The Compact Metropolis:
Planning for Residential Intensification in the Greater Toronto Area

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the last few years, the notion of the compact city has emerged as a key theme in professional planning practice and the academic planning literature. The advocates of compact urban development claim that by planning more compact urban regions and suburban communities, agricultural land can be preserved, the impact of urbanization on the environment can be reduced, more socially inclusive and vibrant communities can be created, and the fiscal costs associated with growth can be minimized.

Thus, in many metropolitan regions throughout North America, state, provincial and regional governments have undertaken comprehensive policy initiatives to control sprawl, direct growth into regional cores and suburban centres, and to achieve a greater range and density of housing in suburban developments. These policy initiatives have met and are meeting with mixed success, in part due to the resistance of municipalities to planning directives coming from "above".

In order to understand the sources of municipal resistance and to provide insight that would help craft more successful intensification strategies, this thesis conducts a case study of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This urban region was selected for detailed analysis because the Ontario government has undertaken a number of province-wide policy initiatives to encourage more compact urban forms, and because it has taken further steps—such as the creation of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA)—to control sprawl in the GTA itself.

Unlike in some US states where unitary growth management legislation has established comprehensive planning frameworks to prevent sprawl, intensification policies in Ontario have been adopted piecemeal by the provincial government over a period of years, by a number of ministries, and with a variety of legal statuses. Thus, the first task of the case study is to identify and describe the province-wide intensification policy framework, designed to influence municipal land-use planning in favour of compact development. After this, the case study turns to the activities of the OGTA in its attempts to facilitate regional action to curb sprawl and promote intensification. Finally, a detailed analysis of the planning policies contained in official plans of upper- and lower-tier municipalities in suburban regions reveals the extent to which provincial and provincially-brokered regional policies were respected.

The principal finding of the case study is that municipalities in the region have compromised and co-opted provincial policy initiatives by adopting three linked development strategies: what I call expansion management, site-specific intensification, and nodal development. These strategies allow municipalities to satisfy provincial policy

pressures in a way that responds to "domestic" growth pressures and constraints, and avoids major changes in the trajectory of suburban growth trends. The case study results suggest that municipalities are increasing their autonomy relative to the province in terms of control over development patterns. Under these conditions, the effectiveness of provincial policy initiatives will depend—at least partly—on the legitimacy of such actions from a municipal point of view. The principles of effectiveness and legitimacy are used in the closing sections of the thesis to recommend some changes to provincial and municipal policies, programs and institutions that would encourage a more compact metropolitan region.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Carolyn Guillet,
whose love and patience made it possible.

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Part I: Introduction, Framework, and Methodology

1 . Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Concern with the form of the city and how it affects our environmental, social, and economic well-being is not new. Indeed, the search for the ideal urban form has been a recurring concept in reform movements and utopian visions for at least a hundred years. As Olson (1991: 251) has noted:

> The swift growth of the nineteenth-century metropolis produced monstrous problems... [T]he concentration of built capital, and the haste to accumulate more, generated threats to health on an unprecedented scale. Concern about these threats led to new ideas, and by the turn of the century reformers had blueprints ready for a revolution in urban form. They saw congestion as the problem, and envisioned cheaper, faster transportation as the solution. Greater mobility would permit a more generous use of space, so that city-dwellers could breath again.

Since that time, and especially in the last forty years, this turn-of-the-century vision has been realized on a grand scale: a greater proportion of North Americans are living in urban regions, but these regions are becoming progressively less concentrated on the urban centre and average densities are failing (Sharpe, 1995).

The planning ideology that supervised this massive decentralization from core cities, and the rise of suburban residential subdivision as the dominant residential paradigm is often traced to the ideas of the Englishman Ebenezer Howard, the putative father of modern town planning. Howard was reacting against the high densities, congestion, pollution and unsanitary living conditions that characterized city life in the preceding stage in the evolution of urban form. He perceived that the countryside was being depopulated as farm labour migrated to the city for industrial jobs, while the city was clearly becoming over-populated. His proposal, which he called the Garden City, would combine the best attributes of the city and country: the opportunities for social intercourse, employment, and cultural facilities of the city would be combined with the fresh air, low rents, and beautiful gardens of the countryside. According to Sewell (1993b):

> Howard's book gives eloquent voice to values that gained ascendancy in North America in the latter part of the twentieth century, values that were expressed by many suburban planners, developers, and house buyers: lower densities are better; using farmland on the edge of the city will result in lower house prices; and suburbia gives freedom.

But the sprawled city itself has produced a "counter-revolution" in thinking about desirable urban forms. The low-density suburb has come to be seen as a wasteful consumer of

resources, a drain on public finances, a polluter of the air, a juggernaut that eats up the land and spits out social alienation, inequity and isolation. And the city—the dense, fuming, and congested city that was the bane of environmentalists and planners at the turn of the century—has emerged as a model for suburbs to emulate in reforming their development patterns: higher-density, transit-based, socially diverse, energy-efficient, and accessible. The advocates of compact city claim that by planning more compact urban regions and suburban communities, agricultural land can be preserved, the impact of urbanization on the environment can be reduced, more socially inclusive and vibrant communities can be created, and the fiscal costs associated with growth can be minimized. Lang and Armour (1982: 12) provide a typical vision of a more compact urban form, composed of a three part package of interlinked concepts: a densely settled urban form; a mix of land uses; and a public transit system to connect form and function.

> The settlement is compact. Little urban sprawl, strip development or underutilized land exist, the result of infilling and development controls. Nor does the settlement spread into its hinterland's agricultural areas and forests, which are seen as valuable energy resources. Places of work, residence, shopping and recreation are well related to each other and to the transportation system, and people choose to take advantage of them rather than making long automobile trips. Population densities in most parts of the community are sufficiently high to make transit feasible; it is also convenient, efficient and heavily used. Clustered along transit corridors and in the settlement's several centres are complexes that mix a wide range of activities for mutual advantage.

Having begun as a minority tradition in the planning literature around the middle of the century, the vision of a more compact city has emerged as a dominant paradigm in Canada and abroad. In Canada alone, the number of reports that have adopted this model is astonishing. At the national level, examples include the work done by D'Amour at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (1991, 1993), the Canadian Urban Institute (1990, 1991), and the Canadian Institute of Planners (1990). At the provincial level, provincial ministries of municipal affairs and housing in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec have adopted positions, policies, or legislation in favour of more compact urban forms (British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1995; Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992; Quebec Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1994). In larger metropolitan regions, planning bodies or special commissions considering metropolitan-wide planning issues have also embraced the compact city as a model for future development: the Greater Vancouver Regional District (1995), the Office for the Greater Toronto Area, the Task Force on the Greater Toronto Area (1992a), and the Task Force on the Greater Montreal Area (1993).

At the local level, many municipalities across Canada have undertaken planning studies to determine the desirability and opportunity for intensification within their borders (e.g., Kitchener, 1991; Halifax, 1992; Regina, 1993; St. John's, 1991; and the City of Thunder Bay, 1991). A survey of planning officials in urban areas across the country conducted by Isin and Tomalty (1993) revealed that two-thirds of respondents were willing to say that they personally supported intensification as a policy goal in their municipalities. Less than 14 percent were opposed.

In the US, the concept of more compact growth has been incorporated into the growth management strategies of 13 states, including Florida, Oregon, and New Jersey (DeGrove, 1992a). In the UK and Australia, urban "consolidation" is firmly on the planning agenda (Newman, 1993), as is urban "concentration" in Norway (Naess, 1993), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1990) has strongly endorsed compact urban form in its widely circulated Green Paper on urban policy.

1.2. Intensification, Sprawl, and Density

Intensification refers to a key aspect of the compact city, namely increasing the intensity or density of land use above those conventionally the case. Because intensification is at the heart of this thesis, it is important to elucidate the word as it used here and to distinguish the key dimensions of the term.

The word "intensification" can be used to refer to an actual development trend towards higher densities or to public policy initiatives designed to encourage such a development trend.[1] Although I will not avoid discussing intensification as a development pattern or process, the main focus of this thesis will be on intensification as a policy objective.

We may distinguish between policies that encourage intensification of already built-up areas versus intensification of newly developing areas on the urban fringe. In already built-up areas, the most commonly used intensification typology in Canada (Canadian Urban Institute, 1991a) comprises:[2]

- conversion: increasing the number of households that can be accommodated in existing detached or semi-detached single-family dwellings through renovation and/or additions
- infill: the construction of new housing within existing serviced residential areas on vacant or underutilized sites, in a form that is physically integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood
- redevelopment: the creation of new housing units through the redevelopment of currently underutilized sites (whose uses may be obsolete) in already built-up and serviced districts

- adaptive reuse: the construction of new housing within sites that may have been originally designated for non-residential uses, and which now can incorporate residential development.

In greenfield areas, intensification policies may aim to:

- increase the range of housing types to include more medium and higher-density housing in new residential areas
- increase densities of ground-related housing by encouraging smaller lot sizes.

The above typology relates to intensification at the site-level only, and this is the most common and enduring usage of the term. Intensification policies may also be directed at the neighbourhood or community-wide levels. Neighbourhood or community-wide initiatives could include the planning of compact new towns, upzoning of whole neighbourhoods, or the establishment of higher-density development nodes around transit facilities and along transit corridors. Achieving intensification at this scale will usually entail policies of the site-level type, but may also involve policies that influence population growth, limit the amount of new land available for development on the urban fringe, limit development in non-urban areas, or guide infrastructure investment (such as transit) so as to support growth in already built-up areas. Some have called these latter policies "community intensification" in order to contrast them with site-specific "housing intensification" policies (Borooah, 1992). Community intensification is one of the goals of growth management (as it is usually called in the US and increasingly so here in Canada), which involves a broader attempt to manage how communities grow in order to link population and employment growth with land and infrastructure requirements.[3]

In metropolitan areas made up of a large number of municipal units, we may also speak of regional intensification. At this level, intensification refers to policies to slow growth in non-urbanized and suburban municipalities, and to direct growth into the regional core, usually the historic centre of the metropolitan area. Regional growth management policies use similar techniques as at the local level, including infrastructure investment planning and population targets, but usually involve mechanisms to coordinate planning and development across the municipal units in the region. Figure 1-1 illustrates the concept of intensification as it applies at all three levels of analysis: site, community, and regional.

Of course, the word "intensification" can involve and apply to non-residential land uses, including industrial, commercial, and institutional. Some authors have pointed to the importance of reforming the way such non-residential lands are used in achieving intensification objectives, e.g., the amount of space used for school playgrounds, highway interchanges, or for environmental services such as storm water storage (e.g., Whitwell, 1995). But as Lynch (1981: 264) says, "the density of housing is always a fundamental decision in

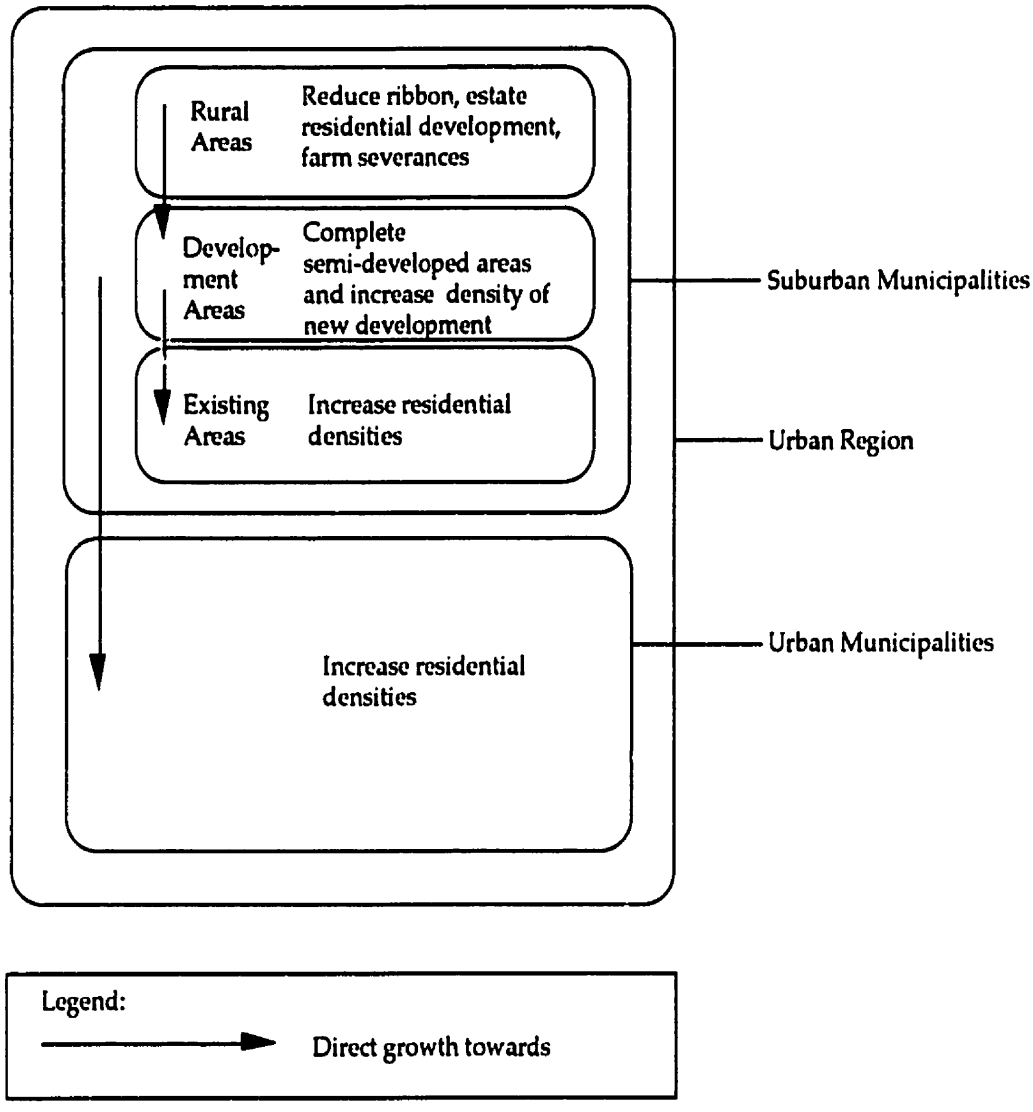


Figure 1-1: Intensification in the Urban Region

city design. It sets the framework for all the other features and has far-reaching implications." For the following reasons this study focuses on policies to influence residential development:

- residential areas use more land than any other urban land use and the type of housing that will be built helps determine the amount of land needed to accommodate new growth
- the growth of residential areas reflects changes in the distribution of population in an urban region, and therefore plays an important role in the locational decisions of many retail, financial, personal and community services
- residential areas are the origins of daily travel and hence the distribution of housing is a prime determinant of travel mode, which in turn has a major impact on land consumption for transportation facilities.

Another way of defining a term is to contrast it with its opposite. Thus, further light may be shed on the meaning of intensification by contrasting it with the concept of urban sprawl, a phenomenon intensification policies are designed to arrest. Unfortunately, no precise technical definition has been developed in the literature on the subject. DeGrove (1992a: 18) defines sprawl as: "scattered, untimely, poorly planned urban development that occurs in urban fringe and rural areas and frequently invades lands important for environmental and natural resource protection." Fowler, (1992) considers sprawl to be a multidimensional phenomenon, including decentralization of population and employment (i.e., from centre to periphery), deconcentration (i.e., the trend towards less-intense land use and lower densities in new developments), and homogeneity (i.e., large zones with single land uses and the tendency for suburban areas to segregate housing on a socio-economic basis). Finally, Wainman (1996: 3) links sprawl on the fringe to the development potential of existing areas: she characterizes sprawl as "rapid growth in the outlying regions of a city while the existing urbanized area could feasibly support a larger population and denser development within its boundaries."

Combining elements of these definitions, I will use the term sprawl in this thesis to mean:

> The rapid extension of the urban envelope onto agricultural and environmentally-sensitive lands due to the growth of low-density car-dependent residential areas that are relatively homogenous in social character and built form, and that draw development potential away from the already urbanized area, specifically the regional core.

This definition implies the same three levels of analysis used in the discussion of intensification above: the regional level, concerning the change in the balance of population from the regional centre to the regional periphery, the local level, concerning the balance of population growth between the built-up and fringe areas, and the site level, concerning the

actual density and mix of dwelling types. Although these features are typically linked, that is not necessarily so: i.e., sprawl on one level is not necessarily sprawl on other levels. Thus, decentralization of the regional population to suburban areas does not necessarily entail low-density homogenous development.

Another way of describing a phenomenon is to say how one could measure it. Different authors have suggested different ways of measuring the degree of compactness or spread of an urban area. Edmonston et al. (1985) propose using a measure called the density gradient, which reflects the steepness of density declines from urban centres to peripheral areas. The British Columbia Round Table (1994) has proposed a number of other measures: housing density in mature urban areas compared to the density of newer suburban areas; the area of rural land converted to urban uses annually per 1000 increase in population; the rate of redevelopment of urban land to higher-density urban use; or the value of building permits in urban nodes compared to their value outside of nodes. Marchand and Charland (1992) have suggested still other measures: the degree of continuity of land use, the structure of land uses in terms of number of major nodes in an urban area, average transportation distances involved in daily commutes, and the density of land use.

A number of measures will be used in the course of this thesis. Land-use density is usually thought to be the simplest and most useful measure for many planning purposes, especially at the site or neighbourhood level (Newman and Kenworthy, 1989). In simple terms, density is a measure of the intensity of the use of land and has two numerical elements: a numerator and a denominator. The numerator is the type of urban activity or development that takes place on the land, usually population, jobs, housing units, building floor space. Since the main concern here is with residential density, the number of housing units will normally be used. The denominator is the area of land to which the measures of urban activity apply. The complexity of density measures is introduced by the variety of ways to measure the denominator. Two types of density measures are the most common. Net density is usually defined as the number of housing units divided by the area of land used for housing purposes, i.e., the aggregate parcel area. Gross density is the number of housing units divided by the land area of the neighbourhood being described, i.e., the land used for housing purposes, along with local streets, neighbourhood stores, religious institutions, schools and other neighbourhood-related land uses.

Gross density is the measure most often used in the present study, but others will be employed where appropriate:

- Floor space index, commonly used to measure the density of land use in higher-density areas with a mix of commercial and residential uses. It relates the floor area of the built structure to the area of the parcel it is siting on, so it is a form of net density.

- Municipal density, in which the denominator is the entire municipality. This measure is used to make rough comparison of the degree of urbanization among municipalities within a given region: obviously, the more rural land in a municipality, the lower its municipal density will be.
- Intensification ratio, which is the amount of growth within a municipality that is accommodated within the existing built-up area versus greenfield development. This measure can be used to reflect past development trends and to establish planning targets
- Regional population distribution ratio, which is a measure of the relative growth in the regional core compared to suburban areas outside the core. This is used to reflect trends in population diffusion and targets in population reconcentration.

While these measures may seem quite straight forward in their definitions, many are not. Net density is open to interpretation because some planners include half the street area in front of the units being described while others do not. Because definitions differ as to what is "neighbourhood-related", gross density is an ambiguous measure. Hitchcock (1994:) illustrates this point by posing the following question:

> Some neighbourhoods contain uses which might be considered regional in nature, such as the necropolis, zoo and adjacent parkland located on the edge of the Don Valley within Toronto's Cabbagetown. Should all of the area of these uses be counted as part of the gross residential area, some of it, or none? There is no single answer to the question.

Similarly, the floor space index is also open to a number of interpretations because it does not relate to building height, often an important planning concern. The intensification ratio depends on how the "existing built up area" is defined: should it include only lands with development above a certain density, lands within the designated urban envelope, whether developed or not, or some other definition? Finally, municipal densities and population distribution ratios are based on census data, which themselves are open to some latitude of interpretation due to shifting definitions and standards used in data collection: e.g., whether transient people are included in a municipality's population figures. As we will see as the thesis unfolds, the ambiguity of these measures is an important terrain of conflict in intensification policy.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

If a consensus has emerged that sprawl is "bad" and intensification is "good", then what is the problem? Isn't it simply a matter of reforming planning and development process so as to achieve higher-density new developments with a greater range and mix of housing, directing more growth to mature suburban areas and to the regional centre? Needless to say, the situation is more complicated. First, there is intense debate about the alleged benefits of the

compact city over conventional development patterns. The arguments of the compact city advocates—often supported by environmentalists, transit-activists, social housing advocates, central city interests, and federal and provincial housing and planning agencies—have been attacked by those who believe that the benefits of the compact city are unproved and that the notion is an excuse for greater government intervention in the development process. Detractors of the concept claim that an unregulated market will allow intensification to occur naturally and that new urban forms are emerging in suburban areas that make intensification policies redundant. Outside of these suburban centres, the low-density subdivision and the automobile form an unbeatable combination for which the vast majority of citizens have voted with their feet.

Linked to this debate—and getting closer to the problematic at the heart of my thesis—is the controversy over the appropriate role of different levels of government in the planning and development process. If the alleged benefits of the compact city happen to be mostly non-local, which compact city advocates acknowledge, then senior governments will have the strongest motivation for adopting intensification policies. But, if the costs of intensification are felt most acutely at the local level, then municipal governments may have strong motivation to resist such policies. Given that control over land use is shared between provincial and municipal governments, intensification policy seems to be ideally structured to result in conflicts between different levels of government.

This is the issue that is explored in detail in this thesis. In many metropolitan regions throughout North America, state, provincial and regional governments have undertaken policy initiatives to control sprawl, direct growth into regional cores and suburban centres, and to achieve a greater range and density of housing in suburban developments. These policy initiatives have met and are meeting with mixed success, in part due to the resistance of municipalities to planning directives coming from "above".

The key research question motivating this thesis is: "Why have provincial policies designed to influence municipal planning activity towards the creation of more compact communities not been that successful and what can be done about it?" In order to answer this question, I conduct a case study of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This urban region was selected for detailed analysis because the Ontario government has undertaken a number of province-wide policy initiatives to encourage more compact urban forms, and because it has taken further steps—such as the creation of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA)—to control sprawl in the GTA itself.

1.4. Research Objectives

The specific research objectives of this thesis flow from the main research question posed above. They are:

- to explore the academic and planning literature on the compact city/sprawl and to identity the key terms of the debate
- to document the evolution of the provincial intensification policy framework in the case study region using a chronological narrative, and to identify provincial policy objectives
- to track the translation of provincial policies into municipal planning actions and to shed light on how municipalities interpret and react to provincial policies
- to use the insights gained from the research to reflect on potential reforms to provincial and municipal institutions, the policy process, planning practices, and other instruments to meet the goal of amore compact urban form.

1.5. Thesis Outline

This thesis follows a standard format. The literature review, theoretical basis and rationale for the study are provided in Chapter 2. The literature review is organized on the basis of the three major claims about the benefits of the compact city: a healthier and less resource-consumptive environment, a more just and vibrant society, and growth that is less costly to the public purse. Challenges to each of these major claims are also considered as are the rebuttals of compact city advocates. The theoretical basis begins with a justification for public intervention in the development process, and then moves on to a justification for provincial intervention in municipal decision-making in order to achieve more compact urban forms. Municipalities are presented as having two limitations that prevent them from achieving the most desirable development patterns: first, municipal decision-making is heavily influenced by local political forces that favour sprawl over compact urban form; and second, individual municipalities in metropolitan areas do not take into account the positive and negative externalities of their land-use decisions. This leads into a discussion of the relationship between provincial and municipal levels of government with respect to land-use planning issues, i.e., the degree of provincial dominance/municipal autonomy. A brief review of intensification initiatives in Canada's largest metropolitan areas shows that municipalities have considerable ability to resist provincial planning directives, leading to the research questions:

- why do municipalities resist provincial attempts to manage growth and achieve more compact urban form?
- what types of provincial policies and policy instruments are more or less likely to be resisted by municipalities?

- what enables municipalities to thwart or adapt provincial intensification policies?
- what recommendations can be made for achieving more compact urban forms given the findings of the research?

Finally, the questions are cast in the language of policy formulation and implementation in order to provide a conceptual framework for the case study.

In Chapter 3, the justification for the choice of case study region is given and the case study method is described in some detail. Upper- and lower-tier municipalities in the GTA have been involved in a round of official plan making over the last five years or so, a period that corresponds well with the creation of the provincial intensification policy framework. This provides an opportunity to use official plans as a vehicle for exploring the relationship between provincial intensification policies and local planning policies. The case study uses a number of data sources including interviews with provincial and municipal planners; a diversity of documentary sources, including provincial policy statements, official plans and background reports, minutes from public hearings on official plan proposals, and documents from other stakeholders in the planning process; and, newspaper articles on intensification, sprawl, and official planning.

In Chapter 4, I identify and describe the elements of the province-wide intensification policy framework. Policies are grouped under three rubrics: growth management, which relates primarily to policies intended to reduce the consumption of land for new urban development; housing supply, which covers policies meant to ensure a greater range of residential densities and housing types; and urban structure, which encompasses policies to encourage the development of higher-density nodes and corridors throughout the urban region.

Chapter 5 describes the policy framework at the regional level, focusing on the activities of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area, a branch of the provincial government created in 1988 to coordinate provincial actions in the region and to facilitate a discussion on growth management among provincial and municipal planning agencies. Two major policy outcomes are detailed in the chapter: the urban structure proposed by the Urban Form Working Group and the 30-year population allocations to the various upper-tier municipalities that resulted from the deliberations of the Population and Employment Committee.

Chapter 6 links the previous section on provincial and regional policies with the next section on municipal official plan responses. It does so by describing the official plan approval process and by placing municipal planning in its institutional setting. Some of the general features of the new generation of official plans in the GTA are described as a prelude to the reporting in the next three chapters.

In Chapters 7 to 9, the impact of the provincial policy framework on municipal planning decisions is described and assessed, with each chapter dealing with one aspect of the policy framework: growth management, housing supply, and urban structure. After determining the degree to which the provincial policy objectives are realized in the official plans under study, the factors that might be operating at the local level to produce the observed results are identified.

In Chapter 10, I attempt to broaden the analysis from the detailed findings concerning the provincial intensification policy framework and its implementation in official plans. I do this by summarizing the findings and linking them to the research questions posed in Chapter 2, and to the wider literature on implementation problems, regional planning, growth management, and intensification. I close the chapter by reflecting on some of the theoretical issues raised in Chapter 2.

Chapter 11 proposes some recommendations for achieving more compact urban form in the GTA based on the forgoing case study, and draws some implications for other urban regions. Finally, I consider some of the limitations of the current case study, which point to future research directions.

Endnotes

[1] Thus, when we say "mainstreet intensification" we may be referring to either an observed pattern of density change or to the policy initiative to encourage this pattern.

[2] This typology has several strengths: it employs well-known planning terms, is simple and intuitive and appears to capture the main types of intensification. Nonetheless, it does have at least two defects of which we should be aware. First, the typology is incomplete; it does not mention, for instance, the creation of new housing by severing existing single-family lots. Secondly, some categories are over-determined; there is no reason, for instance, why conversion should be limited to detached or semi-detached homes.

[3] The link between these two forms of intensification were pointed out as early as 1976 by Peter Spurr in his well known study on land development in Canada: "While the easiest way to protect neighbourhoods is to focus growth on raw fringe lands, this accelerates the destruction of the natural environment and increases the total cost of development. To avoid these costs and disadvantages, it is necessary that significant amounts of growth occur in the form of compact development in both fringe and existing areas. It appears, then, that the basic dimensions of urban land policy must protect the natural environment, limit urban sprawl, and encourage growth to occur through densification across existing cities" (365).

2 . Planning the Compact City: Theoretical Considerations and Analytical Framework

2.1. Introduction

As a planning vision, the compact city presents an alternative to historical and current trends in urban development. Thus, it is normally assumed that a more compact urban form can be achieved only through public policy action on the part of senior governments. In a market society—and particularly one that values local autonomy—such policy action needs to be justified on a number of grounds: i.e., that there are important gains to be made from a public perspective, that an unregulated land market cannot achieve optimum densities, and that local governments are unable or unwilling to be the primary agents of change.

In this chapter, I review each of these arguments and conclude that, indeed, provincial policy action is needed in order achieve more sustainable development patterns. I also conclude that while local governments may not be equipped to act independently to intensify the urban fabric, they are not plastic entities whose planning policies and practices can be molded by unilateral provincial policies. The Canadian experience in planning large metropolitan areas over the last few decades has shown that municipalities can have profound influence on the ability of provincial or regional governments to implement compact city policies. This insight serves to focus attention on the relationship between provincial and municipal governments and an analytical framework is elaborated that will help address the specific research questions.

2.2. The Benefits of the Compact City Model

In the introduction to this thesis, I noted that the notion of the compact city has undergone a shift from a minority utopian vision to the mainstream of the planning literature. This can be attributed to the emergence of a widespread concern with economic, social and environmental costs of conventional patterns of urban development. As Bourne (1991: 186) remarks:

> The question of interest here is the possibility of reducing and redistributing some of these costs by encouraging new urban forms and a different balance of growth between new suburban greenfield sites and the recycling of existing built-up landscapes.

The three rubrics of social equity, economic efficiency, and environmental soundness are the commonly accepted building blocks of sustainable development, to which its advocates have linked the concept of the compact city (Canadian Institute of Planners, 1990). In this section, I survey some of the purported benefits of the compact city relative to

traditional regional and suburban development patterns, using the three rubrics just mentioned.

2.2.1. Social Benefits

The earliest critique of suburban sprawl was based on the contention that low-density scattered settlement patterns could not form the basis for a vibrant, meaningful community life. This critique can be traced at least as far back as the writings of Benton MacKaye of the Regional Planning Association of America (Alexander and Tomalty, 1994). In his 1928 book *The New Exploration*, he divided the urban region into three distinct environments, each having its own integrity: wilderness (primeval), countryside (rural) and urban (communal). In his view, sprawl, a "low grade urban tissue", compromised the integrity and distinctiveness of each of these environments and violated their residents' psychological needs. "These souls live all in a single environment: not city, not country, but wilderness—the wilderness not of an integrated, ordered nature, but of standard disordered civilization" (quoted in Hiss, 1990: 189).

This cultural critique of suburbia continued into the middle part of the century: In the 1940s, Paul and Percival Goodman published their book, *Communitas*, which disparaged the suburban interpretation of the Garden City concept: "rather than live in a Garden City, an intellectual would rather meet a bear in the woods" (1960: 35). In 1961, Jane Jacobs published her work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In it, she criticized the received principles of modern planning as irrelevant to how cities actually grow and function. She, too, deprecated the Garden City concept of Ebenezer Howard and the sterile low-density suburbs and single-use districts she felt his ideas had helped to spawn.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the critique of suburbia dovetailed with the growing concern over class and racial segregation in US cities. There, urbanists identified traditional suburban development patterns as a physical expression of an exclusionary society that the white middle-class had built as it fled the inner-cities. Downs (1977) argued that "opening up suburbia" would allow low-income households escape the ghetto, give a better education to their children and take advantage of expanding suburban job opportunities, thereby helping to eradicate inner-city poverty and diffuse the possibility of racial and class conflict.

More recently, the social critique of suburban development has shifted to the claim that suburban forms have failed to respond to changes in the social structure of urban society. Suburbs, having been based on the concept of the nuclear family with a male breadwinner and a female home worker, no longer reflect social realities. The US designer, Peter Calthorpe (1993: 15) put it this way:

> The nuclear family, for whom suburbia was conceived, now represents barely one out of four new households. But we are still building WWII suburbs as if families were large and had only one bread-winner, as if jobs were all downtown, as if land and energy were endless, as if another lane on the freeway would end traffic congestion.

One key demographic change is the gradual aging of population in many communities (Hodge, 1995). Another is the falling average household size: as families get smaller and more and more individuals choose to live alone, populations in some mature areas with stable housing stocks actually decline. Rising affluence and the waves of new immigrants also affect the demand for housing in terms of type and location. (Harris, 1991). Finally, with the mass recruitment of women to the paid workforce, the isolation and car-dependence of suburban houses appears less appropriate to many women and their families. These demographic changes point towards a shift in housing demand away from larger, single-family houses towards a wider range of housing choices, including smaller- and medium-sized new houses and units that can be provided through infill and conversion of existing stock (Cooper Marcus, 1986; Booth, 1985; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1995; Michelson, 1985; van Vliet, 1991). Furthermore, these demographic changes may be contributing to a limited "back to the city" movement that is creating greater demand for housing in central cities (Bourne, 1992a).

2.2.2. Economic Benefits

The social critique of the suburb relates primarily to the segregated land uses traditionally found there. The economic critique of sprawl can be related to two other features of conventional suburban development: the deconcentration of land uses to lower densities and the decentralization of population and employment from the traditional core to suburban locations.

In the residential context, deconcentration refers to the predominance of low-density detached residential units. Wheaton and Schussheim (1955) proposed several hypothetical development patterns to accommodate additional residential growth in three Massachusetts cities and analyzed the impacts on municipal costs of density, size of settlement and distance from the city centre. The authors found that service costs of water supply, sanitary sewers and streets, tend to decrease as residential density increases. They attributed this to a reduction in length of streets and utility lines per dwelling. Their conclusions were reinforced by Isard and Coughlin (1956) in a similar study of hypothetical settlements.

The Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board in BC was one of the first Canadian planning agencies to express concern over the costs of servicing low-density development. In 1956, it conducted an analysis of utility and servicing costs (road paving, road and ditch

maintenance, and water supply costs) of three zones representing different population densities in the Surrey region. The board concluded that these costs were significantly higher in lower-density areas than those in the higher-density areas.

In 1977, the Real Estate Research Corporation published the results of what became the best known study on this topic, *The Costs of Sprawl*. The study examined costs of various development patterns for six communities and six neighbourhoods with different population densities. The study included capital and operating costs of utilities (including sewers, water supply, storm drainage) and "soft services" (such as police, fire and schools). The authors found that contiguous, compact development is less costly than sprawled development.

More recently, a study along these lines was done by Essiambre-Phillips-Desjardins Associates et al. (1995) for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. It explored differences in public and private costs for two types of developments: a conventional suburban design and a more compact "neo-traditional" design. The authors concluded that:

> The infrastructure in the alternative plan, featuring a denser development and a broader mix of house types and land uses, is more cost effective for both the public and private sectors. The total life-cycle cost (over a 75-year period) of the infrastructure in the alternative plan is approximately $11,000 per unit, or 8.8 percent less than in the conventional plan... The per unit cost of savings associated with the alternative plan is attributed to the increase in residential density, which spreads the cost of the infrastructure over more units, and to the increase in land-use mix, which reduces the residential sector's share of capital, operating and maintenance costs (30).

A related economic argument in favour of compact cities is that a greater mix of housing in new developments can create communities that are more sustainable from an infrastructure point of view:

> because new suburbs are targeted toward specific homogenous groups... they require a disproportionate volume of services unique to the target group (e.g., schools)... As the population enters the next stage of its life cycle, services initially provided become redundant, and new services, consistent with the life cycle, have to be provided (Mathur, 1990).

Decentralization is another principal feature of urban evolution. Critics of suburban sprawl claim that decentralization from the central city has two main economic disadvantages, it leads to the economic decline of the central city and it leads to underutilization of existing public investment in infrastructure and requires expensive infrastructure development on the fringe.

Among the first to make the argument that suburban development is a causal factor in the loss of population and economic activity in the central city was Thompson (1965). He claimed that the flight of middle and upper classes had a tendency to depress the residential

property values, with obvious repercussions for the local tax base. A downward spiral sets in as commercial and industrial sectors follow customers and employees to the suburbs. Similar arguments have been made by the critics of sprawl:

> Although the debate on whether and to what extent urban sprawl is detrimental to regional growth and wealth is ongoing, there is little doubt that it threatens the inner city, whose demographic, economic and fiscal decline can be partly imputed to unregulated suburban expansion (Des Rosiers, 1992).

Several studies have compared the servicing costs of fringe development with infill development of the already built-up area. Cost savings are greatest when incremental infill development exploits excess service capacity, such as existing schools. A study undertaken by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1981 showed that a population increase of 5,000 in the inner-city could save $12.5 million by avoiding the need to create new school facilities for greenfield development (Kearns, 1981). Another Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation-sponsored report—a case study of St. John's, Newfoundland found that—given excess capacity in infrastructure and services—densities could be increased in already built up areas with negligible effects on capital costs. Where increased densities implied greater operating costs, such as in garbage collection and waste disposal, the enhanced assessment base was enough to neutralize the change (Barnard, 1981a). A Winnipeg case study confirmed these conclusions for that city as well. The Winnipeg study also found that intensification of existing built up areas could lead to better use of transit facilities and existing expressways by reducing commutes to work, resulting in significant cost savings (Barnard, 1981b).

2.2.3. Environmental Benefits

Historically, many writers concerned with the environmental effects of urbanization have favoured the decentralization of major cities into smaller settlements (Alexander and Tomalty, 1994). Concerns were expressed about the degradation of the environment that resulted from urban crowding and concentrated industrial activity. Bookchin (1973), for instance, conceived of the ideal urban form as consisting of smaller, self-contained cities with plenty of open and green space, buffered by rural areas and connected by efficient transportation systems. Although concerns about higher-density urban living have not been eliminated among environmentalists, the balance of environmental opinion has shifted decisively toward more compact urban forms (Paehlke, 1991).[1]

A key environmental argument against low-density suburban development is that it increases the need for motorized transportation. Holtzclas (1991) compares vehicle miles traveled per capita and per household for San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Great Britain, Toronto and elsewhere. The results show a consistent pattern: doubling residential or

population density reduces the annual auto mileage per capita or per household by 20 to 30 percent. Based on his empirical work relating land use to transportation, Cervero (1991) has argued that intensification, mixed land-use, and a better jobs-housing balance are essential ingredients for reducing automobile use.

Related to automobile use is the issue of air quality. Automobiles are responsible for over 40 percent of all air pollution (Brown and Jacobson, 1987). Downing and Gustely (1977) found that air pollution from automobiles was 20 to 30 percent less in a more compact community than in an sprawled development.

Higher densities also make public transportation more viable. A widely cited Australian study by Newman and Kenworthy (1989) of 31 cities in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia showed the direct relationship between residential density, the viability of public transit systems, and automotive fuel usage. A 1977 study by Pushkarev and Zupan showed that residential densities were an important determinant of transit use. They found that as residential densities increase, transit service became more feasible and auto use declined.

Higher densities also enhance the potential for walking and cycling. The Angus Reid Group (1992: 5) looked at eight Canadian cities and compared place of residence, place of work, and mode of transport to work. They concluded that "higher densities and greater proximity of home and work... are required if the choice of mode of travel to work is to become more environmentally friendly or healthier."

The compact city may also reduce the cost of environmentally friendly services. Paehlke (1989) claims that higher-density settlements are better able to afford recycling programs, such as waste collection, facilities recovering waste materials, the marketing of waste materials, and the control and treatment of effluents and other forms of pollution. This argument is reinforced by Richardson (1992: 160) who argues that environmental "impacts may be more economically and effectively managed if the sources are concentrated than if they are dispersed."

The smaller living units and multiple dwellings associated with compact urban forms are more resource efficient. Owens (1986) found that heat energy is more than 20 percent more efficient in semi-detached houses and nearly 30 percent more efficient in row houses than in comparably insulated single-detached dwellings. A mid-floor apartment requires about one-third the heat energy of a detached house of equivalent size. He also argued that high-density development makes district heating feasible. In another study, Downing and Gustely, (1977) found that in high-density areas, energy consumption from auto transport, space heating and cooling requirements were more than 40 percent lower than in low-density residential

developments. Water consumption was reduced by approximately 35 percent in high-density communities.

Another environmental argument advanced by promoters of the compact city idea is that it preserves farmland at the urban fringe. Because cities were often originally located so as to exploit an agricultural hinterland, urban sprawl tends to consume high quality agricultural land. Warren et. al. (1989) have found that in the 20 years of urban growth from 1966 to 1986, large Canadian cities spread chiefly onto agricultural land: of the 301,440 ha of rural land urbanized, 58 percent was of high agricultural capability. According to Maynes (1990) intensification of land use is the most important method of reducing sprawl onto farmland.

2.3. Challenges to the Compact City Model

The compact city model has been challenged on a number of grounds, including social, economic, and environmental. Here, I would like to briefly review and address some of the main points of this critique.

2.3.1. Social Challenges

The social critique of the compact city takes issue with the claim that higher-density living is more vibrant, livable, and community-oriented. Authors in this vein point to the considerable research showing that low-density communities on the suburban fringe are more desirable than higher-density central areas to a wide range of households. Among the "push" factors are high central area land prices, traffic congestion, the relatively unsafe conditions typical of inner cities, dislike of ethnic and racial diversity, aversion to high-density living, and an antipathy towards interaction with dissimilar social groups (Kivell, 1993). Pull factors attracting residents and employers to suburban locations include lower land prices, the availability of land for residential and industrial development, a pleasant environment for raising a family, privacy, and a rural ambiance (Audirac, 1992). In this connection, the point is often made that compact city enthusiasts are swimming against the tide and threatening to interfere with the clearly expressed housing preferences of the majority of the population (Harvey, 1965).

Defenders of the compact city model have been able to counter these arguments to some extent. In response to the criticism that people "vote with their feet" in terms of housing preference by moving to low-density suburban neighbourhoods, Neuman (1991: 346) makes the interesting distinction between the housing-type preference, which he admits is overwhelmingly single-family, and the preferred form of community. "While Americans may prefer single-family homes, this does not mean they want them to exist in sprawling forms." He goes on to cite evidence that community residents, when shown images of both sprawl and traditional housing and community types, overwhelmingly prefer traditional types. Other

authors have pointed to the increasing acceptance of neo-traditional urban designs in spite of in-grained preferences for low-density suburban designs (Bookout, 1992).

The social critique of intensification also points to the wide range of research that shows that increases in density are generally unwelcome to existing residents and have a range of negative economic and social impacts. A study done for the Ontario government by Klien & Sears (1983) found widespread resistance to intensification projects, especially when lower-income housing was being proposed. The authors found that resistance to intensification was greater in suburban areas than in central cores. A study done for the City of Vancouver (1986) found that concerns were highest in homogenous low-density residential areas, but that acceptance of intensification projects increased as densities and land-use mix increased. In the US, the Advisory Committee on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing (1991) concluded that a pervasive NIMBY syndrome, especially in the suburbs, was one of the most significant barriers to affordable housing in urban areas across the country. A common theme is found among all these studies: residents of low-density neighbourhoods resist higher-density housing because they believe it will affect neighbourhood quality (e.g., parking, parks, traffic), personal security, and property values.

Evidence is available to counter these claims. A growing body of studies points to the conclusion that intensification does not negatively affect surrounding property values. In Canada, Ekos Research Associates (1989) studied 51 non-profit housing projects randomly selected in three cities and found that the projects had no overall negative influence on the property values of neighbouring properties. Another study by the same authors (1988) showed that conversions—such as the creation of basement apartments—had negligible impacts on surrounding property values. In the US, Martinez (1988) carried out a review of 15 key studies, dating from 1963 to 1986, on the impacts of low-income housing on surrounding property values. He found that 14 of them had reached the conclusion that there are no significant negative effects.

In response to criticisms about the quality of life in higher-density areas, compact city advocates claim that attention to design and process issues at the site level can obviate local social impacts. Another study by Ekos Research Associates (1994) carried out in Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax found that acceptance of higher-density affordable housing could be increased by appropriate project design, an open and thorough consultation process, and by avoiding over-concentrations of such housing in particular neighbourhoods. A study undertaken by Energy Pathways (1994) in Charlottetown showed that neighbourhood concerns with social housing projects were higher for residents who were not aware of current project proposals than for residents that were aware, implying that increased community participation could enhance acceptance of intensification projects. This research is consistent

with published reports of planners' experience with consultation programs, which show that an open process and appropriate design can go a long way towards overcoming neighbourhood concerns with higher-density development (Pianosi, 1991).

From a design point of view, intensification advocates have recognized that concentrations of "towers in the park"—which attract the most public opposition—can no longer be considered the best way to increase land-use densities and housing supply in all situations. In this spirit, a number of studies and charrettes have been undertaken in order to show how moderately high densities can be achieved with low-rise and ground-related dwelling types in combination with more modest development standards (Lehman & Associates, 1995; Canadian Urban Institute, 1990). Other studies have been undertaken to show how suburban subdivisions can achieve higher densities without the repetitiveness and ugliness that has come to be associated with the concept (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 1993; Urban Development Institute Pacific Region, 1991).

In terms of personal security, compact city advocates have tried to uncouple the association in many people's minds between density and crime. Long ago, Jacobs (1961) coined the phrase "eyes on the streets" to express the sentiment that dense, lively neighbourhoods were more likely safer than deserted ones. Bourne has argued that:

> It is said, for example, that some environments inevitably lead to crime, social alienation and civic disorder. Of course, physical environments can accommodate, if not stimulate certain types of behaviour, both social and anti-social, but they generally do not produce that behaviour. Physical planning clearly should do all that it can to facilitate and stimulate positive social behaviour... But deviant behaviour is a social problem not a physical or architectural one (Bourne, 1975: 9).

There is at least some evidence that higher-density or mixed-density neighbourhoods are no more likely to be affected by crime than more homogenous ones. Fowler has evaluated the impact of the design of the post-war city on human behaviour by studying 19 different Toronto neighbourhoods, ranging from the physically diverse to the physically homogeneous (e.g., those with only residential high-rises, or only suburban houses, or only warehouses). The author concludes that:

> The less overall small-scale physical diversity, no matter what the socio-economic makeup of the neighbourhood, the less neighbours knew each other, and the more crime, especially juvenile crime, there was. It is important to note that this relationship held up in the suburbs as well (1991: 31).

Finally, critics of growth management suggest that restrictions on the supply of new land at the urban fringe will tend to increase prices, especially for the existing single detached units (Simpson, 1993). Evidence for this comes from the experience garnered during the first

wave of growth controls in the 1970s, especially in the US. There, limitations on the construction of new housing resulted in higher housing prices and the displacement of development pressures to jurisdictions less able to manage growth (Navarro, 1991).

Advocates of more compact urban forms do not contest the notion that reducing the supply of new land for development on the urban fringe will tend to raise housing prices. However, they do contend that a distinction must be made between earlier, fragmented attempts to prevent growth on the urban fringe and more comprehensive growth management policies that include mechanisms to increase housing supply: i.e., streamlining the development approval process, setting housing mix and minimum density targets for new development, and capital grants to increase the production of affordable housing. Under these conditions, housing prices can remain stable as sprawl-limiting policies go into effect (DeGrove, 1992a).

2.3.2. Economic Challenges

The alleged economic benefits of the compact city have also been attacked. For instance, Feldman has argued that the Real Estate Research Corporation study modeled different development mixes and demonstrated that service delivery is less expensive in compact zones, but that it failed to compare the cost of adding infrastructure to service population growth on the periphery with the costs of such infrastructure closer to the regional core:

> Because land at or near the center inevitably is more valuable than land on the periphery, especially in the presence of policies that raise doubt about the potential use of peripheral lands, the construction of additional facilities to service urban populations will be more expensive than new facilities at the fringe... Thus, planning that discourages sprawl may be protecting established economic interests, raising the land values of early occupiers while preventing newcomers from affording urban land and the services that accompany it (1987: 142).

In support of this contention, observers point to one of the most comprehensive reviews in Canada of servicing costs associated with different development options, the Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study. This study found that the capital costs of development would be about the same over a 30-year period, whether the development represented a continuation of current spread patterns, clustered into higher-density nodal areas throughout the region, or concentrated in the existing built-up areas. The authors concluded that high costs of upgrading services in the urban core and acquiring land for parks and other facilities offset any per capita efficiency advantages of the central option compared to the spread option (IBI Group, 1990).

This finding has had a major impact on the debate over sprawl in Canada. Even organizations that endorse the compact city idea on other grounds warn, on the basis of the

IBI study, that "urban densification should not be justified solely on the basis of lower servicing costs to the public" where redevelopment of core areas might require new infrastructure (British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and Economy, 1994: 87).

Advocates of the compact city have attempted to qualify the IBI conclusions on the grounds that the study was conducted in great haste and made a number of insupportable assumptions (Hitchcock, 1991).[2] In fact, five years later, the consultant revised its findings, explaining that "the study was carried out... in four months under intensive time pressure." The revised figures showed that, in fact, the central and nodal options would result in significant capital cost savings over the spread scenario of 14 percent and 10 percent respectively.

The fiscal studies supporting more compact growth patterns have also been attacked. Critics claim that the original engineering studies that supported the compact city model typically calculated costs of the infrastructure needed to service real or hypothetical settlements of different densities, but left out operating costs and the public costs associated with activities other than infrastructure investment. An alternative to the engineering approach is offered by statistical studies that regress actual public expenditures by municipal authorities against densities for a large number of urban regions. Studies using this approach tend to show that higher population densities are associated with higher per capita local government expenditures (Marchand and Charland, 1992).

One of the earliest statistical studies of local government service costs was conducted by Brazer (1959) who analyzed data for 462 cities in the US. Except for highways and recreation, he obtained a positive correlation between per capita local government expenditures and population density. Another study by Bahl (1969) examined city expenditures for 198 central cities. Using the same categories of local government expenditures as those used by Brazer, he found population density to have a positive and significant influence on per capita expenditures, the only exceptions being highway and park expenditures. More recently, Ladd (1992) conducted research on 247 US counties to determine the impact of density and rates of population on the costs of providing public services. She found that the relationship between density and public expenditures (including operating, capital, and public safety costs) were U-shaped, with a trough at about 625 people per square kilometre (i.e., less than three units per net hectare). After this threshold, those counties with higher population densities had higher public sector spending than those with lower densities.

Two issues need to be raised in the context of these studies. First, those regression studies that looked at fiscal costs associated with larger cities found that public sector costs declined as the proportion of the metropolitan population found in the central city increased.

This might imply that monocentric urban regions are more efficient from a fiscal point of view than dispersed urban regions. Secondly, in their review of the literature on the public costs of various development patterns, Marchand and Charland (1992: 19) have pointed out that regression studies have difficulty isolating the effects of different development densities on public spending (because they use a municipal-wide density measure) and warned that conclusions based on such studies are therefore of questionable validity. Although they recognized that engineering studies do not capture the full picture either, the authors favoured such studies as a basis for conclusions about the relationship between development patterns and public expenditures. As we have seen, such studies support the claim that higher-density urban forms are fiscally more efficient.

Critics also question the connection made by compact city supporters between central city decline and suburban development. Garreau (1991) argues in his book *Edge Cities* that central cities are in decline for macro-economic reasons, with suburbanization as a symptom. He emphasizes that edge cities simply mirror modern needs and technological evolution in transportation and communications, and that traditional downtown cores are now an anachronism. Thus, as a normal process of metropolitan growth, urban sprawl should not be unduly impeded by intensification policies.

While empirical justification for the claim that suburban development leads to central city decline has eluded the advocates of the compact city, there is some evidence that a healthy central city is essential for a sound regional economy. Ledebur and Barnes (1993) surveyed 78 metropolitan areas in the US and found that changes in central city median household incomes were strongly correlated with incomes in the cities' suburbs. Where a central city was not doing well, its suburbs were also suffering, and vice versa. The authors concluded. "There is strong economic justification for addressing the needs of central cities and for cooperation among cities and suburbs to meet the mutual economic needs of their local economic regions.

2.3.3. Environmental Challenges

The environmental gains claimed by the proponents of the compact city depend largely on the claim that it would entail less commuting than in sprawled cities. Some researchers have attacked what they see as the underlying supposition in the anti-sprawl literature, i.e., a monocentric model of urban development whereby residents' trip lengths increase as urban growth extends from a single employment centre. Gordon and Wong (1985) counter this model with a polycentric model, which states that trip-ends (especially for work trips) become more dispersed as cities grow and that this development is in many ways more efficient. To test for this, the authors used a national sample from the US 1977 Nationwide Personal

Transportation Study. They concluded that dispersed work trip-ends had allowed for shorter work-trip distances for suburban residents in the largest cities.

In a later paper, Gordon et al. (1989) argued that, as urban growth continued, the monocentric city became inefficient due to increasing congestion costs close to the CBD and that, as a result, a polycentric urban structure emerged. They found that dispersed and polycentric metropolitan areas facilitate shorter commuting times. Because of changing urban structure, Poulton (1995: 91) has argued that intensification of mature neighbourhoods in the central area of the urban region is inefficient. "The transportation and locational benefits to residents in these areas are declining. The city form is changing and the attractive locations for jobs, homes, and services are located more and more in suburban belts."

The longer commute times expected by the monocentric model depends on the assumption that residents' place of work is exogenously determined, i.e., that their choice of employment will not be affected by their residential location. Recent evidence provided by Waddell (1993) and Levinson and Kumar (1994) suggests that residential and employment location are jointly determined, indicating that the city's inhabitants make location adjustments to reduce commuting distances.

In defence of the compact city, some have claimed that the polycentric urban structure model is only applicable to some cities—especially those in the US southwest—and that other North American cities—especially Canadian cities—are still primarily monocentric (Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd., 1991). In support of this view, Goldberg and Mercer (1986) have shown that for a large number of economic variables—such as manufacturing and wholesaling activity, retail establishments, and the number of hospitals—Canadian cities are more centrally-oriented in their urban structure than are their US counterparts. Bourne has examined commuting patterns in order to test the "multi-nucleation hypothesis" in the 27 largest urban regions of Canada. He concluded that:

> overall commuting flows still tend to be dominated by the widespread dispersal of employment throughout the suburbs and by the continued attraction of the central core in terms of long distance commuting related to higher-order jobs and professional occupations. The multi-nucleated urban form... apparently has not yet arrived (1989: 325).

In 1994, Coffey conducted a case study of urban structure in the Montreal region. Noting that Garreau identified three models of poly-nucleation (i.e., cases where the CBD retains its traditional economic role; cases where economic growth is shared between the CBD and suburban centres; and cases where the CBD relinquishes its role to suburban centres), he concluded that "the Montreal CMA is thus situated somewhere between Garreau's first and second models, and is probably closer to the first than to the second" (1994: 95).

A recent study on commercial activity in the GTA found that there were 40,000 commercial outlets in the region, half of them in about 1000 commercial nodes. Within this diffuse structure, the authors found that:

> more than half the commercial activity is still located within Metro, the smallest in area of the five regional municipalities. Of the 56 percent of commercial jobs in Metro, 20 percent are located within the downtown core, 10 percent in the rest of the City of Toronto and 25 percent in that part of Metro outside the city... Comparisons of Toronto with other North American cities suggest that Toronto is unusual in the strength of the core, and the vitality and variety of retail strips within the inner city (Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity, 1996: 105-106).

It is also widely recognized that, in Canada, the extent of suburban nucleation is partly an outcome of planning choices made by provincial, metropolitan and central city governments, all of which are strongly committed to the preservation of central city economic health (Bourne, 1992b).[3] To the extent that this process is under public control, it is unlikely to proceed to the point where the CBD loses its role as the employment centre in the metropolitan region. Thus, with CBDs continuing as major employment areas and commute destinations within metropolitan regions, a strong case can still be made for directing new population growth to central cities.

Some authors have also warned that in striving for more compact urban forms, we may put pressure on planning authorities to allow developers to convert green and open space in already built up areas to residential use. This would reduce wildlife habitat while increasing stormwater runoff and discharge into water bodies (Audirac, 1990). According to Hitchcock (1994: 15), "density can be something of a blunt instrument in relating urban development as it occurs 'on the ground' to various kinds of planning objectives." He goes on to point out that:

> the association of environmental protection with higher density tends to assume that 'the environment' is somehow outside the city. In this view, the relatively high density of Toronto is desirable because it reduces land consumption outside Toronto. Toronto's municipal area density has come at the expense of wetlands and stream courses within the city's boundaries.

In his review of the environmental effects of intensification, Paelhke (1991) acknowledges these and a number of other environmental risks of intensification, including potential negative micro-climatic effects and increased exposure to contaminated soils due to redevelopment of industrial land. He concludes, however, that most of these risks can be mitigated through appropriate design and complementary policy initiatives, and that, on balance, the positive implications of the compact city outweigh the negatives ones.

Finally, it has been pointed out by detractors of the compact city model that the decline of farming in the urban shadow is related to larger economic forces such as changes in the global prices of agricultural products and the subsidy wars among developed nations. Given this situation, the concentration of population in compact cities may, ironically, serve to undermine the rural farm economy by depriving farmers of economic activity that could have sustained them—i.e., the right to sever or sell their land (Newby, 1990; Breheny, 1992). Recognizing this as a potential problem with intensification, compact city advocates have proposed mechanisms to compensate and support farmers outside the urban boundary: e.g., through the purchase of development rights, the transfer of development rights, differential taxation programs, and right-to-farm legislation (Mantell, 1990).

2.4. The Role of Public Policy

This review of the empirical literature suggests that, while the debate is obviously ongoing, there are a number of potential advantages to more compact urban forms over conventional suburban development patterns and regional decentralization. Most of these potential benefits of the compact city are of public concern because of the strategic importance of the resources involved (farmland, energy), the implications for public health (air quality, recreation), social justice (housing choice and affordability), public expenditures and taxation levels (capital and operating costs associated with different development patterns), and economic development. Thus, the advocates of the compact city have routinely called for strong public policies to intervene in the development process in order to deliver these potential benefits.[4] In this section, I review the main justifications offered for policy intervention.

2.4.1. Planning Needed to Overcome Market Failure

A number of different approaches can be taken to explaining suburban development patterns, each of which implies a different role for public policy in guiding growth. Economic theories concentrate on the role of individual consumers of urban land. Such theories lead to the conclusion that only a minor or very limited role can be justified for public policy in guiding suburban growth, usually suggesting that inexorable forces are operating universally to produce the characteristic growth patterns observed throughout North America and elsewhere.

Market-based theory conceives of spatial change in terms of the demand for space, with the supply side seen as passively responding to market signals. This model posits that spatial change is a product of individual location decisions in a given spatial environment. Decision-makers are assumed to seek out locations that optimizes their locational tradeoffs—for industrial location this involves (among other things) the minimization of transportation

costs in inputs (labour, raw materials, etc.) and outputs. In residential location the main tradeoffs are between travel time to employment locations, land prices, and environmental amenities.

Technological changes are also an important aspect of this form of explanation: the development of the highway system and the spread of the automobile shifted the tradeoff calculus to favour more distant commutes (Coppack, 1988). In later phases of the evolution of the urban region, the shift to an information-based economy encourages the development of exurbia by allowing its residents to telecommute to urban locations (Hepworth, 1990).

The foregoing deals mostly with the decentralization aspect of suburbanization. The deconcentration characteristic of suburban development can also be explained on the basis of individual decisions and market transactions, in particular the demand for low-density neighbourhoods and detached large-lot housing as an essential part of the North American dream. Lynch (1981: 261) writes:

> The preferences of most (but not all) groups of the population of the United States is for a relatively low residential density. These preferences have been stable over a long period of time... Moreover, this preference seems to be shared by majorities in most countries of the developed world, despite differences in culture, political economy, or in the doctrines of their leaders and planning professionals.

The third key feature of suburban development in North American cities is segregation along socio-economic, racial or ethnic lines. Suburban expansion tends to cater to middle and upper class households, leaving lower class households behind in the core area. Within suburban areas, communities tend to be organized along socio-economic lines with lower priced housing relegated to arterial streets, as buffer zones between industrial and residential areas, or otherwise spatially segregated from middle and upper class areas. Economic explanations for such development patterns emphasize the bundle of amenities that residents purchase in their housing decisions, including neighbourhood quality, stability and predictability. These values are maximized in socially homogenous residential areas.

An underlying assumption of much of the economic approach is that the allocation of land by the market is the most efficient possible. In this case, the proper role of government is to remove barriers to the expression of market forces:

> Intensification by government fiat is not in the best interests of housing consumers or society as a whole. The primary role of government should be to ensure there is a plentiful supply of sites for medium- and higher-density housing both in existing communities with excess capacities and fringe suburban areas. Government should expedite approvals for the redevelopment of underutilized or obsolete sites for housing [and]... eliminate obstacles to "main street" housing, such as burdensome parking requirements and insufficient densities (Clayton, 1992: unpaginated).

Bourne (1994: 17) has noted that intensification "has been a continuing element of urban growth and change since cities began." As such, "this process of 'densification' in the building envelope, which some would call a natural process, is clearly market-driven..." Intensification as a market outcome—this "natural process"—works through a number of mechanisms. First, as an urban area grows, land values rise and an economic premium is placed on using land more efficiently. This provides an incentive for redeveloping lands to higher densities. Drawing on evidence in US cities, Pieser (1984) argued that "a freely functioning urban land market with discontinuous patterns of development inherently promotes higher-density of development... by later infill."

Secondly, the values of land in different uses shift relative to each other in response to larger economic changes such as the shift in demand for industrial land from central areas to the urban fringe. This has left large tracts of vacant or underutilized industrial, railway and port lands in central areas available for redevelopment.[5] In some central cities the industrial land values have actually dropped below residential values in the central area, providing a signal that converting lands to residential uses are appropriate.

Thirdly, economic cycles and long-term economic changes to the regional economy can result in changes in income and savings and thus to changes in the demand for various housing types and locations. Lower average incomes and job insecurity during recessionary times may lead to the strengthening of the market for smaller lot detached housing and medium-density, street-related housing forms. Fourth, demographic and lifestyle changes give rise to changing consumer tastes and a limited "back to the city movement" which is creating demand for housing near downtown locations.

However, as Martin (1977) and others have pointed out, the unregulated market produces the most efficient allocation of land uses and densities only under conditions of perfect competition. Critics of the economic approach point to many deviations from this condition in land markets and argue that unregulated land markets would not work to produce sustainable forms of urban development. The most obvious divergence between those development patterns suggested by the compact city concept and those that would result from the free operation of market forces is in terms of social equity. Housing that is affordable to the full range of social and demographic groups, residential opportunities for immobile or low-income households near facilities and services, and neighbourhoods that are socially inclusive are not automatic outcomes of an unregulated land and housing market. As Kivell (1993: 30) has noted:

> One of the most comprehensive criticisms [of the unregulated market] concerns its failure to cater adequately for a number of social needs, in terms of the

> provision of land for socially desirable but unprofitable uses, and in term of catering for economically weak social groups.

Nor do free land markets necessarily produce the most economically efficient outcomes. Due to "market failures" a free private housing and land market will not create housing in desirable locations, mixes, and densities so as to optimize the efficiency of the urban system. Sprawl is not just the product of the attractiveness of low-density living, it is a result of the failure of markets to operate effectively:

> Although [sprawl] represents an inefficient allocation of resources for society, it must be profitable in an economic sense for those who are a party to it. This suggests certain elements of monopsony or imperfect competition in the resource markets. It also represents a monopoly element in the product markets. This situation suggests a passivity on the part of consumers and homeowners who are evidently willing to purchase inferior goods at a premium (McKee and Smith, 1972: 182-183).

Intensification may take place in unregulated markets, but it will be in a chaotic fashion that generates community resistance and fails to achieve the potential benefits. Developers propose rezoning for intensification projects in order to maximize profits, not to optimize the use of existing services and infrastructure. Distinguishing developer-led intensification and policy-led "reurbanization", Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd. (1991b: 5) observed that:

> residential intensification implies an ad-hoc, uncoordinated approach to intensification, while reurbanization implies a coordinated, comprehensive approach. As such, reurbanization is an approach to urban growth which emphasizes the public interest, and represents the best chance of maximizing the attainment of public objectives.

Market-based theories of land allocation assume a large number of sellers in the market place, selling to the highest bidder among many buyers. Marxist and other radical writers have offered fundamental critiques of this assumption, arguing that far from being passive takers of the highest bid, property owners often have control over prices through monopoly positions in the land market. According to Reid (1991: 62), for instance, the Canadian "corporate city" has been dominated by local real estate speculators and promoters whose interests were reflected in the form of development following WWII — the suburb. "Starting with Don Mills," he claims, "we see the first conscious and organized attempt by corporate developers to build and organize the built environment."

Most empirical evidence suggests that developer monopoly may be less pervasive than is implied by radical critics of market allocation (Markusen and Scheffman, 1977), but other imperfections are clearly present. Most important is the issue of externalized costs associated with suburban growth patterns: e.g., costs to the environment and the community that are not

included in the cost of producing or purchasing a house. Commonly cited biophysical externalities associated with suburban growth include increased greenhouse gas production, deterioration of wetland function, loss of recreational land and amenity values. According to Oxley (1975: 500): "the existence of external effects drives a hard wedge between private and social costs. Thus market operations based on individual decisions do not maximize social objectives."

Externalized costs are increased when the infrastructure needed to avoid environmental and social degradation does not accompany new residential development. According to Nicholas (1993: 202):

> A Florida commission found that the per family cost of growth amounted to $37,000 for infrastructure. Given average growth of 125,000 households per year, Florida's cost of providing infrastructure to these new households during the 1980s ran $4.6 billion per year. Of course, Florida did not pay these costs in monetary terms but paid them largely in terms of congestion and pollution.

Thus, the housing market generally fails to incorporate the cost of or to directly furnish the public goods needed to support efficient development patterns, such as roads, public transit, stormwater management facilities, and so on. When public agencies step in to provide such services, they essentially subsidize low-density fringe development (Kasarda, 1983; Vining, 1983). In the US, the per dwelling unit public capital cost was calculated by the California Office of Planning and Research to be about $20,000 in 1982 (Nicholas, 1993). Fowler (1992) has estimated a similar public subsidy to low-density suburban development in Canada.

The last point raises the issue of government involvement in the land allocation process. As Harvey (1987) has pointed out, market-based theory assumes that outcomes are dictated primarily by market transactions and that there is little government interference. However, recent writing on this topic has pointed to the important role played by senior governments in the suburbanization process. As Gottdiener (1994: 243) has explained:

> The suburbanization of homeownership is almost single-handedly the consequence of active state intervention... It has long been repeated...that suburban development has occurred because of an insatiable demand among Americans for the single-family home. Clearly such massive growth would not have occurred after WWII were it not for the variety of government subsidies directed toward supporting the supply of that particular form of housing. In addition to the government programs...which propped up both a housing industry and a real estate financial framework, admissible tax deductions also worked specifically to reduce the burden of mortgage payments and local property taxes on homeowners... In short, the reason single-family home ownership is so popular in the US is because people are literally paid to purchase into this mode of housing.

In the face of market imperfections and the distortions introduced by government financing of public and private goods, concerted public policy is needed in order to reorient market forces and maximize the efficiency and equity of the urban system. One way to achieve more compact urban form would be through economic instruments: i.e., taxes and charges that internalized environmental costs and charged developers for the full costs associated with public goods. Vojnovic (1994) has applied the full cost pricing notion to the issue of urban sprawl, claiming that by recognizing the true costs in the pricing of urban private and public goods, urban regions would have a greater propensity to intensify to a more compact and efficient pattern of development. This is also the approach taken by Blais (1995: 50) in her study on the Toronto region:

> More efficient land-use patterns would be achieved by implementing the principle that property owners should pay for services and infrastructure in accordance with the degree to which they generate infrastructure and service costs... Of course, low-density development would still be freely available, but people who choose that option would pay more of its real costs.

Many municipalities in Canada have taken steps to implement full-cost pricing by adopting "pay-as-you-go" mechanisms, such as sewer impost fee, building permit fees, and development charges. Some jurisdictions have also internalized some of the environmental costs associated with low-density car-dependent development by imposing taxes on gasoline consumption and road use.[6] Finally, some jurisdictions have attempted to use economic means to address equity issues by proposing that developers pay "linkage fees" to support affordable housing as a condition for development approval.

Market-based instruments have several advantages: they provide ongoing incentives for voluntary compliance with public goals, they are flexible in that the levels charged can be adjusted as conditions change, they usually require little administrative machinery to impose, if properly implemented they can reduce economic inefficiency often associated with regulatory instruments, and they respond to a shifting ideological preference for "carrots" instead of "sticks" (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995).

However, it is important to realize the limitations of economic instruments in encouraging the creation of more compact cities. First, developers, housing consumers, and commuters strongly resist shouldering the full costs (capital, operating, and environmental costs) associated with low-density suburban development patterns. Secondly, some charges may exacerbate social inequities by increasing the average cost of housing or reducing mobility and access to services. On the basis of these considerations alone, Cervero (1991: 120) noted that:

> The best solution would be to price low-density living correctly through higher property taxes, fuel taxes, and congestion fees... But, because of political inertia, congestion charges and "sprawl" taxes have yet to materialize in the US. This, then, leaves land-use practices as more or less a second-best solution to the problem.

There is, however, another important limitation to market-based policy instruments. In their discussion of the role of planning in a market society, Bardessa and Cameron, 1983: 442 (summarizing the writing of Scott and Roweiss, 1977) argue that "it is too simplistic to conceive of political forces coming into play only to rectify the ineffectiveness of market forces." They point out that market players compete for resources that are under public control and that "in these circumstances the State often has to make a decision on whom to bestow locational advantages accruing from its decisions." In a metropolitan region, such decisions may include the allocation of population growth to different spatial areas of the region, investment in trunk sewer and water systems, major transportation investments, or the location of an urban limit line beyond which private land-owners will not be permitted to develop their lands. For such decisions, there are no market mechanisms available to fail: all such decisions are essentially public in nature.

2.4.2. Municipal Planning Inadequate

We may conclude from the foregoing discussion that there is a strong case for public intervention in the development process in order to overcome market failures and to allocate resources and growth potential on a regional scale, and that this intervention should be centered on land-use issues. This raises the question as to the appropriate role of land-use planning agencies in achieving more compact urban form.

The Canadian constitution gives responsibility for local and private matters to provincial governments.[7] Generally speaking, provinces across Canada have delegated most of their powers over land use to municipal governments. Although each province presents a somewhat different situation, municipalities across Canada enjoy similar powers: local governments can create official plans that set out policies to guide the physical, economic, and social development of the municipality, pass zoning bylaws that control land use, height, lot coverage, and density; engage in development control that allows conditions to be set on a site-by-site basis before development is permitted to go ahead; and regulate the subdivision of land in suburban areas, including timing, servicing, use, and density (Kiernan, 1990).

Given these delegated powers, one's first inclination might be to look to local governments as the principal agents in promoting more compact development patterns. But, according to the advocates of the compact city (e.g., Downs, 1992), municipalities are not equipped to achieve these ends. Their typical pro-growth orientation and their geographical

fragmentation within metropolitan regions prevent municipalities from addressing sprawl on a local basis and from resolving issues on a metropolitan scale. I turn now to a consideration of these two features of municipalities, i.e., their pro-growth orientation and their geographical fragmentation within metropolitan regions.

2.4.2.1. The Growth/Anti-Growth Coalitions

Theoretical support for the lack of confidence in municipalities to manage growth appropriately comes from the variety of writers who focus on the of the so-called "growth machine" or "growth coalition". Various theorists have contributed to this model (e.g., Mollenkopf, 1983, 1972; and Gottdiener, 1977, 1986), however, the approach is perhaps most closely associated with two writers—Harvey Molotch and John Logan—whose work will serve as the basis for the following exposition unless otherwise noted.[8]

According to the growth machine model, local power is tied to land. Municipalities have an inherent bias towards growth as a result of pressures from economic elites, i.e., from both existing and potential investors in the municipality. Such elites use civic institutions to maximize returns on investment, especially by "increasing the intensity of economic activity occurring within one's turf" (Molotch, 1988: 26).

At the core of the local growth machine are real estate investors and politicians, whose fortunes are strongly interlinked. Of all the local elites, real estate investors "are the ones most dependent on the unique local powers of government" (Gottdiener, 1994: 248). Real estate investors have a special interest in the expansion of urban boundaries and in the extension of municipal services to their property in order to maximize the exploitation of the land resource. Thus, property owners within a municipality compete for public investment and land-use policies that will valorize their investments.

While real estate investors compete for site-specific advantages, they cooperate at the municipal and regional level in order to attract outside public and private investment. All real estate investors stand to gain from the increasing economic activity in the area that results from major infrastructure investments such as port facilities, airports, highways. industrial or commercial activities or multinational. Population increases, new employers, and more retail activity all raise the value of land in the vicinity and thus the revenues commanded by the owners of property.

But the relationship between property interests and local politicians is two-way. Real estate interests are of particular importance to the campaign funds of municipal politicians, often being the largest contributors for all major candidates, and almost always dominating among the winners. In return, municipal politicians ensure that planning regulations are generally supportive of real estate interests, although public decisions may involve some winners and losers. This raises the issue of local corruption as a systemic aspect of the growth

machine. As Gottdiener (1994: 247) notes: "local political leaders often use public office in a corrupt manner to realize personal and party gain from their elected ability to regulate land use in regions that are growing rapidly."

Municipal councils are also tied to economic interests through the mechanism of the property tax, a major source of municipal revenue in all North American cities. The fiscal interests of the municipality may be pursued through various land-use strategies. Where municipalities have excess infrastructure due to unrealized growth aspirations, falling population, or declining household size, they may pursue an intensification strategy to increase the efficient use of the physical plant. Municipalities may also try to attract new industry and commerce, the richest source of property tax with the lowest demand for municipal services. In suburban areas where land is plentiful and relatively cheap, municipalities may attempt to restrict residential growth to units with high assessed values, typically detached housing on large lots.

Growth machine theorists acknowledge, however, that fiscal imperatives are often overlooked by local councils when they conflict with the needs of the growth machine. Most commonly, leap-frog development may be approved on lands belonging to a prominent local developer, requiring the extension of expensive new services, rather than on lands adjacent to existing built up areas. As Logan and Molotch (1987: 188) observe:

> Because growth machines are active at the suburban level, fiscally irrational projects can often be approved. And because use value activism is strong in some places, there are residential towns that willingly sacrifice fiscal gains to preserve their amenities.

Besides real estate investors and local politicians, the growth coalition includes local financial institutions, newspaper publishers, lawyers that deal in real estate, planning consultants, accountants, property management firms, construction companies, and construction materials supply firms. "Cosmopolitan" corporations who sell their products nationally or internationally are not particularly concerned with the general character of local growth, but may have special needs—such as zoning, infrastructure, or appropriate housing opportunities for their employees—that can be met by local decision-makers. Thus, they will involve themselves in local planning decisions that affect their firms' economic competitiveness.

In the US, local politicians are often linked to state and national party machines, either formally or informally. Senior level politicians help their local counterparts by delivering programs and investment that will increase development opportunities in the municipality (e.g., a new airport or highway). In turn, local politicians may offer their senior counterparts

support (in the form of endorsements or staff contributions) during state and national level elections. Thus, senior politicians may serve an important role in the local growth machine.

While most local governments are therefore predisposed to support growth and urban expansion, other forces come into play that force municipalities to shape or condition that growth. Local councils must also pay heed to electoral interests if they are to retain power. Most importantly are the residents' associations that arise in order to enhance or protect the "use value" of their properties and neighbourhoods as opposed to the "exchange value" being pursued by real estate interests (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Thus, neighbourhood groups lobby for local amenities, such as parks, daycares, hospitals and so on in order to enhance local use values. This could bring neighbourhood groups into direct conflict with the growth coalition.

In central areas, real estate investors are typically interested in achieving the maximum density that the site will bear. If they encounter a pliant local government, intensification will occur in a haphazard way, perhaps at the expense of local service levels. Growth machine theorists note that neighbourhood protection groups are generally more powerful in well-to-do areas and one of their principal objectives is to prevent the encroachments of the poor. As property owners, some existing residents may also be concerned about preserving the exchange value of their homes: they fear that introducing higher-density housing and social diversity into the neighbourhood will affect land values. For all these reasons, such groups lobby councils to impose height or density limits, and, in the extreme cases, municipality-wide growth moratoria. This is not necessarily a contradiction of the growth machine point of view. As Johnson (1989: 212) says:

> It is not a contradiction that proponents of growth occasionally take part in growth-limitation efforts... In general, the suburban growth limitation effort aims either at controlling the pace of growth to permit adequate servicing of it or to keep unwanted land uses (and lower income people) away from the more affluent residential areas. Those residents certainly favour growth elsewhere in their metropolitan area[9] and often reap abundant profits from it.[10]

On the urban fringe, speculators are the leading edge of the growth machine, buying up farms, holding them until favourable land-use regulations and servicing can be secured from the local government, and then selling to developers at a profit. The result could be poorly planned growth with serious environmental, social, and fiscal disadvantages, including loss of green space and farmland, destruction of landscape values, reduced air and water quality, congested roads, and spiralling taxes (Gottdiener, 1977; Feagin, 1988). In response, vibrant environmental and ratepayer movements have arisen at the local level to contest the logic of unrestrained suburban growth.

Under certain conditions, anti-growth coalitions may gain local power and severely limit, at least for a period, the expansive activities of the growth coalition. But growth machine theorists are quick to point out that the anti-growth coalition is at a disadvantage in the face the economic and political resources at the disposal of the growth machine. Moreover, case studies of the dynamics between growth and anti-growth coalitions in the US have shown that the anti-growth coalition may be divided between environmentalists calling for higher-density development of the urbanized area in order to preserve land on the urban fringe, and residents of existing neighbourhoods who do not wish to bear the costs of higher-density living in terms of reduced quality of life (Vogel and Swanson, 1989). Thus, the anti-growth coalition may have some impact on the location and distribution of growth, but their fragmentation means that they are unable to present viable alternatives to the overall pace of growth in any given locale.[11]

2.4.2.2. Municipal Fragmentation

The growth machine analysis presented above would apply to any urbanized municipality, but in metropolitan areas fragmented into a large number of municipal jurisdictions, other difficulties arise to undermine the ability of municipalities acting alone to manage growth and achieve the most equitable, efficient, and ecologically sound urban form. As Bollens (1992: 455) has observed:

> Among the primary reasons for the transference of growth policy authority from local to state government has been the unwillingness or inability of local governments to deal adequately with growth issues that transcend municipal boundaries.

In regional planning theory, these growth issues are typically identified as negative and positive externalities (e.g., Barlow, 1981). Externalities arise when locally regulated land uses involve costs and benefits that are unevenly distributed across jurisdictional levels: i.e., when a land use involves costs to the locale but benefits to the region, or vice versa.

Negative externalities occur when actors in one municipal jurisdiction make decisions that have negative effects on an adjacent municipality where citizens cannot directly register their disapproval. Thus, traditional low-density suburban development patterns may be desirable from a local political and fiscal perspective, but the incremental results on the regional level may be irrational: they may chip away at the local agricultural land base, increase energy consumption, pollute the regional "airshed", leave the region with no recreational areas, or seriously undermine the functioning of regional ecological systems.

Such environmental externalities are the most commonly cited, but externalities may arise whenever municipal boundaries transect a functional system, whether that be an ecosystem, housing market, labour market, transportation system, or land market. Tax

competition is an especially problematic form of negative externality in metropolitan regions. We have already seen how the dependence of municipalities on property tax revenues may distort local development decisions. In metropolitan regions with fragmented municipal structures, these problems are exacerbated because adjacent municipalities may compete with each other in order to maximize the capturable returns from new development. Thus, municipalities may over-zone for high tax land uses, e.g., office centres and industrial parks. While this may be rational from the point of view of the individual municipality, the aggregate result could be an urban region with so many designated employment centres that no discernible urban structure can emerge.

Positive externalities occur when the benefits of a local service spill over into other jurisdictions, resulting in an under-allocation of resources to the service in question. "Since external benefits are not taken into account by the jurisdiction providing the service, in general too little of the service will be provided" (Slack, 1995: 5). A typical example is transit provision: if an individual municipality establishes and subsidized its own transit services, the benefits may accrue to users in other municipalities who do not contribute to the subsidy. Thus, transit will be under-provided and metropolitan growth will take place assuming a lower level of transit than would otherwise be the case, resulting in more auto-dependent development.

Spillovers also occur when local jurisdictions foreclose on locally unwanted land uses (or LULUs), such as affordable housing. In urban areas comprehended by a single municipality, there is less incentive for exclusionary zoning because "it is obviated to some degree by the self-evident fact that low-income households must be accommodated somewhere" within the municipality (Poulton, 1995: 92). When an urban region straddles a number of municipalities, individual jurisdictions may choose to limit the number of low-income or high-density dwelling units, assuming they will be provided by other municipalities within the region. The under-supply of higher-density housing in suburban areas may force lower-income households to locate or remain in the central city where the stock of such housing is historically high.

But this is not the only spill-over affecting the central city. The central city in a metropolitan area typically provides a large number of services that are of benefit to the entire region, but to which suburban dwellers do not contribute through property taxes.[12] In fact, one of the reasons households relocate to suburban areas may be to escape the high taxes usually associated with supporting central area services. This may threaten the fiscal and social stability of the central city. Given the centre's lack of control over development in fragmented municipalities at the periphery, this dynamic may create demands among central city interests for regional planning (Feldman, 1987).

It is important to realize, however, that controlling positive and negative externalities associated with development on a fragmented fringe is only one motivation for regional planning. The other principal justification is to allow growth through the efficient provision and coordination of services. Infrastructure such as water, sewage, communication and transportation facilities can only be efficiently provided at the metropolitan scale and fragmentation prevents the realization of such economies (Sharpe, 1995; Barlow, 1981). Frequently, the costs of such facilities are well beyond municipality capabilities and senior governments (i.e., provincial or regional) are expected to step in.[13] When regional land-use planning is associated with commitments to strategic infrastructure investment to support regional growth, the attractiveness of planning on this scale becomes more apparent to municipalities where the potential for growth is highest, i.e., suburban jurisdictions outside the core city.[14]

This leads to one final point: regional coordination is increasingly seen as an essential element in overcoming destructive and inefficient municipal competition for external investment and in enhancing the competitiveness of the metropolitan area relative to other urban regions. This follows from the increasing recognition of the importance of metropolitan areas in the national and sub-national economic strategies:

> Much of the capacity of [a] nation to deliver a rising standard of living and to compete globally in specific industry groups rests ever less on the volume of the nation's resources and increasingly on how those resources are organized spatially and functionally in its metropolitan areas (Coffey, 1994).

With the concentration of economic power in urban areas, according to Sancton (1991: 482), provincial governments became increasingly interested in managing the development of metropolitan regions: "As provincial governments tried to orient their economies away from various forms of primary production, their cities became increasingly important as the places in which diversified economies could take shape." The increasing economic importance of the regional economy to provincial authorities, the reality of economies of scale in service provision, and presence of negative and positive externalities has meant that the scope of the purely "local" has diminished substantially and the scope of the "non-local" has expanded.

2.4.3. Provincial Planning Required

Given the growth orientation of local governments, the inability of local anti-growth coalitions to control the overall pace of growth and its impacts, and the debilitating effects of municipal fragmentation, compact city advocates have pointed to the need for intervention in the local planning process by higher levels of government. In the context of regional planning, Bollens (1992) has coined the terms "growth restriction" to refer to the need to arrest forms of

growth with negative externalities, and "growth accommodation" to refer to the need to stimulate forms of growth with positive externalities. Conveniently, these terms can also be applied to the type of senior government policies needed to address the distortions on local decisions making caused by the local growth and anti-growth forces: growth restrictions are required to prevent developers from expanding the urban area at car-dependent, poorly-serviced, low densities, while growth accommodation policies are needed to counteract neighbourhood groups that would refuse to accept higher-density, more affordable housing in their midst. Table 2-1 summarizes these points.

Table 2-1: The Need for Intensification Policies

	Intensification Policies	
	Growth Restriction	Growth Accommodation
Growth machine	Restrict expansion of urban area at low density	Accommodate intensification of mature areas with diversity of housing types
Municipal fragmentation	Restrict land uses with negative externalities, e.g., auto-dependent, poorly serviced, environmentally destructive, farmland consumptive	Accommodate land uses with positive externalities, e.g., affordable housing

In the US, compact city advocates have touted state-sponsored planning systems as the best means of achieving more efficient, equitable, and ecologically sound development patterns. From an inclusionary housing perspective, the Advisory Committee on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing (1991) concluded that local regulation was the primary regulatory barrier to affordable housing and thus the state was the level of government that could best accomplish regulatory reform. From a growth management perspective, DeGrove has strongly advocated "state-sponsored" legislative reform that would create strong guiding context for municipal planning decisions (1984; 1991; 1992a; 1992b).

Burt (1983), as quoted in Vogel and Swanson, 1989: 66) has explained DeGrove's position:

> He does not talk of limiting growth, calling that impossible, but of managing it. He advocates an idea fast becoming popular among planners: the designation of urban areas into which all new development would be squeezed... It would force urban redevelopment by denying space for development to sprawl across the countryside... In return for that...he would pledge the retention of open spaces and natural vistas. With this, he believes developers and environmentalists might realize a mutuality of interest...and create a coalition of public support.

What American writers call "state-sponsored" growth management imposes growth restrictive and growth accommodating policies onto local policy makers, who are forced to address the costs and benefits of local development and to take measures to protect the environment and quality of life in their community. Rather than reducing the overall amount or rate of growth, growth management programs seek to redistribute growth and development in ways that minimize negative environmental, social, economic, and fiscal impacts. The primary instruments through which state-sponsored growth management operates are official plans, conventional zoning and subdivision regulations, development fees, annexation controls, urban limit lines, as well as infrastructure service and timing requirements (Landis, 1992: 491).

To date, 13 US states have initiated growth management planning systems, including Florida, New Jersey, Oregon, Georgia, Maine, Vermont, and Washington. Within metropolitan areas, state-wide systems are complemented by provisions for regional coordination of municipal decisions. These systems typically involve transferring certain municipal powers up to regional or state-level agencies. Based on his familiarity with these planning frameworks, compact city advocate Anthony Downs (1994) has itemized the components of an ideal state-sponsored growth management systems for large metropolitan areas. His *New Vision for Metropolitan America* uses a combination of state-wide planning policies and coordination of municipal plans on metropolitan-wide scale :

- a statement of state-wide planning goals and policies applicable to all municipalities
- local plans and policies inconsistent with these goals should be challengeable by local residents in court or in special forums created for such adjudications
- every local government should be required to develop a comprehensive land-use plan that addresses common elements (such as transportation issues and housing affordability)
- significant citizen participation should be required in formulating these plans
- a single government agency at either state or regional level should be empowered to review all local land-use plans, check their consistency with the states' goals and their consistency with each other and suggest revisions were inconsistencies are found
- the agency should have the power to withhold approval of local plans, with significant penalties in the form of various types of state financial assistance
- the approval agency should have the power to override local government decisions, such as zoning decisions that prevent creation of low-cost housing, but would not be directly involved in approving plans for individual developments
- an adjudication process should be set up to settle disputes between local governments and the state coordinating agency and between developers and local governments, i.e., a special court or a quasi-judicial administration agency

- the same agency that coordinates the plans of local governments should also coordinate state transportation departments, utility regulation departments, environmental protection departments, and other functional agencies
- formal reports should periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the entire system, conducted by a third party.

While some of these provisions may sound radical to a US audience, where "home rule" for municipalities is still the norm in many jurisdictions,[15] they will sound somewhat more familiar to Canadian audiences, where provinces have traditionally taken more initiative in guiding municipal planning. Here, provincial governments are invested with several legal powers with which to respond to the challenges of planning for the compact city. First, provinces have the power to create (or abolish) municipalities, which includes the power to alter existing municipal boundaries to include wider geographical areas and to create new municipal institutions at both lower and upper tiers. Secondly, provinces determine what planning powers municipalities will have and how these powers will be shared between levels of municipal government or between municipal governments and provincial agencies. Third, provinces retain influence over how municipal powers are to be exercised, primarily through provincial approval of major municipal planning decisions. This approval authority may be exercised directly by the provincial minister responsible for municipal affairs (as in Ontario and Quebec), or indirectly by appealing municipal decisions that violate provincial policies through semi-independent administrative tribunals, such as the Ontario or Quebec Municipal Boards, or through the justice system, as in British Columbia. Other provincial agencies or commissions may have the power to override local planning decisions, such as the agricultural land commissions in British Columbia or Quebec.

In the first part of the century, municipalities enjoyed considerable autonomy over land-use decisions. Since then, planning systems in Canadian provinces have evolved to impose ever greater legal controls over local land-use planning (Taylor, 1986). Until the 1960s, the reduction in municipal autonomy was taken for granted as notions of scientific management, centralized administration, and universal standards of service delivery predominated in the Canadian federal system (Nowlan, 1976). But by the 1970s, the notion of democratic participation, local particularism, and grassroots activism, along with the fiscal crisis that had engulfed senior governments and their obvious inability to deal with systemic problems such as inflation and unemployment, led to a renewal of demands for local autonomy (Hamel, 1991).

After this, further provincial incursions into the municipal realm were undertaken under the rubric of increasing local autonomy. In the Ontario case, the province-wide planning system was extensively revised in 1981 as a result of a seven-year review process. A

landmark during the process of revising the act was the release of the report of the Planning Act Review Committee chaired by Eli Comay. Among the recommendations of the report were the radical devolution of authority to local municipalities, the elimination of the legal status of official plans and the elimination of mandatory content in official plans, with an emphasis on local discretion. In fact, however, the new act increased provincial control, in particular through: provincial policy statements, for which municipalities would have to "have regard to" in their planning decisions; a listing of substantive and procedural provincial interests, including environmental protection, energy conservation, infrastructure provision, inter-municipal cooperation, and resolution of conflicts involving municipalities; and the "declaration of provincial interest" which could be used in any specific planning situation to ensure that provincial interests were protected in local decisions (Marshall, 1992).[16]

In terms of planning for the Toronto area, Sancton (1991: 482-483) has remarked that since the early 1970s:

> provincial power in relation to our cities has probably increased. Although various reorganization schemes—including Ontario's program of regional government—were in part justified on the grounds that they would enable more decentralization of provincial authority to restructured municipalities, there was in fact very little decrease in provincial control.

In fact, as this municipal restructuring was taking place, the province was preparing to massively increase its involvement in municipal planning in the Toronto region. A series of regional planning studies was carried out in the 1960s and early 1970s, resulting in the very ambitious Toronto-Centred Region concept. This regional plan would see growth directed to a number of regional centres well supported by higher-order transit, and away from agricultural and recreation lands north of the central area. The provincial role in achieving this vision would be dominant, using its control over regional infrastructure planning and plan approval to steer local planning efforts in the right direction. Indeed, the plan required the newly-created upper-tier governments to serve provincial interests in controlling lower-tier planning activities.

In Quebec, the Parti Quebecois announced its "re-evaluation of local power" in 1976 and its intention to devolve responsibility for land-use planning entirely to local councils. The government created (and subsidized) upper-tier regional municipalities (MRC) in order to oversee this process. Meanwhile, however, the province also created a commission to manage agricultural land and prevent municipal expansion at the expense of good farmland. The Agricultural Land Protection Commission, created in 1978, was an arm's length provincial agency that had the power to override municipal zoning decisions.

Within the Montreal region, the province adopted its own regional plan in 1978—the so-called "preferred option"—as a policy framework for metropolitan growth. The option envisioned a consolidation of the urban fabric within the already built-up areas of the region, giving priority to redeveloping the island of Montreal. It represented the first coordinated attempt by the province to guide the strategic decisions made by the government in the Montreal region so as to curb urban sprawl: decisions on the location of government facilities, infrastructure investments such as new subways and freeways, sewage treatment plants, greenbelts, and so on. This vision was to be realized by a moratorium on bridges and freeways connecting the central city to its suburbs, which served as the basis for the 1979 transportation plan for the region, and by preventing the urbanization of farmland in the outer reaches of the region, as expressed by the Agricultural Land Protection law.

The preferred option was also meant to provide guidance to the 12 newly formed MRC in adopting their first strategic plans. Thus, municipal restructuring—which was supposed to increase municipal autonomy—was incorporated into the province's plan to increase its control over the development of the metropolitan region. Quesnel (1990: 43) concludes from his review of provincial-municipal relations in Quebec's planning system that the discourse of decentralization, with the associated images of greater democracy, citizen participation, and a sense of belonging to a community "was part of the legitimation process of [provincial] intervention in urban development."

In British Columbia, the province also engaged in municipal reorganization under the rubric of strengthening the autonomy of local governments and their ability to address local issues related to growth. In order to accomplish this goal, the province provided for the creation of regional districts in 1965 to administer certain functions over several municipal jurisdictions (Oberlander, 1993). Meanwhile, however, the province also established the Agricultural Land Commission in 1972 with powers to control expansion of urban areas in order to protect quality agricultural land throughout BC. Although an arm's length agency, the commission's members were appointed by the province and its decisions were subject to appeal to the provincial cabinet.

The first steps towards formalized regional planning in the Vancouver region were taken in 1949 by the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs when it established the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. In 1966, the board adopted an official plan, but it quickly became a source of friction with the provincial government. The Board was dissolved in 1968 by the province and its functions were taken over by the four Regional Districts, including the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), that had been created the previous year.

The GVRD approved a regional plan in 1975, including population and employment targets for each municipality, a regional urban structure, a regional transit plan, and an open

space system. When in 1983 the GVRD's planning activities came into conflict with provincial political priorities in the region, the province responded by stripping the district of its planning and zoning powers. After that, the GVRD plan became advisory only. Transit planning in the region tells a similar story: although transit planning is an essential aspect of achieving the regional vision, local elites in the region have struggled in vain to gain control over the levers of regional transit provision. In fact, in 1985, the province passed legislation to centralize control over transit provision at the provincial level (Smith, 1986).

This brief review suggests that in the provinces with the country's three largest metropolitan regions, institutional, legislative, and policy changes since the 1970s have tended to strengthen the legal basis for provincial control over municipal land-use decisions and metropolitan planning. Not surprisingly then, commentators whose analysis focusses on the legal basis for provincial-municipal relationships tend to cast municipalities in the role as—in the final analysis—subordinate and reactive to provincial initiatives. For instance, in summarizing the intergovernmental relationship in land-use planning, Kiernan (1990: 67) provides a good illustration of the primacy sometimes given to legal factors: "regardless of the relative merits of the municipal and provincial arguments, at the end of the day the bald legal and political reality remains that the provincial government almost invariably has the final say."

Some researchers have begun to question this approach. Quoting Jones (1988), Smith (1995a) has distinguished between the legal authority of senior governments to influence municipal decision-making ("the right of a legislature to create, modify or destroy") and power ("the ability of the authority to act in full or in part, to exercise unfettered choice to act at any time, any place, or to any extent it chooses"). Indeed, there is a small but growing body of evidence that suggests that while provincial regulatory frameworks may be expanding, municipal strategies for preserving autonomy and thwarting provincial goals are also becoming more sophisticated, regardless of the formal legal relationship between the two orders of government (Andrew, 1995).

Along this line of thought, Frisken conducted a case study of provincial attempts in Ontario to reform the local property tax system. She presents quite a different picture from the image of an aggressive provincial state overwhelming reactive and subordinate municipal agencies with their superior constitutional powers. Rather, she suggests that "local political institutions and actors may be vigorous and often successful in combatting provincial initiatives perceived as contrary to their interests, or in persuading provincial officials to modify policies to take those interests into account" despite their legally subordinate position in the government hierarchy (1991: 357).[17]

If we revisit the discussion of provincial attempts to manage growth in large metropolitan areas in Canada with this view in mind, we find that Frisken's view has a certain plausibility in this policy field as well. While the legal power to manage growth clearly resides with the province, policy initiatives by Canadian provinces have frequently encountered serious implementation difficulties, and in some cases have been completely abandoned. A variety of explanations have been offered for the difficulties encountered in implementing growth management policies, including lack of provincial funding, the failure of senior governments to coordinate their interventions in particular regions, and changing economic conditions, but a common theme seems to be the resistance offered by municipalities to provincial or regional planning initiatives.[18]

In the Toronto region, the TCR concept was quietly abandoned by the end of the 1970s, and, in retrospect, pronounced as a provincial planning failure. Since then, the important role played by municipal governments in forcing the provincial government to modify its regional planning vision has become clear (Bordessa and Cameron, 1982).[19]

In Montreal, the preferred option plan was not well received by suburban municipalities, who resented the constraints it implied on growth prospects and local autonomy. In this context Charbonneau et al. (1993: 460) have noted that: "The difficulty with making such a perspective operational depends on several factors, not the least of which is the resistance of local authorities to a decision imposed on them by the provincial level."

As a result of municipal agitation, the Quebec government "clarified" the option by extending the areas in which consolidation of the urban fabric was to take place to include the near suburbs on the South and North Shores. Municipalities in the region have also successfully lobbied provincial agencies to supply infrastructure wherever it is needed to support local growth, effectively undermining the infrastructure policies of the preferred option. Finally, the strategic plans adopted by the new suburban MRCs violated the regional vision in their growth projections and land designations: in fact, these plans were often mere compilations of lower-tier aspirations and therefore tended to confirm existing development patterns. The preferred option soon came to be seen as a statement of good intentions by the government, but had limited impact on the form of growth in the area (Quesnel, 1990).

Even in the Vancouver region, where the provincial government had used its legal powers to dissolve and decentralize regional planning institutions and to strip regional districts of their official planning powers, there is evidence that municipalities were not merely passive victims of these policy changes. As Smith and Bayne (1994: 731) report: "In British Columbia... the regional planning system was emasculated in 1983; the stated reason was to free municipalities from the regulatory authority of regional districts.[20]

Thus, despite the literature on provincial domination of land-use planning in the large metropolitan regions of Canada, there is some evidence that municipalities may play an important role in thwarting or modifying provincial designs in order to address their own substantive and institutional interests.[21]

2.5. Research Questions

The argument advanced to this point suggests that provincial intensification policies are required in order to achieve more compact urban forms, but that the growth of metropolitan areas has been difficult to manage in part due to municipal resistance. By the mid-1980s, provincial efforts to manage growth in the three largest metropolitan areas of Canada were at a low ebb: the TCR concept had been more or less abandoned by a chastened Conservative government in Ontario; the Liberal government elected in 1985 lifted the moratorium on highway construction to the outer suburbs and adopted policies that weakened the agricultural zoning law; and in British Columbia, the GVRD was reduced to an advisory agency that was unable to control the growth aspirations of its suburban members up the Fraser Valley.

The low ebb in provincial activism corresponded in time with the dampening of sprawl due to economic factors—the oil crisis and recession of the early 1980s—and the shift in policy interest towards stimulating growth rather than managing it. But in the second half of the 1980s, economic recovery renewed suburban growth tendencies. Once again, concerns were raised about the need to manage growth on a metropolitan scale, both in terms of providing the infrastructure required and in terms of increasing the efficiency of land use by directing growth to central cities and increasing suburban densities on the fringe. The strong environmental consciousness that was infiltrating all policy fields at the time dovetailed with these growth management issues and resulted in stronger calls for provincial action to achieve more compact urban forms.

Provincial governments responded with a variety of policy initiatives. In Ontario, a province-wide commission on planning and development was created in 1991 to recommend changes to the planning system and to suggest provincial policies that would (among other things) better control sprawl and promote residential intensification. These were translated into reforms to the provincial *Planning Act* in 1995. In the Toronto region, the province created the Office for the Greater Toronto Area in 1988 in order to help coordinate the provincial policies affecting growth and development in the metropolitan region and to facilitate the creation of a strategic vision in conjunction with municipal governments. Over the next six years, the office undertook a growth management study for the region, set up a number of working groups to build consensus for a regional urban structure, and set in motion a process

for allocating population growth to the various upper-tier regions within the GTA. A new round of upper-tier planning within the GTA presented the provincial government with the opportunity to implement growth management policies at the local level. Then in 1995, the Ontario government announced the creation of a task force to consider the future of the GTA and to generate proposals on governance, planning, taxation, and economic development. The task force's report—released in early 1996—strongly endorsed the compact city model and recommended that a new regional government undertake to create an integrated land use and transportation plan.

In Quebec, a second round of official planning is now being undertaken by the MRCs, this time with more policy guidance being provided by the province. These policies include requirements that the MRC plans promote the consolidation of existing urban areas, favour more compact development patterns at higher densities and provide for a greater mix of land uses. As for the Montreal region, the Quebec government announced the creation of the Task Force on Greater Montreal in April, 1992. The task force was given a mandate to make recommendations on regional planning and development, municipal structures, taxation, economic development, and the role of the City of Montreal in the region. The task force reported in 1993, recommending that a regional government be established that would oversee regional planning. The report also recommended that the plan be based on the principle of compact development, i.e., adopt minimum densities, promote the consolidation of existing residential areas, and encourage a wider choice of housing types throughout the region. Although no action has yet been taken on the plan (at least partially due to the resistance of suburban municipalities), the new Minister of the Metropolis has announced that he intends to implement parts of the task force's report.

In British Columbia, the NDP government elected in 1991 launched a commission on housing opportunities in order to address the crisis of affordability in that province. The commission's report resulted in several important reforms to the *Municipal Act* that gave municipalities the legal flexibility to create opportunities for affordable housing, but did not require them to do so. In terms of growth management, the province adopted a new *Growth Strategies Act* in 1995, which introduced a "cross-acceptance" between regional and municipal plans in the province. In the Vancouver region, the GVRD embarked on an ambitious program to update the Livable Region Plan at the end of the 1980s, and in 1995, a new plan was officially adopted under the *Growth Strategies Act*. Although the plan had been diluted somewhat as a result of suburban resistance, it directed population growth to the regional centre and into suburban town centres, presented a vision of more compact growth, and is linked to a new regional transit plan.

These initiatives suggest that intensification, especially in large metropolitan regions, has once again emerged as an important planning issue in metropolitan regions across Canada. Whether or not provincial governments will achieve their objectives will depend to some extent on the cooperation or resistance they encounter from municipalities within those regions.

These observations lead to the major research question addressed in this thesis: "Why have provincial policies designed to influence municipal planning activity towards the creation of more compact communities not been that successful and what can be done about it?" This question can be addressed by posing a number of subsidiary questions:

- What are the main provincial policies that attempt to influence municipal planning decisions with respect to residential densities?
- To what extent do municipalities implement and to what extent do they resist these provincial intensification policies?
- To the extent that municipalities resist provincial intensification policies, why do they do so and how?
- What recommendations can be made for better implementation of provincial intensification policies given the findings of the research?

As Smart (1994: 577) has noted in his review of literature on provincial-municipal relations in Canada:

> In general there is an imbalance in the literature: analyses of policies and formal descriptions of institutions are plentiful while works that consider what actually happens in these institutions, how policies are implemented, and how local responses may modify what actually results are in scarce supply.

This insight suggests that one of the next steps in developing our understanding of intensification policy in Canada would be a more detailed examination of an attempt by a provincial government to implement such policies and a close analysis of the municipal response. In this thesis, I undertake a case study of intensification policies in one urban region in Canada, the GTA.

2.6. Analytic Framework: Policy Formulation and Implementation

Elements of the analytic framework that I will use for this case study have already been alluded to in this chapter. Here I bring them together into a larger public policy framework in order to set the stage for the case study.

There is no generally accepted definition of public policy in the academic literature. Some writers in the field reserve the phrase to apply to formal statements of government policy such as contained in legislation while others use it very loosely to refer to "whatever governments choose to do or not do" (Dye, 1984). Pal (1992: 13) has defined public policy as

"a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems," and this is accepted as a serviceable definition for purposes of this thesis.

The analysis of public policy may take a number of forms: the researcher may aim to: analyze the objectives, content and design of a policy; trace how the policy was implemented by implementing agencies, or; evaluate the impacts of the policy on the target variables (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984; Pal, 1992). The present research will focus on the second of these three forms of policy analysis, i.e., the response of local planning agencies to provincial policy's promoting intensification of the urban fabric. But the other two aspects of policy analysis will not be ignored. In terms of impact evaluation, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the ultimate aim of provincial policies is to affect land use, and that municipal planning policies are only an intermediate step in this process. For this reason, I will make observations throughout the thesis on the implications of municipal planning policies for further implementation on the ground.[22] In terms of policy formulation, it is important to identify the problems being addressed by the provincial policy framework and the stated goals of that framework: only then can we assess whether local implementation is meeting the policy objectives.

I have already surveyed the reasons that a provincial government might undertake intensification policy initiatives in metropolitan regions: to protect provincial interests in addressing the inequities, economic inefficiencies, and ecological problems that flow from the influence of the growth machine at the local level and from municipal fragmentation. On this reading, provincial governments must intervene because the problems of metropolitan regions have become too important from an economic, environmental and social perspective to leave to municipal governments.

But governments do not only adopt policies to defend their jurisdictional interests: they also serve as a conduit for societal structure and power. Thus, they may adopt policies in the interest of economic elites, e.g., the development industry may be calling for the province to intervene in municipal decision-making in order to remove anti-growth regulations or the agricultural industry may want provincial action to preserve farmland. Provincial action may be also be in response to the demands of electoral constituencies, in this case, this might include housing consumers, environmentalists, or social welfare activists. Finally, provincial policy initiatives may be a means for provincial bureaucrats and politicians to expand their sphere of action by intruding into municipal jurisdiction or enhancing their status within the provincial bureaucratic hierarchy.[23]

The choice of policy instrument is an important aspect of policy formulation. This refers to "the capacity of governments to act through the use of different instruments—

taxation, regulation, expenditures, public ownership, and moral suasion—to achieve a particular goal (Woodside, 1986). Doern and Wilson (1974: 339) have developed " coercion theory", which postulates that in choosing policy instruments, governments will move from the least coercive measure to the most coercive over time.

> The hypothesis would suggest that politicians...tend to respond first in the least coercive fashion by creating a study, or by creating a new or reorganized unit of government, or merely by uttering a broad statement of intent. The next least coercive governing instrument would be to use a distributive spending approach in which the resources could be handed out to various constituencies... [A]t the more coercive end of the governing continuum would be direct regulation in which sanctions or threat of sanctions would have to be directly applied.

Although this theory has not gone unchallenged (e.g., Trebilock et al., 1982), it can serve as a basis for analyzing the evolution of intensification policies in the case study region.

According to Friedmann (1987: 163), "one of the really serious problems in policy analysis is the lack of attention given to the question of policy or program implementation." Political scientists and policy analysts traditionally assumed that after policy decisions were made, they were automatically carried out, rendering the implementation process of little interest to academics. But as Kernaghan and Siegel (1987: 106) point out, "there can be significant slippage between policy statements and actual policy, and then further slippage between policy as adopted and policy as implemented."

One reason that policy implementation has received so little attention is because of the assumptions of classical theory of public administration. The genesis of this model reaches back to the turn of the century, with the writings of Max Weber, who described an ideal bureaucracy as a highly rational, legalistic authority structure controlled at the top by policy formulators, whose decisions were automatically implemented by unquestioning subordinates. This machine metaphor virtually excluded implementers from the policy formulation process and allowed them very little discretionary authority and no political latitude in implementing policies.

This "classical technocratic" model held sway until mid-century, when it began to come under scrutiny by political scientists. One of the major criticisms concerned its unrealistic assumptions about the link between policy formulators and implementers. Appleby (1949) was the first to suggest that implementers were often involved in policy formulation, a situation considerably more complicated than idealized in the classical model. This critique grew as more studies on policy implementation appeared showing that implementers were not simple automatons, but often actively involved in policy formulation

or in developing strategies to co-opt or resist the policy directives coming from above (e.g., Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973).

In this chapter, I have already discussed the constitutional/legal framework for provincial-municipal relations, the division of authority over planning and development matters, and competing views of the degree of domination by province and subordination of municipalities. To further characterize the provincial-municipal relationship from an implementation perspective, I will employ the typology offered by Nakumura and Smallwood (1980) in their analysis of the politics of policy implementation:

- Classical technocratic: this is the Weberian ideal-type, which assumes that formulators state goals clearly and delegate the technical responsibility for carrying out those goals to implementers, who agree with the goals and carry them out in the desired manner.
- Instructed delegate: this model is similar to classical technocratic approach, except that formulators delegate more discretion to implementers, who have limited authority to make decisions during the policy implementation process.
- Bargaining approach: this approach departs substantially from the classical Weberian model. Formulators and implementers do not agree on policy goals, but instead engage in a bargaining or negotiation process in order to realize policy objectives. Each "side" requires the cooperation of the other in order to realize policy objectives but may enjoy different power resources that will effect the outcome of bargaining process.
- Discretionary experimenter: formulators do not have enough authority or knowledge about particular circumstances to specify detailed policy directions. Thus, formulators convey general goals to implementers and implementers use their discretionary powers to carry out policy goals.
- Bureaucratic entrepreneur: implementers initiate policies by formulating goals and then marshaling support for those goals among relevant groups and policy makers.

These different policy implementation styles are characterized by different degrees of influence of the policy implementor on policy formulation, and in their discretion over how policy is implemented. In the classical mode, the implementor has no influence and no discretion whereas in other styles the implementor has either greater influence (entrepreneurial), greater discretion (discretionary experimenter) or both (bargaining). These analytical categories will aid in characterizing the provincial-municipal relationship, especially in the conclusions to the thesis.

Another assumption of the classical technocratic model was that local implementers had no political constraints on their ability and willingness to carry out the commands of the policy formulators. As the recognition of the discretion and influence of implementers increased, more attention began to be paid to the political environment of implementers and

how this affected their ability to respond to policy directives from above. The primary linkages between municipal planning decisions and the external environment are through electoral and fiscal "transmission belts".[24] As we have seen in the discussion of the growth machine model earlier in this chapter, the main local political constraints on municipal decision-making flow from collective actors involved in shaping the planning and development process: primarily developers of the growth coalition and citizen groups of the ant-growth coalition. This analytical framework draws attention to:[25]

- the political influence of property developers in local planning matters and their interest in pursuing the intensification of the already built up area, in seeing suburban expansion, and in steering public facilities towards their lands
- the activities of existing residents, environmentalists, and other anti-growth actors in their attempts to defend use values against growth pressures
- the relationship between planning decisions and fiscal considerations.

The two implementation issues discussed here (i.e., the relationship between provincial formulators and municipal implementers, and political constraints on local implementers) correspond roughly to the two dimensions of municipal autonomy identified by Gurr and King (1987). "Autonomy I" (or what others have called "horizontal autonomy") refers to the degree of autonomy of local government decision-makers from influence exerted by local political forces, and "Autonomy II" (or "vertical autonomy") refers to the degree of autonomy of local government decision-makers from influence exerted by senior governments. This distinction can be used to illustrate the conceptual framework, presented in Figure 2-1.

To address the main research question as to why provincial policies designed to influence municipal planning activity towards the creation of more compact communities have not been that successful, we can draw upon the literature on the conditions for successful policy implementation. Since the 1970s, the number of works in this field has grown steadily (e.g., Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980; Brooks, 1993; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981; Morah, 1990; Edwards, 1979), allowing us to identify a number of relevant conditions. Here they are arranged according to the two dimensions of municipal autonomy just identified:

Vertical Dimension:

- there is a valid causal theory connecting policies with desired outcomes
- the policy framework contains detailed, clear instructions to implementers and has a firm legal basis
- political leaders are supportive of the policy framework
- the social, economic, and political conditions that gave rise to the policy continue to hold over the life of the policy

- policies of other state agencies are supportive or neutral
- bureaucratic institutions that implement the policy framework have adequate mandates and resources to carry out their roles
- the judiciary is supportive of the policy framework
- there is support for the policy objectives among the public
- there is a effective process for monitoring policy impacts and progress towards realizing policy objectives as a basis for adjusting policy framework

Horizontal Dimension

- external constraints on local implementers do not interfere with implementation
- local implementers have adequate incentive to comply
- local implementers are willing to alter traditional roles and practices in order to comply with the policy framework
- local implementers' concerns with local autonomy do not interfere with implementation.

These conditions for successful policy implementation will be employed in Chapter 10 of this thesis to analyze the research results and suggest avenues for reform of the provincial policy framework, the policy process, planning practices, and other instruments that might help to achieve provincial policy goals.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a rationale for the research study and a conceptual framework with which to conduct the research. The review of the literature on the compact city revealed the key terms of the debate and pointed to the fact that many of the benefits of compact urban form are felt at the non-local level while many of the costs are at the local level. This set the stage for an exploration of the justification for public intervention in the development process and for provincial land-use policies in particular. Municipalities were presented as having two limitations that prevent them from achieving the most desirable development patterns: first, municipal decision-making is heavily influenced by local political forces that favour sprawl over compact urban form; and second, individual municipalities in metropolitan areas do not take into account the positive and negative externalities of their land-use decisions.

This led into a discussion of various provincial initiatives to influence urban form in the largest metropolitan areas of Canada. Difficulties with implementing these policy initiatives were tied to the issue of provincial-municipal relations. A conceptual framework was established that will allow us to investigate these relations with respect to a particular case, i.e., the GTA. In the next chapter, I turn to a detailed account of the methods used to investigate the case study.

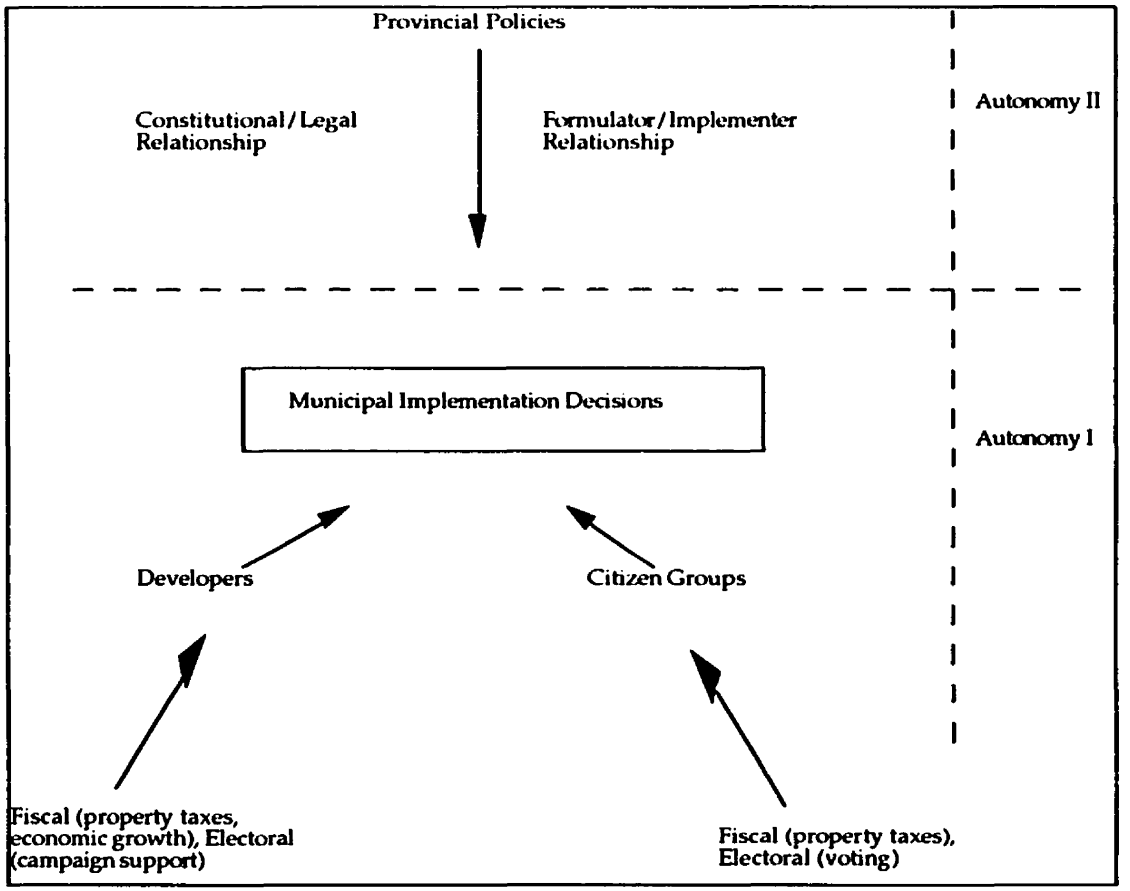


Figure 2-1: Conceptual Framework

Endnotes

[1] The list of environmentally-oriented organizations advocating more compact urban forms in Canada is impressive. It includes the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy (1992), the former BC Round Table on the Environment and Economy (1994), the Fraser Basin Management Board (1996), the National Round Table on Environment and Economy (Roseland, 1992), the Friends of the Earth (O'Brien, 1991), the City of Vancouver's Task Force on Atmospheric Change (1990), Alberta's Environment Council (1988), and the Ontario Environment Network (1990). In the UK, the influential Friends of the Earth (Elkin, 1991) have adopted the compact city position, and in the US it has been promoted by the World Watch Institute (Brown, 1987).

[2] One assumption that has not received that much attention is the population projection for Metro Toronto under the concentrated scenario: it postulated that Metro might accommodate up to 3.8 million people by the year 2021, or an increase of 1.6 million over the current population of 2.2 million. Given that the population of Metro had been more or less stable for 20 years, this seems like an unlikely—even extreme—vision, regardless of one's faith in the ability of public policy to affect settlement patterns. Presumably, with a more realistic population target for the concentrated option, existing excess infrastructure capacity could have been relied on to handle the increased population and less extravagant investments in infrastructure would have been necessary.

[3] As Greenberg and Maguire (1988) point out: "The plan for deconcentrating growth in the Toronto region was a deliberate response to potential over-development in the central area of Toronto, not an unstoppable migration away from the city."

[4] For example, Richardson et al. (1991: 3) called for Ontario to "decide on goals—the values and desired conditions—by which future changes in its land and environment will be governed.... *[T]he provincial government has a clear and inescapable responsibility to articulate these goals in a meaningful way and to put them into a coherent framework.* This is an immensely difficult and demanding task, there should be no misunderstanding about his. It is, equally, an absolutely essential one" (emphasis in the original).

[5] In a case study by Bourne (1992) of the "population turnaround" in the City of Toronto, it was found that 47 percent of population growth in the 1981-86 period was accommodated on such sites.

[6] In Canada, these mechanisms have been explored furthest in the Vancouver region. See the study done by the IBI Group (1993) for a survey of policy initiatives in this field.

[7] The federal government's role in influencing urban form is problematic in Canada because of the constitutional division of powers giving the province exclusive jurisdiction over municipal institutions and local matters. Furthermore, provincial governments have resisted federal intrusion into this area, as evidenced by their reaction to the short-lived (1971-1979) Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. Nonetheless, federal policies have played an important role in the development of the urban system across Canada through its policies on immigration, free trade, telecommunications, and banking, to take a few examples. It has also had an important influence in shaping particular urban regions through its influence over infrastructure such as railways, airports and harbours, and its regional development policies. But the federal government's influence on urban form has been most direct in terms of housing: the provision of mortgage insurance and federal tax laws that have assisted home owners, and a combination of public loans and on-going subsidies for social housing. However, the federal government has not used its powers over infrastructure and housing in any concerted way to shape urban form or to encourage intensification. Rather, the federal government's interest in housing has been linked more with economic development and fiscal issues than with urban problems or the needs of any particular urban area (Fallis, 1994).

[8] Their ideas on the growth machine were laid out in several works, but most comprehensively in *Urban Fortunes* (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Other writings include Molotch, 1976; 1988, and 1988.

[9] Filion (1992) has explained that the residents may support local growth in hopes of seeing their properties appreciate in value and local taxes decline as fiscal entries improve.

[10] This approach sheds a different light on the market-based explanations for suburban segregation noted earlier. For instance, Smith (1988: 10) has observed: "far from being an expression of rationally calculated economic choices by individual consumers for different housing and amenities bundles, the

race and class segregation of metropolitan areas in the US is a by-product of the social actions of political actors in various local jurisdictions pursuing a conscious policy of local protectionism. In this way, the managerial and professional strata erect significant barriers to residential and social mobility: zoning laws, restrictive building codes, property tax differentials and the life, which stratify metropolitan communities by income, race and class... [the top strata] use exclusionary public policies like large lot zoning to limit the choices available to the slightly less wealthy. These, in their turn, follow suit, until the bottom of the social structure is reached. In this position, 'market choice" is virtually non-existent."

[11] Growth machine theoriest point to research showing that growth controls are seldom effective in stopping growth. For example Landis (1992: 491) found that: "Viewed over a ten-year period, local growth control programs, of the types adopted in seven mid-sized California cities during the early 1980s, have been largely irrelevant to the management of urban growth... Locally administered population and housing growth caps have proven extremely porous... [T]hey have not substantially limited growth or development."

[12] Sharpe (1995) expresses this by referring to the daytime versus nighttime populations of central cities. The one square mile City of London, for instance, counts about 7,000 night residents. At noon on a weekday, he estimates, they are between 200,000 and 500,000 people in that area.

[13] Opponents of regional coordination point to the empirical evidence that suggests the cost of services begins to rise over a certain population threshold, obviating the economy of scale argument (e.g., Kushner, 1992). As Frisken (1991) has pointed out, however, this research finding applies to the so-called soft services, such as policing and fire services. The growth-supportive services being discussed here fall into the category of hard-services, for which larger planning units outperform smaller.

[14] From a compact city point of view, this aspect of regional planning is a double edged sword: on the one hand efficient land-use patterns require efficient services to support them, on the other hand the provision of new infrastructure is likely to remove servicing barriers to fringe development and lower costs to private developers.

[15] An influential paradigm in the US is "public choice theory", which asserts that competition among fragmented municipalities is the best way to ensure high-quality, low-priced public services. According to writers in this vein, the policy prescriptions of senior governments are merely expressions of their institutional and personal self-interest and are unlikely to have beneficial effects at the local level. If regional planning and service provision is required, municipalities acting through intermunicipal service agreements or "contracting out", can meet the need. This view is far less accepted in Canada, although the growing interest in private-public partnerships and the search for alternatives to "more government" has raised interest in the paradigm (Sancton, 1994).

[16] After this, the trend towards greater provincial legal controls continued with amendments to the Planning Act to extend the conditions under which provincial interest could be declared, to include more issues under the rubric of provincial interest, such as housing, and through the elaboration of more policy statements under section 3 of the Act.

[17] In terms of the federal-municipal relationship, Filion's (1988) study of the federal Neighbourhood Improvement Program showed that the city of Montreal co-opted the federal program, which emphasized preservation and rehabilitation of existing residential areas, to pursue a pre-existing urban renewal program.

[18] In the US, "localist resistance" to state sponsored growth management initiatives is well-documented. DeGrove's (1992:161) review of state-sponsored growth management policies in the US found that in all cases, it was the state-level government that took the initiatives to reassert a more activist role in land use and growth management vis a vis local levels of government. Local governments tended to opposed any new initiative unless they played an important role in the implementation process that was envisaged by the legislation. Clark (1994) has documented local resistance to the efforts of regional planning agencies.

[19] A fuller analysis of the failure of the TCR will be presented in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

[20] The provincial decision to abolish the planning and zoning powers of regional districts followed in part from a specific land-use conflict in the GVRD. A local pro-development council, along with a major developer, had lobbied for provincial intervention in order to allow a large parcel of land to be

removed from the agricultural land reserve, in violation of the regional plan (Oberlander and Smith, 1993).

[21] I have not even mentioned the important role played by municipalities in shaping the jurisdictional structure within each region by initiating or resisting amalgamation or annexation proposals (see O'Brien, 1993).

[22] An alternate approach to this research might have been to focus on assessing the actual impacts of provincial policies on the ultimate target, i.e., land use patterns. However, because the provincial policy framework was only recently-formulated, and given the length of time usually involved in changing patterns of land use, a comprehensive evaluation of the impacts "on the ground" of the provincial policy framework is not yet possible.

[23] I realize that I cannot do the topic of provincial policy formulation justice in a couple of paragraphs. A variety of works are available that provide a good cross section of explanatory factors in senior government policy formation in Canada. See, for instance, Brooks, 1993; Atkinson, 1993; Howlett, 1995; Pal, 1992.

[24] This framework for analyzing local planning decisions draws its inspiration from the analytic framework presented by Filion in his work on core area redevelopment in Kitchener (1992; 1995).

[25] While the main focus will be on collective actors, the influence of individual actors can not be ignored: in some cases, charismatic individuals with significant resources or authority can have a decisive impact in a planning outcomes.

3 . Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter presented justifications for provincial action to achieve more compact urban forms and briefly reviewed some provincial policy initiatives in metropolitan areas. This review revealed that whether or not provincial governments will achieve their objectives will depend to some extent on the cooperation or resistance they encounter from municipalities within those regions. These observations prompted the major research question addressed in this thesis: "Why have provincial policies designed to influence municipal planning activity towards the creation of more compact communities not been that successful and what can be done about it?" This question can be broken down into a number of subsidiary questions:

- What are the main provincial policies that attempt to influence municipal planning decisions with respect to residential densities?
- To what extent do municipalities implement and to what extent do they resist these provincial intensification policies?
- To the extent that municipalities resist provincial intensification policies, why do they do so and how?
- What recommendations can be made for better implementation of provincial intensification policies given the findings of the research?

3.2. Rationale for Case-study Approach

This thesis adopts a case-study approach. According to Yin (1989), the case-study approach is suitable for answering "how" and "why" questions, such as those posed above. This is because a case study allows the investigator to immerse him or herself in the details of a particular setting, explore the motivations of key actors, and follow linkages over time and between actors and levels of analysis. As will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.6, the present research attempts to trace the fate of provincial policy initiatives from the provincial level through to metropolitan, and upper- and lower-tier municipal planning agencies. This research objective is ideally suited to the case study approach.

A case study approach is most appropriate when the investigator wants to study "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" and when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"(1989: 23). The present study focuses on recent policy changes at the provincial level and how these are affecting municipal planning decisions. A basic assumption of the research, as expressed in the conceptual framework

outlined in the last chapter, is that provincial policy initiatives and municipal planning decisions occur in a rich context that conditions the policy and planning outcomes. This context includes the political influence of powerful social actors, electoral influences, economic and environmental problems, and the self-interest of policy and planning agencies in advancing their own agendas. By restricting the scope of research to a particular situation or geographic location, the case study approach allows the investigator to observe interactions and to look for patterns among a large number of variables and outcomes.

3.3. Type of Case Study

Three types of case study are generally recognized in the methodological literature: descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory (Neuman, 1991). But as Babbie (1979: 87) says, "[a]lthough it is useful to distinguish the three purposes of research, ...most studies will have elements of all three." This is the case in the present research. First, this research has a descriptive aspect in that the policy framework and administrative mechanisms to translate that framework into municipal decisions needs to be fully described before any further analysis can proceed. Secondly, the research has an exploratory aspect in that it does not attempt to test a specific hypothesis, but generates results that suggest a number of conceptual constructs and hypotheses that could be tested in future research. Thirdly, the present case study has an explanatory aspect in that it offers a range of reasons to account for the observed behaviour of municipalities in implementing the provincial policy framework.

Although it has features of all three types of case study research, the present inquiry is essentially exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is appropriate when the investigator undertakes research without the intention of testing a pre-conceived idea as to what to expect in the way of relationships among variables. The researcher may make this choice because he or she wants to broadly explore a topic in a relatively unstructured way that will reveal unexpected relationships among variables and suggest new conceptual constructs. As Babbie (1989: 105) notes:

> Since there is a tendency among social scientists to regard the exploration of unstructured ideas as inferior to more structured inquiries, I should note that I do not take that position. Often research efforts that are largely unstructured at the outset may be more fruitful ultimately than those that are prestructured. In a structured inquiry, analysis all too often concludes with the testing of a prespecified hypothesis. In an unstructured inquiry, however, it concludes with satisfying ourselves that we have discovered the best available answer to our general research question....

Exploratory research is also called for when the basic facts of a case are not well known and have not been previously reported (Putt and Springer, 1989). In the case at hand, the policy area had not yet been mapped or described by academics, and even professional

planners working in the case study area had only a partial grasp of the policy framework and the administrative mechanisms involved.[1]

In exploratory research, tentative conceptual constructs are developed in the course of data collection and analysis and are used to generate hypotheses that can be tested through future research. This approach to theory and hypothesis generation—sometimes called "grounded theory"—is well established in the social science literature, beginning with the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). In the course of the field work for the present study, elements of the provincial policy framework and municipal planning responses became visible that had not been remarked upon in any of the secondary literature reviewed prior to beginning the field research.[2] Also, the evidence that was emerging from the field research suggested that certain theoretical distinctions had to be made that were not available from the secondary literature.[3]

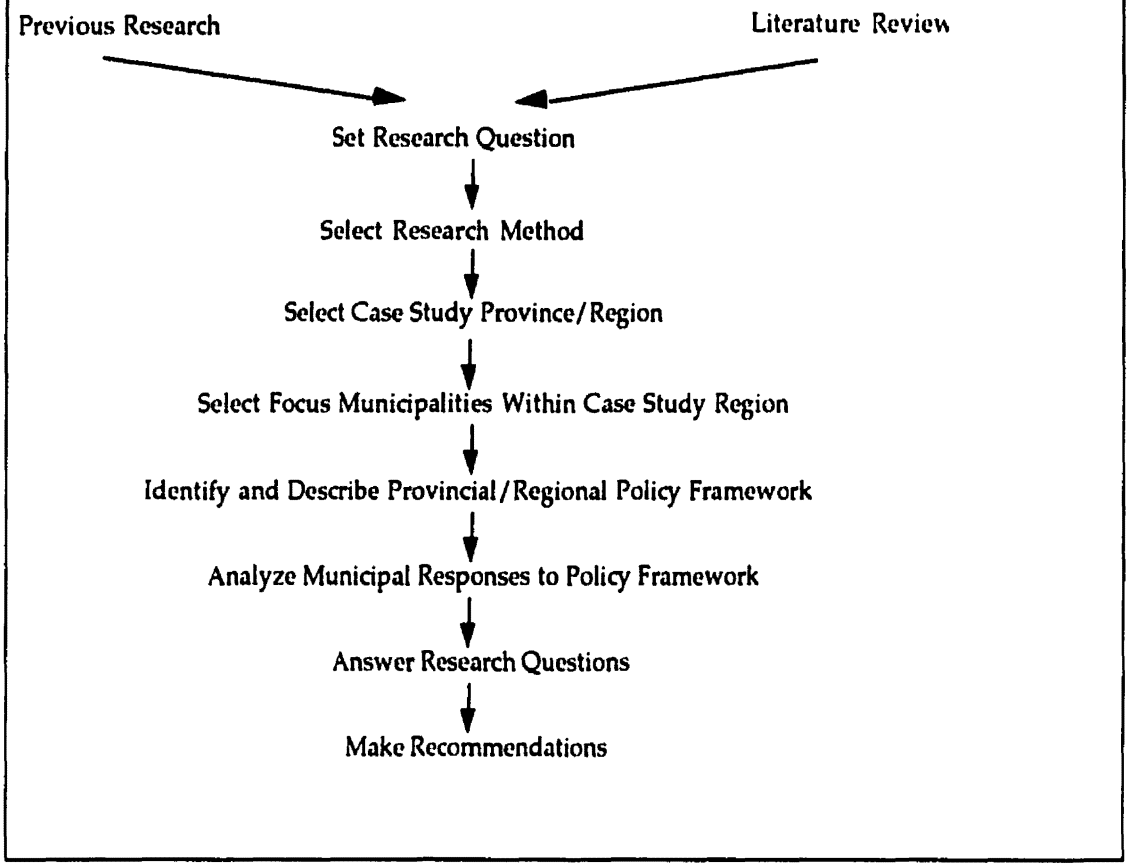
According to Yin (1989), there is no necessary connection between the type of case study undertaken and the data gathering and analysis techniques used to conduct the study. However, exploratory researchers frequently use qualitative rather than quantitative techniques because the former are less wedded to hypothesis testing. Qualitative methods are appropriate to such research because they are flexible, "open to using many types of evidence and discovering new issues" (Neuman, 1991: 19). Qualitative research allows the investigator to identify overall patterns in the data gathered and to relate those patterns to relevant contextual factors, whereas quantitative research methods (such as statistical surveys) focus on the frequency or incidence of discrete events. The present case study adopts a qualitative approach and the specific methods used are elaborated below.

3.4. Selection of the Case-study Region

A flow chart of the steps used to construct the case study is shown in Figure 3-1. Following the choice of the research question and research method, is the selection of a case study region.

The choice of case-study area was facilitated by earlier exploration by the author in association with other investigators. Research had been undertaken on intensification by surveying the over 1000 municipalities in the 26 metropolitan regions of Canada. The results of more than 500 completed surveys showed that intensification issues in Canada were most acute in the three largest metropolitan areas: Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal (Isin and Tomalty, 1993).

Figure 3-1: Research Steps



A second research study was carried out that focused on these three metropolitan regions (Tomalty, 1996). This investigation suggested that the Toronto region would serve as the most fruitful metropolis within which to undertake more detailed research. This decision was based on the following rationale:

- the strong provincial presence in regional land-use planning through its powers of plan approval and its well-developed planning policies
- the existence of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area, a regional body to coordinate the strategic planning decisions across provincial ministries and municipalities in the study area, which had set as its goal the creation of a more compact region
- the existence of the Ontario Municipal Board—a provincial agency—which gives stakeholders the opportunity to challenge municipal plans on the basis of their failure to adhere to provincial interests and "good planning principles."

Not only did this region show rich possibilities in exploring intensification dynamics, but it promised to serve as an important critical case: if intensification policies were found to

be ineffective under these conditions, then we could say with some confidence that they would be less likely to be successful in other metropolitan regions of the country.

3.5. Selection of Focus Municipalities

The preliminary study also helped in making a number of other strategic decisions regarding the thesis research. First, the preliminary research revealed the central importance of the dynamic between provincial and municipal planning agencies: the province generally adopting and promoting policies to encourage more compact forms of development; lower-tier municipalities often resisting; and upper-tier municipalities playing an intermediate role.

The preliminary research also revealed that this dynamic was most visible in suburban areas. In the suburban areas the main dynamic was between provincial and lower-tier planning agencies, with upper-tier planning playing an increasingly important role. Within Metropolitan Toronto, provincial policies played a lesser role as the upper-tier government was the primary motivating force behind the policy push for intensification. The preliminary research also revealed that the provincial policy framework was developed largely to influence land-use and housing development patterns in the suburban regions outside Metropolitan Toronto and address suburban resistance to the principles of intensification.

Over the next 30 years, almost 85 percent of GTA growth is anticipated to occur in the suburban regions outside Metro, i.e., the regional municipalities of Durham, York, Peel, and Halton (see Figure 3-2). Clearly, this is where land is going to be consumed in the development process and where increasing land-use efficiency will have the greatest impact in determining the environmental, fiscal and social consequences of growth. As Feldman (1987: 129) wrote:

> The fringe or periphery, then, is the area beckoning development as an extension in some fashion of existing populations and activities inside the established metropolis. It is apparent visually, and it is distinct economically and politically. It is the main arena where developers can perceive options, and where the governments perceive opportunities for shaping the future direction of urban life.

After having decided to focus on the regional municipalities in the GTA outside of Metropolitan Toronto, I also needed to decide which of the 24 lower-tier municipalities comprising these regional municipalities would be studied in more detail. Most of the new growth in the region is expected to occur in the municipalities adjacent to Metro, along the Lake Ontario lakeshore and up the Yonge Street corridor north of Toronto. These municipalities can be called "suburban" as opposed to the urban municipalities within Metropolitan Toronto or the rural municipalities towards the fringes of the GTA. Suburban municipalities have localized urbanized areas but are undergoing significant new growth as a

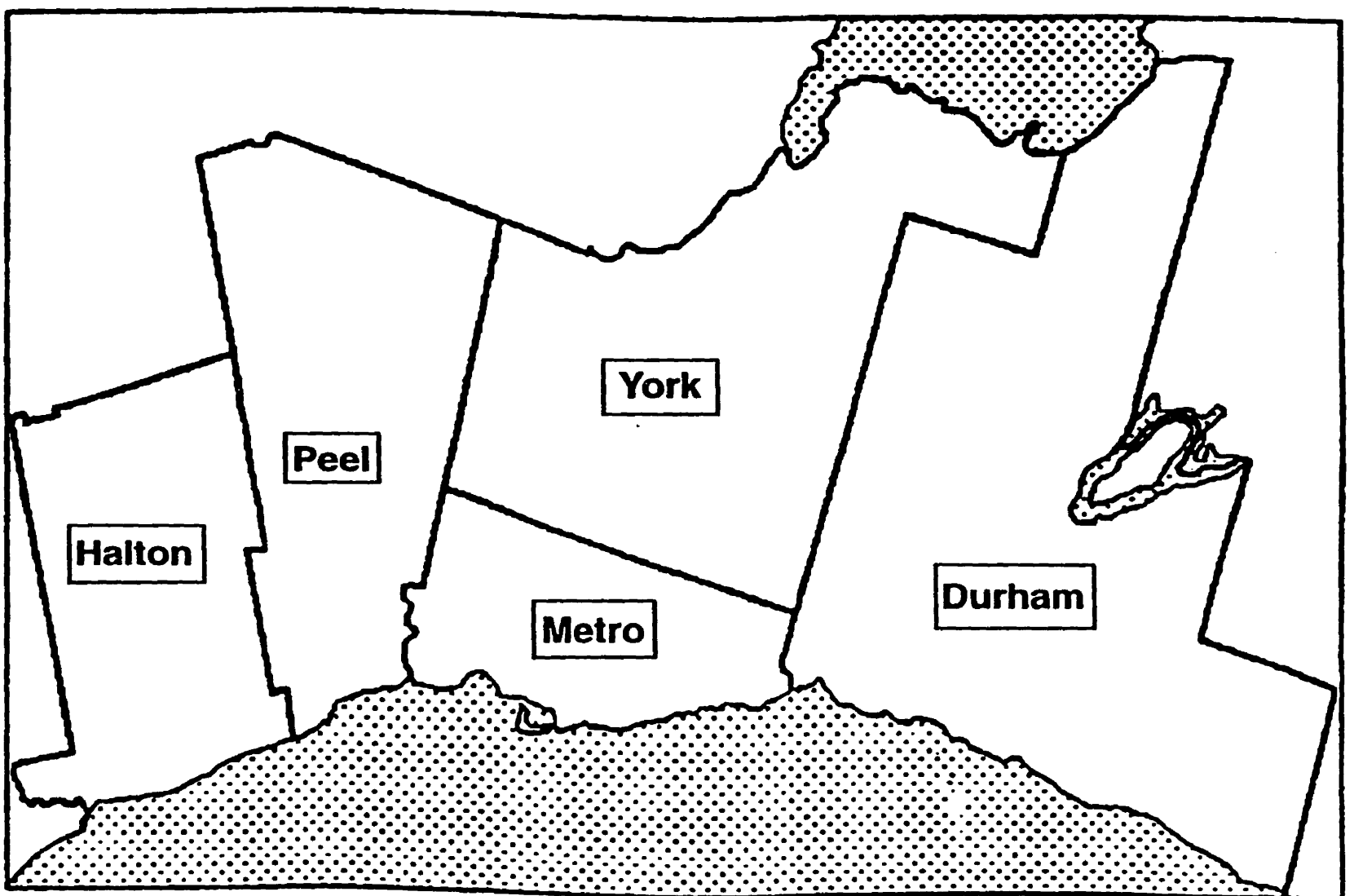


Figure 3-2: Upper-Tier Muncipalities of the GTA

result of the extension of the urban envelope, the completion of already designated areas, or the infilling of mature areas.

Table 3-1 shows some salient figures for the municipalities in the GTA, including population, housing, and density. Municipalities in each of the five regions have been classed either urban, suburban, or rural on the basis of their population densities.[4] Densities above 2000 per sq. km. were classed as urban, densities between 150-1999 were classed as suburban, and those municipalities with densities below 150 were classed as rural. All the urban municipalities are in Metropolitan Toronto. The outer regions have no urban municipalities, but each has a mix of suburban and rural municipalities. Suburban municipalities are attracting the greatest amount of residential growth: household increases are generally higher than in rural municipalities of the same region (except for Clarington).

The level of development activity and the availability of greenfield sites within these rapidly suburbanizing municipalities makes the policy choices between intensification and a continuation of conventional development patterns more meaningful than in Metro—where virtually all the land base has been urbanized—or within most rural municipalities, where growth rates have been and are expected to remain relatively low.

Having decided to focus on suburban municipalities outside Metro, I had to make a further choice among the 13 municipalities fitting this description. I assumed that impacts of the emerging provincial policy framework would most likely be seen in municipalities that have recently undertaken major official plan reviews and that have substantially incorporated new planning policies. Because official plans are usually accompanied by intense research and policy activity, they provide the outside researcher with rich material for studying planning policy and the interaction of planning authority in the region. Six of the 13 municipalities have recently engaged in complete revisions of their official plans: Burlington, Mississauga, Brampton, Newmarket, Pickering, and Whitby. These six municipalities—shown in Figure 3-3—were selected for detailed study.

3.6. Case-study Design

Research design typically involves the identification of units of analysis and data sources. Units of analysis are "those units that we initially describe for the ultimate purpose of aggregating their characteristics in order to describe some larger group or explain some abstract phenomenon" (Babbie, 1979: 88). In the present research, I use two categories or dimensions to group the units of analysis: policies and levels of government. Intensification policies are divided into three areas, depending on the principal policy objective: growth management, which relates primarily to policies intended to link population and employment growth to land and infrastructure requirements; housing supply, which covers policies meant

Table 3-1: Population, Household, and Density Characteristics of GTA Municipalities

City	Total Population (1992)	Total Households (1992)	Total Hectares (sq. km)	Pop. Change (1987-1992)	Household Change (1987-1992)	Pop. Density (1992)	Class †
Metro							
Toronto	598,939	291,352	99.9	-24,368	15,502	5,995	U
York	132,290	57,305	23.6	-5,333	2,004	5,606	U
East York	97,250	45,715	21.6	-3,178	1,326	4,502	U
North York	541,796	208,177	180	-30,167	6,812	3,010	U
Scarborough	485,240	180,553	187.4	10,284	15,798	2,589	U
Etobicoke	295,915	119,301	127.1	-10,975	5,800	2,328	U
Durham							
Oshawa	123,681	48,812	142.1	-1,412	4,753	870	S
Ajax	54,542	19,037	65.3	19,829	6,280	835	S
Whitby	59,152	20,875	147.2	13,666	5,292	402	S
Pickering	64,946	21,632	221.4	17,900	5,945	293	S
Clarington	47,262	17,575	575.9	13,629	5,729	82	R
Scugog	17,053	6,860	455.5	1,996	880	37	R
Uxbridge	13,241	5,090	412.3	1,269	805	32	R
Brock	10,530	4,549	402.8	448	450	26	R
Halton							
Oakville	109,718	39,565	142.5	24,162	8,996	770	S
Burlington	125,260	47,778	189.1	6,414	6,441	662	S
Halton Hills	35,496	12,727	280.7	-184	1,232	126	R
Milton	30,138	10,416	370.9	-1,722	540	81	R
Peel							
Mississauga	434,093	154,463	292.5	64,482	29,862	1,484	S
Brampton	217,892	72,889	271.4	35,217	13,930	803	S
Caledon	33,538	11,575	698.7	4,029	1,851	48	R
York							
Newmarket	42,932	14,544	36.8	8,812	3,318	1,167	S
Richmond Hill	74,007	27,085	97.6	28,401	11,008	758	S
Markham	145,325	45,425	205.9	37,020	9,439	706	S
Aurora	27,840	9,982	49.5	7,855	2,711	562	S
Vaughan	106,460	31,307	261.8	48,097	10,612	407	S
Georgina	27,838	13,328	288.5	6,352	2,788	96	R
Whitchurch —Stouffville	17,403	6,404	201.2	2,646	880	86	R
East Gwillimbury	17,346	5,713	238	2,961	991	73	R
King	17,444	5,997	339.2	1,268	683	51	R

† U = Urban, S = Suburban, R = Rural

* These are "municipal densities" meaning total population divided by total municipal land area.

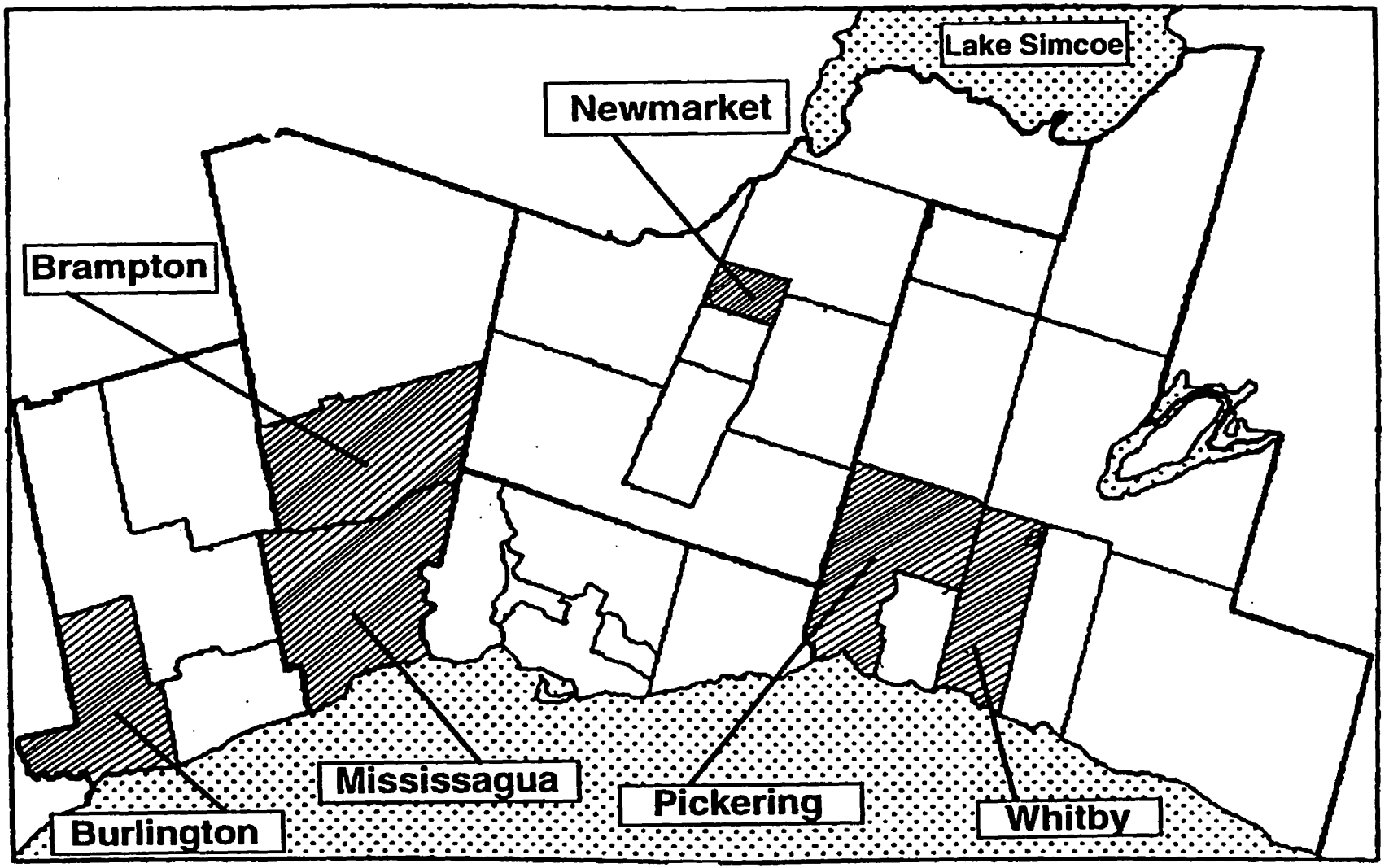


Figure 3-3: Lower-Tier Focus Muncipalities

to increase housing opportunities in the already built-up area and to ensure a greater range of housing types and densities in new development; and urban structure, which relates to policies meant to encourage a system of higher-density nodes and corridors throughout the urban region. The second dimension is the four relevant levels of government: the province, the OGTA, and upper- and lower-tier municipalities. The interplay of these two dimensions provides the logical backbone of the thesis report: the thesis reports on particular policies and follows them through from provincial formulation to municipal implementation.

The report logic can be expressed as a series of research "moments" or logical steps. Research moments are divided into two main sections: policy formulation and policy implementation. In the policy formulation section, the analysis proceeds by establishing the provincial policy framework and the policy context. The ***policy context*** is defined as those societal conditions and concerns that gave rise to the policy initiative and helped shape its formulation. The ***policy framework*** is the series of provincially adopted or endorsed policies governing urban growth and housing development. This framework is divided into two components: those policies that apply to municipalities province-wide and that emanate from provincial "line departments" such as the Ministries of Municipal Affairs, Housing, Environment and Energy, and Transportation; and those policies emerging from the activities of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area, a metropolitan coordinating agency that cuts across line departments. After presenting each of the major elements of the provincial policy framework, some attention is paid to the ***policy reaction***, i.e., the response of the municipal sector across Ontario and in the GTA in particular.

In the next section of the thesis, the implementation of the policy framework is examined in detail. Implementation is studied by exploring the ***official plan context*** of the case-study municipalities, ***official plan dynamics*** involving provincial and municipal planners and other key stakeholders, and ***official plan outcomes***. This latter treatment is divided into the three policy areas mentioned above: growth management, housing supply, and urban structure. For each policy area, explanations are proposed for the policy outcomes. This ***official plan interpretation*** is constructed from the point of view of municipal planners, pinpointing the key constraints and motivations on their decision-making. Finally, because official plans are only the first step in achieving policy-directed changes "on the ground," the implications of the official plan outcomes for ***plan implementation*** is briefly discussed relative to the provincial policy objectives for each planning aspect of the compact city. This completes the logical movement from the problems being addressed by the provincial policy framework and policy formulation, through policy implementation, to understanding the municipal response and its implications for realizing provincial policy objectives on the ground.

For each level of analysis, a variety of data sources is available. As Hakim (1986) notes, case studies are usually based on two or more methods of data collection, a fact that allows case studies to present a more rounded and complete account of the target issue or process. In the present case study, six data sources were employed:

- newspaper articles
- secondary literature and data sources
- interviews with provincial and municipal officials
- official policy and planning documents
- other government documents, including background planning reports, research reports, minutes of public meetings related to official plans, and written comments from government agencies on proposed official plans
- documents produced by other stakeholders in the region, e.g., municipal associations, development interests, environmental and social advocacy groups, farm organizations, labour unions, residents' groups, and individuals.

Table 3-2 links the research moments with the various data sources identified above.

3.7. Case-study Data Sources

In this section, more detail is provided on the data sources used in conducting the case study, data collection methods, and analytical procedures.

3.7.1. Newspaper articles

Newspapers can provide an important source of information about intensification as a policy issue and about particular intensification projects. They present very fine-grained analysis from a variety of writers over an extended period of time. Reportage is often based on interviews with parties to intensification policy or project conflicts, making it an excellent vehicle for exploring the types of policy dynamics surrounding intensification. The combination of feature articles, editorial/opinion pieces and letters can furnish important insights into what is happening behind the headlines.

An analysis of newspaper accounts can also help identify the major issues associated with growth and development and the political context accompanying the elaboration of the intensification policy framework or its implementation through official plans. Newspaper articles are also a convenient starting place for contacts within government and may lead to potential interviewees. Finally, the analysis of newspapers is unobtrusive: the events have already taken place, the articles written and the research activity cannot influence the opinions of the source.

Table 3-2: Research Design: Research Moments and Data Sources

Research Moment	Data Sources					
	Newspaper articles	Secondary sources	Official documents	Other government documents	Stakeholder documents	Interviews
Policy Formulation						
Policy context	intensification, density, sprawl, and specific policies	lit/data on housing, growth trends, etc.	-	provincial and OGTA reports, NGO reports	position papers on policy issues, research reports, and newsletters	provincial officials
Policy framework	-	Secondary literature on specific policies and the planning system in Ontario	provincial policy statements and other policy documents, OGTA policy documents	implementation manuals for and draft versions of official policies	-	-
Policy reaction	specific policies	-	-	-	position papers on policy issues, research reports, and newsletters	municipal officials
Policy Implementation						
Official plan context	intensification, density, sprawl	Lit/data on housing, growth trends, etc.	-	municipal planning reports	-	municipal officials
Official plan dynamics	-	-	-	communications between provincial and municipal planning agencies	public comments on official plan proposals	provincial officials, municipal officials
Official plan outcomes	-	-	official plans	-	-	-
Official plan interpretation	intensification, density, sprawl	secondary literature on planning	official plans	municipal planning reports	-	municipal officials
Official plan implementation	intensification, density, sprawl	secondary literature on planning	-	secondary plans	-	municipal officials

Undoubtedly, there is a complicated relationship between the content of newspaper articles and the political or social events they describe: newspapers may help set agendas as much as they describe them. Nonetheless, content analysis of newspaper articles has been used by credible researchers to gauge public opinion or the political climate surrounding certain issues. Mazur and Lee (1993) used accounts in the *New York Times* to judge the importance and awareness of various global environmental issues. Other researchers have done likewise (e.g., Castells, 1974; Funkhouser, 1973; Filion, 1992). Of course, investigators must be aware of the potential editorial bias of newspapers, but properly conducted and interpreted, journalistic sources can be a legitimate source of information when used in conjunction with other, independent sources of information on policy issues (Baker, 1992).

Thus, newspaper analysis presented itself as one potentially important source of insight into the provincial policy context and municipal reaction to specific policies; the municipal planning context and the constraints and issues facing municipal planners in responding to the policy framework; and implications for implementing specific aspects of the policy framework.

Because the *Toronto Star* provides more consistent coverage of regional development and planning issues than the *Globe and Mail*, and because it publishes suburban editions covering planning and development issues outside Metropolitan Toronto, it was selected for systematic searching. Searches were conducted of the full-text electronic version of the *Star* from the beginning of 1989 to the end of June 1995, encompassing the period during which the provincial intensification policy framework was elaborated in Ontario. Search terms included "density", "intensification", and "sprawl". All articles with any of these terms (in addition to some qualifying terms in order to reduce spurious hits) were downloaded to disk. Articles that were inappropriate (e.g., on bone density or sprawling wrestlers) or of marginal interest were filtered out and the remaining articles were printed. These articles were coded so as to respond to the research logic laid out above.

Relevant articles dealing with "urban sprawl" in the GTA amounted to 275 for the period under study. Each article was coded according to:

- the jurisdiction level concerned, including the specific municipality if mentioned
- whether it referred to particular aspects of the policy framework or served to illuminate the general policy context
- according to the main issues raised, whether they be problems associated with sprawl or the benefits of reducing sprawl.

Relevant articles containing references to "intensification" or "density" amounted to 598 for the period under study. Each article was coded according to:

- the jurisdiction level concerned, including the specific municipality if mentioned

- whether it referred to specific development projects, to policy and plans, or to intensification as a general issue
- the main issues raised in the article.

While these 873 articles from the *Toronto Star* formed the bulk of newspaper analysis, they were complemented by other articles from the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* on specific policies and policy initiatives, especially:

- the Housing Policy Statement
- the Apartments in Houses legislation
- the Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario
- the Task Force on the Greater Toronto Area.

Finally, for municipalities poorly covered by the *Toronto Star* (i.e., Whitby, Newmarket, Burlington, and Brampton) local newspapers were searched for articles relating to provincial policies or the official planning process. Taken together, this collection of newspaper articles provided a rich source of information with which to assess the intensification policy context over the study period, gain insight into the formulation of specific intensification policies at the provincial level, and to understand the planning context within the GTA and the focus municipalities.

3.7.2. Secondary Literature and Data Sources

Secondary literature and data sources were used in assessing the provincial and regional policy context and the context of official plans at the local level. Data sources included figures from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on housing starts, from Statistics Canada on housing stock and demographic trends, the Canadian Real Estate Association on housing prices and affordability, from Metropolitan Toronto on regional housing, transportation, population, and employment trends, the Canadian Urban Institute on population density and government structure, and the research output from individual municipalities in the region on land use and housing matters. Secondary literature on specific policies and the planning system in Ontario was also employed in describing the policy framework, in helping to interpret municipal responses to that framework, and the implications for plan implementation.

3.7.3. Interviews

Interviews with government officials provided a principal source of information for the case study. A "judgemental sample" of interviewees was chosen, meaning that the sample selected was judged to be the one most likely to yield an understanding of the subject of study in the case-study area. The sampling procedure used a combination of "snowball" and "quota" methods, depending on the jurisdictional level.

In the case of provincial officials, interviewees were identified through the snowball method. Those officials responsible for formulating or overseeing the implementation of particular policies were suggested by other informants and interviewees. Thus, the list of provincial interviewees was built up over the period during which field research was conducted. Provincial officials were interviewed from the Ministries of Municipal Affairs; Housing; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Transportation; Environment and Energy; and Natural Resources. Representatives from arm's length provincial agencies and commissions were also interviewed, including the Ontario Reality Corporation, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, and the Commission on Planning and Development Reform. Many of the current and former officials with the Office for the Greater Toronto Area were also interviewed.

In the case of municipal officials, interviewees were suggested by newspaper articles, provincial officials involved in plan approvals, or through "cold" calls to municipal planning departments using municipal and provincial directories. Officials were interviewed from the four regional municipalities within the GTA and Metropolitan Toronto, the six local municipalities whose official plans were studied in detail, and from some non-focus municipalities. Table 3-3 shows the number and distribution of interviews conducted for the case study.

Table 3-3: Interviewees for the Case Study

Category	Number of Interviewees	Number of Interviews
Provincial	21	27
OGTA	5	7
Municipal—Upper-tier	10	16
Municipal—Lower-tier	15	21
Total	51	71

Interview research for the case study took place from May 1994 to August 1995.[5] A total of 71 interviews were carried out with 51 different interviewees, lasting from 30 minutes to 2.5 hours but averaging about 1.25 hours. Before the interviews took place, interviewees were given a preliminary description of the project, its purpose, and the types of questions that would be asked of them. By and large, the interviews proceeded through a question and answer, semi-structured format. Interviewees were permitted to talk freely about their interpretations and concerns. Most interviews were conducted over the telephone, detailed notes were taken on a desktop computer, and a paraphrased transcript was prepared immediately afterwards.

As conceptual constructs and potential explanations for planning outcomes became available in the course of the research, follow-up interviews were conducted with some of the

interviewees. During these second or third interviews, I could ask interviewees questions regarding the tentative conclusions I had reached, explore alternative explanations, and get feedback on the appropriateness of emerging constructs.

Despite the semi-structured approach to the interviews and the evolving interview objectives, consistency was maintained for each group of interviewees and a set of common interview objectives was established. For provincial officials, common objectives included:

- clarifying the policy context, including the problems being addressed by the policy
- determining the policy objectives in terms of desired changes to municipal planning policies
- obtaining a description of specific policies with which the official was associated
- identifying constraints on policy implementation
- identifying typical points of conflict or controversy with municipalities in implementing policies through municipal official plans.

For municipal officials common objectives included:

- clarifying the planning context in terms of key planning issues to be addressed through official plans
- identifying typical points of conflict or controversy with upper-tier or provincial agencies involved in official plan approval
- interpreting planning policies in each category of provincial intensification policy.
- determining the implications of those planning policies for development activity within the municipality.

A list of interviewees appears in Appendix A of this thesis.

In addition to these semi-structured, longer interviews, 26 shorter (i.e., less than 30 minutes), unstructured interviews were conducted with officials holding specific information that was needed in order to round out the case study. This included interviews with a provincial officials having information on the number and distribution of assisted housing in the GTA, the number of municipalities in the GTA that conducted provincially-funded intensification studies, and the number of severances on agricultural land. Similarly, municipal officials were interviewed who had detailed information on the production of affordable housing in a specific municipality, the fiscal impacts of different housing types, and the progress of an OMB hearing related to an official plan policy. These "secondary interviewees" are listed in Appendix B of this thesis.

3.7.4. Official Policy and Planning Documents

The official policy documents making up the provincial intensification policy framework were identified during the case study research. These included:

- legislation
- policy statements under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*
- policy guidelines to be used in the provincial approval of municipal plans and in generation of municipal plans
- policy reports of the OGTA resulting from the activities of formally organized committees including provincial and municipal representatives

These documents were subjected to detailed analysis using the following protocol:

- the categories of intensification policy (growth management, housing supply, and urban structure): used to identify and categorize the relevant policies within each document
- the typology of formulator-implementer linkages: used to characterize the approach employed by the policy formulating agency responsible for the document in terms of the amount of influence municipalities and other stakeholders were permitted to exert over policy formulation
- the typology of policy instrument types: used to differentiate elements of the policy framework according to their legal coerciveness
- provincial policy objectives: the impact the provincial policy was meant to have on municipal planning policies.

In addition, the upper- and lower-tier official plans of the focus municipalities within the case study region were assembled and subjected to systematic analysis. Eleven categories were created with which to label sections of plans. Each category was then included under one of the main units of analysis: i.e., growth management, housing supply, and urban structure.

General
- Preamble/Introduction/Principles of the Plan
- Implementation Mechanisms

Housing Supply
- Housing/Residential Policies
- Community Improvement Areas
- Monitoring

Urban Structure
- Commercial Areas
- Urban Structure
- Transportation

Growth Management
- Servicing/Phasing/Boundary Changes
- Agricultural/Rural Areas
- Environment/Open Space/Resources

Finally, plan policies organized in this way were linked to each of the three elements of the provincial intensification policy framework in order to assess municipal compliance.

3.7.5. Other Government Documents

Government documents other than official policies and plans were also used in building the case study. At the provincial level, a number of other sources of documentation were uncovered that helped interpret the policy framework in terms of the motivation for undertaking policy initiatives, and assessing the objectives of provincial planners in implementing the policy framework at the municipal level. These documents included:

- draft policy documents
- policy implementation manuals
- public education materials
- comments on official plans from provincial ministries.

At the metropolitan level, the main source of documentary information was provided by the OGTA, including:

- draft policy documents
- comments from municipalities on OGTA policy documents
- public education material
- background research reports.

At the municipal level, background studies and reports leading up to official plans were also helpful in interpreting the plans, as were official plan-implementing instruments. These included:

- Municipal Housing Statements, which identify housing needs over the long term and assess current housing supply trends
- Residential Intensification Studies, which identify the intensification opportunities present in the municipality based on such factors as land availability, willingness of property owners, servicing availability and demand for housing in those locations
- Growth Management Studies, which forecast population and employment growth in the municipality in order to justify an expanded urban boundary
- Secondary Plans, which give more detailed guidance than official plans to the development of specific areas within a given municipality
- Transit Studies, which consider the various options for improving transit service, including land-use options
- Strategic Plans, usually based on extensive public consultation. These plans set down the basic long-term goals and values of the community.

3.7.6. Stakeholder Documents

A number of stakeholder-produced documents were also used to help establish the policy context, the policy reaction, and official plan dynamics. Stakeholders are defined as "the various parties who are affected by policy decisions, whose interests are at stake when changes are proposed" (Hakim, 1986: 146). Stakeholder organizations were divided into three levels: provincial, regional, and local. Provincial interests included the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Environmental Network, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, the Ontario Round Table on the Environment and Economy, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Inclusive Neighbourhoods Campaign, and the Urban Development Institute. Regional stakeholders included those organizations with an interest in intensification issues and that claimed to have a regional perspective, including the Greater Toronto Home Builders Association, the Metro Toronto Social Planning Council, the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Environmentalists Plan Transportation, the Toronto Environmental Alliance, Women Plan Toronto, and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine. The range of documents produced by provincial and regional stakeholder groups included: policy position papers, research reports, newsletters, and brochures. The local stakeholders category was comprised of those making comments on official plan proposals in the case study area, i.e., residents', environmental, and other groups, individual developers, and individual citizens.

3.8. Validity and Reliability of the Case Study

Case-study research design has been criticized as unscientific and unlikely to produce results of a generally valuable nature (George, 1979). In answering these criticisms, Yin (1989) has identified three tests of good design for exploratory case-studies: external validity, construct validity, and reliability.[6] Each one is dealt with in turn below.

3.8.1. External Validity

External validity refers to whether or not the study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study. In the case at hand, can the findings and conclusions based on research in the GTA be extrapolated to other metropolitan regions in Canada? Critics claim that single case studies are unable to provide insights into broader phenomena because they are based on the unique conditions found in particular locales. Yin (1989) makes the counter-claim that such critics misunderstand the nature of case studies: unlike other forms of research that depend on statistical generalization, case studies rely on analytical generalizations.

Patton (1982) suggests that, although a case study may not technically permit broad generalizations to all possible case studies, logical generalizations can be made from the weight of evidence in studying a single case. Single case-study research is most powerful when

cases are chosen that are either typical, deviant, or critical (Hakim, 1986; George, 1979). The research objectives for this thesis focus principally on the dynamics of the interaction between provincial and municipal planning agencies. To explore this dynamic, I selected a "critical" case-study, i.e., that metropolitan area of the country where intensification issues were most in evidence and where provincial policies were most aggressive in promoting municipal planning policies that would create more compact urban forms.

This research logic has been used in other case studies on urban issues in Canada. Most recently, Coffey (1994: 78) has reasoned that:

> in the following analysis, we are examining the Canadian CMA in which the edge city phenomenon should logically be the least likely to appear. If we do find evidence of the phenomenon in Montreal, in a context in which planned decentralization policies and certain important geographic, socio-demographic, and economic conditions are absent, we may assume with a reasonable degree of assurance that edge cities are more likely to appear in other metropolitan areas.

Thus, the fact that Ontario has an elaborate intensification policy framework and a more authoritative, directive planning regime than other provinces (as briefly described in section 3.3) makes the GTA a good candidate for this study from the point of view of external validity, i.e., if intensification policies were found to be ineffective in the GTA, then it could be argued that intensification policies would be unlikely to succeed in other jurisdictions. But the particular features of the case study area may also have a negative implication from the point of view of external validity. We may find, for instance, that certain aspects of the provincial intensification policy framework are being successfully implemented at the municipal level, but that the uniqueness of the GTA case study prevents us from concluding that such policies could be successful in other urban areas in the country. The issue of the generalizability of the research findings to other urban areas is taken up in the final chapter of this thesis.

3.8.2. Construct Validity

A common failing of case-study research design is the lack of a valid set of measures or variables that are used to structure the research, and that are consistently referred to in interpreting the research findings. Critics suspect that impressionistic, unstructured case studies allow for too many subjective judgements about data to be included or excluded from the reporting of research findings. To address this issue, Yin suggests that the investigator justify the selection of constructs and variables used in the study.

In the research at hand, the principal variable to be studied is that of policy changes affecting the density of residential development. As explained in Section 0, this variable was resolved into three components: growth management, housing supply, and urban structure. An

effort was made to touch base with these aspects of intensification policy at all stages of the research design and in the research report itself. This includes the analysis of the provincial policy framework and the analysis of municipal plan implementation. The conclusions presented in Chapter 10 also respect this logical structure. A justification for choosing these three elements, as opposed to some other construction of the policy framework, is therefore important to establishing the validity of the research.

Because this study inquiries into the translation of provincial policy objectives into municipal planning policies, it was essential that the identified policy components "resonate" with the policy structure at both jurisdictional levels. Thus, in order to choose the most appropriate units, a preliminary understanding of intensification policies at provincial and municipal levels was necessary. At the provincial level, this proved to be a difficult task. In Ontario, the researcher who sets about investigating intensification policy cannot turn to a single provincial policy or program—or even a single government department—and quickly finds him or herself making judgements about what should or should not be included under that the intensification policy title. Clearly, "intensification" is not a discrete policy area, but is a rather vague public policy goal that is expressed through a number of indirectly-related government actions. It was not immediately clear how to organize this array of policy initiatives in such a way as to lend itself to easy analysis.

At the municipal level, I found a more obvious pattern in policies relating to land use intensity. Almost all of the ten municipal official plans that were subject to detailed scrutiny had main sections relating to housing supply and urban structure. Looking back at provincial policies relating to land use intensity, I found that the concepts of housing supply and urban structure corresponded to key provincial policies (such as the Housing Policy Statement and the Transit-Supportive Guidelines), but left out provincial policies related to managing growth such as projecting population growth and budgeting land to accommodate growth. Once this third category (growth management) was identified at the provincial level, I revisited official plans to see whether corresponding municipal policies could be identified. Indeed, I found that the plans contained policies on anticipated population growth, the extension of urban boundaries, the servicing and phasing of growth, and the preservation of agricultural and environmentally sensitive land, usually organized into two or three sections. Together these seemed to correspond well with the definition of growth management being advanced by the province. Discussion with key informants at the provincial level confirmed that this was a rational and useful way to organize the policy framework. Thus, the three policy components—housing supply, urban structure and growth management—only became visible in an iterative fashion as the research unfolded, a situation not untypical of policy research (Majchrzak, 1984).[7]

To ensure case study validity, Yin also suggests that the investigator demonstrate that the measures used to track the selected variables do indeed reflect those specific variables, i.e., that they are not spurious. The research design described in Section 3.6 assumes that policy changes affecting the density of residential development can be gauged through a careful study and interpretation of policy and planning documents at the provincial and municipal levels of government. At the provincial policy level, this assumption is relatively unproblematic: a number of ministries were surveyed for the key policies affecting the consumption of land, housing, and urban structure. Policy changes were tracked through official policy announcements, including policy statements under Section 3 of the Ontario *Planning Act*, cabinet approved documents, and ministerial policy publications. It is hard to imagine a convincing argument that provincial policy was something other than was expressed through these documents, although conclusions to the thesis must take into account the possibility that provincial policy and funding actions other than those examined may have contradicted intensification policies.

Construct validity is more problematic at the municipal level, where measurement was limited to statements contained in official plans and background documents. A critic may point to the obvious chasm between municipal intentions as expressed in official plans and the translation of those intentions into zoning and development control changes, where resistance to provincial policy changes may be more forcefully expressed. The choice to focus on official plans was made for a number of reasons:

- these are the primary implementation mechanism envisioned by provincial policies
- they are the most comprehensive statements of municipal planning policy. Other planning documents, such as secondary plans or zoning by-law amendments, may reflect municipal policy in specific districts but only official plans enunciate policies that are municipality-wide
- in most cases, official plans had only recently been adopted or were still in process of being adopted. Thus, relying on changes to zoning bylaws or development-control policies would have introduced even greater doubts about the construct validity
- focussing on official plans did not obviate consideration of secondary plans and zoning changes—where they had taken place—in assessing how official plans might be implemented in selected municipalities.

Yin proposes a number of checks on construct validity, checks that have been implemented in this research design: a variety of data sources have been used, key informants have been asked to review the principal findings, and a chain of evidence has been maintained. The latter is discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.8.3. Reliability

Case studies have also been criticized as unreliable in the sense that a second investigator working independently of the first but following similar procedures might easily arrive at significantly different findings and conclusions. In other words, the case-study methods may invite research bias and error that influences the outcome of the research but is difficult for an outside reader to detect in the final report.

Babbie (1979) itemizes a number of reliability issues that are relevant to the case study at hand: interviewees may be influenced by the demeanor or attitudes of the interviewer, interviewees may give opinions beyond their realm of special knowledge, newspaper coding might have been influenced by the orientation of the coder to the issue at hand, and so on.

The reader's confidence in the reliability of the study can be enhanced in two ways:

- by showing that any given result or interpretation in the thesis itself can be traced back through a chain of evidence to documented sources
- by convincing the reader that the investigator took steps to ensure that his or her personal bias did not unduly influence the choice of data sources or the interpretation of the data gathered.

Each of these sources of reliability is discussed in turn.

Yin (1989) suggests that reliability is enhanced when the researcher creates a formal case-study data base that is separate from the written report, documents the procedures followed in the case study, and maintains a chain of evidence.

The present study has maintained an extensive data base separate from the written report. This data base is composed of:

- transcripts of every interview conducted for the research
- coded information on relevant newspaper articles
- a bibliographic data base listing primary documents including provincial policies, official plans and reports of other stakeholders
- an address and scheduling data base showing the coordinates, affiliation, and position of each interviewee and data source, along with a record of contact with them and their role in the research design.

The procedures used in the present study have been extensively documented:

- a list of research objectives for each type of interviewee was maintained
- notes on the coding of newspaper articles were maintained
- the source of each primary document was noted and a date of receipt recorded.

A chain of evidence was maintained by:

- identifying the research objectives

- linking the selection of municipalities, interviewees, other members of the policy community, and newspaper articles to the research objectives
- carrying out the data collection with each data source in a consistent manner
- linking the evidence presented in the report to specific data sources, consistent with the need to protect the anonymity of interview sources.
- maintaining a confidential data base on the individual sources for statements appearing in the thesis.

Other techniques are available to increase the reader's confidence that a second investigator proceeding from the same research question in the same study area would select similar data sources and reach similar conclusions, i.e., that personal bias did not unduly influence the conduct and outcome of the research. As one safeguard, Yin (1989: 65) recommends that preliminary findings should be reported to "two or three critical colleagues" who might suggest additional sources of data and offer alternative interpretations of the data than those being proposed by the investigator. In the present study, a thesis committee of four other academics and one professional planner served just this function by reading and commenting on earlier drafts of the thesis. Furthermore, key informants were provided with the main research findings at several points during the data collection and thesis writing stages. Their responses helped refine later data collection strategies and the interpretation of the data. Finally, I took special pains to remain open to alternative explanations and unexpected findings. One indication of this openness is the fact that the conclusions drawn from the research depart in important ways from the assumptions I held going into the study.[8]

3.9. Methodological Issues

There are a number of issues raised by the method used in the thesis that require further discussion.

3.9.1. Selection of Focus Municipalities

In this study inferences are drawn from the focussed study of six suburban municipalities within the GTA to the wider group of 13 suburban municipalities. This could be an important source of error if the selection of six municipalities were non-representative or biased in some way.

In order to address this issue a number of assurances are available. First, the six case studies represent a wide range of suburban conditions that should allow us to generalize the findings to the full range of suburban conditions within the GTA:

- Geographical dispersion: Each of the four regional municipalities outside Metropolitan Toronto is represented in the selection of municipalities for focussed research.

- Growth rates: from among the lowest (Burlington) to among the highest (Pickering) recent rates of growth in suburban areas of the region.
- Development stages: three municipalities—Whitby, Brampton, and Newmarket—designate substantial new growth areas in their official plans while three others—Mississauga, Burlington, and Pickering—are nearly or fully designated.
- Size: from Newmarket with only 46,000 people in 1991 to Mississauga with a population of 463,000 or roughly 10 times the size.

Secondly, a number of interviews were conducted and documents analyzed from other suburban municipalities within the GTA in order to increase confidence that the six selected municipalities were typical cases. This included the municipalities of Aurora, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan. Nothing came to light through these efforts that suggested the six focus municipalities were atypical in any way.

3.9.2. Confidentiality and Reporting Technique

Confidentiality was promised to interviewees in order to increase the likelihood of receiving personal insights and frank opinions rather than the official positions of the organization being represented. Interviewees were told that quotations may be used from the transcript but that the personal identity of the informant would not be divulged. They were also told that their names and affiliations would appear in an appendix of interviewees at the end of the thesis.

Heclo and Wildavsky (1981) established the validity of this methodological choice in the research on British fiscal policy. In their case-study report, they emphasized that their research was only possible because they gained the trust of their interview subjects and guaranteed their anonymity, even if this entailed special efforts on their part in reporting on the research findings. The disadvantage of this method is that quotations must be presented in the thesis without giving the reader the opportunity to weigh the reliability of the speaker. To minimize this disadvantage, the affiliation of the speaker being quoted is given, and in some cases, the speaker's position in the bureaucratic hierarchy, i.e., "a senior planner" or "a policy advisor of long standing." Care was taken to ensure that these epithets would not serve to identify the speaker personally.

A residual problem emerges from the fact that not all evidence and argument can be put forward in the form of quotations from interviewees. Thus, statements of fact or interpretation appear in the Chapters 4 to 9 without specific references being provided. Once again, this approach tends to reduce the reader's ability to judge the perspective being represented or to assess the reliability of the evidence furnished. Fortunately, it is possible to report on the research findings in a way that groups interview sources by agency. Footnotes

are provided at the beginning of each section or sub-section indicating the agency or agencies that provided the interview information being presented. This usually includes the level of government, the ministry or department, and, where applicable, the office or branch concerned.

3.9.3. Changing Policy and Planning Landscape

Another important methodological issue concerns the time frame selected for analysis. The main purpose of this critical case study is to determine whether provincial intensification policies are being incorporated into municipal official plans in suburban regions of the GTA. The fact that both provincial policies and official plans are "living" entities that are still evolving presents a special challenge to the researcher.

As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, the provincial intensification policy framework can be divided into province-wide land-use planning policies and GTA-specific regional policies. Both aspects of the framework were developed through incremental additions between 1989 and 1994. In 1995, however, the province-wide planning system in Ontario began to undergo more fundamental change. First, the spring of 1995 saw legislative changes to the planning system and a consolidation of provincial policies. These changes tended to strengthen the intensification policy framework. Then in the summer of 1995, the Progressive Conservatives replaced the New Democrats as the governing party after a provincial election. The Tories immediately undertook to review and dismantle many of the NDP reforms, resulting in a planning system with a weaker intensification policy framework.

Given the fact that this is a critical case study, I am interested in assessing the impact of the most assertive provincial policies on municipal planning decisions. The most assertive policies are those implemented by the NDP government in the changes to the planning system in 1995. However, given their short-lived existence, few official plans were undertaken and approved with this policy framework in mind. Therefore, I will assess the impact of the provincial policy framework as it developed over the period from the end of the 1980s until the introduction of the Tory reforms in the Fall of 1995. After reaching conclusions based on this time period, I comment on the likely impact of the Tory planning reforms in the last chapter of the thesis.

Producing an official plan often takes several years from initial draft to council approval and final provincial approval. The municipal plans that have been chosen for analysis were all drafted after the key elements of provincial policy framework were in place and before the proposed Tory reforms in late 1995.[9] Thus, we can assume that they were largely shaped under the policy conditions that pre-dated the Tory reforms.[10] Furthermore, some aspects of the intensification policy framework were relatively unaffected by the

changes introduced by the Tories. Most importantly, many aspects of the regionally-specific policies described in Chapter 5 remained in place. Finally, the administrative mechanisms for translating provincial policies into municipal plans were also unchanged by the NDP-Tory transition.

Another timing issue arises due to the fact that at the time of writing, some of the plans were not yet approved by the province. Thus, some elements of the plan may be changed before final provincial approval, and these changes may have suggested a different dynamic between provincial and municipal planning agencies than that concluded on the basis of events so far. Table 3-4 shows the status of the various plans studied at the time of writing.

Table 3-4: Official Plan Status

Municipality	Stage of Approval
Whitby	Adopted by Council Sept/94
Pickering	Draft plan issued June/95
Newmarket	Adopted by Council Oct/94
Brampton	Adopted by Council June/93
Mississauga	Draft plan issued Dec/94
Burlington	Adopted by Council July/94
York Region	Approved by Ministry of Municipal Affairs Oct/94
Durham Region	Approved by Ministry of Municipal Affairs Nov/1993
Halton Region	Adopted by Council March/1994
Peel Region	Draft plan issued July/1995

The fact that municipal plans are still evolving does not necessarily detract from their value given my research purposes: all of the plans reviewed had been extensively commented on by provincial agencies, and that documentation was made available to me for analysis. Although the outcome might still be in doubt for some plans, the main points of contention and provincial priorities in plan review are therefore available for analysis.

3.10. Conclusion

This chapter has explained and justified the method used for the case-study research and explored some of the issues raised by this approach. The research design presents two main opportunities, one descriptive and one explanatory:

- to lay out a detailed description of policies designed to achieve higher residential densities in a Canadian metropolitan area, including administrative mechanisms and planning outcomes
- to provide other investigators with tentative hypotheses explaining the planning outcomes that could serve as the basis for further, more systematic research.

Endnotes

[1] For instance, the growth management objectives of planners in the Plans Approval Branch at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, described in Chapter 7.

[2] For instance, the basic distinction between growth management, housing supply, and urban structure policies, discussed further in Chapter 3 below.

[3] For instance, the distinction between growth management and expansion management, made in Chapter 7.

[4] These are what Hitchcock (1994) calls "municipal densities". A better measure of the average population density in each municipality would be the total population divided by the urbanized area rather the total area of the municipality. Unfortunately, this data is not readily available.

[5] A few "update" interviews were conducted after this period.

[6] Yin's fourth test of good case study design is internal validity, which refers to the confidence we can have in the causal relationships posited by the case study, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions. This test of adequate research design is normally applied only to explanatory or causal studies where factors are being sought to explain certain phenomena or test a clear hypothesis. The present case study does not fit either of these types—rather it is of an exploratory kind. In these types of studies, strong statements about causal connections are usually avoided.

[7] It is important to note that the three types of intensification policies were designed to achieve a number of policy objectives other than increasing the intensity of residential land use: growth management policies are meant not only to concentrate development on the least land base but also to ensure the orderly expansion of urban areas in terms of the phasing of services, and the reduction of fiscal and environmental impacts of growth; housing supply policies are meant not only to encourage higher-density greenfield development and the intensification of existing areas, but also to promote the production of affordable housing and a range of housing types that meet existing and future demand; and urban structure policies are meant not only to engender higher-density residential nodes and corridors, but also to revitalize town centres, attract commercial development, and make transit improvements economically feasible. Thus, the treatment of intensification policy in this thesis will frequently take place through discussion of these related policy objectives. Nonetheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that the focus of the research is on the intensity of residential land use in the GTA.

[8] As will be seen in Chapter 10, for instance, I conclude that provincial policies should be formulated with greater municipal input in order to increase the legitimacy and therefore the effectiveness of the provincial policy framework. When I began this investigation, I felt that the involvement of municipalities in formulating intensification objectives would be a mistake.

[9] Some policy developments had to be ignored in this study because they came into effect so late in the study period. Most important are the guidelines developed by the NDP for implementing alternative development standards, which were not finalized by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Housing until April, 1995.

[10] When this is not the case, mention will be made in the text.

Part II: The Provincial Intensification Policy Framework

4 . Province-Wide Land-Use Policies

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I review the elements of the province-wide intensification policy framework. As the chapter will detail, the policy objectives have shifted over time as economic and political conditions changed. In the 1970s and early 1980s, intensification policies were put forward in support of the goals of energy conservation, farmland preservation, and building rehabilitation. In the late 1980s, housing affordability was the overriding policy objective and intensification was seen as one instrument in increasing the supply of affordable housing. In the early 1990s, the issue of urban sprawl took centre stage of the province's policy concerns and intensification was promoted as an instrument in managing growth and arresting sprawl. Not only has the policy objective evolved, but so too has the policy instruments used. The chapter shows that the province has employed a wide array of policy instruments in achieving its objectives, from policy research, policy guidelines, policy statements and legislation.

The chapter is organized into two main sections: first, the evolution of intensification policies in the 1970s and 1980s is surveyed. Secondly, the current policy framework—defined as those policies created from the beginning of the new round of provincial policy effort in 1989 up to and including the planning reforms of 1995—is surveyed.

4.2. Pre-1989 Provincial Policy

Four ministries were active in the 1970s and the 1980s in developing policies to support intensification: Agriculture and Food, Housing, Municipal Affairs, and Energy, with Housing playing the key role. Intensification policies were of four kinds:

- research
- influencing the planning practices of municipalities by creating planning guidelines
- funding municipal studies and infrastructure investment
- intervening directly in the housing market by targeting the decisions of property owners.

Each of these is considered in turn.

4.2.1. Research

During the early 1980's the province undertook an extensive research programme on housing intensification, including:

- the multi-volume research report prepared by a number of consulting firms led by Klein & Sears (1983), entitled *Study of Residential Intensification and Rental Housing Conservation*, jointly commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

- a study commissioned by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Association of Municipalities of Ontario and conducted by David Hulchanski, entitled *Urban Residential Land-Use Conservation, Densification and Intensification: A Review of the Literature* (1982).
- a series of reports carried out by Lewinberg Consultants Ltd., entitled *In Your Neighbourhood*, published between 1984 and 1987.

The main focus of this research was "small-scale" intensification of already built up areas, particularly conversion and infill in mature areas. One of the principal motivations behind these reports was to assess the public acceptability of this form of urban redevelopment in the aftermath of the politically disastrous experiments with urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s. Small-scale intensification had the potential to lead to diffuse physical change in the urban fabric while increasing substantially the supply of low-cost rental housing in core cities. Thus, it was designed to achieve provincial goals without threatening the stability of established neighborhoods.

4.2.2. Intervention in Municipal Land-Use Planning

Beginning in the late 1970s, the province began to establish policies and programmes designed to affect the priorities and decisions contained in municipal plans.

4.2.2.1. The Food Land Guidelines

Ontario's best agricultural lands are located in the most heavily urbanized areas of the province. This has resulted in increasing competition over the use of these lands. With the suburban housing boom of the 1960s and 1970s, urban development in rural areas emerged as an important political issue. Studies showed that the best agricultural lands in Ontario were disappearing at what seemed an alarming rate (Bureau of Municipal Research, 1977). Responding to this concern, the provincial cabinet approved the Food Land Guidelines in 1978 as a statement of government policy (Ontario, 1978).[1]

The main purpose of the guidelines was to ensure that land with high capability for agriculture was kept available for farming. The guidelines required that municipalities contemplating the development of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes justify their plans through a variety of means:

- projected population for the municipality
- referring to the potential for infilling of existing built-up areas
- the land acreage required, calculated on the basis of population increase to be accommodated at reasonable density
- efficiency of servicing
- logical extension of an existing community

- providing proof that no alternatives in terms of lands with lower quality soils were available to accommodate the planned growth.

The guidelines completed the government's Strategy for Ontario Farmland, the purpose of which was to maintain an economically viable agricultural industry in Ontario. Thus, the main purpose of the guidelines was to assist municipalities in planning to preserve agricultural land, not to arrest sprawl. The guidelines worked to direct growth to lower quality agricultural land: they did not look at the need to preserve other environmentally valuable resources or to enhance land-use efficiency as an overall goal.

Being among the first of the province's official policy statements, the announcement sparked discussion about the appropriate manner of provincial policy intervention in municipal affairs. Municipalities asked that the province adopt a formal mechanism requiring consultation with municipalities, which helped give rise to Section 3 of the revised 1983 *Planning Act*. In 1985, the province undertook a review of the Food Land Guidelines, and a draft Food Preservation Policy Statement was released for public review in 1986 by the Ministers of Agriculture and Food, and of Municipal Affairs. Ironically, however, the Food Land Guidelines were never adopted under Section 3 and therefore never became an official policy statement.[2]

4.2.2.2. Land-use Planning for Energy Conservation Guidelines

Reflecting the dramatic rise in oil prices in the 1970s and early 1980s, energy conservation had become a major policy objective of the provincial government. In support of the province's energy conservation goals, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing produced three documents in 1982:

- provincial guidelines for official plans outlining the various planning techniques that could be incorporated into official plans to conserve energy—including compact development, mixed land use, adaptive reuse, and "retrofit" development
- a review of urban development standards suggesting how reduced servicing standards could save embodied energy in sewers, roads, sidewalks, and so on
- a Handbook for Energy-Efficient Residential Subdivision Planning dealing with site design issues.

The provincial effort culminated in 1984, with the issue of *Land-Use Planning for Energy Conservation*. The document pointed out that: "Of all the energy conserving techniques available to planners, increasing densities is the most effective. Increasing residential densities, particularly if multiple-family units are included, will result in considerable reduction in both space-heating needs and transportation energy requirements" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1984: 5). In support of this position, the document laid out comprehensive guidelines for municipal planners on issues ranging from site design, mix of

land uses, transit-supportive development, and intensification of the already built up area. Implementation of energy conservation measures was to be through a range of land-use planning instruments including official plans, secondary plans, zoning bylaws, site-plan control, and subdivision control.

4.2.2.3. Main Street Revitalization Program

One of the earliest intensification programs was called Main Street Revitalization Program, begun about 1978 by the Ministry of Housing's Community Renewal Branch. Over the course of the next couple of years, the branch published a number of information packages designed to encourage municipalities to refurbish their traditional mainstreets by improving the public realm and allowing housing to be built above existing retail spaces (Ontario Ministry of Housing, undated).

4.2.2.4. Municipal Housing Statement Program

Begun in 1980, the Municipal Housing Statement Program provided funding to municipalities to carry out housing studies as a precondition for receiving any federal-provincial funds for municipal non-profit housing. The studies required that the municipalities undertake housing needs projections and encouraged them to adopt housing intensification policies, presumably as an alternate way to satisfy the demand for low-cost housing. Municipal Housing Statements were adopted by municipal councils and approved by the Ministry of Housing. The guidelines for creating Municipal Housing Statements called for housing policies that would "encourage a particular emphasis on the growing need for renewal and planning for energy efficiency." The guidelines suggested that municipalities should adopt policies to:

- maximize opportunities for infilling, through the division of lands by consent, to achieve compact growth
- maximize opportunities for redevelopment at higher densities to increase energy efficiency.

4.2.2.5. Ontario Neighbourhood Improvement Program

The Ontario Neighbourhood Improvement Program (ONIP) was part of the Programs for Renewal, Improvement, and Development (PRIDE). It was designed to:

- assist municipalities revitalize older residential neighbourhoods occupied by low- and moderate-income households
- encourage investment in the rehabilitation of existing housing stock and new infill development by private or assisted housing
- encourage energy conservation through energy-efficient land use.

The program provided grants for improvements to low-income residential neighbourhoods where the housing stock and community services were deteriorating. ONIP funded: municipal services (sewer and water, hydro, gas, roads, etc.) and community facilities (parks, wading pools, swimming pools, ball diamonds, community centres, etc.). It also

provided funds to purchase land for low- and moderate-income housing where the land consists of residential buildings beyond the stage of economic rehabilitation (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1983).

In the mid-1980s, the PRIDE program was expanded to provide additional grants for upgrading residential services and facilities that would specifically support intensification. These grants could be used to help municipalities implement some of the strategies identified in the MHS. An off-shoot of PRIDE, known as HINT (Housing Intensification) was targeting at community improvements that would exploit the intensification potential of a given area. Offered from 1988-90, only 15 municipalities across Ontario took advantage of the program, and of those, only two (Toronto and York) were in the GTA.

4.2.2.6. Neighbours

This program made funds available to assist municipalities in undertaking communication/education-oriented initiatives intended to promote housing intensification options and reduce neighbourhood resistance to intensification planning policies. Funding was available from 1988 to 1989 only. Some municipalities used these funds to implement communication goals of the MHS Intensification Study.

4.2.3. Market Intervention

4.2.3.1. Home Planning Advisory Service

This program provided funding to assist municipalities in establishing and operating a "hand-holding" function to assist small-scale producers through the design, development approval and construction associated with intensification and renovation projects. Again, this could be an element in implementing a municipality's MHS Intensification Study.

4.2.3.2. Add-A-Unit

Operated between 1983 and 1985, Add-A-Unit offered interest-free loans to homeowners to add accessory units (such as basement apartments) to their houses. As a pilot program, it was offered only in four Ontario municipalities: Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and Thunder Bay. In 1986, it was folded into the Convert-to-Rent Program.

4.2.3.3. Convert-to-Rent

This program offered interest-free loans (of up to $7000 when the program ended in 1990) to owners of detached dwellings to encourage them to add an accessory unit.

4.2.4. Summary

In the 1970s and early 1980s, intensification policies were motivated by the need to conserve agricultural land and energy, and to encourage the rehabilitation and conversion of existing

housing. As the energy crisis waned in the early 1980s and high interest rates and recession slowed down suburban development temporarily, the rationale for intensification shifted from resource conservation to addressing certain problems in the supply of housing: the need to encourage privately created units suitable for senior citizens and lower-income households through the conversion and infill process. This issue dovetailed with the mounting fiscal problems experienced by the province: intensification was increasingly seen as a way of optimizing the use of existing infrastructure in central areas with declining populations and reducing the need for costly new infrastructure investment on the periphery, and to reduce the demand for provincially-subsidized housing units.

Regardless of the motivation, provincial policies and programs in this period appear to have met with little success. Although the Food Land Guidelines continued to be in effect into the 1990s, "the general feeling among the agricultural community and others is that low-density urban sprawl on quality farmland has continued relatively unhampered by policy" (Commission on Planning and Development Reform, 1993: 25). Rural planning was being done through the consents process: municipalities in Ontario granted 12,200 severances in 1988, up from the 3,965 granted in 1982 (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1989). As for the Land-Use Planning for Energy Conservation Guidelines, officials at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs acknowledged that they seemed to have vanished without a trace and appeared to have had little impact on municipal plans or the plan approval process. A series of program evaluation studies (e.g., Cresap/Barnard, 1988; Jerome Markson Architects et al., 1985) showed that the market intervention programs were meeting with some success in terms of the uptake by property owners and the creation of new units, but by the turn of the 1990s, funding for most of these programs was being wound up and the money transferred to the NDP's job creation strategy, the JobsOntario Community Action Program. This was a community economic development program that had no objectives specifically related to intensification. At any rate, municipal intransigence to adapting planning regulations was presenting a formidable barrier to their wider success. As a senior official in the Ministry of Housing wrote:

> By the end of the decade, community opposition to intensification, particularly small scale intensification within neighbourhoods, was increasing. A component of the Convert-to-Rent program which supported the conversion of single-family homes to create accessory apartments was really only successful in the City of Toronto, which was virtually the only municipality in Ontario in which the zoning by-law permitted these apartments in any significant way. In response, the new housing Minister attempted to directly influence local plans and zoning regulations which prohibited these uses for the first time through the introduction of a policy statement under the *Planning Act* (Borooah, 1992: 4)..

The policy statement referred to in this quotation was the first component of a renewed provincial campaign to reduce sprawl, encourage intensification of already built up areas, and increase the density of new residential development. I turn now to a consideration of each of these policies.

4.3. Provincial Policy 1989-1995

4.3.1. Introduction

The provincial policy framework as it has evolved from 1989 is described in this section, organized according to the units of analysis identified in Chapter 3: i.e., growth management policies, housing supply policies, and urban structure policies. The reader will recall from the discussion in the last chapter that these rubrics provide a convenient logical structure for describing and evaluating intensification policies in Ontario, not only because they capture the main thrust of provincial and regional policies relevant to the intensity of residential land use, but also because they correspond to the categorization of policies in municipal official plans. We turn now to a consideration of provincial policies falling under each rubric.

4.3.2. Housing Supply Policies

4.3.2.1. Introduction

One of the most important expressions of the provincial policy interest in intensification is the Land-Use Planning for Housing Policy Statement (or the Housing Policy Statement), approved by the Ontario Cabinet on July 13, 1989 and jointly announced by Chaviva Hosek, the Minister of Housing and John Eakins, the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The Housing Policy Statement was one among a small number of other such statements adopted under Section 3 of the 1983 *Planning Act*, which gave the province the authority to issue policy statements that other ministries and municipal authorities must have "regard to" in their decisions. According to Kanter (1992: 5), "the Housing Policy Statement reflected increasing provincial interest in the impact of planning decisions on housing cost and design, an area which had previously been left to municipalities."

The Housing Policy Statement was an attempt to address problems of housing supply that had reached crisis proportions in the last half of the 1980s. Although many regions of the province were experiencing problems, the government was particularly aware of deteriorating conditions in the GTA. Before going on to describe the Housing Policy Statement, I will briefly review key elements of the context in which the policy was formulated and adopted.

4.3.2.2. Policy Context[3]

4.3.2.2.1. Demographic Trends

A number of important demographic trends lay behind some of the housing issues that will be discussed in the following sections: population growth, declining household size, and housing starts across the province.

Ontario's population had increased steadily since 1961, rising from about 6.2 million to 9.9 million in 1991. At the same time, the average household size had declined from about 3.7 in 1961 to 2.7 in 1991, a decline of 27 percent in 30 years (Statistics Canada, 1991). The decreasing household size can be attributed largely to family households having fewer children and to an aging population. The result was an increased number of "empty-nester" households. Population increases, coupled with a decline in average household size, resulted in a rising demand for smaller dwellings.

4.3.2.2.2. Housing Affordability

The Housing Policy Statement was responding largely to a housing affordability problem that had been gathering force since the middle of the decade but reached crisis proportions in 1988 and 1989. Very high mortgage rates persisted throughout the decade and there was a dramatic rise in resale housing costs. Although affordability had become an issue elsewhere in the province, it was especially pronounced in the GTA: the average resale price rose from $102,318 in 1984 to $273,698 in 1989 (Canadian Real Estate Association, 1991). In Burlington, for example, housing prices had tripled over that 10-year period, doubling in the last three years of the decade alone. Frequently the rate of increase was greatest for smaller residential units, suggesting unmet market demand for medium-density housing.

A poll conducted across most of the GTA in 1988 showed that housing affordability and supply were major political issues for residents. It showed that almost 86 percent of respondents were dissatisfied at the lack of affordable housing in the area and 60 percent were very dissatisfied. Nearly 60 ranked housing problems among the area's top three concerns. The poll revealed that dissatisfaction was almost as high among suburban municipalities as within Metropolitan Toronto(*Toronto Star*, May 20, 1989: A1, A8).

According to a report published by Peel's regional chief administrative officer: "Peel Region is experiencing a housing affordability crisis as serious as some of the older urban centres in Canada and perhaps even more so because of the rapid rate of population growth," (quoted in *Toronto Star*, January 5, 1988: A1). The report went on to note that most of the housing being planned and developed in the region was aimed at the higher end of the market, reflecting the demand for larger houses on large lots for second- and third-time home buyers.

Besides the personal implications for those unable to find adequate housing, high housing prices were widely considered to be responsible for a number of other negative effects of provincial concern. First, provincial officials thought that skyrocketing housing prices would force both homebuyers and industry to seek out new land farther and farther beyond Metro's border, thus contributing to urban sprawl (*Toronto Star*, April 22, 1989: E1). Secondly, as the Minister of Housing pointed out, "many businesses and professions are finding it difficult to attract talented young employees" to the Toronto area because of the high cost of housing, leading to a loss of employment in the area (*Toronto Star*, March 2, 1989: A7).

4.3.2.2.3. Suburban Resistance to Social and Rental Housing

Another issue that the government intended to address with the Housing Policy Statement was suburban resistance to social housing projects, which were almost exclusively higher density in form. Within the GTA, of particular concern was the low rate of production of rental and social housing in the surrounding regions and the concentration of such units in Metropolitan Toronto. In 1989, out of a total of 139,500 social housing units in the GTA, 106,100 units or 76 percent were in Metro. In York Region, where resistance to social housing was strongest among the GTA suburban municipalities, government-assisted housing made up only 3.5 percent of the housing stock in 1989, compared to over 10 percent in Metro, and only 16.4 percent of housing stock was for rent compared to nearly 60 percent in Metro. Of the 30,000 new assisted units being planned for Ontario, only 700 had been approved for York Region. Municipal councillors were frequently opposed to social housing in their municipalities and would use their planning powers—such as with rezoning applications or even site plan approval in an area already zoned for higher-density housing—to defeat proposals being put forward by non-profit and co-op groups (*Toronto Star*, March 16, 1989; February 20, 1989: A20).

4.3.2.2.4. Exclusionary Planning

Exclusionary planning refers to the municipal practice of designating only for low-density development, excluding higher-density, cheaper housing. Often, these practices are motivated by a desire to maintain an "exclusive neighbourhood" image or to avoid any negative fiscal implications associated with providing social services for lower-income residents.

The suburban growth surge in the latter half of the 1980s was serving primarily an upscale market. Developers were building houses for the richest sectors of the regional population. Of course, not all suburban municipalities in the GTA were accused of such practices, but some certainly were. For instance, developers complained about Oakville's 40-foot minimum frontage regulation, and Vaughan mayor Lorna Jackson was criticized for her

pledge to keep low-cost housing out of the town of 85,000 by preserving the status quo of detached and above-average priced homes (*Toronto Star*, December 10, 1989: E19).

Among planners in the region, Richmond Hill also had a reputation of exclusive zoning. According to one local planner: "Council sees Richmond Hill as a single detached community." Although, council would approve high-density housing, this was largely limited to condominium development. "Council was enamoured of single detached and condominium housing all through the 1980s, they wouldn't approve any medium-density low rises. It's a social perception that good people live in condo apartments or detached housing but bad people live in townhouses."

The ministry was hearing complaints from builders such as the Metropolitan Toronto Home Builders Association that they were being stymied in their efforts to produce cheaper housing because some municipalities would not zone land for smaller lots. "Builders have no problem constructing the upscale or more expensive homes," said the president of the Association:

> the problem is on the affordability side. There is a real shortage of townhouse lots. Many builders would like to enter this particular type of market but there is no land available. It is virtually almost nil. Municipalities have the responsibility for planning. Surely they have the demographic information which shows there is a need for the first-time buyer to purchase a home. There is a significant need for smaller lots (*Toronto Star*, January 9, 1988: E1).

4.3.2.2.5. Land Supply and Servicing

The province's analysis pointed to land supply as a key reason for the dramatic increases in housing prices in the GTA. Developers complained to the province that municipalities were failing to keep up with the demand for serviced land and that this was affecting housing prices. "The most immediate challenge [to the industry] is the cost of land. Unless the supply of serviced land is increased [by municipalities], the cost of land will continue to rise in the face of the anticipated demand for new residential, commercial and industrial development" said John Switzer, president of the Urban Development Institute. He went on to criticize municipalities: "The resistance of municipalities, and ratepayers to higher-density development, the long and complicated planning process, municipal development standards and excessive lot levies will remain as issues in 1988" (*Toronto Star*, January 2, 1988: G1).

In some areas, battles erupted over servicing for blocks of land, and charges of political corruption flew. In other cases, developers with committed services failed to move ahead with development projects thereby tying up those services and preventing other developers from moving ahead. Given the rapidly rising price of housing in the area, some

owners intentionally kept their land undeveloped (thereby reducing carrying costs), while waiting for higher returns.[4]

Several municipalities in suburban regions of the GTA had imposed, or threatened to impose, growth freezes by restricting the supply of serviced land for new development. Growth freezes, it appears, were undertaken at least partially in order to force the provincial government to increase funding for services so as to maintain service levels as growth proceeded. In Brampton, for instance, a freeze was placed on residential development by municipal council pending increases in provincial funding for transportation services. In the same municipality, school boards also attempted to freeze development in order to avoid congestion of the school system. Growth freezes were also imposed in Oakville, and threatened in Vaughan (*Toronto Star*, March 7, 1989: A7).

4.3.2.2.6. Addressing Regulatory Barriers to Intensification

Policy advice to the government had been moving in the direction of a more direct provincial role in land-use planning issues affecting housing provision. The above mentioned multi-volume *Study of Residential Intensification and Rental Housing Conservation*, found that "existing municipal by-laws, official plans and development approval practices and procedures constitute a major constraint to realizing intensification opportunities to any major degree through the province" and pointed to a number of provincial instruments that could be used to help overcome these barriers. However, the recommendations were relatively gentle, including education campaigns and minor changes to legislation such as the section of the *Planning Act* dealing with minor variances.

In 1987, an influential report by Eli Comay[5] once again drew attention to municipal practices that were serving as regulatory barriers to housing intensification. Concerned mostly with conversion of single detached housing, the creation of housing in non-residential buildings, and infill housing, the report's author noted that municipal planning regulations have an inhibitory effect on intensification:

- the narrow scope and rigid definitions for permitted uses, which effectively render much of the existing low-density housing stock inaccessible to most of particular housing types in question
- because of this, most intensification proposals automatically trigger the rezoning process, which in turn brings into play the full force of prevailing neighbourhood attitudes and opposition to such housing.

The report made a strong case for considering housing regulation as a provincial rather than exclusively municipal issue. Noting that the "prevailing practice is to treat these matters as being primarily for local municipalities to decide for themselves," he noticed that the latitude of the *Planning Act* for the province to pursue its interests had not been exercised in

the housing field. "This, in the end, represents the core issue" in dealing with the regulatory framework affecting housing intensification (Comay Planning Consultants Ltd., 1987: 4).

His assumption was that "the determination of what takes place on the ground (use), and how it takes place (performance), will remain a local responsibility in the first instance. But it is also accepted that in the furtherance of provincial interests the provincial government has the authority to restrict the way in which municipalities and other local agencies exercise this responsibility. It is assumed, in other words, that Provincial Ministers have the authority to act on behalf of the provincial interest" (6).

4.3.2.3. The Housing Policy Statement[6]

4.3.2.3.1. Introduction

The Land-Use Planning for Housing Policy Statement (the "Housing Policy Statement") was issued jointly by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Housing, by Order-in-Council dated July 13, 1989, pursuant to s. 3(5) of the *Planning Act*, 1983. It represented the formal expression of the provincial interest in overcoming the obstacles "to ensuring that decision-makers have regard to the provincial interest in housing when making land-use decisions" (Brown, 1990: 1).

According to Section 3 of the 1983 *Planning Act*, policy statements apply to "any authority that affects any planning matter." This includes municipal councils, local boards, the OMB and other provincial ministries, but it is clear that the primary target of the policy statement was municipal councils. Municipalities must "have regard to" policy statements in their official plans and official plan amendments, zoning bylaw decisions, and decisions regarding the processing of individual development proposals. What does "have regard to" entail in terms of the discretion of municipal officials? A provincial planner has written on this topic:

> In working with a policy statement, a municipality must first determine if the policy applies in a particular instance. If the statement is applicable, its objectives should be reflected as closely as possible in local policies. When reviewing or approving municipal policies provincial authorities will take a similar approach, i.e., is a particular policy statement applicable, did the municipality have regard to it and is it adequately reflected? If it is not, has the municipality demonstrated how and why it could not meet the policy? In a similar way the OMB must "have regard to" policy statements in adjudicating matters referred or appealed to it. In cases where a statement appears not to have been taken into account, the onus will on the municipality to demonstrate to the OMB why the policy could not be followed (Fitzpatrick, 1992: 399-400.

Thus, policy statements do not require that municipalities comply rigidly, rather they tread a line between being directive and specific enough to be meaningful, yet flexible enough to allow realistic interpretation in varying circumstances and in different geographical areas of the

province. However, the onus is on municipalities to show why the policy might not apply to them.

4.3.2.3.2. Description

The Housing Policy Statement had five components: two housing supply elements addressing the range of housing types in new development and the intensification of existing areas; a growth management policy relating to the supply of land for residential development; and two more general elements, streamlining the planning process and monitoring. Each of these will be considered in turn.

4.3.2.3.2.1. Range and mix of housing

The policy statement encouraged the formation of municipal planning policies that would increase housing choices in the context of the local housing market. Choice was interpreted in three dimensions: a variety of built forms, a variety of tenures, and unit prices. It required that municipalities:

- designate lands in the official plan specifying appropriate residential uses and densities
- establish policies in the official plan so that the range of housing types—including housing defined as "affordable"—be distributed throughout the municipality on lands designated for residential use
- incorporate implementation policies in the official plan to assist in achieving the identified range of housing types
- establish policies and standards to enable at least 25 percent of new development (in either greenfield or existing areas) to be affordable.[7]

4.3.2.3.2.2. Intensification of Existing Areas

The fourth component of the policy statement was residential intensification in already built-up areas. This section directed municipalities to adopt policies that would promote intensification activities such as infill housing, redevelopment of residential or non-residential lands, conversion of non-residential structures to residential use, and the creation of accessory apartments. The purpose was to "identify opportunities to increase the supply of housing through better use of existing resources, building or serviced sites to meet changing demographic trends and housing demands" (Ontario, 1989: 8). In carrying out this purpose, municipalities were to designate areas in the official plan where each form of residential intensification would be permitted. Municipalities could restrict intensification locations on the basis of the following criteria only:

- the physical potential of the existing building stock or previously developed sites to accommodate the identified forms of intensification

• the ability of existing services to support new households in the affected area
• the potential demand for these forms of accommodation.

Otherwise, "[m]unicipalities are required to designate all sites and/or areas that meet these tests for specific forms of residential intensification" (Brown, 1990: 7-8).

4.3.2.3.2.3. Land Supply

The policy statement required that municipal governments maintain a 10-year supply of land designated for development within a 20-year planning frame, that they identify the projected servicing needs for these lands, and that they maintain at least a three-year supply of draft approved and/or registered lots and blocks for new residential development at all times.

The implementation guidelines that accompanied the policy statement set out a procedure by which municipalities would be expected to estimate the amount of land needed to satisfy this provision. Briefly, this involved a series of projections of population growth over five, 10 and 20 years. Upper-tier municipalities would establish their growth projections first and then allocate the expected growth to lower-tier municipalities, based on factors such as the feasibility of providing infrastructure, the impact of new employment opportunities, the projected composition of households, and the potential for intensification within the community.

In order to maintain a three-year supply of lots and blocks, municipalities with land being subdivided for development were required to create an inventory of existing undeveloped lands at the draft approved/final approved stage and project targets of demand for subdivided lands for three years. The implementation guidelines recognize, however, that the demand for new subdivision units would change from year to year, so the actual targets did not need to be included in the plan.

4.3.2.3.2.4. Streamlining

The policy statement required that municipalities implement procedures to reduce the time necessary to process residential applications. This measure was intended to reduce the carrying costs associated with housing development (and hopefully, housing prices) and to increase the supply of new housing.

4.3.2.3.2.5. Monitoring

The policy statement also referred to monitoring issues. This was intended to provide some mechanism by which planners could track the implementation of provincial policy objectives. It called on municipalities to adopt official plan policies to review:

• the adequacy of the land supply

- the range of housing forms produced through greenfield development and intensification of existing areas
- house prices for each housing form
- how targets for processing of land-use planning applications were being achieved.

Municipalities were directed to amend their policies if on-going monitoring showed that provincial policy objectives as expressed in the Housing Policy Statement were not being met.

4.3.2.3.3. Response

The response to the Housing Policy Statement centred around the 25 percent affordability target. Opposed were the development and building industry and the larger business community, represented by such groups as the Ontario Alliance for Housing, and the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Trade. Such groups considered the 25 percent target an arbitrary quota that would be impossible to enforce and suggested a range of other policy measures would have been more effective in promoting housing affordability: phasing out rent controls, caps on municipal development charges, and the release of more surplus government land for housing (*Toronto Star*, March 7, 1989; March 3, 1989: A7).

On the other side of the debate was the Affordable Action Housing Group, which considered the policy "muddled and too weak to succeed." The housing coalition, made up of unions, social agencies and church organizations, wanted at least 60 percent of new dwellings to meet the province's affordability guidelines, over twice the target contained in the policy. A similar position was adopted by the Cooperative Housing Association of Ontario, one of the key groups expected to provide low-cost homes in the province. In particular, this association was concerned about the ability of the province to enforce its policy statement on reluctant municipalities (*Toronto Star*, March 3, 1989: A7). The City of Toronto, with an interest in seeing other municipalities in the GTA accept more affordable housing, also considered the policy too weak and lacking in enforcement procedures. City staff suggested that a special committee, made up of housing ministry and GTA municipal officials, be established to forecast the region's 10-year need for affordable housing and to set quotas for each municipality (*Toronto Star*, Feb 7, 1989: A5).

Many Ontario municipalities were not only opposed to the affordable housing target in particular, but to the policy statement in general. In its response to the draft statement, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) noted that:

> Housing is currently not a matter of provincial interest under the *Planning Act*. The Cabinet approval of the proposed Housing Policy Statement will establish the detailed policies created by the proposed Housing Policy Statement as matters of provincial interest. This will present potentially significant

> ramifications for changes in the traditional municipal and provincial roles in the land-use planning process and authority (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1989: 2).

The response stated that: "The Association believes that the... mechanistic and inflexible approach to planning for residential development as present in the Policy Statement [is] inappropriate and will be ineffective in dealing with the housing problems in this province" (1). The policy statement was clearly interpreted as an attack on municipal autonomy: "The Policy Statement attempts to deal with the housing shortage by controlling municipal options in land-use planning" (1).

With respect to the residential intensification section of the policy statement, for instance, the AMO report found that the concept was only supportable as an option for use at the discretion of municipalities. Quoting from its earlier report on the 1981 *Study of Residential Intensification and Rental Housing Conservation*, the report reiterated that:

> AMO believes that zoning has traditionally been a municipal responsibility. Any suggestion to weaken such powers through Provincial intervention is strongly opposed. AMO believes that those municipalities that wish to encourage intensification should revise their official plans and zoning by-laws to facilitate conversion to the degree and in such areas as municipalities believe appropriate... AMO believes it must be left to each municipality to decide to what extent it wants to facilitate such activity (8).

It went on to suggest that the province get its own house in order, as it were, before intervening in municipal planning procedures by directing the province's attention to a number of other matters of provincial responsibility: rent review, tax regulations, rental housing protection, the *Landlord Tenant Act*, infrastructure funding, non-profit housing programs and commercial and industrial development strategies.

The rejection, in fact, was unequivocal: "It is unusual for the Association to express a blanket rejection of a proposed provincial policy. The rejection was not arrived at lightly. Since all municipalities and other authorities must have regard for the Housing Policy Statement it must be a clearly expressed and fair document. It should not put municipalities under the burden of complex, expensive and detailed planning aimed at goals that are unachievable. This Policy Statement does just that" (2).

The province made changes to the policy statement as a result of the input from AMO and other stakeholders, but most were modest relative to the demands for fundamental revisions. The most significant change concerned the definition of affordable housing, which was made more flexible. The draft policy required that half the affordable housing supplied in a municipality be affordable to households with the lowest incomes, i.e., up to the 30th percentile, and the other half to be affordable to households of moderate incomes, i.e., from the 30th to the 60th percentile. The final policy did not mention the two categories, meaning

all the affordable housing could be directed at moderate income households. Other minor changes to the text of the statement were made, with the effect, as noted by Frisken (1990: 61), of removing "language that implies a direct assault on specific municipal planning practices."

Given the categorical response to the statement by the municipal sector, it is not surprising that many municipalities in the GTA did not implement the Housing Policy Statement by making appropriate changes to their official plans. The target date of August 1, 1991 was given to the 104 municipalities within the priority areas, including the 35 municipalities within the Greater Toronto Area, to implement the provisions of the Housing Policy Statement. A review of municipal compliance was performed by Ministry of Housing staff in 1993. It concluded that by the target date, only 54 municipalities—or just over half—had complied with the policy statement. Even those plans fell somewhat short of the expectation of provincial officials. As one complained: "On the one hand they were good. They certainly had regard to the policy statement. But they were not as strong as we had hoped for. The level of detail hasn't been overly enthralling in terms of enthusiastic adoption."

Municipal compliance with the Housing Policy Statement was highest for the land supply aspects of the policy. As one provincial planner put it: "Most municipalities love to designate lots of land. That section was adopted by everybody: everybody wanted a 10-year land supply." Streamlining was also well received by municipalities in their official plans, as were the monitoring provisions of the policy statement.

Compliance was lowest for those aspects of the policy statement dealing with intensification. Only 25 percent of the municipalities surveyed had identified permitted areas for intensification within their official plans. This conclusion was reached even though very broad latitude was given in the interpretation of municipal policies: "For the purpose of this study, even fairly general policies on intensification were identified as having had 'regard to' the Housing Policy Statement. This was regardless of whether the policies were of questionable value, or if other policies could be considered as running counter to them" (Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1993a: 7).

A provincial official involved in the review said: "I know that the intensification policies were the most difficult ones. In fact, a few plans were adopted that included everything else in the Housing Policy Statement but intensification, [especially] those municipalities in high growth and newly urbanizing areas." He attributed the lack of compliance to the fact that: "Developers were not showing that much interest in intensification and the whole concept was considered politically difficult, i.e., saying we are going to support changing neighbourhoods." The review showed that, of the various types of

intensification called for in the policy statement, provisions for basement apartments were the least well implemented in municipal plans.

In 1991, AMO also conducted a survey of the 104 priority municipalities in Ontario to gauge their response to the Housing Policy Statement (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1991a). The report pointed out that by the provincially-imposed deadline many priority municipalities had conducted housing studies and public consultations in preparation for official plan changes, but confirmed that municipalities were having difficulty responding to the Housing Policy Statement.[8] It argued that the policy statement was deeply flawed and required substantial revisions to be implementable by municipalities. Essentially, the report argued for less planning intervention by the province and greater discretion and power at the local level in meeting the policy goals.

The report suggested that there was wide support in the municipal sector for the goals of the Housing Policy Statement but not the means adopted. In particular, municipalities were concerned that they did not have the regulatory instruments to ensure that affordable housing is produced at the end of the planning process:

> the municipal authority to effectively plan for affordable housing production is extremely limited. AMO argued that requiring municipalities to amend their official plans and zoning by-laws only addresses part of the regulatory environment and will not result in anything different than what is being produced already... Many municipalities continue to support the position that they should have the power to ensure that affordable housing actually gets built and that it is actually delivered to targeted income groups at affordable costs (Association of Municipalities of Ontario 1991a: 22-23).

The province had argued that some housing types were intrinsically affordable, e.g., higher-density smaller units. Municipalities argued that developers may use the Housing Policy Statement (e.g., at the OMB) to get approval of higher-density units but there was no guarantee that such units would be brought on stream at affordable prices. In order to ensure production of affordable housing, the report called on the province to pass legislation that would give municipalities sweeping powers to regulate housing prices, rent, occupancy, tenure and affordable housing delivery in the form of Affordable Housing Agreements with developers. The agreements would be executed as a condition of development approval, including rezoning, site plans, variances, subdivision plans, consents, condominium approval, and building permits.

The report went on to summarize the municipal response to the intensification component of the Housing Policy Statement. The main objection was to the so-called "reverse onus" implied by the policy statement: it required municipalities to designate lands for intensification unless it could be shown that one of the three provincial criteria were not met in

particular areas. Not only did this remove local planning discretion, but it also excluded local criteria "such as the compatibility of a proposal with the existing character of a neighbourhood" (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1991a: 35). The report concluded that the criteria for intensification "should be determined through a local consultative process and not be centrally established and applied uniformly across all communities" (36).

4.3.2.4. Apartments in Houses/Residents Rights Act[9]

4.3.2.4.1. Introduction

As the recession deepened and developers themselves began to push municipalities to allow denser, more affordable housing, the conflict between the province and Ontario's municipalities over affordable housing and intensification began to subside. In May of 1992, however, the NDP's throne speech announced that the province would pursue legislation to enforce the provisions of the Housing Policy Statement with respect to basement apartments, once again bringing the province into sharp conflict with municipalities.

According to some observers at least, the production of secondary units may be very promising as a means of supplying affordable housing and as a means of intensifying the urban fabric (Comay, 1994). But municipal councils have generally rejected initiatives to legalize such units or permit them as of right, largely due to the objections of existing residents.[10] This does not mean that homeowners have been actively discouraged from creating such units: officially, the province estimates that there are now about 100,000 illegal units in Ontario with just under half of them within Metropolitan Toronto (Douglas, 1994).

The Housing Policy Statement had included accessory apartments in its intensification provisions, requiring that municipalities adopt official plan policies and zoning provisions allowing accessory apartments in residential zones by August 1, 1991. By the deadline, however, no municipality in priority areas of Ontario had fully complied. In fact, many municipalities had expressed their strong opposition to allowing accessory apartments in single-family neighbourhoods. They demanded that the province meet a long lists of conditions before they would change their official plans and zoning bylaws to permit basement apartments: they proposed that the *Landlord-Tenant Act* be modified making it easier to evict troublesome tenants, that apartments be permitted only in owner-occupied dwellings, and that municipal officials such as fire and building inspectors be given the right of entry for inspections. The province responded that it could not meet these conditions, as many of them would contravene the Charter of Rights or human rights legislation.

Despite the municipal protest, the province was committed to action on this issue for a number of reasons:

- the illegal status of accessory apartments exposed tenants to arbitrary decisions of their landlords, an issue close to the social justice orientation of the NDP government
- unlike other forms of intensification, the province felt that municipal discretion in site-specific zoning for basement apartments was unnecessary, and that no planning process was required to resolve neighbourhood planning issues
- experience with provincial programs in the 1980s had shown that, unlike developers in large-scale intensification projects, homeowners would not go through the rezoning process in order to legally establish their right to a second unit
- accessory apartments were finely tuned to market conditions, making home ownership more affordable during times of rising costs (interest, price of housing) and providing a supply of low cost rental housing without the need for provincial subsidy
- accessory apartments were thought to be the most benign and non-intrusive forms of intensification because they could be produced without changing the exterior appearance of neighbourhoods.

In October of 1992, the province introduced the Apartments in Houses legislation (Bill 90), which would allow home owners to add a second unit to their house, and in the Fall of 1993, these provisions were incorporated into Bill 120, the *Residents Rights Act.* The apartments in houses provisions of the act were proclaimed into law on July 14th, 1994.

4.3.2.4.2. Description

The *Residents Rights Act* amended the *Planning Act* and the *Municipal Act* to prevent municipalities (through official plans and zoning bylaws) from prohibiting accessory apartments in detached, semi-detached, and row houses located in zones that permit residential use. Existing units became legal as long as they met applicable standards (fire, building, planning) and new units in detached, semi-detached, and row houses were permitted as of right. The act also contained provisions to prevent municipalities from creating standards that would effectively block secondary apartments.

Essentially, the act "deemed" itself into municipal zoning by-laws, overriding the local planning process. However, the act did not alter the authority of municipalities to regulate the physical character of the neighbourhoods. Municipalities retained the power to deal with matters such as lot size, lot coverage, yard setbacks, building height, maximum building floor area, and landscaped open space, as long as such standards did not exceed those applied to houses without secondary units.

4.3.2.4.3. Response[11]

The response to apartments in houses legislation was sharply divided. Strongly in favour were social groups organized around issues of housing affordability and access, especially for

disadvantaged groups. The Inclusive Neighbourhoods Coalition, an Ontario-wide coalition of 140 children's aid, legal aid, social housing, and human rights groups, was foremost in this respect. Within the GTA, individual groups, such as the Affordable Housing Action Association in Mississauga, and the Scarborough Housing Work Group, were also supportive of the legislation.

Strongly opposed to the legislation were municipal councils, who saw it as invasion into their area of authority. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario had fought the legislation from its introduction in 1992. Their documented response indicated that "first and foremost AMO objects to the provincial intrusion into the authority for zoning which has been delegated to municipal councils", calling it an unprecedented interference in municipal authority (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1992: 1).[12] The association also brought forward a number of more detailed concerns:

- It objected to the use of binding legislation rather than a policy statement in expressing provincial objectives.
- It claimed that the legislation was a heavy-handed attempt to force a blanket policy on all municipalities across the province, when the problem of affordable housing was only an issue in the largest urban centres. "As a result, many municipalities outside of the major urban centres of the province see this as a policy initiative created in response to a 'Toronto' problem and not one which is sensitive to or reflects the situation in their communities" (4).
- It endorsed the provincial objective of promoting social diversity in neighbourhoods, but claimed that this was "clearly a matter of local policy and neighbourhood design" (5).
- It drew attention to a number of planning concerns such as the impact of accessory units on hard and soft services, which would normally be considered in the rezoning process but were sidestepped by the legislation.

Newspaper analysis over the two-year period between the introduction and proclamation of the apartments in houses legislation shows that municipalities were concerned about a number of other points not raised in the AMO report. Most importantly, municipal councillors were outraged by provincial insensitivity to the fears and expectations of homeowners, i.e., the fear that basement apartments would cause neighbourhood property values to fall and the expectation that neighbourhoods would remain socially exclusive. Whitby's response was typical. The council unanimously rejected the province's draft legislation on apartments in single-family homes. As a column in the *Toronto Star* (September 17, 1992: A5) recounted:

> "They must be thinking of filling these homes with leprechauns," Councillor Joe Drumm said. Buying a dream home will be a nightmare with increased density

> driving property values down in some neighbourhoods if the proposed law is passed, he said. He objected to the part that states the province will remove the municipal ability to impose excessive standards that disallow apartments in homes. "What the province fails to realize is that homeowners in this community have moved here because they find those 'excessive standards' extremely valuable."

Shortly after proclamation of the act, the City of London launched a court challenge against it, with 30 other municipalities participating along with some neighbourhood associations and ratepayer groups.[13]

4.3.3. Urban Structure and Growth Management Policies

4.3.3.1. Introduction

By the turn of the 1990s, the policy context had begun to undergo changes that tended to reduce the urgency of housing supply issues and shift attention to wider issues of urban development. The Toronto story paralleled changes across the province. A sharp reduction in the number of housing starts in the Toronto area following the real estate bust of 1989 relieved many of the policy pressures that had given rise to the Housing Policy Statement in the first place. Growth no longer outstripped land supply, the price of housing fell throughout the region, interest rates were down, the rate of increase in rents gradually declined and rental unit vacancy rates rose. Developers tapped into a stronger market for lower-priced housing and began to build more medium-density housing or detached housing on smaller lots (*Toronto Star*, October 24, 1992: C5).

As alarm over housing affordability and supply faded in the province and the Toronto region, one might have expected intensification itself to decline as a policy issue. But this did not happen. Rather, intensification as a policy goal was adopted by government agencies and social groups that had a much broader urban agenda in mind, i.e., curbing urban sprawl.[14] The critique of urban sprawl was essentially a criticism of the total development pattern typical of post-WWII cities. Curbing sprawl required not only higher-density housing development, but the management of employment growth, infrastructure investment, transportation decisions, and service delivery. In contrast to housing supply, sprawl was discussed not only—or even primarily—as an equity issue. Rather, it was seen to encompass issues of fiscal inefficiency and environmental deterioration. This reflected two important trends: the rising fiscal crisis that embroiled all levels of government in Canada as they struggled to reduce expenditures and to "download" responsibility for service provision;[15] and the blooming environmental movement, raising concern for the protection of environmental features, local and global ecological systems, and farmland.

4.3.3.2. Policy Context

In the early 1990s, a number of provincial bodies had begun to draw attention to the issue of urban development patterns in Ontario. Among these was the Urban Development and Commerce Task Force of the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, which published its final report in March 1992. The report's recommendations were based on the view that low-density, single-detached housing development had serious ecological, economic, and social implications. Ecological problems cited by the Task Force included the excess consumption of energy in transportation and heating associated with low-density development, the pollution of air, water and soil, the loss of farmland and the destruction of the natural environment and wildlife habitat. The economic symptoms included the erosion of the economic base of many Ontario towns, and high infrastructure costs. The social symptoms include the poor distribution of affordable housing. The task force recommended that municipal planning be reformed so as to better integrate environmental and economic issues with land-use planning. It pointed towards the work of the Sewell Commission to propose policy and legislative changes that would contain sprawl and set urban development patterns on a sustainable basis (ORTEE, 1992a).

The Round Table was not the only organization to pin its hopes on the Sewell Commission to reform municipal planning so as to curb urban sprawl. The Ontario Environment Network, the province's largest and most influential coalition of environmental groups, formed the Land-Use Caucus in 1991 and immediately became deeply involved in the work of the Commission. The Caucus had identified urban sprawl as a major environmental issue and used its influence with the Commission (one of the Commissioners was a prominent environmentalist and colleague of the chair of the Land-Use Caucus) to push for strong growth management policies that would protect environmental features from urban development and produce land-use patterns less dependent on car use (OEN, 1992).

The Sewell Commission had been established in 1991 by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to recommend changes to the *Planning Act* (and related policies) that would "restore integrity to the planning process, would make that process more timely and efficient, and would focus more closely on protecting the natural environment" (Commission on Planning and Development Reform, 1992: 1). The Commission immediately identified urban sprawl as one of the key issues with which it had to contend in its recommendations for planning reform (*New Planning News*, November/December, 1991). Environmental and fiscal issues were at the top of the Commission's concerns with sprawl. It pointed to following costs of "low-density, scattered, and sprawling development":

- Servicing: the capital and operating costs of "hard" services, such as sewers and roads, and the operating costs of "soft" services, such as policing.

- Land consumption: the disappearance of prime agricultural land, the loss of open spaces and wetlands.
- Environmental: particularly the costs of ever-increasing automobile use and pressures on ecosystems and watersheds (*New Planning News*, March, 1992: 5).

Two types of sprawl were identified by the Commission, each with serious economic and environmental impacts: scattered growth in unserviced areas at the urban-rural fringe and in rural areas, and low-density residential growth in serviced suburban areas.

The number of severances being granted to agricultural land owners had increased dramatically in the last half of the 1980s and made scattered growth on the urban-rural fringe a significant political issue by the early 1990s.[16] Of particular interest with this type of sprawl were the environmental costs associated with septic-based development and the fiscal costs of trying to provide services to a very scattered population. By 1991, almost one million septic systems had been installed in Ontario, with about 30 percent thought to be failing, causing serious public health concerns. Polluted groundwater, in turn, created pressures for the province to fund municipal water and sewers systems, adding to the fiscal strain. Attempts by the Ministry of Environment and Energy to increase the size of septic-based lots for environmental reasons ran into opposition from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, which objected to taking larger amounts of farmland out of use (*New Planning News*, December, 1991).

Scattered development on the urban fringe also created pressures for expensive service delivery that was fiscally unsustainable. Provincially subsidized services to rural areas included police, fire, snow removal, and school busing, all of which were increased by low-density scattered development (*New Planning News*, July, 1992).

The key environmental and fiscal issue associated with the second type of sprawl—low-density residential growth in serviced suburban areas—is automobile dependence, and to a lesser degree, water and sewer services. The Ontario Round Table's Task Force on Transportation had reported in 1992 that there were roughly 4.6 million cars registered in Ontario, and that per capita energy consumption in the province was one of the highest in the world. As a whole, the transportation sector accounted for about a third of the carbon dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, and volatile organic compounds. Traffic congestion was increasing in the highly urbanized portions of southern Ontario, a result of low-density residential development segregated from employment sources (ORTEE, 1992b).

The fiscal costs associated with road construction and maintenance to support low-density suburban growth presented an increasing burden to a cash-strapped provincial government. About $750 million was spent in 1991 by the provincial government to build and improve local roads, an amount matched by the province's municipalities. To this must be

added the hundreds of millions spent per year by the province on expressway and highway construction. Developing a transit system to service lower-density suburban growth was also very taxing: in 1991, the province contributed $400 million to the operation of public transit systems, with another $600 million raised through local means for this purpose. Operating costs per trip were about $1.75, with costs increasing as the population density of the service area decreased (*New Planning News*, March, 1992).

The costs of providing sewer and water were also being raised as an issue related to low-density suburban development. In 1991, municipalities in Ontario spent about $1 billion to install and maintain water and sewer services. About $150 million, or 15 percent, of the total was provided through grants from the province. This burden was increased by land-consumptive development patterns: "The further underground sewer lines are extended, the higher the cost of furnishing and maintaining service to each household" (*New Planning News*, March, 1992: 7).

Both types of sprawl identified by the Commission were associated with the high rate of agricultural land consumption in Ontario. A widely cited study conducted by Environment Canada (Warren, 1989) showed that 78.3 percent of rural land converted to urban use in Ontario from 1981 to 1986 was prime agricultural land, compared with 53.4 percent for Canada as a whole. The report also indicated that the Toronto urban region converted 10,047 hectares of prime agricultural land, compared to only 2,665 hectares in the Montreal region converted, and 498 hectares in Vancouver. These issues were raised by the Sewell Commission in its critique of urban development patterns in the province (*New Planning News*, March, 1992).

4.3.3.3. Transit-Supportive Land-Use Planning Guidelines

4.3.3.3.1. Introduction

The Transit-Supportive Land-Use Planning Guidelines (Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992) were inspired by an earlier study undertaken for the Ministry of Transportation on the relationship between municipal land-use practices and public transit in the GTA (Frisken and McAree, 1989). That study concluded that there were two main strategies open to governments in the GTA: accept ongoing trends toward urban deconcentration and dispersal as inevitable and irreversible, and to concentrate on accommodating urban transportation systems to them; or to try to influence land-use development in ways that support transit operations and help to sustain transit ridership, thereby making it possible to provide transit service to a large proportion of the urbanized population.

The study noted that:

> The Provincial Government has expressed its interest in municipal transit in the form of generous transit subsidies. Despite this financial commitment, it has no declared interest in promoting regional and municipal land-use policies that benefit transit operation and transit users. On the other hand, the *Planning Act* does include among "Matters of Provincial Interest" a number of items that relate to the way land-use decisions impact on transit. There is a need to determine how the Area's governments are translating that implicit interest into their land-use decisions, and whether there is more they can do (x).

The principal recommendation emanating from the study was that Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Municipal Affairs should collaborate in the creation of guidelines to help municipal and regional planners incorporate into official plans land-use features conducive to transit cost-effectiveness and accessibility. As a result of the study, a joint Ministry of Transportation/ Ministry of Municipal Affairs team, working in conjunction with the IBI Group, developed the Transit-Supportive Guidelines. The policy team included only one representative of the municipal sector, but the draft guidelines were reviewed by municipal planners—in addition to environmentalists, developers and transit organizations—and refined on the basis of the comments received.

As the guidelines themselves indicate, they "represent suggestions and advice to be used at the discretion of municipalities, and are not formal statements of provincial policy" (1). Although many of the participants would have preferred to see transit-supportive principles expressed in a policy statement under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, they realized that this was unrealistic given the fact that few such statements had been adopted and the generally long time frame associated with their development. Furthermore, according to a key member of the study team, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs was a reluctant participant in the process: "they didn't see transit-supportive planning as very high on the [policy] agenda."

4.3.3.3.2. Description

In this section, I summarize the intensification and growth management related provisions of the guidelines. In doing so, I omit other transit-supportive policies that are not relevant here.

4.3.3.3.2.1. Activity Nodes

The guidelines suggest that upper- and lower-tier official plans incorporate provisions to encourage the development of an urban structure based on linked nodes and corridors. Activity nodes allow a better mix of uses and higher development densities. These nodes have the following characteristics:

- Mixed use: By concentrating mixed uses into activity nodes, trip ends are concentrated into discrete locations, making it more convenient to use transit. Uses should include employment, retail, recreational, entertainment and cultural facilities. Residential uses

should also be encouraged in order to make transit services more feasible and to ensure that nodes are populated around the clock.

- Compact: Higher-density residential uses, again, ensure that transit services will be well used. Nodes should be higher-density than surrounding uses, but include a variety of housing types and income levels.
- Hierarchy of nodes: The size, density and variety of uses at nodes should be related to the level of transit services provided. Table 4-1 indicates suggested densities for three nodal types.

Table 4-1: Transit-Supportive Guidelines, Hierarchy of Nodes

Location	Level of Service	Density (fsi)
Large urban centre	Rapid transit or commuter rail	3-5
Larger municipality	Buses	2-4
Small municipality	Buses	1.5-2

Source: Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992.

4.3.3.3.2.2. Corridors

The guidelines conceived of corridors as linear activity nodes along major transit routes. Corridors should be:

- Medium-density: This seems to suggest slightly lower densities than in activity nodes.
- Mixed-use: The notion of the Main Street was used to illustrate this concept—residential, retail, small shopping plazas, local commercial, offices, small scale light industrial and entertainment activities would be encouraged.

4.3.3.3.2.3. Urban Boundaries

In order to discourage scattered residential or commercial development in isolated rural areas which are more difficult to serve by transit, and to provide a long-term context for phasing growth in a compact fashion, the guidelines suggested that municipalities adopt firm urban boundaries. It suggested that the amount of land required to accommodate growth should be calculated at development densities that are sufficiently high to support cost-effective transit operations.

The authors recognized that boundaries could be overly restrictive or overly generous: overly restrictive boundaries could lead to a supply/demand imbalance in local land markets and raise land prices, overly generous urban boundaries could reduce municipal incentive to develop at higher density.

4.3.3.3.2.4. Phasing of development

The guidelines note that "in urban areas where there is a preference for single-family housing, there may be a tendency to develop lower-density uses first, while higher-density activity nodes and corridors may not intensify for some time. If urban boundaries are expanded before the higher-density nodes and corridors begin to intensify, it will be very costly to provide high quality transit services to new urban areas" (33-34). Thus municipalities should:

- avoid pre-servicing areas outside the existing boundary with municipal sewer and water
- designate target densities in official plans for nodes, corridors and residential areas
- require densities in existing areas to reach target levels before designating new land for development
- avoid down-zoning of sites in nodes and corridors.

4.3.3.3.2.5. Minimum Residential Densities

The guidelines identified density as a key factor in transit-supportive land uses. Table 4-2 shows the densities suggested to support various levels of transit use.

Table 4-2: Densities Required to Support Various Levels of Transit Services

Service	Minimum Residential Density Required
Bus, 1 km route spacing, 1 hour service	10 units per hectare adjacent to route
Bus, 1 km route spacing 1/2 hour service	17 units per hectare adjacent to route
Bus, 1 km route spacing frequent service	37 units per hectare adjacent to route
Rapid transit, 5 minutes headways during peak hours.	30 units per hectare average density over extensive areas with higher densities in central areas and around stations.

Source: Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992: 18.

4.3.3.3.3. Response

The guidelines were published in April, 1992 with little fanfare. According to an official at the Ministry of Transportation, they were well-received by environmentalists and transit groups, although some groups claimed that they did not go far enough in terms of proposing targets for minimum densities and that—as guidelines—they did not carry enough legal weight to influence municipal planning.

Precisely because they were discretionary guidelines, they attracted little attention from developers and municipalities. A number of municipalities—such as Kitchener, Kingston Township, Orangeville, and Scarborough—signaled that they were interested in adopting the guidelines in the design of particular developments, but no municipality made an outright commitment to implementing them in a wholesale way. According to Frisken (forthcoming: 23):

> While guidelines lack the authoritative weight of policy statements in the repertory of devices the government can use to influence local land-use decisions, their distribution to planning officials throughout Ontario signals that changes are occurring in the way provincial officials are likely to evaluate municipal planning decisions. In other words, they have changed the context in which municipal planning is carried out to one that is less supportive than in the past of practices that encouraged or acquiesced to low-density sprawl, more supportive of practices that encourage more compact urban forms. Pressures on municipalities to adapt to this new context will continue to conflict with pressures to minimize constraints on new development in the interest of economic growth or to maintain the low-density environment that the majority of suburban residents seem to want.

Within the GTA, the guidelines helped shape regional planning policies by providing a basis for thinking about an appropriate urban structure. This influence will be apparent in the discussion of regional planning policies in Chapter 5.

4.3.3.4. Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines[17]

4.3.3.4.1. Introduction

The Sewell Commission was not to report until 1994 and legislative changes would not take place until 1995. Nonetheless, the Commission had an important policy impact in that it drew attention to the need for planning institutions to address growth management issues. The public discussion engendered by the commission's consultation process was one of the factors that encouraged the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to issue its Growth and Settlement Guidelines in 1992. The guidelines provided municipalities with a statement of provincial goals that would guide provincial planners in reviewing and approving municipal planning decisions such as official plans and official plan amendments.

According to one provincial planner: "Sprawl translated into costs for the province, including the need to upgrade roads, improve ambulance services, fire services, and so on. We wanted to reduce costs by making growth patterns more efficient." Thus, the guidelines were designed to encourage municipalities to direct growth to existing settlement areas and away from environmentally-sensitive areas, prime agricultural lands and resource areas.

Because the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines dealt mostly with the issue of greenfield development, whether on serviced or unserviced land, they were clearly aimed at municipalities in suburban and rural areas. Within the GTA, this meant that the guidelines would be of greater influence in the suburban Regions of Durham, York, Peel, and Halton than in Metropolitan Toronto, where the land base was almost entirely built out.

The guidelines suggested that municipalities develop a vision of what was desirable for the future of a community. "If a common vision is established, the planning process can direct growth and development to appropriate locations in suitable forms to best achieve this vision" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992: 1). They also embodied the new

thinking on sustainable development, incorporating economic, environmental and social considerations. According to the document, land-use planning should:

- contribute to the protection of natural and cultural heritage, promote energy and water efficiency and the conservation and wise management of natural resources to support both environment quality and economic growth
- support economic growth and fiscal efficiency by making use of existing infrastructure and human services and efficient provision of new infrastructure and services to newly developing areas
- recognize social needs by contributing to the accessibility of a full range of resources such as housing and employment, open space and education and health facilities.

The guidelines consolidated and formalized bureaucratic practices that had already been instituted through the ministry's planning approval process. They served to strengthen these practices by placing them in a formal document that received the approval of the provincial cabinet. Cabinet-approved guidelines provided provincial planners with greater legitimacy and authority to negotiate with municipalities over planning policies, such as official and secondary plans.[18] Cabinet approval also meant that the guidelines would carry more weight with and for other ministries involved in municipal land-use planning, i.e., Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Transportation, and the Ministry of Housing.

4.3.3.4.2. Description

According to Kanter (1992: 9):

> The intent of the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines seems to be the establishment of a development hierarchy. In simplified terms, intensification of built-up areas is best; new development near built-up areas may be allowed if densities are high enough; development in other areas is bad, and will only be allowed if the municipality undertakes a comprehensive needs analysis.

Many of provisions of the guidelines reiterated what had already been espoused in pre-existing provincial policies, e.g., the growth management and land designation aspects of the Food Land Guidelines, and the need for an adequate supply of designated and serviced land as in the Housing Policy Statement. The Growth and Settlement Guidelines however, added a number of other dimensions to the policy framework, including the need to exploit intensification opportunities before expanding the urban envelope and to develop at minimum densities. As one official in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs phrased it:

> The primary purpose of the Housing Policy Statement was not to support intensification over greenfield development—it said you should have both. Everybody thought that vast majority of development would still be greenfield. It was trying to address supply of land, support intensification, and accessory

> apartments, integrate servicing, land use and planning. But the mindset has changed dramatically. There is far greater concern about urban sprawl in the GTA than in 1988-89: that's manifested through our ministry's Growth and Settlement Guidelines.

Finally, the guidelines incorporated some policy considerations on urban structure that had been expressed by the Transit Supportive Land-Use Guidelines of 1991. Thus, the main contribution of the guidelines was to place intensification issues in a larger planning context of managing growth. Summarized here are the relevant aspects of the guidelines, presented under the rubrics of the main analytic categories.

4.3.3.4.2.1. Growth Management

- Designating land beyond the existing built-up area should be based on defensible population and employment projections for the municipality.
- Opportunities to accommodate growth within existing built-up areas should be exploited before extending development into greenfield areas.
- Development to be directed away from significant environmental features and areas, prime agricultural lands, and other resource lands.[19]
- Development taking place on previously undeveloped land within a settlement area should occur adjacent to the existing built-up area, wherever practicable.
- Impacts of growth and development on municipal finances have been minimized and are at an acceptable level.
- Designation of new land for development should incorporate a "phased" approach to new development and redevelopment which indicates how growth is to be accommodated in the short-term.
- Minimum densities should be specified to encourage compact new development.

4.3.3.4.2.2. Urban Structure

- Land-use planning should support the efficient provision and use of public transit in municipalities where public transit exists or may be introduced in the future by including policies within the official plan which ensure that overall densities in the area are adequate to support public transit; concentrate development at higher densities within nodes and along arterial roads and other transportation corridors; provide opportunities for a mix of land uses; and ensure that the street layout and location of public facilities and walkways allows for efficient access by transit vehicles and by transit riders.

4.3.3.4.3. Response

The reaction of municipalities and municipal sector representatives to the Growth and Settlement Guidelines was muted. Some municipal officials objected to the fact that the

province had issued the guidelines while the Sewell Commission was studying growth management issues and proposing a provincial policy statement on the topic. Rural officials complained about the infrastructural policies contained in the guidelines, specifically the bias towards communal versus private services in remote areas. In suburban municipalities, there was some resistance to the requirement that they had to explore intensification opportunities before approving greenfield development. A representative of the municipal sector explained that "it was too subjective. Municipalities were expected to address it in official plan, but how could you prove it either way?" Because the guidelines focused on the extension of the urban envelope and services, they had little impact on fully urbanized municipalities such as those in Metropolitan Toronto.

Other stakeholders also responded to the provincial guidelines. The development industry commented that the requirement to use existing infrastructure could be problematic if the appropriate zoning allowing intensification were not in place. Developers were concerned that inconsistencies or a lag between provincial policy guidelines and municipal zoning practices could slow down greenfield development without generating intensification opportunities in the already serviced areas. Environmentalists, in contrast, were much more positive about the guidelines, claiming that they would go very far towards stopping sprawl and preserving important environmental features and functions (*Ontario Environment Network News*, November 1993).

4.3.4. Summary

It is clear from this survey of provincial intensification policies that there was no single "intensification policy" and no single agency responsible for formulating and implementing intensification as a provincial policy objective. Rather, we have seen that there were a number of provincial policies that could be considered part of the intensification policy framework, with a variety of legal standings, and that a range of provincial agencies had been involved in developing the framework.[20] Nonetheless, it is evident that the collection of policies I am calling the intensification policy framework formed an integrated whole, and that individual policies were usually linked in some way to earlier policy initiatives, either responding to failures or problems in prior policies, or incorporating earlier policies into a broader policy context. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 4-1.

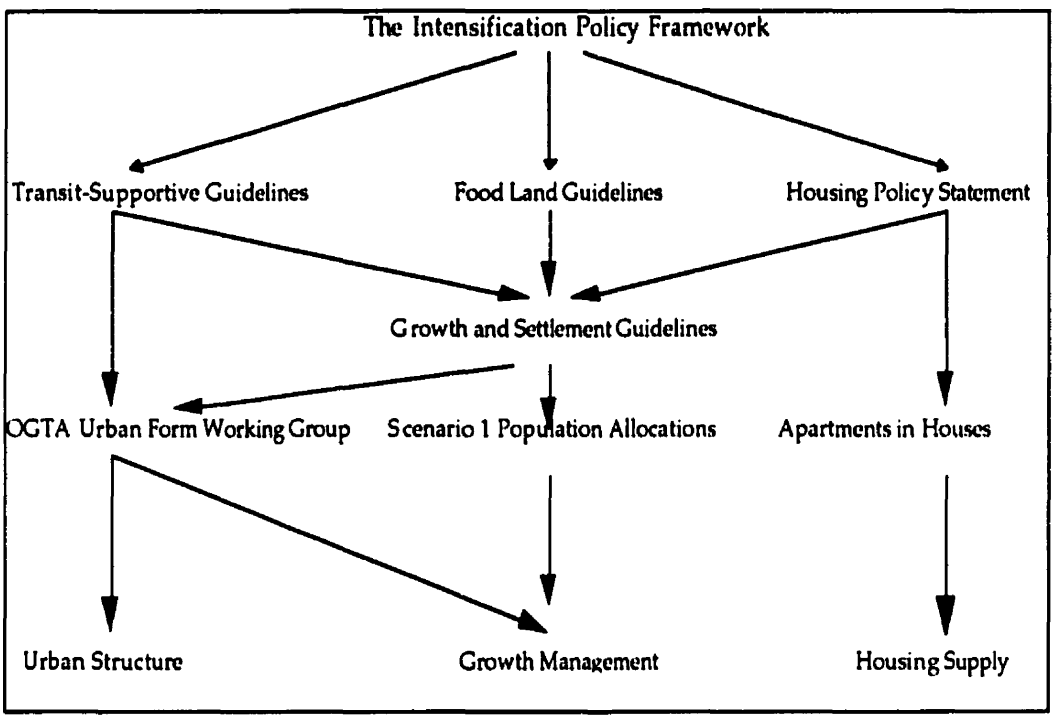


Figure 4-1: Linkages Among Elements of the Intensification Policy Framework

4.4. The 1995 Reforms

This tendency for the policy framework to build on itself and incorporate earlier objectives reached its apogee in the reforms suggested by the Sewell Commission and undertaken in the NDP reform package of March 1995. Three official plans (Mississauga, Pickering and Peel) included in the present study were developed for approval under this reformed planning system. For these reasons, it is important that the 1995 reforms be considered in some detail, an endeavor I undertake in the following sections.

4.4.1. The Sewell Commission

The Commission on Planning and Development Reform was established by the province in 1991 to review the planning process and recommend legislative and policy changes in response to widespread concerns about an aimless planning system that was time-consuming and inefficient, marked by intense conflict between different levels of government and had failed to take environmental consideration into account as a routine aspect of land-use planning. The Commission was chaired by John Sewell, a former Mayor of the City of Toronto. The main goals of the Commission were to streamline the planning process and increase its public openness, redefine provincial and municipal responsibilities, and incorporate environmental issues into land-use planning. One of the key themes advanced by the

Commission was the need for more compact urban development patterns and residential intensification in particular (*New Planning News*, 1992).

4.4.2. Planning Reform

The Commission released its final report in 1994 and its recommendations were substantially incorporated into legislative and policy changes that came into effect in March, 1995.[21] As part of the reform package, a comprehensive set of policy statements was elaborated that incorporated modified versions of previously announced policies, such as the Growth and Settlement Guidelines, the Housing Policy Statement, the Food Land Guidelines, Wetland Policy Statement and so on. Most importantly, the reforms continued the trend towards a policy-driven provincial planning system and away from a system based on close provincial involvement in individual land-use decisions by municipalities. This gave a consistent, across-the-board policy statement status to what had been a confusing array of different policies with different enforcement statuses. Some of the key motifs behind the new comprehensive set of policies was the need to control sprawl, preserve environmental features and agricultural land, and encourage residential intensification.

The new comprehensive set of policy statements strengthened some of the housing supply provisions of the policy statements and guidelines it replaced:

- A higher percentage of affordable housing was required in new development (30 percent instead of 25 percent, and half of this had to be affordable to the lowest 30th percent of household income).[22]
- Small-scale intensification (including infill, rooming, boarding and lodging houses, and apartments in houses) was to be permitted in all residential areas except where infrastructure was inadequate or where there were significant physical constraints. This removed the third criteria of the Housing Policy Statement—i.e., the need to demonstrate demand for such housing—which had served as an excuse for municipalities to avoid designating areas for intensification in the past.
- The requirement that municipalities maintain a reasonable supply of designated and serviced lots on hand for development was modified so as to include lots arising from the designation and servicing of land in the already built-up areas, i.e., from intensification. In the past, this requirement of the Housing Policy Statement had been interpreted to mean an adequate supply of serviced greenfield land, adding to pressures for fringe growth.

Growth management policies contained in the Housing Policy Statement and the Growth and Settlement Guidelines were incorporated into the comprehensive set of policy statements with some modification. On the one hand, provisions that would have municipalities establish minimum densities for new development were dropped and the new

policies were less directive on transit-supportive land use, making no mention of nodes and corridors, transit-supportive densities and street layout. On the other hand, the new policies encouraged municipalities to use residential development standards that facilitate compact and affordable housing.

The comprehensive set of policy statements was backed up by very detailed implementation guidelines, which were developed through consultation with stakeholder groups. These guidelines provided municipalities with further information on the meaning of the policy statements, and suggested a variety of means to fulfill them. They also incorporated key provisions of the Transit Supportive Guidelines discussed earlier in this chapter. Although these guidelines did not become mandatory for municipal planning, they certainly gained further legitimacy by being included in the new implementation guidelines.

The policy changes were accompanied by legislative changes (Bill 163) that had two main goals: to reduce the province's power to intervene in municipal development decisions (i.e., its approval authority), but to give more weight to the province's policy statements (i.e., its policy authority). The first goal was achieved by delegating provincial approval power over official plans, plans of subdivision, condominium plans, and severances to municipal authorities and by removing the province's option of declaring an issue of provincial interest before the OMB. This meant that the province could no longer overturn OMB decisions and have the final say on municipal planning decisions. Changes to the approval authority made little difference in the GTA where upper-tier municipalities had already taken over most of the provincial function in this respect. The Sewell Commission's earlier recommendation that the province eventually remove itself completely from the approvals process—strongly endorsed by municipalities in the province—was retracted in the final recommendations.

The second goal was achieved by requiring that municipal official plans and other planning decisions were to "be consistent with" policy statements under the revised *Planning Act*, replacing the earlier "have regard to." "Be consistent with" is thought to provide less leeway to municipalities in interpreting provincial policy objectives. Essentially this meant that provincial policies would carry more weight at the municipal level and with tribunals such as the OMB. Also important was the provision that the province would stipulate mandatory contents of upper- and lower-tier official plans through regulations. Such contents were likely to include population and housing projections, infrastructure planning, and density provisions.

4.4.3. Response

As might be expected, the response to the Sewell Commission's recommendations and the reform package based upon them were sharply divided, with environmentalists on one side

and developers, home builders, and the municipal sector on the other. Environmentalists perceived that they had won major reforms to the planning system that would protect environmental values through strong, mandatory environmental policies, detailed implementation guidelines, and a continuing provincial presence in municipal planning decisions (*Ontario Environment Network News*, June, 1993). Their input into the process appeared to be based on the assumption that municipalities could not be trusted to protect environmental values in the face of developer pressures. As one briefing document put it:

> The [Sewell Commission's] expectation is that municipalities will assume a more responsible attitude and voluntarily comply with provincial policies once strong, clear policies have been established. But this expectation may be excessively optimistic... [E]ven in clear-cut situations, municipalities may choose to ignore provincial policies – because they don't like them, or because it's politically convenient to approve a questionable development in the name of local boosterism (OEN, 1992).

Although environmentalists continued to demand more concessions right up until the reforms were put in place, it was clear that they had won most of the key conflicts: strong environmental policies and the "be consistent with" provision were preserved against developer- and municipal-sector lobbies to soften them, and the earlier recommendation that the province eventually withdraw from the municipal planning approval process was overturned. Only one major battle was lost: i.e., the Commission's preliminary recommendation that environment take precedence over development when policies conflict was withdrawn in the final package.

The development industry, led by the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association and the UDI, claimed that the new policy statements were rigid and favoured environmental values over economic development. They objected to the "be consistent with" clause on the grounds that it "will result in top-down planning," reduce the discretion of the local planning authorities, i.e., "the ability of local decision-makers to respond to unique circumstances and other local conditions" (1994: 3). In general, the industry suggested that the policy statements be softened by changing modal verbs from "will" to "should", and that they be less prescriptive.

Interestingly, the industry generally supported the growth management provisions with respect to ensuring an adequate land supply, servicing and phasing development, but criticized the vision of compact urban form embedded in the policy statements: their comments dryly noted "We would suggest that not all residents of Ontario would agree with this lifestyle" (7). The strongest language was reserved for the affordable housing policies, which the industry considered unnecessary and unjustified. They expressed the concern that

the revised housing policies would require affordable housing in every project, no matter how large or small.

The municipal sector's response to the reform package was similar to that of the building and development industry. AMO's (1994: 2) overall perspective was that planning reform should lead to "increased municipal decision-making authority," calling for "clearer roles, and a strong municipal role in making planning decisions." In their view, the provincial interest should be formally defined and delimited and the province should speak only through formal policy statements and should eventually withdraw entirely from the approval process. The organization did not support the change to "be consistent with", and they rejected the level of detail that was expressed in the new policy statements: they wanted the province to set only "broad goals and objectives" and to leave the translation of those goals into planning policies up to municipalities. As the association's response to the draft reform package said:

> many of the policies are too specific and directive, focusing on means and not ends and perpetuate the distrust of municipalities' ability to implement, and maintain the integrity of provincial goals and objectives (E-2).

Like the development industry, AMO also broadly endorsed the growth management objectives, but rejected the intensification concept at the heart of the NDP proposals: "The policies blindly endorse a position that compact urban form will solve planning problems, best protect the environment, and result in the optimum allocation of societal resources. This very major assumption remains unexplained or supported"(Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1993: 24). Again, like the development industry, the municipal sector objected most strongly to the provincial housing policy, especially the provision to raise the affordable housing requirement from 25 to 30 percent:

> municipalities have again questioned the appropriateness of setting a province-wide percentage or standard for achieving a certain proportion of affordable housing through the land-use planning process. Our assessment is that it is neither appropriate to apply one standard across Ontario or for the province to expect that land-use designations can meet affordable housing targets. In conclusion, it is recommended that this policy should be brought into line with other policies and therefore not specify a quantity of land for this particular land use (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1994a: 26-27).

The perspective given by AMO represented the views of the association's main constituency, i.e., elected municipal officials. It is important to note, however, that although professional planners did not play a major role in the public debate on planning reform in Ontario, their professional association took quite a different perspective on the reform package than did their political "masters". Comments on the Sewell Commission's work by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (1993) showed that they substantially agreed with

the direction of reform being adopted and with most major reform proposals. Most significantly, planners backed the move to the "be consistent with" enabling clause for policy statements, and, with very minor reservations, endorsed the new policy statements. However, like AMO, they did reject the provision that conflicts between policy statements be resolved in favour of environmental concerns.

4.5. Conclusion

The survey of provincial policies related to residential densities in Ontario has provided an opportunity to explore some of the political and legal dynamics around the issue of intensification. It is clear from the responses to various provincial policy initiatives that municipalities are on guard to protect their discretion and control over land-use decisions, and in this effort they are supported by the development community. This finding is consistent with the expectations of the growth machine theory introduced in Chapter 2 of this thesis: real estate interests appreciate local autonomy because the local sate is more amenable to their influence than senior governments. It should also be noted that growth management policies were generally supported although higher-density new development and intensification of existing areas was more problematic. Finally, the approach of environmental organizations is also consistent with the framework laid out in Chapter 2: i.e., they proposed stronger provincial role in municipal planning and saw local discretion as a prelude to sprawl.

The policies discussed in this chapter also reflected the wide range of instruments available to the province in encouraging residential intensification. Table 4-3 shows the policy objectives addressed by each component of the provincial intensification policy framework. Policy objectives are arranged according to the units of analysis introduced in the last chapter, i.e., growth management, housing supply, and urban structure. The table suggests that the various policies overlap in their policy objectives: growth management had the greatest number of sources of policy support and the urban structure objective had the fewest sources of policy support.

Table 4-3: Province-wide Intensification Policies: Policy Objectives

Policy	Policy Objectives		
	Growth Management	Housing Supply	Urban Structure
Apartments in Houses	X	√	X
Housing Policy Statement	O	√	X
Growth and Settlement Guidelines	√	X	O
Food Land Guidelines	√	X	X
Transit-Supportive Guidelines	√	X	√

Legend: √ = Focus of the policy, O = Considered by the policy, X = Not considered by the policy.

Table 4-4: Province-wide Intensification Policies: Legal Status

Policy	Legal Status			
	Ministry	Date	Original Policy Status	After 1995 Planning Reforms
Apartments in Houses	Housing	1994	Legislation	Legislation
Housing Policy Statement	Housing and Municipal Affairs	1989	Statement under S. 3 of the *Planning Act*	Statement under S. 3 of the *Planning Act*
Growth and Settlement Guidelines	Municipal Affairs	1992	Cabinet-approved Guidelines under S. 2 of the *Planning Act*	Statement under S. 3 of the *Planning Act*
Food Land Guidelines	Agriculture and Food	1978	Cabinet-approved Guidelines under S. 2 of the *Planning Act*	Statement under S. 3 of the *Planning Act*
Transit-Supportive Guidelines	Transportation and Municipal Affairs	1992	Joint Ministerial Guidelines under S. 2 of the *Planning Act*	Guidelines to the Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements

The overview of provincial policies presented in this chapter suggests that—consistent with the expectations of "coercion theory" described in Chapter 2—the general trend in intensification policies over the last 20 years has been towards greater provincial intervention in the municipal land-use planning process: from policy research and suasion through funding programs, to the use of guidelines, policy statements, legislation, and finally, the tightening of

control represented by the 1995 reforms. The legal status of the key elements of the intensification policy framework is shown in Table 4-4.

Apartments in Houses, which used provincial legislation to override municipal planning discretion, had the most legal weight. Next in order of authoritative status was the Housing Policy Statement, which was a formally-adopted policy under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*. Section 3 of the *Planning Act* requires that municipalities "have regard to" the Housing Policy Statement, but this leaves more room for municipal discretion and local interpretation of provincial objectives than does legislation.

Next in the hierarchy of legal weight was the Growth and Settlement Guidelines, which was a "cabinet-approved" document, meaning that it had been endorsed by other ministries to guide their actions on planning matters. This policy document had about the same policy status as the 1978 Food Land Guidelines, whose growth management provisions it largely incorporated. Although the legal basis for the Growth and Settlement Guidelines was not specified in the document, it could have been justified under Section 2 of the *Planning Act* identifying the range of provincial interests. Such cabinet-approved policy guidelines probably provide more leeway in municipal action than formal policy statements and the document itself claims that the guidelines come second if they conflict with provincial policy statements under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*.[23] Lowest in policy status was the Transit-Supportive Guidelines, which was released jointly by the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, but were not an official policy statement and were not cabinet-approved. Theses guidelines did not have the word "policy" in the title and were considered "assistance" to municipalities that wanted their settlements to be transit-supportive.

We may conclude from this review that the housing supply objective had the most legal weight, using both binding legislation and an official policy statement. The growth management objectives had a somewhat weaker expression and the weakest were the urban structure policies contained in the Transit-Supportive Guidelines. After the 1995 reforms to the planning system, the housing supply and growth management objectives achieved equal weight as part of the comprehensive policy package. The urban structure objectives were mentioned in the policy set, but did not serve as a policy focus. The Transit-Supportive Guidelines were incorporated into the policy guidelines.

Together, these policies comprise the province-wide policy framework. These policies have served as a basis for the development of regionally-specific policies within the GTA. This is the topic of the next chapter, to which I now turn.

[1] In 1966, the Minister of Municipal Affairs gave a speech to the effect that new development should be concentrated in existing settlements. This become known as the Urban Development in Rural Areas policy, but it was not codified or made official policy in any way.

[2] As we shall see below, however, many of the provisions of the Food Land Guidelines were incorporated into the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines in 1991.

[3] This section is based on a survey of newspaper articles in the *Toronto Star* from 1988 to 1989 and interviews with planning officials in the Ministry of Housing, Planning and Building Policy Section, and the Industry and Municipal Liaison Section.

[4] For greenfield sites, until land is developed, agricultural assessment applies. These can result in tax rates as little as one-tenth the level of residential rates.

[5] Eli Comay was the man who headed the planning reform commission of the 1970s, resulting in an overhaul of the Ontario *Planning Act* in 1983.

[6] Sources for this section are the Housing Policy Statement itself, the Implementation Guidelines for the statement, and an essay by Evelyn Brown (1990), a member of the provincial unit overseeing the implementation of the statement, the Housing Advocacy Task Force.

[7] The policy statement defined "affordable housing" as housing that would have a market price or rent that would be affordable to households within the lowest 60 percent of the income distribution for the housing region. "Affordable" was defined as annual housing costs that do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income. Every year, the ministry puts out a guideline showing the income of households in the 60th percentile of income earners for a given area, and the amount of housing cost that are affordable to them. Thus, the definition of what counted as affordable housing permitted some local variation within a provincially defined framework.

[8] The province had committed millions of dollars to funding of municipal housing studies that would allow municipalities to identify housing needs and intensification opportunities in implementing the Housing Policy Statement.

[9] This section is based on a survey of newspaper articles in the *Toronto Star* from 1992-1994 and interviews with officials in the Ministry of Housing, Planning and Building Policy Section, and the Industry and Municipal Liaison Section.

[1010] However, a series of planning studies have failed to show that secondary units have significant negative impacts on neighbourhoods (Hulchanski, 1994).

[11] In addition to the cited documents, this section is based on interviews with representatives of the UDI, provincial officials in the Ministry of Housing, Planning and Building Policy Section, and Industry and Municipal Liaison Section , minutes of the GTA Mayors Committee for 1993-1994, and municipal planners in the GTA.

[12] Although AMO and the UDI often took similar positions on issues related to intensification, in this case the development industry was more or less silent. Because it involved only small-scale property owners, the industry had little interest in the issue. Home builders showed somewhat more interest, opposing the legislation on the grounds that they feared legalized secondary units would lead to higher development charges on detached dwellings. The legislation was also opposed by realtors, who believed that basement apartments would damage the prestige value of up-scale neighbourhoods, and by fire chiefs, who doubted that basement apartments could be as safe as conventional dwelling units.

[13] They argued in court that the legislation violates the security of the person in that basement apartments can cause exposure to hazards such as fire and flooding.

[14] Whereas the number of newspaper articles on housing intensification projects declined precipitously from 1989, the number of articles on sprawl grew from 1989 to 1992, easing off only slightly in 1993 and 1994.

[15] In response to its fiscal crisis, the Ontario government passed the Social Contract Act of 1993, which required a reduction in public sector payroll costs by $2 billion, province-wide. In order to achieve the targeted reductions, the province reduced transfers to municipalities by $199.2 million. In addition to staff layoffs and early retirements, municipalities have responded by placing increase emphasis on user fees, reduced services and higher property taxes (Kitchen, 1994).

[16] Although this was an issue in the GTA as well, it was especially pertinent in rural counties, such as Grey County, where the provincial government actually had to suspend the planning powers of the county administration in order to prevent further sprawl (*Globe and Mail*, June 21, 1991: A7).

[17] The information for this section was generated through interviews with officials at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Municipal Policy Development Division, and the Municipal Operations Division.

[18] They did not, however, achieve the status of a policy statement under sections 3 of the Planning Act. Ministry of Municipal Affairs staff did not propose a policy statement because the Sewell Commission was known to be working on similar guidelines that would eventually become part of the comprehensive set of policy statements passed under planning reform in 1995.

[19] The guidelines referenced a number of policies related to the preservation of environmental features and resource areas. Such policies have objectives other than the intensification of land use, but have implications for municipal planning policies related to urban form. These polices includes:

- the Wetlands Policy Statement issued jointly between Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Natural Resources in 1992, but circulated in draft form for public consultation since 1981 and available with "guideline" status since 1984
- the Mineral Aggregate Resources Policy Statement, issued jointly by Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Natural Resources in 1986
- the Flood Plain Planning Policy Statement, issued jointly by Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Municipal Affairs in 1988.

Due to limitations of space, I cannot give these policies the detailed attention they might otherwise enjoy. I can mention, however, that such policies affect urban form primarily due to their impact on "environmental take-outs". This term refers to the dedication of land in order to support ecological functions or resource extraction, making it off-limits to development. This includes natural area designations, significant wetlands, aggregate development areas, floodplains, headwater and recharge areas, in addition to the required buffer areas. Together, these take-outs can amount to a significant proportion of the land base.

A survey of AMO's responses to these policies shows that—compared to provincial housing supply policies—municipalities were generally accepting of provincial policies that would direct growth away from environmentally-sensitive or resource areas (AMO, 1987; 1988; 1991b). Objections to the policies—on detailed issues or on the grounds that they were too prescriptive—were couched in a context of overall support rather than the rejection that characterized AMO's response to the Housing Policy Statement and the *Residents' Rights Act*.

[20] This contrasts with the situation in many US jurisdictions where comprehensive growth management packages have been adopted in single legislative events.

[21] One important differences between the recommendations of the Sewell Commission and Bill 163 concerned lot creation in agricultural areas. The Sewell Commission had recommended that severances on farmland be strictly controlled whereas the planning reform policies allowed severances for a number of reasons, including retirement homes for farmers, a common cause of farmland fragmentation and unserviced rural development.

[22] This provision essentially reversed the single major change in the Housing Policy Statement between its draft and final versions, which had been made in response to municipal objections.

[23] An important fora where this discretion is defined and expressed is the Ontario Municipal Board. I will touch on the OMB's role in Chapter 10.

5 . Regionally-Specific Land-Use Policies

5.1. Introduction

The intensification policies considered in the last chapter related to the province-wide planning framework. The provincial policy framework provided guidance to individual lower- and upper-tier municipalities in preparing land-use plans and in development approval decisions. This chapter describes the policy framework at the regional level, focusing on the activities of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA), a branch of the provincial government. In 1988, the province created the OGTA in order to help coordinate the province's policies affecting growth and development in the region. The principal mandate of the office was to coordinate provincial actions in the region and build consensus on a regional growth management strategy. The office has no legislative basis for its role and no formal planning mandate. It depends for its effectiveness on the willingness of other ministries and governments to implement its recommendations (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, undated).

This chapter begins by describing key elements of the policy context: what gave rise to the widely perceived need for regional land use goals? This will be followed by a brief overview of the two principal elements of the regional policy framework: the population distribution targets and the urban structure vision for the region. Because the OGTA does not directly control land use, implementation of the regional policy framework depends on the willingness of municipalities in the region to reflect the framework in their official plans and other planning decisions. In later chapters, I will examine how these elements of the provincial policy framework are being expressed in the actual planning activities at the level of individual suburban municipalities in the GTA.

5.2. Policy Context

The regional intensification policy framework was established largely between 1989 and 1993 through a series of studies and working groups, coordinated by the OGTA. Before going on to describe and assess the elements of this framework, I present a brief overview of the study region.

5.2.1. Overview of the Study Region

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is an administrative unit defined by the provincial government and corresponds roughly with the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area. The GTA had a population of 4,235,756 in 1991, and covered a land area of 7,200 square kilometers.

At the core of the region is the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro), an upper-tier municipality composed of the City of Toronto and five other lower-tier (or "area") municipalities: York, North York, East York, Etobicoke and Scarborough. Metro was created by the province in 1953 in order to foster coordination of planning, infrastructure and service provision within its borders. Since 1988, it has had a council composed of directly elected representatives together with the mayors of the lower-tier municipalities, who sit on it *ex officio*.

Surrounding Metropolitan Toronto, and created roughly 20 years later to promote efficient capital planning and effective administration of regional services, are four other regional jurisdictions with separate governing councils: the Regional Municipalities of Durham, York, Peel and Halton. Together, these regions are comprised of 24 area municipalities, ranging from large cities such as Oshawa to relatively sparsely populated areas such as East Gwillimbury. In total, therefore, there are 30 lower-tier area municipalities and five upper-tier regional municipalities in the GTA.

Upper-tier governments are responsible for determining the pattern of settlement and for identifying region-wide infrastructure needs such as arterial roads and trunk sewers. Lower-tier governments maintain most of the land use planning powers to control development, although they are subject, through plan approval requirements, to regional and provincial land use policies.

The electoral structure of the four regional municipalities is similar. Each of the upper-tier councils is made up of the heads of council (i.e., mayors and reeves) of each of the area municipalities in the region, plus a number of other councillors who sit on both lower-tier and upper-tier councils (the "double direct" system). Representation of each lower-tier municipality on the upper-tier council is roughly proportional to its population within the regional municipality, although Sancton (1992) has pointed out that the voting power of rural municipalities is greater than warranted by their population and the opposite is true for the more populous suburban municipalities within each region. The largest cities (Oshawa, Markham, Mississauga, and Burlington) in each region have the most votes, but no municipality has a majority of voting members on any regional council. Each regional council selects a non-voting (except in the case of a tie) chair from the general population, i.e., he or she is a non-elected member. Thus, the chair is the only member of an upper-tier council who is not also a member of a lower-tier council.

The Toronto region has no metropolitan-wide governing institution. Since 1988, however, the provincially-created Office for the Greater Toronto Area has provided a coordinating function to help facilitate regional cooperation and improve provincial-municipal relations.

5.2.2. Growth Patterns

Before 1971, most of the region's population growth occurred within what is now called Metropolitan Toronto, but since then, most of the population growth in the region has occurred outside Metropolitan Toronto. Between 1971 and 1991, growth was especially strong to the north and west of Metropolitan Toronto, with York region tripling its population and Peel close behind. Growth has been weaker on the east, with Durham experiencing less than a doubling of its population over that time.

Table 5-1: Changing Population Distribution in the GTA, 1971-1991

Territory	1971 Population		1991 Population	
	(000s)	% of GTA	(000s)	% of GTA
City of Toronto	713	24.42	635	14.99
Metropolitan Toronto	2,090	71.58	2,276	53.74
Durham	215	7.36	409	9.66
York	166	5.68	505	11.92
Peel	260	8.9	733	17.31
Halton	190	6.51	313	7.39
Four Outer Regions	831	28.46	1,960	46.28
GTA	2,920	100.00	4,235	100.00

Source: Statistics Canada

Compared to the rapid growth before 1971, Metropolitan Toronto experienced a stagnation of population growth from 1971 to 1991: from 2.09 million to 2.276 million, only a nine percent increase (see Table 5-1). To bring the chronological trend into relief, consider that between 1961 and 1966, Metropolitan Toronto gained about 40,000 people annually, whereas between 1986 and 1988, Metropolitan Toronto lost an average of 30,000 people per year (*Metro Facts*, Feb. 1992). Between 1971 and 1981, the City of Toronto experienced an absolute population decline from 712,785 to 599,282 but thereafter partially recovered to a 1991 population of 635,395. Relative to population growth in the rest of the GTA, however, the city continues to decline: it accounted for only 4.9 percent of the regional population growth in the years 1986-1991, although it comprised more than 15 percent of the total regional population.

While growth attributable to natural increase had declined over the preceding three decades (birth rates declined while death rates remained constant), the main change in population trends was a dramatic shift in net migration. Before 1971, migration resulted in increasing population in Metro, while it has drained population since then. Of the three sources of net migration into Metro—international, other provinces, and within Ontario—the first two have remained positive over the 1980s.Thus, the net migration out of Metro since 1971 is attributable to losses from Metro to other areas within Ontario, primarily to the

adjacent suburban areas (*Metro Facts*, 1992: 2). York, Peel and Durham regions—in that order—were the primary destinations of migrants from Metro between 1981 and 1991 (*Metro Facts*, 1993: 2).

Table 5-2: Net Migration from Metropolitan Toronto to Ontario Destinations, 1981-91

Region	Net Migrants	Percent Total
York	-189,140	40.95
Peel	-146,090	31.63
Durham	-82,790	17.93
Simcoe	-26,080	5.65
Halton	-17,760	3.85
Total	-461,860	100

Source: (*Metro Facts*, April 1993)

Reflecting on these figures, Metropolitan Toronto's strategic plan noted that: "Without specific intervention, population growth in Metropolitan Toronto will be stagnant... Unless more people are encouraged to reside within Metropolitan Toronto, the population is expected to increase by only five per cent, to approximately 2.3 million people, by the year 2011. With immigration, it can be expected to climb between 2.5 and 2.8 million" (Metropolitan Toronto, 1991: 45).

Densities in the GTA gradually decrease from the centre in concentric zones. At the core of the region is the City of Toronto, which has the highest population density in the GTA (6540.3 persons per square km. in 1991). This density is the highest of any city in Canada, but is moderate for a central city by international standards. Adjacent to the core city is a second zone of municipalities that make up the rest of Metropolitan Toronto. These municipalities have an average density of 3077 persons per square km. Metro as a whole has an average density of 3611 per square km. Beyond the perimeter of Metropolitan Toronto, a ring of municipalities in the 400-2000 people per square km. range is found along Lake Ontario and up Yonge Street as far as Newmarket. Beyond that is a ring of lower-density outer suburban municipalities with less than 400 people per square km..

In 1991, the Toronto CMA had a total of 1,366,695 housing units, 791,825 owned and 574,870 rented. Of these, almost 55 percent were of the single-detached or semi-detached type, and 38 percent of the units were in apartments. Row houses accounted for only six percent of the region's dwellings.

Table 5-3: Housing Types, GTA

Housing Type	Number of Units	Percent
Single-detached	607,445	45
Semi-detached	124,000	9
Row house	84,015	6
Apartment, detached duplex	28,135	2
Apartment building, five or more storeys	386,130	28
Apartment building, less than five storeys	131,175	10
Total	1,366,700	100

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, data supplied.

It is estimated that the region's 1991 population of 4.2 million people will grow to about 6.67 million inhabitants by the year 2021 (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 1993). This assumes an increasing growth rate, from about 66,000 people per year in the 1971-1991 period to about 122,000 per year. The demographic weight of the City of Toronto and Metropolitan Toronto will continue to decline: over half the region's population will reside outside of Metropolitan Toronto by the turn of the century.

The household structure of the region is undergoing rapid changes. The traditional two-parent family with children is declining and there are growing proportions of singles and one-parent families, as well as aging empty-nesters. These trends contribute to a declining household size throughout the region, increasing the demand for smaller dwelling units. Table 5-4 shows that this trend is most pronounced within Metropolitan Toronto, but also affects suburban regions within the GTA.

Table 5-4: Household Size, Metropolitan Toronto and Outer Regions, 1961-1991

Jurisdiction	1961	1971	1981	1991
Metropolitan Toronto	3.76	3.32	2.71	1.59
Four Outer Regions	3.84	3.57	3.16	3.12
GTA	3.78	3.39	3.86	2.81

Source: Metropolitan Toronto, 1995.

5.2.3. Economic Issues

The call for GTA-wide regional planning that emerged in the late 1980s was based primarily on the need to coordinate infrastructure investment after decades of underinvestment, poor infrastructure planning, and high rates of growth. The region had not been subject to any concerted planning effort since the failure of the province's earlier initiative, the Toronto-Centred Region concept, in the mid-1970s. One result of this failure was a serious mismatch between population growth in suburban areas and infrastructure availability. In the eastern

part of the region where infrastructure was furnished to service a much higher population than actually evolved, there was an overcapacity of sewerage. On the western side of the region, where the province had wanted to constrain further growth, water and sewage infrastructure was deficient, and some municipalities, such as Milton and Halton Hills, were forced to declare development freezes in the late 1980s. The municipalities north of Metropolitan Toronto experienced the highest growth rates in the region and sewage facilities were nearly exhausted.

The region had seen very little transportation infrastructure investment since the mid-1970s. Subway and rapid transit expansion had ceased in 1970s after the construction of the Scarborough LRT, and other than the northward extension of Highway 404 and improvements to Highway 427, there had been no major highway expenditures. The resulting traffic congestion that resulted had become the top concern of GTA residents according to a poll conducted in 1989 (*Toronto Star*, May 15, 1989: A1).

A frustrated development industry was among the most vociferous of the proponents for a regional plan of action. In its 1989 report entitled *The Greater Toronto Area Outlook—Year 2011*, the Urban Development Institute (UDI) predicted that the GTA could grow from 3.9 million to 5.3 million people by the year 2011 (UDI, 1989: 7). The report argued that given the magnitude of the expected population increase, drastic measures had to be taken right away to plan for and arrange financing for substantial infrastructure investment. Infrastructure investment was crucial to open up new areas for growth and to minimize the "real and perceived problems created by recent high growth rates in the GTA" (9) which might otherwise lead to growth moratoria.[1]

There was a note of panic discernible in the report: "There is a critical shortage of developable land around Toronto for both the short and the long term. In the short term, the recent boom has devoured most of the supply available in the approval pipeline... In the medium term there is a critical shortage looming for developable lands. In most regions, the supply of land for low-density units will be almost all absorbed within 10 years" (24). The fear was with an infrastructure planning horizon of 15 years, the supply of available land would be exhausted before new infrastructure could be put in place to open up new land for development.

The report noted the uneven development of planning capability among the various regions, with Durham having a well developed growth strategy and an official plan, whereas Peel's plan was indefinitely stalled and York had not yet tried to create a plan. But even if official plans were in place in all regional municipalities, "because regional official plans usually only address matters within their own political jurisdiction—the wider inter-regional concerns of the GTA are likely not to be considered." It therefore called on the province to

"undertake to prepare an overall strategy for future growth, including a sound economic plan that will support and fund that growth" (24).

While the development industry was a vocal advocate of regional planning in the late 1980s, it was certainly not alone in calling for some sort of provincial intervention in the region: other business interests also quietly lobbied for provincial action in the region. By the end of the 1980s, there were already clear signs of economic decline in the area: "slumping automotive markets and increasing world competition, coupled with the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and other trading bloc changes, suggest that it would be unwise to assume that the GTA's economic future will be 'business as usual'" (IBI Group, 1990a: Volume 2: s.3). The GST was being introduced, the Canadian dollar was rising against its US counterpart, and the cost of doing business in Toronto was higher than just across the border in the US (*Toronto Star*, September 7, 1989: E1).[2] Economic growth had begun to slow, and in Metropolitan Toronto, a palpable decline had already set in, although most observers had no idea how serious this would become.[3]

Business interests were concerned that provincial inaction on infrastructure investment was leading to high industrial and commercial land costs as developable land dried up. Increasing traffic congestion in the GTA had given rise to concerns about the economic impacts due to slower movement of goods across the region. The Metropolitan Toronto Goods Movement Study, conducted in 1988 for the Metropolitan Toronto Department of Roads and Traffic, estimated the following costs:

- $1.9 billion of the $6.4 billion total annual costs of goods movement within the GTA or between the GTA and other regions in 1986 could be attributed to traffic congestion
- the cost would rise from this 30 percent level to about 50 percent in 1997
- over the next 10-year period, the costs due to congestion would amount to about $15 billion in 1986 constant dollars.

A 1990 report by the IBI Group commissioned for the Ministry of Transportation concluded that increases in transportation costs on this magnitude could lead to increases in retail costs of products and services sold in the GTA, and a reduced capacity to adopt "just in time" strategies by local industry, requiring higher inventories and inventory costs (IBI Group, 1990b). Congestion would also penalize companies in the GTA relative to other regions because of the difficulty of attracting new employees to the region and the increased pressure on wages due to long commute times. Congestion and commuting costs were also a factor in companies' decisions to locate new plants outside the GTA. Together, these factors could have serious impacts on the competitiveness of business located in the GTA.

The demands of the development and business community for provincial action on coordinating and funding growth in the region were strongly endorsed by the suburban

municipalities of the GTA. This was not surprising, given that suburban regions would be the major beneficiaries of the types of infrastructure development projects being demanded: twinning of the existing York/Durham sanitary sewer to increase its capacity in some places and extending it to open up new areas for development; establishing a lake-based sewer and water system in Halton; construction of Highway 407 across Peel, York and Durham Regions; and extension of Highway 403 through Halton. Given the historic imbalance between population and employment growth in the suburban areas, these municipalities were particularly interested in public investments that would open up new land for commercial and industrial development, increase access to markets, and generally enhance their attractiveness to potential employers.

Another principal stimulus for some sort of coordination of regional growth came from Metropolitan Toronto interests who were concerned about the decline of the regional core. Councillors and planners from Metropolitan Toronto also proclaimed the need for the province "to direct growth in the right direction" and "put some money on the table" (*Toronto Star*, November 4, 1989: A4), but their interests were diametrically opposed to those of the development industry. While the UDI and regional municipalities in the suburbs were interested in promoting growth in greenfield areas on the suburban fringe, from Metropolitan Toronto's perspective this was exactly the problem. In fact, the character of suburban growth was having significant negative spill-over effects in the regional core. A survey done by Metropolitan Toronto in 1986 showed that the low settlement densities in suburban areas outside Metro were accompanied by a dramatic increase in vehicles per household and a concomitant increase in the number of daily trips made by car (see Table 5-5).

Cordon counts conducted by Metropolitan Toronto showed that congestion was particularly bad near the Metropolitan Toronto boundaries, suggesting serious spill-over effects of suburban development. Whereas the CBA saw only a 17 percent increase in traffic into the area in the 14-year period between 1975 and 1989, traffic across the Metropolitan Toronto boundary into the suburban regions increased by 132 percent in the same time period (Metropolitan Toronto, 1990: 5.9). Metro planners predicted that traffic and transit chaos would result from a continuation of suburban growth patterns: they forecasted that the 2.7 million automobile trips per day into, out of, or within Metropolitan Toronto in 1991 could grow to more than 5 million daily by 2021 (Metropolitan Toronto, 1991b).

Table 5-5: Population, Household, Density and Travel Features in the GTA, 1986

Feature	Core*	Inner Suburbs*	Outer Suburbs*
Population	910,400	1,224,300	1,504,500
Households	385,900	434,900	488,900
Residential density**	5,300	2,780	1,440
Vehicles per household	0.96	1.43	1.76
Households with no car	30%	15%	1%
Households with more than one car	21%	40%	64%
Total daily trips per person	1.95	2.13	2.28
Trips made by car	55%	70%	81%
Trips made by transit	32%	22%	9%

* Core includes the City of Toronto, and the higher-density mature suburbs within Metropolitan Toronto. The Inner Suburbs are the remainder of Metropolitan Toronto and the Outer Suburbs are made up of the GTA outside Metropolitan Toronto.
** Persons per square kilometre, urbanized area only.
Source: Canadian Urban Institute, 1992: 18.

Metro interests contested the need for massive infrastructure investment in the suburban regions and wanted to see some limitation on public spending for suburban growth in favour of renewing infrastructure within Metropolitan Toronto (*Toronto Star*, March 8, 1989: A7). Officials noted that virtually all roads in Metropolitan Toronto carry more cars and trucks than they were designed for, and most were over capacity for two hours or more each day. Yet "the province is spending most of its transportation dollars on new roads in the surrounding regions, while Metropolitan Toronto is struggling to get the money it needs to keep the existing system in good repair."[4] However, the province had made it clear that it would not consider funding new infrastructure projects—such as new subway lines and sewer separation—if Metropolitan Toronto did not take measures to increase its population above current trends (*Toronto Star*, May 9, 1989: A6).

5.2.4. Environmental Issues

By the end of the 1980s, environmental issues were once again coming back onto the public agenda after the hiatus in environmental concern that characterized the earlier part of the decade.

The increasing rate of housing production and the increased proportion of housing being built in low-density detached forms had dramatically expanded the urban envelope in

the 1980s, especially to the north of Metropolitan Toronto. Not surprisingly, one of the most vocal of conservation groups at the time was the Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition (STORM). The moraine stretches on an east-west axis across three suburban regions and is directly in the path of the northern expansion of Toronto's urban envelope. STORM, a coalition of environmental and rate payer groups, which took shape in 1989, called for provincial action to stop sprawl and preserve this fragile ecosystem (Alexander, 1991).

Another prominent environmental group was Save the Rouge Valley System. This group aggressively lobbied for setting aside a large linear park area on the eastern flank of Metropolitan Toronto, straddling three upper-tier municipalities. Activists explicitly linked the park to the need to stop formless sprawl and destruction of environmental features by suburbanization (*Toronto Star*, June 10, 1989: A5).

Reflecting these concerns, the Liberal government in 1989 appointed Ron Kanter, a member of the Ontario legislature, to undertake a study of the options for preserving or creating a regional natural heritage system. The Kanter report noted that "The difficulties associated with tremendous growth are being experienced collectively by all five Regions in the GTA. Therefore, it would seem most appropriate to consider strategies and solutions on the same GTA-wide scale" (Kanter, 1990: 6).

Other environmental and transportation groups were also forming at the time and targeting auto-based sprawl as environmentally irresponsible. As we saw in the last chapter, the focus of environmental concern in the early 1980s had been the energy consumption associated with low-density development. This remained an element of environmental concern, but the energy context had changed dramatically in the intervening 10 years. Research had demonstrated that global pollution problems had become major threats to our survival and well-being, many of them associated with the burning of fossil fuels. In fact, "the energy crisis has become an environmental crisis" (Gagnon and Guérard, undated: 2). Thus, environmentalists linked sprawl to issues relating to both energy consumption and the deterioration of environmental quality: acid rain, the greenhouse effect, and reduced air quality. Groups like Environmentalists Plan Transportation came into being towards the end of the decade demanding that growth in the region be better managed in order to reduce automobile dependency (*Toronto Star*, June 3, 1989: D3).

Related to environmental issues was the rising public concern over the erosion of the rural environment. High residential growth rates and the resurgence of demand for single-detached housing in the late 1980s translated into an accelerated consumption of farmland in the suburbanizing areas. Also important were emerging concerns about food security, which were related to anxieties about climate change, world population growth, and the reliability of

long-distance supply of food to the region (Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, 1991).

These concerns gave rise to numerous battles in the area, which pitted development firms against grass-roots groups attempting to protect prime agricultural land. As one observer put it: "This negative portrayal of the rural to urban land conversion process, together with social attitudes giving high value to farmland and agriculture as a way of life, underpin proposals to force urban development into more compact forms" (Beesley, 1994: 15).

Perhaps the greatest boost to awareness that the region was a single entity from an environmental perspective came from the Commission on the Future of Toronto's Waterfront, chaired by David Crombie, a former mayor of Toronto. The Crombie Commission had been established in 1988 to examine issues related to the health of Toronto's waterfront, but extended the geographical scope of its mandate to include the whole region when it realized that Lake Ontario water quality issues could not be separated from development activity in the headwater areas of Toronto's rivers and streams. The commission coined the term "Greater Toronto Bioregion" to express this interdependence. The many studies and reports issued by the commission helped draw public attention to the issue of urban form and the need for regional coordination of growth (Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, 1990).

5.2.5. Social Issues

Speaking with a weaker voice, but also concerned with the negative impacts of regional development patterns were agencies and individuals active on social issues. Their main concerns were to overcome exclusionary zoning practices of suburban communities that were creating a socially homogenous suburban landscape with poor social services for those who needed them, the lack of affordable housing in the region, and the barriers to accessibility that low-density automobile-based development was engendering. As one social service provider in York Region said at the time, "Basically, there's been no planning at all. The developers came in and built these massive developments and there was no thought given, at any level, to the need for support services" (*Toronto Star*, October 2, 1989: A15). Other activists pointed out that car-dependent sprawl had created social polarization by isolating and rendering helpless those who could not afford cars and that addressing poverty had to involve a change in direction of development patterns in the region (*Toronto Star*, June 1, 1989: A25).

Social issues took on new prominence in the region after the NDP won the provincial election of September of 1990. This signaled an important change in the ideological orientation and policies of the provincial government. Besides its strong environmental platform, the

labour-oriented NDP also brought a new interest in social justice issues to Queen's Park. Developers and business interests fell from favour and environmentalists and social justice advocates gained the ear of the new government.

Ruth Grier, the new Minister Responsible for the GTA, announced that the province should alter its thinking on regional issues to include consideration for social equity. Switching from a focus on infrastructure and finance, staff were directed to start thinking about the "human element" in regional planning: e.g., access to decent jobs and social services for all sectors of society, and more democratic participation in the regional planning process. This new emphasis entailed a shift from "hard" efficiency talk to "soft" talk about the concept of community health. This concept included "feeling vital and full of energy, having good social relationships, experiencing a sense of control, having and exercising choice over their lives and living conditions, being able to do things they enjoy, having a sense of purpose in life, income security" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992c: 5).[5]

5.2.6. Summary

The call for regional planning was emanating from a number of actors at the end of the 1980s, who were beginning to appreciate the integrated nature of the region and the inability of specific municipalities to "go it alone" in transportation, land-use, environmental, and housing policy. Most commentators seemed to agree that a dysfunctional system was evolving in the Toronto region. But they were not speaking with one voice. Although it would be an exaggeration to call them "coalitions", two "camps" could be discerned on the regional political landscape: those advocating greater coordination of public investment and provincial transfers in order to remove barriers to conventional growth patterns and avoid economic downturn in the region; and those who wanted to redirect conventional growth patterns in order to prevent a deterioration in the quality of life, polarization of the classes, and environmental decay.

Divided as they were on the solution to the region's problems, the two camps agreed on the need for some form of regional planning. Many observers drew attention to the large number of initiatives under way that required coordination from the provincial government: construction of Highway 407, the creation of a provincial/municipal waste management committee, the *Greater Toronto Greenlands Strategy*, the "Let's Move" subway extension and LRT transportation plan for Metropolitan Toronto and Mississauga, and the new Land-Use Planning Housing Policy Statement. "All these initiatives respond to important planning issues," Metropolitan Toronto's *The GTA: Concepts for the Future* report stated, "but they lack a framework or context within which decisions regarding the future urban form can be made. Each responds to a particular issue but the implications for other initiatives are not

addressed" (Metropolitan Toronto, 1990: 30). This could lead to contradictory strategies, lost opportunities to integrate services in a cost effective way,[6] and unnecessary destruction of natural features and farmland. "These issues illustrate the need to develop a broad concept and strategy for the future GTA as a framework for municipal growth" (30). I turn now to a discussion of the regional strategy that has evolved in the GTA.

5.3. Pre-1989 Regional Policies

Population growth in the Toronto area was very strong after WWII, taking place mostly in the suburban areas immediately adjacent to the City of Toronto. But because the city had decided to stop annexations of surrounding municipalities in 1912 (most of the candidate municipalities were fiscally insolvent) the metropolitan area was not equipped with a strong planning authority to manage growth (Kulisek and Price, 1988).

In response, the provincial government designated a metropolitan planning area, appointed a nine man Toronto and York Planning Board and charged it with preparing an official land use plan for Toronto and its twelve suburbs. In 1949, the Toronto and York Planning Board proposed that the area infrastructure needed for growth be established, but the question remained as to how those services could be effectively provided in an area divided into a number of separate autonomous municipalities. The planning board recommended that political unity be imposed on the metropolitan region by amalgamation of the city proper with its suburbs.

In 1950, the Toronto City Council endorsed the Toronto and York Planning Report and agreed to apply to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for full amalgamation of the city with the suburbs.[7] The proposal was resisted by the now large and affluent suburbs, who were in favour of continued municipal autonomy. The OMB report (known as the Cumming Report after the name of the current chair of the OMB) was issued in 1953, resulting in the passage of the Metropolitan Toronto Act, which marked the beginning of Canada's first experiment in regional government. The boundaries accommodated over 90 percent of the population living and working in Toronto's housing and labour market (Bourne, 1984). From a growth management point of view, Metro Toronto encompassed the areas of high growth and was well equipped to provide the financial basis and the planning coordination to manage the problems associated with growth within its borders.

The Cumming Report warned against the view that the metropolitan boundary should be considered the permanent limit of the jurisdiction (Wronski and Turnbull, 1984). In the meantime, Metropolitan Toronto had been given some planning control over development in its hinterland through the mechanism of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board. While the board lacked a mandate to provide a positive context for growth in the hinterland,[8] it

succeeded in preventing the worst excesses of uncontrolled and uncoordinated growth in the area.

As development pressures began to extend beyond the boundaries of Metropolitan Toronto, however, the planning board proved incapable of effective growth management. Municipalities in the area were experiencing financial distress as growth spilled over local boundaries and as the need for municipal infrastructure outstripped their ability to borrow. Municipalities responded to this stress by adopting strategies that would be destructive in the long-term, including cut-throat competition with neighbouring municipalities to attract commercial and industrial assessment and exclusionary zoning policies to prevent high-density, low-income housing that would burden local infrastructure and services without significantly adding to the assessment base.

The Ontario Committee on Taxation (chaired by Lancelot J. Smith) was set up in 1963 by the provincial government to look into the local taxation and revenue system. The Smith Report, released in 1967, recommended the far-reaching reform of the structure of local government, in particular the creation of regional governments. The province responded by planning a series of regional governments that would eventually blanket the whole province, starting with hot spot areas in the Golden Horseshoe, the Ottawa area and Sudbury.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs of the time, Darcy McKeough, explained in a 1968 speech to the legislature that a regional municipality would "be responsible for planning the broad, overall physical and economic framework for regional growth," and that the boundaries for the new regional governments should cover "the urban centre and its rural hinterland, both of which are, in fact, mutually interdependent" (quoted in Wronski and Turnbull 1984, 129).

These principles were not, however, to be applied to the Toronto region. Instead of expanding the Metropolitan Toronto government to include the growing areas outside the metropolitan boundaries, as envisaged by the OMB in 1953, the province decided to abolish the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board and carve out four regional municipalities from Toronto's hinterland: York Region was established in 1971 and Durham, Peel, and Halton, were created in 1974.

In the absence of a metropolitan planning authority, the responsibility for coordination on a regional scale fell to the province, which developed a large-scale planning vision for the Toronto region through a series of exercises that began in the mid-1960s with the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study (MTARTS) and continued with the Toronto-Centred Region (TCR) concept in the 1970s. According to Gertler (1984: 157-158), the province was responding to a number of pressures that were putting "regionalism" on the political agenda:

- the continuing concentration of new economic growth and population in a few big city-regions
- an increasing sensitivity about the disparity in economic and general cultural opportunities between the different regions of the province
- the spilling of urban settlement far beyond traditional town and city boundaries
- the need to organize services on a scale that crossed present municipal boundaries
- tax and service inequalities within urban-centred regions
- worry about the pressure of population growth on water, air, and agricultural land
- an increasing demand for recreational space coupled with the anxiety about retaining unique natural areas
- a growing gap between the need to address problems at the regional level, and the institutional and financial means for coping with such problems.

Frisken (1990) notes that the TCR concept had as its goals: (1) to put limits on new growth and to contain it, (2) to preserve agricultural, recreational and natural lands, (3) to promote some development in centres away from the Toronto core, and (4) to geographically balance growth in the region by slowing development in the west and encouraging it in the east.

While the TCR concept was adopted as provincial policy in 1971, many of the planning implications of the concept were never formally implemented. Explanations for this failure typically focus on the resistance to the plan offered by municipalities, especially those whose population and employment growth were to be curtailed in the north and west of the region. Observers note that resistance to the regional plan increased as the plan gradually became more detailed, moving from the various growth scenarios of the MTART study, to a single concept plan announced in 1970, to the more detailed population targets contained in the interim status report of 1971, and finally, the Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex (COLUC) task force report of 1974. The latter "was so detailed and precise in its prescriptions of population projections and distribution and land-use allocation among the different municipalities involved that they all complained and the province was terrified. It was accordingly published only as a staff document and not as a statement of government policy" (Wronski, 1984: 131).[9]

The loss of seats in the provincial election of 1975 was widely interpreted as a rebuff to the province's increased involvement in local affairs. In the period following the election, the TCR concept "crumbled, for it had no strength within the province, no strength at the grass roots" (Gertler, 1984: 159).

While municipal resistance was important in derailing the TCR concept, other factors were also at work. There were objections from private landholders whose development

potential would be affected by the plan. Furthermore, a series of provincial policies contradicted the plan, such as the decision to built the York-Durham trunk sewer to support growth in the north; huge land banking investments in the west; the Ontario Housing Action Program to increase the supply of new dwellings, which favoured growth in Peel and York; and the failure of the province to go ahead with major infrastructure investments in the east such as the Pickering airport, the Scarborough expressway and the extension of GO Transit to Oshawa. Economic changes were also important in this respect: the oil crisis of 1973 reoriented thinking on regional planning towards concentrating growth in already built-up areas, fiscal restraint undermined commitment to the major infrastructure projects needed to support the regional plan, and market forces clearly pointed towards greater development in the west than in the east of the region.

By the mid-1970s, it was already becoming apparent that the province was not completely committed to the plan, and hopes for implementation began to fade (COLUC, 1974). By the end of the decade it was clear that most of the aims of the proposal were not going to be realized, with two exceptions: the *Parkway Belt Planning and Development Act* and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* were both passed as offshoots of the TCR plan. They served to limit sprawl in specific areas of the region: the former by creating a greenway to break urbanization to the north and west of Toronto, and the latter by imposing strict planning constraints on development on the Niagara Escarpment, flanking the region on the west.

The best evidence that the TCR concept had failed in its objectives to manage growth in the region was the continuation—or acceleration—of dispersed, relatively unstructured growth in the region. By the end of the 1980s, these development patterns had resulted in serious enough problems on a regional scale that the province initiated a new round of regional planning exercises (Farncombe, 1993).

5.4. Regional Policy 1989-1995: The Office for the Greater Toronto Area

The Office for the Greater Toronto Area was created in 1988 to serve as an institutional mechanism to coordinate provincial activities and represent provincial interests in the GTA. The deputy minister, Gardner Church, was instrumental in promoting the need for regional land use policies and in helping to initiate the consensus building strategy of the office to develop an action plan for the GTA. In contrast to the "top-down" strategy that had failed in the TCR era, he was convinced that a more "bottom-up" approach would be more successful.[10] He is usually credited with bringing the region's diverse government actors, including the 35 municipalities in the region, to the negotiating table for the first time in the region's history.

As we have seen, infrastructure needs identified in the late 1980s were the original impetus to regional planning in the Toronto area. As environmental and social issues joined the mix of concerns about living in the region, provincial planners began to realize that infrastructure exercises could not be adequately undertaken without some larger vision of desirable urban form.[11] In this section, I briefly survey the activities of the OGTA in developing an urban form vision for the region based on two key concepts: the allocation of growth to various regions within the metropolitan area and the adoption of an urban structure vision based on the notion of nodes and corridors.

5.5. Population and Employment Projections

The OGTA's growth management initiative began with a population study, undertaken with the aid of an outside consultant and conducted in close association with the regional municipalities. It forecasted continued strong growth in the region: approximately another two million people would be living in the GTA by 2021, with almost 90 percent of new growth going to the outer regions (Clayton Research, 1989). This report was undertaken by the GTCC in response to concerns that population projections by municipalities in the region far outstripped realistic expectations, with negative consequences for land-use and infrastructure planning in the region.

The Clayton study was widely accepted as realistic projections for the region: "[they] were prepared slowly and thoroughly with full technical input from the regions and represented something approaching unanimity on the scale and distribution of growth within the GTA" (York Region, 1991: 2). They served as the basis for the next growth management study undertaken by the OGTA, the Urban Structure Concepts Study.

5.6. The Urban Structure Concepts Study

In January 1990, the OGTA contracted a private firm (IBI) to explore the implications of the rapid population growth forecasted by the Clayton study. The multi-volume report explored the fiscal, social, and environmental impacts of three regional urban form scenarios—spread, nodal, and central (IBI Group, 1990a).

The central scenario assumed that most new growth (both residential and employment) would be accommodated inside Metropolitan Toronto, concentrated in areas where significant redevelopment potential existed on underutilized lands. The spread scenario represented a continuation of current development patterns, with new population distributed largely outside Metropolitan Toronto in an evenly distributed, low-density pattern, primarily on greenfields land at the fringe. Employment growth was assumed to take place in the downtown Toronto, in the already established suburban subcentres and to a lesser extent, in the adjacent four regions. The nodal scenario assumed roughly the same regional distribution

of population and employment growth as the spread model, but concentrated that growth into higher-density nodes located in suburban areas, resulting in a more compact form.

The selection of the three growth scenarios was based on two related but distinct dimensions in growth management, one relating to the distribution of growth between the suburbs and Metropolitan Toronto (regional growth distribution) and the other relating to the structure of urban growth within suburban areas (urban structure). In terms of the regional growth distribution, either growth could be accommodated within the regional core, i.e., Metropolitan Toronto, or it could be accommodated largely in the suburban areas adjacent to Metropolitan Toronto. In terms of urban structure, suburban growth could be accommodated in the already built up areas or on greenfield sites. This provides four possible scenarios (see Table 5-6), but because Metropolitan Toronto was entirely built-out, greenfield development was not a future option, reducing the plausible scenarios to three. Thus, the IBI scenarios were actually a combination of urban structure options and population distribution options. First, I will address the urban structure dimension, and will therefore concentrate on the difference between the spread and the nodal option. Later, I will discuss the population distribution aspect of the study, best expressed in the contrast between the spread and central scenarios.

Table 5-6: The Logical Structure of the Three IBI Growth Scenario

Regional growth distribution	Bias towards Metropolitan Toronto (central)	Bias toward suburban regions	
Urban structure		Bias towards already built-up areas (nodal)	Bias toward greenfield locations (spread)

5.6.1. Urban Structure

Of course, the nodes and corridors vision was not a new one. It follows in the footsteps of earlier planning attempts to engender an urban structure in the Toronto region:

- the Toronto-Centred Region concept exercise in the 1960s and 70s attempted to establish a region-wide urban structure based on a hierarchy of centres connected by transportation corridors
- within Metropolitan Toronto, the 1976 Central Area Plan of the City of Toronto, other municipal plans in Metropolitan Toronto, and the 1980 Metroplan all were directed towards creating an urban structure on the basis of mixed-use centres.

These earlier urban structure initiatives were based on the perceived need to address an imbalance in growth dynamics, whether that be at the region-wide or Metropolitan Toronto levels. Emerging from a regional economic development strategy, the driving force of the

Toronto-Centred Region concept was the deconcentration of employment growth from the central area in Toronto to outlying centres such as Oshawa, Hamilton, and Peterborough. Decentralized growth was directed into outlying centres in order to increase the functional efficiency of the region and rationalize investment in transportation and other infrastructure. Within Metropolitan Toronto, the City of Toronto's Central Area Plan and the 1980 Metroplan emphasized the need to direct employment growth to the emerging city centres in North York, Scarborough, and Mississauga.[12]

Urban structure planning is important from an intensification point of view because it gives a context in which site-level intensification can be planned: "An area of land which is to be reurbanized must be planned in the context of its location and the potential role defined for it in the overall structure of the Metropolitan region" (Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd., 1991a: 13). C. N. Watson Associates Ltd. (1994: 6.18-6.19) has identified the following benefits of an urban structure based on centres and corridors:

- efficient use of existing infrastructure and services
- higher-density housing opportunities that are in proximity to transit to respond to the demographic needs of those requiring transit support, and the provision of mixed-use centres that support ease of access for all groups
- increased opportunities for closer live/work relationships that conserve energy and respond to changing socioeconomic characteristics
- larger available local labour force, resulting from greater opportunities for a mix and range of housing
- healthy diversity of employment opportunities by providing office and retail development in mixed-use centres
- improved commercial/industrial-to-residential assessment ratio
- more rapid circulation of capital, commodities, information, labour and other inter-activity linkages to the production process
- indirect, spin-off contribution to the profitability and economic activity of other firms in the vicinity.

Table 5-7: Population, Employment, and Spatial Features of the Spread and Nodal Scenarios

Feature	Base Year 1986	Spread 2021	Nodal 2021
Resident population	3,733,000	6,020,000	6,020,000
Total employment	2,079,000	3,440,000	3,440,000
Urbanized area (hectares)	148,200	236,100	205,400
Gross density (P+E/Urbanized area)	15.4	15.8	18.1

Source: IBI, 1990.

Table 5-7 shows some basic figures for the spread versus the nodal scenarios as conceived in the IBI report. The spread option proposed that current development trends continue, i.e., that low-density development would take place on greenfield sites in the suburban regions but slightly higher than those experienced during the past decade in the four suburban regions, reflecting recent trends towards higher-density development. This scenario would require an additional 88,000 hectares of land over that already developed in 1986. Transportation requirements for this scenario would include some improvements in commuter rail and rapid transit lines, but would also require major improvements or extensions of both arterial roads and major highways in the suburban areas.

The nodal option proposed that existing residential and employment centres be strengthened and that new centres be established in existing communities. This scenario would require only 57,000 hectares of additional land over that already developed in 1986. Nodes would be connected by commuter rail or rapid transit in a hierarchical network of three categories. The categories were based on population and employment size, as shown in Table 5-8.

Table 5-8: IBI Report Nodal Characteristics

Node Category	Population Range	Typical Population	Typical Employment
A nodes	75,000 +	100,000	50,000
B nodes	25,000—75,000	50,000	25,000
C nodes	5,000—20,000	10,000	5,000

Source: IBI, 1990.

The IBI scenario envisioned A nodes to be located on major commuter rail or rapid transit lines in communities that were already well established and where sufficient intensification potential was present to allow the emergence of higher-density residential and mixed residential/employment uses. B and C nodes were also to be located on commuter or

rail rapid transit lines (or possible served by express bus), but would be in areas with less intensification potential or that were located farther from the regional centre.

Beyond this simple classification, the report offered little detail as to the nature of the nodes it was proposing: i.e., their size and density, the type of uses that might be found in them, or the nature of the connecting corridors. The locations of nodes were intentionally left vague by the IBI report. They did not propose, for instance, a model showing the spatial hierarchy of nodal types. A map illustrating the concept showed the hypothetical and approximate locations of 42 nodes spread throughout the already urbanized portions of the region, with 27 of them in the four suburban regions outside Metropolitan Toronto. Generally speaking, nodes were located in various city centres, at locations with major redevelopable land sites, and areas likely to see expanded transportation facilities, especially commuter rail and rapid transit.

The IBI report used eight criteria in order to assess the relative benefits and costs of the growth concepts: urban structure, economic impetus, transportation, hard services, greening/environment, human services, external impacts, and overall infrastructure costs. Each of these criteria was further refined into a number of factors, and within each factor one or more measures were developed as a basis for evaluating differences among the three scenarios, for a total of 42 measures.

According to the IBI assessment, the nodal scenario excelled in most measures: it was superior to the spread option on 29 of the 42 measures; the spread option was superior on six; and the two scenarios scored equally on the remaining seven measures.[13] The measures on which the spread scenario did better included the provision of road access to rural areas, the ease of intercity connections, and the availability of open space to residents. The two concepts rate almost equally against the criterion of capital cost required to support them over the next 30 years, but the nodal option fared better in yearly transportation operating costs: $11.1 billion versus $12.0 billion for the spread option.

5.6.2. Distribution of Regional Population Growth

The second growth management dimension identified above related to the distribution of population growth between Metropolitan Toronto and the surrounding suburban regions. As we will see in later chapters of this thesis, the OGTA-led discussion about the desirable distribution of population within the GTA was essential to other efforts to manage growth within the region. In particular, population distribution has served as a basis for negotiations between provincial and regional planners over the amount of land that needs to be designated for new development in regional official plans. Population distribution figures have also been important for infrastructure planning, such as sewer extension and expansion agreements

between the province and regional municipalities. Population projections help guide future land-use decisions in maintaining rights of way for transit or highway development. I turn now to a contrast between the central versus spread concepts, which best express the regional population distribution options.

The spread concept represented the continuation of current development trends characterized by substantial population and employment growth in the suburban regions. This assumed the population distribution that appeared in the Clayton figures from 1989. Under this concept, the population of Metropolitan Toronto would increase by 235,000 by 2021 while the population of the four suburban regions would increase by 2.05 million people.

In contrast, the central concept assumed substantial population and employment growth within Metropolitan Toronto. This scenario would see a considerable reduction in the rate of urbanization beyond Metropolitan Toronto boundaries. As Table 5-9 indicates, this would provide a major redistribution of population away from the Clayton forecast, with a growth of 1.61 million in Metropolitan Toronto to a population of 3.8 million people. The population of the four suburban regions would increase by only 680,000 to 2.2 million people by 2021.

Table 5-9: Regional Population Distribution, IBI Spread vs Central Scenarios

Scenario	Durham	Halton	Metro Toronto	Peel	York	GTA
Base Year (1986)	326,000	271,000	2,193,000	592,000	351,000	3,733,000
Spread 2021	794,000	593,000	2,428,000	1,198,000	1,007,000	6,020,000
Central 2021	475,000	378,000	3,800,000	828,000	540,000	6,020,000

Source: IBI, 1990.

As Table 5-10 shows, redirecting population growth in this fashion would mean a significant reduction in the amount of new land needed and a corresponding rise in the overall settlement density of the region.

Table 5-10: Population, Employment, and Spatial Features of the Spread and Central Scenarios

Feature	Base Year 1986	Spread 2021	Central 2021
Resident population (P)	3,733,000	6,020,000	6,020,000
Total employment (E)	2,079,000	3,440,000	3,440,000
Urbanized area (ha.) (A)	148,200	236,100	182,600
Density (P+E/A)	15.4	15.8	20.4

Source: IBI, 1990.

In comparing the central and spread model along the 42 measures, the report assessed the central concept as superior on 29 measures, the spread model was better on seven measures, and the two concepts equivalent on the six remaining measures.

5.6.3. Report Summary

If we compare the report's assessment of the three growth concepts together, we see that the central option fared best across the 42 measures used to assess the various options. It was considered superior on 22 of them, whereas the nodal and spread options placed first in only six each. The report concluded that the central option made the most efficient use of resources such as land and energy and placed the least stress on environmental features. However, it would require the greatest amount of government regulation to direct population growth from suburban areas to Metropolitan Toronto. It entailed the most dramatic change from the status quo in terms of the population densities and housing types, and choice of transportation mode "with the risks that are inherent in any significant change from the status quo" (IBI, 1990: Summary Report: S-9).

The spread option appeared to be less politically risky in that it would require less change from the status quo in terms of delivery of new housing, lifestyles, and government intervention in the development process. However, it was least compatible with the principles of sustainable development because it would consume the greatest amount of farm land and other environmental features, use the most resources, and produce the most air pollution due to the auto-dependency and long commutes implied by the model.

The nodal option was considered intermediate between the central and spread options with respect to the principles of sustainable development. Relative to the spread option, it would provide a greater range of choice of housing types, community size and character, living styles, transportation modes and human services, while reducing per capita resource requirements and pollution levels.

One could conclude from the study, therefore, that there were clear trade-offs to be made: the substantive benefits to be achieved through a concentrated urban form versus the political feasibility of achieving such an urban form on the ground. However, the consultants were careful not to endorse any one scenario: rather, they emphasized that the study was of a "pre-planning" nature and was intended to stimulate public discussion about future growth issues and the implications for infrastructure investment.

5.6.4. Response[14]

After only six months of study, the IBI findings were published as a seven-volume report in June 1990, and circulated for discussion. All five regions subsequently responded to the

report, as did several local municipalities. Responses were also received from several ministries and non-governmental groups.

Municipalities in the region reported that detailed responses were impossible given the "pre-planning" nature of the study and the lack of any policy prescriptions for achieving the various scenarios. Many municipalities also resented the process involved in the study, claiming that the it was conducted as a breakneck pace and with little technical input from the regions. Notwithstanding these reservations, however, municipalities reported that they accepted the nodal option as a desirable urban structure. In fact, many municipal responses claimed that such a growth pattern was already being pursued, without regional or provincial intervention. York Region's response, for example, claimed:

> As much as the present development in the regions surrounding Metro is being labelled 'spread' or 'sprawl' in actual fact the built environment is evolving as a series of nodes alternating with low-density development. The nodes may not be as concentrated, with as great a diversity of uses or as closely related to public transportation as the ideal model would prescribe but nevertheless they are nodes or concentrations of development. This nodal form of development is occurring with the present level of planning controls (York Region, 1991: 2).

York Region, speaking on behalf of some of its area municipalities, accepted that "the nodal concept appears to show the most promise for further consideration," but indicated that the population figures in the IBI concept were too low to accommodate growth aspirations of some municipalities of the region. In its own response, Vaughan's council endorsed the nodal option on the grounds that, in its interpretation of the model, it did not entail any change from current trends. The Peel response (on behalf of its three area municipalities, Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon) rejected the critique of current suburban development patterns implied in IBI's description of the spread scenario, and claimed that a nodal strategy was already being pursued. Peel suggested the OGTA adopt an "exaggerated nodal option" that would permit greater population and employment growth than foreseen by the IBI nodal scenario.[15] In its response, Durham favoured what it called a "macro nodal" urban structure that would result in less concentrated development than IBI's nodal concept (Durham, 1990).

Some of the smaller municipalities, such as East Gwillimbury (1990) and Whitchurch-Stouffville (1991), endorsed the nodal option, provided they were designated as nodes for future development. Other smaller municipalities, such as King Township (1991), accepted that their growth options might be curtailed by the nodal structure proposed by IBI on the condition that compensation be offered by the province to make up for the negative fiscal impacts.

Another issue raised in municipal responses to the study concerned the balance between population and employment projections. Richmond Hill (1991), for instance, seemed content to accept the population projections of the nodal scenario, saying that they were actually greater than its own forecasts, but balked at the reduced employment projections implied by the scenario. In its response to the IBI report, the town asserted its need for an increased industrial assessment base and its unwillingness to accept the role of a "dormitory community" to Metropolitan Toronto.

According to Metropolitan Toronto response to the IBI report, the nodal option suffered from having too many suburban nodes in general, and from having them too scattered across suburban regions. Instead, Metro proposed a modified nodal structure called "reinvestment centres" that preserved the number of nodes in Metropolitan Toronto but halved the number of primary growth centres in the suburban regions, dropping those that were further removed from Metropolitan Toronto boundaries. Metro's position was that suburban nodes were acceptable as long as growth was phased so as to achieve density objectives within Metro before investing in nodal development outside Metro's boundaries (Metropolitan Toronto, 1990).

In its response to the IBI study, the City of Toronto declined to endorse any particular urban structure, claiming that the report "primarily addresses the problems of low-density suburban growth." However, it did endorse the concept of intensification and said that the city would support any urban structure that reduced auto commutes into the central city (City of Toronto, 1991: 41). North York and Etobicoke city councils passed resolutions endorsing the nodal option. The Scarborough council adopted the nodal scenario on the condition that it be supported by provincial funding in infrastructure (Metropolitan Toronto, 1991).

Interestingly, some provincial agencies expressed concern about the nodal option. Most importantly, the Ministry of Housing, while supportive of the nodal concept in principle, doubted that it could be achieved given the public's traditional resistance to intensification. The ministry pointed to the potential adverse effects on housing supply and affordability if planning controls were put in place to constrain land supply, but intensification of already built-up areas failed to materialize.

Several non-governmental organizations also responded to the IBI report, including environmental groups and the development community. Although some environmentalists questioned the need for any growth in the region at all,[16] most groups endorsed the nodal model. In Metro, Environmentalists Plan Transportation endorsed Metropolitan Toronto's "reinvestment centres" modification of the nodal option. The UDI also endorsed the nodal option but expressed doubt about the its feasibility given the lack of effective government policy to encourage intensification.

From this array of responses, it appears that there was a widespread acceptance of the nodal structure as a growth management strategy for the region: suburban and urban municipalities, provincial agencies, and non-governmental stakeholders endorsed the nodal concept in principle. However, there were three related qualifications to this "emerging consensus". First, the terms of the endorsements suggested that the "nodal scenario" might be smoothing over a wide array of potentially conflicting development visions. Secondly, there was some reservation about the intensification aspect of the nodal concept. Third, given the large number of nodes projected by the IBI study, and the claim that current development patterns were already conforming to this model, it was not clear how this option actually deviated from existing trends. Nonetheless, the nodal option was adopted by the OGTA as a growth strategy for the region.

Although not unexpected given the political support for this plastic concept, the adoption of the nodal concept by the OGTA was criticized by some observers who pointed out that the IBI report had judged the central option to be the most sustainable (e.g., Beesley, 1994). A former OGTA official explained this outcome:

> If we had said "fine, we'll put all the new people in Metro," to service them would be a nightmare. And this was a society that had turned down the Spadina and Scarborough expressways. You would have to expand Dufferin Street and Yonge Street to six or eight lanes of traffic to accommodate the flow. So in practice, [the central concept] was impossible to implement. You get violence and crime when people are put cheek by jowl. And then what were we to do with the pipes already invested in Peel and York/Durham? The nodal concept gave us the best of both worlds.

As the IBI report was being circulated for consultation, a provincial election took place. The Liberal government was defeated and the NDP formed a new government with a strong environmental and social mandate. The new orientation of the government was reflected in the next major report of the OGTA, entitled *Growing Together: Towards an Urban Consensus in the GTA* (1991), published in the Fall of 1991. The report merged the OGTA's IBI study with the results of two other environmentally-oriented studies, also commissioned by the province but undertaken independently of the OGTA. The first was a study on greenlands in the GTA by M.P. Ron Kanter, resulting in a report entitled *Space for All: Options for a GTA Greenlands Strategy* (1990). The second was the interim report of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, called *Watershed* (1990). Picking up the lexicon of the other two reports, *Growing Together* advocated an approach to growth management based on environmental sustainability and social equity.

The document reported that the spread concept was undesirable or unworkable and that most submissions "rejected the central concept as requiring too much intervention by

government, or as being impractical in other ways" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1991a: 12). That being said, the report announced the "emerging consensus" on growth management that pointed towards a nodal urban form predicated on an increase in transit investment to link nodal centres and land-use controls to support transit efficiency. Nodal development would occur through intensification and redevelopment at higher densities and would reduce commuting needs by providing a better balance between housing and employment.

Also significant was the report's proposal for a provincial-municipal partnership in which the province was to provide the lead while regional and area municipalities were to retain responsibility for site-specific planning and implementation. Explicitly contrasting the recommended approach with that of the Toronto-Centred Region concept in the 1970s, the report explained that the province should show leadership by:

- providing a strategic framework which would describe the province's vision for the GTA's future, and would state the values and principles that should guide local and regional planning
- making funding commitments consistent with the resulting plans
- coordinating the actions of provincial ministries to ensure that they be consistent with agreed directions for the GTA.

This report was followed in the Spring of 1992 with a document entitled *GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future*. Rejecting the "pipes and roads" approach of the previous government as exemplified in the IBI report, the new Minister responsible for the GTA made it clear that she wanted urban form issues to be based on a coherent vision of the GTA as a livable, just, and environmentally-healthy place. Putting the province's policy objectives in the bluntest words yet, the document claimed that "urban sprawl must be stopped" and "a more compact nodal development pattern must be adopted" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992c: 31).

The document confirmed that the province would take a leadership role in managing growth in the GTA, but that it would seek the cooperation of the constituent municipalities. Official plans were presented as a principal means of realizing the province's strategic vision for the region: "A means must be found so that the need for consultations on official plans, the planning process, and the future of the GTA is clearly understood" (30). The document announced that six provincial-municipal working groups had been formed to advise the government on how to move ahead with a "strategic action plan" to guide future decision making. In the meantime, "the concepts in this paper will guide all provincial ministries in their activities in the GTA" (30).

5.7. The Urban Form Working Group[17]

Although its methodology was criticized by municipalities and academics alike,[18] the IBI study moved the discussion about urban structure in the region a major step forward: in response to the study, the five regional governments of the GTA had agreed in principle that urban sprawl should be stopped and that the concept of nodal development should guide growth in the region. In 1992, the OGTA set up six working groups to study various aspects of this concept and develop more detailed proposals. Working groups included: urban form, countryside, infrastructure, economic vitality, financing mechanisms, and human and social development. In this section, I will focus on the work of the urban form group as it dealt most directly with the planning issues related to the proposed nodal urban structure.

The Urban Form Working Group was established in November 1991 and met frequently for several months before producing its report in April of 1992. The group was made up of 21 provincial and municipal non-elected officials.[19] The mandate of the group included defining and elaborating upon what was meant by "urban structure", "compact urban form", "nodes and corridors" in the GTA context, and what needed to be done at the local, regional and provincial levels to achieve a more compact form.

The working group concluded that a hierarchy of mixed-use nodes linked by a network of transit-serviced corridors would be the best urban structure for the GTA. The outcome of the working group will be detailed in Chapter 9. In this section, I would like to describe and analyze the provincial-municipal dynamics that characterized the working group decision-making process.

The major contribution of the working group was to bring together the province-wide notions found in the provincial Transit-Supportive Guidelines with the regionally-specific ideas found in the GTA-level IBI report, and to integrate these with the growth aspirations of the region's constituent municipalities. The core concept of a hierarchy of mixed-use nodes connected by transit along intensified corridors and the types of uses envisioned—especially the mix of employment and residential uses—all coincided with the provincial Transit-Supportive Guidelines. The IBI concept was less defined than that found in the Transit-Supportive Guidelines, but its sketchy lines can also be seen in the working group results. The main difference between the IBI and the urban form working group concepts is found in the number and location of nodes. The IBI concept had 27 widely scattered suburban nodes. One former OGTA official called this a "status quo" concept based on the existing urban envelope. In contrast, the working group proposed only 14 suburban nodes, which were contained in a more restricted urban envelope that excluded urban areas such as Newmarket, Aurora, Milton. No nodes were proposed in greenfield locations or undeveloped areas. In effect, the working group's concept was more of a combination of the central and nodal options devised

by IBI and closely resembled the "reinvestment centres" concept put forward by Metropolitan Toronto.

Another key difference between the IBI concept and that of the working group was the much heavier employment assumptions in nodal areas put forward by the working group. These assumptions appear to have emanated from the *Guidelines for the Reurbanization of Metropolitan Toronto* prepared by Berridge Lewinburg Greenberg Ltd. (1991a) for Metro's new official plan. The choice of these historically higher Metropolitan Toronto activity ratios (employment to residents) may have reflected the suburban interest in attracting more employment and to boost their assessment bases. The Reurbanization Guidelines also provided guidance to the OGTA working group on the corridor concept, which had been overlooked by the IBI report and only generally described in the Transit-Supportive Guidelines.

However, if one of its goals was to provide a detailed model for a functional urban structure that could serve as a basis for municipal planning, the group's work was not completely successful. The spatial location of nodes and corridors, in particular, was left extremely vague in the group's final report. According to one participant, this was one of the most divisive issues facing the group during its deliberations.

> We had a lot of disagreement in the group about whether we needed the map and then we had a lot of disagreement about where to draw the nodes and finally we just came up with this vague map. We had 50 maps that were more detailed before that vague one. The map [we ended up with] is just dots and numbers. There was blood on the floor over that. People in the working group couldn't look at it from an intellectual point of view. They all wanted nodes.

Municipal representatives in the working group competed with each other to have a node designated in their municipality. The competitive attitude was fueled by the assumption that only municipalities with designated nodes would benefit from provincial infrastructure investment.[20] After consulting with their political leaders, members of the working group decided to add five more nodes to the 18 that had already been agreed upon. The proliferation of suburban nodes then became a divisive issue between representatives of suburban municipalities, who stood to benefit from more nodes, and Metropolitan Toronto, who stood to loose.

The vagueness of the final product could also be attributed to the lack of consensus about the relative roles of provincial, upper- and lower-tier municipal planning agencies. The general wisdom seemed to indicate that provincial imposition of a regional plan would not work, a lesson learned from the Toronto-Centred Region concept experience. The question was whether a regional coordinating body set up by the province should be developing a detailed land-use plan against which municipal plans could be measured and criticized. On the one

hand, this seemed a natural route as the urban structure would have to reflect the reality of a single integrated urban region. On the other hand, others involved in the process seemed to believe that the OGTA's role should be restricted to one of enunciating general principles and coordinating provincial investment and other decisions to support municipal plans based on those principles.

Ambivalence over the provincial role in the spatial definition of the region is evident in the modifications made to the various drafts of the working group's report. In an early provincially-drafted version, it was suggested that: "More specific guidelines on nodal and corridor development could be issued by the province to assist municipalities in identifying areas which may be suitable for such development" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992d: 2). Later drafts dropped the suggestion that the province may help determine the location of nodes. The final version read: "more specific guidelines may prove necessary in some instances in order to assist municipalities in understanding and applying the nodal concept" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992b: 28).[21] The very vague map that was finally produced by the working group indicates a compromise between these two interpretations of the provincial role.

Nor was the group able to arrive at a consensus on the definition of compact urban form, as its mandate required. On the "compact" side, the group failed to establish a target density recommended for new development on greenfield sites, target densities were not suggested for corridors, and the densities provided for nodal areas were very broadly defined and were expressed in floor space index (fsi) units, which are open to a wide variety of interpretations.[22] On the "urban form" side, the group failed to generate feasible ideas on the form of more compact development such as the character of streets, blocks and building types. As others have noted, the case studies on compact urban form provided by the working group were "more in the nature of isolated developments than portions of urban fabric" (Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd., 1992: 32). Interviewees pointed out that many of the more instructive case studies undertaken by the working group were created under pre-war planning regulations and would no longer be permitted under current zoning and building codes.[23]

5.7.1. Response[24]

Each of the other five working groups accepted the nodal urban form as a basis for its deliberations. Recommendations from all six working groups were published in 1992, and in October, the OGTA conducted a series of "invitation-only" regional workshops on those recommendations.[25] A consultation event was held in each of the five upper-tier municipalities in the GTA, to which municipal politicians and bureaucrats were invited.

The consultation process involved is worth commenting on. The OGTA had consistently targeted municipal officials as the primary audience in its consultation efforts and the October 1992 workshops were no different. In fact, OGTA staff considered consultation with other stakeholders as the responsibility of municipal governments. The problem was that the municipalities appeared to resent having this role being forced upon them by the OGTA:

> In soliciting municipal comments, the OGTA also requested that area municipalities hold extensive public consultation with the residents of the municipality. This request is inappropriate. Consultation should not be "downloaded" to area municipalities. Consultation should be conducted by those who prepared the work, can explain the work, defend the work, and speak with a degree of certainty about how comments received would be taken into account. It is recommended that the OGTA be responsible and therefore accountable for consultation of documents prepared by or for them (Pickering, 1993: 4).

The result was that consultation with stakeholders on OGTA proposals was consistently weak: environmentalists and developers played little role in the consultation process, appearing to be distracted by events in other fora, such as the unfolding of the Sewell Commission's ideas on the provincial planning system. In fact, however, it is clear from stakeholder documents that both interests supported the nodal structure approach advocated by the working group. For its part, the development industry was relieved by any growth management plan that would unblock the infrastructure investment channels. For its part, the environmental community took the initiative in organizing its own consultation event on the working group reports. The report that issued from the event showed broad support for the nodal option (Toronto Environmental Alliance, 1992). Thus, the OGTA's strategy of excluding stakeholders other than municipalities may have streamlined the consultation process, but it may also have served to undermine the process by abandoning the opportunity to build a region-wide constituency for change that could bridge the geographically-based interests (i.e., the upper- and lower-tier municipalities competing for growth and infrastructure investment).

One reason municipalities wanted to avoid a leading role in consultations on the OGTA regional vision may have been the connection between the nodal development concept and intensification. OGTA staff reported that the this was one of the most controversial aspects of the 1992 regional consultation meetings:

> we had to do a lot of educating on what higher density meant in terms of built form... We tried to stay away from [the word] "intensification" because people associated it with high-rises, so we used "compact urban form" and "mixed uses". We tried to use a lot of pictures and we did case studies so we could show people what we meant and that it already existed in a lot of places around the region. This was our biggest item [of controversy].

OGTA staff report that a geographic pattern was discernible in the responses gathered at these public meetings: municipalities outside the urban envelope as defined by the urban form working group—such as Georgina and East Gwillimbury—wanted more nodes designated in the northern part of the GTA, whereas the rapidly urbanizing municipalities within the envelope—such as Vaughan, Richmond Hill, and Markham—supported the concept of concentrated nodal development, "as long as it didn't slow down what they wanted to do" as one former OGTA staff person explained. In general, the closer the municipality to Metropolitan Toronto, the more strongly it supported the OGTA regional vision. Perhaps not coincidentally, these were the municipalities that were overwhelmingly better represented on the six working groups that developed the vision.[20]

The question as to the appropriate role of the OGTA in formulating a regional vision or action plan was raised in municipal responses to the various OGTA initiatives. As one municipality expressed it: "clarification is required on whether the [OGTA] action plan is intended to be a broad strategic plan concerned with the guiding programs and service delivery, or whether it is intended to be a super-regional official plan concerned with the physical planning of the GTA" (Pickering, 1993: 4). The question also arose as to who would be responsible for designating the urban envelope shown in the urban form report. Would the province draw the line and enforce it through regional official plans or would the regions draw the line? The weight of opinion at the workshops was clearly that the province should avoid "dictating" the number of nodes, the placement of corridors, and the course of the urban limit line.

The consultation workshops revealed that officials from upper-tier suburban municipalities supported the OGTA regional planning initiative because they saw it as an essential element in coordinating provincial investment decisions for the infrastructure needed to support their own land-use planning efforts. The lack of coordination among provincial ministries was a major theme of the consultation workshops. Municipalities complained that the province was approving official plans and amendments to bring new areas into development but other ministries were not coming up with the infrastructure dollars needed to support that development. The result was a growing infrastructure deficit in the region, inefficient planning processes and growth patterns. Regional officials were hoping that as a result of the GTA planning exercise, major funding commitments would be made.

Suburban participants in the workshops pointed out that unless population growth is linked to employment growth, the whole regional planning exercise would be meaningless. Population growth in suburban areas without more jobs would mean more commuting to the central city and a less economically competitive region.

Another theme in the municipal responses to the OGTA planning framework was the importance of preserving municipal autonomy. Although the province was taking great pains to work collaboratively through the OGTA with municipal governments in the region, some municipal officials still felt they were being treated as "just another interest group" rather than a third order of government in partnership with the province. The minutes of the consultation workshops, for instance, showed a strong sense of distrust for the provincial government and its agencies in their attitude towards municipal interests—words like "dictatorship" were used to describe the provincial comportment towards municipalities. One participant at the consultation workshops asked "does the province already have a plan in its back pocket?"

There seem to have been two sources of this fear. First, although the province had little direct control over land use and relied on municipal cooperation to achieve its land-use policy objectives, it did have control over major infrastructure funding decisions. Municipal growth aspirations could not be achieved without the elusive infrastructure dollars controlled by the province. This fueled the belief that the province was really in control of regional development patterns and that the consultation efforts were merely window dressing. Municipal distrust of provincial intentions was also fueled by the spill-over effects from other issues: namely solid waste management and Bill 120, the basement apartments legislation. In both cases, municipalities in the region felt that their interests and authority were being violated by haughty and unilateral provincial actions.

5.8. The 1993 Population Projections

As mentioned above, the IBI and urban form working group exercises were based on population and employment projections done by Clayton in 1989. When the 1991 Census data became available, the OGTA initiated a new round of forecasting for the period 1991 to 2031 in order to update the older figures. This time the technical work was performed by Hemson Consulting, and Coopers & Lybrand (1993), who worked under the direction of the population and employment subcommittee at the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee. The population and employment subcommittee of the GTCC was chaired by Sylvia Davis of the OGTA and included representatives from the provincial ministries (including the Ministries of the Environment and Energy; Transportation; Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs; Municipal Affairs; and Treasury) and senior officials from each of the five upper-tier municipal governments in the GTA. The committee chose the consulting team and played an active role in directing the Hemson study.

The resulting report, entitled *The Outlook for Population and Employment in the GTA*, was published in August 1993. As we will see in Chapter 7, the projections contained in this

report became the basis for upper-tier planning in the suburban regions of the GTA. For this reason, I will review the report in some detail, focusing on the population aspect.

It is difficult to compare the 1989 Clayton report with the 1993 Hemson report because of different time frames used (2021 versus 2031 respectively). Nonetheless, it is clear that two significant changes in the growth projections had taken place in the interim. The first major change was in the absolute amount of growth expected GTA-wide. In spite of the deep recession that had intervened between the two projections, the later report shows an increase in growth projections for the GTA to 2021. The increase was from a range of 5.5-6.5 million in the 1989 projection to 5.8-7.7 million in the 1993 projection, and from a "most-likely scenario" projection of six million in the 1989 projection to 6.7 million in the 1993 report.

The second major change from the 1989 projections was in the distribution of growth within the GTA. Noteworthy here is the fact that new projections do not change the growth forecast for Metropolitan Toronto—it is constant at about 2.4 million in 2021. Rather, the increase in expected growth is entirely attributed to more rapid growth in the outer regions of the GTA. In other words, the change in growth projections from 1989 to 1993 saw a further decentralization of the region and smaller share of growth attributed to Metropolitan Toronto, a decline from almost 11 percent to about 5 percent of new growth.

The numbers reported above for the 1993 Hemson report are drawn from the "Reference Scenario", which assumes that current policy initiatives to stem employment decline in Metropolitan Toronto will be successful and that "the numerous intensification efforts will be sufficient to result in population growth in Metro" (70). The Hemson report considered two "alternative" regional growth distribution scenarios. The major difference between the two alternate scenarios was the role played by Metropolitan Toronto in accommodating future growth. Scenario One assumed the realization of the growth management concepts included in *GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future*, the provincially-sanctioned document mentioned above. Thus, Scenario One was based on "aggressive intensification policies", with Metropolitan Toronto accommodating a larger component of growth than the reference forecast. Scenario Two assumed a distribution of regional growth that was consistent with those patterns found in other major urban centres elsewhere in the Western world. Essentially, this scenario assumed that current trends would continue and that very little new population growth would occur within Metropolitan Toronto.

Table 5-11 shows the distribution of population forecasted for the two alternate scenarios. It shows that in Scenario One, Metropolitan Toronto is expected to accommodate 2.7 million people—just over 40 percent—of a GTA total of 6.67 million in 2021. In Scenario Two, Metropolitan Toronto achieves a population of only 2.32 million, or under 35 percent of the total expected population of the GTA for 2021. It is interesting to note that the difference

between Hemson's Reference Scenario and the "aggressive intensification" scenario is very small for at least two regions: in Durham and Halton the difference is only 20,000 people over the 30-year period. This represents 3.5 percent and 5.5 percent of the expected growth respectively. In Peel and York, the numbers are more significant: in Peel 10.1 percent of the expected growth will be diverted to Metropolitan Toronto, and in York intensification policies directing growth to Metropolitan Toronto would result in 22.8 percent less than the growth than would take place under the current policy framework.

Table 5-11: GTA 2021 Population Projections by Region

Scenario	Metro Toronto	Peel	York	Durham	Halton	GTA
Reference	2,410,000	1,320,000	1,290,000	970,000	670,000	6,670,000
Scenario One	2,700,000	1,260,000	1,110,000	950,000	650,000	6,670,000
Scenario Two	2,320,000	1,350,000	1,320,000	1,000,000	690,000	6,670,000

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., 1993.

5.8.1. Response[27]

The Hemson report was not a purely technical exercise. Although based on standard scientific approaches to projecting population and employment trends, the report also reflected political realities in the region. This is especially true in the selection and definition of the various scenarios, which were based on different assumptions about the likelihood of success of intensification policies. The exercise provided many opportunities for political input into the projection process. As the report itself says: "the consultants established a continuous process of reporting to the [population and employment sub-] committee. At each stage the assumptions were reviewed, the implications of the assumptions were considered, the results were discussed, and general agreement was reached" (Hemson, 1993a: 6).

Indeed, population and employment projections are an intensely political activity in the GTA. Future infrastructure funding for a region can hinge on whether or not its population is expected to cross a certain threshold. Many provincial grants are given on a per capita basis, such as for human services and schools. Population growth is widely perceived to be a condition of employment growth and therefore an essential element in the fiscal and economic health of the municipality. Policy-directed reductions in the expected population growth introduces problems for municipal planners and land developers. When asked why the suburban regions would prefer the Reference Scenario as opposed to Scenario One, a provincial official in the OGTA explained that: "municipal officials wanted more population because then they wouldn't have to plan. Adopting Scenario One meant they had to cut some gross development areas out of their plans. And if they thought that more population was going to come, then developers could do what they wanted."

The Hemson report was distributed to the chairs of the suburban regions in August of 1993. The document was accompanied by a letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs which informed local leaders that the Minister had chosen Scenario One as the basis for future land-use planning, infrastructure investment and policy development. No formal municipal input was solicited by the Minister before making his decision. Municipal responses to this announcement were complex: while some municipalities accepted the population projections under Scenario One, others saw it as an unwarranted policy-driven intervention in an otherwise scientific exercise. All the suburban upper-tier municipalities rejected the employment forecasts as too low.

Even staff members of the OGTA seemed at odds over the intensification scenario. On the one hand Gardner Church, the Deputy Minister of the OGTA, had been pushing for a much higher growth objective within Metropolitan Toronto, up to three million people by the year 2021.[28] On the other hand, a former OGTA official expressed the view that the region's intensification potential "depended on what the market would be like. If the market really started to push for intensification [then it might happen]. But Ray [Simpson of Hemson] and I didn't think it would happen... Ray kicked and screamed saying 'Scenario One won't work'.[29]

The Hemson study brought to a head the concerns of suburban municipalities about the distribution of population and employment growth. Suburban officials were willing to accept the need for regional growth management because they believed that it would lead to provincial investment in infrastructure to support suburban growth and result in some decentralization of employment growth from Metropolitan Toronto on the grounds that a better mix between employment and population would reduce commuting. It would also improve their assessment base by redressing the historical imbalance between population and employment growth in the suburbs.

This was not, however, the way the province saw it. The recession did not reduce population growth in the GTA but was taking a terrible toll on employment levels. The most serious employment decline was in Metropolitan Toronto. Compared to the suburban regions, which had gained back recessionary employment losses by mid-1993, Metropolitan Toronto had experienced a 15 percent decline in total employment since 1989. Understandably, the province was loath to adopt any long-term planning commitments that would reinforce trends to accelerate employment loss in the regional core. As one participant on the committee commented:

> what started to lose the [suburban regions] was that the Hemson figures showed expected employment growth to population growth ratio was getting lower for the whole area, so nobody would be happy. The Hazels [i.e., powerful suburban mayors] wanted employment increased but were happy to do with less population increase. The province said no. Then it got political.

After forceful complaints, especially from the Regions of York and Peel, the province relented and undertook to review the employment distribution figures for the four suburban regions. In November of 1993, new figures were announced by the OGTA that showed significant increases in employment targets, as shown in Table 5-12.

Table 5-12: Forecasted Employment Distribution for the GTA, 2021

Region	1991 Actual	2021 Forecast		Percent Adjustment
		Scenario 1	Adjusted Scenario 1	
Metro Toronto	1,368,000	1,800,000	1,700,000	- 5.5
Peel	378,000	686,000	725,000	+5.7
Halton	141,000	326,000	350,000	+7.4
York	248,000	578,000	625,000	+8.1
Durham	156,000	366,000	400,000	+9.3
Total	2,291,000 ,000	3,756,000,0 00	3,800,00000, 000	+1.2

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. August 1995.

Although the population projections of Scenario One represented a comittment to a policy of intensification relative to projected trends (i.e., compared to the Reference Scenario), it also clearly implied a reduction in the intensification goals for the region (i.e., compared to the concentrated scenario in the IBI projections). A former senior OGTA official strongly criticized the OGTA's Scenario One: "The population distribution they've accepted as policy is terrible; it projects only a tiny amount in Metro Toronto and the rest as sprawl."

Table 5-13 compares Hemson's 1993 Reference Scenario and Scenario One population projections with IBI's spread and nodal growth concepts. Noteworthy here is the fact that the "aggressive intensification" scenario in Hemson's 1993 projection gives rise to exactly the same proportion of residents living in Metro Toronto as does the "spread" scenario from the 1990 IBI projections. In 1992, the OGTA had announced widespread support for a "concentrated nodal" growth concept, implying a Metropolitan Toronto population share of at least 47 percent of the 2021 GTA population. In 1993, the "aggressive intensification" targets had allowed Metropolitan Toronto's share of the regional population to decline to 40 percent.

Table 5-13: Hemson and IBI GTA Population Distribution Projections, 2021

Region	Hemson Reference	Regional Dist(%)	Hemson Scenario1	Regional Dist(%)	IBI Spread	Regional Dist(%)	IBI Nodal	Regional Dist(%)
Metro Toronto	2,410,000	36	2,700,000	40	2,428,000	40	2,800,000	47
Peel	1,320,000	20	1,260,000	19	1,198,000	20	1,190,000	20
York	1,290,000	19	1,110,000	17	1,007,000	17	804,000	13
Durham	970,000	15	950,000	14	794,000	13	681,000	11
Halton	670,000	10	650,000	10	593,000	10	545,000	9
GTA	6,670,000	100	6,670,000	100	6,020,000	100	6,020,000	100

One of the main reasons for this ebb in Metro Toronto's projected share of metropolitan growth appears to have been the loss of confidence in Metro's ability to achieve its own intensification goals. As we have seen, Metro Toronto was concerned about its diminishing weight within the GTA as population growth accelerated outside its boundaries during the 1970s and 1980s. Cross-boundary commuting, loss of economic potential, and underutilization of infrastructure investment encouraged the Metro government to adopt policies aimed at attracting new growth. Thus, Metro's 1991 strategic plan called for a population target of up to 2.8 million by 2011 (Metropolitan Toronto, 1991). Given the near exhaustion of greenfield sites within the boundaries of Metropolitan Toronto, this growth target clearly assumed a successful intensification campaign.[30]

By mid-decade, however, optimism in Metro's ability to undertake or succeed in major intensification initiatives had dimmed.[31] The 1991 population target was incorporated into the 1992 draft official plan, but was reduced to 2.5 million in the 1994 final version.[32] Interestingly, the 2.5 million figure had been considered "trend" in a growth scenario report done by Metro Toronto in 1991 (Metropolitan Toronto, 1991c). As one analyst observed in an editorial in *The Intensification Report* (Jan-Feb 1994: 26):

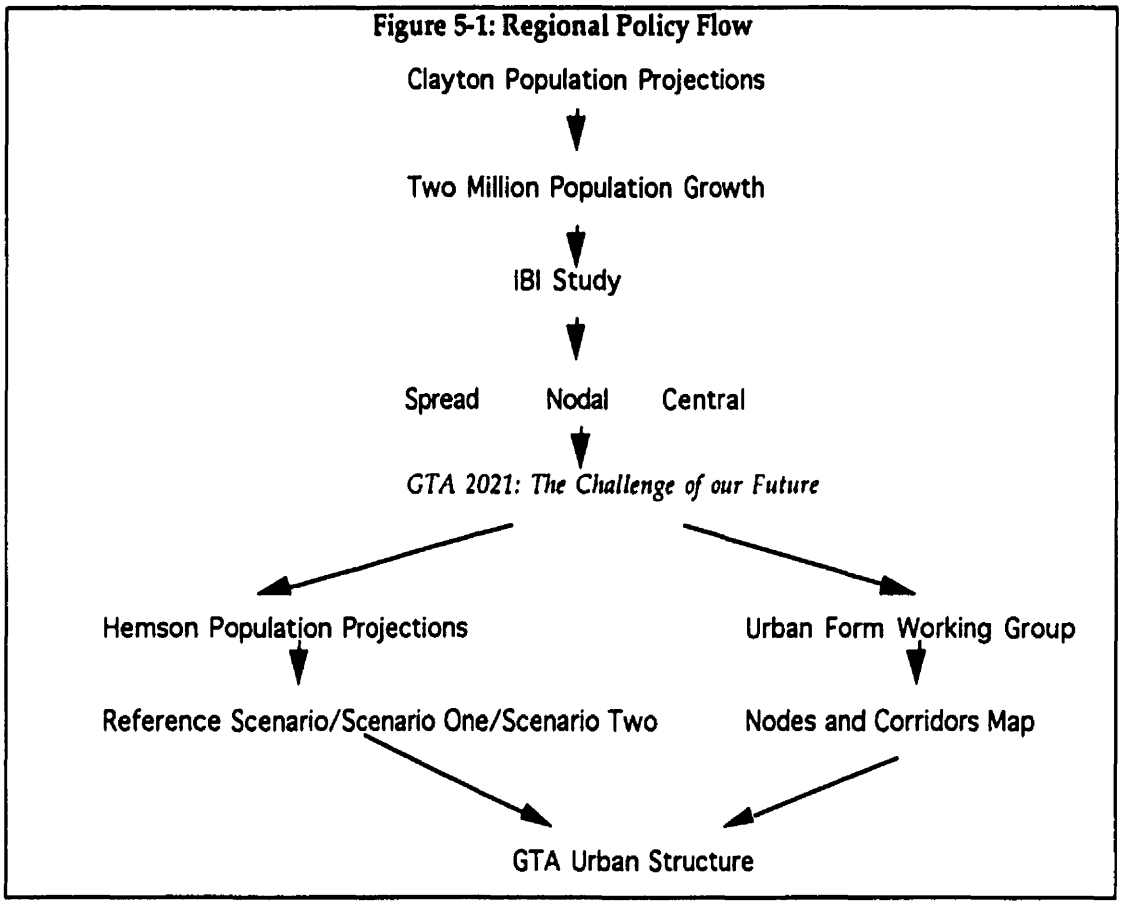
> The low proportion of total growth assigned to Metropolitan Toronto in the latest OGTA Scenario One projections demonstrates an acceptance by the report's authors that current barriers to significantly higher level of intensification within the boundaries of Metro cannot be overcome. Instead, it is advocated that growth be focused on nodal sub-centres in the Regions surrounding the core.

5.9. Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the intensification policy framework that has evolved at the regional level. This framework shares two of the three main intensification policy categories used as the basis for my analysis: an urban structure based on the nodes and corridors concept and growth management based on regional population allocations. Figure 5-1

shows the flow of policy ideas, moving from the 1989 population projection prepared by Clayton to the urban structure concept for the GTA.

Figure 5-1: Regional Policy Flow



Regional policies recounted in this chapter were reminiscent of those adopted under the TCR concept in the 1970s: a hierarchy of urban centres distributed throughout the region, regional population and employment targets, linking growth to infrastructure development, and using the planning approval hierarchy (provincial, upper-tier, and lower-tier municipalities) to implement the plan (Cameron, 1979).[33] However, the story presented in this chapter shows that the more recent regional intensification policies were developed with a higher degree of consultation between the province and the municipal sector, a process that was mediated by the OGTA. Provincial officials took pains to ensure the involvement of planners from the upper-tier municipalities, but lower-tier planners were also involved in the many working groups that helped develop the policy framework. Local politicians were less directly involved, but they had ultimate control over the acceptability of the policy ideas being "brought home" by the planners on the working groups, and they were the primary audience targetted by the regional consultation exercises described above. Only one significant policy

decision was made without municipal consent, i.e., the choice of Scenario One population growth allocation among upper-tier municipalities.

This process differs markedly from the policy process involved in the evolution of the province-wide policy framework described in Chapter 4. In that case, consultation with the municipal sector was the exception rather than the rule. Where consultation took place, it was limited to municipal reviews of proposed policy statements or guidelines and only minor changes were made to the policy in response. In contrast to the regionally-specific process, the province-wide policy process was resented by municipalities, who believed the provincial role should be limited to establishing broad policy goals. These various approaches to policy formulation correspond well to the typology of relationships between policy formulator and implementer outlined in Chapter 2:

- The provincial approach to province-wide policies seems to correspond with the instructed delegate model, which is similar to the classical technocratic approach, except that formulators delegate more discretion to implementers, who have limited authority to make decisions during the policy implementation process.
- Municipalities reject this approach in favour of a discretionary experimenter model, claiming that provincial policy formulators do not have enough authority or knowledge about particular circumstances to specify detailed policy directions. Thus, formulators should convey general goals to implementers and implementers should be permitted to use their discretionary powers to carry out policy goals.
- The policy process involved in generating regionally-specific policies seems to match the bargaining approach, whereby formulators and implementers engage in a bargaining or negotiation process in order to realize policy objectives. Each "side" requires the cooperation of the other in order to realize policy objectives but may enjoy different power resources that will affect the outcome of bargaining process.

Taken together with the province-wide policies discussed in Chapter 4, the regionally-specific policies discussed in this chapter constitute the intensification policy framework that is meant to guide municipal land-use planning in the GTA. In the next four chapters, I explore how this framework was reflected in municipal planning activities in the region.

Endnotes

[1] This apprehension was fueled by the decisions of towns like Oakville to impose growth freezes in the late 1980s in response to a perceived decline in the quality of life of the lack of availability of adequate facilities to service growth. Councillors and planners in other parts of the region were also becoming resistant to further growth as service capacities were outstripped. The Seaton project, in North Pickering, for instance, received a chilly reception from Durham council for this reason (*Toronto Star*, October 2, 1989: A15).

[2] In 1989, 92 percent of all new businesses in Buffalo were started by Canadians (Nozick, 1992).

[3] "The boom has ended... but most analysts agree the boom won't end with a crash, as the previous one did in 1981." (*Toronto Star*, September 7, 1989: E1).

[4] In contrast, the UDI report predicted that more than 80 percent of the growth in the GTA would take place in the regional municipalities around Metro and that infrastructure investment should be concentrated there. "It might be tempting to believe" the report warned: "the GTA's growth pressures can be accommodated simply by "intensification". Higher densities in areas which already have infrastructure in place sounds like a rational solution. However, many services in Metropolitan Toronto are already at or near capacity. They require expansion or rebuilding to handle increased loads. At the same time, the regions need continuing growth, particularly industrial and commercial growth, to provide employment opportunities for their residents—and cut down on commuting" (UDI, 1989: 25).

[5] This report is often cited as a turning point in the fortunes of the GTA. Those interests that were more concerned with infrastructure development, saw it as a "touchy-feely" document that discredited the OGTA. The UDI president was quoted as saying "Its not a planning document anymore, it's turning into a social commentary... There's not a practical piece of anything in there" (*Globe and Mail*, March 14, 1992: D2).

[6] The most obvious example of fragmented and inefficient service delivery across the regions was public transit: in 1990 there were 14 separate transit systems providing service in the GTA with little service integration (Metropolitan Toronto, 1990: 17).

[7] The OMB is an independent, provincially-appointed administrative tribunal that adjudicates on planning and related conflicts.

[8] Unlike the Metropolitan Toronto government, the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board did not have the power to incur debt for capital expenditures and therefore could not supply the infrastructure needed to support large-scale growth in the hinterland.

[9] The TCR concept was developed unilaterally by the provincial government with little municipal input. The final elaboration of the concept, contained in the COLUC report, was generated by a task force with representation from six Ontario ministries and planners from the upper-tier municipalities in the TCR. However, municipal input at this stage was superficial: as the COLUC report stated "the task force, in accordance with its terms of reference, worked within the constraints of present provincial policies relating to TCR and made no attempt to develop alternative concepts" (ix).

[10] This certainly reflected the general wisdom of the day. See for example, minutes from the Central Ontario Planners Conference (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1989).

[11] In this sense, the OGTA reiterated the TCR experience: it began with a transportation infrastructure needs study (MTARTS), but eventually gave rise to a comprehensive vision for the region including desirable settlement patters and population targets (COLUC).

[12] These suburban centres were conceived of as are primarily office, retail and service locations, with some residential use surrounding employment areas.

[13] The central option was superior on 22 of the 42 measures.

[14] This section based on OGTA, 1991, written briefs from GTA municipalities, and interviews with OGTA staff.

[15] The region suggested that the population target for Brampton should be 450,000 by 2021 (Peel, 1991). This was not only greater than the growth allocated under the nodal option, it was 52,000 greater than under the spread scenario.

[16] For instance, the Pickering Rural Association dismissed all three growth options on the grounds that each involved too much conversion of farmland to urban uses. Resistance of environmental groups to the whole notion of further growth in the region was the main motivation for changing the IBI mandate to require them to look at a minimal growth option in addition to the three growth options originally mandated. The report concluded that the minimal growth option was not feasible or desirable. The IBI authors noted that "barring the types of extreme controls which have been applied in some totalitarian countries, it is very difficult for democratic governments to conceive and apply policies which will effectively cap the overall growth of a major metropolitan area. If the forces of population in-migration and economic momentum are strong for a particular metropolitan area, intervention to slow the rate of growth tends to have minimal impact on the growth rate but

does produce substantial increases in land and housing prices. If sources of in-migration are drying up and/or economic momentum is faltering, such intervention may seriously affect the centre's growth rate and produce substantially greater retardation than originally intended. The report goes on to conclude that "the risks of such a policy, particularly at this time of changing trade patterns and fiscal instability, would create a real risk of throwing the GTA into a recession and diverting growth to adjacent areas in upstate New York or elsewhere in the US" (IBI, 1990: Volume 2: S.5).

[17] This section is based on interviews with current and former officials from the OGTA, the published report of the working group (OGTA, 1992b), earlier versions of the report, memos between group members, and minutes of the working group's meetings.

[18] A series of academic seminars were held on the report at the University of Toronto and published in May, 1991. Most of the participants seemed to endorse the nodal model, but many questions were raised in the course of the seminars regarding the methodological credibility of the IBI report (Hitchcock, 1991).

[19] The 10 provincial members represented most of the ministries directly involved in regional growth issues—such as the Ministries of Municipal Affairs, Housing, Transportation, Natural Resources, and Environment—except for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. One group member was from the OGTA. The rest represented various upper and lower-tier municipalities in the region. All upper-tier governments were represented except for the region of Peel. Representatives from rapidly growing municipalities adjacent to Metro dominated the list of lower-tier members: Mississauga, Vaughan, Markham, Ajax, and Richmond Hill. There were no representatives from rural municipalities.

[20] An earlier version of the group's report suggested a selection criteria for intermediate nodes: i.e., those for which some form of higher capacity transit might be foreseen by 2031, meaning at the very least a bus line with its own right or way, but including fixed rail transit such as LRT or subways. This encouraged the speculation that nodal status was tied to transit investment.

[21] The ambivalence is also evident in the choice of words used to describe the provincial role: to develop an overall "vision" for the GTA (rather than a "plan"), a word that could refer to general principals and a future state of general regional health, or to an overall land-use configuration.

[22] Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd. (1992) suggested that the report should have used a gross urban density parameter, which is more compatible with large-scale land use planning and transit planning.

[23] The OGTA would eventually contract a consultant to handle some of the issues raised here. The resulting report (Lehman and Associates, 1995) was completed in early 1995 but was not released because of its "political" nature until after the June provincial election.

[24] This section is based on interviews with current and former officials at the OGTA and on minutes of consultation meetings held by the OGTA in each of the regional municipalities.

[25] The workshops also included consultation on the proposed GTA policy statement.

[26] Even on the countryside working group, only one representative out of 17 was from a rural municipality. Rural municipalities were much less directly involved in the OGTA process than their suburban counterparts and relied on upper-tier officials to represent their interests.

[27] This section is based on interviews with OGTA staff and former staff and minutes of meetings held by the GTA mayors, 1993-1994.

[28] This was an objective that was not entirely acceptable to Metro itself.

[29] The fact that the consultant had disowned Scenario One was widely known among municipal officials in the region and provided ammunition to those that did not want to respect the scenario as a basis for official planning.

[30] The population objective was to be achieved through "intensification, redevelopment, and infill that will have a limited effect on established residential neighbourhoods" (Metropolitan Toronto, 1991: 23).

[31] One could speculate about plausible reasons for this loss of confidence

- The plan sees most of this growth being accommodated through redevelopment along arterial corridors (Main Streets), and on large former industrial and railway lands. However, the Main Streets program of the City of Toronto has proven to be a disappointment because of neighbourhood resistance to reduced planning standards (Farncombe, 1994). Metro Toronto has

also developed a Main Streets program, but after five years no housing units have directly resulted from the planning activity involved. The redevelopment potential of large sites—mostly industrial land—is limited by soil contamination issues and council's concern over loss of employment lands and future assessment potential. Finally, some large scale projects have been resisted by Metro on the grounds that infrastructure is not adequate to handle the increased load (Feldman, 1995).

- Some area municipalities in Metro Toronto have resisted the housing supply implications of the population projection.
- The recession hit Metro very hard, reducing the demand for new housing and official interest in intensification. There is now serious concern as to whether there is sufficient demand for new housing in Metro Toronto to support the population projections.
- Political resistance to basement apartments and neighbourhood intensification is as fierce among some Metro municipalities as is it in suburban regions.

[32] The City of Toronto had likewise embarked on an official plan review with similar themes. Its revised official plan strongly endorsed the principle of concentrating growth in Metro in order to reduce sprawl on the regional fringe and automobile commuting into the central city (Toronto, 1991).

[33] Despite these similarities, there are significant difference between the TCR concept and the more recent regional planning policies. Most importantly was the emphasis on decentralization in the TCR concept, whereby population and employment growth were to be redistributed to areas of the province outside Metro Toronto. In contrast, the OGTA has dismissed the prospect of dispersing growth to areas outside the GTA and has emphasized the need to focus growth within the GTA on Metro Toronto.

Part III: Municipal Planning Policies

6 . Linking the Provincial Policy Framework to Municipal Planning

6.1. Introduction

In the Part II of this thesis, the provincial intensification policy framework was described in detail. In this part of the thesis, I turn my attention to describing and assessing the municipal response in suburban regions of the GTA, as reflected in official plans. The principal questions being asked are:

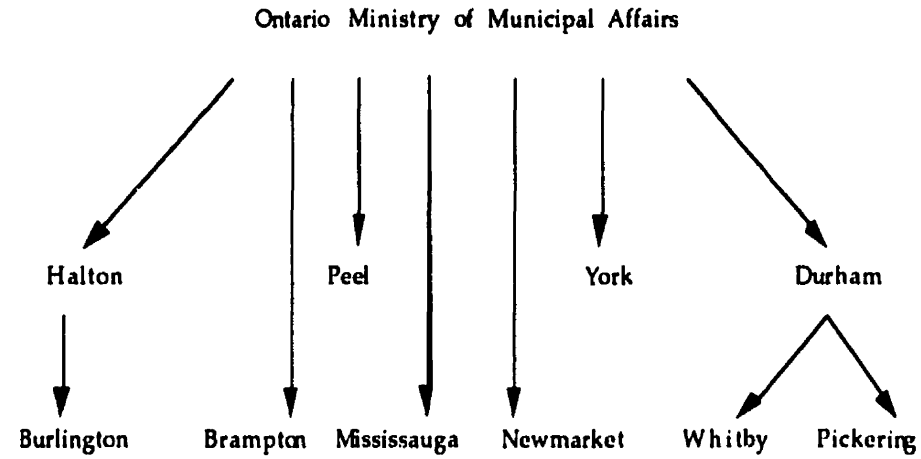
- To what extent are suburban municipalities responding to intensification policy pressures from the provincial government?
- Why are they responding, or why not?
- What are the implications for implementing intensification policies and realizing provincial objectives?

6.2. The Provincial Review and Approval Process

One of the principal means of implementing the provincial and regional intensification policy framework outlined in the last two chapters is through municipal land-use planning. In the GTA, this planning takes place at two jurisdictional levels, that of the upper-tier "regional" municipality and the lower-tier "area" municipality. The principal expression of municipal land-use planning policies—and therefore the most likely vehicle for provincial policy expression at the municipal level—is the official plan.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has approval authority over all upper-tier official plans and amendments in the province, including the four suburban regions of the GTA. Where regional municipalities have official plans in place, the province has delegated its approval power over lower-tier plans to upper-tier councils, but those lower-tier plans are nonetheless circulated to provincial ministries for comment. Thus, Durham and Halton Regions have approval powers over their lower-tier official plans. This is true for York Region as well, but authority was not delegated until after the Newmarket plan was submitted to the province for approval. Until Peel's plan is approved, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs remains the approval authority for lower-tier municipalities in that Region. Figure 6-1 shows the approval authorities for each of the six focus municipalities in the suburban regions of the GTA.

Figure 6-1: Approval Authority for Upper- and Lower-tier Plans



As part of the province's commitment to expedite the planning process and to remove barriers to economic growth and development,[1] the Ministry of Municipal Affairs set up the Official Plan Project in November of 1992. The Project was charged with handling the backlog of official plans waiting for approval across the province. A year later, in the Fall of 1993, a special unit was created to handle the negotiations with regional municipalities within the GTA.[2] The unit's mandate was to facilitate the revision and creation of new official plans in the GTA and to ensure that provincial interests were being adequately met through the official planning process. As the approval authority for the GTA, the unit was the administrative mechanism responsible for overseeing the implementation of both province-wide policies described in Chapter 4 and the regionally-specific policies described in Chapter 5.

Approval of official plans in Ontario moves through a number of stages. Here, I describe the approval of an upper-tier plan by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs but approval of lower-tier plans by upper-tier authorities follow substantially the same process. Typically, informal negotiation between the municipality and the ministry begins with a draft official plan. After it has been formally adopted by the municipal council, the plan is submitted to the ministry and circulated to other provincial ministries and agencies for comments. This culminates in a formal letter from the Director of the Plans Administration Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to the Commissioner or Director of Planning of the municipality in question. Letters are often divided into four sections: requests for further information, requests for changes the Ministry of Municipal Affairs considers "essential", requests it considers "desirable", and requests from other provincial agencies, neighbouring municipalities and other stakeholders (such as Ontario Hydro or conservation authorities) that were not included in any of the previous categories.

The municipality in question must then decide whether to respond to the comments by modifying its plan or whether to risk delaying provincial approval of the plan over particular issues.[3] The province may:

- refuse to approve the plan
- approve a plan in its entirety as is
- modify a plan after consultation with the municipality and then approve it in its entirety
- approve parts of the plan and "defer" other parts for further discussion

Thus, the ministry has the legal power to unilaterally alter the plan if it does not receive a satisfactory response to its comments letter. In turn, a municipality (or any other party) may object to the alterations, and request that the minister refer the plan or the objected-to parts of the plan to the OMB, unless he or she finds that the request is "not in good faith or is frivolous or vexatious or is made only for the purpose of delay." The OMB, in turn, may alter the plan or parts of the plan or approve it as is.

Clearly, plan approval is a complicated interaction between provincial and municipal planning agencies, involving a number of legal recourses, implicit or explicit threats, and opportunities to apply political pressure by either side. This process of negotiation and conflict resolution results in many changes being made to plans before they are fully approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. For example, in the case of the Region of York's official plan, there were 99 modifications, the Region of Durham had 187, and the Town of Newmarket's new official plan had 66.[4]

6.3. Recent Official Planning Activity in the GTA

After being established in the early 1970s, the four regional governments outside Metropolitan Toronto were required to produce regional plans within their first three years of existence. This was easier said than done for three reasons. First, regional councils were made up of politicians elected under the double direct system as described in Chapter 5. This structure made it difficult for upper-tier councilors to take a regional perspective when their political fortunes depended on how their decisions played out in their local municipalities. Thus, regional planning was not a top priority of regional councilors. Secondly, local councils were reluctant to relinquish control over their development choices to upper-tier governments. Thirdly, the provincial legislation that set up the regional governments did not specify how regional planning should take place or how it should differ from local planning. And finally, the creation of regional government had proved to be a political unpopular move (and may have contributed to losses in the 1974 election), undermining provincial support for strong regional activity (Canadian Urban Institute, 1991b).

As a result, only Durham and Halton, the regions with the lowest growth rates, managed to produce regional plans within the legislated time frame. In the rapidly growing Regions of York and Peel, where regional plans would have had a greater impact on managing growth in the GTA, official plans were stalled until the mid-1990s, 20 years after the creation of the upper-tier governments. In both cases, several plans had been started but did not proceed to completion once it had been made clear that regional council would not support them. This reflected the strong interests of area municipalities in those regions to have a free hand in controlling their own development.

At the lower-tier level, all municipalities in the GTA have had official plans in place. They have been subject to amendments in order to introduce new policies, such as in response to the provincial Housing Policy Statement, to designate new areas for expansion of the urban envelope, or to consider site-specific redesignations. Some lower-tier plans had been amended up to 400 times within their lifespan. As with upper-tier municipalities, the first half of the 1990s has been marked by a flurry of plan-making activity among the GTA lower-tier municipalities: new official plans have been drafted in over half the suburban regions.

This intense planning activity taking place in suburban municipalities within the GTA provides rich material for an analysis of intensification policies. The factors that stimulated the planning activity may help shed some light on the policy context:

- Economic conditions changed dramatically at the turn of the decade. Those regional municipalities with official plans found that they were unable to address new economic challenges and stimulated interest in new official plans. The recession also favoured attention to longer-term issues as the amount of development declined in the GTA to roughly half the pre-recession level. This reduced the everyday pressures on planners and allowed them to turn their attention to revising their plans.
- The OGTA played a role in facilitating the round of plan reviews. Having decided that it would not itself produce a GTA-wide plan but would instead see its regional objectives conducted via upper-tier planning activities, the office had a direct interest in seeing the plans through. The office hinted to upper-tier councils that unless updated official plans were forthcoming, money would not be available for planning studies or infrastructure investment.
- The province used its approval powers over secondary and subdivision plans in those regions that still had no official plan in place (York and Peel) to veto development proposals. In justifying its decisions, the province made it clear that without official plans, there was no context within which to judge the acceptability of the proposed developments.

- Municipal councils themselves saw that with the large number of official plan amendment applications that had come forward in the last few years, it would be effective from a planning perspective and more efficient from an administrative perspective to handle them through a single regional plan or plan revision rather than on a development-by-development basis. Thus, landowner pressure for changes to the urban boundary also played a role in triggering a new round of municipal plans.
- Finally, and perhaps most important, was the rapidly evolving provincial policy environment since 1989, especially with respect to environmental, housing, and growth and settlement concerns. This convinced both provincial and municipal planners that existing official plans had to be revised (and new ones created where there were none) to reflect the new policy framework.

6.3.1. The Role of Official Plans

Upper-tier ("regional") planning serves as an important intermediary role between provincial interests and local planning decisions. Regional official plans set the urban envelopes to be respected in the local official plans and development approvals, project major infrastructure requirements, designate areas to be protected from development, and propose policies with respect to the desirable location and form of development. Thus they set the broad policy and spatial framework for development, suggesting the future development patterns and urban structure for the regional municipality. Unlike lower-tier municipal plans, they do not generally propose specific land-use configurations within development areas.

In principle, upper-tier plans are supposed to reflect provincial interests and provide a framework for lower-tier municipalities to incorporate those interests in their detailed land-use planning. Thus, where upper-tier plans have been put in place in the GTA (Durham, Halton, and Metropolitan Toronto) they have tended to "contain a very strong policy framework and do not address the level of land-use detail found in local official plans. As well, regional plans tend to possess a stronger linkage to provincial policies and interests than is present in the lower-tier plans" (McCleary, 1989).

Lower-tier plans must conform to upper-tier plans where such a plan is in place (i.e., in Durham, York, and Halton). Whereas upper-tier plans outline a long-term (30-year) vision of the physical form and strategic policy for the region, lower-tier plans are being prepared with a shorter time horizon (20-years), and present a more detailed vision of community character and planning policies for directing development over that time period. Lower-tier plans designate land for different uses, set out the infrastructural requirements to support development, and set out policies that will be used in approving development proposals.

The *Planning Act*, 1983 laid out the relationship between upper-tier and lower-tier plans. Sections 27 (1) requires that lower-tier plans conform to upper-tier plans: it empowered the upper-tier to amend a lower-tier plan or zoning bylaw if the lower-tier plan is not amended within one year to conform with the upper-tier plan. Where there is a conflict in interpreting or applying upper-tier and lower-tier plans, the act states that the upper-tier plan prevails to the extent of the conflict. For instance, settlement areas defined by upper-tier plans are must be reflected in revised lower-tier plans. Clearly, the act assigned primacy to upper-tier plans, and this was continued into the reforms of 1995.

6.3.2. Themes in Upper-tier Official Plans

At the level of basic principles, the upper-tier plans addressed themselves to the three broad policy goals associated with sustainable development: environmental protection, economic health, and community/social development. Consistent with the emerging provincial orientation, the notion of sustainable urban development served as a central theme for upper-tier plans in the region. For instance:

- The Durham plan included a commitment to sustainable development as a key principle. The plan associated this principle with the following objectives in its urban areas: compact form, mixed uses, intensification, urban design, public transit, linkages for pedestrians and cyclists and a grid system of roads (Durham Region, 1994: 37).
- The Region of Halton declared sustainable development as the basis of the official plan review: "sustainable development recognizes that land-use planning goes beyond simply the control of land uses; it encompasses people and the social, economic and natural environments. Therefore, policies in the Official Plan would be sensitive to our social and economic needs as well as to our environment" (Katsof, 1992 [quoted in Social Infopac, 1993]: 9)
- The York plan used the three "components" of sustainable development as an organizing principle of its plan: Sustainable Natural Environment, Economic Vitality, and Healthy Communities. "These three concepts, which are closely interrelated, must be balanced with each other in order to ensure a continued high quality of life in York" (York Region, 1994: 3).
- The Peel plan is based on three planning themes: the ecosystem approach which highlights the importance of the environment and its integrated systems; sustainable development, which is strongly tied to economic growth; and healthy communities, which are concerned with the implications of planning on people and society. The plan claims to express "balanced but flexible goals and objectives that promote an equilibrium between ecosystem awareness, sustainable development, and healthy communities" (Peel, 1995: 5).

In all of these cases, sustainable development was associated with transforming patterns of land use from auto-dependent, low-density development to a more compact urban form emphasizing a mix of uses, proximity, transit-supportiveness, protection of environmental features and greater efficiency in the supply of infrastructure and services.

All the plans are organized around a regional structure made up of three "systems": an urban system, a natural system, and a rural system. The notion of nodes and corridors structures thinking around all three systems. The urban system is comprised of a hierarchy of mixed-use nodes or centres linked by higher-density transit corridors, a concept is explored in detail in Chapter 9 on Urban Structure. Nodes and corridors is also a metaphor that is used in the plans to structure thinking about the ecological system. The plans reflect the growing opinion that the integrity of ecological systems can be preserved in the face of urbanization by maintaining or enhancing a linked system of natural areas (Riley and Moore, 1994; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1991). Nodes (usually called "core areas") are large enough to ensure species survival and reproduction and have sufficient biological diversity to engender system resilience in the face of changing conditions. Wetlands and forest communities are commonly included in the system of nodes. Corridors are linear features such as landforms, shorelines, rivers, creeks and streams that link nodes, and serve important biological functions such as providing migration routes. Both nodes and corridors perform important hydrological functions, such as groundwater recharge and discharge. Besides these functions, the green system serves recreational uses and helps to separate and define the various urban areas within the region.

Together, nodes and corridors in the urban system and centres and corridors in the ecological, or natural heritage, system make up the urban structure of the municipality. The third component is the rural system. It is also structured—to some degree at least—on the notion of nodes and corridors with the nodes being rural hamlets and the corridors being the connecting roads. Planning policies in upper-tier plans ensure that rural development is directed as much as possible to rural nodes.

6.3.3. Themes in Lower-tier Official Plans

The theme of sustainable development is not as prominent in lower-tier plans as at the upper-tier level. It is, however, detectable in some plans, such as Pickering's. The town adopted "sustainable community development" as its plan review theme, which it defined as:

- Sustainable: being concerned about future generation, limiting use of non-renewable resources and pollution-causing activities
- Community: jobs/housing balance, recognize diversity of needs, involve people in planning
- Development: using change as a positive force, efficiency, local resources (Pickering, 1994).

The general orientation of recent official plans is towards more compact urban form. Lower-tier official plans have adopted policies designed to discourage leap-frog development, to produce more orderly and well-serviced growth, and to complete vacant lands within the urban fabric before moving into greenfield areas. The preservation of natural features is a new emphasis in municipal plans in the GTA. Plans usually include general policies to encourage the preservation and enhancement of significant natural features and resources, and to minimize the impacts of development on air, water, and land.

Plans state that a greater diversity of housing types is required to meet the changing needs of the population. The plans encourage a broader mix of residential dwellings in terms of type, size, costs and tenure (freehold, condominium, and rental) as a departure from the prevalence of detached housing forms in suburban areas.

The plans also attempt to make greater links between land-use and transportation issues. While no plan claims that it will overcome automobile dependency in suburban areas, most plans aim to provide a transportation system that is more balanced between automobile, transit and non-motorized means of transport. Thus, most plans include policies to encourage transit-supportive development, such as higher densities around transit corridors and facilities. Plans also address the issue of a transit-based and transit-supportive urban structure based on nodes and corridors.

6.4. Conclusion

In the next three chapters, I examine the planning policies found in the official plans selected for review—the four upper-tier and six lower-tier municipalities—in order to determine whether and how the provincial intensification policy framework is being incorporated into planning policies at the municipal level. In Chapter 7, I will look at growth management policies, in Chapter 8, housing supply policies, and in Chapter 9, urban structure policies.

Endnotes

[1] This was the motivation for setting up the Office of the Provincial Facilitator, under Dale Martin.

[2] After Durham, York and Metro plans had been approved, the unit was folded back into province-wide Official Plan Project. Team members continued to work on Halton's Official Plan review and on the new plan for the Region of Peel.

[3] Municipalities may also risk other provincial penalties. Under the *Planning Act*, 1983, the Province had additional powers over municipal planning not mentioned here, such as the zoning order power (s. 46), and the withdrawal of delegated planning authority from municipal councils (s.4). However, these were rarely used. More commonly used were the administrative powers such as withholding municipal infrastructure grants or delaying the approval of subdivision plans.

[4] Municipalities have consistently expressed resentment over the process itself because of the delays that it entails, the sometimes conflicting directives from different commenting agencies, the staff

time that is involved in negotiating changes with the province or objecting to the OMB, and, perhaps most importantly, the constraint on municipal autonomy implied by the approval process.

7 . Growth Management Policies

7.1. Introduction

In Chapter 3, the organization of the thesis around the units of analysis was described, including the levels of jurisdiction and policy fields. In Chapters 4 and 5, the provincial and metropolitan policy framework was described. In this and the following two chapters, the impact of that policy framework on municipal planning decisions is assessed, with each chapter dealing with one aspect of the policy framework: growth management, housing supply, or urban structure. In this chapter, I look at the degree to which provincial growth management policies have been expressed at the municipal level.

7.2. Upper-tier Municipalities

7.2.1. Introduction

In the last chapter, the official plan approval process was described and the GTA Official Plan Project was introduced. The project has served as a principal mechanism for translating provincial policy objectives into planning objectives that could be embedded in municipal official plans. One of the principal thrusts of the GTA Official Plan Project was a growth management strategy called the "land budgeting exercise." The main purpose of the exercise was to establish a firm urban envelope for the GTA and to minimize the amount of land to be designated for new development in the suburban regions around Metropolitan Toronto.

This was to be accomplished by pursuing four planning objectives:

- incorporate the OGTA population objectives into the regional official plans
- establish a firm urban limit line for each region within the GTA
- increase densities for greenfield development
- increase the proportion of new population accommodated within the existing urban boundary.

Each of these objectives will be considered following a discussion of the land budgeting process.

7.2.2. The Land Budgeting Process

At the heart of regional growth management policies was the land budgeting process, devised by the province as part of its strategy for approving this generation of upper-tier plans. This process begins with the upper-tier population targets accepted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for the GTA, as described in Chapter 6. By using typical demographic projection methods, such as headship rates and housing occupancy rates, these targets are translated into the number of new housing units that will be needed over the life of the plan to reach the

population target. It is assumed that a certain amount of this figure will be achieved through intensification of the existing urban area, so the number of units to go into expansion areas is accordingly reduced. Minimum density provisions are then applied in order to determine the amount of land that needs to be designated to accommodate population growth in the region. The distribution of this land is then determined in negotiation with area municipalities and urban boundaries are indicated on the regional official plan and reflected in area municipal plans as they are updated.

This is the "top-down" process. In most cases, area municipalities conducted "bottom-up" processes as well: they carried out population forecasting exercises, analyzed housing trends and needs, looked at the intensification potential of the municipality, and determined the amount of land needed to accommodate new development within the planning framework.

Thus, the land budgeting exercise involves a number of separate "movements" that must come together into a series of plans that are mutually consistent within each of the regional municipalities. This entails detailed negotiations between provincial officials and upper-tier municipal staff on the one hand, and between upper-tier and lower-tier municipal staff on the other hand. In some cases, an official plan committee composed of regional and local planning staff along with officials from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, was set up in order to provide frequent contact among the parties involved.

7.2.3. Setting Land Budget Objectives

In 1991, Durham Region undertook to revise its official plan, the first of the regional municipalities in the GTA to do so in this planning round. It was during the negotiations over the Durham plan that the province crafted its objectives in land budgeting. The approval of this plan therefore serves as a useful introduction to the growth management process at the upper-tier level.

Although Durham's draft plan claimed compact development as one of its key objectives, this goal seemed to be contradicted by a number of features in the plan. First, it proposed population targets that were far greater than the numbers emerging from the OGTA targeting process. Although no time frame was associated with the plan, it set a population target of 1,017,500, triple the 1986 population and 25 percent greater than the population forecasted under the IBI spread scenario.

This population target was based on a "mature state" forecast that began by identifying lands suitable for development throughout the region and then assigning an average mature gross density of 25 uph. Obviously, the higher the gross density that was

projected, the greater the population increase that could be justified. Regional planners emphasized, however, that this was not a density target for new development.

Nonetheless, lower-tier politicians—including those sitting on both lower- and upper-tier councils—responded violently to the draft plan. In Whitby, councillors denounced the density projections of Durham's draft plan as "horrendous", claiming that it would be "packing 'em in like sardines" (*Whitby Free Press*, April 10, 1991: 1). "Growth is fine," said one influential councillor, "I have no problem with growth as long as it's manageable and affordable" (*Whitby Free Press*, June 12, 1991: 13). He recommended that the regional plan be changed to reflect a gross density of about 17 uph for new developments.

In 1993, the region adopted its official plan, omitting the density assumptions that were contained in the draft plan, but maintaining the land supply requirements and population target. The province rejected several features of the plan. First, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs insisted that some time frame be applied to the plan and signalled that it would be willing to grant a 30-year boundary instead of the typical 20-year boundary in exchange for firm density and intensification targets. The ministry pointed out that the draft plan population numbers were highly inflated, and proposed 930,000 as a target for 2021. It also noted that a corresponding reduction in the amount of land designated for new development would have to take place. In terms of intensification targets, the ministry proposed that 20 percent of new growth take place through intensification of the existing urban envelope. In terms of density targets, the province seized upon the 25 uph gross density figure that had been used to justify the region's population forecast and recommended that it be incorporated into the plan as a target minimum density for development in the expansion areas.

Durham regional and local councillors responded strongly to these proposals. The regional chairman complained that provincial demands would put "us in the same league as the heaviest-populated areas of Metropolitan Toronto... To accept that would have destroyed the lifestyle we enjoy in Durham Region" (*Toronto Star*, July 22, 1993: SD6).

Following this, negotiations between the province and the region produced a compromise over land budgeting issues. The plan that was eventually approved by the province included two of the province's four land budgeting objectives: it adopted a firm urban boundary, and it planned to accommodate approximately 20 percent of all new population growth through intensification. However, the approved plan overshot the GTA Scenario One population growth projections, reaching a compromise figure of 970,000 (actually closer to Durham's target than the province's). The ministry-approved plan did not explicitly recognize minimum densities, but the land supply calculations were based on a forecasted gross density of 17 uph, exactly as demanded by lower-tier municipalities in their

response to the draft plan. The amount of land designated for expansion areas was roughly the amount of land first proposed by the region in its "mature state" scenario.

Not only did the province settle on its growth management objectives during the negotiations surrounding the approval of the Durham plan, but the process served to structure the expectations of other regional planning authorities as they undertook their own official planning initiatives. In the following sections, I consider outcomes for each of the province's four planning objectives. Outcomes are summarized in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Land Budgeting Objectives in Regional Official Plans

Region	Regional Population Target	20 Percent Intensification	17 uph Minimum Density	Firm Urban Boundary
Durham	O	O	X	√
York	√	O	X	√
Peel	O	X	X	√
Halton	√	O	X	√

Legend: X=not present, O=partially present, √= fully present.

7.2.4. Regional Population Targets

The development of population distribution targets across the GTA—as orchestrated by the OGTA—were dealt with in Chapter 5. These targets served as the province's opening position in the official plan negotiations with upper-tier municipalities in the GTA.

To what degree were the OGTA numbers reflected in the official plans of the region? Table 7-2 gives some information about population projections in the region. Hemson's Reference Scenario and Scenario One are shown along with the numbers appearing in the regional official plans. The key figures are in the final column, indicating whether the regional official plans have met the OGTA population targets for Scenario One, the "intensification scenario" described in Chapter 5 above.

The table shows that two of the four suburban upper-tier plans have met the OGTA targets while two others have overshot the provincially-sanctioned targets. The largest deviations occur in the cases of Peel and Durham, where the population projections incorporated into official planning documents are somewhat higher than the OGTA targets.

Table 7-2: GTA Population Distribution Projections (millions)

Region	Year	Hemson Reference	Hemson Scenario 1	Regional Plans	Regional Plans - Scenario 1
Metropolitan Toronto	2011	2.387	2.541	2.500	-0.041
Peel	2021	1.324	1.255	1.328	+0.073
York	2021	1.287	1.107	1.100	-0.007
Durham	2021	0.969	0.952	0.970	+0.018
Halton	2011	0.547	0.534	0.530	-0.004

Although I am less concerned here with employment forecasts because of their indirect connection with residential intensification, it is interesting to note that the final employment figures were well reflected in regional official plans. Table 7-3 shows that only Durham incorporated a figure significantly different from the OGTA allocation. As noted in Chapter 5, however, the OGTA allocations had been adjusted upwards in response to regional objections.

Table 7-3: GTA Employment Distribution Projections

Region	Year	Scenario 1	Adjusted Scenario 1	Regional Plans	Regional Plans - Adjusted Scenario
Peel	2021	686,000	725,000	719,000	-6,000
York	2021	578,000	625,000	625,000	0
Halton	2011	269,000	290,000	290,000	0
Durham	2021	366,000	400,000	458,000	+58,000

7.2.5. Minimum Densities

The ministry's objective was to have regional official plans incorporate minimum density objectives for all new development, applied on a region-wide basis. A level of 25 uph gross density was initially considered in negotiations with Durham but, as we have seen, the goal was eventually reduced to 17 uph.

Clearly, provincial planners were unsuccessful in convincing regional officials to formally incorporate minimum densities in their official plans. None of the plans incorporate clearly stated minimum densities to be achieved in new developments. Halton, however, is preparing an Urban Structure Plan, which will eventually become part of the official plan through an official plan amendment. The draft plan proposes an average net density of about 30 uph for new development. The number includes only the privately owned land on which

housing is situated and excludes roads, schools, parks, local retail, religious and utility uses. Once these other uses are added in, the gross figure is about 20 uph.

In two other cases, minimum densities were incorporated into official plans in more subtle, if less enforceable, ways. In Durham's case, the official plan states—as one of the four bases of the plan—that "over time, the density of new development will continue to increase" but does not assign any numerical targets. According to regional staff, however, such targets are considered to be a "background assumption" of the plan and will be used when considering lower-tier municipal plans, plan amendments and plans of subdivisions.

In York Region, density targets are also subtly expressed in the new official plan. Rather than being explicitly stated in the plan, minimum densities are implied in a "sidebar illustration". The sidebars suggests that a typical new community on 1000 hectares of land would be about 40-50 percent green space, parks, roads and schools, 35-40 percent residential lands, and 15-20 percent employment lands. It would have about 16,000 residents living in 6,000 homes on the residential lands, for a gross density of about 15 uph. Because this is not formally stated in the plan, however, it is not considered an official target.

In Peel Region, target densities for new development are not expressed in the draft plan, but there is planning assumption that densities will be in the order of 22 uph, including residential lots and the internal road pattern, but excluding parks, schools and major arterials. Once these land uses are included, the resulting densities would be about 15 uph gross, again slightly lower than the provincial minimum.

7.2.6. Intensification Targets

More successful from the provincial perspective has been the province's attempt to get regional official plans to incorporate intensification objectives. However, here too, success has been qualified. The ministry's goal was for each regional plan to contain policies that would direct a minimum of 20 percent of new growth to the already existing envelope. Thus, designation of new land for development would be sufficient to accommodate a maximum of 80 percent of the expected population growth of the region.

In two cases, a 20 percent intensification objective has been included in the plan. The Durham plan, for instance, stated that: "Intensification is encouraged within existing urban areas. Further, as an overall target, the Region, in conjunction with the area municipalities, will plan to accommodate approximately 20 percent of all new population growth through intensification" (Durham, 1994: 17).

The 20 percent intensification target has also been expressed in the official plan for the Region of York (1994: 35): "To target a minimum 20 percent of the Region's forecasted population increase to existing built-up portions of urban areas, towns and villages in keeping

with the centres and corridors structure of this plan and by redevelopment of under-utilized areas and areas in transition."

Using the definition of intensification that appears to have been accepted by the ministry, Halton's plan implies an intensification objective of over half of new development. This surprisingly ambitious target will be put into perspective below. In Peel, the draft official plan does not include any intensification objectives.[1]

7.2.7. Urban Boundaries

Most successful of all of the land budgeting objectives has been the urban boundary consolidation. The setting of the urban boundary is crucial to the integrity of the land budgeting process. A fluid or easily changed boundary would render the provincial intervention meaningless as boundary changes are made to reflect development pressures rather than growth management objectives. All four plans incorporate measures to inhibit changes in the urban boundary outside of official plan review processes.

Typically, the regional official plans call for further growth to be centred around existing communities and villages and for an urban boundary that will clearly define urban and rural areas. Normally, provincial approvals are for a 20-year land supply at the regional level and a 10-year supply at the local level. In this round of GTA official plan approvals, however, the province is allowing for 30-year boundaries in regional plans and 20-year boundaries in area municipal plans. The 30-year planning was stimulated by the OGTA's 30-year population and employment growth studies. It is also thought to provide greater long-term planning ability, and to provide more certainty for farmers and developers. Land that is within the 30-year boundary but outside the 20-year boundaries of municipal plans will not be available for development over the next 20 years.

The regional plans state that changes to the urban boundaries will require a regional official plan amendment, and normally be conducted during a complete plan review. Thus, Durham's plan states that "expansions to the urban area boundaries shall only occur through a comprehensive review of this plan in 2001." At the urging of the approval authority, detailed requirements for the approval of boundary extensions between plan reviews have been incorporated into the plans. Thus, the plans state that before the region will consider an extension to the urban boundary a "growth management strategy" or "comprehensive analysis" must first be conducted. This typically includes a defensible analysis of the intensification opportunities within already built-up areas. Requests for boundary extensions must be consistent with the province's population and employment growth forecasts.

7.2.8. Discussion

According to a senior planner at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, "we feel we have really pushed the envelope with this, we have significantly moved the yardstick." There is no doubt that with this round of upper-tier planning, an extremely important dialogue has emerged between provincial and regional governments. However, the extent to which the yardstick has been moved is not clear.

Where there is an established yardstick against which to measure the impact of provincial intervention—namely with the population targets—we find mixed success. On the positive side, simply having achieved a consensus on the method for a regional population allocation may be a powerful aid in managing growth in the future. Population (and employment) forecasts for each region are used to designate settlement and land-use boundaries, to determine future transportation investment requirements, calculate sewer and water capacity needs, help determine housing needs and associated land requirements, and the need for increased municipal services such as schools, parks, and libraries. Thus, the population allocation is an essential growth management tool. Secondly, having won agreement on the basic principle that growth must be forecasted on a GTA-wide level and then distributed in a zero-sum game among the upper-tier regions (i.e., a top-down manner) may help tame the growth aspirations of lower-tier municipalities and suburban land owners, and retard the incremental sprawl that the bottom-up approach has led to in the past.

On the negative side, I noted in Chapter 5 that the OGTA's population targets were very modest. In terms of the balance of growth projected to occur between Metropolitan Toronto and the four suburban regions, the "aggressive intensification" targets of Scenario One were no more ambitious than the spread scenario that had been developed earlier by IBI. Furthermore, two regions, Durham and Peel, failed to meet the intensification scenario adopted by the OGTA as a basis for regional planning and instead adopted population figures that corresponded to the Reference Scenario.[2] In the case of York Region, the OGTA's intensification forecast was exactly the same as the region's own trend forecast and therefore did not engender any conflict between provincial and regional interests (York Region, 1993). The province also indicated that it would be flexible on adjusting upward the population target for York Region, where a number of area municipalities would like to see their targets substantially increased. If all increases are granted, it would raise the York number approximately half way to the Reference Forecast from its current level. This would leave only Halton with a plan that substantively reflects the OGTA population targets.

In terms of the other targets, there is no yardstick against which to measure the impact of provincial intervention. For instance, there is no standard of past trends on which to evaluate the ambitiousness of the intensification targets adopted in regional plans. Provincial

planners simply do not know what the existing trends are, or how much growth would have been accommodated within the existing envelope in the absence of their policy intervention. Their best guess however, is that about 15 percent of growth in the past has been through the intensification of the built up area in suburban regions. The 20 percent goal therefore represents a significant if not dramatic increase over past trends.

Although the 20 percent intensification target was met or superseded in three of the four plans, it is important to realize that the meaning of "intensification" for this purpose is unclear. An analysis of the working definition being developed in Durham—and provisionally accepted by the province—shows that the intensification claims of official planning documents are clearly inflated. Intensification, according to this definition, refers to development on land that was "built up" as of June 5, 1991, the date that the regional council adopted Durham's official plan. The meaning of "built up" here is critical: it refers to any land that had any residential structure on it at the time, even if it was a single house on five hectares of land. Using this definition, the boundary of the "built up area" is more or less coterminous with that appearing in previous regional plans. If this definition emerges as the accepted one, greenfield development at any density will be counted as "intensification" as long as it occurs within the previously existing boundary.

For the Regions of York and Durham, it is difficult to say how the 20 percent official plan intensification targets would translate into the more common meaning of the word, i.e., growth that occurs in the already urbanized area. In the case of Halton, there is more information to go on. As noted above, the Halton plan calls for over half of all new development to be in the form of "intensification". In determining the amount of land to be designated in the new plan, Halton undertook a number of planning studies. One study concluded that:

> Due to the age structure of the population and due to Halton's position in the GTA, growth in Halton during the planning period will be mostly based on people moving to Halton to occupy ground-related family housing. This limits the amount of growth that can be accommodated through intensification during this period, since most units created through redevelopment and intensification are apartment or non-family type units (Halton, 1994: 1-27).

This assessment is clearly inconsistent with the claim that over half of new development would be through intensification. The discrepancy between the two meanings of intensification is revealed in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4: Halton Population Growth Projections to 2011

Source of Growth	Population	Percent of Growth
1991 population	313,000	0
New development on undeveloped parts of the existing urban envelope	83,000	38
Redevelopment or infill in already built-up areas	34,000	16
Development in areas designated under new plan	100,000	46
Projected population growth	217,000	100

Source: Halton, 1994

The table shows that approximately 54 percent of new growth will be accommodated within the urban boundary established in the 1980 official plan, but this includes 38 percent to be accommodated on vacant land and only 16 percent in the already built up area. Thus, the intensification target for this region—using the conventional definition of the word—is only 16 percent. This figure is only marginally above the existing trend, according to the province's own planners.

In terms of the densities expected of new development, again, it is difficult to measure the ambitiousness of the provincial targets relative to existing trends. Although there is little empirical evidence that this is the case, provincial planners claim on the basis of anecdotal evidence that conventional densities are around 10-12 uph gross. Clearly, however, residential densities have been increasing significantly in the last five years. Durham planners estimate that recent developments in that region were more on the order of 15 uph gross. An earlier draft of the OGTA report on urban form, discussed in Chapter 5, claims that residential development in the early 1990s was occurring at up to 15 uph gross.

If this were the case, the minimum density objectives set by provincial planners would represent a "fixing" of the development densities currently found in many new subdivision into a semi-official policy status. Given the higher densities of recent development, this would not be a trivial accomplishment. Any increase in average densities at these low numbers could mean a shift from densities that are clearly not transit-supportive to densities that make feasible a minimal level of transit provision.

However, if one goes by the figures in Lehman & Associates *Urban Density Study*, commissioned by the OGTA, the 17 uph target may fall short of the threshold. That study claims that gross densities of about 50 residents per hectare are required to support minimum levels of transit (i.e., half hour service) and this is the minimum density they recommend for new suburban development in the GTA. According to a provincial planner, this translates into

a gross residential density of about 20 uph, or somewhat higher than the provincial target for upper-tier plans. Supporting this higher target is the earlier draft of the OGTA report on urban form: it calls for an average gross density of 20-25 uph.[3] Another source on this matter was provided by the Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario (1993: 22), which suggested that "new additions to communities on full services should be developed at 'medium density,'" which it defined as housing with frontages of about 25-30 feet. This translates into a net residential density of 36-45 uph or a gross density of about 26-32 uph.[4] Thus, the provincial target of 17 uph gross, while higher than conventional densities, hardly represents a major "moving of the yardstick", measured either by the targets being suggested by the province's own consultants and commissioners or the trends created by current market conditions.

Furthermore, the semi-official status of the density targets raise important issues about how they will be implemented by regional municipalities when and if market conditions revert to earlier patterns. Their lack of official status may mean that provincial objectives will not be as strongly represented when conflict over density arises between upper- and lower-tier municipalities, or at provincial land-use tribunals, such as at the OMB or the Environment Assessment Board.

Moreover, it is clear from interviews with provincial and regional planners that opinions differ as to the significance of the density target. Provincial planners present it as a minimum to be achieved on average by new development across the regional municipality. In contrast, planners in upper-tier municipalities perceive it as a target to strive for, effectively a maximum density target.

Finally, the evolution of provincial environment policies also raises concerns with respect to minimum density targets. The changing provincial policy context has strongly favoured the protection of environmentally sensitive lands. As a result, land dedications for environmental purposes were expanded to include land for storm water management, buffers along water courses and wetlands, buffers adjacent to valleys along table lands, wetlands and wetland buffers, tableland woodlots, groundwater recharge areas, and wildlife corridors. Prior to these policy changes, only specially-designated environmentally-sensitive areas and areas of natural scientific interest, in addition to lands within valleys, would be considered automatically off-limits to development. Thus, the net effect of policy changes was to remove large amounts of land from the developable base.[5]

From an intensification perspective this is a double-edged sword. Because it removes land from the area available for development, the urgency of promoting more compact forms of development is enhanced. On the other hand, the environmental "take-outs" may also

make intensification more difficult to achieve: i.e., the overall density of new development may be reduced if one takes into account all the land protected by provincial policy.[6]

The definition of gross density used by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in its approval deliberations excludes the land protected by provincial environmental policies. This means that even if the pressures on regional officials to achieve higher gross densities were effective, what are sometimes called the super-gross densities, including environmental take-outs, may remain roughly constant or may even be reduced.[7]

Whether or not this is a net environmental gain will depend on the other environmental implications of the resulting development pattern. To answer this question we would have to know whether the transit-supportive benefits of more compact urban form depend on higher super-gross densities or whether they can be achieved at merely higher gross densities. If the larger environmental take-outs result in settlement patterns that are more diffuse at a super-gross scale, public transit investment may be rendered less feasible and automobile usage may be encouraged. This would obviously undermine some of the environmental goals of the land budgeting program.[8]

In fact, the ministry's objective was to increase the site-level densities to more than account for environmental take-outs: if achieved, this would result in an increase in super-gross density on the regional landscape. However, a provincial planner from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs was not confident that this would be the outcome of the upper-tier land budgeting exercise.[9]

Once again, the interpretation placed upon provincial objectives by municipalities tended to undermine those objectives. In this case, municipalities insisted on including in their land budget all undevelopable land, not just that land that could not be developed because of provincial policy. Thus, they claimed they needed more land than calculated based on the provincial definition. In most cases, the province ended up allowing the municipalities to use their own definition. As a provincial planner explained:

> Vaughan proposed 400 hectares more than we thought they should have had given the municipal population forecast. We sent the region a memo proposing that they remove two large blocks from the expansion area. They just nickelled and dimed us all the way, arguing that because there was a hydro corridor somewhere or a cemetery it shouldn't be included in the land budget... It was incredible, but they got their way, they got their land designated.

7.3. Lower-tier Municipalities

7.3.1. Introduction

At the level of lower-tier municipal plans, the land budgeting exercise initiated by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is less visible: of the six plans reviewed, only Pickering's and Whitby's

were developed after an upper-tier land budgeting plan was in place. While the land budgeting objectives will be considered where appropriate in this section, my assessment of lower-tier plans will be based on the more general provisions of the Growth and Settlement Guidelines. The section headings that follow are taken from items described in the treatment of the guidelines in Chapter 4.

7.3.2. Defensible Population Projections

One of the functions of upper-tier governments, according to the provincial policy framework, is to distribute expected growth among the component area municipalities. Thus, each of the four upper-tier plans contain growth projections for each area-municipality in the upper-tier region, the final step in the top-down process of population allocation for the GTA.

However, many municipalities engaged in a "bottom-up" forecasting process of their own that allowed them to arrive at their own estimates of the likely growth potential within the planning time-frame. We can get an idea of how ambitious the provincially-controlled top-down process was by comparing the results to the outcome of the municipally-controlled bottom-up process. Table 7-5 summarizes the findings contrasting the two population allocation processes.

Table 7-5: Bottom-up and Top-down Population Forecasts, 2021

Municipality	Bottom-up Trend Forecast (A)	Top-down Allocation (B)	Difference (B-A)
Burlington	173,500	180,000	6,500
Mississauga	660,000	691,000	31,000
Brampton	530,000	553,000	23,000
Newmarket	83,000 (2016)	75,000	0
Pickering	145,000	145,000	0
Whitby	154,650	163,000	8,350

In Brampton, a 1991 forecast was made that indicated the municipality would reach a population of 490,000 by the year 2021. The next year, the municipality began to consider a range of growth options in terms of the direction of urban expansion and the amount of land to be designated for new development. The planning department suggested an urban boundary that could be justified based on the population and employment forecasted. In response to pressures from the development industry, however, council chose to add further expansion areas. This resulted in an urban boundary that could accommodate a population of 530,000, or 40,000 more than originally projected. Ironically, this number is actually substantially below the population allocated to Brampton by Peel Region in its new official plan, i.e., 553,000.

In Whitby, municipal planners considered the regional population forecast to be significantly inflated over what was realistic for the region. In their view, the region exaggerated its numbers in order to help justify greater provincial investment in the region, in terms of highway widening and extension, and to influence the outcome of the negotiations surrounding the renewal of the York-Durham water servicing scheme. Regional planners also wanted see a very rapid rate of growth in Whitby in order to strengthen the Oshawa-Whitby area as a regional focus. Whitby officials felt that an unrealistic population projection for the municipality would make it difficult to defend the urban boundary against developers who wanted "in". Thus, the town undertook its own population study showing a significantly lower projection than the top-down method. According to their bottom-up calculation, the region's target for the municipality of 163,000 to the year 2021 is about 8,000 too high. Nonetheless, it is the higher regional target that is incorporated into Whitby's plan.

In Mississauga, a bottom-up growth forecast done in 1994 indicated that the municipality's population would increase to about 660,000. The allocation from Peel was 691,000 or 31,000 greater than that anticipated by the municipality based on existing growth trends. In Burlington, the Municipal Housing Statement shows that the city's trend growth would result in a 2011 population of 173,500. The amount allocated by Halton region was—once again—higher than the bottom-up trend forecast by 6,500 at 180,000. In Pickering, the bottom-up process produced a result similar to the top-down process.

The only municipality in the survey set that expected a greater population increase than allocated by its upper-tier municipality was Newmarket. There, the official plan called for a population of 83,000 in 2016, "reflecting Newmarket's historic share of net migration in York Region." This compared to a forecasted population of 75,000 in 2021 (i.e., five years later) found in the York Region plan. According to a municipal planner, "York was taking engineering things like water and sewer into account and wanted us to grow less, based on what was left over [from the regional growth target] after other municipalities were assigned their allocations." The town managed to convince York Region to accept the higher numbers, and it appears as though this will be agreed to by the province as well: according to a provincial planner "we may okay that one... it's easy to justify."

This analysis shows that none of the six municipalities surveyed was required to reduce its population forecast in order to accommodate the regional allocations. This can be taken as another reflection on the relatively weak deflection from trend represented by the "aggressive intensification" scenario proposed by the OGTA and its translation into upper-tier targets. The fact that regional allocations actually exceeded lower-tier forecasts in most cases also suggests that upper-tier municipalities were engaged in a competitive game to get a larger share of the "GTA pie" and to maximize their growth potential. As one lower-tier

planner from Halton Region remarked in an interview: "our representative came back from the GTA negotiations and told us he could only 'get' 670,000." In most cases, lower-tier municipal councils were agitating for higher population allocations,[10] but the Whitby case shows that municipalities slated by regional plans for very high rates of growth (see Table 7-6 below) may resist higher projections.

All plans reviewed assumed that growth would take place, even where no further land was designated for development. As shown in Table 7-6, official plans for the six lower-tier municipalities incorporated growth expectations of between 39 percent and 166 percent, with an average growth expectation of 98 percent—or almost a doubling of population—over 30 years.

Table 7-6: Municipal Growth Expectations to 2021

Municipality	1991 Population	Forecasted Population	Percent Increase
Burlington	129,575	180,000	39
Mississauga	463,388	691,000	49
Brampton	234,445	553,000	136
Newmarket	45,474	83,000	83
Pickering	68,631	145,000	111
Whitby	61,281	163,000	166

7.3.3. Growth Adjacent to Built-up Areas and Phasing of Services

Most plans contained strong wording that phasing of services would be coordinated with residential growth in order to avoid the fiscally and socially untenable situation that arose in the late 1980s when housing production outstripped the production of community and social services. Thus, lower-tier plans establish policies that will work to "phase and coordinate parks, schools, churches, community centres, day care centres, health centres and shopping facilities with new housing to maintain and improve the quality of urban life" (City of Brampton, 1993: 8). Typically, plans contained policies to:

- Phase development within expansion areas and nodes and corridors based on the availability of municipal services and school accommodation.
- Use servicing decisions to direct and stage growth rather than letting development decisions determine service requirements.
- Limit service provisions within the envelope established by the plan and to prohibit the extension of municipal services to areas outside the envelope, with limited exceptions (i.e., for institutional or municipal use).
- Direct growth to areas adjacent to those already serviced.

7.3.4. Minimize Impacts of Growth on Municipal Finances

All plans reviewed have policies to minimize the fiscal implications of growth. Mississauga's plan contains a typical statement: "To locate development so that the cost of providing services is maintained within acceptable limits (City of Mississauga, 1994: 20). There is clear support within the plans for the principle of "user-pay": i.e., that new growth should support itself in terms of capital requirements. Most plans refer to the *Development Charges Act* as a primary vehicle for realizing this principle in practice.

Many plans also contain policies requiring that the rate and location of future residential and non-residential growth will be regulated to ensure that a balance is maintained between public demands for services and overall fiscal capacity. All plans contain policies that would work to maintain a desirable ratio of employment to residential assessment, for instance requiring fiscal impact assessments of applications for redesignation of commercial and industrial uses to residential. Some plans, e.g., Burlington, Mississauga, and Newmarket, hint that residential development would be limited if employment to residential assessment were to fall below a certain threshold (e.g., 25-30 percent in Burlington). Brampton's plan explicitly links new development to the ability of transportation or school services to properly accommodate the increased usage that would result.

7.3.5. Direct Growth Away From Significant Environmental Features and Towards Settlement Areas

All plans contain policies to direct growth away from significant environmental features, prime agricultural lands, and other resource lands. The Mississauga plan, for instance, designates Environmental Planning Areas such as "natural forms, functions, and linkages" including "woodlots; greenbelts; wetlands; ANSI's; Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species; Environmentally Sensitive Areas; Lake Ontario Waterfront." The plan requires that an Environmental Impact Study accompany development proposals within or adjacent to protected environmental areas, as does Whitby's. In municipalities covering segments of the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment or the Parkway Belt, clear planning policies endorsing provincial interests and prohibiting incompatible development are included in the official plans. In the Town of Newmarket plan, for example, policies clearly recognized the provincial interest in the moraine and states that "any development applications for lands within/partially within the Oak Ridges Moraine... shall be reviewed based on the requirements of the Ministry of Natural Resources" (Town of Newmarket, 1994: 121).

All municipalities with significant resource and agricultural lands also have policies to protect resource areas, and to divert growth away from agricultural lands into designated settlement areas. Typically, plans contained policies to prohibit or discourage severances on

agricultural lands outside the urban envelope. Consent to sever, where permitted, had to meet stringent conditions such as: "Consents may only be granted if the proposed lot is intended as a retirement lot for a farmer who has been farming for a substantial number of years and is retiring from active working life.." (City of Brampton, 1993: 134), or in Newmarket: "Consents shall only be granted where the severance is for the purpose of infilling within existing development" (Town of Newmarket, 1994: 137). Whitby's plan prohibited "scattered isolated residential development" and "ribbon development" (Town of Whitby, 1994: 59). Plans routinely prohibited any development proposal on agricultural lands that would require urban water and sanitary services.

Most of those municipalities with significant wetlands have fully incorporated provincial planning policies aimed to protect them from incompatible uses (e.g., Whitby, Brampton, and Newmarket), although Pickering's plan was a partial exception. Significant wetlands have been mapped by the Ministry of Natural Resources and appear in official plans along with policies to prevent development on or near them. Whitby's plan has the clearest statement of policy: "the Municipality shall implement the goals of the Wetlands Policy Statement prepared by the province under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*... Development may be permitted on land adjacent to Provincially Significant Wetlands if it is in full conformity with the Wetlands Policy Statement as demonstrated by an Environmental Impact Study" (Town of Whitby, 1994: 5-4).

7.3.6. Intensification of Built-up areas before Greenfield Development

No municipal plan surveyed here contained provisions that required exploitation of intensification opportunities within the built up area before allowing new development in greenfield areas.[11] However, all plans contained some statement that such a strategy would be encouraged. Pickering's plan: "Town Council shall encourage appropriate intensification and use of existing infrastructure prior to extending infrastructure into undeveloped areas of the community, or building new infrastructure" (Town of Pickering, 1995: 78). Brampton's plan says that approval priority "favours those developments which infill or round out existing communities, which can make use of existing under-utilized facilities, and which will expedite the completion of missing links or components of partially completed facilities" (City of Brampton, 1993: 167). Whitby's plan (echoed by Newmarket's) contained this passage: "It shall be the policy of Council to encourage infilling of vacant areas and intensification of underdeveloped areas within the town which are currently serviced with municipal water supply and sanitary sewer services. The accommodation of infilling/intensification

opportunities shall be considered when assessing development applications, extensions of services or construction of roads" (Town of Whitby, 1994: 8-12).

These provisions satisfy the provincial "intensification-first" requirement by including in the meaning of intensification the in-filling of lands that are serviced but not yet fully developed. Typically, this situation occurs when recently developed subdivisions are not fully built out or when formerly designated open space or parkland becomes available for development. This contrasts with an interpretation of intensification that would require the redesignation of already built-out areas for higher-density development. As one planner said:

> there was a question as to whether we had to go in and redesignate land because we can achieve a lot of our intensification goals without redesignation to medium density. We would not be as likely to support it if we had to redesignate land... I would say for the most part, [intensification goals] will be met by developing raw land.

Mentioned above was the fact that Whitby and Pickering's official plans were developed in the aftermath of the upper-tier land budgeting exercise and therefore could be expected to reflect the intensification objectives of Durham's regional plan. Pickering's plan does not incorporate an intensification objective. The plan reports that the population will more than double over the next 20 years from about 70,000 to about 145,000. Of this 75,000 increase, about 45,000 is expected to take place on the provincially-owned Seaton lands in currently-zoned agricultural area. About 20,000 will take place through the completion of recent subdivisions (at existing density designations) and areas of former environmental constraints, such as the Altona forest. The remaining 10,000 will be accommodated by intensifying arterial roads. Thus, about 13 percent of the expected growth will take place in the already urbanized areas, somewhat less than the 20 percent target.

In Whitby, the new official plan incorporates the 20 percent intensification objective agreed to by the region. Given that Whitby has not been the site of extensive intensification in the past, this appears as a notable achievement. However, local planners called the effect "smoke and mirrors", given the regional definition. The Whitby draft plan actually had adopted a much lower intensification target—only 10 percent—based on a study of intensification opportunities in the town. Local planners interviewed emphasized the serious constraints to intensification in the town: resistance from local residents, high land values in the central area, fragmented land ownership, and many areas with antiquated services that would need to be upgraded before any intensification could take place. Officials initially offered resistance to the region's attempt to persuade them to use the 20 percent objective. After negotiating with the region, however, Whitby staff realized that using the regional definition of intensification would amount to roughly the same level of "real" intensification

already contemplated in the draft plan. And, according to town officials, this is about the rate that was expected given past development trends and forecasted demand for intensification-supplied housing.

In Brampton, the draft official plan does not set a target for intensification. However, a background study to the official plan showed that there was potential for about 15,000 units to be accommodated in mature areas of town, mostly through intensification of nodes and corridors and the redevelopment of industrial sites (the study excluded the potential for neighborhood infill development or accessory apartments). This represents only about 15 percent of the growth that is anticipated in the municipality over the length of the plan and—according to local planners—probably would have been realized with or without provincial intensification policies.

Besides recommending to municipalities that numerical intensification targets be incorporated into their plans, provincial comments on draft official plans also suggest that policies be put in place that prevent boundary changes until 60 percent of the vacant designated land at the time of approval is developed. No plans reviewed actually incorporated any such requirement and interviews with municipal planners revealed no intentions to do so.

7.3.7. Compact Development and Minimum Densities

Most plans contained reference to the need for "compact development" on greenfield sites. However, no plan offered a definition of compact development in its glossary and measures to achieve this policy objective were generally absent, a point frequently made in the provincial comments on lower-tier plans.

Most importantly, no plan contained policies that would require the municipality to achieve minimum densities in new development or redevelopment proposals. A partial exception to this observation was provided by Brampton's plan, which states that "urban boundary expansion areas should be planned within a medium-density range of 11 to 15 units per net residential acre (7.8 to 10.7 units per gross residential acre)" (City of Brampton, 1993: 6). However, the statement appears in the introduction to the plan, not in the body of the plan. Other passages in the introduction make clear that the introduction itself is not part of the official plan.

A number of mechanisms for increasing densities were suggested in the province's comments on official plans:

- policies that would require the municipality to review applications already in the approvals process in order to promote increased densities

- policies to require that vacant lands be built out to maximum densities allowed under current planning regulations
- incorporate performance standards for target densities for all residential lands proposed to be added to the urban area to be developed at the average density on which the land supplies are based.

To date, however, lower-tier official plans have not incorporated any of these provisions and interviews did not reveal plans to do so.

7.4. Summary of Findings

The land budgeting exercise undertaken by planners at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is an important element in the province's strategy to manage growth and promote intensification in the GTA. The general conclusion that emerges from this analysis is that there is a growing recognition of the need to reshape development patterns in the suburban regions but that there are significant constraints on formulating and implementing ambitious targets.

At the broadest level of the GTA-wide population distribution, upper-tier municipalities have for the first time incorporated population targets that provide a framework for investment decisions in public infrastructure, lower-tier plans, and land development. But the targets actually adopted by upper-tier plans are modest in their intensification objectives.

At the level of the regional municipalities, we have seen that where targets for diverting population growth away from greenfield and towards mature areas were incorporated into regional official plans, they were allowed to be defined in a way that diluted their potential impact on development patterns. Where targets were defined in a more ambitious way by the province—i.e., with minimum density provisions—they were not incorporated into official plans but adopted only as informal "assumptions".

At the level of super-gross population density, meaning the overall density of settlement on the regional landscape, it is difficult to demonstrate that the provincial intervention is making a significant difference because of the countervailing effects of increasing environmental take-outs. But if super-gross densities are not changing, it is because densities at the site level are increasing and planning pressure is being applied to fill out unfinished parts of the urban fabric before extending the settlement area. The growth management policies found in both upper and lower-tier plans are careful to avoid any implication that intensification goals would be met by accommodating significant levels of growth in existing residential areas.

7.5. Interpreting the Findings

In this section, the findings reported above are interpreted with the aim of identifying the principal factors influencing planning outcomes. The interpretation is based on an analysis of supporting planning documents, such as housing or growth management studies, a review of newspaper articles relating to the planning and official planning process in each study municipality, minutes from public meetings on official planning proposals, and interviews with municipal planners. The discussion is divided into two main parts: those factors that tend to increase municipal compliance to provincial policy objectives, and those that tend to reduce compliance.

7.5.1. Comply to the Provincial Policy Framework When it:

7.5.1.1. Responds to Local Growth Management Pressures

7.5.1.1.1. Fiscal Issues

Rapid, scattered, low-density growth was intensifying the fiscal crisis of suburban municipalities around Toronto. The deficit war between federal and provincial levels of government led to increased expenditure responsibilities for municipal governments throughout Ontario, while local pressures made increasing property taxes undesirable. In some ways the situation was worse in suburban areas of the GTA as explosive growth in the 1980s created service "time bombs", i.e., low-density residential development that appears to improve the assessment position of municipalities in the short run, but eventually gives rise to demands for expensive services, draining municipal treasuries.

Essentially, this reflected a mismatch between the high standard of services new arrivals from Metropolitan Toronto expected and the low-density built environment they were creating for themselves. Thus parents expected their children to be bused to school, but a scattered population made that an expensive proposition. This mismatch was clearly articulated at the time by critics of sprawl, such as Metro Councillor Richard Gilbert: "People moved to the suburbs and expected the same level of services (especially recreational facilities) that they had in the city where the densities made it practical" (*Toronto Star*, February, 1990: A21).

In the last years of the property boom, 1986-1989, several of the highest growth municipalities had property tax hikes of between 10 and 20 percent per year. Markham, which more than doubled its population in the 10-year period between 1981 and 1991, was the hardest hit. In February 1990, the town council announced that it was laying off 20 firefighters and cutting back other services to get the municipality's projected 50 percent local tax hike down to 20 percent. In Vaughan, where the population had almost quadrupled in the

same 10-year period, residents were faced with tax increases of about 20 percent in 1990. They were forced to close swimming pools and libraries, and to cut bus services (*Toronto Star*, February, 1990: A21).

As the Sewell Commission noted (1993: 21):

> One assumption commonly made by municipalities is that development should be approved because it "enlarges the tax base" and brings in more revenue, which lightens the load for everyone... With limited provincial subsidies and municipal funds now available for new services and infrastructure, this assumption is being challenged. Municipalities are recognizing that new residential development may not expand the tax base significantly enough to cover its own costs... While there seem to be no definitive studies, some research has concluded that certain development forms involve less initial and ongoing expenditure than others.

This realization created a willingness among municipal officials to be more assertive in the management of growth and to be more selective in the types of growth that would be welcome in the municipality. In particular, it encouraged municipalities to consider the potential for cost savings through intensification of the already built up area and to place restrictions on scattered rural growth.

7.5.1.1.2. Environmental Issues

In most suburban areas of the GTA, environmental issues played an important role in putting urban sprawl and intensification on the local planning agenda. Environmental groups lobbied to preserve natural landscapes and significant environmental features, especially in sensitive areas such as on the Oak Ridges Moraine to the north of Metropolitan Toronto, and the Rouge River Valley to the east. Groups such as Save the Oak Ridges Moraine, Save the Rouge Valley System, and Durham Environmental Network showed themselves to be sophisticated strategists in preserving environmental features, not hesitating to use the OMB and the political process whenever necessary to fight "undesirable" development proposals (*Toronto Star*, December 23, 1989).

Often arguing that any greenfield growth would be a violation of environmental principles, these groups played an important role in increasing political support for growth management and more compact urban forms. Environmental groups were also effective in associating suburban sprawl with automobile dependency and pointing out the need for suburban areas to increase densities and improve transit in order to reduce energy consumption, air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions (*Toronto Star*, June 1, 1989: A25; June 3, 1989: D3). Interestingly, making the link between disappearing farmland and suburban sprawl was left to environmental groups in the region, as farm groups stayed more or less silent on this issue (*Toronto Star*, June 3, 1989: D3).

Resident surveys conducted as part of official planning exercises in suburban areas of the GTA suggest that environmental values were strongly influencing political priorities. In the City of Burlington, for instance, residents indicated that the most important planning issue was the preservation of natural areas and agricultural lands (City of Burlington, 1994: 6). Minutes of public meetings revealed that this pro-environment orientation was also discernible among citizens more directly involved in the official planning process. Generally, the records showed that participants accepted (or demanded) that environmental issues be placed on an equal footing with social and economic concerns in municipal planning activities.

7.5.1.1.3. Rate of Growth

Newspaper articles, planning reports, and minutes of public meetings suggest that the rapid growth in suburban regions of the GTA in the 1980s had made the rate and nature of growth an issue of public concern. Surveys conducted for official plan reviews and comments on official plan documents revealed that residents were ambivalent about the prospects of further residential growth in their municipalities. A minority opinion among existing residents—especially environmentalists—was that growth should be stopped altogether or deflected to slower growing communities within or outside the GTA. The more commonly expressed opinion was that either growth was desirable—to the extent that it could help revive sagging suburban centres, stimulate the local economy, and perhaps improve the assessment base—or that developers could force municipalities to allow growth, whether or not planners and the public agreed to it.[12] Therefore, rather than stopping growth, official plans should focus on managing it properly. As a survey in Brampton suggested, residents would accept continued growth if it could "be accommodated in a well-planned and controlled fashion" (Brampton, 1993: iii).

Residents' notions of proper growth management seemed to be reacting to what they perceived as past planning failures. First, there was the perception that, in the past, growth had been allowed to proceed without the services required to support it, leading to traffic congestion, air pollution, groundwater deterioration, overburdened libraries and schools, and so on. In response, existing residents consistently advanced the principle that growth should only be permitted in step with the provision of new services and infrastructure, especially roads. Secondly, there was a strong sentiment among existing residents that environmental features and rural landscapes had been "eaten up by sprawl," leading to a loss of the "small town" atmosphere that had attracted them to areas outside Metropolitan Toronto in the first place, and that planning regulation should be strong enough to prevent the loss of such amenities. Thirdly, existing residents believed that growth should not lead to increased property taxes, i.e., that it should pay for itself through fees and charges on developers and home builders or be financed by the province.

Rural dwellers were divided about the desirability of growth. Some favoured directing growth to urban areas and obviating the need for intensification of rural hamlets. Others seemed to favour the increased economic activity that rural growth would entail. Likewise farmers and farm groups were ambivalent about strong policies to protect farmland. In principle, they supported the need to preserve the agricultural base, but many considered restrictions on severances and estate residential development, reductions in the area designated for expansion, and firm urban boundaries as ways of gaining a socially desirable goal at personal cost to them. They suggested that these policies be softened to allow farmers to sever lots or to sell their land to developers. If growth management policies were implemented, they felt that mechanisms should be found to compensate them for their loss of development rights (e.g., public land purchase or purchase of development rights). As alternatives to growth management policies, they suggested that measures be found to make farming an economically viable option in the face of powerful development pressures (e.g., tax benefits).

7.5.1.1.4. Community Identity

Another planning issue that has recently emerged with considerable force is the need to create a sense of community identity in suburban areas around Toronto. This issue has emerged in reaction to the nondescript, auto-based, continuous fabric of suburbanization that has spread across the landscape, enveloping the older rail-based villages of the region. In public consultations, residents expressed their strong preference for a community with a distinctive landscape, history, and settlement pattern. This has engendered support within the region for planning policies that preserve the historical character of villages, towns, and city centres, and for preserving elements of the natural landscape that may help to define and separate communities. As a background report to Peel's official plans states: "Expansion of the urban boundary will take place but to an established final urban boundary and should be subject to certain tests with respect to the availability of reurbanizing land and to appropriate design standards. The communities of Peel should not sprawl into a merged and formless urban area but be clearly identified and identifiable" (Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd., 1994: iv).

7.5.1.2. Responds to Local Growth Pressures

In the last section, I surveyed some local issues that were typically increasing awareness and acceptance of the need to manage growth in suburban areas of the GTA. It is important to note, however, that no plans seriously considered a "no-growth option." The implicit question addressed by the plans was not whether, but how much growth would be desirable within the time frame of the plan. Developers and other real estate interests were the strongest advocates of growth in the municipalities surveyed. For instance, when asked "why allow any

growth at all" one planner interviewed for this research responded: "I don't want to spend the rest of my professional life in front of the OMB fighting developers, that's why!" A review of comments on official plans showed that individual developers were the most frequent commenters and that they generally supported higher growth projections and expanded land budgets, as did the Urban Development Institute. Local business associations were generally less active than developers, but also tended to oppose limits on growth when they commented on official plans. Comments from large firms outside of the real estate industry were rare.

Clearly, there has been a certain level of conflict between municipalities and developers over the amount of land designated in upper-tier plans: in Durham, referrals to the OMB took place on 13 parcels of land, including three large sites; in York, referrals to the OMB have taken place on seven parcels of land, including one the size of Newmarket.[13] Nevertheless, planners report that the level ot conflict may be less than might have been expected. Several factors may be at work here. In many suburban regions, there had been a freeze on official plan amendments to expand urban boundaries as the province applied pressure for regional and area municipalities to update, revise or create official plans. The round of new official plans that was undertaken in the early 1990s broke this gridlock and provided for a large amount of new land to be designated for urban purposes. Developers saw at least some of their properties freed up for development, increasing their support for the plans in general.

Although some developers objected to the firmer urban boundaries and stricter phasing and servicing policies, these constraints were generally accepted because they laid out clear rules for when and how new land would be serviced for development, always a high priority for the development community.[14] Furthermore, many of those developers that found some of the property on the "wrong" side of the new urban boundary had large enough holdings distributed throughout the region that they also controlled property on the "right" side of the boundary, reducing their opposition to the urban boundary. Properties outside the urban boundary would continue to enjoy the tax advantages offered agricultural land in the GTA. Thus, the largest (and most powerful) property owners did not lobby forcefully against the growth management provisions of the plans.[15]

Moreover, as a local planner explained:

> these days most land owners have cash flow problems, so they are eager to get their land to market as fast as possible. Most developers are anticipating a turn-around in the residential market in the next year or two and they see that the supply of serviced lots is steadily running down in the GTA So they are more agreeable [to planning constraints] than they have been in past.

Another planner offered this explanation: "Some developers may be accepting the boundaries now because they think they will be able to get what they want from pliant councils in the future." Finally, one might also speculate that conflict with developers over the regional growth boundaries was muted by the fact that the amount of land actually designated for development was not much less than would have otherwise been the case, i.e., in the absence of provincial efforts to budget land.

7.5.2. Challenge the Provincial Policy Framework When it:

7.5.2.1. Threatens Municipal Discretion

A close reading of municipal official plans shows that municipalities are very much concerned to maintain their latitude of action as development conditions and pressures change. One expression of this concern is the highly qualified, conditional language that framed growth management policies in official plans. Typically, the plans avoided language that would commit councils to specific courses of action—language such as "will" or "shall"—and instead employed phrases such as "will endeavour to", "will encourage", or "will consider". As sometimes noted in comments from provincial agencies, the use of such wording leaves municipal plans ambiguous as to its objectives and difficult to assess in terms of the realization of plan objectives.

The desire of municipalities to preserve their freedom of future action is also apparent in the tension between provincial and municipal planners with respect to target setting. In their comments to municipalities, provincial planners have insisted that a variety of measurable targets be incorporated into both upper- and lower-tier plans in order to ensure that growth management goals are attained. In addition to justifiable population and employment targets, this includes:

- intensification targets, including overall intensification goals and targets for specific intensification areas such as in nodes and corridors, and for secondary plan intensification
- density targets for new development, development currently in the approvals process and for redevelopment
- minimum intensification thresholds to be reached before considering official plan amendments for boundary extensions
- performance standards that would ensure newly designated lands are built out at the densities used to justify the need for boundary expansion.

According to provincial planners, growth management targets are essential to plan making because:

- they can be used as criteria to evaluate the performance of the plan's objectives

- they provide clear and objective targets towards which other policies should work (e.g., servicing policies)
- they can be incorporated into quantitative exercises such as land budgeting.

In contrast, upper-tier municipal planners strongly preferred that plans avoid numerical targets because:

- lower-tier municipalities resist the target-based approach
- single targets are not appropriate in the diversity of planning situations they face
- intensification and density result from forces and factors beyond planning control
- they cannot be enforced if they go unmet
- their objectivity is specious given the lack of empirical basis
- their legitimacy is questionable given the lack of consultation in arriving at the specific numbers.

Regional planners interviewed felt that numerical targets were inappropriate given the wide diversity of local situations that needed to be addressed. Whereas, let us say, 17 uph might be suitable in one place, it may not in another. Enforcing minimum density standards on all new developments would produce a homogenous landscape poorly suited to local conditions.

Suitable densities, they tended to believe, should be determined by "good planning principles," the services available to the site, and market demand for housing in that area, not by an abstract formula imposed by a distant authority. To most of the suburban planners interviewed, making municipalities responsible for achieving intensification and density targets appeared inappropriate given the lack of control they felt they had in achieving such targets. Most felt that municipal planning agencies should restrict themselves to putting in place supportive policies to intensification and removing planning barriers. The rest, they felt, should be left to the market.

Planners questioned whether the province had the power to enforce the targets if regions do not appear to be meeting them over the course of the 30-year plan. The same dynamic that was causing the province to place more emphasis on upper-tier planning as a vehicle for provincial interests was also eroding provincial capacity to enforce compliance with provincial interests. As development occurs increasingly on a "pay as you go" basis and provincial funding for large scale infrastructure investment falls off, planners expect the province to wield fewer levers of control.

Finally, local planners questioned the legitimacy of the numerical targets on a number of grounds. First, some of the targets used by provincial planners in their plan approval decisions were unilaterally determined by provincial officials with no input from municipalities, who were responsible for implementing them "on the ground." Secondly,

provincial officials were not able to provide any empirical basis for the targets: usually, it was merely a case of "moving the yardstick" a few percentage points. Third, such targets were clearly not part of the politically-endorsed provincial policy framework. The policy basis for the province's position is the 1989 Housing Policy Statement and the 1992 Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines, neither of which included any specific intensification or minimum density targets. In contrast, municipal planners point to the specific targets that were set for both affordability objectives and land supply goals in the provincial policy framework. Provincial planners acknowledge that the lack of specific targets in the policy framework has hobbled them in negotiations with municipal officials, especially in their quest to have firm growth management targets adopted in official plans.

The province would have liked to see definite intensification and density targets set, but upper-tier planners suggest instead that the province set intensification principles and let the area municipalities achieve intensification goals in their own way. As a former official at the OGTA expressed it:

> The provincial planners wanted formulas. They wanted it to be 25 units per hectare, but they compromised with Durham at 17 units per hectare. But 17 may be appropriate somewhere, but not elsewhere, and 17 is not much above current density anyway. If you have a principle then it goes into official plans, but if it's a formula, it's someone in a little office rubber stamping things. They were driving the municipalities nuts. You need a range of possibilities.

Principles are planning objectives expressed in general terms, and allowing for a variety of implementation strategies. Thus, principles provide upper-tier planners with much more discretion to exercise in approving lower-tier plans. One of the main differences between the targets and principles approaches is the degree of conflict each is likely to entail between upper- and lower-tier municipalities. A serious attempt to implement numerical targets would require that upper-tier planners use a heavy hand in approving lower-tier planning decisions, whereas general principles would allow upper-tier planners to tolerate a wider range of planning strategies. The preference of upper-tier planners for general principles over numerical targets suggests that they do not feel equipped or prepared to do battle with area municipalities over growth management targets.

7.5.2.2. Contradicts Market Forces

As we have seen, provincial planners have tried to increase the average density of suburban development by persuading municipalities in the region to adopt minimum densities for planning purposes. Interviews with planners and planning documents reveal a considerable antagonism to this idea among suburban planners.

Underlying some of the antagonism to higher suburban densities is the widespread rejection of urban values in suburban municipalities. This takes a number of forms but most importantly for my present purpose is the common belief—according to municipal planners—that such densities might be appropriate in Metropolitan Toronto, but are not appropriate in suburban municipalities. In particular, they pointed out that a high percentage of growth (in some areas, up to 80 percent) is made up of people coming into the region, primarily from Metropolitan Toronto. The main attraction of the suburban regions is the opportunity they offer for low-density housing forms, primarily the detached units. Regional councils, they pointed out, were unlikely to adopt planning principles that undermined the region's ability to respond to the "Canadian dream". If setting higher-density targets for new development involved a drastic change in building form, a significant reduction in the amount of single detached housing, or the introduction of high-rise housing, it would be strongly resisted by councillors.

Suburban planners also reported that the "Canadian dream" is strongly supported by the bias among developers for lower-density greenfield development. This may be partly motivated by the conservatism of an industry that is slow to innovate with housing forms, but may also reflect profitability issues.[16] Even if market trends are supportive of higher-density housing in the short term, developers still resist long-term minimum density targets on the grounds that they could "tie their hands" sometime in the future when market conditions change.

7.5.2.3. Threatens to Disrupt Existing Neighbourhoods

Despite the fact that residents do not support sprawl onto fringe lands, suburban planners are convinced that residents of mature areas would also be strongly opposed to intensification of their neighbourhoods or to a proliferation of higher-density projects on under-utilized lands within the built-up area. In Burlington, for instance, an extensive survey of residents undertaken by Gallup showed that intensification of mature areas was widely rejected as a means of accommodating more growth. Planners also reported that talk of higher-density targets is also of concern to the existing residents of newly developing suburban areas that are not yet completely built-out. Residents fear that higher densities in new development may be achieved by redesignating remaining vacant lands within incomplete subdivisions to allow higher-density housing. Moreover, residents may oppose any new subdivision adjacent to them with higher than "normal" densities.

These perceptions are corroborated by the minutes of public meetings held to review official plan proposals and by written comments from the general public. Residents opposed any change in the designation of existing communities and insisted that if intensification was to take place, it should be in accordance with very careful safeguards and only on a site-

specific basis. Although some individuals supported intensification in principle as a way of reaching environmental goals, generally, there was an uneasiness about higher-density living: it was associated with crowding, crime, reduced property values, and community instability.

The planning process pursued in Halton Region is perhaps the best illustration of the difficulty of "selling" higher densities to the public. Halton Region undertook a public participation process in order to determine acceptable density levels of new development. Three density choices were considered:

- Existing suburban: At 22 units per net hectare, this reflected the density of recent suburban developments in Halton Region such as the River Oaks development in Oakville. This would require virtually no change in living standards or constriction of housing choice from the current trend.
- Mid-range: About 30 units per net hectare. This density range would require some changes in housing standards: front driveways, garages and a front yard could still be provided, but would be smaller.
- Urban: about 44 units per net hectare. This housing density would require significant changes in development standards and housing expectations: not enough room for both front yard and front driveway, thus would require back lanes and street parking; smaller setbacks from road right-of-way.

After an extensive public consultation process, the mid-range density was chosen, "but significant reservations about the implications of increases in density were voiced" (Halton, 1994: 2-15). Backing up slightly, the region "clarified" the proposed density by noting that:

- it is based on a current housing trend mix of 60 percent single detached and semi-detached units, 15 percent rowhouse, and 25 percent apartments
- the average residential lot would be only slightly smaller than existing households, and that single detached housing can mean any of the full range of lot sizes, including traditional 50 foot lots.

In sum, the region argued, the proposed density would be "consistent with the current housing market. As a result, mid-range density is not a recommendation for communities built at a density that is significantly higher than is currently being built or proposed in some parts of the GTA" (2-16).

7.5.2.4. Conflicts with Conventional Practices

Councillors, residents and developers are not the only opponents of higher-density development in new suburban subdivisions. The experience of developers that have attempted to undertake innovative development projects has shown that there are powerful forces within municipal bureaucracies that militate against dramatically higher densities in

new developments. Some of these attempts—such as the Springdale development in Brampton—have run up against the body of codes that are embedded in the practices of planning, public works, parks and engineering professionals. Municipal transportation engineers resist reductions in road rights-of-way and the introduction of rear lanes that allow lot frontages to be reduced, officials in parks departments object to smaller parkettes that permit a finer grain of residential development, educational authorities do not like to see their school facilities reduced in size, and legal departments frequently raise the tricky liability questions that the use of innovative housing designs and development standards may involve (Sewell, 1993a; The Daniels Group, 1990).

The professional orientation of planners is also an issue here. Some suburban planners admitted that they were more oriented towards greenfield development than the intensification of mature areas. Typically, suburban planners felt that greenfield growth was inevitable and that it should be accommodated in the most efficient way possible. To some extent, this is due to the now conventional ethos of the planning profession, strongly oriented towards subdivision planning, but may also be influenced by other factors:

- Many planners feel that it would be unfair to "change the rules of the game" by deciding not to permit greenfield growth after land parcels had been purchased by developers with the intention of developing them.
- Planners are also aware that councils are frequently "pro-growth" in their orientation and that this generally means greenfield development.
- Some planners felt that they should not resist greenfield growth because public investment had already been made in servicing greenfield areas.
- Planners felt that they had limited powers to control growth: developers can often force development approval by appealing to the OMB.

7.5.3. Uncertain Role of Upper-Tier Planning Agencies

The preceding discussion raises the question as to the role of upper-tier municipalities in the implementation of growth management policies. It is clear from the growth management aims of the province that it is attempting to create a full two-tiered planning system within the GTA. "The adoption and ultimate approval of [these plans] will usher in a new era and heightened responsibilities for Regional Council[s]. These responsibilities will only be enhanced upon the approval of the proposed provincial Planning Reform legislation as the Region[s] will then become the approval authority for all area municipal official plans and amendments" (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1994: 6).

The increasing importance and priority given to upper-tier plans by the province reflects the maturing of upper-tier governments since their creation in the 1970s, the trend

towards greater reliance on regional plans to express provincial interests, and the evident desire of the province to delegate certain responsibilities to the regional municipalities. In particular, the province made it clear that it intends to withdraw from funding regional infrastructure such as large-scale water and sewerage facilities, and would like to reduce its commitment on other major infrastructure projects. Furthermore, the province also announced its intention to put more responsibility on upper-tier governments to regulate and approve the planning activities of lower-tier municipalities (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1992b). For these reasons, regional official plans have taken on a much greater importance than they have had in the past and could serve as an important vehicle in implementing the intensification policy framework.

But, as the province realizes, this depends heavily on the willingness of upper-tier municipalities to adopt more responsibility in leading and managing the planning and development of the region. The results presented above raise the question as to whether provincial goals can be achieved using regional municipalities as a vehicle under their present structure.

For instance, the increased responsibility is not being accompanied by institutional changes that would justify confidence in regional planning capabilities. Most importantly, the political structure of the regions, which renders them easily influenced by the local interests of the individual area municipalities, remains unchanged.[17] As upper-tier planners themselves acknowledge, regional plans are unlikely to serve as vehicles for a strong regional vision as long as councillors are considering how their decisions are going to "play" at the local level.

The capture of regional municipalities by area municipalities is not uniform across the GTA. But even in those regions where upper-tier governments have more of a leadership reputation, planners are careful not to step on the toes, as it were, of their lower-tier counterparts. Thus, a common explanation offered by regional planners for resisting numerical targets was that they encroached on responsibilities in the domain of area municipalities. As one upper-tier planner said: "In urban areas we are concerned with infrastructure planning. The density and intensification potential of urban areas is left up to the area municipalities themselves."

7.6. Implications for Implementation

Clearly, the land budgeting exercise has led to official plans, especially at the regional level, that are much more sensitive to the efficiency of land use, to the need to manage growth to reduce fiscal and environmental impacts, and the need to produce more compact communities. The dilution of provincial policy as embodied in official plans, however, will have important implications for how the plans will be implemented.

Although the province originally expected minimum densities would be observed by new developments in each area municipality, the understanding worked out between upper- and lower-tier officials does not bear that understanding out. It appears, rather, that minimum densities will be implemented as a regional average over the time period of the plan. This carries with it the danger that lower-density areas will be allowed to proceed in the hope that higher-density areas will eventually follow. In the end, however, the region may be left with a string of low-density subdivisions and then be forced to apply for an expansion of its urban envelope in order to accommodate further growth.

Region-wide objectives—both for minimum densities and intensification—means responsibility for achieving the objectives are diffused across time and area municipalities. The potentially negative effect of this arrangement might be obviated by close monitoring of development patterns over the life of the plan. Indeed, the regional official plans call for monitoring the implementation of the land budgeting objectives through tracking such measures as redevelopment to total development ratio, residential and non-residential densities, and regional housing mix targets. However, some planners interviewed—at all three levels of government—questioned whether resources would be available for this purpose. As another planner said "we won't know whether we are successful until the 30 years is up."

7.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, I propose that a distinction be drawn between "expansion management" and intensification, two distinct but related aspects of growth management. By expansion management, I am referring to phased, orderly growth, on lands adjacent to those already designated or developed, with services planned and staged to match development needs. Such expansion avoids environmental and resource lands and completes development on vacant lands in already serviced areas. Expansion management ensures that growth occurs in a logical way, prevents scattered development on agricultural land outside the urban envelope. It is not, however, directly concerned with the amount of land designated for development.

Intensification, in contrast, is directly related to the amount of land that is designated for new development because, for a given population forecast, this determines the density of development and degree of mature-area intensification that will have to be achieved by the municipality. Intensification calls for development to take place on less land by occurring at higher densities or to take place within already built up areas. One municipal planner acknowledged that growth management did not necessarily involve intensification and higher density by saying: "The whole point of growth management is that you don't want people going out to greenfield areas as long as vacant land within the urban envelope is still available.

The density of development within the envelope may be higher, but that is not necessarily so." As we saw in Chapter 4, this was a distinction that was also (implicitly) drawn by stakeholders involved in the discussion over the Sewell Commission recommendations and the 1995 planning reforms: developers and municipalities accepted the need for growth management interpreted as phased orderly development, but rejected the notion of the compact urban form with higher densities and intensification imposed on existing neighbourhoods.

My review and analysis of municipal plans suggests that they accept the need for expansion management, but reject intensification. This can be seen at several levels of analysis:

- upper-tier municipalities accept the need for GTA-wide population forecasting, regional targets, and allocation of growth to individual municipalities because of the implied provincial commitment to furnish adequate infrastructure, but show less interest in restricting population and employment growth to levels below trend forecasts
- upper-tier municipalities have adopted policies to make the urban boundary firmer, but balk at reducing land designation for urban expansion, incorporating minimum density requirements and intensification objectives
- lower-tier municipalities adopt policies to ensure orderly expansion of their urban areas, to complete semi-developed areas, and to reduce scattered rural development, but reject provincial and upper-tier attempts to limit total growth or to force them to commit to higher-density greenfield growth or intensification of the already built up area.

Thus the province's land budgeting initiative has been translated by municipal plans into an exercise in managing expansion more efficiently rather than imposing intensification on reluctant municipalities. The distinction between growth management and expansion management will be taken up again the conclusions to this thesis.

Endnotes

[1] The Peel plan had not been approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, but the committee that developed the plan included an Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. I therefore assume that some attempt has already been made to incorporate provincial objectives into the plan.

[2] Although its population projection for 2021 is almost 70,000 greater than the Scenario One allocation, Peel argues that its plan actually corresponds to the intensification scenario. Peel planners claim that the 1991 census undercounted population in the GTA by about 100,000 due to the large number of transients. They estimate that about 50,000 of these were in the Region of Peel at the time but went uncounted. Therefore, it has inflated its 1991 population figure from the 730,000 reported in the Hemson study to 779,600. Furthermore, Peel planners argue that a "half-year" of population growth should be added to its 1991 estimate because of the timing of the census. These "adjustments" bring Peel's projected 2021 population closer to that allocated under Scenario One.

[3] Of course, it should be kept in mind that we are talking about minimum average densities, and that this permits densities to range widely on a site-by-site basis.

[4] These density conversions are based on factors found in planning documents: a planning document from the Region of Ottawa-Carleton (1995: 3) entitled *Understanding Residential Density* provides a table for conversions from housing frontage to net density, and Brampton official plan contains a rather elaborate treatment of the density concept, proposing a net to gross density conversion factor of 0.71.

[5] This trend towards increasing environmental "take-outs" reiterated a process that had taken place in land use planning after WWII: i.e., the increase in the amount of space being set aside for public purposes, including increases in road rights of way, school yard standards, public open space and parks, and other public institutional uses. The end result of this trend was an urban fabric of relatively low densities or high density areas surrounding by open space (Lehmann & Associates, 1995).

[6] The conflict between intensification and ecological objectives has been more intense in certain areas of the region outside the six focus municipalities: those municipalities straddling the Oak Ridges Moraine in York Region and the Rouge Valley area, mostly in Scarborough. In general, outcomes over the last five years have favoured ecological objectives over intensification objectives.

[7] This issue is illustrated by an exchange published last year in the *Intensification Report* concerning densities to be achieved at Cornell, a new community in Markham just north of Metropolitan Toronto. The community is being designed by the province on provincially-owned land. Thus, what the province does here is being widely taken as a model of what provincial policy is intended to achieve. On the one hand, provincial officials claimed that the expected density at Cornell will reach approximately 22 uph gross, compared to 15 uph in typical suburban areas of Markham. Detractors point out that although site densities will be higher than conventional subdivision designs, and thus the built form will have a more intense "look", the overall or super-gross densities will be lower than typical suburban developments once open space is taken into account.

[8] A study in Markham looked at the impact of neo-traditional planning on automobile use. It showed that the automobile modal share would be reduced from 96 to only 92 percent by building higher density suburban subdivisions if they were surrounded by subdivisions of conventional densities. According to Richard Gilbert, a well-known urbanist and transportation consultant in the region, "there is a sense that medium-density housing is a panacea, yet maybe it is a bit like recycling: it makes you feel better but doesn't really deal with the problem (*Intensification Report*, November-December, 1993: 15). A recent study by Cervero and Gorham (1995) supports this view: they found that higher densities had a proportionally greater effect on inducing transit usage in transit-oriented than in auto-oriented districts.

[9] An academic observer of this situation has also drawn attention to this issue. Commenting on the emergence of neo-traditional planning in the Toronto area, he writes:

> The dwelling types (more attached houses and smaller lots) and layouts (narrower streets and smaller setbacks) may suggest compactness. But we should not confuse built form with density. The built-up part is often surrounded by , or interspersed with, generous opens spaces. This makes the actual land consumption much higher than the look of the development suggests. The overall density (number of dwellings divided by the total area) of a neo-traditional or eco-village development is often quite comparable to that of a conventional subdivision (Leung, 1995: 14).

[10] This is consistent with the findings of Bordessa and Cameron (1982: 141) in their analysis population allocation process in York Region as a result of the TCR concept: "Consistent pressure by the Region of York on the Province contributed to the demise of a serious attempt to plan the growth of the metropolitan Toronto region. But he conflict between the Region and its constituent municipalities was one of the forces that drove the Region on to challenge provincial policy. Local municipalities had traditionally equated growth with progress. With only one minor exception, York Region's constituent local municipalities proposed higher local population targets than York Region contemplated."

[11] In fact, it is very difficult to say what this might imply. One indication of intensification potential is the density to which developers are willing to build in any given area - typically, planners report that applications for development in the already built-up areas of the municipality exceed existing zoning limits and have to "knocked down" by planners in response to neighbourhood concerns.
[12] Comments from planners interviewed supported this view: i.e., through the political process or through the OMB or through provincial pressures, development could be forced on an unwilling community.
[13] The Peel and Halton plans were still in the approval process at the time of writing and referrals to the OMB had not yet taken place.
[14] This agrees with Adams and Kent's 1991 case study research on the response of developers to planning for urban extensions in the UK.
[15] As Bordessa and Cameron (1983: 443) noted in their analysis of regional planning decisions in York Region, "there are wins and losses from land investments, but as long as the former outweigh the latter no meaningful attack will be launched on the State from within the propertied class."
[16] For instance, developers make the argument that the current structure of development charges encourages lower density development. Because charges are applied on a dwelling type basis that takes into account occupancy but not land consumption, they become more onerous as the number of units in a defined area increase. Since the revenue potential of land is calculated on the saleable frontage of lots, increasing the number of lots in a tract can increase development charges faster than sales revenue (Skaburskis and Tomalty, 1996).
[17] The suburban regions of the GTA use a "double direct election" method to elect regional councillors, whereby municipal voters elect some persons to serve on both local and regional councils at the same time. Other regional councillors hold their position by virtue of their local office, usually mayors.

8 . Housing Supply Policies

8.1. Introduction

In the last chapter, I explored how provincial growth management policies were being interpreted and applied through upper- and lower-tier plans in the GTA. One of the conclusions arrived at was that phased, orderly urban expansion appeared to be better accepted by municipal authorities and reflected in municipal plans than policies that encourage the intensification of already existing areas or substantially increase densities above those currently found in suburban areas of the region. One of the principal reasons that was advanced for this conclusion was the resistance of lower-tier municipalities to higher-density development and intensification of existing urban areas. This insight will be further explored in this chapter through a detailed analysis of the housing supply policies found in the housing sections of municipal plans. Interviews with planners at all three levels of government, a review of the minutes from public meetings regarding plan approval, and newspaper articles will help interpret the documents and shed light on the planning context, political dynamics and constraints on policy formation and implementation.

8.2. Upper-tier Municipalities

Unlike municipal growth management policies surveyed in the last chapter, which were directed principally at upper-tier municipalities, the main target of housing supply policies is the lower-tier municipalities. Nonetheless, the province is expecting the upper-tier municipalities within the GTA to play a role in achieving provincial objectives through its approval powers over lower-tier plans, and this role is briefly described here.

In contrast to "last generation" plans adopted in the 1970s (i.e., in Durham and Halton), the plans reviewed adopted strong policies that would increase the efficiency of use of residential land, generate a wider range of housing types, create opportunities for more affordable housing, and promote some intensification of existing areas. Thus, all four upper-tier plans adopted the land supply and affordable housing targets contained in the provincial Housing Policy Statement, as well as provisions for monitoring municipal progress towards plan objectives. Most plans also encourage area municipalities to increase housing supply through various intensification activities, i.e., redevelopment of shopping plazas, businesses and industrial parks and older commercial and residential areas, especially where lands area close to public transit. Language very close to the Housing Policy Statement is used to encourage municipalities to designated residential areas with a broad range of housing forms, types, sizes and tenures. Finally, all plans except Peel's required local plans to permit accessory units.

But because of the limited authority of regional plans in implementing housing supply policies, and because of the reluctance of regional councils to invade the traditional jurisdiction of lower-tier municipalities, regional policies are expressed in general, vague, and conditional terms. Thus, upper-tier plans do not designate for the housing densities in residential areas, set population or density targets for any of the component communities, or require that certain types of intensification be permitted in specific types of residential designations. Given the lack of site-level planning instruments at the disposal of upper-tier municipalities, most plans do not provide for strong implementation policies.

Where upper-tier plans encourage area municipalities to adopt intensification policies, such statements are invariably linked to qualifiers that refer to the policies and constraints of lower-tier plans and the need to respect the scale and physical character of existing neighbourhoods. The accessory apartments provisions in most plans admit of local constraints such as servicing restrictions, health, safety "and other reasonable standards." Although more forceful language is occasionally used, the plans typically say that the region will "encourage" lower-tier municipalities to include or "support" their attempts to include housing supply policies in their official plans that would lead to higher densities in new development and intensification of existing areas. The upper-tier policies are phrased so as to direct lower-tier municipalities in their decision making, recognizing that lower-tier municipalities have much more planning authority over these issues.

Housing mix targets are one potentially powerful tool in the hands of regional municipalities to ensure that future development plans will provide for medium and higher-density housing. Most plans refer to the regional housing policy statement, which often contain long-term housing mix targets. However, there are several constraints on the effectiveness of these targets as a planning tool.

First, strictly speaking, these statements do not have legal status because they are not considered part of the official plan.[1] Moreover, housing targets contained in the Regional Housing Statements rarely deviate from existing trends. In Durham for instance, a target was set of 70 percent single detached (of which 10-15 percent must be upscale executive housing) and 30 percent other housing types.[2] According to a regional planner, the trend is about 68 percent single-detached during normal times, so there is no difference from trend (although single-detached dwellings went up to 90 percent of all new housing in the late 1980s). Thus, "the housing mix policy will only make a difference if the market goes crazy again." Finally, upper-tier planners doubted that they had any power to enforce such targets: "housing mix targets are a joke. It's market driven and you can't control the market. All you can do is let developers know that there is a tremendous demand for medium- and higher-density housing."

Clearly, the ability of upper-tier plans have a role to play in supporting the housing supply policies of lower-tier municipalities, but the findings presented here suggest that these governments are unable and unwilling to take a leading role. Undoubtedly, the main instrument in achieving provincial housing supply objectives in the region is the local official plan. I turn now to a detailed analysis of the official plans of the six lower-tier study municipalities.

8.3. Lower-tier Municipalities

As we saw in the discussion of the Housing Policy Statement in Chapter 4, early municipal responses to this provincial policy were halting and inadequate according to a study done by the Ministry of Housing in 1993. That study found that many municipalities, even the so-called priority areas, had not adjusted their official plans to comply with the Housing Policy Statement. In this chapter, I carry out a more detailed analysis of the six suburban municipal plans, all of which have incorporated policies in response to the Housing Policy Statement. I also take into account that after 1993, Bill 120 required that municipalities permit apartments in houses in most residential areas. The findings are summarized in Table 8-1.

8.3.1. Land Supply Targets

Land supply policies were widely incorporated into the plans reviewed, normally using wording very similar to that found in the Housing Policy Statement. Both the requirement for official plan designation for a 10-year supply of residential land and the three-year supply of draft approved or registered lots and blocks on plans of subdivision for new residential development were consistently respected.

8.3.2. Range of Housing Types

The most direct way to comply with this aspect of the provincial policy framework would be for official plans to designate for a range of housing types by showing a map where various residential categories are allowed and to provide a description of each category including density ranges and housing forms.

Most plans included residential land-use categories of various density ranges and designated relevant areas on a land-use map. The plans specify that low-density areas may contain detached, semi-detached units and other ground-related units may be permitted provided that they are compatible with the scale, urban design and community features of the neighbourhood and the density limits designated in the plan. Medium-density areas permit either ground or non-ground related housing forms and high-density areas permit non-ground related housing forms.

Table 8-1: Housing Supply Objectives in Municipal Plans

Provincial policy objective	Burlington	Mississauga	Brampton	Newmarket	Whitby	Pickering
Land Supply Policies						
10-year land supply	√	NA	√	√	√	√
3-year supply of lots and blocks	√	√	√	√	√	√
Housing Range Policies						
Designate for range of housing types	√	O	O	√	√	√
Specify permitted uses	√	√	O	√	√	X
Specify densities	O	O	O	O	O	O
Distribute range of housing types throughout municipality	O	X	√	X	O	√
Implementing policies to achieve range	O	√	O	√	√	√
Refer to zoning standards to achieve range	O	O	X	√	O	O
At least 25 (or 30)% of new residential units to be affordable	√	√	√	√	√	O
Implementing policies to achieve affordability	√	√	√	√	X	√
Mature Area Intensification Policies						
Identify types of intensification	√	√	√	√	√	√
Designate areas for each form of intensification	O	O	O	O	O	X
Designate Community Improvement Areas	O	√	O	O	O	O
Permit accessory apartments as of right	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monitoring	O	√	√	√	√	√

Legend: NA = not applicable, X = not present, O = partially present, √ = present.

However, no plan provided for a minimum density limit in the lower-density category. In fact, most plans defined the low-density category as having a *maximum* density approximately equal to the *minimum* average density level being sought by provincial planners in new residential development, i.e., 17 units per gross hectare.[3] Some plans, such as Mississauga and Brampton, designated residential categories and described them including housing forms and densities (again, no minimum density in the lower-density category), but did not show the designations on a map. This level of detail, important from a provincial policy standpoint, was left to the secondary planning process.

Most plans showed a bias against medium- and higher-density residential development by imposing more restrictive development conditions upon them than for low-density development. In Newmarket and Whitby, for example, applications for medium- and high-density development are to be reviewed based on a list of nine criteria, including servicing, transit availability, proximity to retail services, parks and open space, traffic impacts, adequate on-site parking, landscaping, and compatibility with adjacent uses in terms of design, orientation, form and landscaping. No such criteria are listed for low-density applications. Buffering, such as screening walls, fences, trellises, berms, trees or distance is required to separate medium-density from lower-density housing. Medium- and high-density housing also often requires site plan agreements whereas low-density housing does not. In some municipalities surveyed, the likelihood of requiring a rezoning also increases as the density category increases.

Table 8-2: Maximum Densities for Different Residential Designations (units per net residential hectare)

Designation	Burlington	Mississauga	Brampton	Newmarket	Whitby	Pickering
Low (new OP)	25	50	X	24	30	30
Low (old OP)	25	X	X	24	X	25
Medium (new OP)	50	100	X	60	65	80
Medium (old OP)	50	X	X	45	125	75
High (new OP)	185	323	X	155	135	140
High (old OP)	X	X	X	155	250	125

Legend: X = not present

One indicator of a positive municipal response to the provincial intensification objective would be planning designations that shifted the density range of the various residential designations above those values found in earlier plans. Table 8-2 shows the density ranges designated for each residential category, comparing the new generation of plans currently being approved to the plans they are replacing. Clearly, few plans increased the density ranges, and Whitby actually reduced the density ranges substantially. Planners in Mississauga attempted to ratchet up density categories by proposing the range shown in the

table (where none had been included before), but these figures will be removed from the next version of the plan reportedly due to objections from municipal councillors.

Another way of addressing the provincial policy framework in this respect would be by establishing housing mix targets that would move the municipality away from traditional reliance on detached housing. In fact, most municipalities did adopt housing mix targets as shown in Table 8-3. The targets suggested a declining share of detached and semi-detached housing types with increases in medium- and higher-density housing. As will be discussed in greater detail below, they were designed to meet forecasted changes in the municipal housing market, based on demographic and economic trends.

Table 8-3: Housing Mix Targets

Municipality	Low	Medium	High	Total
Burlington	X	X	X	X
Mississauga	X	X	X	X
Brampton	59	17	24	100
Newmarket	62	23	15	100
Whitby	70	20	10	100
Pickering	69	19	12	100

Legend: X = not present.

Finally, municipalities might also help satisfy the provincial policy objective by designating more land for medium- and higher-density uses in expansion areas than in the past. Planners in municipalities that expanded their urban boundaries in their new official plans reported that, indeed, more medium and high-density areas were designated than would have been found in previous plans. They hastened to add, however, that the plans contain no guarantees that these designations will be maintained if the market proves stronger for low-density housing. This is discussed below in greater detail.

8.3.3. Distribute Range Throughout Municipality

The Housing Policy Statement required that municipalities establish policies in the official plan so that the range of housing types—including housing defined as "affordable"—be distributed throughout the municipality on lands designated for residential use. Half the plans contain statements to the effect that a range of housing types or affordable housing will be encouraged throughout the municipality. For example, Pickering's plan said "Town Council shall provide for the integration of a broad range of housing types within each neighbourhood, rural village and across the community" while Burlington's plan called for a "wide range" of

housing types and tenure. However, no plan specified what a "broad" or "wide" range of housing types means (i.e., by listing the housing types that will be distributed).

In fact, in making reference to a desirable range of housing types, some plans linked it to another objective: the municipality's desire to avoid concentrated high-density rental or social housing. For example, Burlington's plan contained the following objective: "To encourage the integration of a wide range of housing types and tenure and discourage large concentrations of higher-density residential blocks" (City of Burlington, 1994: III-2). Other plans called for a "balanced" or "equitable" distribution of affordable housing throughout the municipality.

This was clearly imposing quite a different interpretation on the planning objective than that contemplated by provincial policy makers and such language frequently emerged as a point of contention between local and provincial authorities. The province argued that such language might "restrict opportunities for affordable housing or be used to reject affordable housing in areas already containing affordable housing, which would be contrary to the intent of the Housing Policy Statement" (Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1993b: 2). Instead, the province suggested the following wording: "to encourage opportunities for affordable housing throughout the municipality," but this was rarely incorporated into municipal plans.

8.3.4. Implementing Policies to Achieve Range

Most plans considered the use of density bonusing as a means of increasing height and density of development above that otherwise permitted in the applicable zoning by-law. Like general intensification provisions, however, these were normally subject to strict limitations in their use, often stipulating a range of "compatibility" requirements. Also, most bonusing provisions, except for the case of Newmarket, were not explicitly linked to achieving housing mix, affordability or intensification objectives.

Beyond density bonusing, other implementing mechanisms, such as assisted housing programs and holding by-laws are acknowledged in the plans but—once again—not linked explicitly to achieving housing intensification or housing range targets. In this respect, Newmarket's official plan was again an exception in that it specifically linked the development approvals process to housing range goals. The language used, however, seems to mute the intended impact of the policy: "As part of Council's commitment to encouraging and assisting in the production of an adequate supply and mix of affordable housing, the development approvals process... shall be *monitored*" (Town of Newmarket, 1994: 103, emphasis added). Only Mississauga's plan contained a policy to discourage sites designated for higher densities from being down-zoned to lower densities.

8.3.5. Refer to Zoning Standards to Achieve Range

Few plans explicitly referred to the need to review or change zoning bylaws as a means of achieving housing range, density or intensification objectives. Newmarket's official plan was an exception to this rule, requiring that "Council shall implement standards in the Zoning Bylaw to ensure that an affordable mixture of housing is available in the town in accordance with applicable Provincial policies" (Town of Newmarket, 1994: 103). Implementation policies dampen the impact of this provision by requiring that a range of conditions be met for any amendment to the zoning bylaw including:

- the proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses, and...buffering provided to ensure visual separation and compatibility between uses
- potential nuisances effects upon adjacent uses are mitigated
- adequate municipal services are available
- the size of the lot is appropriate for the proposed use
- the site has adequate road access and the boundary roads can accommodate the traffic generated
- the on-site parking, loading and circulation facilities are adequate.

8.3.6. Affordable Housing Target

All plans made reference to affordability targets. In two cases, no percentage target was mentioned, only that it would be consistent with the Housing Policy Statement. In other cases, the 25 or 30 percent target was specifically referenced. In no case did the official plan call for an affordability target above that required by the Housing Policy Statement. This is the case even though the Housing Policy Statement required that housing studies be undertaken to determine the demand for affordable housing and that a target higher than minimum required be adopted if indicated by the study.

In the case of Pickering, interviews with planning officials revealed that an affordable housing target was deliberately left out of the draft plan. This was the most recent of the six official plans to be included in the current study, and planning officials believed that the new provincial government would result in a dilution of the affordable housing requirements.

8.3.7. Implementing Policies to Achieve Affordability Target

The provincial policy framework was ambivalent as to whether the affordability target was to be achieved on a municipality-wide basis, on a district plan basis, or on the basis of significant development applications. The strongest policy would state the numerical objective and require that it be achieved on a development application basis with city-wide monitoring

and mechanisms in place to correct trends if they were found to deviate significantly from the target.

Mississauga's plan sets the target to be achieved on a city-wide basis. The plan does not require affordability targets to be met as a condition of approval for development applications, although it is "to be considered" when evaluating applications. In Pickering, no city-wide target is set, but the plan says council shall consider requiring the applicant to demonstrate how the affordability targets of the Housing Policy Statement will be met.

Most plans contained specific policies to implement the affordability target. Most commonly, plans made the affordability provision a condition of development or subdivision approval. In all cases, however, this was phrased as a potential condition of approval, not a necessary condition. Bonusing was also mentioned in some plans as a way of achieving the target, as was giving processing priority to development applications with affordable housing. However, even plans with implementing policies contained statements that expressed council's desire to avoid a concentration of affordable or assisted housing in particular districts of the municipality.

Although many plans referred to the need to monitor the achievement of the affordability objective, no plan suggested a course of action if the range of housing projected in official plans was not met.

8.3.8. Designate Areas for the Various Types of Intensification

Plans reviewed are generally in compliance with the provincial directive to identify intensification types such as infill, redevelopment, and accessory apartments. But the Housing Policy Statement requires that municipalities go much further: i.e., that areas be designated to accommodate the various types of residential intensification contemplated by the policy statement based on physical potential and demand. In fact, none of the plans surveyed designate areas for specific intensification types.

Rather than designating areas for intensification, however, plans often indicated the settings where intensification might be "encouraged". This is almost always defined as along arterials or in specific mixed-use nodes with transit services. In all six municipalities, plans explicitly direct higher-density residential development to the boundaries of existing neighbourhoods, along arterials, and in urban nodes or centres. "Almost all intensification activity occurring in Pickering over the next 20 years will be on those lands designated as Mixed-use Nodes and Corridors, not low-density residential areas" (Town of Pickering, 1995: 71). For instance, the Burlington plan says "the redevelopment of under-utilized lands and non-residential lands will be encouraged at the periphery of existing residential neighbourhoods for non-ground-oriented housing purposes" (City of Burlington, 1994: III-6).

Another indication of positive response to the provincial objective of increasing the range of housing choice in suburban municipalities would be to redesignate lower-density residential areas to allow higher-density uses. In fact, most plans did this only sparingly, usually to consolidate a mixed-use node or corridor. Beyond these limited exceptions, few plans undertook to redesignate residential areas, neither those already built out nor previously designated greenfield areas.

Few municipalities redesignated substantial non-residential lands for higher-density residential uses. This was so despite the fact that in most cases an intensification study was undertaken at the request of the province that resulted in the identification of a number of intensification opportunities within the built-up areas of the municipality. A common story, however, was that either council was not willing to incorporate the intensification sites into the official plan, or, if they were included in a draft plan, they were subsequently removed due to citizen objections. Only those intensification sites on arterials or those buffered from established neighbourhoods survived the public review process and made it into the council adopted plan. In one municipality, for instance, a planner reported that "we put a few intensification sites [identified in the intensification study] in the draft plan, but council kicked them out. Nearby residents asked council to change them, and council said "of course".

In other cases, intensification opportunities were identified in the intensification study, but did not even make it to the draft plan stage. As another municipal planner said:

> studying intensification will not make it happen. It will definitely not advance it or support it in any way. Such studies merely highlight to council what opportunities are available, but it has not resulted in any policy changes. Aside from the study, which was undertaken in response to provincial pressure, there has been no discussion on how to encourage intensification here.

Where major intensification sites are included in the official plan, they are often at densities that were lower than those recommended by the residential intensification study or by planning staff.[4]

Where the intensification of existing neighbourhoods was contemplated as a general policy, the plan also contained highly restrictive criteria that would have the effect of preventing any abrupt changes to existing neighbourhoods. Burlington's plan is a partial exception to this pattern in that it states: "ground-oriented residential infilling within existing neighbourhoods shall be encouraged." But, the plan states, the following criteria are to be considered in evaluating development applications within established neighbourhoods:

- adequate municipal services such as water, wastewater and storm sewers, schools and parks

- availability of off-street parking
- ability of road system to accommodate increased traffic
- availability of future transit facilities
- compatibility with existing neighbourhood character in terms of scale, massing, height, siting, setbacks, parking, and amenities
- minimal impact on existing vegetation
- consideration of sun-shadowing on adjacent properties
- availability of community services and neighbourhood conveniences
- "capability to provide adequate buffering and other measures to minimize any identifiable impacts."

In Mississauga:

- infill or redevelopment proposal shall recognize and enhance the scale and character of the existing residential area by having regard for natural vegetation, lot frontages, and areas, building height, coverage, mass, setbacks, privacy and overview.
- all residential development proposals will be subject to the following criteria: built form, scale, massing, orientation, parking, overshadowing, and the quantity and quality of open space, and how it integrates with existing and proposed surrounding development, the relationship of the proposed development to adjacent land uses and the suitability of transition in height, density, and built form; adequacy of engineering services, adequacy of community services, accessibility of collector or arterial roads and transit system; parking, overshadowing and amenity loss on adjacent sites.

By refusing to designate areas suitable for specific types of intensification, municipalities maintain strict control over changes in the density of the urban fabric. Rather than being as-of-right, intensification proposals will continue to be subject to the discretion of municipal decision makers. Undoubtedly, however, conditions for approving intensification applications would have been more onerous if not for the intervention of provincial planners in the plan approval process. For instance, some officials plans would have contained clauses that would have required intensification projects to be compatible with the social character of the neighbourhood, which would have worked to help preserve exclusive neighbourhoods from any affordable housing developments. Official plans might also have contained policies to limit intensification projects on the grounds of their financial impact on municipalities, which might also have been used to prevent affordable housing whose inhabitants might be expected to require a higher level of social services.

In its comments to municipal planners on their official plans, the province has indicated that another way of respecting this policy objective would been to set targets for different types of intensification on a district-by-district basis, targets that could be

implemented by tying them to the development approval process. No plan reviewed for this study included such targets.

8.3.9. Community Improvement Areas Linked to Intensification

The implementation guidelines to the Housing Policy Statement required that municipalities designate community improvement areas in order to help with the necessary improvement of services or facilities where they have been identified as a constraint to intensification. Community Improvement Areas, as described in Chapter 5, are mature areas of the municipality designated to receive new investment in infrastructure as a revitalization measure. In fact, all plans do this, but few plans explicitly linked servicing of such areas to intensification objectives. Only one plan made the link to supporting intensification: Mississauga.

Rather than being supportive of intensification goals, general servicing policies were more likely to call for restrictions on development in built-up areas based on the limited availability of municipal infrastructure and services. Thus, most plans surveyed failed to address this aspect of the provincial policy framework, to expand or upgrade existing infrastructure and public facilities to support intensification goals and meet the demand for housing through intensification.

8.3.10. Permit Accessory Apartments

Although Bill 120 stipulated that any municipal planning policy that is more restrictive of apartments in houses than the provincial standards is without force, most municipalities surveyed here have included policies that either clearly violate or fail to comply with provincial standards. Burlington's official plan, for instance, defines the accessory unit as smaller than the primary dwelling unit, in spite of the fact that the regulations accompanying the act say "no planning document shall regulate the relationship between the size of the two residential units." Burlington's official plan also requires that the outdoor private amenity area must be adequate for the amenity and leisure needs of all occupants, whereas the regulations under the act state that "no planning document shall require that the size of the amenity area exceed the requirement applied to a house with one residential unit at the same location."

Mississauga's draft official plan makes accessory apartments subject to the following conditions: engineering and social services, urban design and site plan considerations, legal requirements such as power-of-entry, licensing, and temporary use by-laws; compliance with Ontario Building Code, Fire Code and Property Standards; financial impact; the more detailed policies of District Plans. In Brampton, accessory apartments are "subject to zoning, licensing and safety regulations where such forms are permitted in the applicable Secondary

Plan" (City of Brampton, 1993: 31). In Newmarket, apartments in houses are permitted in low-density areas subject to a list of 10 criteria, including "maintaining the character of the surrounding residential area and the accessory unit is incidental to the permitted residential use.. and does not exceed 35 percent of the total habitable floor space'" (Town of Newmarket, 1994: 38). Whitby's plan has substantially the same conditions.

8.3.11. Monitoring

The provincial policy framework required that municipal official plans monitor the supply of land, the range of housing types being developed over the duration of the official plan, the percentage of units that meet affordability criteria, the density of housing, and the amount of housing produced through intensification versus greenfield development.[5]

The provincial aim in requiring monitoring by municipalities was to establish a mechanism that would raise flags when provincial objectives were not being met as the plan implementation proceeded. All official plans reviewed included monitoring provisions that showed regard for the provincial policy framework. In some cases, such as Brampton, monitoring provisions followed relatively closely the wording of the Housing Policy Statement, while in others, such as Mississauga, more general language was used. Some plans went beyond the requirements of the Housing Policy Statement: Whitby's plan called for monitoring population, employment, and development trends and "housing requirements by type, tenure, and cost" (Town of Whitby, 1994: 9-9).

A close reading the monitoring sections of municipal plans showed how this activity can be a double edged sword in terms of meeting provincial planning objectives. Most plans recognized in their monitoring policies that the outcome of monitoring activities could be used to suggest stronger implementation measures in order to meet the objectives set out in the plan. Interestingly, however, one of the main purposes many municipalities included monitoring provisions was to show to what extent "the goals and objectives of this plan remain realistic in light of changing circumstances" (City of Mississauga, 1994: 114). This implied that municipalities may use monitoring outcomes to reduce the ambitiousness of plan objectives where they could not be justified by market trends.

8.4. Summary of Findings

My review of planning policies reveals that, consistent with the findings of the last chapter, intensification objectives were not well-reflected in municipal official plans. Only one of the 10 intensification objectives was adequately reflected in all six lower-tier municipal official plans: identifying types of intensification. Interestingly, this was the single most superficial of all the policy objectives of the provincial intensification framework: it requires only a simple list of intensification types, whether they are to be permitted or not. One policy objective,

permitting accessory apartments as of right, met with almost total non-compliance. Ironically, that represents the one policy objective that has the strongest provincial policy authority behind it: actual legislation as opposed to a provincial policy statement or policy guidelines.

Also well-complied with were the affordable housing policies. Five of the six municipalities recognized the Housing Policy Statement goal for affordability in one way or another and almost all included some policies in their official plans to guide (if not ensure) its implementation.

Policies bearing on a range of housing types and densities were also well-received in certain respects. A range of types were designated in official plans or targeted in housing mix policies and policies were generally present to implement the range. Where plans generally fell short of provincial objectives was in specifying minimum densities for low-density development and in adopting policies that would see the range of types distributed throughout the municipality. Official plans also failed to refer to zoning policies to implement the housing and density ranges concerned.

One of the most important policy objectives from the point of view of this thesis—the designation of areas for each form of intensification based on physical potential, service availability and demand—was also among the weakest to be reflected in municipal plans. Generally, municipalities shied away from designating specific areas where intensification types would be expressly allowed, or attached so many conditions that only very specific areas—such as on arterial roads—would pass the test. In the case of accessory apartments, already mentioned above, low-density residential areas were designated but municipalities obviously struggled to preserve municipal discretion over their approval by attaching conditions and requiring rezoning. Finally, provincial monitoring objectives were well respected in most plans, although, as noted, this may represent a double-edge sword in terms of long-term municipal compliance with provincial policy objectives.

8.5. Interpreting the Findings

One cannot help but be struck by the ambivalence of the documents reviewed here. Vague statements endorsing intensification strategies throughout the municipality, including infill of existing neighborhoods, are followed in the same plan by detailed policies listing a wide range of constraints on intensification, especially in established neighbourhoods. Policies acknowledging the importance of adhering to the provincial policy framework are side-by-side with policies clearly flaunting that framework.

One way to interpret these results would be to say that they reflect underlying tensions in the planning process at the local level. On the one hand, it is clear that municipal plans are responding to some degree to the provincial policy framework in that the language of

provincial policy is frequently used and specific provincial policies are often referred to in the plans.[6] Important provincial policy objectives are met by the plans surveyed, such as enhancing planning regard for the need for more affordable housing in suburban areas and the need to accommodate higher-density housing near community services. On the other hand, it is equally clear that official plans have been careful to deflect intensification away from established neighbourhoods and that little can be found in the plans that would ensure a wider variety of housing types in new development, two key provincial objectives.

When compared to the straightforward implementation of other aspects of the intensification policy framework—such as the expansion management policies described in the last chapter—it is clear that municipal compliance to housing supply policies is more complex. In this section, I offer an analysis of some factors at work in shaping municipal response. Interviews conducted with planners at all three levels of government, along with an examination of background planning documents and newspaper articles, will help us interpret the results of the official plan analysis.

8.5.1. Comply to the Provincial Policy Framework When it:

8.5.1.1. Responds to Local Conditions

Interviews with suburban planners and a review of other documents suggests that the pattern of response reported above can be partially explained as a response to local conditions.

8.5.1.1.1. Demographic Change

Municipal officials in suburban areas were increasingly aware that demographic changes would require that they plan for a wider range of housing types than had characterized conventional suburban development. Long-term demographic forecasts suggested a gradually increasing need for smaller units. The key trends were the general aging of the population and social trends towards more single or single-parent households, smaller family sizes including couples with no children, unrelated adults sharing accommodation, and retired active adults (Hodge, 1995). The trend towards single-parent households and an older population was also giving rise to the need for new urban forms that emphasize integrated, pedestrian-oriented communities with services and shopping readily accessible. Intensification was perceived by local planners as a means of responding to these changing demographics, and in particular, a way of allowing existing residents to remain in their communities as they move through life stages.

Planners observed that these pressures could be dealt with by a strategy of selective intensification rather than wholesale change to the existing urban fabric or forcing new urban areas to develop at much higher densities. There is no question in any of the plans reviewed that detached, relatively low-density housing will remain the predominant housing form in

suburban areas: no housing mix target or density range policies attempt to reverse the historical trends in newly designated land, and there is no attempt to raise the densities of land already designated but not yet built. In the "big picture", it is clear that a limited exploitation of intensification opportunities in mature areas of town and the creation of a limited amount of medium-density housing in new development was thought to be an adequate response to changes in housing demand.

8.5.1.1.2. Jobs/Housing Balance

By the end of the 1980s, many suburban municipalities found that residential development had not been matched by industrial development within their municipalities, or that the type of housing available did not match the housing needs of the new industries that had located within the municipality.

As corporations have decentralized to suburban locations, some have found that the available housing choices do not match their employee's needs. Employers considering locating in suburban locations apparently feared that their employees would demand higher wages to pay higher housing costs or they would have to commute long distances to more affordable locations. High housing costs could therefore reduce the competitiveness of businesses locating in suburban areas that lacked a balanced housing stock (IBI Group, 1990b).

Many suburban municipalities in the region had pursued a strategy of attracting middle and upper-income residents, who—it was assumed—would commute to employment in Metropolitan Toronto. As businesses decentralized to suburban locations, employers and social service agencies struggled to call attention to the deficit of medium- and higher-density housing that would be affordable given the wide range of employment opportunities that had opened up in the region. Exclusionary zoning in York Region, for instance, had produced a situation the regional chairman found intolerable: "We have industries that can't find the employees they need to fill the jobs" (*Toronto Star*, October 2, 1989: A15). Likewise, the chairman of Durham Region complained in 1989 that Durham lost 2,200 new jobs because two firms decided to build plants some place else." After checking with both firms, he discovered it was the high cost and lack of housing choice that had sent those companies elsewhere (*Toronto Star*, 17 Aug 1989: N1).

8.5.1.1.3. Infrastructure Costs

As the cost of building infrastructure rose and was transferred to municipalities, some regional and local authorities became more sensitive to land-use consumption.[7] As provincial funding for infrastructure declined in the 1980s with little prospect of ever resuming, municipal authorities became more aware and concerned over the planning and financing of

infrastructure to service new growth. In effect, municipalities in the region were caught in the middle: development approvals were made on the basis of provincial infrastructure funding commitments went ahead while the funding commitments went unrealized (McCleary, 1989). The resulting lag between the level of development and the infrastructure needed to support that development threatened service levels as road congestion increased, water treatment facilities were overburdened and sewage capacity reached its limits. These developments caused some municipalities in the region to consider the benefits of directing some development towards built-up areas where excess servicing capacity was available.

The early 1990s saw important legislative changes in infrastructure funding. The *Development Charges Act*, which passed into law in 1989, provided municipalities with a formal mechanism to transfer the responsibility for funding capital projects to the private sector. This allowed municipalities to adopt a "pay as you go" approach to development that would avoid accumulating long term debt. But, for a number of reasons, the act has not eliminated fiscal concerns related to new growth: the act applies only to the capital costs related to growth and the rates charged often do not cover the full costs involved; the act does not apply to operating costs associated with servicing new growth; municipal expenditures usually occur in advance of development and collection of the charge; and limitations are imposed on municipal borrowing by the OMB. Far from eliminating fiscal concerns, the act tended to focus attention on fiscal issues because municipalities were obliged to undertake detailed studies of the costs associated with new growth in order to justify their development charge bylaws. This helped engender a concern among public officials and developers to reduce costs.

A focus of fiscal concern is transportation infrastructure. One regional planner interviewed for this study pointed out that:

> the road system cannot support all the transportation needs of the future. There is not enough capacity no matter how much we build. On the other hand, we have no viable transit system. So higher-density housing strategically located will support transit.

8.5.1.2. Respects Market Trends

The fact that certain elements of the housing supply component of the provincial policy framework dovetailed with market forces helps to explain some of the finding reported above. For instance, the land supply objectives of the Housing Policy Statement were strongly reflected in municipal plans. This policy objective was supported by local development interests as a way of ensuring a continuous supply of developable lands and overcoming the chaotic planning situation at the end of the 1980s.

Generally, municipalities have avoided adopting housing supply targets when they are not required by the provincial policy framework. When they do adopt targets, municipal plans tend to reflect current or expected market trends rather than goals set by provincial planning policies, independently of market trends. Thus, there is no indication that the housing mix targets reported in official plans and supporting documents are anything beyond that which is currently being supplied by market forces. The housing mix targets are usually based on market studies performed by consultants and reported in Municipal Housing Statements showing trends in demand and supply for the jurisdiction in question. In most cases, the mix that is arrived at is based on an analysis of recent trends in housing construction and on forecasted demand for new housing (e.g., Lapointe Consulting Inc., 1994). The forecasts were generally undertaken in order to help avoid supply conditions that led to the housing crisis in the intervening years. Typically, these studies do not assume any effective policy intervention to direct growth or to intensify land uses, i.e., the mix targets do not deviate from past and expected market trends for policy purposes.

Similarly, an average density target was included in Brampton's official plan. This target, it turns out, is based on a forecast made by a housing consultant, not assuming any changes in housing density due to provincial policy changes, but based on projected incomes and housing demand for the area.

The fidelity of the municipal response to housing affordability targets can also be explained in this way. The municipalities surveyed here reported that because of falling land values, the provincial affordability target was well below current housing trends and therefore did not require any special planning intervention to achieve, especially if interpreted on a city-wide rather than project-by-project basis. For instance, in Durham Region, where the affordability of new housing is being tracked, a recent planning report indicates that 51 percent of new house sales were affordable according to the province's definition (Region of Durham, 1996).

The intensification targets that go into the land designation justification for official plans are also based on an assessment of what is likely to occur given market conditions, not the physical potential of the existing urban fabric. In Brampton, for instance, an intensification study for the city's new official plan revealed that a supply of about 15,000 units were possible given market trends. As a planner said "we can spin out all types of intensification potential on paper, but we have to be realistic about what the market can provide." In Burlington, a planner reported that expected growth for the city could be entirely accommodated on vacant and underutilized sites in the city, but that this was considered unrealistic by municipal officials given the demand for single-family housing on greenfield sites in the expansion areas of the city.

As mentioned above, the province's monitoring objectives were selectively met by municipal plans. While the province wanted monitoring to serve as a basis for challenging municipal implementation of provincial objectives and to serve as a basis for requiring official plan modifications if provincial objectives were going unmet, lower-tier municipalities were eager to incorporate monitoring provisions in order to provide a basis for challenging provincial targets if they were revealed to be "unrealistic". Municipalities hoped that if market trends turned out to be different than those assumed by provincial planners, they could use the monitoring information to justify a relaxation of provincial standards, i.e., on population and employment growth, intensification, housing mix, and minimum densities in new development.

8.5.1.3. Contains Politically-Sanctioned Numeric Targets

The presence of numeric targets in the provincial Housing Policy Statement also helps to explain the high degree of municipal compliance with certain components of the policy framework. For instance, we have seen that the land supply objectives and the housing affordability target were very well reflected in municipal plans. The presence of the politically-sanctioned provincial targets provide considerable leverage to provincial planners to insist on their inclusion in municipal plans: it is hard for municipalities to argue that they have "had regard to" a provincial policy if explicit targets are ignored. This outcome contrasts markedly with efforts of provincial planners to embed other, bureaucratically-sanctioned targets such as the 20 percent intensification policy or minimum densities, as reported in Chapter 7.

8.5.2. Challenge the Provincial Policy Framework When it:

8.5.2.1. Threatens Municipal Discretion

From the provincial perspective, the most effective way of ensuring long term compliance with provincial policy objectives is to ensconce numeric targets in municipal official plans, such as housing mix targets, affordability targets, or minimum residential densities. With the exception of the affordability targets discussed in the last section, this was rarely achieved in the plans surveyed. Although plans sometimes recognized the need for such targets and undertook to generate them in the future, they were careful not to adopt official policies that might be difficult to fulfill under changing market conditions.

When they are contained in official plans, numeric mix targets are couched in language that is descriptive or predictive in nature rather than prescriptive. The preamble to the Brampton plan, for instance, states "the general trend anticipated to 2021 capacity is a significant reduction in single detached density units to 28.1 percent of total housing stock, and increases in all other density types to yield 30.9 percent semi-detached, 16.9 percent

townhouses and 24.0 percent apartment" (City of Brampton, 1993: 6). The Newmarket plan uses similar language to describe its housing mix targets, language that seems designed to avoid tying council's hands in future planning decisions.

Another strategy used in official plans to preserve municipal discretion was—ironically—to place very general language in the official plan with a blanket endorsement of the Housing Policy Statement (e.g., in Mississauga's plan). This strategy allows the municipality to claim that its plan respects provincial policies, but avoids having to specify—and therefore commit to—how these policies will be applied or interpreted at the local level. Such an endorsement gives little direction to local residents and property owners about the significance of the policies for their land-use decisions, and makes it less likely that the policy will have any impact in the development of the community.

When municipal autonomy was directly threatened by a provincial policy objective, municipalities might respond by simply ignoring that aspect of the policy framework. As we saw, the Housing Policy Statement required that municipalities designate areas for different types of intensification based on the demand for housing in those areas, servicing capacity and the physical potential of the area to accommodate more housing. Planners reported that this requirement cut too close to councils' traditional control over housing development, and, as a result, no plan reviewed undertook to meet this objective. As one provincial official involved in plan review acknowledged: "This was the most difficult of the Housing Policy Statement provisions to enforce... It was difficult to prove that there was demand for various intensification types. The municipalities would not admit it or they would only admit in certain areas and we couldn't prove it elsewhere."

In general, planners showed the same reluctance to adopt housing supply targets as was noted in the last chapter on growth management targets. Planners explained that housing supply targets were undesirable from their point of view because targets are static whereas the housing supply market is dynamic. As one planner put it: "we don't want numbers in the official plan if we can help it. We've always had a problem with prescriptive rather than performance-based targets. If affordability became an issue again, we would know about it and we would deal with it in our own way."

8.5.2.2. Threatens to Disrupt Existing Neighbourhoods

Another key factor in influencing the type of planning policies appearing in the municipal plans reviewed is the need for planners and councils to avoid conflict with existing residents. As we saw in the last chapter, the expansionary aspects of growth management policies may entail little conflict with existing residents because they influence principally how and when development occurs on the urban fringe. In fact, such policies may be supported by existing residents because they tend to act to maintain servicing standards throughout the

municipality and prevent deterioration in the existing quality of life. This may help to explain the direct, strong policies in favour of expansion management found in the municipal plans reviewed.

Contrast that situation with the onerous conditions placed on intensification policies. In fact, we found that these conditions greatly exceeded the criteria laid down by the provincial planning framework, which restricted the conditions that could be placed on intensification to the physical potential of site, service availability, and demand for the housing type. In some cases the plans used language in direct contradiction to the Housing Policy Statement: i.e., the "compatibility" provisions requiring new development to fit in with existing neighbourhoods as a condition for development approval.

These restrictive conditions on intensification were strengthened by plan statements that expressed the overriding desire of councils to preserve existing neighbourhoods and to avoid threatening existing residents with unacceptable changes in their built environment. Pickering's plan, for instance, states that: "Town Council recognizes its neighbourhoods as the fundamental building block of the urban system; and will endeavor to maintain the unique character and identities of its neighbourhoods as they evolve over time" (Town of Pickering, 1995, 19). Other municipalities that have weaker neighbourhood identities merely refer to "established residential areas" as being important to preserve in the face of growth pressures.

A review of comments on proposed plans and interviews with suburban planners revealed that certain aspects of the provincial policy framework are more controversial with existing residents than other aspects:

- allowing accessory apartments as of right in all existing neighbourhoods
- allowing widespread changes to established neighbourhoods through infill and redevelopment
- allowing high-density development of any kind near existing residential areas.

Most planners interviewed could tell similar stories of raucous public meetings to discuss the province's Apartments in Houses legislation and the frigid reception the legislation received at meetings of city council.[8] Resident studies, such as that conducted in Brampton, suggested that people would accept accessory apartments only if their legalization were accompanied by strict controls (City of Brampton, 1991). Not surprisingly, this is where official plans show the greatest reluctance to abide by provincial policies: as we saw, accessory apartments were recognized in the plan but councils went far beyond the provisions of the legislation in placing conditions on their creation.

In some cases, the restrictive policies on intensification in draft official plans were intentionally undertaken so as to place the municipality on a collision course with the province. In Mississauga, for instance, the council-approved plan included extensive

conditions on intensification and accessory apartments that council fully expects to be overturned by provincial planners. The purpose of this strategy is to force the province to publicly intervene in order to change planning policies and therefore to accept the political costs associated with promoting intensification in existing residential areas. As one suburban planner said, "we don't want to do the province's dirty work for them."

There is some evidence, however, that the province has actually backed down from such confrontations. Provincial planners themselves acknowledge that they are resigned to the fact that municipalities are reluctant to allow (or lose control over) the intensification of existing neighbourhoods. They have therefore come to accept official plan conditions requiring the compatibility of use, as long as only physical compatibility is at issue and not the general "character" of the neighbourhood, which may imply social exclusivity. In Whitby, for instance, of the 10 conditions placed on accessory apartments, only the policy requiring that accessory units make up less than 35 percent of total floor space will be challenged by the ministry. In the case of Newmarket, which has similar language in its plan, not even that measure is being challenged by the ministry although it clearly violates provincial legislation.

But the resistance to legalizing basement apartments is only one expression of a general resistance to rapid or uncontrolled neighbourhood change. In the case of basement apartments, existing residents were typically concerned with parking issues, changes in the built form, loss of property values, property maintenance, absentee landlords, and the "character" of the neighbourhood, which frequently had social overtones. These concerns also arise with other forms of minor intensification, such as infill development.[9] Planners have discovered that theoretical arguments about the efficiency of infill development where there is a surplus of infrastructure and servicing capacity are lost on local residents who anticipate deterioration of the quality of life in terms of built form, parking, overcrowded parks, and usually unnamed "social problems" that accompany medium-density development within their neighbourhoods.

Local councillors are extremely sensitive to this type of opposition. In council discussions over revisions to Whitby's official plan, one councillor claimed "We have people come out in droves when developers come back and ask for intensification of their neighbourhoods." Another warned that intensification would be the "death knell" of Whitby's downtown: "If you take on older area and double the population, it will ruin the area" (*Whitby Free Press*, April 17, 1991: 3).

Rather than designating for such development, official plans typically leave it to secondary plans, which in turn require rezoning applications that are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The official plan provides the municipality with the control it needs to refuse approval by including a wide range of compliance conditions for development applications. In

suburban municipalities that are designating little or no new land for development in the current round of official planning (i.e., Pickering, Mississauga, and Burlington), planners report that some secondary plans for mature areas will allow very carefully controlled and gradual increases in infill densities over time, a planning action that is meant to dovetail with rising property values and pressures from developers. In still expanding suburban municipalities (i.e., Whitby, Brampton, Newmarket), planners do not report any plans to allow low-density areas to intensify.

Equally controversial in some suburban municipalities is the issue of high-rise housing. In the denser, more urbanized areas such as Mississauga, the condominium boom of the 1980s and the large number of assisted housing apartment buildings constructed under the NDP engendered resistance to major intensification projects involving high-rise construction.[10] This translated into a fading of council support for new high-rise projects.[11] In other municipalities surveyed, there is less pressure for allowing large-scale redevelopment projects of the type that are common in Mississauga. In Brampton, for instance, a 1991 intensification study reported that no such projects had ever been undertaken in the municipality.

Nonetheless, high-density housing in these municipalities may be opposed by existing residents not on the basis of direct experience with such projects, but from a sense that high-density housing is inappropriate in a suburban area, especially given the availability of land for new development. In Newmarket, for instance, although a range of densities are designated in the official plan, thereby technically meeting the requirement of the provincial policy framework, a closer look reveals that the amount of land actually designated for high-rise development is minimal. After planners had originally suggested allowing high-rises in the "downtown" area, a public meeting convinced councillors otherwise and the designation was removed in the next draft of the official plan.

As a general observation, residents pointed out in all these cases of proposed intensification that "the rules of the game" were being altered after they had made their commitment to a certain place, a manifest injustice. Existing residents rarely supported any form of intensification, unless it was part of a downtown revitalization plan, in centres, or along transportation corridors. Rural residents tended to support intensification in urban areas.

8.5.2.3. Conflicts with Conventional Practices

Many planners believe that mature-area development is more difficult than low-density greenfield development. Small and unusual lot sizes, soil contamination issues, neighbourhood opposition, and so on, make intensification applications more time-consuming and troublesome than "clean slate" greenfield development. These attitudes are important because they can affect how development applications are received by planning departments and the

expectations of developers. Planning attitudes may lead to an "easier ride" for greenfield development than for mature-area intensification.

8.6. Implications for Implementation

What I will call "political failure" is one of the most serious implementation issues identified by suburban planners with respect to housing supply policies. They reported that municipal councils sometimes agreed to official plan policies that would support a wider range of housing types in principle but reneged on official plan commitments when it came to particular development decisions. In the development of new communities, plan approval may be given for a variety of housing types, including low-, medium- and high-density. The various density designations, may however, get built out at different times. In the past, low-density areas may have been built out leaving whatever medium-density and much of the higher-density sites vacant.[12] As the community develops with detached housing as its predominant form, resistance builds to allowing the build-out of higher-density sites. Existing residents fear that such housing will negatively affect their property values, increasing traffic, lead to social problems, i.e., result in a reduction of their quality of life.[13] Developers cite market forces and neighbourhood resistance in their application to justify rezoning to lower density. These are often considered favourably by municipal councillors anxious to avoid conflict with existing residents and powerful economic interests in favour of "potential" residents.

There may be little in the official plan or secondary plans to prevent this: we have seen that few plans reviewed contained policies to prevent or discourage down-zoning of sites designated for medium and high-density housing. Nonetheless, general planning policies in favour of higher densities and intensification—and the provincial policy framework behind those principles—can strengthen their hand when it comes to "showdowns" over these issues at council or committee meetings, or at the OMB.

This "strengthened hand" motif arose often in interviews with municipal planners. Building out subdivisions at the planned for densities is one example. It may also be useful when dealing with an application for redevelopment or infill in a mature area of the municipality. In this case, official plan policies in favour of affordable housing, housing mix and general statements in favour of infill development can help strengthen a planning report in favour of an application that is being objected to by area residents.

The official plan strategies adopted by the municipalities reviewed have a number of other important implications in terms of policy implementation. The tendency to relegate housing type and density issues to the secondary planning process means that targets and ranges are not set—and may not be monitored or implemented—on a municipality-wide basis.

It also means that implementation of the intensification and housing mix provisions in already planned and built-up areas will need to await secondary plan reviews, which could be a very long-term process. In the case of Brampton, for instance, it is expected that this will take about 15 years to complete. In other cases, such as Mississauga where the municipality is approaching its built out state, more planning attention is being given to the review of existing secondary plans (as opposed to developing new ones) and this might reduce the time frame involved. In general, however, recent reductions in the staff complement of many municipalities will militate against a quick review of existing secondary plans and therefore will entail a much slower implementation of intensification policies.

Monitoring of future development activity to determine the efficacy of intensification policies in official plans is another implementation issue. Actual monitoring activity being undertaken by municipal planning departments seemed low and resources committed to improving it were not available. With the end of the Municipal Housing Statement funding program, the province had signalled that it would no longer contribute to data collection on housing and land supply issues. Under these circumstances, it would be tempting for municipalities to "under-implement" those policies that they reluctantly placed in their official plans as a result of provincial pressures, e.g., those dealing with basement apartments and the affordability targets. In the latter case, I was unable to locate responsibility for monitoring and reporting on municipal progress towards the affordability target in any of the municipalities surveyed.

A related implementation issue is the difficulty of measuring some official plan objectives so that monitoring is even possible. Thus, planners complained that it was impossible to measure the demand for housing units of different intensification types everywhere in the municipality, and that knowing the servicing capacity of various neighbourhoods in order to judge their intensification potential according to the provincial policy statement might also pose a problem.

Another implementation issue raised by planners is their lack of perceived control over the actual outcomes associated with some intensification policies. Perhaps the most commonly raised issue is the affordability target: planners claimed that developers were really in control of the price at which housing will eventually sell. Attempts by some municipalities in the region to enter into development agreements that specified the selling price of new housing were unsuccessful. In the current housing market, developers claim that virtually everything they build is "affordable" and planners have little to go on to contradict such claims.

Many of the issues raised with respect to implementation relate to the question "what if the housing market changes?" As was pointed out above, meeting intensification and

housing range objectives has been relatively painless given existing market conditions. Under these conditions, planning principles and market forces are operating in the same direction. However, we do not know how the policy system that has been in place will operate under significantly different conditions.

Finally, implementation of the housing supply policies will depend in part on the behaviour of upper-tier governments in the region, given their approval power over subdivisions, condominiums, and lower-tier official plan amendments. One provincial planner called this the "soft under-belly" of the provincial housing supply strategy in the GTA. It is widely recognized that upper-tier councillors have their primary allegiance to the area municipality from which they are elected.[14] This means that upper-tier councils are loathe to interfere too greatly with the residential development decisions of lower-tier councils in order to achieve objectives and targets present in upper-tier plans or housing policy statements. As Frisken (1990: 61) has noted:

> The province also looks to regional councils to take a leadership role in developing regional housing policy and then in seeking compliance from local municipalities through the subdivision approval process, without acknowledging the limited ability of regional agencies to influence local planning decisions.

Rather than interfere too directly in the housing policies of lower-tier plans, upper-tier governments have addressed affordability issues by establishing non-profit housing corporations to build units for lower-income households. According to Frisken (1990: 61) "They decided to act only after being persuaded that a shortage of low-cost housing is a problem for some of the own constituents, not just for people in Metropolitan Toronto." With declining funds available for this purpose from senior governments, however, this direct provision function of upper-tier municipalities in the region is fading: as one regional planner noted, however, "we used to have control over housing mix through non-profit housing. We created lots of more affordable housing apartments, but now can't do that."

8.7. Conclusion

The municipal response to the provincial policy framework can be characterized as an attempt to respond to local intensification pressures, and show sufficient regard to the policy framework without raising public concerns over growth and intensification and contradicting market trends. Municipalities clearly see provincial attempts to change the municipal role in housing supply as incursions into their traditional domain and as a threat to their autonomy. The findings of this chapter are consistent with those of the previous chapter, i.e., provincial policy attempts to encourage more compact new development and intensification of mature

areas are resisted by municipalities, but measures to ensure the orderly expansion of urban areas (i.e., the land supply objectives) are broadly accepted.

This is not to say that provincial housing supply policies have been ineffectual: suburban planners tended to play down the impact of the provincial policies on their official planning decisions, instead attributing them to local conditions and development pressures. They acknowledged, however, that they would not have placed intensification policies in their official plans without the policy pressure and the funding for intensification studies emanating from the province. As one suburban planner said: "provincial policy and the funds that the province provided [for planning studies] were critical to get the city to look at issues it was already interested in."

Nor have municipalities completely rejected the intensification of mature areas and higher-density new development. Rather, they evolved a common strategy to address their "domestic" intensification pressures arising from demographic and economic changes, and to respond to the policy pressure from the province. This strategy concentrates intensification pressures into discrete sites in the mature area of suburban regions and in the newly developing areas, typically in large-scale redevelopment sites, into mixed-use centres and along high-use corridors. The nodes and corridors strategy links transportation and built form: local roads and collectors are designated for low-density development, medium-density housing along major transit routes and designated corridors, and high-density development in major nodes supported by major transit services. This strategy allows municipalities to address intensification pressures while directing them away from established neighbourhoods. The nodes and corridors approach serves as the subject for detailed attention in the next chapter.

Endnotes

[1] According to a provincial planning in the Plans Appraisal Branch, this is because regional councillors do not want to have future decision making bound by placing numeric targets in an official plan.

[2] In 1993, York Region adopted a housing mix target of 50 percent of new construction to be single family and 50 percent other types of housing. This seems like a major shift given the fact that the existing housing stock in the region is 80 percent single detached. Ironically, however, the target for single detached is actually higher than the mix contained in development applications over the previous 3.5 years, which was only 36 percent single family. The report notes that a 50/50 target "would allow for swings in the economy and the marketplace. Even with 50 percent of new units being single detached, the total housing stock in the Region in 2021 will remain predominantly single detached units at 62 percent." The Halton Urban Structure Review calls for a housing mix in new developments of 60 percent single detached and semi-detached, 15 percent rowhouse, and 25 percent apartment units. The current housing stock is 60 percent single detached, so this hardly represents a major deviation from existing trends.

[3] Once again, density figures are approximate. The Burlington plan sets 25 units per net hectare as the maximum allowed in the low density designation. Using a rule of thumb of about 2:3 to convert from net to gross, this translates into about 17 units per gross hectare or less than 7 units per gross acre.

[4] In Mississauga, for instance, a major redevelopment opportunity presented itself at the St. Lawrence Starch Plant Lands, but council reduced the density from 3.0 time coverage to 2.0 as a result of local objections.

[5] Province-wide requirements are detailed in the implementation guidelines accompanying the Housing Policy Statement, but provincial planners claim that monitoring is also essential to the implementation of the regional growth management objectives.

[6] Although this varies from plan to plan. For instance, Mississauga appears to avoid using provincial language whereas Brampton uses it generously.

[7] For instance, Durham Regional Chair Herrema went on record in 1989 to complain that his region was being inundated with single-story shopping plazas. "They should have apartments on top. But the developers won't do it. They're making enough money off the retail development that they don't want to be bothered with tenants. As a result public money is being spent inefficiently on sewers, roads and schools to service developments that could accommodate many more people" (*Toronto Star*, October 6, 1989: A25).

[8] Minutes of meetings from the GTA Mayors group - made up mostly of suburban politicians - strongly reflects this animosity towards the provincial legislation.

[9] Planning documents, such as the Region of Peel Municipal Housing Statement, distinguish between minor, moderate and major intensification. Minor takes place within neighbourhoods and includes accessory apartments, infill, and garden suites. Moderate involves modification of the streetscape within a neighbourhood or on the neighborhood edge and major intensification involves large scale redesign of an area with a change in land use and demolition of buildings.

[10] There is in fact a blurring between these two housing tenure types because of the highly publicized cases where private developers who were unable to pre-sell condo units sold their land (and planning approvals) to non-profit housing agencies for social housing development.

[11] In Burlington, this was not the case. There, social housing was undertaken on smaller parcels of land and at medium densities, so there was little resistance from existing residents. In fact, the experience with social housing proved to Council that intensification could be undertaken in selected sites without political conflict.

[12] Most municipalities surveyed report a large amount of land zoned for high density but still vacant.

[13] Planners point to the culpability of real estate agents in these circumstances in not informing their clients of the fact that nearby vacant property was zoned for higher density housing.

[14] One provincial official in the Local Policy Branch explained: "it's a double direct system of election, but that doesn't mean councillors wear both hats evenly . What do citizens pay more attention to - your ability to fix pot holes and clear streets, or to your ability to pass a strategic plan? I think the answer is pretty clear."

9 . Urban Structure Policies

9.1. Introduction

In the last chapter, I identified a site-specific intensification strategy based largely on directing intensification pressures to high-volume arterials and centres of higher-density, mixed-use activity. Typically, municipal plans included a hierarchy of such of such nodes and corridors, with the highest level being of regional significance. In this chapter, I explore this aspect of the municipal response to the provincial intensification policy framework, i.e., urban structure. As we saw in Chapter 5, the notion of a regional structure based on nodes and corridors was suggested by the OGTA Working Group on Urban Form in its 1992 report. According to the report:

> the role of the province is to clarify the overall vision for the GTA, but the effectiveness of the vision will be determined by a strong, cooperative two-tier process. The urban structure should be the responsibility of the regional municipalities, in consultation with local municipalities, and the form, mix and intensity of development should rest largely with the local municipalities (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992b: 29).

My main interest here is to examine how the strategy has been translated into official plans given the overlapping and sometimes diverging interests involved.

9.2. The OGTA Concept

The provincial-municipal dynamics that lay behind the Urban Form Working Group were described in some detail in Chapter 5. I concluded that in spite of provincial attempts to achieve a more definite statement, the urban structure proposed by the group was left vague due to municipal reluctance to have a provincial agency too directly involved in the details local land use planning. In this section, I will lay out in more detail the actual outcome found in the working group's final report.

9.2.1. Nodes

According to the OGTA working group report, a node is "an area of concentrated activity serving as a community focal point and providing services or functions not normally found elsewhere in the community. To work well, everything in a node should be close to everything else. This helps promote a pedestrian-oriented environment by ensuring walking distances to and from public transit are reasonable." The report presents the following features of nodes:

- Hierarchical organization: Several levels of nodes are necessary in order to integrate the various levels of transit service available into a coherent feeder system, with the highest level of node corresponding to the highest capacity transit services (LRT, subways) and

lower nodes corresponding to moderate capacity transit vehicles (frequent buses or streetcars, perhaps within a dedicated lane). A hierarchy of nodes also allows for a full range of services, economic activities, and housing types within a community and across the region.

- Mix of land uses: nodes have a variety of uses, e.g., residential, commercial, financial, institutional, cultural etc. A mix of uses ensures that a node is well used throughout the day and throughout the week. Nodes are often built around concentrations of employment opportunities. In conjunction with residential opportunities, a node encourages people to live and work in the same area.
- Compact: nodes are more compact and much denser in comparison to non-nodal urban areas.
- Transit-based: public transit in some form needs to exist while not excluding other forms (e.g., road and rail).
- Transit-supportive: the concentration of people and diversity of land use, along with urban design makes the provision of transit services more feasible.
- Pedestrian-friendly: The compact, mixed use of the node encourages walking between destinations. Thus, they are well-suited for the use of social groups that may be less mobile: e.g., seniors.

There are at least four types of nodes: central, major, intermediate and local. The only central node in the GTA is downtown Toronto, which serves as a unique focal point for the province and beyond, and is characterized by a very high concentration of employment, limited residential and a wide array of specialized land uses such as government and cultural attractions. It has the highest densities in the region and relies on major transportation infrastructure such as the subway, LRT, and GO Transit.

Major nodes provide a GTA-wide focal point, have a high employment concentration along with residential, commercial and retail uses. Densities are not as high as in the central node but a higher level of transit, such as subway or LRT, is necessary in order to support this nodal level. City centres in Etobicoke, Mississauga, North York, Scarborough and Oshawa constitute the major nodes of the region. These centres are at various states of maturity, with Oshawa, North York and Mississauga well developed, Scarborough at an intermediate stage, and Etobicoke being a projected centre.

Intermediate nodes provide focal points for the upper-tier municipalities, often with a predominance of employment, commercial and retail uses but with a growing residential component. Densities are from medium to high, but these nodes are more car-oriented and are supported by medium level transit services such as buses, streetcar and GO transit. The 23

intermediate nodes are scattered throughout the region, with 13 in suburban regions and 10 within Metropolitan Toronto (see

Figure 9-1). These nodes represent a mix of existing, currently developing, and projected locations. The report avoided identifying precise locations of the intermediate nodes, instead giving only general coordinates.

Local nodes provide a focus for the lower-tier municipality, or the neighbourhood. They have local retail and service uses such as small shopping malls, service-related employment, and a residential component. The urban form group avoided designating local nodes as these were seen to be in the purview of area municipalities.

In terms of the size, density, and mix of uses to be found in the various types of nodes, the OGTA report provided some general parameters to guide official plans. These are shown in Table 9-1.

Table 9-1: Characteristics of Nodes, OGTA Urban Form Working Group

Type of Node	Size (ha)	Resident/ Employment Mix	Density Coverage (fsi)	Employment
Major	75 - 150	1 resident/2.5 jobs	Reurbanizing: > 6 Urbanizing: > 4	25,000 - 100,000
Intermediate	< 75	1 resident/1.5-2.0 jobs	Reurbanizing: 3-6 Urbanizing: 2-4	7,000 - 25,000
Local	< 75	1 resident/0.5 jobs	Reurbanizing: 2-4 Urbanizing: 1-2	< 7,000

Source: Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992b.

9.2.2. Corridors

In its report, the Urban Form Working Group recognized the need for nodes as focal points for more intensive development, but claimed that "the corridors linking the nodes may be even more important as a means of realizing the GTA vision of a more compact urban form" (1). Along this line of thought, the report went so far as to describe the urban structure vision as "a network of linked major corridors within which are a series of major and intermediate nodes" (22). Curiously, however, the report provided municipalities with little guidance as to what corridors might look like.

According to the OGTA report, Yonge Street is the archetypal corridor. A corridor is the historical heart of a community, linear in nature and running along main or arterial roads, or direct access highways (i.e., not controlled-access highways like the 401). "The key to successful corridors in diversity of use and maintaining activity throughout the day." Corridors are served—or are planned so as to be capable of being served—by public transit, and they encourage pedestrian movement. Densities are higher than in the surrounding community, but would normally be lower than in the nodes linked by the corridor. Like nodes,

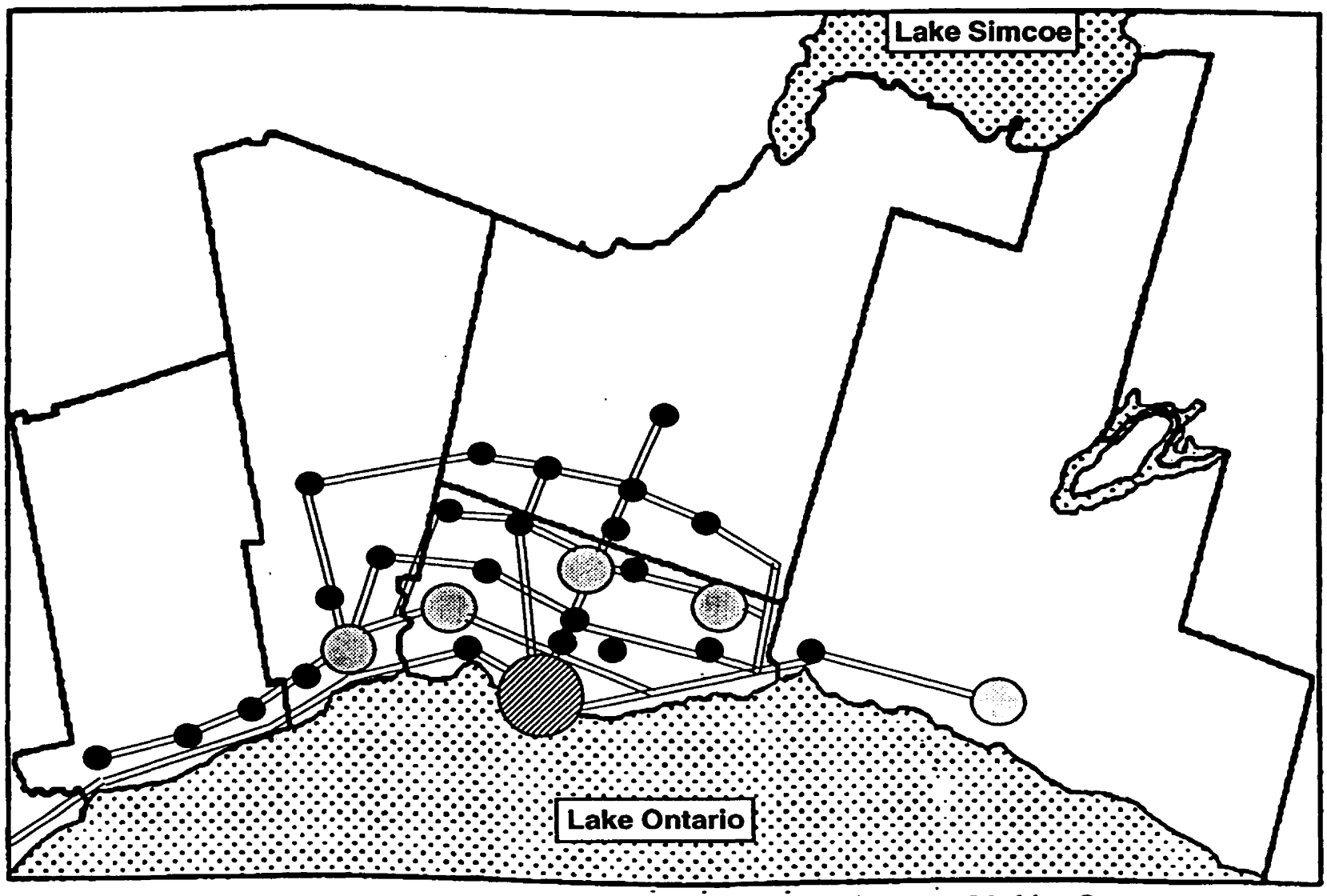


Figure 9-1: GTA Urban Structure: OGTA Urban Form Working Group

corridors can mature, from uni-functional transit routes linking nodes to full-fledge main streets with a diversity of forms and functions.

The final report of the OGTA's working group avoided showing precise locations of the suggested corridors, although earlier drafts indicate that the group had particular routes in mind. In the suburban regions outside Metropolitan Toronto, the corridor network consisted of Kingston Road and Highway 2 from Oshawa on the east, up Markham Road to Highway 7 running north of Metropolitan Toronto, and down Highway 10 in Mississauga to connect with Highway 2 to Oakville.

9.2.3. Time frame

Members of the OGTA working group considered themselves as facilitators of an emerging urban structure: they proposed ways the existing structure could be built upon, in terms of the growth of existing nodes, the development of nodes now in the planning process and the completion of missing corridor linkages. No particular time frame was given except to say that: "The opportunity exists to channel development in a manner which extends the life and capacity of the existing urban area within the GTA and thus form the basis of a longer term development pattern and structure to 2031 and beyond" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992b: 22).

9.3. Upper-tier Official Plans

9.3.1. Introduction

Although the urban structure vision contained in the working group report was never adopted as official government policy, it was adopted by provincial planners in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the OGTA as an important goal in the official plan approval process. A provincial planner with the OGTA claimed that "we have worked very closely with all the regional municipalities in terms of regional official plans and in seeing that this current generation of official plans reflects the vision." The main responsibility for provincial review on the urban structure implied by municipal official plans lies with the OGTA, whose recommendations are routinely incorporated into the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' comments to municipal planning directors. I turn now to an examination of how well these ideas have actually been incorporated into official planning documents in the region.

9.3.2. Findings

Table 9-2 summarizes the number of nodes designated in each upper-tier plan, and indicates whether other information, such as population, employment, density, exact boundaries or areal size is provided.

Table 9-2: Urban Structure Details in Upper-tier Plans

	York	Halton	Peel	Durham
Corridors Designated	√	X	X	X
Nodes Designated	√	√	√	√
Number of Nodes Designated	4	11	2	20
Hierarchy of Nodes	O	X	X	√
Location Shown	√	√	√	√
Boundaries Shown	X	X	X	X
Population Target	√	X	X	X
Employment Target	√	X	X	X
Density Target	√	X	X	X
Area Given	√	X	X	X

Legend: √ = present in plan, X = not present, O = partially present.

A detailed review of the four upper-tier plans shows that the urban structure envisioned by them corresponds in some ways and fails to correspond in other ways to that suggested by the OGTA report:

- Hierarchy of nodes: Three of the four plans designated one nodal level only—corresponding roughly to the OGTA's intermediate level—rather than a hierarchy of nodes with distinct functions. Durham's plan, being the exception, designated four levels, two of which were in urban areas and two in rural areas. In Peel's and Halton's plans, lower level nodes were left entirely to local area plans. York's plan took the middle road: it designated regional level nodes only, but identified those area municipalities that should designate lower-order nodes.
- Corridors: Generally speaking, corridors were not as well considered in upper-tier plans as were regional nodes. Of the four plans, York's alone designated a hierarchy of corridors—"regional" and "urban"—and included policies for their definition. Three regional corridors were designated, one along Highway 7, a parallel corridor along Steeles avenue, being the border with Metropolitan Toronto, and a third corridor running north-south along Yonge St. Urban corridors are essentially the grid of arterial roads running through urban areas. The other three upper-tier plans leave the designation of corridors entirely to area municipalities.
- Mixed-use: All the plans call for a mix of land uses. Non-residential uses often included in planning policies include employment (such as offices), recreation, entertainment, civic, and cultural uses.

- Transit-accessible: All four regional plans suggested that nodes should have a strategic location on the transit network.
- Transit-supportive: All four plans suggested that development densities and land-use patterns should be supportive of a high level of transit service.
- Pedestrian-friendly: The nodes described in the upper-tier plans pay some attention to urban design so as to encourage pedestrian use and a human-scale development pattern.

Table 9-3 and Table 9-4 give some indication of the level of detail provided by the upper-tier plans and the direction given to lower-tier municipalities as to the content of their own official plans. Clearly, the plans give varying amounts of guidance to local official plans: Halton provides very detailed guidance on a number of planning issues, York and Durham provide slightly less guidance, while Peel's plan gives little guidance.

Halton's plan designates 11 nodes and requires lower-tier municipalities to adopt secondary plans that will give them full definition. Beyond the basic parameters of being compact, mixed-use, transit-accessible, transit-supportive, and pedestrian-friendly, Halton's plan directs lower-tier municipalities to ensure adequate service and infrastructure provision, to adopt intensification targets for the nodes, and suggests that lower parking standards may be desirable in such locations.

At the other end of the spectrum is Peel's plan. It directs area municipalities to prepare policies on a number of node and corridor features (size, population capacity, transportation system, etc.), but does not provide any guidance to area municipalities on acceptable ranges for such features. In fact, Peel's plan amounts to little more than an invitation to lower-tier municipalities to cooperate with the region in undertaking studies into establishing a nodes and corridor system in the region. "This is a weakness of their plan," acknowledged a provincial planner.[1]

Most plans did not provide numeric targets relating to the size, density, or mix of employment and residential use to be expected in a node. Only York's plan provided any detail about the size of nodes, saying regional centres should be about 50-100 hectares in area and urban centres about 30 hectares. Again, only York's plan gave any numeric details about the land-use composition of nodes, discussed in more detail below.

Upper-tier plans provided less direction to lower-tier municipalities on the designation and design of corridors than for nodes. Of the four plans, York's alone designated a hierarchy of corridors—"regional" and "urban"—and included policies for their definition. The Peel plan had no policies concerning corridors and did not designate any in its urban structure component. As with nodes, however, it undertook to examine jointly with area-municipalities the feasibility of a system of regional corridors. Halton's plan, which was very explicit in its policies about nodes, merely states that it encourages local official plans to designate mixed-

Table 9-3: Regional Guidance to Lower-tier Plans: Nodes

	Region			
Lower-tier official plans should:	Durham	York	Peel	Halton
Designate centres	√	√	√	√
Identify centres in plan	√	√	√	√
Designate for mixed-use	√	√	O	√
Allow high/higher-density development	√	√	O	√
Have/improve transit facilities	√	√	O	√
Adopt transit-supportive design	√	√	O	√
Encourage pedestrian-friendly design		√		
Discourage low-density use	√	√	X	X
Adequate services/infrastructure	√	√	X	√
Require sec plan	X	√	X	√
Require intensification objectives	X	O	X	√
Reduce parking standards	X	X	X	√

Legend: X = not present, O = partially present √ = fully present.

Table 9-4: Regional Guidance to Lower-tier Plans: Corridors

	Region			
Does or requires lower-tier to do:	Durham	York	Peel	Halton
Designate corridors	X	√	X	X
Identify in plan	X	√	X	X
Designate for mixed-use	X	√	X	X
Allow high/higher-density development	X	√	X	X
Have/improve transit facilities	X	√	X	X
Adopt transit-supportive design	X	√	X	X
Discourage low-density use	X	X	X	X
Adequate services/ infrastructure	X	X	X	X
Require secondary plan	X	√	X	X
Require intensification objectives	X	X	X	X
Permit reduced parking standards	X	√	X	X

Legend: X = not present, O = partially present, √ = fully present.

use corridors and to include appropriate land-use and transportation policies to support the development of nodes. Durham's plan does not designate regional corridors, but directs higher-density development to arterial roads, where higher level transit is available.

9.4. Lower-tier Official Plans

9.4.1. Introduction

The OGTA Urban Form Working Group report stated that:

> At the end of the day, it is the local municipalities that will have the most challenging role in bringing a new urban form to life. Working with both the province and regional levels for support, the local municipalities will provide the essential link to communities and neighbourhoods. Local municipalities will have the task of refining the structure and nature of nodes and corridors within their jurisdiction. They will review, and where necessary revise official plan policies and zoning bylaw requirements to ensure their consistency with the finally agreed urban form concept (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1992b: 29).

I now turn to an analysis of lower-tier plans in order to assess how the OGTA vision, as translated by the upper-tier municipalities, is being expressed in recent official planning exercises.

9.4.2. Findings

Table 9-5 presents the findings for nodes and Table 9-6 presents those for corridors.[2]

9.4.2.1. General Features

Municipal plans show detailed boundaries of designated nodal areas on land-use maps. Typically, plans identify a hierarchy of mixed-use nodes and corridors as the areas of highest activity in the municipality and explicitly direct intensification pressures to those sites. All plans incorporated the regionally-defined nodes, with one exception: Pickering's plan did not designate the new community of Seaton, presumably because the land in this area is owned by the provincial government and development is under provincial planning control.

All plans designate nodes at lower hierarchical levels than those regionally designated. Most plans only identified one nodal level below that of the regionally-designated one, but Whitby's and Pickering's included two more levels, going down to the neighborhood level. On average, lower-tier plans designated another four nodes of local significance. Ranging from 10 in Mississauga to only one in Newmarket.

All the plans call for a mix of land uses, including residential and non-residential uses, especially employment uses (such as offices), recreation, entertainment, and civic, cultural uses. They differed slightly, however, in how hierarchical levels were distinguished. While all defined the various hierarchical levels by density definitions, not all differentiated between

Table 9-5: Definition of Nodes in Lower-Tier Plans

Policy objective	Municipality					
	Burlington	Mississauga	Brampton	Newmarket	Whitby	Pickering
Designates regional nodes	√	√	√	√	√	O
Designates local nodes	O	√	√	√	√	√
Accords with upper-tier plan	√	√	√	√	√	X
Boundary established	√	√	√	√	√	√
Higher-density	√	√	√	√	√	√
Density or housing ranges	√	O	X	√	√	√
Intensification targets	X	X	X	X	√	X
Mixed-use	√	√	X	√	√	√
Designates uses	√	X	X	√	√	√
Pedestrian-friendly	√	√	X	√	√	√
Transit-access	√	√	X	√	√	√
Transit-supportive	√	√	X	√	√	√
Urban design	√	√	X	√	√	√
Non-restrictive design guidelines	√	√	X	√	√	√
Discourages low-density use		√	X	√	X	X
Ensures provision of necessary infra/services	√	X	X	√	X	X
Reduced parking requirements	X	X	X	X	√	X

Legend: X=not present, O=partially present, √= fully present.

Table 9-6: Definition of Corridors in Lower-Tier Plans

Policy objective	Municipality					
	Burlington	Mississauga	Brampton	Newmarket	Whitby	Pickering
Policies on Corridors	√	√	√	X	X	√
Corridors designated	√	√	√	X	X	√
Density or housing ranges	√	X	X	X	X	√
Mixed-use	√	√	X	X	X	√
Pedestrian-friendly	√	√	X	X	X	√
Transit-access	√	√	X	X	X	√
Transit-supportive	√	√	X	X	X	√
Attention to urban design	√	√	X	X	X	√
Non-restrictive design guidelines	√	√	X	X	X	√
Discourages downzoning	O	√	X	X	X	X
Ensures provision of necessary infrastructure/ services	√	X	X	X	X	X
Reduced parking requirements	√	√	X	X	X	X

Legend: X = not present, O = partially present, √ = present.

levels by differentiating permitted uses. Some included provisions that not all uses would be permitted in all areas whereas others provided that all uses would be permitted at all levels.

Densities within nodes were often suggested in general terms as permitting high or medium-density development, and detailed plans for the nodal areas usually indicated the distribution of these land uses. In their comments on official plans, provincial officials attempted to convince municipalities to place intensification objectives in their nodal designations, i.e., to place numeric targets on the population and employment increases that could be expected in nodal areas over the life of the plan. Except for Whitby's plan, which provided data about the employment and population potential of each nodal area, no plan reviewed incorporated such objectives. But two plans provided target densities for the various levels of nodes in their plans. Pickering's plan suggested density ranges within the range set out in the OGTA report and the Transit-Supportive Guidelines: i.e., up to 3.0 fsi for regionally-designated nodes, up to 2.5 for second order nodes, and up to 2.0 for third order nodes. Burlington's plan allows a fsi of 2.5 in its second order centres, which corresponds to the OGTA "local node". Typically, plans called for higher densities at the core of the node and diminishing towards the edge.

All lower-tier plans (except Brampton's, once again) designated nodes in areas with good transit access and contained transit-supportive measures such as safe and convenient access be provided for pedestrians to transit stops, maximum distances to transit stops, requirements that buildings be oriented to the street and transit services, and that roads be designed for efficient transit service.

9.4.2.2. Design Issues

One issue appears very strongly in the plans of lower-tier municipalities that does not loom as large in upper-tier plans and is not an integral part of the OGTA vision at all: urban design. All plans except Brampton's linked the nodes and corridors concept to urban design requirements. We learned in the last chapter that design guidelines could serve to restrict intensification completely or to allow only incremental change by imposing rigorous requirements, including the necessity for projects to integrate with the surrounding community.

It could it be argued, however, that in a different context, design guidelines will actually encourage intensification by reducing objections and improving integration. In assessing this issue, I have tried to judge whether the guidelines are restrictive or supportive of intensification in centres and corridors: e.g., do design guidelines specifically recognize the higher-density, mixed-use nature of nodes and corridors, or do they evince a back-handed attempt to impose limitations on type, density, or size of housing?

In Mississauga, the urban design guidelines clearly make distinctions between the design of sites interior to communities and those along arterials or in centres. The latter are

understood to have a high land coverage compared to conventional "suburban" built forms, to allow up to 10 storeys in height, a reduced setback, with buildings oriented to the street. Furthermore, the plan specifically encourages infilling and redevelopment in these areas. Other plans reviewed make similar distinctions between the built form of nodes and corridors and that of established neighbourhoods. It would appear, therefore, that suburban municipalities do distinguish between intensification opportunities within existing neighbourhoods and those within nodes and corridors. Design criteria as applied to urban nodes and corridors are not intended to be restrictive or to undermine the intensification potential of these sites.

Heightened attention to design is also justified in official plans on other grounds:

- With corridors in particular, the challenge is to create an unbroken, integrated streetscape over several properties that are quite likely to have multiple owners. This situation requires attention to urban design issues and the imposition of design controls.
- Design considerations are crucial to creating a human-scale, functioning built environment where people can circulate freely on foot without the types of hindrances that often arise in poorly designed projects.

Thus, the studies required by official policies are to look at such things as the potential location of buildings, the mix of uses on the block, street pattern, establishes minimum and maximum heights, and the main pedestrian routes.

9.4.2.3. Implementation measures

In lower-tier plans we might expect to see a number of implementing measures that would promote the gradual realization of the nodes and corridor concept through development control, e.g., density targets, development review guidelines, and provisions to ensure the local provision of the necessary services.

In fact, this was a weakness detected in most plans. Take one important implementing provision as an example: discouraging lower-density uses in areas designated as nodes or corridors. Only the Mississauga plan actually discourages downzoning. The Burlington plan allows it but the proponent will be required to propose ways to transform the site to higher intensity, transit-supportive and pedestrian-oriented development in the future.

Provisions regarding reduced parking standards tell a similar story. One might expect this to be a key aspect of planning for nodes—at least regional-level ones—but in fact it receives little attention in lower-tier plans. Only Whitby's makes mention of it and even here it only seems to hint at the possibility rather than to endorse it.

Density bonusing might have been another instrument endorsed in municipal plans as a means of implementing the nodes and corridors concept but only Burlington 's plan explicitly links the two. In fact, Burlington's plan seems to be somewhat of an exception to the

"poor-implementation" rule in that it also proposes holding zones and a city land banking program to assist private sector redevelopment in nodes.

9.4.2.4. Corridors

As at the upper-tier level, corridors were less well defined than nodes in some plans. In two lower-tier plans, Whitby and Newmarket, official planning policies did not distinguish between nodes and corridors. In the four other cases, nodes were distinguished from corridors in planning policies: Pickering, Burlington, Mississauga, and Brampton. Even in these cases, however, policies were usually somewhat sketchier than for nodes and no hierarchy was implied in terms of density or function within the urban structure. Burlington's plan had the best articulated policies on corridors, stipulating the range of uses to be allowed, density targets and building heights, and permitting a reduction of parking requirements for with transit-supportive design. Detailed design considerations are provided to ensure the compatibility with surrounding uses, but do not seem onerous considering the densities to be permitted along the corridor. The built form encouraged by the plan is typical of the Main Streets idea: retail and service commercial (or other pedestrian-oriented uses) at grade with residential uses above grade.

9.5. Summary of Findings

By way of summarizing the findings, I will attempt to compare the urban structure presented by the OGTA to that which emerges from my examination of upper- and lower-tier planning policies.

9.5.1. Upper-tier

One way to assess the degree to which the OGTA urban structure plan is being expressed by regional official plans would be to compare it with the regional structure pattern that emerges if one combines the four suburban regional urban structure plans. The latter is represented in Figure 9-2. We can see from this figure that in fact, the two differ in several respects. First, the OGTA plan has 15 suburban nodes, two major (Mississauga and Oshawa) and 13 intermediate. The combined official plan version has 2.5 times that number: 33 nodes including Mississauga Square one and Oshawa.

The geographic location of the nodes is difficult to compare given the extreme generality of the OGTA urban structure plan and the dearth of references points by which to "pin down" the suggested positions. It appears, however, that of the 15 suburban nodes suggested by the OGTA working group, 11 are represented in the regional official plans by nodes in the approximate locations suggested by the OGTA. This implies that, of the 33 suburban nodes in

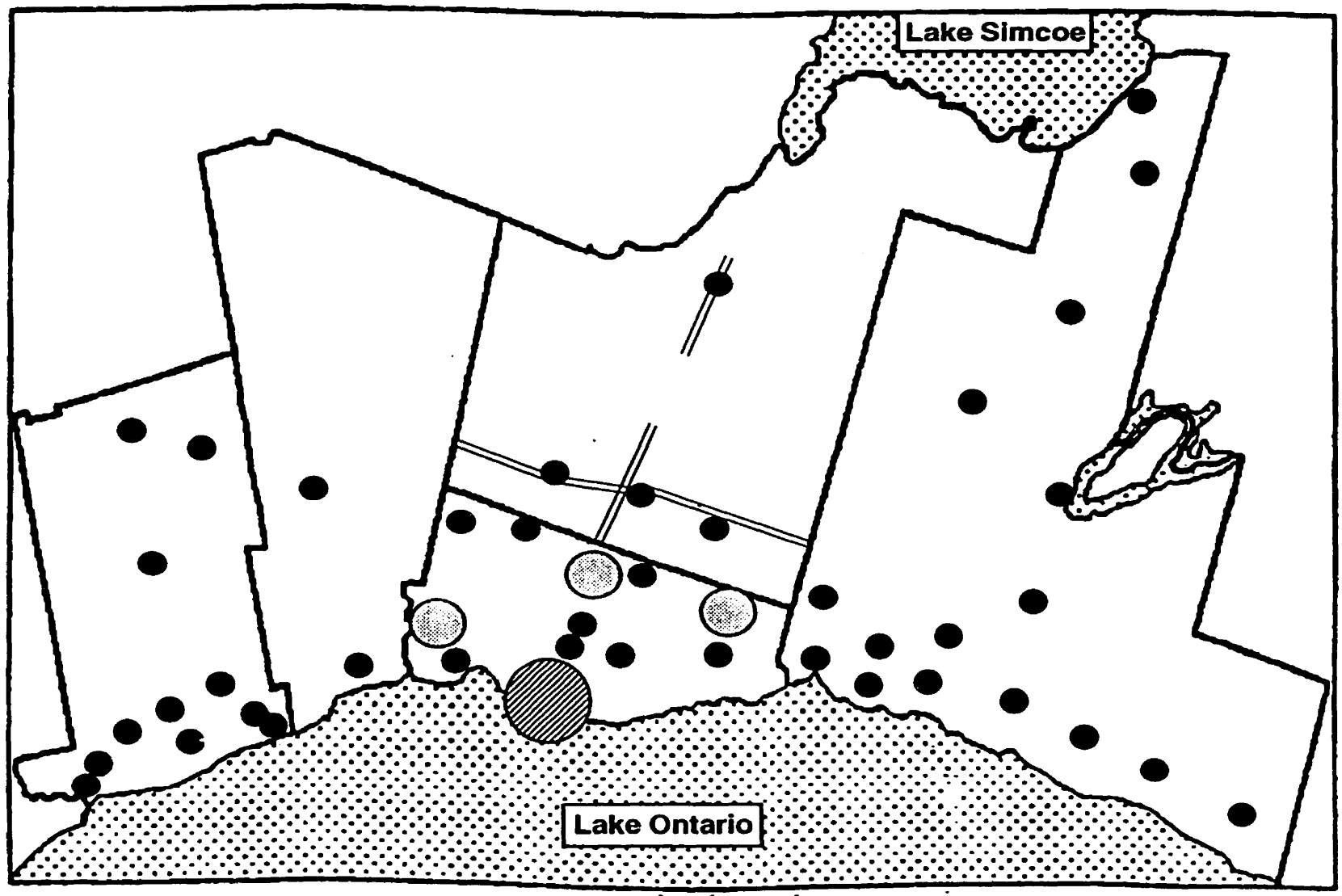


Figure 9-2: GTA Urban Structure: Upper-Tier Official Plans

the combined upper-tier plans, two-thirds or 22 are in locations not projected in the OGTA plan.

Another dimension on which the OGTA vision could be compared to its embodiment in municipal plans would be in terms of the anticipated size of nodes. Unfortunately, given the lack of reference points in the official plans with respect to the anticipated size of the nodes, it is difficult to comment extensively on this aspect of the proposed urban structure. York's plan, however, gives us a clue. It estimated that regional nodes would be in the order of 20-30,000 employees and 5-10,000 residents at a gross density of 4-600 residents and employees per hectare. This suggests a nodal land area of about 67 hectares, which is in line with the figure suggested in the OGTA report (up to 75 hectares for an intermediate node).

The York plan also lets us assess the issue of the ratio of residents to employees. Taken the high numbers from the guideline of 5-10,000 residential to 20-30,000 employees in a node, the ratio is one resident to three employees. Taking the low numbers, the ratio is one resident to four employees. This is roughly twice the ratio recommended by the OGTA, i.e., one resident per 1.5-2.0 employees, and represents a very conservative approach to the mixed land-use objectives..

It also may be worthwhile to consider briefly the allegiance of the official plans to the OGTA corridor concept. The OGTA urban structure map identified a series of corridors linking the suburban nodes both along the Lake Ontario shore and in a half circle on the outside perimeter of Metropolitan Toronto. The York plan designates a corridor along Highway 7 that would appear to coincide with the northern link of the half-circle. It also designates a length of Yonge St. that roughly corresponds to the OGTA plan, although the latter terminates in Richmond Hill while the York plan shows the corridor, after a little interruption, continuing on to Newmarket. Apart from York Region, however, no regional plan designated corridors, although the Durham plan proposed that a joint study involving provincial, regional and local governments be undertaken to consider designating Highway 2 (Kingston Road) as a regional corridor. This would correspond to the eastern wing of the Lake Ontario corridor shown on the OGTA map. Nonetheless, most of the corridor concept expressed in the OGTA report remains unrealized at the upper-tier official plan level. Given the importance the Urban Form Working Group placed on the corridor concept, this represents a significant deficiency of the upper-tier plans compared to the OGTA vision.

9.5.2. Lower-tier

Lower-tier plans were relatively faithful to upper-tier plans in terms of giving policy expression to the nodal concept: i.e., designating mixed-use, higher-density areas with definite boundaries where intensification initiatives would be welcomed. They reflected well the

location of regionally-designated nodes in their plans and therefore indirectly carried out the OGTA vision to the extent that it was reflected in upper-tier plans. In the case of Durham and York region, where the upper-tier had designated two nodal levels within urban areas, local municipalities incorporated both levels into their plans.

In several ways, lower-tier plans went beyond upper-tier plans in realizing the OGTA vision. First, by designating third order nodes, some plans (albeit in Durham only) took steps to further fleshing out the OGTA plan for a hierarchy of nested nodes. Secondly, by designating more nodes than in the upper-tier plans, some of the nodes designated by the lower-tier plans corresponded to nodes that had appeared in the OGTA plan but were not represented in the upper-tier plans.[3] Thirdly, by designating more corridors than the upper-tier plans, lower-tier plans helped give (limited) body to this aspect of the OGTA vision.

An examination of the location of the corridors shows that they are consistent with those proposed in the OGTA visions: i.e., along Queen St. in Brampton (a continuation of the corridor designated by York Region as it passes into Peel Region and an extension of the Highway 7 corridor being studied by the OGTA), along Kingston Road in Pickering (a plausible candidate for the eastward extension of the Lake Ontario shore corridor on the OGTA map), and along Fairview Street and Plains Road in Burlington (a plausible candidate for the westward extension of the Lake Ontario shore corridor on the OGTA map).

9.6. Interpreting the Findings[4]

9.6.1. Comply Provincial Policy Framework When it:

9.6.1.1. Responds to Local Conditions

The idea of an urban structure based on nodes and corridors responded to many of the needs of suburban municipalities. Here, I present the main reasons mentioned in official plans, given by suburban planners interviews, and offered in newspaper articles.

9.6.1.1.1. Demographic Changes

The concept of an urban structure based on nodes and corridors responds to the need of suburban communities for a certain amount of medium and higher-density housing to satisfy expected changes in housing demand due to declining household size, delayed age of child-bearing by women, and aging of the population. Planners claim that higher-density housing near transit will allow people to stay in their communities throughout their life cycles.

9.6.1.1.2. Jobs/Housing Balance

For some municipalities, the emphasis is clearly on the employment potential of the nodes and corridor concept. In Mississauga, for instance, the concept was conceived as a instrument for

increasing the employment base of the city. Only later, and in response to the OGTA work, did the city consider making them into mixed-use residential areas. The nodes and corridors concept was seen as a means to establish a better live-work relationship for local residents by providing employment opportunities near residential areas.

York Region's plan suggests that employment projections for nodes in that region are substantially greater than those proposed by the OGTA. While the description of nodes afforded in other planning documents does not allow us to judge how widespread this is, interviews with provincial and municipal planners suggests that this may be the case in the other suburban regions of the GTA as well.

This conflict reflects deeper issues about the nature of the nodal concept. Is it primarily an employment-oriented and job-generating scheme or a growth management strategy to reduce the need for public investment and preserve environmental features on the urban fringe? Competition among the GTA's municipalities for employment growth is well-established.[5] The fact that earlier versions of regional and area municipal plans included the concept of employment centres may suggest that this is the kernel of their approach, while provincial planners appear more interested in the fiscal, environmental and social benefits of the nodal strategy.

9.6.1.1.3. Community Identity

By serving as places of more intense social interaction and by concentrating residential, human service, commercial and office activities in one central location, it was hoped that centres would create a "heart" for suburban communities. In this sense, centres and corridors were seen as part of the community building process, helping to create more integrated, "complete" communities where residents could find a full range of urban services and dwelling types.

9.6.1.1.4. Infrastructure Efficiency

An urban structure based on nodes and corridors was seen as an opportunity to take advantage of existing services and facilities to support new population growth, to allow municipalities to concentrate the resources available to improve transit facilities into areas where they are likely to have maximum impact, and to create higher-density areas that would support transit use and pedestrian access, reducing the need for automobile use.

The connection between land use and transportation has emerged as an important planning issue in suburban regions of the GTA over the last five years. Regional municipalities such as Halton and Peel have commissioned major studies of how a regional transit system could be promoted within their regions. As the background study to Halton's official plan pointed out, it has become a widely shared assumption in the GTA that:

> it is not possible to develop a successful transportation system without a corresponding pattern of land uses and densities. As much as the typical low-

> density suburban single-family house on a 40 to 75 foot lot with curving street is a function of the automobile as primary transportation mode, a transit network requires its own levels of density, mix of land uses and specific urban pattern in order to support the infrastructure (A. J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Co., 1992: 9).

9.6.1.1.5. Economic Development

An urban structure based on nodes and corridors holds the potential for revitalizing existing commercial areas—some of which were in decline—by providing a focal point for public- and private-sector investment. By attracting retail and commercial development to higher-density mixed-use areas, levels of services will be increased to existing residents without disturbing their neighbourhoods.

Suburban municipalities also perceived the concept of nodes and corridors as a strategy for justifying a greater employment forecast for suburban regions and for decentralizing employment growth from Metropolitan Toronto in a way that would not lead to further sprawl.

9.6.1.2. Avoids Disruption of Existing Neighbourhoods

We have seen in previous chapters that intensification raises fears about dramatic changes to the built and social environment. The nodes and corridor approach is designed to allow changes to take place within the urban fabric in a way that stabilizes rather than disrupts the community. Planners point to the potential of a nodes and corridor strategy to direct intensification pressures to sites that are more suited to exploit the strengths of intensification without the disadvantages. As one planner said: "We were just getting into the whole idea that you've got to put the increased population somewhere, so you should put them there."

As an intensification strategy, the nodes and corridors concept has engendered political acceptability due to its promise of diverting new development away from "established" neighbourhoods. Municipal planners report—and public comments on official plan proposals corroborate—some concern from residents adjacent to designated intensification areas, but at a much lower level of concern than expressed in public meetings about large scale redevelopment projects or neighborhood intensification through infill or accessory apartments. In Brampton, for instance, about 40 percent of the intensification potential of the existing urban area is contained in a single designated corridor: the Central Commercial Corridor, about four km. long and linking the Old Brampton downtown area and the more recent Bramalea City Centre. Public meetings held to discuss the related secondary plan attracted attention "to one or two hotspots but," according to a local planner, "it was nothing compared to the total area that was being designated for intensification."

The need to avoid conflict with existing residents also helps explain the emphasis on urban design that is evidenced in the official plans reviewed. As one lower-tier planner remarked:

> Generally the idea has been accepted by municipalities, by staff and politicians, but there may be some resistance from neighbourhoods... They are concerned about the urban design impact. They don't want massive towers, so we have to be sensitive to urban design and make sure the intensified corridors integrate well with the community.

I noted above that Burlington appeared to have the most assertive planning policies with respect to nodes and corridors: its policies were very well-articulated, including density targets and a wide range of implementing mechanisms such as holding bylaws, bonusing provisions, and reduced parking requirements. This might be explained by the fact that Burlington has undergone an extensive public participation process that has increased tolerance for the idea among both residents and councillors (Pianosi, 1991). As one city planner expressed it: "Council's attitude has changed over time. With our official plan we tried to demonstrated that intensification could happen without the detrimental aspects councillors were fearing, so we have higher-density mixed-use centres and corridors in our plan. Even five years ago, this would have been difficult to get through."

The nodes and corridors strategy is also attractive to suburban planners because of its flexibility in accommodating various levels of population growth, which often depend on factors beyond planning control. In Pickering, for instance, it is not clear whether or not the new community of Seaton will be built soon on provincial lands. If Seaton does not go ahead, or does so only very slowly, population pressures can be diverted to nodes and corridors in the southern planning area of the municipality, without threatening low-density residential areas. As one Pickering planner put it: "Our message is that it is the only way to keep existing neighbourhoods stable by directing it to areas that are flexible and can take growth if more than we expect show up."

9.6.1.3. Respects Existing Development Trends

The concept of an urban structure based on nodes and corridors was not, of course, drawn out of "thin air": rather, it was based on a system that the OGTA report acknowledged was already largely in place.[6] In fact, most of the nodes that are identified in municipal plans correspond to existing centres or those that are currently emerging as a result of transportation improvements (such as the building of Highway 407).[7] The already existing nodes are of two types: those based on the hamlets and city centres that characterized the older urban form of the GTA before the tide of suburbanization swept around them, and those nodes that have emerged as part of the process of suburbanization. In York Region, for example, centres of the

first kind include historic village centres like Unionville and Klienburg, and examples of the second kind are the Highway 7-Weston Road area of Vaughan or the Davis Drive-Highway 9 area of Newmarket.

Nor is the nodes and corridors concept new to official planning in suburban regions of the GTA. Indeed, most earlier official plans contained policies on nodal concentration of development.[8] Current plans differ from earlier plans in the degree of detail offered in describing the size, density and composition of the areas concerned. Earlier plans contained urban structure components, but ideas were not as well developed, and they typically emphasized employment or commercial uses (such as shopping centres) over a mixture of such uses along with residential uses. The idea of corridors—i.e., transit-supportive, higher-density mixed-use areas—figured even less prominently in earlier plans than in the current generation, although higher-density residential uses were commonly directed towards arterial roads.

Thus, rather than interpreting the close correspondence in nodal numbers and locations between upper- and lower-tier plans as evidence of municipal compliance with a provincially-initiated and endorsed urban structure vision, it may be more accurate to interpret upper-tier plans as aggregations of designations that already existed at the lower-tier level and to see the site-specific policies in lower-tier plans as the fleshing out of pre-existing planning policies.[9] Provincial intervention has provided valuable assistance in stimulating region-wide discussion about the nature and definition of nodes and corridors, in providing a GTA-wide planning context for the designation of new nodes and corridors in official plans, and for making the urban structure notion a planning concept to which attention would be paid in official plan approvals. It was also helped refine the discussion of nodes and corridors by providing a coherent (if somewhat vague) image of mixed-use, pedestrian friendly, and urbane places rather than the uni-dimensional commercial images usually assumed in earlier municipal planning documents. Nonetheless, it is clear that the urban structure policies that have been adopted in this generation of official plans in the focus municipalities of the GTA were building, for the most part, on existing development and planning trends emanating from the municipal level.

9.6.1.4. Responds to Local Growth Pressures

The nodes and corridors strategy provides a comprehensive strategy for responding to current growth pressures being applied by developers through applications for rezonings. A number of factors appear to be at work here:

- Developers are responding to land value changes as communities mature and higher intensity development areas are suggested along arterials and at major intersections.

- Arterials are prime locations for redevelopment in suburban areas because of the prevalence of larger lots, such as car dealerships, gas stations, single ownership retail plazas, and parking lots. Ironically, the car-dominated urban pattern in this case makes land assembly for higher intensity use unnecessary or uncomplicated if necessary.
- Many of the applications that have been put forward in the last five years were from property owners that had approvals for commercial development. Compared to the residential real estate market, the commercial market was in total collapse, therefore developers applied to the municipality for rezoning to residential use along these corridors. Thus, the increased attention in official plans to mixed-use development is responding to this trend.

The uncoordinated nature of these pressures presented several problems to planners: conflict arose over specific development proposals that could not be justified on any policy basis, the concentration of assisted housing in particular areas generated serious opposition to new development, and design issues arose as growth produced a mish-mash of urban places that were poorly integrated with the existing built form. Under these conditions, many planners felt that a planning framework was necessary in order to guide development more constructively. Official plan policies are meant to help resolve problems in this "developer-led" intensification process. Problems that planning policies address are centred on design issues and integration with the low-density neighbourhoods adjacent to the intensified nodes and corridors (see below).

As adopted in official plans, the nodes and corridors concept may also be attractive to municipalities because it can help justify yielding to expansionary pressures in greenfield areas. The OGTA acknowledged that some nodes might occur on greenfield sites, but were firm in insisting that all nodes should be located within the current urban envelope. Clearly, the report would not have endorsed extending the envelope in order to incorporate new nodal centres.[10] In the municipal plans reviewed here, however, some of the proposed nodes across the region are in fact in newly designated areas. In some cases, private landowners have been the motive force behind the designation of new lands as a regional or sub-regional node. As a planner from Pickering explained when asked why a "regional node" was situated in an official plan expansion area:

> When the region did their regional planning exercise in 1993 they wanted a node there, which reflected private landowner interest in getting some development going... So we expanded the little triangle that appeared on the regional plan and got funding from the land owner group for a planning study.

9.6.2. Challenge Provincial Policy Framework When it:

9.6.2.1. Threatens Municipal Discretion

As I noted in previous chapters, the desire to preserve municipal autonomy underlies many official planning decisions. In general, suburban municipalities have avoided comittment to specific intensification targets, especially at the lower tier. This pattern is confirmed here by the near total absence of employment and housing targets set in official plans for centres or corridors. This is in spite of the clear recommendation from the OGTA reports and provincial comments on official plans that such targets would be appropriate.

The findings also indicate that, with some exceptions, implementing mechanisms are weakly represented in the lower-tier official plans where we would expect to find them. This could represent a simple lack of experience with how to implement an emerging concept, or it may be interpreted as a desire to avoid making firm commitments to implementing a built form that has not yet been tested in practice.

9.6.2.2. Conflicts with Existing Technical Standards and Practices

It is important to keep in mind that the planning policies reviewed above are only one component of a larger planning system that has helped to give rise to the existing suburban fabric. Transforming that fabric—even with the help of market forces—will require substantial changes to the planning system that go beyond official planning policies. Most importantly are the design issues: the width of streets, of sidewalks, the distance between intersections and so on are crucial to creating the more "urbane", pedestrian-friendly built environments envisioned in the plans. Such environments may be "built-in" to nodes designated in the historic villages of the region, but achieving urbane built forms in newer areas may be a serious barrier to realizing the nodal concept.[11]

One does not have to look far to see how existing practices are out of step with those required to build successful nodes and corridors. For instance, some planners interviewed suggested that the dual use of suburban corridors as emerging intensification zones and as traditional conduits for traffic movement could pose conflicts in realizing the concept. A policy in Whitby's official plan, for instance, states that: "Arterial roads shall be designed primarily to facilitate traffic movements between the major landuse activities in the Town and Region." In maintaining the traffic-carrying function of arterial roads, the plan requires that "frontage, land use, entrances, exits and curb use shall be controlled" and that "[i]n existing built-up areas, remedial approaches to minimize the number of intersections with arterial roads shall be investigated" (Town of Whitby, 1994: 48). This expresses the standard suburban model with arterial roads adapted to move maximum traffic and to minimize interference from adjacent land uses, but fundamentally violates the main street character that

is being sought in the new urban vision for the suburbs. As one local planner said: "our transportation people won't allow you to have access to arterials because they want to move large volumes of traffic quickly while we are trying to get commercial development along the street, so we are at odds."

The nodes and corridors concept also implies overcoming other features of suburban planning. One of the common characteristics of the nodes and corridor vision being expressed in municipal official plans is their mix of uses: residential, retail, office, recreational, institutional and cultural activities finely grained to promote walking and transit use. Because of the suburban predilection for segregated development patterns and high-density uses surrounded by open space, experience with planning and controlling the development of finely-grained, mixed-use areas has been relatively shallow.[12]

9.6.3. Uncertain Role of Upper-tier Municipalities

Because regional planning authorities do not actually control the detailed aspects of land uses such as density and mix of uses, the planning implementation of the nodes and corridors concept must take place through lower-tier plans. At the same time, urban structure is an upper-tier responsibility and one can readily appreciate that a hierarchy of interacting nodes via a system of linked corridors stretching across the GTA could hardly be the outcome of uncoordinated lower-tier planning. Thus, the concept of an urban structure based on nodes and corridors necessarily involves the interaction of upper- and lower-tier governments. Given this situation, we would expect the nature of that interaction to be affected by the ambivalent role of upper-tier municipalities as they take on more pro-active planning roles in the GTA while still remaining politically handicapped by the nature of council representation.

The conflict between upper- and lower-tier municipalities over jurisdictional responsibility helps to explain some important features of the upper-tier plans. Comments from lower-tier municipalities on upper-tier plans showed a concern over the intensification implications of the nodes and corridors concept. In particular, lower-tier municipalities were concerned that this policy direction might entail the intensification of existing neighbourhoods. But as Halton Region responded: "Nodal developments are encouraged mainly in the greenfield type of development or in redevelopment of a large scale. It is not our intent to apply this concept to existing neighbourhoods." This helps to explain why so many nodal areas are outside the existing urban envelope, a feature that clearly violates the OGTA working group assumptions.

Most upper-tier plans (with the exception of Durham) identified only one nodal level instead of a hierarchy of levels. In two regions, York and Peel, the number of nodes designated in the upper-tier plan closely corresponded to the number of nodes suggested by the OGTA

and in these cases, lower level nodes were clearly left to local plans. This is an obvious way to minimize the potential for overlap and conflict between the two jurisdictional levels: regional nodes with regional significance designated in upper-tier plans and local nodes with local significance left for designation in lower-tier plans. In Halton and Durham regions, the number of nodes suggested by the upper-tier plan far exceeds the number proposed in the OGTA document. If we assume that some of these nodes are actually local rather than regional in significance, this may represent a strategy to minimize intrusion into lower-tier planning by avoiding the designation of explicitly "local" nodes, while fulfilling a regional planning role. In the case of Durham, two nodal levels are designated in the upper-tier plan, but second order nodes were only shown if they had been already designated in lower-tier plans as sub-central areas.

It may also shed some light on why upper-tier plans failed to provide adequate determinations of the spatial, use and density attributes of the nodes and corridors designated in their plans. Given that the nodes and corridors strategy is a key element in the accommodation of new population in the region, its basic definition such as land area, density or intensification targets, the required mix of employment versus residential are properly in the sphere of the upper-tier according to the provincial policy framework. In fact, however, those plans that attempted to provide more detailed policy direction to lower-tier municipalities, i.e., Durham, York, and Halton, were objected to by lower-tier municipalities that felt their jurisdiction to determine land use was being violated. For instance, in York Region, the Town of Richmond Hill asked the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to refer these parts of the regional plan, which resulted in the following modification to the plan: "That area municipalities shall have the primary responsibility for the preparation of plans for these regional centres, in cooperation with the Region." The town also insisted that regional plan policies governing corridors be less prescriptive and that lower-tier secondary plans be the primary planning instrument for this purpose. This resulted in a softening of the wording guiding corridor development in the York plan.

We found that the urban structure components of regional plans represented a strong first step forward to implementing the OGTA vision, with one exception: the Region of Peel. Given the tension that has existed and apparently still does exist about the appropriate role of regional land-use planning in that region—and especially the reluctance of the city of Mississauga to accept a strong regional role—this result may not be that surprising. Interestingly, Mississauga's official plan displayed strong urban structure components, perhaps trying to demonstrate that upper-tier planning is not necessary for this purpose, while the City of Brampton's plan was the weakest of all the lower-tier plans in this respect, from which one might draw the opposite conclusion, i.e., that regional leadership is important.

York's plan was the most faithful to the GTA vision in terms of the number and location of nodes and the establishment of corridor designation along Highway 7. As York was one of the two regions that had not proceeded with an official plan until recently, one might expect this region to be more like Peel's in its diffident behaviour towards its area municipalities. The fact that this is not the case may reflect the influence of individual personalities on the planning outcome. The new official plan in York Region was the responsibility of John Livey, the new planning commissioner for the Region. Prior to his appointment to York, he was responsible for Metropolitan Toronto's strongly intensification-oriented official plan and before that he had been a provincial planner. Thus, Livey brought with him to York a strong vision of the GTA as a regional city, a belief in land-efficient development, and perhaps a more urbane vision of York Region than another planning director might possess. According to one well-placed interviewee, "he boxed the York council into a corner on this and they are not happy with him." This would imply that the relatively strong urban structure vision contained in the York Regional plan was put in place, not because of the political direction of council but in spite of it.

9.7. Implications for Implementation

What are the implications of the choice of an intensification strategy based on the nodes and corridors concept and the approach being taken to its implementation through planning activities described above?

The fact that upper-tier plans do not describe or designate the full hierarchy of the urban system is understandable given the separation of mandates and the sensitivity of lower-tier municipalities to regional intrusion. However, leaving the designation of lower level nodes and virtually the whole system of corridors to local plans does somewhat defeat the purpose of regional structure planning. It prevents a full integration of service and transportation planning and undermines the upper-tier mandate to manage growth on a regional basis.

Obviously, one of the key determinants of the intensification potential of a centres and corridors strategy is whether or not a demand will exist for housing in those locations. However, no planning or market studies have come to light in this research that would help determine whether there exists or is likely to exist a market for residential units in centres and corridors. Some planners interviewed questioned whether this would be the case. Most of the housing being contemplated for nodes (and less so for corridors) is of the high-density type, for which more land is already zoned than needed to meet current demands. Similar doubts could be raised about the demand for office space. Demand is currently depressed throughout the region, and some planners interviewed questioned whether it was wise to base

development policies on greater concentration of office employment when information technologies are reducing demand for office space and making such concentrations less necessary.

Finally, developers appear to be reluctant to undertake mixed-use projects: they tend to specialize in either residential or commercial projects and find the cross-over difficult. Financial institutions may also be less likely to provide capital for mixed-use projects because of the lack of track record and the competition retail space on mainstreets would face with large scale "big box" retail on the suburban fringe or with regional shopping centres. Zoning and building codes—typically based on the idea that uses should be separated—present a further challenge to mixed-use projects. That the nodes and corridors notion fits the municipal agenda for a variety of political and institutional reasons may explain why it has been embraced with little evidence that there would be a market for housing, office and retail space in these locations.

The Ontario government has never endorsed the OGTA urban form concept at the cabinet level. The nodes and corridors structure was to be made official provincial policy through the mechanism of a GTA policy statement under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, a policy statement that went through a series of drafts but never achieved official status. If this reduces the willingness of line departments to support the urban structure concept in their policy and spending decisions, it could have serious implications for the implementation of the vision. Most importantly, given the very close association between land-use and transit facilities implied by the concept, whether or not the urban structure that is emerging "on paper" can be implemented will depend on the Ministry of Transportation's adherence to it in its decision making. According to one official at the OGTA, however, "the provincial government has failed to make the crucial infrastructure decisions that need to be made to implement the vision."[13]

The absence of capital funding commitments to improve transit services to support the regional structure plan may be undermining faith among municipalities in the region that the vision can ever be realized. As one upper-tier municipal planner said:

> It will require the presence of higher order transportation facilities before you get the intensification the province wants to see. It will take LRT or subways [to support the nodes]. Even if you make the massive investments as they did in Metropolitan Toronto with the subway system, it still takes an enormous effort to make it happen on the ground. The province wants to see this urban structure with higher densities, but I don't see them investing in the transportation infrastructure to support it.

Without confidence in the viability of the concept, planners will continue to approve development based on the existing road system: as one lower-tier planner said, "there is no

use in trying to develop individual sites at higher densities to support transit if it's going to overtax the road system and transit never comes. It's a chicken and egg thing."

9.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, I tracked the translation of the urban structure objectives implied by the Transit-Supportive Guidelines and the specific urban structure vision of the OGTA into official plan policies at the municipal level. We have seen how the upper-tier plans were generally consistent with the provincial parameters in terms of the general description of mixed-use nodes as transit-supportive and accessible, higher-density, and so on. However, I have also noted inconsistencies or signs of fragmentation in the GTA-wide structure implied in the plans: no widely-applied standards of density or size or mix of uses; no clear hierarchy of nodes across the GTA; and no continuous GTA-wide corridor network. The surfeit of nodes compared to the OGTA concept has also been noted. Correspondence between upper- and lower-tier plans is relatively high, although there is considerable tension between the two levels of municipal government over the appropriate role of upper-tier plans in defining the urban structure.

To some extent, the emergence of a centres and corridors strategy as a principal focus of intensification efforts has displaced the small-scale, neighbourhood intensification strategy advocated throughout the 1980s by the Ministry of Housing. In fact, it is clearly conceived of and promoted by municipalities on the grounds that it makes the intensification of existing neighbourhoods unnecessary. In this context, the nodes and corridors strategy can be seen as a defensive move to preserve the unique features of the suburb while responding to "domestic" intensification pressures and the provincial intensification objectives. At the same time, the nodes and corridors concept represents a maturation of the suburbs in terms the succession of land uses that would be expected to occur as urbanization proceeds. Thus, a degree of urbanity is achieved without violating the nature of the suburb.

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the nodes and corridor concept was embraced by municipalities in the region because it was an ambiguous concept that could serve as a vehicle for municipal growth aspirations, respond to domestic intensification pressures, and help meet provincial intensification objectives. Thus, municipalities have clearly co-opted the provincial policy objectives by assimilating the urban structure concept to its own needs. The ambiguity of the concept is the key to this function: if the OGTA working group had arrived at a more specific, detailed and focus conception, with greater emphasis on describing the hierarchy of corridors, and placed limits on the number of nodes that could reasonably be expected to survive over the longer term in the region, then the concept would have had more power to direct municipal planning. But, of course, this ambiguity or vagueness

in the concept itself was a result of municipal intransigence in the Urban Form Working Group, as we saw in Chapter 4.

Nonetheless, from a planning point of view, the nodes and corridors concept is clearly the most promising intensification strategy in the GTA. As an idea, it is endorsed by all three levels of government, is reflected to a certain extent in the municipal plans in both upper- and lower-tier jurisdictions, and is being incorporated into more detailed planning documents, such as secondary plans and urban design guidelines. Its success as an intensification strategy for the region will depend to a large extent on the ability of planning agencies to further define its key features, and to marshal the public and private resources that are needed for its realization.[14]

Endnotes

[1] As a background report to its official plan, Peel Region had commissioned a 1994 study on transit-supportive urban structure by the Toronto firm of Berridge Lewinburg Greenberg, entitled *The Flexible Region*. Ironically, the study won major awards but was more or less ignored in Peel's official plan. Peel's failure to incorporate the OGTA vision may be linked to its decision not to participate on the OGTA Urban Form Working Group: as mentioned in Chapter 5, it was the only upper-tier municipality in the region not to assign an official to the deliberations.
However, Peel council rejected the report's recommendations and decided to leave the details of the urban structure up to a consultation process involving upper- and local-tier officials.

[2] The criteria appearing in the tables are drawn from: the OGTA report, requirements of upper-tier plans, and recommendations found in ministry comments on the official plans.

[3] For instance, a node at Highway 401 and Highway 10 was designated by the Mississauga plan, as was a node at Erin Mills.

[4] The interpretations presented here are based on interviews with planners in the Plans Administration Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs; upper-tier, and lower-tier municipalities.

[5] For instance, in Ajax' comments on Whitby's official plan, the former municipality complained that Whitby had designated too many nodes, in violation of the regional official plan. Ajax was concerned that Whitby would draw retail spending and employment away

[6] According to the report, the challenge was to complete missing linkages and nodes.

[7] A number of studies have examined suburban centres in the GTA from an employment/commercial structure point of view, including Matthew (1993) and the Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity (1996).

[8] In his 1991 study of the GTA, Relph found that earlier versions of official plans in Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, and Pickering had designated "suburban downtowns".

[9] This would agree with the interpretation Frisken (1990) has placed on urban structure planning in Metropolitan Toronto. The 1981 plan for Metro was based on urban structure concept very much like the one being proposed for the GTA by the Urban Form Working Group. Frisken pointed out that Metro's plan merely incorporated designations for suburban sub-centre development that had already appeared in the official plans of the area municipalities concerned. She argued that Metro's suburban municipalities (especially Scarborough and North York) were eager to balance their assessment bases with more employment growth, to attract higher order services and amenities for their own populations, and to develop unique urban identities, distinct from that of Toronto.

[10] According to a former provincial official at the OGTA, this represented a hard-won battle against municipal desire to use the nodal concept as a way to justify the expansion of urban envelopes.

[11] Even the sub-centres in the "suburban" municipalities of Metropolitan Toronto have had difficulty achieving more urbane built environments. Greenberg and Maguire (1988: 121) have detected subtle improvements on the ground in the designated subcentres, but conclude that

many challenges remain in order to create pedestrian-friendly environments, i.e., "creating smaller blocks, more public edges, more alternatives for traffic flows, and walkable sidewalks." Other observers are less charitable in their assessments:

> Most of these long planned nodes don't even exist. Etobicoke has had one on the books for years. The York City Centre is nothing more than a billboard on the edge of a grassy field.... That leaves Scarborough. I've been there a dozen times but I still don't know where the Scarborough Civic Centre is. But I always know I'm close when I come across loopy streets with names like Corporate Drive. You just follow one of these, squiggling aimlessly through parking lots and past loading docks until you find some dingy back-door entrance to The Bay. Then you beat a crooked path to the front door of City Hall. For all its faults, the North York downtown is Parisian in comparison (*Globe and Mail*, February 1, 1994: A12).

In the suburban areas outside Metro Toronto, Relph (1990) has found similar problems: he notes that the Bramalea City Centre in Brampton is little more than a collection of offices and high-rise apartments around a regional shopping mall.

[12] As Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg (1992: 32) point out: "There is a standard approach to zoning and official plans, designs for housing and for the lotting of plans of subdivision, for road widths and the placement of services and utilities, etc. These are all linked to consistently support the status quo and are very difficult to tinker with..."

[13] To date, it appears as though the major funding commitments of the government in supporting the transportation aspect of the vision has been in the form of study funding. The OGTA and the Ministry of Transportation have helped fund a number of transit studies that served as background documents to the regional official planning process, and a major study of the Highway 7 corridor is also underway.

[14] The results in this chapter agree generally with those found in a recent study of the nodal concept in the GTA by Burke (1996). He concluded that "a lack of precision and/or consistency in the definition of the nodal concept at the provincial level can contribute to differing interpretations of the concept, undermining its usefulness as a framework for regional planning" (ii).

Part IV: Conclusions and Recommendations

10. Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Discussion

In this concluding chapter, I broaden the analysis from the detailed findings concerning the provincial intensification policy framework and its implementation in official plans. I do this by summarizing the findings and linking them to the research questions posed in Chapter 2, and to the wider literature on implementation problems, regional planning, growth management, and intensification. I close the chapter by reflecting on some of the theoretical issues raised in Chapter 2 that lay behind the research questions. This provides a link with the recommendations that follow in Chapter 11.

10.1. Summary of the Provincial Policy Framework

One of the early conclusions reached from the preliminary research done in the Toronto area was that policies to promote intensification were being driven by the provincial government. Nothing has come to light to alter this conclusion in the course of the more detailed research. The research has shown that intensification policy objectives have been pursued by a number of ministries that have undertaken a wide variety of spending programs and policy initiatives for a host of different reasons and that they have met with widely varying degrees of success. Here I summarize the main thread in the development of the province's intensification policy framework.

In the 1960s and 1970s, regional growth management was pursued by the provincial government as an element of its regional economic development program. This was an ambitious attempt to shape overall growth patterns on a long-term basis throughout an area considerably larger than the currently defined Greater Toronto Area. The principal goal was to preserve farmland, prevent formless development spreading over the entire region, and to distribute growth into decentralized nodes that could be efficiently supported by transportation and other provincial services.

Ultimately, this policy unravelled with little success in incorporating it into municipal plans. The main upshot of this exercise was the lessons given to the provincial government: i.e., that regional growth management could not be conducted without the consent of local governments and that it must be supported by concerted provincial interventions, especially in terms of infrastructure investment.

Throughout the 1980s, the Ministry of Housing was the main provincial ministry involved in housing intensification policy. In the first half of the decade, intensification policy was focused on mature areas, largely central city locations, where revitalization was seen as an alternative to the discredited urban renewal programs in increasing housing supply. In the

second half of the decade, intensification was adopted as part of the provincial government's policy response to a mounting crisis in the affordability of housing in major metropolitan areas of the province and as an alternative to spending on social housing. This broadened the geographic purview of intensification to include suburban locations.

When suburban municipalities were found to be resistant to funding programs that promoted residential intensification, the province introduced more authoritative measures, namely the 1989 Housing Policy Statement, which required municipalities to address issues related to the supply of land, housing affordability, intensification, and monitoring. When suburban municipalities resisted the Housing Policy Statement, the province took the extreme measure of introducing legislation overriding municipal powers on zoning for basement apartments.

Meanwhile, the issue of intensification had become broader in nature and was being associated with the need to manage growth in order to reduce environmental and fiscal impacts. As one report on the topic noted:

> the intensification concept has evolved to encompass a much broader set of processes and actions needed to promote an urban form which is compact, has higher population and employment densities, fosters the efficient use of land and infrastructure, achieves a greater mix of uses, and creates certain efficiencies between uses. In short, the debate over intensification has grown into a critical inquiry into the impacts of our current city-building practices and a search for new approaches to urban development (*Intensification Report*, Jan-Feb, 1994: 1).

A weak form of growth management was already in place as a result of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Food Land Guidelines, which required that municipalities justify their plans to expand onto agricultural land. In the latter 1980s, new environmental policies were elaborated by the Ministry of Natural Resources that restricted growth in environmentally sensitive and resource areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, and aggregate extraction areas. As the issue of development patterns gained momentum at the end of the 1980s as a result of heightening fiscal and environmental concerns associated with sprawl, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs began to adopt the issue as part of its own mandate. This placed growth management in a wider context: rather than protecting certain unique aspects of the landscape around growing cities, a more systematic approach was adopted that focussed on population and housing needs projections, land budgeting, servicing and phasing of development, intensification goals and minimum development densities. This policy interest was supported by the Growth and Settlement Guidelines, the joint sponsorship of the Transit-Supportive Guidelines (with the Ministry of Transportation), the direction taken by the Sewell Commission to curb urban sprawl, culminating in the reforms to the planning system in March

of 1995. These initiatives were undertaken on a province-wide basis and were designed to influence planning decisions at the level of the individual municipality.

In the Toronto regions, where the metropolitan area straddles municipal boundaries, the province has engaged in cross-boundary or regional planning activities. The OGTA (at different times a branch of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy or the Ministry of Municipal Affairs) set up a series of working committees involving close coordination with municipal officials and developed a more detailed vision for managing growth in the region. The two principal policy products that emerged from these exercises were the regional population allocations and the urban form vision based on a system of nodes and corridors. These were basic building blocks in province's attempt to establish a growth management framework for the region: it would allow better long-range planning for the region as a whole and help to direct growth into the already settled portions of the region, especially Metropolitan Toronto.

Taken together, these policies make up the three elements of the province's intensification policy framework for the GTA: housing supply policies, growth management policies, and urban structure policies. The province had at its disposal a wide array of instruments to implement this framework, including spending decisions for its assisted housing programs, infrastructure spending, and control over development projects on provincially-owned land, such as Seaton and Cornell. However, the principal instrument used by the province was its approval and review responsibility for municipal planing policies and that has been the focus of the present research. Thus, the key actors in regional planning and intensification in the GTA are the appointed officials: i.e., those in the OGTA, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs approval branch and other commenting agencies such as Housing, and planners from upper- and lower-tier municipalities that participated in the various working groups.

I turn now to a review of the accomplishments of the provincial intensification policy framework in terms of municipal official planning in the GTA.

10.2. Municipal Implementation of the Provincial Policy Framework

The analysis presented in Chapters 7 to 9 showed that some provincial policy objectives were realized at the level of municipal planning while others were ignored or adapted to local conditions. Essentially, municipal plans translated the provincial policy framework into three basic land-use planning strategies, what may be called "expansion management", "site specific intensification", and "nodal development".

10.2.1. Expansion Management

There is no doubt that the planning process involved in suburban development has undergone significant changes as a result of the provincial policy framework. Plans are now made with transit in mind, more thought is given to servicing issues before allowing growth, the amount of affordable housing in a plan or a project is considered before approval is given, and it is generally thought that developing areas should be completed before allowing growth in expansion areas.

This does not mean that the suburbs as we knew them are no more. There is no indication in municipal planning policies that a radical change to the fabric of new development in suburban areas is in the wings. As a senior policy maker at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs said, "people think that if our policies are realized there will be no more sprawling suburbs, but that's not true and the policies don't say that: they leave room for sprawling suburbs, but there's an attempt to shape it..."

No upper-tier or lower-tier official plan reviewed for this research committed the municipality to higher densities than were conventionally the case. In some upper-tier plans and supporting documents, higher average densities are proposed as a basis for planning new subdivisions, but these are "planning assumptions" that have no legal status and are only marginally above recent density trends. Less land has been designated for urban expansion than would otherwise have been the case without provincial intervention, although gains in this respect were much lower than hoped for by provincial planners.[1] This is not to deny that there has been a move towards higher-density development in some new subdivisions, with more townhouses and smaller detached lots. But there is no indication that this trend can be maintained by current planning policies if and when market conditions change to favour lower-density housing once again.

Expansion management is the orderly addition of new communities to the existing urban fabric, such that fiscal and environmental costs are minimized. This involves the protection of specific environmental features, such as wetlands, avoidance of the best farmland where possible, the phasing of services to correspond with growth requirements in order to minimize environmental impacts and to maintain community-wide service levels (such as traffic volumes on roads). I have noted, however, that this form of growth management does not depend on achieving dramatically higher densities in greenfield development or substantial intensification of mature-areas. In fact, it could be argued that expansion management is the converse of intensification in two senses: allowing expansion relieves growth pressures and the need for intensification, and if effectively carried out, expansion management can reduce externalities and thus the resistance to greenfield growth among taxpayers and existing residents.

The observation made at the municipal level—that expansion management is strongly supported by official planning policy whereas intensification and higher-density development are not—could be used to describe policy outcomes at the GTA-wide level as well. The analysis presented in Chapter 5 showed that the ambitiousness of the population allocation goals was gradually reduced as the OGTA consultations proceeded from 1989 to 1993.[2] We saw that the province was not able to achieve full compliance to a unilaterally declared Metro-centred "aggressive intensification" scenario, but that all upper-tier plans respected the less aggressive targets contained in the Reference Scenario, based on projections from current development trends.

One of the key accomplishments of the provincial policy framework is the land budget and firm urban boundaries imposed on upper-tier municipalities. These boundaries are accompanied by strict conditions for their revision, conditions that have convinced upper-tier planners that the province will not approve official plan amendments for boundary extensions for 10 to 20 years. This served as a powerful incentive for municipal planners to change planning practices in order to "do more with less land." However, both provincial and municipal planners in the region seem to agree that the GTA population projections made by Hemson in 1993 are not likely to be fulfilled given the economic problems being encountered in the region. This may reduce the incentive to plan for compact growth because the land budget remains the same regardless of the actual population growth. Thus, the population targets and land budgets adopted by the upper-tier municipalities will probably not serve to reduce suburban growth relative to Metropolitan Toronto or to increase development densities substantially beyond what the market would have independently produced. On the positive side, they have served as the basis for a discussion about land and servicing requirements to support the orderly expansion of suburban areas.

10.2.2. Site-Specific Intensification

The intensification policies in the provincial Housing Policy Statement were primarily directed toward overcoming the municipal reluctance to allow "small scale intensification" within existing neighbourhoods. As described in Chapter 4, this strategy was adopted as a way of valorizing provincial infrastructure investments, reducing the demand for social housing, and replacing the urban renewal strategy that had proved to be so politically explosive in the preceding period. Intensification opportunities were to be diffused throughout the urban fabric, constrained only by servicing and demand issues.

All of the official plans reviewed for this research have paid lip-service to provincial intensification policies in the sense that the language of intensification is found in the documents. But there are strong reasons to conclude that this language is designed less to

embrace and implement the provincial policy objectives and more to minimally satisfy provincial demands while maintaining municipal options to control intensification and allow it only where "appropriate". A lack of details on where intensification will be permitted, onerous conditions placed on intensification approvals, few areas redesignated for higher-density development, vague language, and a lack of implementation mechanisms were encountered in most municipal plans.[3]

Most municipalities are explicitly committed to preserving existing neighbourhoods against intensification pressures being exerted by private developers in mature areas, or to allowing only incremental increases in density under tightly controlled conditions. Provincial planners have accepted the political reality that they cannot force intensification of existing neighbourhoods: rather, they were relying on the apartments in houses legislation to force municipalities to allow at least one form of relatively unobtrusive intensification within neighbourhoods.[4]

Thus, site-specific intensification is the second major outcome of the interaction between the provincial policy framework and municipal official planning activity. This is the deflection of intensification pressures—whether emanating from provincial or upper-tier municipal policies, or from economic and demographic changes—to specific areas where the local benefits of intensification can be realized while minimizing the disadvantages. Typically, intensification pressures have been directed away from existing neighbourhoods and onto arterial streets and local centres, where transit and other services are readily available, or towards the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

10.2.3. Diffuse Nodal Development

There is no doubt that the provincial initiative to encourage the development of a regional structure has had an impact on municipal plans in the GTA. The OGTA provided the concept with its planning legitimacy and helped build consensus that this was the best strategy available to create transit-supportive land uses in suburban municipalities, accommodate new growth in a way the minimized the need to expand onto greenfield sites, and provide housing in close proximity to employment, and other uses for those residents who were less mobile than the conventional suburban dweller. The official plan team at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has reinforced this message and helped carry it through to the upper-tier planning level through its review and approval process.

The result has been the emergence of a GTA-wide planning movement that reveals an emerging urban structure and some preliminary steps towards the integration of land-use planning and transportation planning. We should not, however, be sanguine about this. It is also clear from the planning documents reviewed that urban structure as it is currently

expressed in those plans is incomplete and in some sense incoherent. The number of regional nodes designated in upper-tier plans probably exceeds the number that can be realistically supported by growth in the employment, retail and residential sectors. In some regions, there is no clear sense of hierarchy among the nodes, which, from a transit point of view, defeats the purpose of establishing them. Nodes are often designated in greenfield areas rather than in already-built up areas. No plan proposed to establish a node in an existing lower-density mature area. Corridors are poorly articulated in municipal plans. It has also to be noted that official plans and interviews with municipal planners showed very few pro-active measures that would ensure or even encourage the development of the designated nodes and corridors.

The three major strategies described here are linked in a number of ways. For instance, by proposing nodal development in greenfield areas, municipalities can claim to be promoting compact development while justifying the need to expand the urban area. By limiting intensification opportunities to specific sites, the intensification potential of the already built-up area is reduced and expansion on the urban fringe can be better justified. Finally, by expanding the urban fabric with a greater mix of housing and at slightly higher densities, the pressure to intensify mature areas is reduced.

10.2.4. Discussion

These general observations suggest that the provincial policy framework has been considerably reinterpreted or adapted to local conditions in its implementation via municipal official plans. One way of summarizing the findings of the previous six chapters would be to locate the provincial and municipal visions on a spectrum of potential outcomes. Downs (1994: 136-140) has proposed four "visions" of growth in metropolitan areas to classify the various approaches to growth management he has encountered in the US:

- unlimited low-density growth
- limited-spread, mixed-density growth
- new communities and green belts
- bounded high-density growth.

The conventional municipal approach—against which the province was reacting—is closest to Downs' first category of unlimited low-density growth. This approach is based mostly on automobile access, with a porous urban envelope beyond which property owners can reasonably expect to convert their land to urban uses in the short or long term. Local planning controls permit mostly low-density housing and limit the construction of new multi-family units. Affordable housing is supplied directly by senior governments or through the trickle-down market process, but are mostly confined to the central city or inner suburbs (i.e., Metropolitan Toronto).

In contrast, the provincial vision was based on a combination of the last two visions: a strongly enforced urban growth boundary within which most urban growth would occur at transit-supportive densities, but permitting new communities at higher densities separated by greenland systems (such as the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Rouge Park, and the Parkway Belt). In this view, municipalities are required to ensure housing opportunities for all income levels throughout the suburban fabric and to take concrete steps to see that the market responds to these opportunities.

The vision that is actually embodied in official plans of the region best resembles Downs' second category. The key features of this model is a firm urban boundary but incorporating more land for expansion than in the bounded high-density model, clusters of high-density housing surrounded by much larger areas of low-density housing, with a higher overall average than now prevail. Municipalities take steps to create affordable housing opportunities, but restrictions remain on the creation of multi-family units in existing residential areas and enforcement mechanisms are relatively weak.

This analysis suggests that policy change at the local level occurs incrementally, with provincial policy pressures as only one variable in local decision making about planning policies. Between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, the province increased the legal authority of its intensification policy framework, enhanced the administrative resources dedicated to realizing it (in the form of the OGTA and the GTA Official Plan Project at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs), and has taken the high ideological ground by exploiting the link between the compact city and sustainable development, but it has been unable to see its policy objectives fully achieved through the bargaining process that has come to characterize provincial-municipal relations in this policy field. In the next sections I return to the two research questions posed in Chapter 2: why do municipalities resist provincial intensification policies and how do they do so?

10.3. Assessing the Intensification Policy Process in the GTA

In the last section, I summarized the level of compliance of municipal plans with provincial policy objectives. In the sections that follow, I attempt to bring together the research findings with the analytical framework introduced in Chapter 2 in order to explain the outcomes. To do this, I will ask two intersecting questions: "why is the province unable to impose its will?" and "why do municipalities resist provincial policy initiatives?"

One way to approach this topic would be to assess the policy formulation and implementation process as described in Chapters 4-9 from the stand point of the literature on the conditions for successful policy implementation. In Chapter 2, 13 conditions were identified as relevant to the present research. I turn now to a discussion of how the current

intensification policy process as it has taken shape in the GTA deviates from these conditions. Factors undermining the effectiveness of the provincial policy framework will be considered before moving on to the factors undermining municipal ability or willingness to comply.

10.3.1. Factors Undermining Provincial Effectiveness

The policy literature suggests that compromises takes place when the policy formulator does not have the full authority, legitimacy or resources to enforce its will on the implementing body. For further insight into why the province was unable to see its intensification policies fully implemented by municipalities within the GTA, I turn to survey some factors undermining provincial effectiveness.

10.3.1.1. Theoretical Basis of Policy is Questionable

As Wildavsky observed, every policy implies a theory or causal relationship. "The question is never whether a theory is there (it always is)... A promise underlies policy: if the actors we recommend are undertaken, good (intended) consequences rather than bad (unintended) ones actually occur (Wildavsky, 1979). In the case at hand, the provincial intensification policy framework makes two major causal assumptions:

- that municipal planning policies can influence development patterns so as to increase densities, achieve a greater range of housing types, result in the intensification of existing areas, and affect population growth in the municipality
- that such changes would result in major benefits, including reduced land consumption, preservation of agricultural land on the urban fringe, more socially integrated neighbourhoods, fiscal savings, and so on.

Both of these assumptions can be challenged. With respect to the first challenge, some academics have wondered about the real impact of adopting planning policies, especially in the face of powerful growth machines. In the US, Gottdiener (1977) concluded that community plans had little power to alter development patterns, and in Canada, Fowler (1992) has doubted the efficacy of official plans given the power of municipal boards and courts to overturn local planning policies.

Another source of uncertainty about the efficacy of official plans is the diffusion of power within municipal bureaucracies. As Lang and Armour (1977: 43) have noted:

> The comprehensive planner is likely to see implementation as the carrying out of the provision of the Official Plan in order to achieve sound municipal decisions and an orderly, efficient, attractive community environment. The Official Plan is "implemented", according to this view, by public works, land acquisition and other direct municipal actions, and by controlling private development. The implementing departments may see it differently, however.

> The engineer's department, for example, may feel it is implementing its own plans for roads, sewers, water services. Even the chief administrator, in the best position to hold an overall view, is likely to see the Official Plan as but one instrument among others (e.g.,. the capital and operating budgets) for carrying out the Municipality's responsibilities.

But perhaps more important than the constraints on realizing official plans are the limitations arising from the "tractability" of the problem, i.e., sprawl. Theorists of policy implementation have pointed out that policies are less likely to be successfully implemented when behaviour changes required on the part of the target group are dramatic or when the target group is large and diffuse. In fact, both of these negative conditions are found with respect to intensification policies (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). As Filion has noted in his recent work on the transition from fordism to post-fordism (1995):

> Paradoxically, despite growing incongruity with the emerging economic environment, fordist models of development [favouring low-density growth] still dominate the urban scene. This ongoing ascendancy mirrors an enduring attachment on the part of a majority of economic interests and consumers to this form of development, which is tied to persisting domestic values and the consequent taste for single-family housing. The continued decentralization of metropolitan regions also plays a major role in this respect, for dispersed urbanization patterns make it difficult for individuals to break with a fordist life style revolving around the car. Once in place, the space-time relationship associated with fordist-type urbanization acquires a momentum of its own which persists under different society-wide socio-economic circumstances.

Likewise, municipal planners interviewed for the present research doubted whether official planning policies that were significantly out of step with "market realities" could have any impact on future development patterns. This issue will be discussed in detail in Section 10.3.2.3 below.

With respect to the second challenge, I have already reviewed some of they key debates over the actual impacts of more compact development in Chapter 2. Typically, those that favour strong provincial/state action support arguments showing the benefits of the compact city, while those more likely to rely on market actions to create efficient growth patterns favoured arguments that higher-density settlements would have few benefits but introduce greater social, environmental, and fiscal problems. Municipal planners interviewed for this research threw some doubt on the overriding importance of density considerations in achieving public objectives, such as the link between density and fiscal impacts. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 10.3.2.2 below.

10.3.1.2. Policy Instruments Inadequate

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979: 489) have suggested that unambiguous policy directives are a crucial condition of successful policy implementation: "Clear guidance from legislators allows

implementers to stay on track, and helps them resist forces that would try to deflect or change the policy as it is being implemented."

We have seen that the province's goal of removing planning barriers to the intensification of already built up areas was the most sensitive and difficult to satisfy among the region's municipalities. The main instruments in the province's policy arsenal for housing intensification was the 1989 Land Use Planning for Housing Policy Statement. In 1987, Eli Comay evaluated the various options for provincial intervention in local planning for housing intensification. He had this to say about the prospect of a Housing Policy Statement:

> a formal policy statement would probably do little more than indicate what municipalities would have to "have regard to" in dealing with the question. As they are now applied, Policy Statements deal with subjects (flood plans, mineral aggregate supplies, foodlands) where the matters in question are tangible, and for which the degree of "regard" is presumably capable of being measured, at least in theory. Similar statements regarding housing regulation would likely involve material of a more ephemeral nature, concerning which the degree of "regard" given would, in the end, be a matter of judgment rather than measurement. The mechanisms for securing actual compliance with such as statement are hard to envisage (Comay Planning Consultants Ltd., 1987: 12).

The research findings presented here confirm the perspicacity of this statement. In general, the Housing Policy Statement (and its successor in the comprehensive policy statements after the 1995 reforms to the planning system) has allowed for a wide degree of interpretation and has been difficult to enforce on reluctant municipalities. It has also been inadequate in a number of more specific ways:

- Although it set targets for the provision of affordable housing, and these were consistently met in municipal plans, it was unclear about how this target was to be provided: municipal-wide or site-by-site. This provided area municipalities with a latitude of interpretation that weakened its impact.
- It did not set targets for intensification, i.e., it did not suggest minimum densities or require that a certain percentage of new housing units be created in already built-up areas.
- It failed to operationally define key phrases such as the requirement that municipalities designate areas where there was a sufficient demand for housing units from intensification. This allowed municipalities to argue that demand for such units was insufficient and to transfer the onus to prove otherwise onto provincial officials.

10.3.1.3. Judicial Bodies not Necessarily Supportive or Neutral

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979) also included the need for neutral or supportive courts and administrative tribunals for successful policy implementation. In Ontario, the Ontario Municipal Board plays an important role in defining the relationship between provincial and municipal planning authority. Administratively part of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, it is

an arm's length tribunal that hears applications and appeals on planning matters, including zoning by-laws, subdivision plans, and official plans. On the one hand, it is required to take into account provincial policies; on the other hand, it respects accepted standards and practices in municipal land-use planning. In an account of its role in this respect, the Board wrote in a recent decision:

> The Board is not bound to follow [provincial policies]; however, the Board is required to have regard to them, in other words to consider them carefully in relation to the circumstances at hand, their objectives and to determine as a whole what they seek to protect. The Board is then to determine whether and how the matter before it is affected by and complies with such objectives and policies with the sense of responsible consistency in principle... The Board is directed by the legislation and the judicial authorities to give a fair hearing to all interested persons with relevant views to impart, to use its independent judgment on the merits of the proposal, and to see that planning decisions are made with regard to proper planning principles, while always bearing in mind and having regard for provincial policy and the fact that it is one of several factors that the Board is dealing with decision of a duly elected body exercising legitimate legislative authority (Ontario Municipal Board, 1991: 181).

In the period immediately following the announcement of the Housing Policy Statement, the OMB appears to have strongly supported provincial policy objectives, especially with respect to affordable housing. Not only did the Board adopt "fast-track" procedures to undercut municipal foot dragging on social housing projects, it also generally found in favour of affordable housing projects. Writing in 1992, one legal observer noted that:

> Most of the cases heard by the Board have involved assisted or affordable housing. In such cases, the Board typically weighs the need for affordable housing on one hand and considers planning concerns, such as compatibility and adverse impact, on the other hand. In general, the greater the affordable housing component, the less the Board will be concerned with compatibility. Where there is a very substantial assisted component, the Board may virtually ignore compatibility... (Kanter, 1992: 6).

The preferential bias of the OMB towards intensification—if it had continued—probably would have strengthened the hand of provincial planners in negotiating changes to municipal official plans. But by 1992, the OMB's approach seems to have shifted. A provincial official that had been involved in the OMB hearings since 1989 noted that:

> When we started we were the flavour of the month. We were getting people to think of housing as part of land-use planning: that was our hubris. Then the flavour of the month changed and everyone got interested in brownfield sites and the environment and making sure that everything was pristine. So we fell out of favour... with competing provincial interests. What could you build after stormwater management facilities, soil quality, public amenities, building height restrictions, and so on were provided for? Could you get any affordable units?... Some members [of the OMB] made it clear to proponents that they

> would be better off without Ministry of Housing representation there. OMB members would roll their eyes when we came in and say "here they come again.

This shift in the OMB's attitude towards provincial intensification policy objectives seems to have coincided with a decline in interest in intensification objectives at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and probably reflects the subsidence of concern with housing affordability across the province. The effect, however, was to limit the ambitiousness of Ministry of Housing staff in pushing for intensification policies in official plans, knowing that support would not be forthcoming from either Ministry of Municipal Affairs or the OMB.

The Board also hears cases on growth management issues such as the need for servicing, phasing of development, boundary extensions, and severances. Provincial planners report that with severances, the Board generally supported provincial policies and did not permit rural severances when growth management principles were at stake. With respect to boundary expansions, a review of OMB referrals flowing from the Durham official plan (the only regional plan surveyed for which most of the referrals had been resolved by the time of writing) shows that in virtually all cases where the property owner contested the proposed urban boundary, the OMB sided with the region to approve the plan as written. However, a provincial planner points out that in disputes between the province and municipalities, the story is quite different:

> We need more than population forecasts and average densities to justify our boundary recommendations when the upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities are there with the developer saying they want the expansion. We almost never win then and we have learned not to pursue those cases.

This considerably weakens the ability of the province to see its land budgeting process through to implementation in official plans.

Another implementation factor identified by Mazmanian and Sabatier is the level of access and influence that potential beneficiaries have to judicial proceedings to support implementation actions. This includes rules of standing and access to legal and other professional representation. In the absence of funding for intervenors acting in the public interest, the OMB appeal system will tend to work in favour of those interests that have access to more private financial resources, e.g., developers.[5] Although the Sewell Commission recommended that intervenor funding be provided to those acting in the public interest before the OMB, this provision was not incorporated into the planning reforms of March 1995.

10.3.1.4. Lack of Political Leadership

The term "fixer" is used in the policy implementation literature to refer to an influential political figure that has a strong personal interest in a policy and sees it through to

implementation, helping to solve problems as they arise (Morah, 1990). DeGrove (1992a) has identified the support of a key political figure (frequently, the state governor) as crucial to the development and implementation of growth management policies in US city-regions.

In Ontario, however, political support for growth management in the Toronto region has been spotty. Under John Robarts, Premier of the province from 1961-1971, political support was very strong. His ministers Charles MacNaughton (Treasury) and Darcy McKeough (Municipal Affairs) provided strong policy support for the Toronto-Centred Region concept. Political support for managing growth in the region faded after the electoral problems encountered by the Tories in the latter half of the 1970s, attributed in part to the creation of regional governments and the Design for Development program.

In the current round of growth management, politicians have been careful not to appear to be imposing regional solutions on local areas in the GTA. At the end of the 1980s, John Sweeney, Minister of Municipal Affairs in the Liberal government of David Peterson, set up the OGTA as a consultative mechanism with no clear regional planning mandate. As the NDP's environment minister from 1990 to 1993, Ruth Grier was responsible for the GTA and promoted a social justice program, but was careful not to move too far beyond the "emerging consensus" from the OGTA working groups. In fact, the closest the Toronto region has come to an intensification champion is in the person of Gardner Church, a career bureaucrat and former Deputy Minister for the GTA. Interviewees frequently identified him as a key figure in putting intensification on the political agenda in the region and newspaper analysis supports the view that he was instrumental in this regard in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1992, the deputy minister position at the OGTA was abolished and Church was seconded to a series of positions with much less influence on regional issues.

In terms of housing supply policies, Chaviva Hosek, Liberal Minister of Housing, championed the need for strong provincial policies to help create more affordable housing under the crisis conditions that prevailed in the province at the end of the 1980s. Under the NDP, affordability was less of a public concern, but housing supply was taken up as an environmental issue by the Sewell Commission. While the commission was preparing its report, the government seemed content to promote the issue by supporting housing advocacy groups such as the Inclusive Neighbourhoods Campaign, and funding the Canadian Urban Institute's *Intensification Report.*

The lack of a strong political champion for intensification either province-wide or within the GTA does not mean that the NDP government was not committed to intensification as a provincial objective: it does mean, however, that they were sensitive to the potential political problems that could emerge from a strong public stance on the issue. In

general, provincial politicians seemed content to allow non-elected officials and outside groups to promote the issue.

10.3.1.5. Non-Supportive Policies From Other Provincial Ministries

Mazmanian and Sabatier (1981) refer to the policies of other senior government departments as "tangential" to the main policy under study. In their opinion, tangential policies should be supportive of the policy under study in order to maximize the likelihood of its successful implementation.

As discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, the lack of coordination among provincial departments was blamed in part for the failure of the TCR concept in the 1970s. A review of the policy and spending activity of a variety of provincial institutions reveals that this remains a serious problem in realizing any regional and use vision for the GTA.[6] In 1991, Richardson et al. wrote:

> [U]rban growth is a demographic, social, economic and technological, as well as a physical, phenomenon, in important ways influenced by and impinging upon the policies and programs of, at least, the ministries of Municipal Affairs, Housing, Transportation, the Environment and Agriculture. But there is not a vestige of systematic research, agreed goals, coordinated policies, or unified strategy for urbanization in Ontario, nor (with the very limited exception on the OGTA) any mechanism for developing them (5).

Any number of provincial departments can be faulted from this point of view. For instance, one might expect that the provincial Ministry of the Environment and Energy would have had a strong hand in developing the provincial policy framework in favour of more compact communities. But it appears that this has not been the case. The ministry's primary involvement with growth on the urban fringe is from a sanitary servicing point of view. Low-density estate development in rural areas is based on septic systems that require ministry approvals under the *Environmental Protection Act*. The ministry's policies on this score are ambiguous. On the one hand, the ministry is becoming more aggressive in protecting ground water and preventing public health hazards by insisting on larger lots, which translates into lower-density rural settlement patterns. On the other hand, the ministry's policy is to favour applications for sanitary servicing that cluster new rural development onto smaller parcels of land in order to facilitate communal services. As for an outright prohibition on rural development, only the Niagara Escarpment has been made off-limits by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy. Otherwise, the ministry does not see itself in the role of discouraging rural residential development.

According to one ministry staff person: "Compact form is not a policy objective of the ministry. Its interest is through servicing issues, the efficient use of services, and concerns over public health where there are cumulative impacts on water resources." The energy, and

resource use implications of rural development are not considered in the ministry's approval practices. And in terms of suburban extensions to the already built up area, MOEE does not get involved. Justifying extensions to the built-up area is seen as the business of local government and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

In terms of intensification in already built up areas, other Ministry of the Environment and Energy policies are frequently cited as discouragements. Most significant are the Ministry's soil remediation standards in reducing the redevelopment potential of industrial lands in the GTA (Gardner Church & Associates, 1993), but other policies have more subtle impacts. For instance, the ministry has set standards for the minimum separation of residential and industrial uses, standards that don't take into account site-specific issues. This has the effect of segregating land uses and reducing the intensification potential of industrial lands. Storm water management policies may also be interfering with intensification efforts in the region: as standards are ratcheted upwards so is the amount of land needed to satisfy them (Metropolitan Toronto, 1996).

Transportation planning and investment in the region is caught in a mutually enforcing series of factors leading to low-density land use in suburban areas. On the one hand, as a 1989 report on transportation and land use in the GTA prepared for the Ministry of Transportation concluded, suburban municipalities were inflating the demand for highways and ignoring the operational requirements for effective local transit operation in their land-use decisions (Frisken and McAree, 1989). On the other hand, the Ministry of Transportation is known for developing major transportation plans with little concern for provincial land-use objectives in the region (O'Brien, 1991; Environmentalists Plan Transportation, 1995). Thus, the major decisions on settlement patterns are determined by a ministry with little strategic interest in land-use efficiency or urban form. For instance, a major highway project—the 407—is currently underway, paralleling the 401 to the north. According to the local development industry, the highway will open up vast areas for new residential development that would have otherwise remained in agricultural use (*Toronto Star*, July 29, 1996: A6). But, in an interview for this research, a senior policy advisor with the Ministry of Transportation claimed that the primary aim of the highway was to enhance the economic competitiveness of the region by speeding the movement of goods. He considered the fact that the 407 might influence the location decisions of residents as an inadvertent side effect.

In 1991, the OGTA created the Provincial-Municipal Working Group on Infrastructure to look at transportation needs for the region as a whole. The group reported in 1992, recommending that a regional transportation plan should link land-use and transportation investment along the following lines:

- identify a hierarchy of nodes and corridors based on public transit;

- maximize use of infrastructure and investments in land and buildings within nodes and corridors;
- channel highest densities of residential development and employment development to locations where high frequency transit is available;
- identify strategic transfer points as places to concentrate a range of multiple uses.

Two years later, however, the region still had no overall transportation plan linking land-use goals and infrastructure development.[7]

Neither have the province's agricultural land protection policies been particularly effective. Until the NDP reforms introduced in 1995, the province's main policy basis for resisting urban expansion onto farmland was the Food Land Guidelines. For the 17 years since its announcement in 1978, a coalition of farm groups and development interests had prevented the guidelines from becoming an official policy statement under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, reducing its planning impact. Consistent with the distinction made in this thesis between growth management and expansion management, a ministry official claimed:

> We don't want to see a lot of small severed lots, we want to see orderly expansion of urban areas, justified by the population forecast for the municipality... We recognize that growth has to occur.

The ministry's influence in preventing sprawl seems to be particularly circumscribed in rapidly urbanizing areas, such as the suburban municipalities around Metropolitan Toronto in the GTA. According to a ministry official recent OMB decisions show that the ministry may have little success defending against urban expansions in these areas.

The taxation policies of the province are also frequently cited as barriers to intensification (Slack, 1993). Property taxes based on market value assessment—which taxes both land and buildings—discourages higher density use of land and encourages demolitions when buildings are underused.[8] The Ministry of Revenue has also established property categories and assessment practices that have led to per unit taxes on rental buildings that are three or four times the rate on detached homes, thereby favouring low-density growth. Moreover, the province has failed to transfer school and welfare funding from the municipal tax base, unfairly disadvantaging those municipalities, such as in Metropolitan Toronto, that have higher social needs than surrounding suburbs.

Others have pointed out that the province discourages intensification through its grants program to municipalities. For instance, the provincial granting program gives communities subsidies for road improvements inversely proportional to their assessment base. Thus, suburban and rural municipalities receive a greater per capita subsidy for roads than municipalities within urban centres (Bushby, 1995). The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, and Tourism has more than 700 funding programs in the GTA, but is not directed by

any land-use consideration, i.e., from the point of view of the province's expressed policy to direct new growth to Metropolitan Toronto and suburban mixed-use commercial nodes.

Finally, the province's own land development corporation, the Ontario Reality Corporation, has been developing large tracts of government-owned land within the GTA over the last 25 years. In this capacity, it could have served as a paragon of provincial land-use planning objectives, but according to an official with the Corporation:

> our philosophy is maximum return on land development so we are a pure land developer. That means going with market demand, so if you see that 50 foot lots are moving then that's what you build... we reflect market trends. Most of our current developments are conventional [suburban designs].

Gardner Church, former Deputy Minster of the GTA, has introduced the notion of "vertical silos" to help account for the lack of policy coordination among government departments. According to him, provincial governments are not well configured for dealing with urban issues.

> These government are designed to manage issues which are divided into functional areas of specialization... The "vertical silos" of government departments define every issue in their own image. A problem is defined from the perspective of the narrow slice of the community that the department sees and relates to. Thus, transportation departments at the state or provincial level define their "constituency" in the community as the local transportation bureaucracies... The sum of the parts is all there is. No whole can be seen. There is mounting evidence that this approach to "curing" urban areas in North America is in danger of killing the patient for lack of a systemic approach (1996: 100).

10.3.1.6. Changing Social, Economic, and Political Conditions

Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979) have drawn attention to the importance of changing policy conditions in undermining the ability of governments to implement their policy objectives. Conflicting public policies may emerge or the relevant socio-economic conditions may change so as to undermine the appropriateness of a policy objective or its political support. This was an important factor in the failure of the TCR concept, as argued in Chapter 5, and may help to explain some of the results of the present case study.

One important change has been the decline of housing affordability as a major political issue. As land prices fell throughout the GTA, mortgage rates declined and rents eased off, the crisis atmosphere that had prevailed at the end of the 1980s dispersed. This undoubtedly undermined some of the support for intensification policies in the region.

Another important change in terms of provincial political priority has been the shift towards fiscal and economic concerns. As Filion (forthcoming) has observed, fiscal restraint has had an ambivalent effect on intensification. On the one hand, one would expect reduced

funds available for infrastructure to be favourable to intensification policies because these minimize infrastructure requirements. Financial constraints also tend to increase provincial motivation to control sprawl. On the other hand, fiscal restraint may reduce the provincial influence in municipal land-use planning. In a study by Dupré (1968) on provincial-municipal relations in Ontario, the author noted that one of the main instruments at the disposal of the province in prodding municipalities to accept provincial policy priorities has been the use of conditional grants. His study described gradual provincial intervention in transportation planning and road building, originally a municipal responsibility. This intervention took the form of grants to municipalities for building roads, along with which came a series of provincial standards and planning principles (such as road widths) that municipalities had to abide by in order to attract the grants.

Price (1995: 211) has remarked that: "in the 1990s, as provinces have seen their financial powers lessen relative to those of their cities, provincial control over municipalities has begun to erode." The research conducted here corroborates this observation: the province has experienced a gradual loss of its "leverage" over municipal planning decisions due to a gradual decline in its financial transfers to municipalities. Most importantly, the province's ability to deliver on infrastructure promises has declined and the threat of withholding major infrastructure investment in order to achieve municipal policy compliance has become an empty one. As a regional planning official claimed: "Higher density means more infrastructure is required. The province wants it higher but I don't see them investing in the transportation infrastructure to support the densities they want. They can't afford it."

Furthermore, fiscal concern may have been a factor in reducing the province's will to act on intensification objectives. According to some observers, the NDP government based major infrastructure decisions on their job-creation potential (such as the suburban subways), or on the need to increase the economic efficiency of the urban region (as in the case of the new Highway 407 paralleling the 401 across the north of Toronto). Some commentators have remarked how economic development concerns eclipsed regional planning issues during this period:

> [T]he Toronto case suggests that an interest on the part of a central government in managing the rate and pattern of metropolitan spatial development is likely to fluctuate with fluctuations in the state of the national economy and of government finances. The Ontario government's interest in curbing or guiding growth in the Toronto area tended to be more pronounced during times of prosperity than during times of recession. During the latter periods, a preoccupation with stimulating economic development or recovery made the government reluctant to make policy changes that could hinder sought-after investment in any way (Frisken, forthcoming: 23-24).

10.3.1.7. Inadequate Institutions: The OGTA

As we saw, the OGTA was created by the Liberal government in 1988 as a means of addressing the need for coordinating provincial activity and infrastructure investment in the region and for facilitating a discussion with municipalities on managing growth. The office has played an important role in developing a regional vision and articulating the principles of a more compact urban form. It has gradually built support for region-wide solutions to region-wide problems and it has helped gain wider acceptance of the need to manage growth by working behind the scenes with municipal governments.

After eight years of existence, however, the office's strategic plan for the GTA is unfulfilled: it plays only a minor role in coordinating the land-use plans of the region (it provides comments to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs), has little public profile, and has lost its deputy minister.[9] Furthermore, the regional planning activities of the OGTA appear to be at a standstill. After the publication of the reports of the six working groups in 1992 (as described in Chapter 5), the regional planning process was supposed to continue with the formulation of a Strategic Action Plan, including a policy statement for the GTA under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*.

This policy statement embodied the ambitious growth management objectives of provincial planners and would have increased the province's leverage and authority to intervene in municipal planning. The statement called for average density targets, intensification targets, transit-supportive land-use practices, and support for the nodes and corridors concept (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1993). As a provincial planner said: "to do our job more effectively, we need more regulatory type policies like the minimum density policies in the GTA policy statement. But that is tough to sell to area municipalities and therefore to provincial politicians."

Indeed, one of the reasons the policy statement was not adopted as government policy is undoubtedly because of municipal opposition. The policy statement was perceived among municipalities as simply another level of provincial planning authority to answer to, a complication of the land-use planning process, and a unilateral "power grab" by provincial planners. The proposed policy statement was not included in the comprehensive set of policy statements generated as part of the reforms to the Ontario planning system in the Spring of 1995. Staff at the OGTA could not say when or if the policy statement would ever be revived.[10]

The OGTA has also been hampered by a restrictive mandate. For instance, it is clear that the office has been reluctant to address issues related to housing in the region, despite the obvious connection with managing regional growth. Because of the close identification of housing issues with municipal autonomy, the OGTA was careful to preserve the integrity of its

consensus building process by not treading on this aspect of municipal jurisdiction.[11] Thus, the OGTA process did not result in the adoption of regionally-specific policy objectives for housing supply issues such as mix of housing, distribution of assisted or affordable housing across the GTA, or intensification targets. The implementation of the province's housing supply objectives has suffered as a result.

The OGTA has lost its public profile since the elimination of the Deputy Minister position and the wrapping up of the working groups on various aspects of the regional vision. Attempts by the office to negotiate infrastructure decisions—e.g., to resolve disputes between the Regions of Durham and York on sewer and water capacity—have been unsuccessful. Since 1993, responsibility for coordinating provincial action in the region seems to have shifted to the low-profile Deputy Ministers' Coordinating Committee on the GTA.

10.3.1.8. Inadequate Institutions: Upper-tier Municipalities

Traditionally, upper-tier municipalities in the suburban areas of the GTA have served as an expression of municipal autonomy: they have helped raise the capital required to fund the infrastructure needed to support municipal development plans and have provided little leadership in terms of the management of growth or the imposition of development targets.

However, as provincial attention to growth management and urban structure issues has grown, the role of upper-tier municipalities has become more important. Essentially, the province has asked of upper-tier municipalities to reverse their historic role from being an agent of the lower-tier municipalities to become an agent of the province. But upper-tier municipalities in the GTA have several disabilities in this regard.[12] First, their councils are indirectly elected, reducing their legitimacy and visibility in the eyes of their constituents and privileging the lower-tier in conflict between the two. Second, the political heads of upper-tier governments are in some cases appointed officials rather than elected and generally have a weaker political base. Third, the upper-tier is insufficiently distinguished in size from one or two large local governments with which they must share power. Fourth, roles are not adequately differentiated between the two-levels of government.

Not surprisingly then, upper-tier municipalities have only partially accepted the role that the province is offering them. The outcome of the GTA population allocation initiative, combined with the fact that upper-tier population allocations to area municipalities were actually higher in most cases than those expected by the municipalities' own forecasting, suggests that upper-tier municipalities have their own interest in promoting expansion: i.e., either to valorize investment in existing services or to attract more provincial funding for planned services.

The upper-tier interpretation of the GTA urban structure concept shows that these jurisdictions are willing to serve as an intermediary between provincial and local interests

when it is a "win-win" situation, i.e., when there is a general consensus about policy direction. But the lack of specifics in upper-tier plans in directing the intensification policies of lower-tier plans, and the general approach of building on pre-existing development and planning trends that have been endorsed at the local level show that upper-tier jurisdictions are not yet in the business of confronting the planning practices of lower-tier municipalities in the region.

Likewise, upper-tier municipalities have expressed an interest in achieving higher densities of new growth, largely because of the presumed efficiencies in infrastructure requirements, but they do not appear to be prepared to force higher average densities on lower-tier municipalities. In Chapter 6, we saw that the Ontario *Planning Act* assigned legal primacy to the upper-tier government in planning matters and made provisions for upper-tier intervention in lower-tier planning. In practice, however, such intervention is rare:

> It can be done, but only at considerable political cost. Further, it is argued that in a dispute between the upper and lower tier, the lower-tier municipality will generally win in the long run, and particularly in the political sense, because the lower tier has the luxury of being specific, and somewhat closer to the electorate. Unless the upper tier can clearly demonstrate that the interest is regional, and have the lower tier generally agree with the assignment, the region is unlikely to prevail in the long run (Hollo, 1989: 8).

10.3.1.9. Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation

Mazmanian and Sabatier (1981) claimed that implementation would be more successful if formal studies and evaluation of the policy were carried out by the policy formulator. This is a clear weak spot in the province's intensification policy process.

The province has carried out few studies on land consumption or housing issues over the period during which the policy framework was elaborated and implemented. Basic information on growth management in the regions—such as the aggregate amount of land newly designated for urbanization in the upper-tier plans—is not readily available. Recently, the province began cooperating with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in tracking development applications in the region. They collect information about whether an application is in a greenfield or already built-up area, but they do not publish this information in order to avoid conflict with municipalities in the region. Much of the research of region-wide importance is actually conducted by researchers working at Metropolitan Toronto, although sometimes with provincial assistance.[13]

Nor has the province carried out substantial evaluations of the implementation of its growth management and intensification policies at the local level. Only one such evaluation has been conducted, the 1993 assessment of municipal response to the Housing Policy Statement mentioned in Chapter 7. Although welcome, this study was cursory, informal, and went unpublished. No studies have been conducted on municipal responses to other

important aspects of the intensification policy framework, such as whether municipal approvals have actually reached or exceeded the province's affordable housing target.

As described in Chapter 4, monitoring of housing and land supply trends by municipalities is required by the Housing Policy Statement. However, municipal monitoring suffers from a lack of standardized practices, a variety of definitions used (for density, for instance), and inconsistent identification of variables to measure. Municipalities do not intend to collect information that is of key importance from an intensification monitoring point of view, i.e., the proportion of new units accommodated in existing areas versus greenfield development, the density of new development, amount of new development on municipal services, number of severances granted, and so on. Much of the information on housing and land supply that has been gathered by municipalities in the region was the result of the provincially-funded Municipal Housing Studies. Funding for these studies has been discontinued and provincial officials do not expect any further studies to be conducted.

In 1981, the Ministries of Housing and Municipal Affairs released draft guidelines that municipalities could use to create "monitoring reports". The guidelines were motivated by the perception that "in the past, invariably the emphasis has been placed on the making of [official] plans and not so much on evaluating their effectiveness" (Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1981: 1). One of the key objectives of this initiative was to create a framework that would provide clear identification of municipal efforts and outcomes in implementing provincial policies with respect to housing and settlement issues. Such a monitoring system based on consistently applied standards and measures would have gone a long way to overcoming some of the weaknesses of relying on municipalities to furnish key program evaluation information. Needless to say, this system was never implemented.

10.3.1.10. Lack of Public Support

Public support is widely seen as a pre-condition for successful policy implementation, whether this comes from diffuse sources (i.e., public opinion) or target groups that will benefit from the policy (i.e., stakeholders) (Rein and Rabinovitz, 1978; Morah, 1990).

The provincial government was subject to strong pressures to meet the demands of province-wide environmental groups for reduced farmland consumption, energy consumption, and CO2 production by adopting policies to curb urban sprawl. Central city interests—including municipalities and business groups—have also lobbied forcefully for the province to adopt policies to strengthen the CBD and the central city. Finally, province-wide housing advocacy groups applied pressure to allow small-scale intensification of existing neighbourhoods throughout urban Ontario, especially through basement apartments, and to increase provincial comittment to the production of assisted housing in suburban areas.

But unless these demands on the province are matched by a groundswell within a particular urban region, provincial attempts to influence development patterns and municipal planning decisions may involve considerable political risks: the province may be seen as meddling in local decisions about how a community defines itself, or it may be seen as trying to save central cities at the expense of suburban regions.

In fact, the political dynamics of intensification favour municipalities in the GTA in relation to provincial authorities. The political benefits to provincial legislators from successful intensification policies—such as creating a regional land-use plan, diverting growth to Metropolitan Toronto, or stimulating more compact suburban growth—are diffusely spread throughout the region, may be long in emerging and difficult to attribute to particular policy initiatives.[14] Some intensification policies or projects supported by provincial agencies may become controversial and cause provincial politicians considerable political damage, e.g., the Housing Policy Statement and the Apartments in Houses Legislation, or province-sponsored social housing projects throughout the GTA.[15] Furthermore, certain municipal leaders have powerful political bases and are able to influence provincial electoral outcomes. Thus, provincial politicians may be reluctant to support policies that may be interpreted by local politicians as attacks on municipal autonomy within the GTA.

Downs (1994) has pointed out that the risks for senior government politicians could be minimized if there were widespread recognition of the urban region as a single integrated entity with interdependent problems. Under those conditions, it is more likely that the province would be seen as the legitimate vehicle of representation for a regional political community: a community whose interests could never be adequately represented through a fragmented municipal structure.

The available evidence indicates, however, that the issues of sprawl and intensification in the region have currency only among a small number of professional groups involved with development issues: some developers, school board officials, municipal politicians, senior municipal staff, provincial senior staff, academics, journalists, environmental groups, urban designers and architects.

Furthermore, stakeholder interests in the GTA are not well articulated at the regional level. Business associations such as the boards of trade, labour groups, environmental groups, and social planning agencies are fragmented along local lines. Developers are interested in seeing infrastructure built in the region to support growth, but, like the environmental community, have not been actively involved in GTA-wide planning initiatives. Target groups such as poorer households that could benefit from the increased affordability of housing that is supposed to flow from intensification policies are not vocal on the regional political scene. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture does not support prohibitions on rural residential

development and questions the value of preserving certain classes of agricultural land near urban areas (Ontario Federation of Agriculture, 1993). Conservation groups often oppose higher-density greenfield developments on the grounds that they eradicate landscape features or stress local carrying capacity. These observations suggest that there is little evidence of a coherent "growth management coalition" in the GTA lobbying for strong policies to prevent sprawl.[16]

At the provincial level, major interests were more involved in growth management and intensification issues, but again, there was no sign of the "growth management coalition" detected by observers of US state-sponsored planning legislation. Ontario planning reforms were undertaken by the NDP with a single strong constituency—i.e., environmentalists—in favour of provincial intervention in the municipal planning process and more compact urban forms. Against them were arrayed the development industry and the municipal sector, which objected to the provincial policy-led approach of the Sewell Commission and to the vision of more compact communities.

There is little evidence that the concept of compact urban form or sprawl enjoys any support or even recognition from the wider community. A series of focus groups conducted by Decima as part of study for the OGTA found that members of the general public either had no concept of sprawl, didn't think it was a problem, or believed it was inevitable, and therefore did not think of intensification as an effective response (Lehman and Associates, 1995).

Another study conducted by Informa Inc. (1992) involved a series of focus groups with various categories of home owners in the GTA. The study arrived at a number of interesting conclusions:

- There is no apparent awareness of the designation, Greater Toronto Area, or what it represents.
- The primary focus among the general public was "on the home and immediate neighbourhood, with much lower interest and awareness of [GTA]-wide planning related issues and problems."
- The Canadian identity is tied to the idea of owning a detached home. Many people believe that because Canada is a vast country, there is no reason to crowd people together in high-density cities.

Being the only planning and coordinating institution operating on a GTA-wide basis, the Office for the Greater Toronto Area is the obvious candidate for building an awareness of an interdependent region. However, the office does not extend its consultation efforts beyond municipal government officials. Bowing to the view that municipalities are the only legitimate vehicles for expressing citizen interests, the office has conducted few public consultation events itself.

The success of an interventionist policy such as intensification relies on the widespread acceptance of the assumption that governments are legitimate embodiments of the public interest and that they are entitled to act in order to secure the public good. But recent years have witnessed an erosion in popular belief in the benign agency of senior governments to intervene in private markets and personal choices. Although municipal corruption has been a persistent problem in Ontario, the last 10 years has seen a growing public concern with corruption at higher levels of government: the relationship between the Liberal provincial government and the land development industry was an issue that contributed to the downfall of the Liberals in the 1990 election (*Globe and Mail*, May 30, 1994: A6).

But corruption is probably only one of a number of causes for the general shift away from government intervention. Many observers have pointed to the general decline in public faith in expertise, science and large scale social engineering. Smith and Bayne (1994) suggest that the development of postmodern patterns and attitudes are undermining regional planning and governmental structures as a result of an emphasis upon local initiative and control. With postmodernity comes a collapse of beliefs in rational planning by the state.

Others have noted the wide-spread perception that society is overgoverned with too many regulations affecting life-style choices and the growing public concern with taxation levels. Andrew (1994: 433) has observed that: "The policy agenda has therefore shifted to concern for cutting costs, increasing efficiency, reducing the role of government, and increasing the role of the private sector." Such sentiments may be undermining the confidence of provincial officials to insist on tighter regulations, binding targets and more public control over the economic decisions of private actors.

10.3.2. Factors Undermining Municipal Ability or Willingness to Comply

In this section, I attempt to summarize and integrate some of the key factors presented in Chapters 7-9 that were used to interpret municipal resistance to various aspects of the provincial intensification policy framework. Once again, the factors are presented so as to correspond with the conditions for successful implementation introduced in Chapter 2, i.e.:

- external constraints on local implementers do not interfere with implementation
- local implementers have adequate incentive to comply
- local implementers are willing to alter traditional roles and practices in order to comply
- local implementers' concerns with local autonomy do not interfere with implementation.

Table 10-1 summarizes the results.

10.3.2.1. External Constraints on Municipal Implementers

Successful implementation of public policies may be undermined by the external environment of implementers, i.e., the organizations and groups they deal with and the political pressures on them (Brooks, 1993). In the discussion of the municipal response to the provincial intensification policy framework, a consistent theme has been the role of local politics. Here, I review and summarize the points made in chapters 7-9 on this topic.

The political environment influencing local planning outcomes on intensification issues is very complex, but the importance of certain groups is unmistakable: land developers, urban residents, and rural dwellers. Surveys conducted for official plan reviews and comments on official plan documents showed that existing residents were ambivalent about the prospects of further residential growth in their municipalities. On the one hand, growth was closely linked in many people's minds with deterioration in service standards and environmental conditions, and the loss of the "small town" atmosphere that had attracted them to areas outside Metropolitan Toronto in the first place. On the other hand, there was also the hope that residential growth could help revive sagging suburban centres, help the local economy, and perhaps improve the assessment base. At any rate residents seemed resigned to the inevitability of growth and were willing to tolerate it as long as it was managed properly. Paradoxically, to many residents well-managed growth meant both arresting sprawl and preventing intensification of existing areas. Higher-density living was associated with crowding, crime, reduced property values, and community instability. Residents opposed any change in the designation of existing communities and insisted that if intensification was to take place, it should be in accordance with very careful safeguards and only on a site-specific basis. Typically, this meant that intensification would be conditionally supported in town centres and other nodal areas and along high-volume arterials. Residents living adjacent to such areas presented objections to these proposals, but their voices were relatively weak. Many existing residents agreed with the notion that new development should be transit-supportive, as long as it did not undermine public comittment to improvements to the roads used by current residents.

Environmental groups were active in official plan matters, but tended to concentrate on the preservation of specific landscape features rather than lobbying for intensified land uses. Rural dwellers were not strong advocates of agricultural land preservation in the absence of policies to support farming as an economically viable activity.

Table 10-1: Factors Involved in Municipal Compliance/Resistance to Provincial Policies

Provincial Policy Objective	Level of Domestic Political Opposition	Level of Deviation from Existing Practices	Level of Fiscal Benefit	Level of Coercion	Level of Policy Prescriptiveness	Level of Consultation	Level of Infringement	Level of Compliance
Housing Supply Policy Objectives								
Apartments in houses	High	Low	Depends	High	Principle	Low	High	Low
Affordability target	High	High then Low	Depends	Medium	Target	Low	High	High
Diffuse intensification	High	High	Depends	Medium (HPS)	Principle	Low	High	Low
Site-specific intensification	Low	Low	High	Low (TSGs) Medium (HPS)	Principle	Low	Medium	High
Growth Management Policy Objectives								
Growth and Settlement Guidelines - expansion management	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Principle	Low	Low	High
Growth and Settlement Guidelines - intensification	High	High	Depends	Low	Principle	Low	High	Low
Population Allocations - Reference Scenario	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Target	Low	Low	High
Population Allocations - Scenario One	High	Medium	Low	Low	Target	High	Medium	Medium
Urban Structure Policy Objectives								
Urban Structure - nodes	Low	Low	High	Low	Principle/ Target	High	Low	High
Urban Structure - corridors	Medium	Low	High	Low	Principle/ Target	High	Medium	Medium

Developers were very active around official plan issues, typically complaining that that their lands were not designated for development within the urban envelope. Besides individual developers, representatives of the development industry also interacted on official plan matters. Rather than commenting on individual parcels of land, the Urban Development Institute tended to focus on the overall planning philosophy being promulgated through official plans in suburban municipalities. Although the institute tended to agree with policies that secured a reliable supply of land for residential development and that streamlined the planning approval process, it was wary of higher-density and transit-based development and any reductions in growth forecasts for the area. It contended that increased densities on a reasonable scale were desirable in the suburban context to provide more affordable housing and more variety in housing form, but insisted that barriers to supplying the overwhelming demand for low-density housing should not be created.

Within the scope of this research, it was not possible to do a complete survey of all political forces active on official plan issues or to weigh these different influences on plan decision-making, but certain observations suggest themselves:[17]

- Resident concerns relating to the intensification of existing areas are strongly related to planning outcomes: i.e., stable neighbourhoods are generally protected in municipal plan policies, and intensification pressures are directed towards nodal areas and high-volume corridors, where objections are less intense.
- Resident concerns about the pace of growth are poorly reflected in plans, except where residential growth may affect fiscal health of the municipality.
- Resident desires for more orderly growth are well respected in official plans, which often incorporate phasing provisions and safeguards to protect environmental amenities.
- Although existing residents sometimes object to the high growth rates assumed by most municipal plans, the alternative of directing growth towards Metropolitan Toronto is unpopular with development interests.
- Developer concerns about municipal boundaries being too restrictive were not always met by further expanding municipal areas designated for new development. The record suggests that some land owners, hoping to gain windfall profits from redesignations, were disappointed by final plan outcomes.
- There is no source of strong support for dramatic change in the density of new suburban development.
- The intensification of mixed-use nodes and corridors may be the most politically acceptable intensification strategy available to local decision-makers.

- Environmental groups did not play a large role in official plan hearings: rather, the environmental perspective permeated throughout comments from existing residents and rural groups.

10.3.2.2. Inadequate Incentives to Comply

One of the main incentives for achieving a more compact urban form is the fiscal benefits that are supposed to flow from it in terms of reduced public expenditures on infrastructure such as piped services and roads, and on operating costs such as transit. But it is important to tease out the fiscal implications of density for the various jurisdictional levels. The province stands to gain the most in cost savings by directing growth to already urbanized areas, either to the regional core or mature areas of suburban municipalities. This results from the "efficiencies achieved from utilizing existing school, hospital and other human service capacities in already-urbanized areas" (Blais, 1995: 42) where facilities are underused because of reduced household sizes and population levels below servicing capacity. Intensification also favours the province from a financial point of view because it helps create affordable housing and substitutes for the need for provincially-assisted housing.

In contrast, suburban municipalities have had less fiscal interest in intensification. First, directing growth on a metropolitan level to Metropolitan Toronto would reduce growth potential in suburban regions. This is particularly problematic if the reduction of population growth is linked to a reduction of employment growth in suburban regions. Secondly, residential areas in the suburbs around Metropolitan Toronto were comprehensively planned and were not built with significant reserve infrastructural capacity (Lehman, 1995: 29). This reduces the fiscal incentive to direct growth to already existing neighbourhoods as it may be more expensive to expand services in most residential areas to accommodate intensification than it would be to install new services to support growth on the suburban fringe (Poulton, 1995).

The main fiscal imperative facing municipalities is to avoid scattered rural development. Such development appears "cost free" in the early stages because it is usually supported by private services, but it eventually gives rise to demands for locally-funded services, such as school bussing, road paving, recreational centres, libraries, fire stations, and, ultimately for an extended conveyance network for water and sewage. Rural non-farm development also undermines the local farm economy by fragmenting land use and increasing conflict between new-comers and farmers. This is undesirable from a fiscal point of view because farming is widely understood to be a net financial contributor to municipal treasuries (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1988). Thus, municipal plans tended to support provincial growth management objectives such as restrictions on rural residential development and clustering of rural growth in existing hamlets.

When we consider the fiscal advantages to municipalities of higher-density suburban growth, the picture is much less straight forward. Fiscal advantages are supposed to flow from the increased infrastructure efficiencies: e.g., reduced frontages for water, sewerage, local roads, etc.. However, the gradual transfer of the financial burden for growth-related capital costs from the municipality to the private sector (e.g., through the universal use of development charges in suburban areas of the GTA) have led some municipal officials to believe that high-density development is no more advantageous to the municipality than traditional development patterns. As Sancton and Montgomery (1994: 791) gathered from their case study of London, Ontario, "as revenues from the charges grow, there must inevitably be a tendency among municipal councillors to believe that building infrastructure for new residential subdivisions is a costless, if not profitable, proposition."

In terms of operating costs, some municipal planners pointed out that most municipal services are population- rather than area-related (like the provision of libraries and fire stations), that density-dependent services would tend to cancel each other out ("what you loose in garbage pick-up you gain in snow-removal"), and that higher densities may involve welcoming more "soft service-dependent" populations into the municipality.

Most planners agreed that fiscal gains could be made by filling in incomplete subdivisions and other vacant areas on the urban fringe before moving into new development blocks, and that development adjacent to existing settlement areas was more efficient than leap-frog development from a fiscal point of view. Beyond this, however, planners did not have a firm position on the relationship between dwelling type and fiscal burden. Generally, they seemed to believe that residential uses did not pay for themselves, regardless of dwelling type. They pointed to the increasingly interest in the fiscal impacts of land-use decisions shown by municipal councillors and the growing popularity of fiscal impact statements to justify residential redevelopment of employment lands. Official plan policies reflected the concern over loss of assessment base in the form of policies to restrict residential growth unless accompanied by growth in employment-related uses.

One of the primary fiscal benefits of higher-density development is the alleged support it provides for operating public transit. Although most suburban planners agreed with this proposition, not all agreed that it would justify dramatically higher development densities. Transit provision in suburban areas is extremely expensive precisely because of the low-density, auto-dependent urban form that has developed there since the second world war. Whereas one planner may see this as an obvious rationale for transit-supportive densities to be encouraged through landuse planning policies, another might see this as a clear indication that transit provision is a lost cause, especially given the local resistance to high-density growth and the reductions in fiscal transfers for transit from the province.

Planners acknowledge in interviews that they were not prepared to dramatically transform the character of suburban development so as to render "low-density residential" transit-supportive. Official plan provisions corroborate this conclusion. Some plans reviewed contained specific provisions for subdivision design but none required that new subdivisions achieve transit-supportive densities.[11] The policies actually adopted in lower-tier plans suggest that transit-supportive land use is being aggressively promoted in only one setting: i.e., along corridors and in urban centres where it can be hoped that densities will reach levels that economically justify current or increased levels of transit provision.

Other fiscal pressures are serving as disincentives for local compliance with the provincial intensification policy framework. Most importantly is the tendency for municipalities in the region to compete for the tax benefits associated with industrial land uses. Such a strategy leads to the oversupply of industrial land in the GTA, especially in the suburban regions outside Metropolitan Toronto, where from one-third to one-half the land zoned for industrial use was vacant in 1995 (Metropolitan Toronto, 1996). This oversupply tends to inflate municipal demands for greenfield lands during land budgeting exercises, and in older areas, the reluctance of municipalities to rezone industrial land for residential use reduces the opportunities for mature-area intensification (Wainman, 1996). But, given the fact that vacant industrial land provides so little assessment, the long-term impact of this strategy may be fiscally damaging.

We can conclude from these observations that while fiscal issues are an important influence on official plan outcomes, they are not decisive: i.e., forms of growth are permitted or encouraged even though they are understood to be less than optimal from a fiscal point of view.

10.3.2.3. Reluctance to Change Institutional Practices/Roles

Lindblom (1959) suggested that the smaller the scope of behavioural change required by a policy, the less problematic would be its successful implementation. As Berman (1980: 213) explains, this is because:

> implementation can be programmed along existing lines of authority and can consist of modifications to established standard operating procedures... [But] where policy involves major behavioural changes, existing routines have to be redesigned, replaced or sidestepped and new routines must be invented.

In the discussion of findings in Chapters 7-9, I noted that one source of resistance to the provincial policy framework from municipalities was the reluctance of officials to radically alter institutional practices and roles. This included the reluctance of municipal transportation engineers to accept the implied changes to road standards and function, and the resistance of parks and recreation personnel to adapt to more flexible standards that

would allow higher densities to be achieved, and the bias of some suburban planners to conventional forms of greenfield development.

A related theme that emerged in the discussion of findings in Chapter 7-9 was the ambitiousness of provincial targets compared to existing trends. I observed that where long-term trends supported provincial policy direction, the provincial objectives were more likely to be respected by municipal official plans. Such trends favoured the affordability target, expansion of the urban envelope at modestly higher-density due especially to the increasing demand for small-lot detached housing, and the creation of smaller units in sites accessible to services and facilities, especially near transit routes. But where provincial objectives implied a major shift from existing trends, municipalities were less compliant: e.g., dramatically increasing suburban densities, intensification of existing neighbourhoods, and reducing suburban growth below trend.

The deviation of provincial policy objectives from existing trends is an important variable in accounting for municipal reaction to provincial intensification policies because it relates to the understanding different actors in the policy process have concerning the role of planning in a market society. On the one hand, provincial planners assumed a large degree of planning control over land-use development and the housing market. The setting of density, affordability, population, and intensification targets assumes that municipalities have or should have at their disposal instruments to achieve these ends or to correct market trends if they are not heading in the right direction. On the other hand, municipal officials in suburban areas commonly felt that provincial agencies were out of touch with the realities of the housing market and the control that local land-use planning can exert over it.

These interviewees pointed out that the market response would simply not be sufficient to meet the provincial targets. They observed that although there was plenty of physical potential for high-density development in many suburban municipalities, little of this potential was being taken up by the market.

Given this orientation of municipal planners, it is not surprising that they tended to spurn the attitudes brought to official plan negotiations by provincial planners. "[Provincial planners] can tell us to build high-rises, but if nobody will live in them, what is the sense of it?" The attitude of municipal planners was clearly more market-oriented than that of provincial planners and cast in the role of market facilitator rather than state authority:

> Our argument with provincial staff is that the advantages of more affordable, higher-density housing is clear. But we tell them to sell that to the public. It's like telling people to stop smoking: you can try to convince people it is environmentally and socially inappropriate to use less land, but we don't see it as our role to change society.

Planners also accept the constraints of operating in a market society. Interviews revealed that suburban planners were generally of the opinion that local planning institutions play a lesser role in the determination of residential densities than does the marketplace. In fact, one of the most repeated phrases among suburban planners was "you cannot force intensification." Interviewees seemed keenly aware of the limitations of the instruments available to them, i.e., that they had no direct control over the price of housing, the level of development activity within the municipality, or the level and nature of housing demand, which they considered to be more strongly influenced by demographic trends, larger economic forces determining employment and income and senior government policies relating to immigration and regional economic development.

Suburban planners also accepted the overall conditions of growth in their municipalities, i.e., they recognized that people were migrating to suburban regions primarily in search of low-density housing, and it would not be desirable to prohibit such housing forms for planning or political reasons even if it were technically and financially feasible to do so. "There's always Metropolitan Toronto for those who prefer higher densities" was a sentiment that resonated widely in interviews with suburban planners. Some thought that planning intervention—where unwarranted—could actually lead to perverse results:

> Partly we think it's 'mission impossible'. As long as you have a supply of larger lots then people will buy them. If you artificially constrain them, then you drive up the price of large lots and people will invest in them. Then you start getting unintended effects: if you are trying to say to people that it's okay to live on a moderately sized lot, then the last thing you want to do is escalate the prices of low-density lots.

In Chapter 2, the distinction was made between growth accommodating and growth restricting policies needed to achieve more compact urban forms. The evidence presented here suggests that planners are more likely to accept a more proactive role for growth restriction policies than for growth accommodation policies. Growth restrictions, such as disallowing development that is premature from a servicing point of view, restricting the amount of land for low-density housing, prohibiting cul-de-sacs, and so on, fit well into the traditional role of planning as a regulatory activity that directs development by imposing restrictions on a chaotic market place.

Growth accommodation policies, in contrast, require positive planning that creates opportunities for certain types of growth where there may be strong social resistance. These policies, such as encouraging the intensification of existing neighbourhoods, would require a willingness to pursue a social vision—of integrated neighbourhoods—which is often considered to be outside the purview of land-use planning and which conflicts with the role of planners as agents of social stability, not change.[19]

10.3.2.4. Desire to Preserve or Enhance Municipal Autonomy

In explaining the research findings in each of Chapters 7 through 9, preserving municipal discretion was a consistent theme. As Selznick has argued, this is a universal feature of bureaucratic institutions, i.e., to achieve a "condition of independence sufficient to permit a group to work out and maintain a distinctive identity" (Selznick, 1957: 121). Such behaviour presents a barrier to policy implementation because it results in what might be called "goal displacement" whereby the goals of a given policy have to compete with the organizational goals of those involved in its implementation (Brooks, 1993). Although the desire to preserve autonomy is not unique to municipal governments, it can be more pronounced due to the fact that municipalities are a separate order of government and—unlike bureaucratic agencies within the provincial government—can make and support claims that their autonomy is an important and legitimate aspiration to be respected by other levels of government. In the following sub-sections, I attempt to explore in more detail the desire of municipalities to preserve and enhance their autonomy by focussing on three component issues: the level of policy authoritativeness, the level of consultation with municipal authorities in policy formulation and the level of invasiveness into traditional municipal jurisdiction.

10.3.2.4.1. Level of Policy Coercion

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I introduced the "coercion theory" of Doern and Wilson (1974), which suggests that the coerciveness of policy instruments used by governments tends to escalate over time. This model helps account for the increasing authoritativeness of the province-wide policy framework. As we saw in Chapter 4, provincial resolve in promoting intensification through province-wide policies increased from the early 1980s: from research, funding programs and moral suasion to more aggressive regulatory approaches, including policy statements and guidelines and, finally, legislation that actually overrode municipal planning powers. The Planning Reform package that was implemented in March of 1995 as a result of the work of the Sewell Commission continued this trend with the elaboration of a more comprehensive set of provincial planning policies, an elaborate catalogue of policy guidelines, and changes to the *Planning Act* that would require municipalities to increase their compliance to provincial policies.

But a contradictory trend in the authority of provincial policies was also visible in the province's approach to regional planning in the GTA. The province's regional planning efforts fall neatly into two periods: the Toronto-Centred Region concept of the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s and the Office for the Greater Toronto Area of the late 1980s and the 1990s. The earlier period was characterized by an ambitious scheme to reshape the entire urban region, a scheme that involved massive institutional reorganization in the area and that was eventually enabled by the *Ontario Planning and Development Act* of 1973, which "conveyed unlimited municipal

planning powers to the province" (Feldman, 1987). In contrast, the only institutional innovations involved in the more recent exercise in regional planning were the creation of the OGTA and the consolidation of resources at the GTA Official Plan Project in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The OGTA was not given any legal mandate to pursue its regional planning function.

According to classical thinking on policy implementation, the increasing authoritativeness of province-wide policies should have resulted in more reliable implementation while the reduced level of coercion in the regional planning sphere should have undermined implementation. But my review of the municipal implementation of the provincial policy framework showed that certain aspects of the housing supply policy objectives, which had the highest level of coercive power—such as the Apartments in Houses legislation—were the least well reflected in official plans.[20] It is also apparent that the regional planning visions facilitated by the OGTA has been more successful in terms of municipal compliance than the TCR concept. These observations imply that higher levels of coercive authority may create municipal "backlash" that ultimately reduces implementation. Thus, increasing the legal authority of policy elements may not guarantee increasing municipal compliance.

10.3.2.4.2. Level of Policy Prescriptiveness

In Chapters 7 and 8, I discussed the conflict between provincial and municipal planners over provincial objectives expressed as quantitative targets versus "general principles". The province has long taken the position that the most unambiguous policy objectives are those expressed as quantitative targets (Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1981). In the present research, provincial planners argued that a targets approach provided a concrete goal whose realization can be objectively determined over time. In contrast, municipalities rejected the numeric targets approach on the grounds that such targets are too prescriptive, ignored variations in local conditions, and, we may speculate, because unmet targets may provide a justification for greater provincial involvement in municipal decision making and reduce long-term municipal flexibility.

Table 10-1 suggests that expressing provincial objectives in quantitative form is not sufficient to guarantee municipal compliance: Scenario One population targets, minimum density and intensification targets, were all weakly complied with. However, the availability of a numeric target on the supply of affordable housing, backed by the authority of the Housing Policy Statement, may help to explain why this target was well represented in municipal plans despite domestic political opposition and the municipal perception that this provincial objective undermined local autonomy. As noted in Chapter 8, however, municipal implementation of the target may be weak under these conditions.

10.3.2.4.3. Level of Consultation in Policy Formulation

The level of consultation in developing different aspects of the provincial policy framework may also have some impact on municipalities' willingness to comply with the provincial policy framework. The province has created two principal mechanisms with which to formulate intensification policies: the process leading to province-wide policy statements and guidelines and the process involved in the development of a regional planning vision facilitated by the OGTA.

The two methods of policy formulation differ markedly in terms of consultation with the municipalities affected by the policy outcomes. In the case of province-wide policies, the municipalities that would be responsible for implementing the policies were treated essentially as any other stakeholder or interest group in the policy formulation process. Their input was invited after policies were already formulated and their recommendations were only weakly reflected in the final wording of the policy. In this approach, municipalities are seen as bureaucratic implementers of provincial policies, although policies are intentionally kept at a general level so as to allow for implementation to vary according to local conditions.

We have seen in the discussion of the Housing Policy Statement that the municipal sector forcefully denounced this unilateral process of policy formulation and called for greater involvement in the process. The unwillingness of the provincial government to recognize the unique status of municipalities in formulating land-use policies served to increase animosity and distrust between the two levels of government and polarized provincial-municipal relations more than at any other time in the province's history (Tindal and Tindal, 1995).

In contrast, the OGTA was committed to avoiding the top-down policy formulation process used during the Toronto-Centred Region days. Thus, it created the conditions for a consensus-building process that would fully involve the affected municipalities, while maintaining control over the process through funding, staffing, and agenda setting. Essentially, the office facilitated a discussion about regional issues using an inter-governmental model (with some important deviation from that model discussed below). Municipalities played a prominent role on all committees responsible for developing this regional vision, a process which more or less excluded other stakeholders (such as the development industry).

Through this complicated policy formulation process, the province has created a mechanism for influencing planning decisions in the GTA that is unique in the province. Whereas elsewhere in the province, the province-wide policies stand alone in guiding plan approval, approval of official plans in the GTA are heavily conditioned by regionally-specific policies, most of which were developed in close consultation with municipalities. It is also important to note, however, that in some cases, provincial officials have "pushed the

envelope" by unilaterally establishing certain policy objectives, such as the objectives of the land budgeting exercise, i.e., the density and intensification objectives for the regions and Scenario One population allocations.

My review of official plans in the GTA shows that, generally speaking, the degree of compliance with the regional planning framework increases with the degree of collaboration involved in setting the framework. Unilateral provincial actions were poorly complied with while those regional objectives that were the result of considerable consultation, such as the OGTA's urban structure vision for the region, were broadly incorporated into municipal plans.[21]

However, given the fact that collaborative efforts tended to produce objectives that deviated little from existing trends (e.g., the population projections and the urban structure as suggested by the OGTA was largely a reflection of the growth aspirations of municipal governments),[22] it cannot be argued that collaborative objectives represent major redirection of growth patterns. We may conclude from these observations that the province is most likely to adopt ambitious growth management objectives but these are not likely to be well reflected in municipal plans, and that collaboratively set objectives are less likely to present significant changes from existing growth patterns but are more likely to be incorporated into municipal plans.

10.3.2.4.4. Level of Infringement on Municipal Jurisdiction

The conflict between provincial and municipal interests arises in part because provincial and municipal actors are responding to essentially different sets of political and institutional pressures. Except in unusual circumstances, provincial planners do not have direct control over the form residential development takes on the ground, yet provincial agencies are responsible for dealing with the externalities associated with uncoordinated, sprawling growth: the need for more infrastructure, economic losses due to congestion, loss of environmental amenities, and shortages of affordable housing in appropriate locations.

For their part, the regional implications of their development decisions are not foremost among the concerns of municipal planners and politicians. They are responding to local concerns about the quality of the built environment and the potential social and physical changes introduced into neighbourhoods through intensification pressures. They may also be more attuned to the needs of the local development community and their assessment of "what sells." Their interest in intensification policies stems from their need to ensure orderly community growth, revitalized centres, a stable and mixed assessment base, a housing supply appropriate for the needs of local employers and changing housing needs of an aging population. Their political constituency is made up of current residents rather than the

"potential" residents of concern to the province. In order to act effectively on these issues, local politicians need to retain a degree of flexibility in their actions.

As Fowler (1992) has argued, the traditional strategy of allowing expansion of the settled area can be seen as a method of minimizing the conflicts that arise from growth: there was no disruption to the existing urban fabric, land developers were rewarded for their investment and patience, the province absorbed most of the financial costs related to greenfield growth, and the environmental externalities—in terms of automobile caused pollution, consumption of energy or production of waste—went unnoticed and unaccounted for.[23]

When the province intervenes in the local control over development decisions (in order to control the fiscal, environmental, and social externalities associated with residential development patterns) and attempts to impose restrictions or requirements on municipal action, it is reducing the municipality's maneuvering room in dealing with the potential conflict associated with growth. Less land for development translates into fewer satisfied developers, more residents of low-density areas with medium or high-density developments to object to, and more residents of mature areas upset with intensification projects or conversions. Thus, if successful, the provincial intervention is likely to increase political conflict in the municipality. This can only reduce the political fortunes of councillors (although it may increase the autonomy and influence of planners). It is not surprising then that municipalities have developed a number of strategies to preserve their policy jurisdiction against provincial incursions.

The review of official plans and the planning context in the three previous chapters shows that municipalities are more likely to resist complying with those provincial policies that represent the greatest encroachment on their traditional jurisdiction. Provincial objectives to intensify land use through housing supply policies and by restricting the amount of land available for expansion were explicitly designed by the province to thwart past municipal development practices, and they are accordingly perceived by municipalities as direct challenges to their traditional domain. Many of these policies were poorly implemented in official plans, with the exception of the provincial affordability target. In contrast, policies with respect to expansion management, such as phasing and servicing, were well accepted. As Hodge (1994: 39) notes, provincial intervention in metropolitan regions:

> achieved considerable success in the planning and delivery of "hard" services: water supply, waste disposal, highways and parks. But in areas such as housing and social planning, the record is less auspicious, possibly because it cuts closer to municipal turf.

10.3.2.4.5. Summary

The analysis of issues relating to municipal autonomy suggest that policies that invade municipal jurisdiction, that are adopted without consultation, that are highly prescriptive and coercive will be strongly resisted by municipalities. In contrast, if policies are adopted with more consultation with municipalities, then they are less likely to be resisted on other grounds. This is corroborated by the responses of AMO to various provincial policy initiatives: they were willing to accept a greater provincial role in municipal planning (e.g., the "be consistent with" provision of the 1995 reforms, and more prescriptive policy statements) if municipalities were more fully involved and achieved a special status in the consultations that led up to the adoption of new policies. This insight will be kept in mind for the next chapter when I turn to making recommendations.

10.4. Conclusion: The Role of Planning

In the preceding section, I identified variables that could help explain the inability of the province to impose its will on municipalities within the GTA, and why municipalities resisted such an imposition. By necessity, this focussed on the failings and problems within the policy process, leaving the reader with the impression that the future of the compact city in the GTA is pretty grim. I would be remiss, however, to leave the analysis at that stage: in fact the research has also revealed some limited but promising signs that progress in the future towards more compact urban forms may be possible. By way of linking with the recommendations section in the next chapter, I would like to offer a brief analysis of these issues. The discussion is structured by referring to the two major public policy goals that justified senior government intervention as spelled out in Chapter 2, i.e., to bring development decisions into a planning context, and to bring municipal planning decisions into a regional context.

10.4.1. Goal 1: To bring development decisions into a planning context

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, growth machine theory was introduced along with its central hypothesis that local authorities were dependent on and responsive to local growth interests and (to a lesser extent) anti-growth interests. This model has been very useful in the present research. It pointed to the ubiquitous forces shaping growth and planning policies at the local level, helping to formulate questions and pursue the most cogent lines of inquiry.[24]

However, the results of the GTA case study failed to confirm the growth machine model in several respects. In contrast to the predictions of the model, large businesses (other than real estate-related firms) had very little input on official plans as they moved through the approval process. This deviation from expected results may be due to national differences between the US and Canada: municipalities in Canada have less latitude for influence over the key variables of interest to large firms (e.g., restrictions on the use of property tax discounts as an incentive to attract firms (Skelly, 1995). Secondly, there is no evidence of influence in the official planning process from federal or provincial parties. This may be due to the fact that federal and provincial parties are not well established in municipal political systems in the region. Finally, the influence of anti-growth groups was more pronounced than expected: municipalities in the study region show a clear desire to preserve low-density neighbourhoods with a minimum of disruption, even though developers show interest in intensifying those areas.

Most importantly for my purposes, the growth machine model was inadequate in its dismissive treatment of the role of planning in a market society. We have seen that according to growth coalition theorists, municipal autonomy from local social and economic interests is very low. Logan and Molotch's model focused on the role of the local economic and political elites and their ability to create a growth consensus among the electorate and little attention to the role of planners in influencing local development decisions. In Gottdiener's 1977 study of suburban development, he concluded that planners were completely subordinate to municipal politicians, their planning advice systematically overturned by politically-motivated decisions.

Roweis (1983) has pointed out that the planning process is inherently and increasingly politicized in North America as collective interests clash ever more strongly with individual interests. The research conducted for this thesis leaves no doubt that the official planning process is highly politicized and that outcomes were influenced by local growth and anti-growth interests. That it is political, however, does not mean that the process is wholly controlled by local politicians. Drawing from Catanese (1984: 59), Johnson (1989) provides this typology of the political role of planners:

- apolitical-technical: planners are technical experts and do not advocate political or social values. The planner thus implicitly adopts and implements the political choices of the dominant coalitions. "This occurs, for example, when a planner in an upper-scale suburb drafts a zoning ordinance that makes it impossible for a lower income household to acquire a home there" (Johnson, 1989: 214).
- covert-activist: this depicts the planner as somewhat more involved in political choices. Planners assume the appearance of the apolitical technical role, but become involved

behind the scenes in negotiating policies and projects. They want to influence the substantive value choices that surround the adoption of planning policies or projects, but find it best to do so in private meetings with policy makers, politicians, community groups, or developers.

- overt-activist: the planner is an overtly political and openly "support politicians, political parties, and causes that they believe are most in keeping with their values" (60).

Of these three potential roles, the second, or covert-activist is the role that most closely corresponded with the planners interviewed for this case study. For the most part, planners were careful to point out their formally subordinate status to municipal politicians, but their own reports of the official plan process and the documentary evidence suggested a relatively high degree of control over the process. This agrees with the following observation on metropolitan planning in Canada by Smith (1995b: 233):

> Planners are always quick to disclaim any suggestion of power, on the grounds that they merely advise those who have legal authority to act on behalf of the communities they represent. Planners may even express frustration at their lack of power... From an outside perspective, however, what planners seem to lack is not power but responsibility. It is not the planners who are directly accountable to the communities they serve, but the politicians who employ them. That gives the appearance of an open planning system, yet the significant decisions—the decisions that have lasting effect—may have been made at some remove from the public arena.

Sources of planner control over the official planning process included their responsibility for:

- conducting studies (or working with a consultant to conduct studies) preparatory to official plans
- preparing (or working with a consultant to prepare) an initial "staff recommended" official plan for council consideration, which sets the terms of the official plan process
- setting the agenda and conducting public meetings[25]
- receiving, organizing, and responding to the incoming written comments and objections from developers, citizen groups, and public agencies
- recommending changes to the draft official plan based on the comments received
- recommending which items were important enough to go to the OMB to fight for.

These sources of control provided planners with ample opportunity to advance their own planning agendas. But the main source of control appeared to be the key role planners played in the private negotiations with other actors in the planning process. We have seen that the provincial-municipal relationship involved detailed negotiations between planners from municipal and provincial agencies. Such negotiations were also conducted with other stakeholders, including other officials within the municipality concerned, and with developers

and citizen groups. Municipal planners typically manage all of these negotiations—in addition to reporting to planning committees and council—and in this position they are able to play a mediating role among competing interests, enhancing their own influence over the planning outcomes.

Thus, in negotiations over plan approval, planners could say to developers "the province will never allow us to expand the urban boundary so as to include your lands." To councillors, a planner might say "the province will never approve a plan that includes these prohibitions on intensification, that is based on these low densities in new development, or this much population growth." And to a resident group at a public meeting over the official plan, a planner might say "we understand your anxiety over assisted housing, but the province will not permit us to restrict the neighbourhoods where such housing is allowed," or "we were forced to include these policies, but you will have to trust us that they will not lead to unacceptable change in your neighbourhoods." And, of course, this dynamic also worked to reduce expectations of provincial planners too: "I'll never be able to sell that to council" was a phrase frequently heard by provincial planners at staff meetings with suburban planners. But, in the space opened up by this mediation role, planners were able to bring forward their own planning agenda, i.e., of what constitutes "good planning principles."

It was clear from interviews and planning documents that what constituted "good planning principles" was in transition from earlier planning paradigms. Municipal planners distinguished the former approach, which had allowed auto-based, segregated, homogenous, and low-density development, from a new, positive approach to planning, which favours transit, a mix of housing types and land uses in new communities, preservation of environmental features, and completion of the urban fabric over expansion. These ideas reflect emerging trends in urban planning, also shared by provincial planners.

Municipal planners were generally more supportive of the compact city model than their political "masters".[26] They were also more willing to confront local political opposition, while municipal politicians have been wary because of their direct dependence on economic and electoral interests. However, to be effective in this role, planners had to overcome what I called "political failure" in the analysis of intensification policies in Chapter 8. This is the tendency for politicians to be strongly influenced by short-term electoral interests over long term planning goals. For instance, councillors may agree to a broader housing mix in principle, but take every practical opportunity provided by development applications to reduce the range of housing actually created in the municipality.[27] Suburban planners also lamented the fact that local politicians may agree in principle to the need to limit the amount of new land designated for urban development, but in practice were likely to support developers' applications for an official plan amendment to extend the urban envelope so as include their

land. Finally, planners also commented that local politicians may agree to greater land area being designated for medium and high-density development in expansion areas, but only as long as they maintain their discretion to redesignate those lands for lower-density development if development applications come forward with that market in mind.[28]

In this case, planners reported that provincial policies in favour of higher densities and intensification could strengthen their hand when it came to "showdowns" over these issues at council or committee meetings, or at the OMB.[29] Policies of this type will serve to signal to developers where intensification opportunities are more likely to be entertained positively by the municipality and to shift the balance of power in conflicts over intensification in these areas in favour of the developer and planner, and against the residents' group and intensification-adverse politician (e.g., the ward councillor). When developers are applying for density reductions, especially in intensification zones and in new development areas, the policies adopted will strengthen the hand of the planner against the developer and the developer-friendly politician. It is interesting, although not surprising then, that provincial officials report that municipal planners informally lobby them to strengthen provincial policies governing intensification and to enforce them more rigorously.[30]

Leo (1994) has shown that planning autonomy from local economic interests in a given municipality is enhanced by strong growth, when politicians are assured of continued short-term growth, they allow planners to adopt policies that will strengthen the municipality in the long-term.[31] The recession of the early 1990s is commonly thought to have devastated the real estate market throughout the GTA, but in fact, housing starts were strong in the suburban regions outside Metropolitan Toronto: building activity was roughly at the same level as the early 1980s, i.e., before the real estate boom.[32] Employment growth in suburban regions also continued throughout the recession,[33] and immigration was at about the same rate as the early 1980s. Although population growth has fallen short of the levels predicted by Hemson in 1993, it is expected to recover with the end of the recession and to continue to be strong in the future (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 1995).

The end result was that the GTA case study showed *more planning* than would have otherwise been apparent. Greenfield development has become far more regulated than in the preceding period, municipalities are required to conduct housing studies to identify the shelter needs of their residents, official plans are littered with new requirements for impact studies, whether that be on the fiscal impacts of estate residential development, the environmental impacts of low-density developments in environmentally-sensitive areas, or the impact of a subdivision on transportation facilities. By introducing staged development between the 30-year upper-tier and the 20-year lower-tier urban boundaries, lower-tier municipalities were forced to choose among the claims of developers competing for inclusion within the urban

boundary. And, finally, because of limitations on the municipality's ability to finance infrastructure extensions, planning choices must increasingly be made about the most efficient location of new development.

Of course, I am not claiming that planners have unlimited autonomy to pursue their planning agenda. As critics of the urban managerialist approach of Pahl (1970) have argued, planning officials (and other non-elected officials in municipal governments) have limited professional autonomy due to a number of ideological, economic, and institutional factors (Saunders, 1981). Indeed, the available evidence suggests that planners (at least in the US) are attitudinally biased towards growth and development (Calavita and Caves, 1994), and even in Canada, "the planning profession itself and its local government masters retain strong ethical reservations about the legitimacy of strong public controls over the use of private property. Put more bluntly, most Canadian planners are extremely ambivalent about the very legitimacy of public-sector planning itself" (Kiernan, 1990: 63).

Furthermore, planners may lose control over the planning process if the planner-brokered consensus building process breaks down and an issue "goes political": developers or citizen groups may challenge official plan decisions at the OMB, the media may become an important forum if conflict breaks out between stakeholders, controversial issues may be raised at raucous public hearings, or council may enter the fray on specific planning issues with the potential to reject the planner's recommendations. Finally, municipal concillors are concerned about the ramifications of official planning decisions, especially with respect to their implications for taxation levels, resident satisfaction, and the degree to which official plan commitments may reduce their own future maneuvering room. Thus, planners must be sensitive to these issues in their official plan recommendations if they are to avoid conflict with council members. And, as one interviewee explained, "a planner can only contradict his councillor so many times before his job becomes insecure."

With these caveats, I am saying, however, that under the appropriate institutional, economic, and ideological conditions, suburban planners will be able to balance and mediate between competing interests in such a way that helps them to enhance the autonomy of the local state in the face of powerful pro-growth and anti-growth forces that would otherwise lead to greater sprawl.

This, of course, was one of the main justifications for provincially-sponsored growth management and intensification policies as introduced in Chapter 2. If we had found that local planners were completely hamstrung by local growth and anti-growth forces, regardless of provincial policies, there would be little justification for further provincial involvement and little hope that more compact development patterns could ever be achieved in the region.

10.4.2. Goal 2: To bring municipal planning decisions into a regional context

The second justification for senior government intervention in local decision making given in Chapter 2 was to overcome localism, the tendency for municipalities within urban regions to focus on local interests instead of regional issues. As with the growth machine hypothesis, the localist hypothesis helped steer the research in that it focussed attention on regional decisions to address negative externalities (such as low-density, auto-dependent subdivisions) and encourage positive externalities (such as affordable housing) and on the important role of strategic investment decisions in infrastructure to support efficient regional growth patterns.

As with the growth machine hypothesis discussed in the last section, the research findings indicated that municipal localist behaviour was substantially modified by provincial interventions in the region. As a result, more regional planning took place than would have otherwise been possible. Thus, official plans contained regional context statements, and a variety of studies have been undertaken on regional issues. But more importantly, provincial intervention has forced municipalities to engage in more planning whose only rationale is the fact that the municipality exists in a regional context. For instance, regional land budgeting and population allocations mean municipalities have to choose and justify where to allow and where to restrict growth. And, by adopting urban structure policies, municipalities have to choose which nodes and corridors will be supported with limited public resources.

Again paralleling the case with the role of planning in overcoming local growth forces, regional planning dealt more successfully with growth restrictive functions than growth accommodative functions. Most importantly, as noted above, issues related to housing—i.e., the distribution of affordable and assisted housing among the region's municipalities—were not regionalized, while issues related to growth limitation, land designation, and infrastructure were. Once again, municipal planners were the key agents of change, mediating between local politicians—who sometimes wanted more autonomy and less to do with regional issues (which they often associated with Metropolitan Toronto's problems)—and provincial officials trying to facilitate or impose a regional vision.

Planners' awareness of regional issues and willingness to serve this role may have been enhanced by their participation in consultations facilitated by the OGTA. Scores of senior planners from the region's municipalities participated extensively in the variety of working groups that were set up by the OGTA to discuss population and employment targets, urban structure, infrastructure, agricultural land protection, and so on. The province created these fora in part to sensitize local planners to the major trade-offs that had to be made with limited public resources and to increase their "buy-in" of the results. These negotiations forced municipal planners to recognize that their decisions went beyond the localist logic and

adjusting for "market failures", and that they were involved in political allocation of resources that would affect the growth prospects of the various jurisdictions and their property holders.

Other factors may also have been at work, namely the emerging awareness among the region's politicians of the GTA as an integrated economic unit. This awareness has been expressed in a number of ways, including participation in a sub-committee on economic development at the GTCC, agreeing to promote the GTA as a single unit at international trade shows, and the proliferation of conferences on the changing role of GTA in the global economy. At one such conference, Hazel MacCallion, Mayor of Mississauga, remarked:

> We are going to two major [international] exhibits... What we will be doing is not promoting individual municipalities within the GTA, it will be the GTA... In my opinion, we are the economic engine of Canada, and I felt very strongly that the engine was sputtering badly, and we needed to harness our forces. A most unusual cooperative move: to get some 30 municipalities working together to promote the economic recovery of the GTA (1994: 88).

A final factor to consider here is the growing awareness among the region's political leaders concerning the importance of the regional core to the economic performance of the region as a whole. Until the end of the 1980s, few people doubted that the City of Toronto would remain as the healthy, vibrant core of the region in spite of waves of suburbanization outside the city (*Toronto Star*, July 28, 1988: A5). Since then, the property bust and ensuing recession has seriously undermined the City of Toronto's and Metropolitan Toronto's economic performance relative to other regions in the GTA, and the decline was expected to continue (Gilbert and Pepperell, 1994). At first, suburban regions outside Metropolitan Toronto did not want to acknowledge the city's plight, lest it result in favourable treatment from the province. Eventually, however, this position was softened and suburban mayors began to recognize the importance of the central city to their own economic performance. This shift in orientation was reflected in the changing position of the GTA Mayors' Committee, which gradually came to accept the importance of a healthy regional core(*Toronto Star*, June 14, 1995: A7).[34]

As outlined in Chapter 2, the literature on urban politics identifies two types of municipal autonomy, freedom from control from provincial authorities and freedom from control by local political forces (Gurr and King, 1987). In metropolitan regions a third dimension of municipal autonomy could be identified: i.e., autonomy from regional governance institutions. The tension between local control and regional institutions has been documented by students of regional planning institutions in Canada (e.g., Smith and Bayne, 1994) and of growth management regimes in the US (e.g., Clark, 1994).

It is interesting to note that in the Toronto region, because the province has undertaken the primary responsibility for regional coordination—through the activities of the OGTA and Ministry of Municipal Affairs' GTA planning unit—the conflict between the local and regional levels has been subsumed by the conflict between the local and provincial levels. Instead of claiming that other municipalities or the municipally-controlled regional government are threatening their autonomy as in other urban regions of Canada, municipalities in the GTA point the finger at provincial authorities. As Feldman (1995: 225) points out: "[I]n its desire to extend both policy and fiscal control over the GTA, [the provincial government] is slowly spawning protests amongst the regional and area municipalities within the GTA."

One of the predominant sources of contention between provincial and municipal authorities is the fact that provincial policies in the region are—at least in part—being formulated by non-elected officials. When provincial politicians have intervened in regional affairs, they have often done so without consultation with municipalities and have made decisions that were extremely unpopular at the municipal level. This has reinforced the image of arbitrary provincial power. Perhaps the most egregious example of such a decision was the announcement by the provincial government that new landfill sites for the solid waste being generated in the GTA would have to be found within the region itself. But examples more closely related to the topic at hand are also available, i.e., the choice of Scenario One as the regional population allocation.

The key issue in this context is the need to for greater political control over decisions of regional importance, and, from a municipal point of view, greater municipal control over those decisions. The solution that might first come to mind—especially to advocates of the compact city—is some form of regional government: this would have the potential of further regionalizing decision making and reducing conflict between municipal and provincial levels of government in the region.

This was the approach taken by the Task Force on the GTA, appointed by the NDP in the final days of its mandate before the provincial election in June, 1995. In its January 1996 report, the Task Force recommended the abolition of the five existing upper-tier municipal governments and their replacement by a new indirectly-elected Greater Toronto Council (GTC). The new GTC would have some of the powers currently exercised by the province in the region, and some of the powers upper-tier municipalities now have. It would be responsible for: regional planning, economic development, and the construction and maintenance of regionally significant highways. It would coordinate the activities of so-called flexible service districts (essentially intermunicipal agreements) for the provision of non-local services such as transit, water, and sewage treatment. The GTC would undertake to produce a regional transportation plan, but would not have control over the financial levers to

implement the plan. Jurisdiction over arterial roads and adjacent land uses, now lying with upper-tier municipalities, would be transferred to area municipalities.

However, critics of the GTA Task Force have been quick to point out that a regional government would do little to address the real issues facing the region. Reminiscent of the position put forward by Church above, Ruppert, a former policy director with AMO, has written:

> Strategic coordination is clearly more in need within the provincial government... The Golden Report has resorted to focusing on municipal structures [yet] we do not have a provincial government that is concerned or prepared to deal with the real solutions: action on long-overdue provincial-municipal financial reforms and the development of a coherent provincial urban policy (1996: 5).

Admittedly, the creation of a regional government in the GTA is extremely unlikely. As Feldman, 1995 has noted:

> There are no formal GTA governance provisions whatsoever, for very obvious reasons. The provincial government remains fearful of a super-regional government encompassing the GTA which, theoretically at least, might overwhelm the whole provincial governmental structure and directly threaten the province itself.

Furthermore, the notion of regional government is anathema to most suburban municipalities in the GTA. The widespread antipathy to the notion of a regional government: even an indirectly elected government with fewer powers than the existing upper-tier regions became obvious in the aftermath of the January 1996 report of the Task Force on The GTA. An analysis of the submissions to the Task Force from municipalities shows that primary concerns were the loss of municipal autonomy in controlling growth, a fear that regional government would entail amalgamation or abolition of certain municipalities, and the belief that regional government would entail higher taxes in suburban municipalities (Tomalty, forthcoming).[35]

Supporting the view of municipal politicians was a recent poll conducted by Environics, which showed that most residents of the GTA outside Metropolitan Toronto did not support the notion of a regional government, regional tax pooling, or the abolition of any municipal institutions (*Toronto Star*, April 27, 1996: A1; April 30, 1996: A1). Finally, the panel appointed by the new Tory government to review the findings of the GTA Task Force found little public support and strong antipathy to the idea of the GTC. It recommended that the province reject this aspect of the Task Force's reform package (Review Panel on the Greater Toronto Area Task Force Report, 1996).

These results agree generally with those found in the wider literature on regional planning. As Self (1982: 149) writes:

> It seems that popular identification of a common metropolitan existence and set of interests declines steadily with distance from the main center... Few people appear to recognize their membership of an entity called an urban or city region or to appreciate its functional importance, except for transportation: and public interest in that subject grows spottier as one moves outward.

This would suggest that as metropolitan regions decentralize and the proportion of the regional population residing in suburban areas increases, the level of political support for regional institutions would decline. Research in the US suggests that there are three preconditions for strong suburban support for regional government: geographical distinctiveness, positive experiences with regional agencies, and a smaller central city that suburbanites view positively (Baldassare, 1994). None of these conditions apply to the GTA, where there are few geographical features to define the region (compared to, say, the mountains surrounding Vancouver), the most widely recognized experience with regional agencies was with the landfill search of the Interim Waste Authority, a negative experience for most suburbanites, and a large central city with which many suburbanites have neutral or negative associations.

Recognizing the political resistance to any regional government in the GTA, Gardner Church (1993: 13), one of the strongest advocates of regional coordination and compact urban form, has warned:

> It seems to me that the method for dealing with this [regional] reality is not... jamming a regional system onto the current structure. I think that, generally speaking, would be so counter-intuitive to the tax-payer and to the public, no matter what the value of the framework, it will simply be seen as another level of government and an intrusion into the legitimate rights of the states and the local municipalities.

If we accept that regional government for the GTA is unlikely, the question remains as to what steps can be taken in order to strengthen institutions that promote a regional vision, cooperation, and solutions to regional issues? This is another key question that will be addressed in the recommendations found in the next chapter.

Endnotes

[1] In the case of Durham Region's official plan, municipal planners reported that there was little change in the land designated for development between the original plan put forward by staff in 1991 and the plan approved by the province in 1993. In other regions, municipalities used definitional vagueness of the provincial concept of density to argue for the incorporation of larger amounts of land in the expansion areas.

[2] The targets adopted by Ministry of Municipal Affairs were not very ambitious compared to growth management efforts in other metropolitan areas such as the GVRD. There the regional planning agency adopted targets that would see a 77 percent increase in the population of the regional core area over current trends, although suburban lobbying later reduced this target to about 50 percent.
[3] This conclusion mirrors that arrived at by provincial planners in their 1993 assessment of the municipal response to the Housing Policy Statement: "General intensification policies are found in most plans, ... though how the polices are to be implemented is usually unclear. Overall, Otficial Plans appear to have difficulty with the idea of 'planning' for intensification. At best, these Official Plans seem to be a framework for reacting to site-specific applications, and in most cases in an [sic] very cautious and exclusionary manner" (Ontario Ministry of Housing, March 1993: 2).
[4] Interestingly, no one interviewed for this research expected a significant increase in the number of accessory apartments unless crisis conditions in the housing market reappeared.
[5] In some US states with growth management systems in place, citizens routinely launch court challenges of municipal decisions that violate state planning laws. Their funding typically comes from groups such as the "1000 Friends", which conduct major fundraising campaigns specifically for this purpose.
[6] In fact, this is an issue often raised by municipal planners: "if the province can't get its act together to support growth management and intensification efforts, why should we?" they ask.
[7] Nonetheless, expectation had been raised by the OGTA-led process and in 1994, the province set up a long-term planning exercise in partnership with the GTA's regional governments. This initiative is considered in more detail in the next chapter.
[8] Those concerned about sprawl in the region have proposed a move to a unit assessment system that would be based on property dimensions rather than market value (City of Toronto Assessment Reform Working Group, 1988).
[9] In the final report of the Task Force on the GTA, the role of the office in coordinating growth was not even mentioned.
[10] With regional planning being downplayed, the office began giving more attention to economic issues by sponsoring or coordinating studies on issues such as the disproportionate taxation burden in the GTA and the availability of industrial sites in the region. Of the seven sub-committees of the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee (GTCC), none is specifically concerned with urban form or structure. Rather, they reflect the emerging economic orientation of the office: there are sub-committees on economic development, municipal finances, quality of life, telecommunications, infrastructure, property assessment and government services.
[11] For instance, the release of an OGTA sponsored report on residential density was held up for eight months because of concerns over municipal reactions.
[12] Self (1981) noted many of these shortcomings applied to other regional governments across North America and Europe.
[13] For instance, Metro Toronto recently published a research report on industrial lands in the Toronto region. It was carried out with financial assistance from the province and was guided by a steering committee of provincial and municipal representatives (Metropolitan Toronto, 1996).
[14] As Downs (1994: 190) points out in the US context: "Very few beneficiaries would vote for or against a state legislative candidate on the basis of growth management alone."
[15] As mentioned in Chapter 5, this was given as a reason for the electoral defeat of certain Conservative MPs in the 1975 election, especially the creation of upper-tier governments and the amalgamation of lower-tier municipalities.
[16] Perhaps this is explained by the lack of interest on the part of the OGTA to act as a focussing mechanism for a wide-range of stakeholders in the region. Rather, their efforts have been almost entirely directed towards building a consensus among the municipal sector in the region. Thus, no growth management coalition can be recognized at the GTA-wide scale.
[17] Many other interests attempted to influence official plan outcomes, including numerous agencies of the local state. Two such agencies stand out: school boards and social planning councils. School boards tended to support growth management because population projections, phasing of development, and attention to service provision would allow better planning for new schools, a recurring problem in

rapidly growing suburbs. In terms of housing intensification, school boards supported higher density new development on the grounds that more compact new subdivisions could reduce the need for bussing, but they might object to intensification of existing communities (i.e., through basement apartments and infill) unless strict controls were in place to prevent overcrowding of existing schools. Social planning councils also supported growth management in principle because of the increased opportunity to plan for human services and to match human needs with facility provision. They supported the notion of growth centres and corridors as likely to increase access to services, and the notion of intensification as a means of providing more affordable housing. Preserving environmental features was supported as a strategy to enhance amenities for human users.

[18] Some plans (e.g., Pickering's) recommended that the municipality consider other transit-supportive techniques in subdivision design, such as reducing cul-de-sacs in the road layout and reverse lotting on arterials.

[19] This observation closely mirrors the situation found by researchers of growth management regimes in the US. In his review of state-sponsored growth management, Bollens (1992) found that earlier programs tended to restrict growth that would be environmentally destructive - only recently have they begun to encourage growth accommodating policies at the local level. In his well known book *City Limits*, Peterson (1981) pointed out that distributional issues - such as housing opportunities - were best left to senior governments with greater taxing, spending powers and wider geographical purviews. AMO's response to the provincial Housing Policy Statement also reflected this approach, insisting that the province withdraw policies requiring municipalities create opportunities for affordable housing and instead expand its own subsidized housing program.

[20] Of course, because the legislation overrides municipal planning policies, one could argue that the provincial objectives in Bill 120 were perfectly implemented. In fact, however, most municipalities that had defied the province by placing illegal restrictions on basement apartments intended to enforce their own policies and leave it up to property owners to appeal municipal decisions to the OMB.

[21] It is interesting to observe that urban structure planning was not a principal feature of the provincial policy framework (province-wide policies). The growth and settlement guidelines mentioned urban structure in passing and the TSGs were voluntary only, nor were they a major feature of the comprehensive policy package in 1995. They became an important component in local intensification initiatives as a result of the OGTA, which ultimately drew upon the experience of municipalities within Metro Toronto.

[22] The relatively successful incorporation of the urban structure concept into municipal planning policies can also be seen as a result of an inherently less conflictual situation between provincial and municipal interests. For its part, the province sees policies to ensure at least some areas of suburban municipalities become transit supportive, they provide intensification opportunities without requiring as much infrastructure investment as greenfield development, and land use efficiency is increased, allowing for the preservation of environmental, resource and agricultural land. From a municipal perspective, existing neighbourhoods are protected, developments trends are rationalized, and new residential units area provided in response to locally generated pressures for transit-accessible, affordable housing.

[23] The other strategy available to municipalities is not to allow any growth, but this is really only available to the rural municipalities in the GTA that can more easily withstand development pressures. None of the six suburban municipalities selected for review had adopted a no-growth strategy, although Brampton had attempted to freeze growth at one point in order to pressure the province to deliver on promises for transportation funding. The strategy fell apart when the municipal council continued to approve projects in spite of the freeze.

[24] For instance, the theoretical framework accurately reflected:

- the overall pro-growth assumptions behind municipal plans and the role of the public consultation process in "selling growth" to constituents wary of growth either through intensification of the existing urban fabric and the destruction of environmental amenities on the urban fringe

- the importance of developers and real estate interests in local decision-making as they attempt to increase the exchange value of their properties in both fringe and mature area situations
- the important role played by residents in protecting use values of their immediate communities,
- the inability of residents' groups to influence the overall pace of growth within the municipality
- the concern for the assessment base shown by municipal councils eager to reduce tax rates by balancing residential with employment-related growth
- the willingness of municipalities to sometimes override fiscal interests (such as in achieving transit-supportive densities or in lobbying upper-tier governments for greater population growth when it is believed that residential development is a drain on municipal finances) in the face of a powerful growth interests when it comes to expansion of the urban area or the resistance of existing residence to intensification.
- the important role played by external corporate capital in shaping planning priorities in the region as an instrument in meeting its changing spatial needs, i.e., the need for a more diverse housing mix in suburban areas to attract firms with employees of all income levels, and the need for provincial investment in regional infrastructure to support the transportation of goods.
- the general pro-growth orientation of most suburban municipalities, as reflected in the dynamics over population and employment allocations.

[25] In some cases, outside consultants were retained in order to prepare a plan proposal. Even in these cases, however, planning staff appeared to retain control as they typically directed the consultants and relayed information to council via the planning committee.

[26] This observation is based on interviews with municipal planners and provincial officials, and reflects the findings reported in Chapter 5 contrasting the responses of municipal councils versus professional planners to the compact urban form thrust of the Sewell Commission.

[27] Many planners interviewed for this research referred to the gap between political expressions of support for growth management and intensification on the one hand and site-level decisions that would give concrete expression to that support. One planner said: "council's support is only 'lip service'. When it comes down to practical decisions, they will oppose it.'

[28] Recognizing this dynamic, provincial planners have tried to put upper-tier governments in the position of watchdog over lower-tier redesignations. For instance, the province inserted the following (rather self-contradictory) phrase in York Region's plan: "That designations and redesignations that would have the effect of reducing the densities in area municipalities shall ensure that area municipal urban form, density and housing policies are achieved" (York Region, 1994: 33). No other upper-tier plan contained such language.

[29] The first dynamic described above relating to municipal autonomy stresses the political conflict between provincial and municipal jurisdictional levels. This argument suggests that provincial and municipal planners have a common professional interest in "good planning principles".

[30] Andrew (1995: 140) has noted this phenomenon in other circumstances and observed that: "We do not know enough about the processes internal to municipalities, through which professional experts working at the local level pressured their provincial counterparts to extend centralized control in the form of provincial regulation."

[31] He found that the City of Vancouver, with 38 head offices and a flurry of development applications, had more planning autonomy than Edmonton, with only seven head offices and scanty applications for new development.

[32] About 14,760 units per year between 1990 and 1994 compared to about 15,480 units per year in the 1980 to 1984 period

[33] There were more than 90,000 net jobs created in suburban regions between 1991 and 1995.

[34] Why the Mayors' Committee changed its policy on this matter is open to speculation. It may have been due to the increasing academic evidence from the US that healthy cores were essential to healthy regions. More likely, it reflected the desire of suburban mayors to show the province that they did not require a new level of regional government - as was being openly discussed at the time - in order to achieve cooperation on regional issues among the component municipalities. In order to realistically make this case, the Mayor's Committee needed the participation of the City of Toronto, the region's largest and functionally most important municipality. Until then, the City of Toronto

had boycotted the Mayors' Committee because of their refusal to acknowledge the economic plight and special fiscal and servicing conditions in the regional core.

[35] The following comment found in the Town of Whitby's submission to the Task Force was typical of suburban municipalities: "Whitby believes that its boundaries and its size, with significant capacity for future growth, continues to be appropriate to serve the ratepayers of Whitby, now and in the future. Whitby believes that its ratepayers will strongly resist any change to its boundaries resulting in a reduction in Whitby autonomy, its
unique qualities and characteristics, as well as its strong sense of community identity as a viable local municipality in Durham Region (Town of Whitby, 1995: 7).

11. Recommendations

11.1. Introduction

In this closing chapter, I propose some recommendations for achieving more compact urban form in the GTA based on the forgoing case study, and draw some implications for other urban regions. Finally, I consider some of the limitations of the current case study and point to future research directions.

At the time of writing, the province-wide policy framework and institutional arrangements within the GTA were in flux:

- in May 1996, major reforms to the *Planning Act* and a new set of policy statements under Section 3 came into effect
- in January 1996 the Golden Task Force had recommended wholesale change to the governance and fiscal structure of the region
- in February 1996 a provincial panel, appointed to conduct public hearings on the task force's recommendations, found little enthusiasm for dramatic change
- in May 1996, the provincial government announced another task force to look into unravelling provincial-municipal relations and resolving the fiscal issues involved.

Making recommendations under these conditions is undoubtedly hazardous and perhaps unwise: the institutions to which they are addressed may not even exist in a few months or the legal basis for relationships among those still existing may be transformed. Nonetheless, there is still value in making these recommendations: the findings may help put some the changes and proposed changes to the planning system in Ontario and the GTA in perspective, and it is hoped the study will have wider significance for intensification efforts in other regions, regardless how fast the situation is changing in Ontario.

11.2. Reform Principles: Effectiveness and Legitimacy

Before moving on to recommendations, a key choice must be made: given the research findings presented here, should advocates of compact cities propose more coercive provincial policy measures that would increase the pressure on municipalities to meet the provincial interest in stopping sprawl, or should solutions be sought in greater cooperation with municipalities in the region?

In the last chapter, I concluded that the provincial-municipal relationship concerning intensification policies in the GTA can be characterized by a number of different linkage models. In some respects it was found to be a very top-down relationship akin to the classical technocratic or instructed delegate model; in other respects the relationship was better characterized by the bargaining model. The conventional technocratic model would suggest

that recalcitrant municipalities should be subjected to more coercive and intrusive provincial policies and that more extensive command and control measures be put in place, removing their room for maneuver, discretion, interpretation, and therefore their ability to co-opt provincial policies. The primary virtue of the top-down implementation model is the promise of effectiveness it offers in terms of a high-fidelity "linear" movement from policy formulation to policy implementation. The issue of legitimacy is limited to issues relating to the policy formulation process (i.e., that it uses a transparent public process where elected representatives are in control of establishing policy goals). Unfortunately, this approach fails to anticipate the issues relating to the legitimacy of policy formation and implementation at the local level. The research results presented here suggest that the legitimacy concerns of "local implementers" are a major impediment to realizing the objectives of the provincial policy framework. In other words, legitimacy concerns at the local level are interfering with the effectiveness of the provincial policy framework.

This is another way of saying that provincial policy makers cannot expect to achieve their policy objectives without the willing cooperation of local authorities: municipalities have the power to implement, co-opt, or undermine provincial policy objectives. We have seen that municipalities have become increasingly important players in the planning and development game as they have had more responsibility for funding development placed upon them. Recent legislative and financial changes in Ontario reinforce this trend, with significant cuts in provincial-municipal transfers for roads, transit, water, sewage, and other growth-related services in exchange for greater municipal powers in raising revenue from non-property tax sources. The elimination of federal and provincial funding for new assisted housing projects has also placed greater responsibility on the municipal sector for finding mechanisms to create affordable housing. As Frisken has observed, "such shifts are likely to reduce the principal incentive for provincial intervention. They also imply a larger role for municipal governments in determining how metropolitan areas develop. Ultimately, then, Canada's municipal governments have to be taken seriously as agents of metropolitan area adaptation and change" (1994: 22-23).

Indeed, a less hierarchical and more collaborative approach is favoured by municipalities in the region and municipal sector associations. We have seen that new housing supply policy initiatives on the part of the province were met with increasing levels of conflict between the province and individual municipalities, including widespread resistance to the Housing Policy Statement, ever more strident denunciations by AMO, and a court challenge to the *Residents Rights Act*. By the end of the study period, the intergovernmental atmosphere in the region was poisonous: municipalities claimed that the province was being paternalistic in its approach to planning, that the provincial official plan approval process was time-

consuming and humiliating for municipalities, that unelected provincial officials had too much power over the planning choices of elected municipal officials, that there was too much direction given in terms of targets, that unilateral provincial decisions (such as Scenario One population targets) had brought the process into disrepute, and that generally, the province was treating municipalities as "regional offices" of the provincial government (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1995). Rather than increased provincial intervention and oversight of municipal decisions, AMO called for reforms to the provincial-municipal relationship amounting to a new partnership, a so-called Bill of Rights for Local Government:

> There is a need to renew and promote the essential nature of democratic local government, its integral role in the intergovernmental system, and as the level of government closest to the citizens and therefore in the best position to involve them in the making of decisions concerning their living condition (Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 1994b: 11).

Other influential institutions, including some provincial agencies, have also endorsed a more collaborative approach to planning in the region. Most importantly, the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront is in favour of the "ecosystem approach", which is based on negotiation among interested parties rather than top-down planning:

> [E]cosystem planning involves all key stakeholders working together in an open, public, fair, and efficient process... Processes should be designed to facilitate co-operation, encourage conflict resolution, and build consensus. This should result in more timely and efficient decision-making with fewer antagonistic procedures than often occur in traditional planning (1992: 81).

Fortunately, other theoretical models for policy implementation based on more collaborative principles are available. In an influential 1980 article, Berman presented a model called "adaptive implementation", as an alternative to the top-down model, which he called "programmed implementation". In programmed implementation, the major sources of policy failure are seen as ambiguity in objectives, value conflict, overlapping jurisdiction, and resistance from implementers. It follows then that reform proposals would focus on more precise instructions to implementers leaving them less room for interpretation. Implementers are perceived as operating in routinized ways that should be prescribed by detailed guidelines that will reduce discretion and inefficiency, and circumscribed by monitoring their performance, and by offering more incentives to comply with the policy objectives.

The adaptive implementation model offers a different diagnosis and prescription:

> Implementation problems arise because of the overspecification and rigidity of goals, the failure to engage relevant actors in decision-making, and the excessive control of deliverers. The ideal of adaptive implementation is the

> establishment of a process that allows policy to be modified, specified, and revised—in a word, adapted—according to the unfolding interaction of the policy within its institutional setting.

In contrast to the highly specified directives of a programmed approach, an adaptive approach seeks only general agreement on goals, which are permitted to remain vague. Consistent with Lindblom's (1959) concept of "muddling through", this approach works best under conditions where policy formulating and implementing agencies have different interests and values, and where negotiation and compromise on objectives is appropriate. This type of implementation process also calls for maximum participation from stakeholders in order to bring more information to the table and to enhance "ownership" of the outcomes.

According to Berman, an adaptive approach works best when the required behaviour change is dramatic, when the causal theory connecting policy to behaviour change is questionable, and when the relationship between formulators and implementers admits of a degree of autonomy for implementers. As we have seen in the analysis presented in the last chapter, all of these conditions prevail in the present case study. Under such situational conditions, applying a programmed approach may be a mistake: "a programmed approach applied to a loosely coupled setting can lead to the all too familiar problems of symbolic compliance and cooptation... The critical misconception is, thus, the fanciful belief that the 'tightness' of programmed implementation can compensate for and override a loosely coupled structure" (Berman 1980: 219)

Although written over 15 years ago, these two models of implementation capture well the debate that has emerged in the GTA, at the provincial level, and elsewhere in Canada over the appropriate role of provincial, regional and municipal governments in a rapidly changing economic and political environment. At the Ontario-wide level, the NDP reforms to the *Planning Act* were based on a more programmed approach that reduced municipal discretion while the counter-reforms of the Tories were very much in line with the adaptive approach. At the regional level, the model of a directly-elected regional government that would impose a top-down order on member municipalities competes with the model of a more collaborative approach based on a looser municipal federation.

According to Berman, these models are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are ideal types and real world situations may contain elements of both: "the context or policy situation matters...and policy makers ought to choose implementation strategies to match the different situations." In the situation at hand, we can detect limitations of both approaches: the programmed approach does not recognize the local implementer as a separate level of government with a legitimate claim to partnership in decisions that affect them, while the adaptive approach makes the questionable assumption that the level of provincial control

over municipal action cannot be increased through more coordinated action at the provincial level.

The general approach that I will adopt in the following recommendations is that programmed and adaptive implementation techniques must be combined in order to address the effectiveness concerns of the provincial government and the legitimacy concerns of municipal governments. The recommendations put forward here also attempt to incorporate the insights from the discussion at the end of the last chapter, i.e., that the ability of the municipality to resist local political forces encouraging sprawl is tied to the existence of a strong provincial policy framework, and that economic and other issues are driving municipal politicians into a greater awareness of the region as an integrated unit.

11.3. Increase the Effectiveness of the Provincial Policy Framework

11.3.1. Reform the Planning System

Recent changes to the planning system introduced by the new Conservative government in May of 1996 have transformed the policy framework described in this thesis. This is not the place for a detailed review and assessment, but a few observations on the major changes can be made. Changes include the:

- removal of the content requirements for official plans
- amendment process for official plans was considerably streamlined
- removal of the right of municipalities to require that services be in place before approving new development and the removal of the right of the OMB to summarily reject a referral from a proponent if such services were not likely to be in place within a reasonable amount of time
- provision for developers to refer municipal decisions to the OMB (in the past, developers had to request that the municipality refer the matter, giving them an opportunity to drag their heels)
- provision that only the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (the two ministries were combined) can appeal municipal planning decisions to the OMB, removing the right of appeal from ministries such as Natural Resources, and Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
- repeal of the as-of-right apartments in houses legislation, restoring municipal discretion over the right of home owners to establish basement apartments
- provision that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing may exempt a municipality from the need to seek planning approval from the province
- repeal of the "be consistent with" enabling clause for policy statements and return to the "have regard to" clause

• reduction in the prescriptiveness and detail of the comprehensive policy statements.[1]

The main relevance of these changes to the present research is that the reforms moved very far in the direction of the adaptive implementation model presented above.[2] In fact, the provisions of Bill 20 are uncannily similar to those proposed by the municipal sector and the development industry during the public discussion surrounding Bills 163 and Bill 120.[3] Ruppert (1995: 44), a former senior policy advisor to AMO, recently wrote:

> [O]ne questions, where is the provincial voice? The answer is there isn't one and that's the point. The province is repealing more provincial authority than that added in Bill 163. Municipal decision-making is increased, provincial policy-making authority and influence decreased, public consultation and appeal processes further tightened and limited, and developer rights increased.

The main justification for this provincial retreat was that the province could not possibly formulate detailed policies that would be appropriate when broadly applied across the panoply of conditions being faced by municipalities throughout the province. There is, in fact, a compelling logic to this argument, especially with respect to the difference between rural, urban, and metropolitan conditions. This is captured by Church's principle of "particularity":

> except where the case for standard policy is founded on national unity, human rights or immutable standards, policies and institutions of government should be crafted to fit the unique circumstances of various parts of the state or province (1996: 103).

Thus, rather than suggesting that the recently announced policy statement be revoked, I recommend that it be preserved as a generic statement of provincial policy interest in municipal planning decisions and be buttressed in the various regions of the province by the adoption of geographically-specific policy statements under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*. Such statements would provide detailed guidance to municipalities in different regions of the province depending on the particular economic, social, and environmental conditions that prevail within them. They should be adopted with full consultation with the municipalities involved. Regions for this purpose could be defined according to the likely pathways for positive and negative externalities, including ecological systems, housing markets, commutersheds, and economic regions. Perhaps the most promising approach would be to define a number of bioregions in the province that could serve as a basis for regional planning.[4]

11.3.2. Develop Supportive Policies From Related Ministries

The case study pointed to the fact that the province cannot expect to see its policy objectives achieved through municipal land use plans in the absence of supportive provincial policies from related ministries. The Ministries of the Environment and Energy; Transportation;

Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs; Finance; Economic Development and Trade; and other growth and land-related ministries should adopt an explicit policy in favour of efficient use of land as an objective to be pursued through their policies, programs, operating procedures, and their spending decisions. Specifically, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy should consider the spatial implications of its environmental protection policies and include the environmental impacts of any measure that contributes to sprawl as one of the policy costs. This would include storm water and soil decommissioning standards, as well as separation distances between "incompatible" land uses. The Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, and Tourism should assess its many initiatives from the point of view of the province's expressed policy to direct new growth to Metropolitan Toronto and suburban mixed-use commercial nodes. Recommendations for other ministries appear below. Finally, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs should consider adopting innovative and cost-effective measures to support farming as an economic activity in the urban shadow around Toronto. For instance, special tax breaks for farmers that accept conservation easements, helping to fund land trusts, transfer of development rights programs, and in particularly sensitive areas, outright purchase of development rights (Hilts and Mitchell, 1993).

11.3.3. Reform Provincial-Municipal Fiscal Relations

Reform of provincial-municipal relations is needed in order to reduce the property tax dependence of municipalities in the region and to obviate tax pressures towards sprawl. Most importantly, responsibility for funding social services such as schools and welfare should be removed from the property tax and transferred to the province. This would eliminate the need for tax pooling in the region, reduce the fiscal flight of businesses from within Metropolitan Toronto and reduce the incentive for fiscal zoning by suburban municipalities. Furthermore, the *Development Charges Act* should be amended to require that municipalities base development charges on the marginal cost of growth-related capital expenses.

The municipal granting system should be reformed so as to incorporate intensification objectives that would reduce subsidization of scattered rural development. Variables such as income, number of new immigrants, and other indicators of service-dependency should be incorporated into the granting formula, instead of the current system based on assessment only. This would direct more provincial money to Metropolitan Toronto and help stem core decline.

11.3.4. Link Infrastructure and Transit Funding to Achievement of Relevant Land-use Objectives

That provincial infrastructure funding and grants to municipalities are declining does not mean that the province must relinquish its attempts to influence municipal decisions to meet

provincial objectives. The province should link infrastructure investment and transfers to municipal performance on relevant measures related to land use. For instance, increases in transit funding should be made conditional on the adoption and implementation of transit-supportive policies in municipal official plans, road spending should be made conditional the adoption of alternative development standards, and so on.[5]

11.3.5. The Ontario Municipal Board

Intervenor funding should be provided to support citizen intervention in OMB hearings on official plans and official plan amendments when the Board feels confident that the perspective being brought forward is in the public interest.

11.4. Strengthen Institutions of Regional Cooperation

11.4.1. Focus on the OGTA as a Vehicle for Provincial Planning in the Region

The role of the OGTA has been allowed to decline over the last three years, losing staff, its Deputy Minister, and its credibility. Yet, the office is an obvious vehicle for strengthening the province's role in regional planning and in cooperating with municipalities in the region. The role of the office should be strengthened by adopting the following measures:

11.4.2. The OGTA Should Coordinate Policies and Spending of Provincial Line Departments

The OGTA should have its original mandate restored: i.e., to coordinate the decision-making among provincial line departments as they effect the GTA. Carrying out this function will require substantial increases in staffing and other resources. The office should assume responsibility for the regional transportation plan (see below), the funding of major water and sewage facilities, economic development, and environmental protection.

11.4.3. Merge OGTA/Plans Appraisal Branch

One of the insights gained from the research conducted for this thesis is that the agency responsible for overseeing municipal compliance with provincial policies in official plans should also be responsible for coordinating the activities of other state agencies that can affect development patterns in the metropolitan region and whose cooperation is required in order to implement any regional plan or vision. Thus, the OGTA should also assume responsibility for plan approval within the GTA.

11.4.4. Adopt a GTA Policy Statement

As mentioned in Chapter 10, the province has failed to adopt a GTA policy statement under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, although a draft statement has been available for at least three

years. This statement should be officially adopted as one of the regional policy statements recommended in Section 11.3.1. This would respond to a number of the issues raised in the last chapter. It would:

- serve as a statement of the province's "urban policy" in the GTA
- bring current bureaucratic practices into the political sphere by incorporating planning objectives of regional importance
- give more legitimacy to regional planning objectives.

Although the actual targets should be adopted under separate annexes, the GTA Policy Statement should incorporate provisions for each of the following:

- population and employment allocations
- an urban limit line
- affordable housing allocations to each upper-tier region
- intensification and minimum density objectives
- an urban structure vision, including a full hierarchy of nodes and corridors
- shared definitions and terminology on density and intensification, in order to facilitate a regional discussion on relevant planning policies, to standardize planning concepts, and to facilitate monitoring of planning objectives
- a process for negotiating actual objectives with municipalities in the region.

The process for creating the policy statement should include consideration of alternative development patterns, fiscal, economic, social, and environmental impacts, building on the results of the 1990 IBI study and subsequent revisions. A number of comprehensive regional planning process formats are available, including those based on an ecosystem approach (e.g., Tomalty et al., 1994).

11.4.5. Set Growth/ Land-use Objectives

Actual planning and growth-related objectives should be negotiated under the authority of the GTA policy statement and expressed in updatable annexes. These objectives should be expressed in the form of numerical targets wherever feasible. This is crucial from an implementation, monitoring, and adaptation point of view. Municipalities are more likely to accept numerically expressed targets if they are the result of negotiations between provincial and municipal representatives. Targets should be established for the GTA as a whole and then distributed to upper-tier municipalities through negotiations between those governments and the OGTA. Upper-tier targets should be distributed to lower-tier municipalities through inter-municipal agreements. Area municipalities should be given the flexibility to achieve the targets on a municipality-wide basis rather than a site-by-site basis.

11.4.6. Create a Regional Transportation Plan

In Chapter 9, we saw that the nodes and corridors concept depended heavily on provincial investment in transportation and that the uncertainty associated with this was undermining municipal confidence in the nodes and corridors concept. As mentioned in Chapter 10, a GTA transportation plan is being elaborated by the Ministry of Transportation. Preliminary documents showed that there are three key dimensions to the regional transportation plan: demand management, the rehabilitation of the existing system, and system expansion. The transportation plan will link with the nodes and corridors concept embedded in upper-tier official plans now emerging in the region. The plan will "clearly reflect the inter-connections between the way we use and settle land in our communities and the form of transportation system required to service these settlement patterns" (Ontario Ministry of Transportation, 1995a: 2). Among the specific goals formulated early in the planning exercise were to the reduced use of single occupant vehicles and minimization of the need for greenfield development. The latter was softened to "transit-supportive landuse pattern" in later versions of the document (Ontario Ministry of Transportation, 1995b).

Without question, the GTA transportation planning exercise is a major undertaking that has considerable potential to influence land-use patterns well into the future. After two years of work, the transportation is still only in the goals formulation and study design stage, considerably behind schedule. This provides the opportunity to modify the process in several important respects:

- the nodes and corridor hierarchy that is embedded in the plan should be those determined through the regional visioning exercise and described in the GTA policy statement, not those embedded in the current upper-tier official plans
- intensification of suburban land use should be re-introduced as a goal of the transportation plan
- responsibility for the plan creation process should be moved to the OGTA, with increased administrative resources dedicated to developing and implementing the transportation plan
- besides close cooperation with municipal governments, the planning process should include wide-scale consultations with interest groups across the region.

11.4.7. Implement a Joint Monitoring/Response System

Objectives and targets in official plans are meaningless unless resources are committed to tracking progress towards those objectives. The type of monitoring/response system that is put in place will depend on whether programmed or adaptive implementation model is adopted for this purpose. In programmed implementation, monitoring is done in order to

adjust the behaviour of implementers so as to enhance their fidelity to policy objectives. In adaptive implementation, monitoring is done in order to adapt the policy to the conditions prevailing at the level of the local implementing unit. In fact, monitoring can serve both purposes: it will show where municipalities must adjust plans and development control activities to meet targets, but should also give information on local conditions that may make achieving targets more onerous than first thought. Under these conditions, new targets should be negotiated between lower-tier and upper-tier municipalities in order to redistribute targets across area municipalities within the region, and, in the case where conditions have changes so dramatically that the upper-tier municipality feels that it will not be able to meet the overall goal, the target should be renegotiated with the OGTA.

11.4.8. Build a Regional Consciousness and Public Support for Regional Planning

There is currently a mismatch between the growing reality of the region as an economic, social, and ecological entity and the fragmented consciousness of the region's citizens, who still identify most closely with local municipal institutions. Municipalities and developers speak to the region's residents as consumers of housing and tax payers. But Hirsch (1976) has pointed out that when individuals pursue the ideal home and lower taxes on the urban fringe, they actually contribute to the extension of the urban envelope, traffic congestion, and environmental deterioration that destroys the sought-after situation. This suggests a role for regional institutions in informing the region's citizens of the real tradeoffs available to them.

As pointed out in the last chapter, however, the OGTA has accepted "municipalities as gatekeepers, a way to filter the views of residents up to higher levels of government" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, 1991b: 6). But, as the main institution or regionalization in the GTA, the OGTA must overcome its disinclination for direct contact with the citizens of the region, and should play a more active role in building a regional consciousness. The main strategy here should be to focus on the links between "everyday experience" (such as traffic jams, high housing prices, crime, isolation, disappearance of favourite landscapes and so on) and regional planning issues. Overall, the OGTA must undertake to increase public awareness that regional problems transcend municipal problems and require regional solutions. This could be done through an extensive program of regional visioning, and through public consultations on a new GTA policy statement.

If provincial policy objectives are to have more weight in the implementation process, they must have wider legitimacy, i.e., they must involve a wider constituency beyond municipal officials and politicians. Thus, OGTA facilitated regional planning exercises should

include major stakeholders such as environmental groups, business groups, labour, farm groups, social planning and advocacy groups, and so on.

To address the municipal argument that regional issues are adequately dealt with through municipal institutions that represent citizens, the OGTA should build upon the emerging awareness among municipal non-elected officials (such as planners) that the region is more than the sum of its parts from a planning point of view, and the heightened awareness of local politicians that the region in one economic entity for purposes of economic development and global competitiveness.

11.4.9. Launch a Joint Research Program

As noted in previous chapters, a basic lack of research on key issues related to regional growth and on the central claims of the compact city notion have helped to undermine progress on this issue. Thus, the OGTA should undertake, in collaboration with municipalities of the region, to launch an ambitious growth related program. Such a research program should include:

- Identifying the potential for intensification on a area-by-area basis throughout the GTA, applying consistent standards such as: excess servicing capacity; access to facilities; servicing standards for libraries, police, traffic, and so on; housing demand; land ownership patterns; etc.
- Studying the relationship between land-use patterns and economic, social and environmental variables should be more extensively explored within the regional context. This could also serve as a basis for the OGTA-facilitated regional planning exercise described above. In particular, the connection between land-use and fiscal issues should be better explored, with attention paid to expenditures by the various levels of government involved.
- The social impacts of intensification and higher-density living, including the acceptability of various intensification forms, the market demand for various types of medium and higher-density development, design issues, and so on.
- The desirable mix of land uses in nodes and corridors; the likely demand for housing, employment and services in the designated areas under a variety of future scenarios; an assessment of the currently designated nodes and corridors from an economic point of view; and, the financial implications of the nodes and corridors strategy for all levels of government.

11.4.10.Establish a Municipally-Controlled Regional Coordinating Body

While the province has a major role to play in coordinating decisions in the region, the region's municipalities must also develop their own identity as members of a regional entity. Some institution of municipal cooperation is required in order to interact from a municipal perspective with the strengthened OGTA, to help resolve inter-municipal conflicts, and to serve as a forum for consensus building on initiatives jointly sponsored by the OGTA and the municipal forum.

The purpose of the municipal coordinating body should be to provide a forum where regional issues can be discussed, to act as a catalyst for the creation of inter-municipal agreements and special-purpose bodies, and to serve as an advocate for the GTA in provincial and federal fora.

Several governance proposals have emerged to compete with the regional government recommendations of the GTA Task Force, discussed in the last chapter. The GTA Mayors and Regional Chairs Committee has rejected the idea of a Greater Toronto Council and instead has proposed a GTA forum of municipal leaders to regularly address the over-all concerns of the region. They have suggested that the forum be served by a small provincial government secretariat and that it would meet monthly to coordinate such things as economic development and cross-boundary issues like waste, water, sewer, roads and transit. It would have no taxing authority. The province would have the final say in resolving disputes in absence of a consensus. Such a body could help coordinate municipal input into regional planning exercises conducted by the OGTA and its creation should be supported by the provincial government.

11.5. Strengthen Municipal Planning

11.5.1. Strengthen Planning Capacity of Upper-Tier Governments

The case study showed that upper-tier governments played an ambivalent role in the region: while they increasingly served as a linchpin between provincial policy interests and municipal planning decisions, they were hamstrung by political factors that reduced their willingness to contravene lower-tier planning decisions. The GTA Task Force recommended the abolition of the upper-tier governments and their replacement by a politically and legally weaker metropolitan-wide council, trading geographical comprehensiveness for jurisdictional potency. The lack of political support for this option makes its realization extremely doubtful. Furthermore, abolishing upper-tier municipalities might play into the hands of a powerful movement among the large lower-tier municipalities to remove all regional coordination.

Thus, it is recommended here that upper-tier municipalities be preserved, but that their planning functions be strengthened by modifying the Region of Durham, Peel, York, and Halton constitutive acts in order to establish a uniform method of direct election, as is currently used in Metropolitan Toronto. Although circumstances certainly differ, the performance of Metropolitan Toronto council since its shift to direct election in 1988 has shown that upper-tier governments can be strong advocates in favour of higher-density more compact development forms, balancing lower-tier objections. Furthermore, directly elected upper-tier councils may be more insulated from growth and anti-growth coalitions due to the fact that they are not so close to site-specific planning issues.

11.5.2. Strengthen the Planning Capacity of Lower-Tier Municipalities

If a more collaborative relationship between the provincial government and municipalities in the region is to prevail, then municipal institutions need to be reformed so as to increase confidence in local decision-making and improve local planning. The main recommendation with respect to local government must be to increase its capacity for autonomous decision-making in the face of powerful growth and anti-growth coalitions. This can be encouraged by:

- reducing the fragmentation of the local state in the GTA, by putting library boards, police boards, hydro commissions, transit commissions and so on under the control of municipal councils[6]
- reducing fiscal dependence on property tax (as discussed above)
- proclaiming the *Local Government Disclosure of Interest Act* and carrying through with the appointment of Commissioners under Section 7 of the act[7]
- transferring control over local infrastructure spending, especially on transportation, to the planning department.[8]

11.5.3. Modify Planning Practices

Zoning and planning regulations on density, building size, lot size, exaggerated development standards, minimum separation distances, and prohibited uses of the land have impeded intensification and a mix of housing and land uses. These should be addressed by:

- adopting alternative development standards for both greenfield development and redevelopment in existing areas
- replacing single-using zoning with flexible zoning techniques that encourage a mix of uses and the most efficient use of land.[9]

11.5.4. Improve the Quality of Public Participation

The final recommendation concerns improving the quality of public participation in municipal planning processes. Most importantly, mechanisms should be found for providing citizens

with realistic alternatives with respect to growth management options. Residents sometimes desire incompatible development objectives, such as modest growth, no expansion onto rural lands, and no intensification of existing areas. Experience in other jurisdictions suggests that when planners present citizens with the choice among intensification and realistic alternatives to such a planning strategy, resistance to intensification softens. For example, when confronted with the choices between more residential growth in their neighbourhood and increasing traffic congestion from commuters beyond the neighbourhood, citizens may choose the former. Or, when asked if they would prefer to preserve their own districts at the expense of preserving industrial employment lands, they chose to allow neighbourhood changes and preserve industrial lands in their current use (DeMarco, 1995).

Municipalities should also consider innovative ways of tying improvements in neighbourhood quality to intensification. For example, funding for neighbourhood amenities such as parks, daycares and libraries in neighbourhoods could be linked to an acceptance of increased densities.[10]

11.6. Research Limitations, Value of this Study, and Directions for Future Research

In this final section, I reflect on the limitations of the present case study and on how the study could be improved. I then propose a number of ways by which the results of the present case study may inform future research of a more directed nature in the GTA and other metropolitan area in Canada.

The present study has a number of limitations that flow from the research design: it focuses rather narrowly on official plans and more or less ignores the broad range of other municipal planning outputs that could be used as measures of the degree of implementation of the provincial policy framework; it is concerned almost exclusively with residential density rather than the broader array of land uses that help determine whether an urban region is compact or not; and it relies for interview evidence exclusively on provincial officials and municipal planners, ignoring the broad range of other stakeholders involved in the intensification policy formulation and implementation process. Each of these limitations is dealt with in more detail here.

The focus of this research has been on provincial planning policy and policies embedded in official plans. As acknowledged earlier, an official plan policy is only the first step in implementation at the local level: secondary plans, subdivision agreements, zoning bylaws, and building permits translate official plan policies into built forms on the ground. Comments have been made throughout the thesis as to the implications of the research findings for these further implementation steps, but future research could expand on this aspect of the study considerably. For instance, a study centering on development applications

in the wake of the provincial adoption of various aspects of the intensification policy framework might be a fruitful way of seeing how long it takes policies to be translated into practice by developers and which aspects of the development process are most affected.

This type of investigation would also allow us to determine whether and how intensification is actually happening on the ground: i.e., is intensification happening in a policy-led fashion or a developer-led fashion? For instance, do redevelopment areas such as nodes and corridors appearing in official plans and secondary plans show signs of intensification? Is this where the majority of applications are coming in? Or do developers seem to be pursuing other signals, unrelated to the policy framework, such as land values, the reputation of municipal planning departments for speedy or slow processing of applications, the political orientation of councils, or the likelihood of neighbourhood opposition?

Another limitation of the research is that it focuses almost exclusively on residential density. As Simpson (1993: 7-8) has noted:

> If intensification is to achieve the goal of greatly reducing the amount of land required for new urban development, it must focus on more than just the space required for private residences. In a typical community in southern Ontario, private land represents only about one-third of a community's urban land. Public and community uses account for a greater share of the land area. There has not been enough acknowledgment of the need to lower standards and to reconsider issues such as the size of school sites, and road widths and setbacks, among many others.

Furthermore, the benefits of compact urban form may rely less on residential densities and more on the spatial distribution of economic activities, and the relationship of those activities to residential areas (Bourne, 1994). While it was not ignored, this issue played a secondary role in the present analysis. Thus, future research could broaden the scope of the present study to include a detailed analysis of provincial policies meant to influence the spatial distribution of economic activities and municipal reaction to those policies. Development patterns for other land uses, such as industrial, commercial and institutional could be tracked to determine overall trends and policy influences on them.

This research relied heavily on information provided by provincial officials and municipal planners in interpreting official documents and arriving at general conclusions about the nature of the provincial-municipal relationship. Arguably, planners may have a wider perspective than other bureaucratic functionaries on urban issues and the political and economic factors underlying planning choices. Needless to say, however, planners have their own professional interests and ideas that undoubtedly colour their interpretation of policies and other matters relevant to the present research. Thus, one way to broaden the significance of this study would be to incorporate the views of other functionaries, politicians, and other

stakeholders in the official planning process, such as citizen groups and development corporations.

Despite these limitations, I believe the present study may be useful for a number of purposes. This study has focussed attention on the implementation stage of the policy process and detailed the considerable "slippage" between policy formulation at the provincial level and policy implementation at the local level. Such research is not widespread in Canada, and as a result policy makers at the provincial level and planners at the municipal level have little in the way of empirical knowledge to guide their actions. This study therefore may have some value to planners and politicians involved in land-use issues. Within the GTA itself, the policy and planning framework affecting the density of residential land use had never been fully described and it is hoped that the descriptive elements presented in this thesis are adequately detailed and coherently presented so as to give practitioners a comprehensive view of the policies, administrative features, and intergovernmental dynamics involved.

I have also tried to make a contribution to the theoretical literature on the problems associated with policy implementation. In this respect, I hope that the detailed attention given to the issue of local agent autonomy in affecting implementation will particularly interest students of public administration, policy analysis, and political science.

This leads to the third contribution of the study: it helps sheds some light on the changing nature of provincial-municipal relations in Ontario. By relating the official planning process to larger institutional, political, and economic factors, I was able to interpret official plan outcomes in terms of a changing context that seems to be favouring municipal autonomy from provincial oversight.

Fourth, by focusing on a single variable—i.e., the intensity of residential land use—the study has been able to link province-wide growth management, housing, and urban structure policies to regional planning policies. This tended to complicate the analysis but paid off in terms of the comparisons it allowed between the two types of policy in terms of policy formulation processes, level of consultation with municipalities, and level of implementation.

Fifth, I have endeavoured to lay the groundwork for other researchers to structure their research methods and test plausible hypotheses. Future research could be based on determining the importance of any of the 13 factors suggested in Chapter 10 in helping to explain the observed planning outcomes. For instance, it was suggested that the declining authority of the OGTA may have been important in reducing provincial authority over municipal planning decisions in the GTA. This could be more thoroughly investigated in a multiple case study design comparing a number of urban regions with more and less effective regional planning institutions. Beyond the detailed treatment of explanatory factors offered in Chapter 10, I have elsewhere in the thesis proposed explanations for the observed planning

outcomes and these could also serve as the basis for deeper explanatory research designs in the future. Here I mention a few of the potential hypotheses that emerged from the present case study:

- public resistance to intensification is heightened in municipalities where most of the recent higher density housing has been for low-income users
- the commitment of individual municipal officials to intensification goals plays an important role in explaining different municipal responses to the same provincial intensification framework
- public acceptance of intensification can be increased through public education exercises
- the stage of maturation of a municipality has an influence on the acceptance of the need for intensification, at least on the opinions and attitudes of planning staff (i.e., mature municipalities with little or no land available for greenfield development may be more amenable to intensification as a planning policy)
- institutions of regional coordination will be stronger in urban regions where there is positive identification among suburbanites with the fate of the central city.

Sixth, I hope that the conceptual innovations and applications contained in the thesis will help researchers in the design of studies relevant to other metropolitan areas of the country. Specifically, the conceptual organization of intensification policies into growth management, housing supply, and urban structure may help other researchers to bring order to the often confusing array of indirectly-related policy initiatives at the provincial and municipal levels. Furthermore, the contrast between the provincial vision of a more compact urban region and municipal planning strategies presented in the case study of the GTA may also provide investigators in other regions with guideposts for their research, i.e.,:

- growth management versus expansion management
- intensification opportunities widely distributed versus site-specific intensification
- an urban structure based on a limited number of nodes and corridors versus diffuse nodal development without connecting corridors.

I also hope that researchers find the application of the policy formulator-implementor typology to an intergovernmental context useful in conceptualizing provincial-municipal relations in other metropolitan regions. The distinction made in this thesis between growth accommodating and growth restricting policies—and the different municipal response to the two policy types—may also help other investigators form hypotheses and interpret empirical results.

Finally, the GTA case study findings may shed light on intensification efforts in other metropolitan areas of the country and lead to fruitful speculation on how intensification efforts in those areas might compare with those in the Toronto region. Extrapolating the

findings to other jurisdictions is, of course, a perilous task, largely because of the differing legislative frameworks operating in provinces across the country, including the institutions governing provincial-municipal relations, but also because of differences in political cultures, and economic conditions. Nonetheless, I will offer a few thoughts on the applicability of the present study to Canada's two other largest metropolitan regions:

The Montreal region shares many relevant features with the GTA. It is a large metropolitan area with a relatively powerful regional government at its metropolitan core, and a number of less effective regional governments governing the outer suburban areas. Thus, it has no unified planning authority that embraces the entire region, making the provincial government the effective regional planner. As briefly recounted in Chapter 2, previous attempts at regional planning by the province came to naught due to suburban resistance and lack of provincial coordination, much the same destiny met by the TCR concept. Core area decline has also become a major political concern in the region, and has been linked to the issue of suburban sprawl. As in Toronto, a recent task force recommended the creation of a regional government in order to achieve—among other objectives—a more compact region. Resistance from suburban municipalities is expected to prevent the province from moving ahead with jurisdictional reform.[11] Finally, the Quebec government has adopted new province-wide growth management policies to steer a new generation of upper-tier plans, much the same as the provincial strategy in the GTA.

However, there are also major contrasts between the GTA and the Montreal region:

- there has been no attempt to direct population or employment growth among the Montreal region's municipalities
- there is a provincially-controlled agricultural land preservation commission, but its influence over municipal planning is purely negative: it can prevent the premature urbanization of particular sites but cannot exercise a regional planning function
- growth management based on an urban structure vision will be more problematic because of the over 100 municipalities in the metropolitan region[12]
- Quebec has not tried to influence housing supply through municipal level policies and has no counterpart to Ontario's Housing Policy Statement[13]
- the upper-tier regional municipalities have fewer powers to implement a provincial growth management vision
- municipalities are more independent from a fiscal point of view, i.e., the province pays for social services such as education and welfare and municipalities receive less in the way of provincial transfers for operating costs.

Thus, it would seem that although the province is facing many of the same sprawl-related problems in the Montreal region as Ontario faces in the Toronto region, Quebec has a

much less authoritative planning system in place, there are fewer mechanisms for provincial and regional interests to be translated into municipal actions, and municipalities have more motivation and leverage to resist provincial policy efforts. Given these conditions, we might expect that the provincial interest in more compact cities would be more weakly expressed at the local level—in particular with respect to encouraging a range and mix of housing types in suburban areas—and that official planning documents in that region would show less evidence of a concern for the intensity of residential land use. We would not expect to find strong evidence of municipal plan coordination in terms of the expression of a metropolitan urban structure. Nor could we expect that the challenge to the province in creating collaborative mechanisms to overcome municipal resistance would be any less than daunting.

In some ways, the Vancouver region has less in common with the GTA from a provincial-municipal relations perspective than does Montreal. The province has had little direct role in managing growth in the region, choosing instead to create the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), a geographically comprehensive regional institution to manage growth and provide growth-related infrastructure (except transportation facilities). Thus, the province has few policies meant to influence municipal planning, whether growth management, housing supply, or urban structure. In fact, its political culture obviates any top-down type of provincial-regional-municipal planning and favours a more adaptive, shared-decision making approach. Even BC's new *Growth Strategies Act* avoids a top-down approach by relying on "cross-acceptance" of planning policies between the GVRD and its component municipalities.

Interestingly, however, the GVRD has adopted planning objectives that are very similar to those that have been adopted through facilitation of the OGTA in the Toronto region: a regional plan based on a hierarchy of "town centres" connected by transit corridors, a better balance of residential and employment land uses in various areas of the region, and a population allocation that favours the central area of the metropolitan region over suburban areas up the Fraser Valley.

Therefore, we would expect that a case study of the GVRD focusing on official community plans would reveal that region-wide growth management goals are not very ambitious but that they would be relatively well expressed at the municipal level. We would expect to see the GVRD-approved urban structure embedded in municipal plans, but there may be the tendency for municipalities to further designate a number of local centres that would detract from the viability of the regional urban structure. We would not expect to see strong housing supply policies relating to the distribution of intensification opportunities throughout the urban fabric.

[1] The new policy statement under section 3 of the Act were less than half the length of the comprehensive set adopted by the NDP. The new housing policies did not require that municipalities provide opportunities for affordable housing or intensification through their planning decisions. The affordable housing target was dropped and intensification policies were considerably diluted such that municipalities were asked merely to "facilitate residential redevelopment. "Provisions that were desirable from the development community's point of view were retained: i.e., maintaining a 10-year supply of designated land and a 3-year supply of residential units in draft approved or registered plans of subdivision. The new policies dropped the provision to encourage development standards that would facilitate compact and affordable residential development and replaced it with a policy to encourage "cost-effective" standards.

Growth management policies were also affected: growth would still be directed to urban and rural settlement areas but the requirement that growth occur in the form of "logical extensions" to built-up or already designated areas was dropped. Rather than regulating change on the basis of spatial criteria, the new policies pointed to economic criteria: new land for development should be designated on the basis of the efficient use of "land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and avoid the need for unnecessary and/or uneconomical expansion of services and infrastructure." This wording would leave it up to municipalities to decide the most efficient spatial form for new development.

Requirements that new development be compact in form and that municipalities provide opportunities for intensification of existing areas were also dropped. Provisions to support transit were also considerably weakened in the new policy statements.

Environmental policies underwent significant changes. The new policy statement maintains the restrictions on residential development in prime agricultural areas but changes in growth management policies will probably weaken farmland protection. Restrictions on development were maintained in significant wetlands and endangered and threatened species habitat but reduced for some other natural features, including: a reduction the geographical area where the greatest restrictions apply; removal of outright restriction on development that will negatively affect groundwater recharge areas, head-waters and aquifers that have been identified as sensitive areas; and removal of the requirement that the proponent conduct an environmental impact study in areas adjacent to protected natural heritage features and areas.

[2] What are the implications of these policy changes for the three compromise strategies being embodied in municipal plans?

Like the previous provincial policy framework, the new policies encourage municipalities to designate land for new development in the most economically efficient manner so as to minimize the private and public expense associated with land development.2 However, the new policies do not require that municipalities explore or exploit intensification opportunities before allowing greenfield development or that intensification opportunities be created within the built up area. These changes suggest that the province has moved closer to recognizing the municipal approach to growth management, i.e., what I have called expansion management. The effect of these changes will be to lay less emphasis on the spatial aspect of expansion management and focus concern on its fiscal aspect.

By restoring municipal authority to prohibit basement apartments in low-density neighbourhoods and by eliminating the requirement that municipalities create opportunities for intensification throughout the municipality, the new policies confirm the municipal approach to the previous policy framework, i.e., to direct intensification pressures to specific sites where community resistance will be lowest and advantages of intensification will be greatest. Thus, the new policy framework appear to adopt the site-specific approach to intensification that was characteristic of municipal governments.

Because the new policy framework does not deal with regional governance, it will not impact directly on the urban structure aspects of the previous policy framework. In fact, this was one issue of significance to the present report that was not addressed in the reform or counter-reform process: regional planning in metropolitan areas.

[3] Corroborating the observations made in Chapter 10 concerning the difference in perspective between elected and non-elected municipal officials, planners have generally denounced the recent changes to the planning system (e.g., Sniezek, 1996). As one planner interviewed for this research said:

> The problem is that no matter how forceful the municipal plan is in preserving environmental features and promoting compact development, everything could be changed through future amendments to the plan. If there are no teeth in provincial policy to hang your planning hat on, you're in trouble. The weakened policies and the "have regard for" provision is a major boon to developers who want to develop in areas we were hoping would be off limits... "Have regards to" gives developers a second crack at it because they can appeal the municipal plan on grounds that "no doesn't mean no." There are lots of ways to have regard to a policy. There is a trade-off between municipal autonomy to interpret provincial policies in a way that makes sense given our planning situation and the ability to make our plans stick.

[4] This is an approach that seems to be gaining favour in the literature on regional planning in Canada. See, for example, Wright, 1996; Church, 1996; Tomalty, 1994.

[5] In 1995, the Ministries of Housing and Municipal Affairs released a report entitled *Making Choices: Alternative Development Standards*. The guidelines were designed to encourage affordable and compact urban form, especially in new greenfield development. The standards include both engineering issues such as the placement of above and below ground utilities, storm drainage, water distribution, and planning issues such as lot and road widths and setback requirements. The fact that they have been released as guidelines rather than as provincial policy, means that their application is purely voluntary on the part of municipalities and developers.

[6] The Canadian Urban Institute (1995) recently counted almost 300 boards, agencies and commissions among the 35 municipalities in the GTA, most of which were completely or relatively autonomous from municipal councils.

[7] This act represented the fulfillment of an NDP promise to "clean up municipal politics", which they had repeatedly made while in opposition. It set out a clear process for avoiding conflicts of interest by municipal councillors. For instance, it prohibited councillors from accepting "gifts", often associated with undue influence by developers, and established a Commissioner's office that was empowered to investigate allegations of impropriety. Not surprisingly, the legislation was extremely unpopular among the municipal sector. The act was proclaimed by the former NDP government at the end of March, 1995, then rescinded in the middle of April, the day before the provincial election writ was issued. A well-informed official at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing claimed that the NDP rescinded the act because it did not want to fight a provincial election with municipal councils uniformly arrayed against them.

[8] This has been done with positive results in the City of Vaughan in York Region.

[9] Such techniques, sometimes called "performance-based zoning" were pioneered in Canada in the City of Vancouver. A similar planning approach is being piloted in two declining industrial/commercial areas in the City of Toronto that have seen large-scale illegal conversion to residential use (see the City of Toronto, 1996).

[10] Such linkages are being considered in the Vancouver region (*Vancouver Sun*, January 27, 1990; December 6, 1994: B3).

[11] In fact, suburban-urban conflicts are even more deep seated in the Montreal region than in Toronto. There seems to be more resentment towards the central city by suburbanites, perhaps fuelled by linguistic differences and deep political divisions over the desirable future of the province within the Canadian federation. This reduces the opportunities and likelihood of achieving regional coordination, and increases the responsibility of the province to assume the regional perspective. In general, the City of Montreal is more supportive of regional government than the City of Toronto—largely because the Montreal task force did not recommend extensive tax pooling across the region.

[12] As we saw in the GTA, each municipality would like to be the site of at least one nodal area—a manageable proposition in the Toronto region but one that would lead to diffuse sprawl in the Montreal region.

[1313] This may not be that significant a difference due to the fact that housing supply issue are not as important in the Montreal area: the region has higher vacancy rates and lower house prices than in Toronto.

PLEASE NOTE

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