

**Toronto Parkway Belt West Plan:  
A Spatial-Temporal Land Use Study (1978-2002)**

By

**Darryl S. Lyons**

**A Master's Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master in Urban and Regional Planning**

**The School of Urban and Regional Planning  
Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario**

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## ***Executive Summary***

This report aims to trace and analyze the temporal land use change on the Parkway Belt in order to develop a set of recommendations to aid in the five-year plan review. Within this report, a Geographical Information System (GIS) was used in conjunction with existing database and image data to assessing spatial and temporal land use change on the Toronto Parkway Belt from 1978 to 2002. Planners in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) face difficult decisions pertaining to the delicate balance between environmental protection, economic/urban expansion and population growth. These problems are not temporary issues, caused by political ideology, economic recession or ecological awareness; rather, they go to the historic core of planning and have resulted in the need for strong regional planning direction.

The 1978 Toronto Parkway Belt West Plan was the culmination of regional planning , greenbelt and greenway planning, that attempted to direct present and future land use requirements in order to avoid the current dilemma facing the GTA. The Plan consisted of seven links which extended for a distance of 95 kilometres, and was to act as a multi-purpose, utility corridor, urban separator and open space system; however, this study illustrates that twenty-four years since its enactment, the Plan has undergone a massive reduction (30%) of land through application amendments and thereby failed to achieve many of its objectives and goals. Through GIS analysis and the creation of a temporal database, the changes to the Parkway Belt were tracked and assessed to provide a lens in which to ascertain why these changes occurred. To supplement the data findings, research of the Plan policy and trends in the Greater Toronto Area were researched to provide rationale for the land use change and aid in finding solutions.

From this research, a number of themes pertaining to the life cycle of the Plan were identified through the report and policy recommendations were proposed to aid the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in their five year review to resurrect the ideals of regional planning within Southern Ontario through modifications to the Plan.