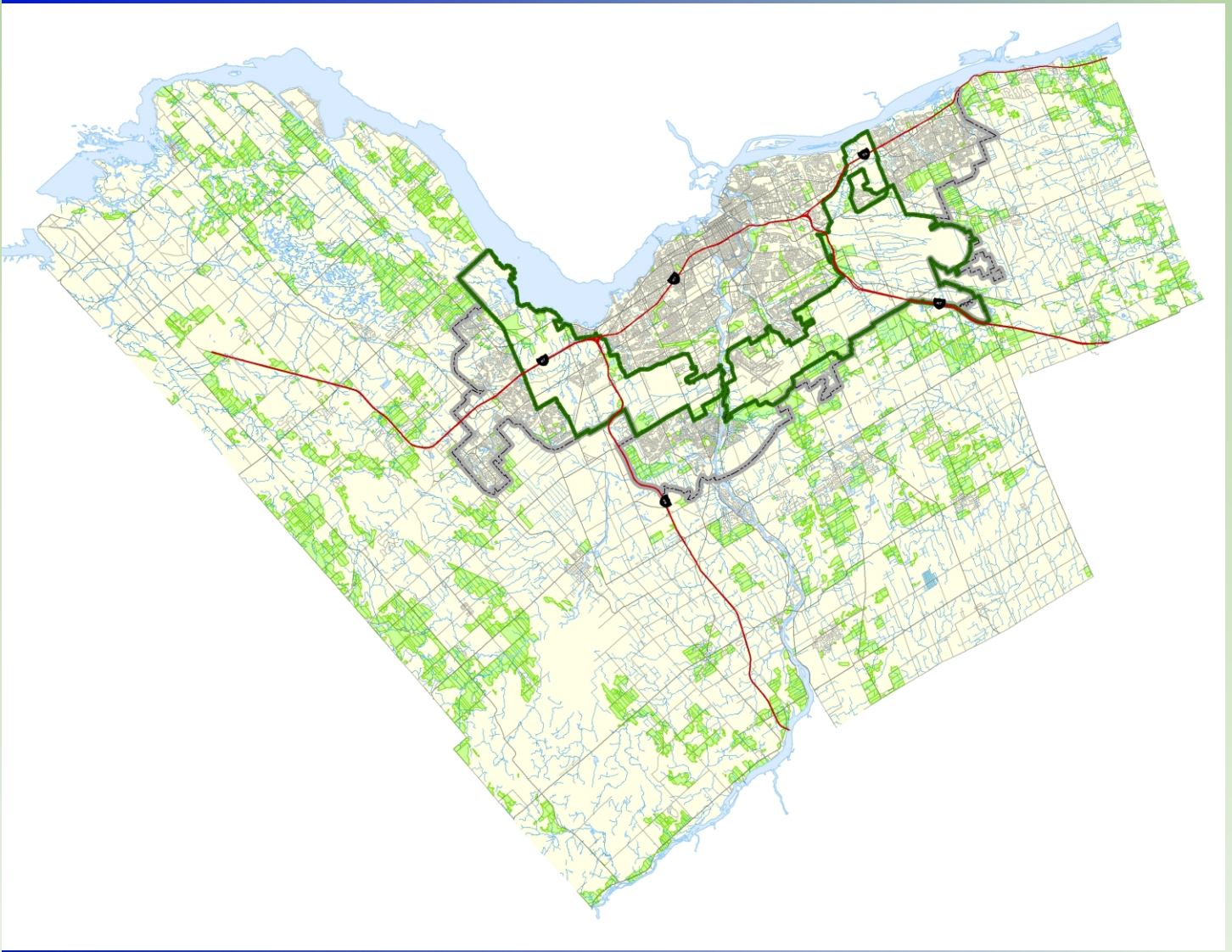




# Study of Potential Sportsfield Sites



Prepared For the City of Ottawa

By:

**DELSCAN**

June, 2005

# **Study of Potential Sportsfields Sites**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The City of Ottawa has determined that there is a deficiency in the supply of sportsfields to meet longer term planning needs, particularly in central areas of the city where population density is increasing and new parkland is not being created. This deficiency was assessed in a study entitled, *Sports Fields Strategy: Strategic Options and Recommendations (IBI Group, 2003)*. One of the recommendations of that study was:

*In order to provide sufficient additional fields to meet the needs of the Central District, the City should undertake an immediate inventory of potential sites that could be purchased or leased in order to provide field development capacity.*

Following the completion of the sportsfields strategy study, City Council approved, on 15 April, 2004, a framework to develop and improve sportsfields to meet current and future needs. In terms of this strategy, sportsfields include playing surfaces for a wide range of team sports such as (listed alphabetically): baseball/softball/slo-pitch, cricket, field hockey, field lacrosse, football, rugby, soccer, and ultimate. These are considered public uses and the City has an interest in their number and distribution.

### 1.2 Purpose, Scope and Objectives of Study

As one step in the implementation of its sportsfield strategy, the City commenced this *Study of Potential Sportsfields Sites*. The purpose of the study is to evaluate and identify lands within the urban and rural portions of the City that have the potential to be developed as outdoor sportsfields of various types and arrangements. This will include sites with sportsfield potential either on a temporary or permanent basis, developed by the City or in partnership with other organizations.

A priority will be given to the study of sites that have the potential to satisfy current and projected deficiencies in sportsfield supply. The focus is on areas within the inner limit of the National Capital Commission (NCC) Greenbelt, rather than sub-urban developing communities. It is assumed that the ongoing land use planning processes of the new communities will go a long way to satisfying community demand for sportsfields in those areas.

Specific study objectives include:

- Confirm policy-based sportsfields location criteria;
- Confirm physical site selection criteria (size, shape, terrain, accessibility, etc);
- Confirm user-based preference criteria, through user-group consultations;
- Study the City's vacant land base to identify candidate sportsfields sites; and
- Evaluate candidate sites with potential and identify an inventory of priority sites.

## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement 2005 (PPS) is relevant to this study as it establishes the Province of Ontario's policy regarding urban and rural development and land use patterns and the use of resources such as agricultural lands, mineral resource lands, and natural heritage features. Decisions related to the City of Ottawa Official Plan shall have regard to the PPS. The PPS is based on three policy thrusts, including 1. Building Strong Communities, 2. Wise Use and Management of Resources, and 3. Protection Public Health and Safety.

It is important to note that "development" is defined in the PPS such that the construction of a sportsfield is deemed to be a type of development. This type of development would also normally result in "site alteration" as defined in the PPS.

The 'Building Strong Communities' policies promote growth in the City of Ottawa to be directed to urban areas, villages and hamlets while the rural areas are to be the focus of resource activity, resource-based recreational opportunities, limited residential development and "other rural land uses". Hence sportsfields are permitted in both settlement areas and rural areas.

Policy 1.1.1.g) requires that the City ensure that public service facilities be, "available to meet current and projected needs". Policy 1.6.1 also requires the City to integrate the planning of growth with the provision of public service facilities, and Policy 1.6.3 encourages public service facilities to be "co-located to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration". Sportsfields developed by the City meet the PPS definition of "public service facilities", and these policies apply.

Large portions of the City's rural area have agricultural capability. Policy 2.3.1 requires that "Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture". Permitted uses and activities in these areas include agricultural uses, secondary uses, and agriculture-related uses. Prime agricultural areas include predominantly higher capability agricultural lands identified through various evaluation systems. Notwithstanding, Policy 2.3.5.1.c) states that an area may be excluded from prime agricultural areas for "limited non-residential uses" such as sportsfields, provided that:

1. *the land does not comprise a specialty crop area;*
2. *there is a demonstrated need within the planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2 for additional land to be designated to accommodate the proposed use;*
3. *there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas; and*
4. *there are no reasonable alternative locations in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands.*

The policy also states that, "Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on surrounding agricultural operations and lands will be mitigated to the extent feasible".

Large portions of the City's rural area are also known to include deposits of mineral aggregates in the form of limestone, sand and gravel resources. Policy 2.4.2.1 states that for such areas, "development and activities which would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resources shall only be permitted if: a) resource use would not be feasible; or b) the proposed land uses or development serves a greater long term public interest; and c) issues of public health, public safety and environmental impact are addressed".

Given that protection of mineral resources is one of the core areas of Provincial interest as stated in the Planning Act, it would be difficult to argue that sportsfield development would serve a greater long term interest than mineral aggregate resource protection. However, it is possible that sportsfield development could be done in a way that does not necessarily physically "preclude or hinder" the potential for mineral aggregate resource exploitation. This would need to be determined on a case-by-case basis, considering such matters as parcel size and shape, topography, road accessibility, etc. When appropriate, the property's zoning might be tailored to reflect permission of Sportsfields as a permitted temporary or interim use in an area otherwise designated for longer-term mineral aggregate use.

Many provincially significant wetlands and other valued natural heritage features exist throughout the City. PPS Policy 2.1.4 has the effect that the sportsfields development is not permitted in significant wetlands or in significant habitat of endangered species or threatened species. Sportsfields development may possibly be permitted in areas adjacent to these features and in other natural heritage features such as significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs), provided that no negative impacts would result. This determination is normally made following the review of environmental impact (EIS) studies.

Other PPS policies provide protection related to water quality and quantity matters, and cultural heritage resources and landscapes, and public health and safety hazards. Sportsfields would not be permitted in areas that would contravene these protection policies.

On the basis of the foregoing, the following is a summary of the key PPS policy considerations pertaining to the development of sportsfields in the City of Ottawa;

- Sportsfield construction is a type of development and is a form of site alteration as defined in the PPS;
- Sportsfields are generally permitted land uses in the City's urban areas, rural settlement areas, and rural areas, subject to other resource-related policies;
- Sportsfields are not permitted in prime agricultural areas unless: the lands are specialty crop areas, there is a clear need to displace prime agricultural lands to accommodate the use, no alternative "reasonable" non-agricultural lands exist for the use, and, there are no alternative "reasonable" agricultural lands of lower priority for the use;
- Sportsfields may potentially be permitted in areas with deposits of mineral aggregates, if considered as a temporary or interim use;
- Sportsfields are not permitted in significant wetlands or in significant habitat of endangered or threatened species, and depending on the results of EIS studies, may or



may not be permitted adjacent to these features or in various other natural heritage features such as significant woodlands or valleylands.

## 2.2 City of Ottawa Official Plan

### 2.2.1 Official Plan General Policies

The City of Ottawa Official Plan was adopted by City Council on May 14, 2003 and was approved by the Province on November 10, 2004. This approval was on the basis that the Plan, as modified, had sufficient regard to the PPS. The approval was subject to various appeals including appeals submitted by Novatech Engineering Consultants Ltd. that were related to policies pertaining to development of sportsfields both in general and in relation to a specific property in the former Township of Osgoode.

The City's Official Plan is relevant to this study in that it provides the municipal policy context relevant to considering potential locations for provisional sportsfields within the city. Key policies are discussed below.

The Official Plan contains a commitment to undertake a *Greenspace Master Plan* to identify and characterize all of the individual greenspaces throughout the City's urban and rural areas. The Greenspace Master Plan is to include two major components, first, natural environmental areas, and second, park and leisure areas (including sportsfields). It is the City's objective that all parks and leisure areas including sportsfields be connected as part of a city-wide Greenspace Network. The Greenbelt Master Plan will focus on publicly-owned lands, but the Official Plan recognizes that private open spaces (such as privately-owned sportsfields) may contribute to the City's overall Greenspace Network. The preparation of this master plan is currently in-process.

Section 2.5.4 of the Official Plan also states that, "Good park and leisure areas are well-distributed within communities, easily accessible from homes and linked to the Greenspace Network". These can be considered preference characteristics for sportsfields throughout the City.

### 2.2.2 Official Plan Land Use Permissions

Parks and leisure uses, including sportsfields, are among the range of land uses that the Plan permits in all land use designations subject to the policies set out in Policy 3.1 entitled Generally Permitted Uses and other applicable sections of the Official Plan. Policies 3.1.13 and 3.1.14 state the following:

*Parks and leisure areas are land uses that support the daily life and functioning of a community and are permitted in all land use designations with the exception of lands designated on Schedules A and B as 'Significant Wetlands South and East of the Canadian Shield', 'Natural Environment Areas', 'Urban Natural Features' and 'Agricultural Resource Areas'. Where parks and leisure uses are proposed on lands designated 'Sand and Gravel' or 'Limestone Resource Area', they will be considered as interim uses pending future extraction of the mineral resources."*

In accordance with the above policy, the following are the Official Plan land use designations where the development of sportsfields and associated site alteration is not permitted:

- Agricultural Resource Area;
- Significant Wetlands South and East of the Canadian Shield;
- Natural Environment Area; and
- Urban Natural Features.

Notwithstanding the direction given by the general provision, individual land use designations and their associated policies provide guidance on where sportsfields are permitted versus discouraged throughout the City. The following are the Official Plan land use designations where the development of sportsfields is typically permitted and encouraged:

- Major Open Space;
- Greenbelt Rural;
- Greenbelt Employment and Institutional Area;
- General Urban Area;
- General Rural Area;
- Village; and
- Developing Community

The following are the Official Plan land use designations where the development of sportsfields is typically permitted but potentially discouraged on the basis that such a land intensive use may jeopardize the achievement of other planning goal for such areas:

- Mixed Use Centres;
- Mainstreets;
- Employment and Enterprise Area; and
- Central Area.

The primary objective for many of the above-listed areas is for employment generation and higher density housing. Recreational uses such as sportsfields are among the permitted complimentary uses, as these would serve residents and employees within these areas as well as the public in the immediate vicinity. Hence, sportsfield development might conflict with the longer term objectives for some of these areas, and they would not be priority areas in the search for sportsfields sites, at least not on a permanent basis.

It is acknowledged that sportsfields might possibly be permitted in portions of lands designated Rural Natural Features and Agricultural Research Area designations, pending the findings of EIS and other site-specific studies. However, given the scale and nature of site alteration required to develop sportsfields, their development in such areas would not be encouraged and would be highly unlikely to be approved through zoning. Some potential may exist on the limited non-wooded portions of Rural Natural Features lands.

The City has evaluated its land base using the Ottawa-Carleton Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) evaluation system. Lands that were rated as prime agricultural areas were designated Agricultural Resource Area in the Official Plan. Section 3.7.3.1 of the Plan establishes the intent for these areas being, “a) Protecting major areas of agricultural and other lands suitable for agriculture from loss to other uses; b) Ensuring that uses, which would result



in conflicts with agricultural operations, are not established in productive farming areas”. Accordingly, the Plan permits only agriculture, farm dwellings, and the following limited uses in Agricultural Resource Areas:

- Small-scale industrial and commercial uses directly related to agriculture, on sites with poor soils and not capable of being used as part of an adjacent agricultural operation;
- Commercial and industrial uses on properties bordering Hwy 417 and Hwy 417 interchanges; and
- Wayside pits and quarries provided the land can be remediated back to agriculture.

These uses are only permitted if they have no adverse impact on adjacent agricultural operations. Sportsfields and other recreation uses such as golf courses are not permitted in Agricultural Resource Areas.

In the case of Limestone Resource Areas and Sand and Gravel Resource Areas, sportsfields are permitted as interim uses only. Accordingly, sportsfield development in such areas would need to be considered as a potential throw-away investment, and these would not be priority areas in the search for sportsfields sites.

Designated and operating Solid Waste Disposal Sites are highly valued for their current use and it is unlikely that lands would be freed up for permitted sportsfield development. There may be a longer-term potential for the adaptive re-use of such sites once their waste disposal function has ceased.

Ottawa’s airport lands are designated as ‘Macdonald-Cartier International Airport’ and ‘Carp Airport’ (Section 3.10) on Schedules A and B to the Plan. While only aviation and related uses are permitted on Carp Airport lands, uses permitted in the Employment and Enterprise Areas may be established on Macdonald-Cartier Airport lands. Sport fields are therefore implicitly permitted.

Other designated Environmental Constraints including Organic Soils, Unstable Slopes, and Landform Features would effectively prohibit sportsfields development. Development in designated Flood Plains might be permitted subject to study. Sportsfields may be permitted in the lands adjacent to Significant Wetlands South and East of the Canadian Shield and adjacent to other environmental/constraint areas provided an EIS is prepared that demonstrates the activity will have no adverse impact on significant natural features and functions. However, such areas would not be priority areas in the search for sportsfields sites.

Notwithstanding all of the above, if sportsfields were proposed to be developed as a large, intensive-use complex that includes significant built form, the use may be interpreted as a Major Urban Facility. Such uses are only permitted in the General Urban Area, Central Area, or Mixed Use Centres.

### **2.3 Federal Land Use Plan**

The NCC’s Plan for Canada’s Capital, and its companion Greenbelt Master Plan, provide an additional level of policy for land use planning in the National Capital Region. For the most part, the new City of Ottawa Official Plan has been aligned with the NCC’s planning objectives. For

example, those areas designated Greenbelt Rural in the Official Plan have similar and corresponding policies in the Greenbelt Master Plan.

The NCC is in the process of preparing an Urban Lands Master Plan. That plan may add a finer level of planning direction for non-Greenbelt lands in the City's designated Urban Area. Although that plan is not completed for reference in this study, the Urban Lands Master Plan Initiation Brief (NCC, June 2003) did identify areas subject to federal plans including National Interest Land Mass properties and other lands of Capital Interest. Such lands will not likely be ever declared surplus and might have constraints to development for sportsfields.

## **2.4 Secondary Land uses on Transmission Corridor Lands**

Pursuant to Bill 58, a Bill that received Royal Assent on June 27, 2002, approximately 22% of the lands owned by Hydro One for its transmission system were transferred (on December 31, 2002) to the Province of Ontario. To protect the primacy of the lands for hydro transmission purposes, the Ontario government has put in place a Provincial Secondary Land Use Program (PSLUP) to ensure all secondary land uses within the transmission corridor lands are compatible with Hydro One's existing and planned transmission and distribution installations. The program establishes, within the realm of secondary uses, a priority for public land uses that includes transportation, infrastructure and recreation uses. Where the Government of Ontario identifies surplus corridor lands for disposal, priority will be given to municipalities and other public bodies in keeping with existing Ontario Realty Corporation practices.

Municipalities had been given a limited time-frame to identify their potential linear and non-linear public use requirements on corridor lands. Linear uses are those that run parallel to the corridor and include roadways, bus ways, rail corridors, walking and biking trails and pipelines. Non-linear uses are those that use only part of the transmission corridor including road crossings, parking, transit stations, water and sewer mains, and parks. Sportsfields are included in this category. The Province will complete their review all municipal proposals including any made by the City of Ottawa and may approve those deemed compatible with the primary function of the transmission corridor.

### 3.0 SPORTSFIELDS SITE EVALUATION

#### 3.1 Data Sources and Limitations

This study utilized a range of digital spatial data available from the City of Ottawa, including:

- Official Plan Schedules;
- Land ownership fabric (parcels);
- Topographic Mapping (1:10,000 and 1:2,000 scales);
- Colour Air Photography (dated June 2002);
- Land Use Mapping (dated 2000); and
- Vacant Urban Residential Land Survey (2002 Inventory).

These data sources were assembled, layered, manipulated and reproduced under license with the City. The mapping and results from this study are limited to the accuracy of the City's digital data provided. Some of the key data layers were not recent as of year 2005, with some being relatively out of date, particularly those providing information on the City's rapidly developing areas. No field truthing was completed. Some map editing of older land use data based was completed based on newer air photo data.

#### 3.2 Screening Process

The scope of the study included the entire extent of the City of Ottawa (280,988 ha in total). This required the study team to formulate a primarily automated process for evaluating and screening lands for sportsfield potential. This was accomplished with the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) software (Arcview) and the above-noted data layers.

In general, the land evaluation followed a whittling process, whereby portions of the land base were eliminated as they were determined to be unsuitable for sportsfield development. This included the whittling of individual lots in accordance with the constraints to development that often did not correspond to lot lines. As a result, a potential sportsfield identified at the conclusion of the screening process may only be a small part of a larger parcel, but with a sufficient unconstrained area to accommodate a sportsfield.

The screening task took the form of a five-level process as outlined in the following sections.

##### **Level 1: Policy Direction**

The first step in the evaluation process removed all parcels of land that could not be developed for sportsfields from a purely policy standpoint. This included lands with the following policy designations as established in the Official Plan:

- Agricultural Resource Area;
- Natural Environment Area;
- Urban Natural Features;
- Significant Wetlands South and East of the Canadian Shield;
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest; and
- Organic Soils.

This step effectively removed 137,140 ha or 49% of the total study area, leaving 51% of the City's land base remaining.

### **Level 2 : Land Use and Status**

The remaining lands were then analyzed based on current land use and also future land use plans. In general, if lands were already developed or if plans were in-process for development, those properties were removed from the pool. Developing communities were removed from the pool on the basis that their sportsfields requirements will be determined during Community Design Plans and ongoing development approvals. Current vacant residential lands not included in Developing Communities were also removed based on the reality that vacant residential lands are highly coveted for development and tend not to remain vacant for long. This second analysis effectively eliminated the majority of the designated Urban Areas, save and except vacant lands.

Lands with known environmental constraints to development were also deleted from the pool at this time. This included lands adjacent to protected features in the Official Plan as follows:

- 500 m from Limestone Resource Areas
- 500 m from Active Quarries
- 500 m from Current or Former Land fill Sites
- 300 m from Active Pits
- 120 m from Significant Wetlands
- 30 m from Natural Environment Areas
- Wellhead Protection Areas

At the conclusion of this step, 81,817 ha of land still remained in the study, representing 29% the City's land base.

### **Level 3 : Parcel Size**

At this stage in the process, the analysis became non-automated and employed on-screen editing methods. For the purposes of this study, the project team created a threshold sportsfield size to which potential sites could be evaluated. This entailed a single field measuring 90 m x 120 m, and a minimum size of 1.1 ha. It is important to note that while some parcels may have been large enough based on shear size, they may not be either wide enough or large enough for sportsfield development. On-screen editing was employed to screen out parcels that didn't meet the minimum dimension criteria but were otherwise large enough in size.

An additional size criterion was developed for the Rural Area. The rural parts of the city generally contain large land parcels, much larger than the minimum criterion. As well, land use maps for the rural area, outside village boundaries, do not exist. Rural residential and estate lots are examples of existing land uses that might be a constraint to sportsfield development. To partially eliminate some of these situations, lands smaller than 10 ha in the Rural Area that contained at least one building were also eliminated from the pool of available parcels, on the premise that those lands were committed to other uses and likely unavailable for sportsfields. It is recognized that some parcels will be effectively removed that may have had sportsfield potential.

It is acknowledged that some parcels that did not meet the minimum dimensions may have some potential for under-sized playing fields. These sites however were not the priority for this study. It is also acknowledged that there may be some locations where there is potential to

assemble portions of adjacent individual lots that together might accommodate a sportsfield. This is a hypothetical scenario that would not likely significantly add to the potential sportsfields land pool.

After eliminating all parcels that were not large enough, 61,606 ha of land still remained (22% of the City's land base)

#### **Level 4: Physical Constraints**

The remaining lands were screened for physical constraints such as topography and drainage features (i.e., unstable slopes and large local changes in elevation, watercourses or woodlots). Where the presence of these constraints divided a site into under-sized portions, the entire site was removed from the pool.

After this step, 34,506 ha, or 12% of the City's land base remained.

#### **Level 5: Air Photo Interpretation and Local Knowledge**

The final step involved a review of the remaining sites in both the urban rural areas of the city using air photo information and other knowledge. This was useful in eliminating sites that were developed as of the date of the photos or where land use configurations prevented sportsfield development, but had been indicated as vacant and available based on the other data layers.

This final step also served as a checks and balances review using air photos of the remaining land base for physical constraints that were not well represented on other physical landscape layers and should have been removed in the previous step. This included an editing of the Rural Natural Features designations to retain only those portions that were non-wooded.

In the end, 25,616 ha of potential sportsfield lands remained, representing 9% of the total city's land base.

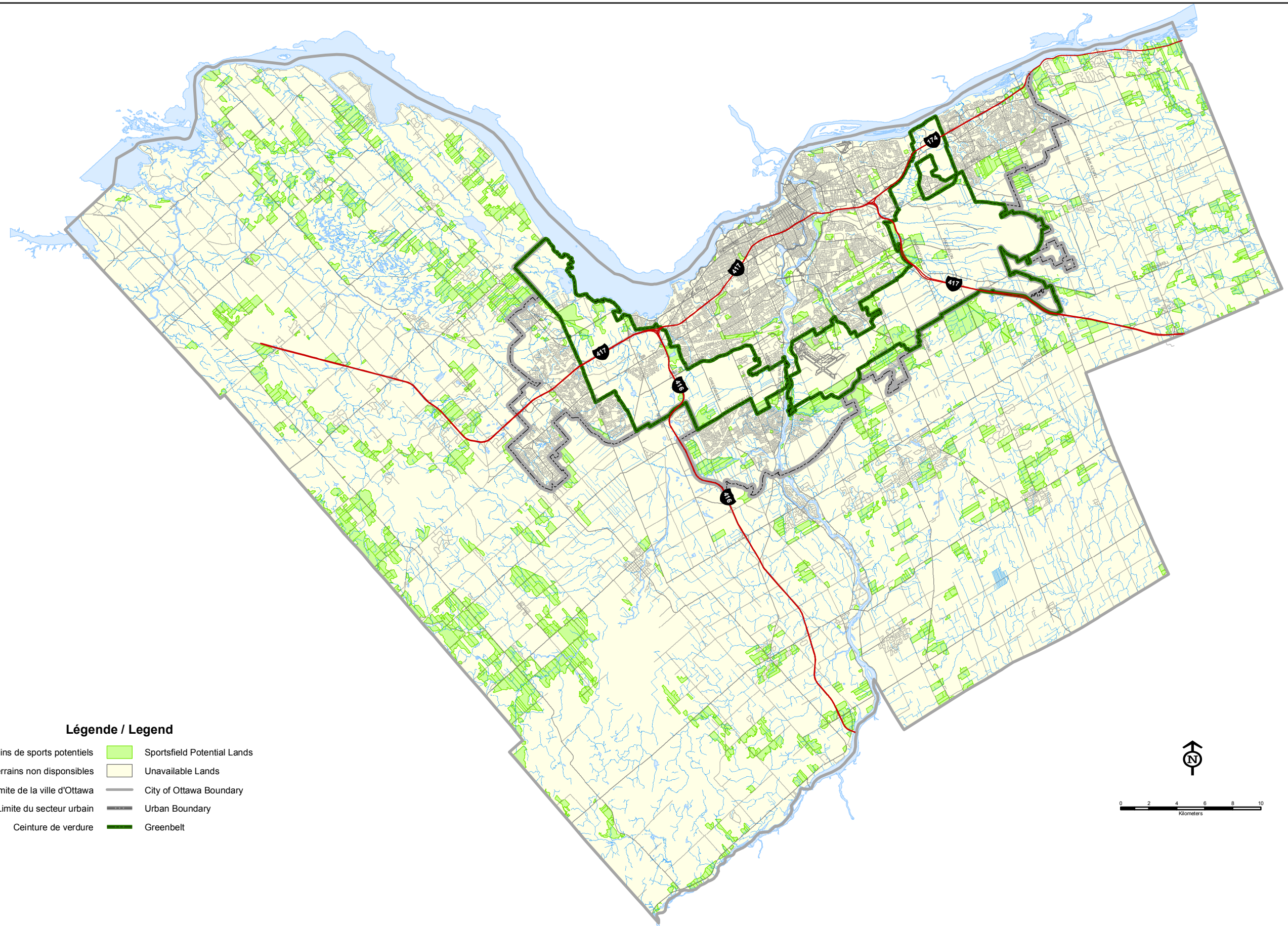
### **3.3 Analysis of Evaluation Results**

The final results of steps 1 through 5 are provided on maps on the following pages. These maps illustrate the findings for the entire city, with a companion enlargement of the designated Urban Area and Greenbelt area. A map featuring the ownership patterns of those potential lands in the designated Employment Areas and Enterprise Areas is also provided. A statistical analysis is provided on Table 3-1.

The following are the key observations from the table and maps:

- At the end of the screening process, a total of 1,502 sites covering approximately 25,600 ha exists across the City, representing 9% of the City's land base;
- Of the identified land area supply, approximately 18% exists within the outer limits of the Urban Area (includes Greenbelt lands);
- Nearly half of the City's land base is covered with land use designations that do not permit or accommodate sportsfields (Agricultural Resource Area, Significant Wetlands, Natural Environment Area, Urban Natural Features, Rural Natural Features, Significant Wetlands South and East of the Canadian Shield, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, and Organic Soils);

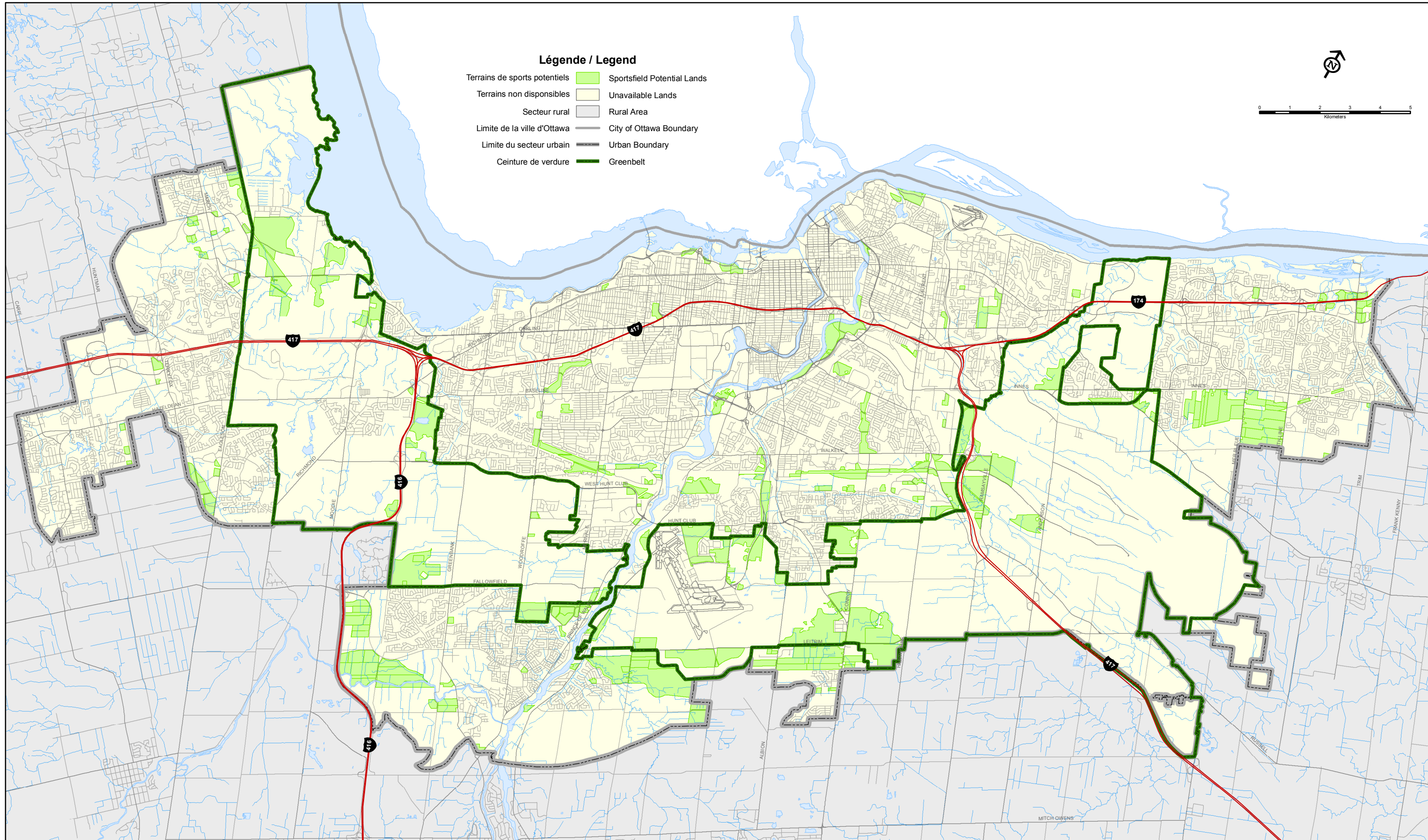




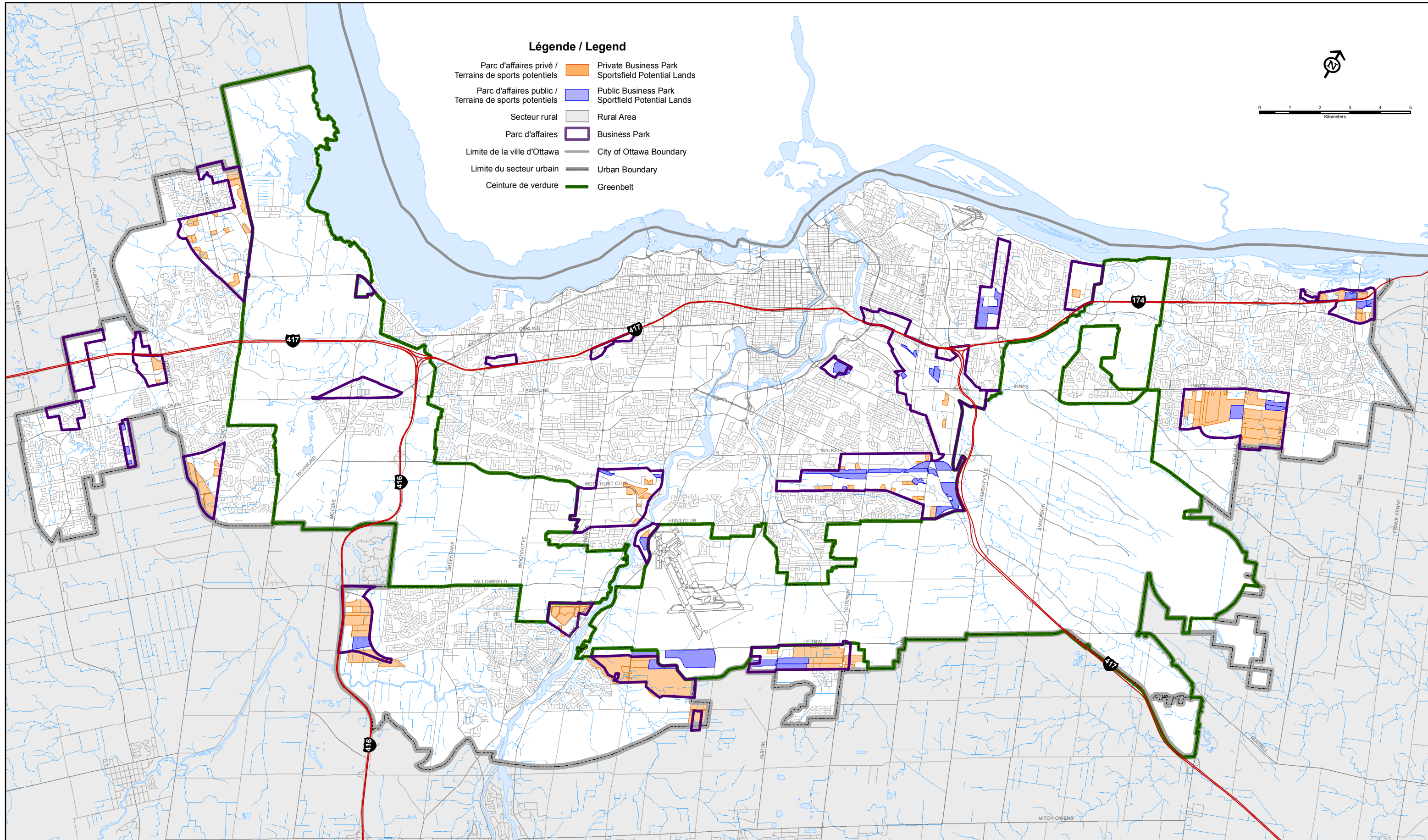
**Légende / Legend**

- Terrains de sports potentiels ■ Sportsfield Potential Lands
- Terrains non disponibles ■ Unavailable Lands
- Limite de la ville d'Ottawa — City of Ottawa Boundary
- Limite du secteur urbain — Urban Boundary
- Ceinture de verdure ■ Greenbelt









**Table 3-1: Statistical Summary of Potential Sportsfields Supply**

Screening Level	Total City		Urban Area		Rural Area	
	# of parcels	Ha	# of parcels	ha	# of parcels	Ha
Baseline	239,286	280,988	195,791	56,101	43,495	224,978
1. Policy	229,156	137,140	193,919	38,315	35,237	98,824
2. Land Use and Status	38,590	81,817	17,919	8,910	20,671	72,907
3. Parcel Size	3,501	61,606	466	6,544	3,035	55,061
4. Physical Constraints	2,471	34,506	338	4,932	2,133	29,574
<b>5. Final Sportsfield Potential</b>	<b>1,502</b>	<b>25,616</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>4,544</b>	<b>1,236</b>	<b>21,071</b>
Urban Area Employment/Enterprise Area (Industrial Lands)*						
Public	33	487				
Private	102	1,430				

\*Included in Final Sportsfield Potential Lands total.

- The average site is between 14 ha to 16 ha in size, indicating a supply of larger sites capable of accommodating multiple playing fields;
- In the Urban Area, the potential sportsfields lands are sparsely distributed, and are often publicly-owned lands;
- Vacant industrial lands (public and private) account for approximately 42% of the total Urban Area supply, and the remaining Urban Area lands are often planned or used as transportation/utility corridors;
- Many potential large sportsfields sites exist throughout the Greenbelt, primarily on lands designated as Greenbelt Rural in the Official Plan; and
- In the Rural Area, vast sectors with sportsfield potential exist on lands that are primarily privately-owned, typically large, many with existing rural buildings on them, and generally distributed following the pattern of the designated General Rural Area (non agricultural, non-wetlands).

## 4.0 PRIORITY SITES

### 4.1 Evaluation Criteria

Of the approximately 1,500 sites identified across the City that have some potential for sportsfields development, it is clear that some would be more preferred than others. To assist in the further evaluation, a set of “preference criteria” was established, as provided on Table 4-1 on the following page. These criteria are based on a combination of Official Plan guidance, City staff and study team knowledge, and user-group input. This input was provided at a stakeholder meeting held on October 27, 2004, from comment-questionnaires (see Appendix A) completed at or following that meeting, and from a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee in February, 2005.

Of the preference criteria provided on Table 4-1, the single most important criteria is location within the City. As well-documented in the *Sports Fields Strategy: Strategic Options and Recommendations* study, the City’s greatest current and projected deficiency is in the central areas, located within the inner limit of the Greenbelt. All other features being equal, lands with sportsfields potential in the more centrally-located areas are most preferred. Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that sportsfield demand for central areas may need to be met through sportsfields in outlying areas in some cases.

From the City’s perspective, sites with the following other characteristics are generally preferred:

- Municipally-owned lands where decisions related to sportsfield use can be made by City Council in consultation with communities and potential partners;
- Other lands in public ownership where opportunities and creative solutions may exist for acquisition or use agreements;
- Sites located adjacent to or well-connected to other existing parks and/or open spaces that are likely to become part of the City’s defined Greenspace Network;
- Sites that are located adjacent to existing public service amenities including schools, where there may be an opportunity to share infrastructure such as parking;
- Larger sites where two or more permanent fields can be developed, with the interest in providing programming flexibility and reducing per-field maintenance costs;
- Sites that are unlikely to result in land use compatibility concerns related to on-field activities, noise, parking, and lighting;
- Sites that exist with sufficient road access; and,
- Sites that are within the transit service area, to promote transit use as opposed to private automobile use.

**Table 4-1: Sportsfield Site Preference Criteria**

Site Criteria	Indicators
Central Location within City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- urban area vs. greenbelt vs. rural area</li> <li>- inside greenbelt (central) vs. outside greenbelt (suburban)</li> <li>- proximity to villages (rural sites)</li> </ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- frontage on public street</li> <li>- provision of driveway and/or parking</li> <li>- arterial/collector vs. local street</li> <li>- public transit service</li> <li>- proximity to rapid transit system</li> </ul>
Connectivity to Open Space System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- within or adjacent to Major Open Space areas</li> <li>- adjacent to existing parks, open spaces</li> <li>- adjacent to recreational pathway</li> </ul>
Proximity to Complementary Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adjacent to other sportsfields</li> <li>- located adjacent to existing public service facilities</li> <li>- located adjacent to existing parking lots</li> </ul>
Land Use Impact/Compatibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- potential for integration, harmony with adjacent uses, especially residential areas</li> <li>- located away from noxious uses</li> <li>- not General Rural land used for agriculture</li> <li>- not in designated Mixed Use Centres, Mainstreets</li> </ul>
Soil/Groundwater Contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not a known contaminated site</li> </ul>
Natural Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not affected by urban natural features study areas</li> <li>- not a treed area requiring substantial clearing</li> </ul>
Hydro Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not directly under high voltage hydro lines</li> </ul>
Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- municipally owned vs. other government</li> <li>- government vs. private</li> <li>- not subject to development applications or other proposed uses</li> </ul>
Permanency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not designated for future urban uses or infrastructure</li> <li>- if temporary use, site has likely longer term term (i.e. 10 year+) development/use horizon</li> <li>- likelihood sportsfield may be a permanent use</li> </ul>
Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- large area with potential for multiple fields and/or multi-use fields</li> <li>- site large enough for choice in parking area and access design</li> </ul>
Constructability and Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- primarily flat well-drained site requiring little grading</li> <li>- not bisected by watercourses</li> <li>- not in flood plain</li> </ul>



From the user-group input, the following observations were made regarding sportsfield location preferences:

- There is a greater tolerance for travel distance to sportsfields for adult and young adult sports, as well as sports at more-competitive levels. For these activities, acceptable vehicle travel times may be as great as 20 minutes, although lesser times are preferred;
- Conversely, there is a lower tolerance for travel distance to sportsfields for younger children and youth sports, as well as less-competitive “house league” type levels. For these activities, acceptable vehicle travel times are up to 10 to 15 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes;
- Locations in rural areas are generally not desirable for urban area residents, unless located near the rural/urban fringe. Sportsfield “complexes” with multiple fields in the rural area would be more acceptable than individual fields;
- There is a slightly greater tolerance for rural area residents to travel to sportsfields in terms of acceptable vehicle travel times;
- In general, transit accessibility is of moderately high importance. Locations offering transit service are more valued to the inner-city population than for sub-urban type households that may be more reliant on automobile use. For more-competitive sports, car pooling often occurs;
- Locations under high voltage power lines are tolerated in some cases but are generally not desirable;
- Some sports organizations have the resources to partner (financially) with the City in an effort to develop sportsfields, although there would be an expectation of some exclusivity in right of use; and
- Locations offering only temporary sportsfields use (such as vacant business park lands) might in some cases be considered as potential partnership sites, provided a minimum length of use could be assumed (such as in the range of 10 years) so that the benefits of investment could be realized.

The user-groups also noted that opportunities to utilize school board sportsfields should be better taken advantage of. School-owned sites (existing or potential) were not included in the inventory created through this study. Issues related to sportsfield maintenance and operation were raised and many helpful suggestions were made, although these matters were not directly related to this study which focuses on the development of new fields.

#### **4.2 Inventory of Priority Sites**

Using the preference criteria set out in Table 4-1, an analysis of the potential sites that best meet the criteria was conducted. The analysis was limited to those potential sites located within or directly adjacent to the outer limits of the City’s designated Urban Area that are publicly-owned. Publicly-owned lands are deemed to offer the greatest potential for acquisition or use for sportsfields in a timely manner, and sites near the Urban Area best respond to the City’s identified sportsfield deficiencies. On this basis, the publicly-owned urban sites are of top



priority at this time. A subsequent analysis of privately-owned and rural area sites could be performed in the future as required.

Maps of these individual priority sites identified are provided in Appendix B, together with a key map. In total, more than 50 priority sites are identified. The majority of these sites fall into one of three general categories, with corresponding implications described below.

### **1. Federally-Owned Lands**

Many sites are owned/controlled by the NCC and other federal departments. Some of these are Greenbelt lands cleared and used for agriculture, while other Greenbelt sites are simply scrub land and overgrowing old fields. These lands are typically designated Greenbelt Rural, meaning that they are among the least-valued Greenbelt Lands. Other Urban Area sites are formerly planned transportation corridors and other underutilized lands such as at Canadian Forces Base Uplands and at the Macdonald-Cartier International Airport. Of all of the potential sportsfield sites in the City, by far the greatest potential supply is on federally-owned lands.

### **2. Vacant Industrial Lands**

Several sites are in designated Employment/Enterprise Areas. Some are in serviced, subdivided business parks, and others are part of larger undeveloped and unserviced areas. Of those that are municipally-owned, the City has a choice of freeing up lands for temporary and possibly even permanent use for use as sportsfields. Such decisions would need to have regard to Official Plan objectives for such areas that focus on employment generation, and would need to be made on a case by case basis.

### **3. Major Open Space Lands**

Some of the sites are in areas designated Major Open Space in the Official Plan, but not planned or used as active parkland. In some cases, public infrastructure such as future roads and major recreational pathways are planned for portions of the lands. The planning and design of such facilities should consider future potential for sportsfields as this may influence the location or alignment of other uses or facilities. For those projects that may not be planned for several years, these sites may have good potential for sportsfields as an interim use.

## **4.3 Suggested Subsequent Analyses**

The inventory of priority sites is intended to form a starting point in the search for future sportsfield sites. It is not intended to be all-inclusive, and it is likely that other equally preferred sites may exist. The identification and analysis process is also limited by the age and reliability of the primarily-digital data that was used as the basis. For example, it is possible that some of the sites listed in the inventory may no longer be vacant, or the lands may have characteristics that render them unsuitable for sportsfields. On this basis, the following subsequent due diligence analyses should be made to determine with more confidence whether or not sportsfields could or should be pursued on a site:

- Confirmation that the lands are still vacant and/or not subject to current development applications or otherwise committed plans;
- Review of existing Official Plan and Zoning By-Law restrictions;
- Preliminary field investigations of surface and subsurface conditions with particular regard to topography, drainage, and soil, and environmental characteristics;

- Evaluation of the alternative site locations with regards to community-specific sportsfield deficiencies and the potential for multiple-field complexes; and
- Analysis of the degree to which development of the site for sportsfields would be complementary to objectives and networks established in the Greenspace Master Plan.

As the City's interest in any given site advances, so should the level of due diligence study. This ultimately should include a title search to confirm specific land ownership and to determine if any restrictive covenants or easements or other encumbrances to sportsfield development are known. Other technical feasibility studies may be required, and community and user-group consultation may be warranted.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The following conclusions are offered:

- The Provincial Policy Statement, the City of Ottawa Official Plan, and the NCC's Plans establish the planning framework regarding the parts of the City where sportsfields are permitted or not, and under what conditions;
- Nearly half of the City's land base is covered with planning designations that generally do not permit sportsfield development. This includes agricultural lands, wetlands, environmentally sensitive lands, and other constrained lands;
- Of the remaining properly-designated lands, approximately 1,500 sites totaling 25,600 ha has some potential for sportsfields;
- Of the land base with potential, only 18% exists within the outer limits of the City's Urban Area, including Greenbelt lands, and of this urban area supply, more than 42% are vacant industrial lands;
- Although a low percentage of the lands with sportsfield potential are in or adjacent to the City's Urban Area, including the Greenbelt, these lands do constitute a significant land supply of approximately 4,500 ha;
- The Rural Area provides a vast supply of more than 1,200 potential sportsfields sites covering approximately 21,000 ha, although this supply is primarily in private ownership, and much of it is distant from the Urban Area;
- Sites within or close to the Urban Area that are publicly-owned are deemed to be the most-preferred sites, as they are likely most-available and best respond to the City's sportsfields deficiency in terms of location; and
- More than 50 sites are identified that meet the basic list of preference criteria, are deemed priority sites.

On the basis of the foregoing, it is recommended that the priority sites be further evaluated by the City for potential development of sportsfields. This evaluation should consider both technical and ownership matters, as well as the degree to which the site would respond to sportsfields deficiency on a community by community basis.



## **Appendix A – Comment-Questionnaire**



**Study of Potential Sportsfields Sites  
Stakeholder Meeting, October 27, 2004**

**Comment-Questionnaire**

The City of Ottawa has commenced a *Study of Potential Sportsfields Sites*. The purpose of the study is to evaluate and identify lands within the urban and rural portions of the City that have the potential to be developed as outdoor sportsfields of various types and arrangements. The focus is on potential sites in addition to other City parks that are currently planned. This will include sites with sportsfield potential either on a temporary or permanent basis, developed by the City or in partnership with other organizations. The study is a follow-up to the City's *Sportsfields Strategy: Strategic Options and Recommendations* (November, 2003). That study identified a deficiency in the supply of adequate sites for sportsfields.

The study is underway and your input is appreciated. Please take a few moments to complete the Comment-Questionnaire at the meeting or mail or fax it to the address listed below by November 10, 2004.

**About Your Organization**

1. What organization (name) and/or sport do you represent?

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2. Approximately how many members are in your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your organization's geographic area of operation (i.e. which communities or areas does it cover)?

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**Sportsfields Needed Where?**

4. In what communities or areas is there the greatest need for additional sportsfields to serve your organization's requirements?

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5. What is the maximum driving distance (in minutes) that your organization's members would find acceptable to travel to a sportsfield for play (i.e. how long is too long to drive)? \_\_\_\_\_

Other related comments:

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6. If there is a potential to locate a new sportsfield in a rural area (i.e. outside of the urban area, outside of the transit service area), would this be an acceptable location to your organization?

Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_

Other related comments:

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7. If there is a potential to locate a new sportsfield in a Hydro corridor, would this be an acceptable location to your organization? Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_

Other related comments:

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### Suggested New Sportsfield Sites?

8. Other than planned City of Ottawa parks, are you aware of potential sites (vacant or underutilized lands not already planned for City parks) that you consider good candidate sportsfield sites (permanent or temporary) that should be evaluated by the City? Please list and describe them in detail.

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### Partnership Opportunities?

9. Is your organization open to the concept of a partnership (involving contribution of funds, land, and/or shared responsibilities, etc.) with the City of Ottawa to provide additional sportsfields? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, and if the City was considering the development of a sportsfield on a temporary basis, such as an interim use on lands planned for other purposes, would you still be open to the concept of a partnership)? Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

Other related comments:

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### Other Comments

10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the study?

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Would you like to receive more information about this study? If so, please provide your name and address below.	
Name	Representing (if applicable)
Address	Postal Code
Telephone	E-mail
Thank you for your participation.  If you would like to provide more detailed comments, written submissions can be sent by November 10, 2004 to:  <b>For further information, please contact:</b> Bruce Finlay, Planner Planning and Growth Management Department City of Ottawa 110 Laurier Avenue West Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1 Phone: 613-580-2424 x21850 Facsimilie: 580-2459	





## **Appendix B – Priority Sites**

**(Note : See Fold-out Map Legend  
at Rear of Appendix B)**