



# Overview of the Greater Toronto Area

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# Outline of Presentation

- ❑ Canadian/Ontario context
- ❑ Description of the Greater Toronto Area and Greater Golden Horseshoe
- ❑ History of restructuring of Toronto 1954 - present
- ❑ Regional decision-making in the Toronto region



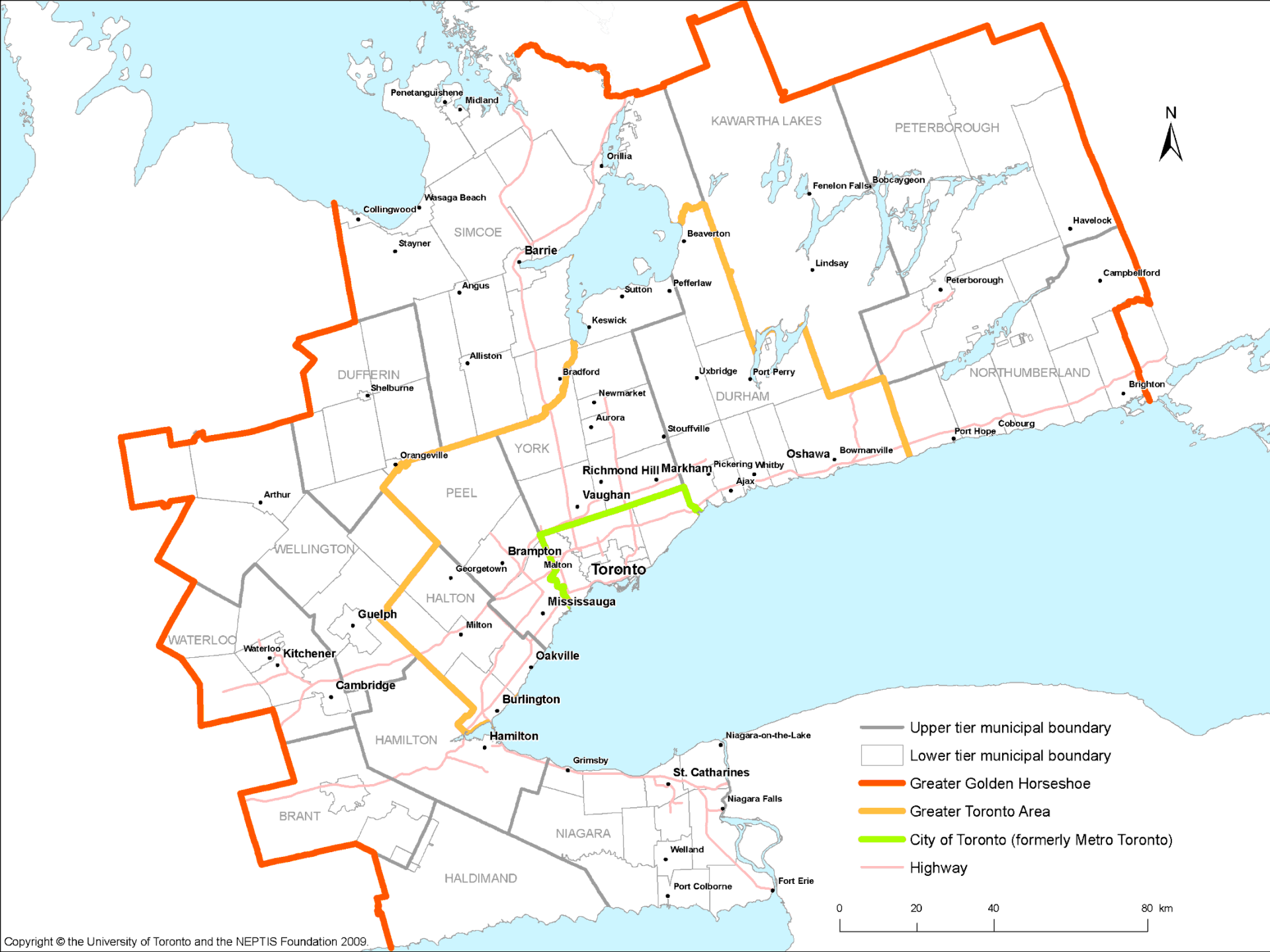
# Canadian Context

- ❑ Similar to the US, Canada is a federation with 3 levels of government: federal, provincial, local
- ❑ Constitutionally, municipalities are creatures of the province
- ❑ Province can create or eliminate municipalities
- ❑ Province determines municipal expenditure responsibilities and sources of revenue
- ❑ Province sets borrowing rules for municipalities (except Toronto)



# Local Governments in Ontario

- ❑ Counties and regions (upper tiers)
  - ❑ Include local municipalities within their boundaries
  - ❑ Provide services over an area that includes one or more municipalities
  - ❑ Counties mainly in rural areas
  - ❑ Regions mainly in urban areas
  
- ❑ Local municipalities
  - ❑ Cities, towns, townships, villages
  - ❑ Referred to as lower-tier municipalities in regions/counties
  - ❑ Referred to as single-tier municipalities where there is only one level of government in the area (e.g. Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa)





# Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

- ❑ One single-tier city – Toronto (2.6 million)
  
- ❑ Four regional governments (two-tier):
  - Peel: 1.3 million people; 3 area municipalities
  - Halton: 502,000 people; 4 area municipalities
  - Durham: 608,000 people; 8 area municipalities
  - York: 1 million people; 9 area municipalities
  
- ❑ Total: 6.1 million people; 29 municipal governments



# Greater Golden Horseshoe

- ❑ GTA plus Hamilton ++
- ❑ Population: 8.76 million
- ❑ 68% of the population of the Province of Ontario (12.9 million)
- ❑ 26% of the population of Canada



# Restructuring of Toronto

- ❑ 1954: Metropolitan Toronto was created by provincial legislation
- ❑ Two-tier government structure: metropolitan tier plus 13 lower-tier municipalities
- ❑ 1967: number of municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto was reduced from 13 to 6 through amalgamations; some more functions to metropolitan level
- ❑ 1985: direct election to metropolitan government





# Restructuring Toronto

- ❑ Metropolitan level: borrowing, transit, police services, social assistance, traffic control and operations, licensing, conservation, waste disposal, and ambulance services
- ❑ Lower-tier governments: fire protection, garbage collection, licensing and inspection, local distribution of hydro-electric power, public health, recreation and community services, and tax collection.
- ❑ Both tiers: parks, planning, roads and traffic control, sewage disposal, and water supply.



# Restructuring Toronto

- ❑ Creation of two-tier government designed to:
  - ❑ Redistribute wealth of central city to suburbs to provide infrastructure
  - ❑ Coordinate land use planning and transportation across the region
  - ❑ Allow lower tiers to be responsive to local needs



# Restructuring Toronto

- ❑ Early reviews applauded success of two-tier structure ... until 1990s
- ❑ Concerns were expressed about:
  - ❑ the ability of the Metro government to address growth issues in suburban municipalities outside of its borders
  - ❑ overlapping responsibilities, confusion, and uncertain accountability in a two-tier structure



# Toronto Amalgamation

- ❑ January 1, 1998: consolidation of metropolitan level of government and lower-tier municipalities into a single-tier city
- ❑ Stated rationale: cost savings
- ❑ Restructuring imposed by provincial government; failed to win support in local referenda
- ❑ Opposition: loss of local identity and reduced access to local government



# City of Toronto Act, 2006

- ❑ City granted broader permissive powers
- ❑ Some additional revenue tools (not income, sales, fuel or hotel taxes)
- ❑ Governance reforms: stronger role for the mayor (but not like US strong mayor system)



# Legacy of Toronto Amalgamation

- ❑ Better services/ lower taxes in poorer parts of the city
  - ❑ Stronger city on international stage
  - ❑ Higher costs
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- ❑ *A city too big and too small*



# Regional Decision-Making in the Toronto Region

- ❑ 1999: Province established the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB):
  - ❑ comprised of elected officials from each of the municipalities in the GTA
  - ❑ no legislative authority except to oversee regional transit; not designed to be a level of government; no taxing authority
- ❑ 2001: GTSB disbanded



# Provincial Role in Regional Planning and Transportation

- ❑ Places to Grow legislation, 2005
  - ❑ Municipal plans need to conform to the Growth Plan (GGH)
- ❑ Greenbelt legislation, 2005
  - ❑ Planning decisions have to conform to the Greenbelt Plan (GGH)
- ❑ Greater Toronto Transportation Authority created, 2006 (now Metrolinx)
  - ❑ Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area