

## **Town of Fort Erie**



## Planning and Development Services

<b>Prepared for</b>	Council-in-Committee	<b>Administrative Report No.</b>	PDS-63-2016
<b>Agenda Date</b>	August 8, 2016	<b>File No.</b>	350301

<b>Subject</b>
<b>REVIEW OF THE DRAFT PROVINCIAL GROWTH PLAN</b>

<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>THAT</b> Council supports Report No. PDS 63-2016 regarding the coordinated Provincial Plans Review(Growth Plan), and further
<b>THAT</b> Council directs staff to forward a copy of Report No. PDS-63-2016 to the Region of Niagara for inclusion in a Regional coordinated response on the Plans review, and further
<b>THAT</b> Council directs staff to forward a copy of Report No. PDS-63-2016 to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Town of Fort Erie Environmental Advisory Committee and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

<b>Relation to Council's 2015-2018 Corporate Strategic Plan</b>
Priority: <b>Prosperous and Growing Community</b>
Goal: A1 - Achieve senior government commitment on key projects and policies
Initiative: A1.2 – Continue to communicate on key issues/advancements of projects

<b>List of Stakeholders</b>
Town of Fort Erie Fort Erie Economic Development and Tourism Corporation Environmental Advisory Committee Region of Niagara Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Development and Investment Community, Public

Prepared by:	Submitted by:	Approved by:
<b>Original Signed</b>	<b>Original Signed</b>	<b>Original Signed</b>
Dave Heyworth, MCIP, RPP Manager of Land Use Policy	Richard F. Brady, M.A.,MCIP, RPP Director of Planning and Development Services	Tom Kuchyt, CET Chief Administrative Officer

## **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the draft policy changes to the Provincial Growth Plan. The Province is undertaking a co-ordinated review of the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Escarpment Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan. It is only the Growth Plan that impacts Fort Erie and this report focuses on proposed changes to the Growth Plan.

The Region of Niagara Planning and Development Department is co-ordinating comments for Niagara on the Provincial Plan review. Should Council concur with the recommendations and comments of this report, a copy will be provided directly to both the region and Province. Comments must be submitted to the Province by September 30, 2016

## **Background**

On May 4, 2015 Council approved the recommendations of Report No. CDS-36-2015 regarding the Province's review of the provincial plans noted above.

Report No. CDS-36-2015 sent to the Province focused on several key requests and issues. A summary of these key points was provided in Report No. CDS-11-2016 which highlighted the Crombie Panel's report. The Crombie Panel's report was an advisory document for the Province to consider for changes to the Growth Plan. Report CDS-11-2016 was provided to the Region and Province. The Region also provided co-ordinated comments to the Province. Council should refer to Report CDS-11-2016 for background.

## **Provincial Changes Based On Comments**

The Province has come out with a set of Draft Policy changes to the Growth Plan. Details on the proposed Growth Plan can be found at [https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=420&Itemid=12#1.1](https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=420&Itemid=12#1.1). Provincial Planning staff made a presentation to Area planners highlighting changes made to consider comments, namely:

- Improving the alignment of definitions between the Plans;
- Improving mapping accuracy;
- Clarifying Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) requirements (the MCR is completed by the Region of Niagara setting the stage for how growth will take place in Niagara);
- Focus on Complete Communities;
- Linkages between Infrastructure and Land Use relative to utilizing infrastructure and urban land efficiently and considering financial sustainability in planning for infrastructure;
- Flexibility for municipalities to deal with stagnant plans of subdivision; and
- Upper tier municipalities to measure and report on implementation.

## **Analysis**

Based on a review of the Draft Policy document and discussions at Area Planners, the following key points/issues are highlighted for Council:

### **Residential development In Built Up Areas**

The current requirement for residential development (generally intensification) in the built up areas is 40% throughout the Region of Niagara. The current intensification target is 15% for Fort Erie. This target has been easily achieved as Fort Erie has met the 40% target. Fort Erie has been able to achieve this target by allowing for different housing forms, age in place opportunities all while still maintaining a proper sense of community.

The Regional MCR will delineate a target for Fort Erie. Based on Regional monitoring of development over the past 5 years, Fort Erie should be able to achieve a target around the 40% range.

**It is recommended that the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) establish an intensification target no higher than 40% for Fort Erie.** Planning staff will report to Town Council the target that is proposed to be established for Fort Erie through the MCR.

### **Greenfield Densities**

The proposed policy change to the Growth Plan will require a minimum density target of 80 people and jobs combined per hectare, being a density increase from the current 50 people and jobs per hectare.

This target is anticipated to be a significant challenge given the Town's distribution of built up areas and natural features. The residential greenfield area with the greatest opportunity to strive towards provincial targets comprehensively is the Bridgeburg North expansion area. Much of the current greenfield employment lands are unserviced.

Fort Erie continues to promote planning on a community basis through secondary planning and providing intensification where it makes the planning sense and is in the community interest, such as near transit and/or open space. The Province needs to consider a collective density objective instead of completely separating out built up areas and greenfield targets.

**It is recommended that Fort Erie request the establishment of a lower greenfield density for smaller urban communities and/or a combined density (greenfield and built up areas) to provide flexibility to locate intensification where it makes the most sense from a community perspective.**

### **Land Supply**

There are planning documents the Province will be completing after the Growth Plan such as guidelines for land budgeting. This will be important for the Region and partnering municipalities in determining the required land supply for growth throughout the region

through the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). As Council is aware work has been completed on an Industrial Land Supply Strategy for Fort Erie and forwarded to the Region. Regional planning will need to consider this work and budget guidelines from the Province in sorting out employment land needs across the Region.

From a residential perspective, Fort Erie has an ample supply of residential lands. As indicated in Report CDS-65-2013, the Town has over a 3 year supply of residential housing in Registered Plans and about a 19.1 year supply in Draft Approved or active Draft Plans. Additionally, the Town has ample residential lands not in either of the above categories within built up areas or greenfields taking the residential land supply way beyond the 20 year time frame. The implementation of the Growth Plan through the Regional MCR will determine the phasing of lands for development or land use change for other uses.

**It is recommended that Planning staff continue to monitor the Region's MCR and report to Council as to how the Region's MCR will impact the Town's employment or residential land supply.**

### **Plans of Subdivision**

The proposed Growth Plan contains stronger policies to deal with older draft plans of subdivision that may not address Growth Plan objectives or community needs. Draft Plans of Subdivision will include a lapsing date and the policies of the Growth Plan must be considered in granting any extensions to the approval. The Growth Plan encourages municipalities to use the authority under the Planning Act to deregister Registered Plans of Subdivision older than eight years if such plans do not meet Growth plan objections.

**It is recommended the above Growth Plan policies be used in the assessment and decision making process of the Town in granting extensions to plans of subdivision.**

### **Requirements For Additional Studies**

The proposed Growth Plan places a greater emphasis on watershed planning, sub-watershed based storm water master plans, source water protection plans, and asset management plans for infrastructure planning for urban boundary expansions. While these requirements assist in planning better communities, it will impact staff resources to implement and increase costs for development. Further guidance on the implementation expectations of these policies is required.

**It is recommended the Province provide greater policy clarification/expectations relative to the implementation of the above studies.**

### **Enhanced Coordination Between Provincial Plans and Ministries**

There needs to be greater policy emphasis to ensure future school and hospital planning (closures, new school sites) compliment the Growth Plan's policy objective of complete communities.

**It is recommended the Growth Plan place greater policy emphasis to ensure school and hospital planning support Growth Plan objectives.**

### **Climate Change**

It is proposed that upper tier municipalities prepare climate change plans and incorporate policies in to Official Plans to advance climate change mitigation. While it is expected this would need to include greenhouse gas emission targets, infrastructure and energy planning strategies to improve climate change resilience greater policy direction/framework needs to be established to provide a clear understanding of factors to be considered. Such a framework should not be prescriptive.

**It is recommended the Province establish greater policy direction provide a clear understanding of factors to be considered in climate change planning.**

### **Natural Heritage System Mapping**

The Growth Plan indicates Natural Heritage System mapping will be undertaken by the Province. There is a lack of detail as to what level this will be at, whether the higher level landscape level or mapping of wetlands , woodlots, wildlife habitat etc. The Province does not have the staff to carry out necessary field work. It is unknown whether the Province would use consultants or Conservation Authorities for field. Town Planning staff do not consider the accuracy of wetland features established through aerial photography to be reliable. Provincial mapping of natural heritage features must be based on field work.

**It is recommended that any mapping of natural features for the Growth Plan be based on field work.**

### **Marina Development**

A policy has been added to the Growth Plan permitting resort development in developed shoreline areas if it is zoned for such use prior to approval of the Growth Plan. Normally, the Niagara Parks Commission would only need to have regard to zoning for development. Planning staff are concerned that enveloping zoning in to provincial policy could complicate the development of the Marina site.

**It is recommended that a policy clarification should be added that this policy does not pertain to a provincial agency or corporation.**

### **Financial/Staffing Implications**

The Manager-Land Use Policy and Director of Community and Development Services reviews and provides advice to Council on upper-tier provincial and regional plans.

### **Policies Affecting Proposal**

Planning in Ontario follows a policy planning hierarchy. Local Official Plans comply with Regional Plans which in turn comply with Provincial Plans. Changes to the Growth Plan will likely necessitate changes to the Regional and Town Official Plans.

### **Comments from Relevant Departments/Community and Corporate Partners**

Local municipal planning and regional representatives have been discussing the review of the Provincial Plans. The Manager-Land Use Policy will continue to keep Council informed on the proposed changes to the Growth Plan and its ultimate implementation at a regional level via the Regions Municipal comprehensive Review currently being undertaken..

### **Alternatives**

Council may choose not to provide the Region/Province comments on the proposed Growth Plan or submit entirely different comments.

### **Attachments**

None

## **Town of Lincoln**



<b>TO:</b>	Economic Development and Planning Committee
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	October 11, 2016
<b>SUBJECT / REPORT NO:</b>	Response by the Town to the Latest Amendments to the Provincial Plans Report - PL 16-51
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Ron Marini, MCIP, RPP Ron Marini and Associates Inc. and Kathleen Dale, MCIP, RPP Director of Planning and Development
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Kathleen Dale, MCIP, RPP Director of Planning and Development

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

For the reasons outlined in PL 16-51, it is hereby recommended that:

1. This report be adopted and the recommendations contained herein be approved;
2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the response of the Town of Lincoln to the latest versions of the Provincial Plans;
3. That the Council of the Town of Lincoln request the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to amend the relevant Provincial Plans in accordance with the provisions of this report;
4. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Niagara Escarpment Commission be as the response of the Town of Lincoln to the latest versions of the Provincial Plans;
5. That the Council of the Town of Lincoln request the Niagara Escarpment to amend the Niagara Escarpment Plan in accordance with the provision of this report; and
6. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Niagara for inclusion in their Municipal Comprehensive Review.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report advises Committee and Council on the Provincial response to the Town and Region submissions on the Provincial review of the Provincial level plans affecting the Town, namely the Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2016, the Proposed Greenbelt Plan, 2016 and the Proposed Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2016.

This response has been prepared with a focus on outstanding issues of local significance and which we respectfully submit, should be given serious consideration by the Province and incorporated into the final Plans for approval. It has been indicated that once comments are received by the Provincial deadline of October 31, 2016, final amendments to the plans will be made with approval of the documents scheduled in the new year.

This response is focused on such issues as boundary adjustments, creating a planning regime to capture the town-building opportunity presented by the proposed transit station, policies designed to address urban uses outside of the urban settlement areas, agricultural and urban lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan, suggestions to implement the proposed Agricultural Support Network and the need for flexibility of Provincial-level plans to be receptive to locally-generated solutions.

The recommendations put forth by this report are aligned with the Town of Lincoln Corporate Plan, 2014-2018.

### **Alternatives for Consideration:**

None.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

The Province is in the process of completing their 10 year review of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan does not apply to lands within the Town; however the remaining Plans do apply to lands within the Town. A map outlining the location of the boundaries of the three Plans is included as Appendix A.

The Provincial review has two stages. The first stage included obtaining initial comments from municipal stakeholders and the public. On May 12, 2015, Committee approved a set of recommendations put forward by Planning Staff to be considered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in their review. Additionally, the Town's recommendations were considered by the Region of Niagara in their submission to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The information gathered through the first stage allowed the Province to develop amendments to the Plans. We are now in the second stage of the public consultation process. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has released proposed versions of the four land-use plans with potential amendments, and is seeking input on the changes. Responses are due by October 31, 2016. It is understood that this is the final opportunity for input to the plans, as the province intends to move to the approval stage of the various plans in the new year.

The Planning and Development Department has produced two reports for the consideration of Council over the duration of the Provincial Plan Review. The first report, for the May 12, 2015 meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Committee (See Appendix B to this report), identified numerous issues of concern related to policy, mapping, timing of boundary refinements, jurisdiction, complete and viable rural communities, alignment of provincial policy, the notion of provincial funding for both policy development and community

infrastructure, community consultation as well as issues related to education and implementation.

The second report produced by Planning Staff for the February 29, 2016 meeting of Committee of the Whole gave Council an update on the Provincial Plan Review process. (See Appendix C to this report) and outlined the issues and comments from both the Region and the Town to the Province concerning the review of the relevant plans. Of particular importance in the report was the production of maps illustrating suggested mapping changes for properties within the Town to allow consistent application of policy. These mapping changes are of fundamental concern to the Town as they reflect local conditions and knowledge and represent logical changes from a municipal perspective, unlike the perspective from a Provincial level plan.

Appendix D to this report details the requests from the Region and the Town relative to changes sought to the respective plans and whether or not the requests were reflected in the latest versions of the Provincial Plans.

### **FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

#### **Financial:**

Once the Provincial Plans are approved, it will be necessary to incur costs to update the Town's Official Plan.

#### **Staffing:**

There are no staffing implications to the recommendations contained in this report. However, if some of the financial recommendations are acted on by the Province, depending on administration, there may be staffing implications.

#### **Legal:**

There are no legal costs anticipated as a result of the consideration of this report.

### **RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

The consultation was carried out by the Province through a series of consultation sessions.

### **STAFF COMMENTS:**

Now that the latest iteration of the respective Provincial Plans has been released for comment, and knowing from Appendix D to this report what changes were made in response to the Town's request, and in consideration of the fact that this opportunity for comment will be the last one before final approval of the relevant Provincial Plans, this report has been prepared to focus on matters that still remain of concern to the Town. The follow discourse identifies the relevant issue of concern, the Staff response and the Staff recommendation to Committee and Council.

**Issue: Boundary Changes:**

Report PL 16-13 crystallized this issue very graphically through the production of a series of maps identifying 21 instances within the Town of the need for Provincial Plans to change due to local situations. The Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan are Provincial level plans and at such a scale, it is only at the local level that the boundary issues manifested. Simply put, such high level plans cannot capture local situations.

We are encouraged that the Greenbelt Plan allows consideration of settlement boundary expansions by an upper tier municipality (Region of Niagara) resulting from Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) subject to conditions. It is to be noted that while the Greenbelt Plan does provide the opportunity for settlement boundary expansion, said boundary changes are also subject to Section 2.2.8 'Settlement Area Boundary Expansions of the proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2016'. One of those criteria include that the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas.

The boundary issues identified in said Report PL 16-13 are reflective of local detail and local circumstances. Some changes are warranted because they are adjacent to existing urban areas, while others 'round out' or complete the limits of development. Others are in areas that are fully built out urban development and should be included with the urban boundary where Provincially-mandated urban intensification may occur. In addition, there are instances where there are partial urban services, the sites can be easily serviced, and the lands are occupied by non-farm uses. Some other properties are non-farm uses where the lands are within the urban area and extend into the Niagara Escarpment Plan area and are fully serviced. Such properties, if outside of the Niagara Escarpment Plan area could be used to implement Provincial Policies related to redevelopment and intensification.

We are encouraged that such parcels of land may be included in the future by amending settlement area boundaries after an upper tier MCR, but we are concerned that in spite of the extraordinary circumstances identified in the preceding paragraph, the Province may veto such minor amendments as the lands are considered to be specialty crop lands. We note that from the mapping, the majority of the lands listed in report PL 16-13 are non-farm uses and we should seek Provincial concurrence that the relevant Provincial Plans provide wording to give flexibility to adjust boundaries to recognize local circumstances once a Regional MCR has been done.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan, as required, be amended to incorporate a provision giving flexibility for minor boundary adjustments after a MCR which adjustments reflect local circumstances, such as non-farm uses, completion of urban areas, or utilization of natural boundaries and that such adjustments not be bound by further policy constraints from the respective Plans.

**Issue: Positioning Lincoln to capture a significant town-building opportunity presented by a proposed transit hub.**

The Province is proposing the extension of transit beyond Hamilton into Niagara. One of the potential sites is located within the Town in close proximity to the Ontario Street intersection with the Queen Elizabeth Way. Planning around such a higher order of transit facility dictates

that a distance of 800 metres around the facility be used to create a transit-oriented community comprising higher densities, various housing forms and mixed use developments. While the potential transit site is located within the Town's urban envelope, additional lands need to be added to the Town's urban envelope if the Town is to have enough land within the 800 metre radius to create a transit-oriented community. It is our opinion that such lands are necessary if the Town is to capture the significant Town-building opportunity presented by the proposed transit hub. We note that the Province has directed other communities to rework plans where higher order transit is planned. We also note that the Growth Plan in Section 2.2.1.2e), supports focused growth in areas with existing or proposed transit with priority given to higher order transit. A good example is the work done by the City of Hamilton relative to updating plans along the proposed Light Rail Transit Corridor. However, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe negates this opportunity in the Town of Lincoln as it clearly states in Section 2.2.4.6 where the transit facility is located on prime employment lands; there is no requirement to create the density otherwise called for in the plan around transit facilities. The Lincoln Transit Hub site is located on prime employment lands.

The foregoing illustrates that the Province may not have policies that align to creating a transit oriented community around the proposed transit hub. This represents a devastating blow to the Town and its efforts to move away from an auto-centric planning model and move towards a transit-oriented development and accompanying lifestyle.

A better solution and one with a significant potential positive outcome involves the Region's GO Mobility Hub and Transit Station Study and its MCR. The MCR presents an opportunity to identify the need to expand urban boundaries while the Transit Station Study will address appropriate land use planning issues. In addition to the foregoing, because the proposed Provincial Policies would only allow the Town to accommodate a transit hub, we believe changes are necessary now to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and to the Greenbelt Plan if the Town wishes to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the Province in creating a transit hub in the Town.

The first change should be elimination of any policies in the Provincial Plans that deny the Town the opportunity to create a transit oriented community plan. The policies related to transit planning and planning around transit hubs that apply to other communities affected by the Provincial level plans should be equally applicable to the Town.

In recognition of the fact that the Region is conducting a MCR which may result in boundary adjustments, the location of a higher order transit facility changes the landscape and a high priority of designating additional lands for development should be centered on access to higher order transit. Consequently, in order to ensure there is a sufficient land base to support a transit-centered community development plan, lands on the east and west sides of Lincoln Avenue and the north and south sides of Greenlane in Beamsville should be designated Special Policy Area in the Greenbelt Plan in recognition of their higher order potential to accommodate a significantly different form of urban development than currently found in the Town and aligned with transit oriented planning as practiced by other municipalities in Ontario, This Special Policy designation will serve as a recognition that the lands so designated may be part of a larger transit oriented community plan in the future, depending on the outcome of Regional planning efforts. In the interim, existing zoning would apply in order not to frustrate plans of current land owners. Once Regional plans are completed and a basis established to create a transit-oriented community plan, said lands

designated Special Policy Area would be designated Towns and Villages in the Greenbelt Plan.

Amendments to the Regional and Town Official Plans would then follow. In addition, it will be necessary for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to amend relevant policy so as to allow employment lands within the Town to be designated for uses within an approved transit oriented community development plan, following completion of relevant Regional Plans as identified previously.

In summary, the Town should not concur with any Provincial level planning effort that frustrates its opportunity to create appropriate community plans centered on higher order transit facilities, which is the case with the proposed Ontario Street/Queen Elizabeth Way interchange transit hub. There is enormous potential in these lands and efforts should be made now to ensure that a sufficient land base is available to create a well-planned transit-oriented community with different housing forms and densities, mixed uses and more reliance on transit as part of the lifestyle. Such efforts should include designations in Provincial Plans to protect the land base necessary for the creation of appropriate transit-oriented plans.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that amendments as required to Provincial Plans be implemented which allow the full continuum of urban land uses around the future transit hub planned in the Town of Lincoln. In addition, in order to ensure sufficient land is available should the Town's urban boundary be expanded to accommodate an appropriate transit-oriented community development plan, that lands on the east and west sides of Lincoln Avenue and the north and south sides of Greenlane in Beamsville be designated Special Policy Area in the Greenbelt Plan and designated Towns and Villages in the Greenbelt Plan once appropriate studies have been done to warrant the new urban designation. Finally, it is recommended that the Province amend the relevant plans so as not to preclude by policy, the building of a transit oriented development in association with the planned transit hub in the Town.

### **Issue: Urban type uses outside of the settlement boundary.**

There were no changes to the Greenbelt Plan to address this issue. Lincoln has a few lands described in the following examples:

- Lands containing urban uses where the property is partly in a settlement area;
- Lands containing urban uses which are fully serviced and located contiguous to an existing urban boundary;
- Lands physically separated from agricultural uses by a provincial highway; and
- Existing institutional, commercial and industrial uses within the agricultural area.

The issue identified is that the Greenbelt Plan has no flexibility to allow the expansion of such uses, add uses or change uses. There is a little more flexibility found in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, policies which are not dissimilar to Planning Act provisions for Committee of Adjustment applications related to legal non-conforming uses.

What is necessary within the Greenbelt Plan is clear direction related specifically to urban-type uses outside of settlement areas allowing such uses to expand, add uses or change

uses. Therefore, appropriate policy is needed to be included in the Greenbelt Plan to offer criteria acceptable to deal with the issue of adding, expanding and changing urban type uses outside of the settlement boundary of the Greenbelt Plan.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that in the interest of equitable treatment found in other planning instruments such as the Planning Act and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, that the Greenbelt Plan policies be amended to allow legal urban uses outside of the settlement areas to expand or add uses or change uses.

**Issue: Removal of Agricultural Land from the Niagara Escarpment Plan and added to the Greenbelt's Protected Countryside.**

This jurisdiction change is requested in view of the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement which recognizes the need for agricultural uses to have more flexibility by introducing agriculturally-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. The Greenbelt Plan describes and protects the land base of an agricultural system, so it is redundant to have agricultural lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Such a removal would then allow the Niagara Escarpment Plan to focus on protection of environmental areas.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that agricultural lands within the Town be removed from the Niagara Escarpment Plan and that the guiding provincial policy document related to agricultural uses and operations be the Greenbelt Plan.

**Issue: Urban lands of the Town within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area.**

Some lands located within a settlement boundary require approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission, even though the Town exercises development approval. The Town has mature planning documents in terms of a new Official Plan, a comprehensive Zoning By-law and other approval mechanisms authorized by the Planning Act. Moreover, local planning approval authorities in the form of Council and Staff are familiar with local conditions and issues and are therefore capable of making informed planning decisions. With the Niagara Escarpment Plan in existence in excess of 30 years, it should focus on environmental matters and remove urban lands from the Plan.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that Urban Lands in Lincoln be removed from the Niagara Escarpment Plan and that such lands be governed solely by planning decisions rendered by the Council of the Town of Lincoln, in accordance with approved planning instruments under the Ontario Planning Act.

**Issue: Agricultural Support Network has no implementation mechanism.**

Both the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan provide for Agricultural Support Networks. However, there are no support mechanisms to implement the policy. The Greenbelt Plan defines an Agricultural System as follows:

“Means a group of interconnected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving, agricultural sector. It has 2 components: 1) an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural uses including specialty crop areas and rural land that together create a continuous, productive, land base for agriculture; 2) an Agricultural Support Network which includes infrastructure, services and agri-food assets important to the viability of the sector.”

The Agricultural Support Network is defined by the Greenbelt Plan as:

“Means within the Agricultural System, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as: regional agricultural infrastructure and transportation networks, on-farm buildings and infrastructure, agricultural services, farm markets, distributors and first level processing and vibrant agricultural-supportive communities.”

Such networks can form the basis for support of local agriculture and related uses through Provincial initiatives, much like community improvement undertaken by municipalities under the Planning Act. The following recommendations are self-explanatory and align with the key direction of the Town of Lincoln as a ‘Centre of Excellence for Agriculture’.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Greenbelt Plan be amended to create policies committing the Province through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to provide the following to local municipalities in the interests of supporting and growing Agricultural Support Networks within the Greenbelt Plan Area:

1. Funding financial incentive programs to assist in the financing of farm buildings, buildings and infrastructure fundamental to the operation of the Agricultural Support Network as well as infrastructure and technology improvements.
2. Financing local transportation strategies and plans designed to create better access to markets and movement of goods at the local municipal level.
3. Funding for local municipalities to construct, rehabilitate and maintain infrastructure and transportation improvements for the Agricultural Support Network.

It is further recommended that the Province, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, develop metrics to measure the success of the programs thus advancing the interests of the Agricultural Support Network.

If the Province elects to keep agricultural lands in Lincoln in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, contrary to recommendations in this report, then similar policies and programs to the above should also be included in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, including associated metrics.

### **Issue: Need for Provincial Plans to recognize local solutions:**

The latest version of the Provincial Plans provided some recognition of the unique aspects of Niagara, especially in the agricultural sector. However, we still view there to be a need for all three Provincial Plans to allow and recognize local solutions. Provincial-level plans must provide the flexibility for local municipal jurisdictions, be they regional or local, to implement broad brush Provincial Plans in a manner that is reflective of local circumstances. The



amendments to the Greenbelt Plan relative to Niagara need to go further so as to recognize the ability of local plans to develop solutions that address local needs.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that all three plans contain specific policy recognizing that because agriculture in Niagara is unique, locally-generated solutions consistent with the intent and purpose of the respective Provincial Plan will be allowed and deemed in conformity with said Provincial Plan.

**Issue: Niagara Escarpment Plan Expansion:**

The Provincial guide, “Shaping Land Use in the Greater Golden Horseshoe” summarizes the amendments of the various plans and includes the following statement:

“The Niagara Escarpment Commission has proposed expanding the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area by approximately 45,000 hectares to provide greater protection to the Niagara Escarpment’s natural heritage and water features and functions and its cultural heritage and scenic resources. The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry has asked the Niagara Escarpment Commission to seek feedback from the public, municipalities, First Nations and Metis communities, and stakeholders on these proposals.”

As noted in comments provided earlier in this report, our recommendation is to shrink the effective area of the Niagara Escarpment Plan in the interests of focussing the Niagara Escarpment Plan on core environmental issues. Lands so removed from the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area would still be covered by the Province’s Greenbelt Plan.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

There are no alternatives for consideration as this report is the next iteration from a series of reports over the past 18 months prepared in response to the Provincial Review.

**COMMUNICATION/ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW:**

Not applicable.

**ALIGNMENT TO CORPORATE PLAN:**

In reviewing the recommendations proposed in this report, we note that the respective recommendations are aligned with the Town’s Future Focus Corporate Plan 2014-2018. The following explains where the recommendations align with the Future Focus Corporate Plan. The recommendations related to boundaries and allowing boundary adjustments based on local knowledge and circumstances is an effort to work effectively with the Province, one of the steps identified in the Communications strategy laid out in the Corporate Plan.

The recommendations related to plans around the future Transit Hub align with the Roads, Transportation and Traffic strategy as this supports the Go transit initiative. Moreover, building a higher order transit hub with the accompanying mix of housing styles and densities, a transit-focussed way of life and mixing uses and creating new commercial opportunities aligns with the strategic goal under Economic Development: “Build an economic capability by

creating an investment-friendly environment, securing our economic future and improving the quality of life for our residents.”

The recommendation related to amending relevant plans to allow expansions, additions, or change of uses is a customer service initiative and implements the Economic Development strategy by pursuing opportunities to support investment and in some cases, attract new businesses.

The recommendation related to moving lands out of the Niagara Escarpment Plan are examples of taking the initiative to service customers locally while working effectively with the Province.

The recommendations relative to the Agricultural Support Network and the recommendations that provincial plans recognize local solutions dovetail with Lincoln’s Corporate Goal to be “A Centre of Excellence for Agriculture.”

In conclusion, the recommendations of this report align with the Town of Lincoln’s Corporate Plan.

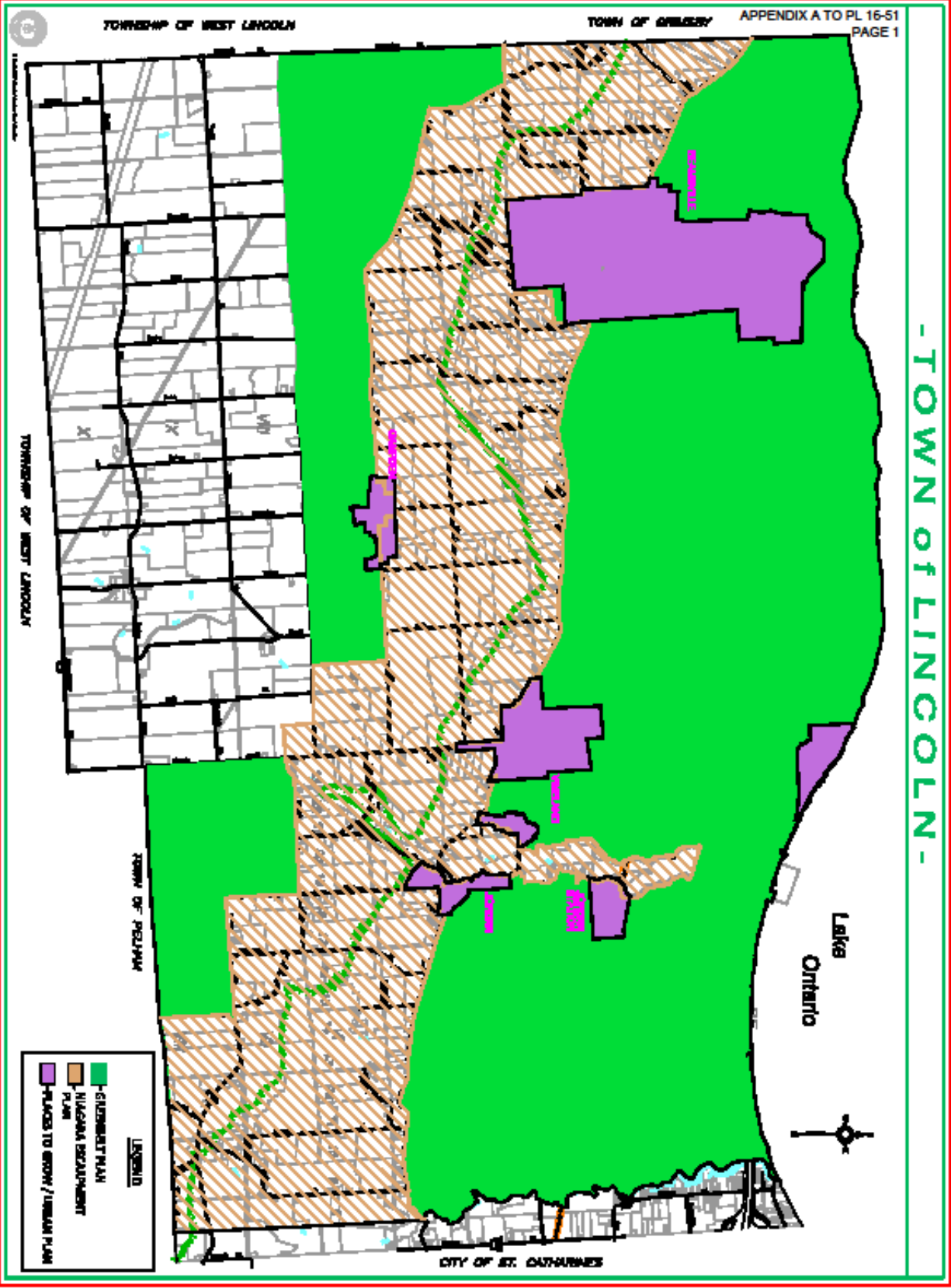
## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A Provincial Plans Map

Appendix B Report PL 15-35

Appendix C Report PL 16-13

Appendix D Comparison of Comments Previously Submitted with the Proposed Plans



Report # PL 15-35  
CN: 1-2-03-02



## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF LINCOLN

REPORT TO: Chairman and Members of the Economic Development and Planning Committee

DATE OF MEETING: May 12, 2015

SUBJECT: Provincial Plans Review  
CN: 1-1-03-01

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons outlined in PL 15-35 it is hereby recommended;

1. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for consideration in their review; and
2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Niagara for information purposes.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a recommendation to Committee and Council regarding the Provincial Plans Review. The report will provide Committee and Council with the changes that should be considered by the Province.

### BACKGROUND

The Province is currently undertaking their 10 year review of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan does not apply to lands within the Town; however the remaining Plans do apply to lands within the Town. A map outlining the location of the boundaries of the three Plans is included as Attachment No. 1.

The review is intended to focus on how the Plans can better achieve the following six goals:

- Protecting agricultural land, water and natural areas;
- Keeping people and goods moving and building cost-effective infrastructure;
- Fostering healthy, livable and inclusive communities;
- Building communities that attract workers and create jobs;
- Addressing climate change and building resilient communities; and
- Improving implementation and better aligning the plans.

The Provincial review has two stages. The first stage is to obtain comments. Comments can be submitted by email ([landuseplanningreview@ontario.ca](mailto:landuseplanningreview@ontario.ca)); or on-line through the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry ([ontario.ca/EBR](http://ontario.ca/EBR)). The information gathered through the first stage will allow the Province to formulate amendments to the Plans. The second stage of the public consultation process will focus on potential amendments to the Plans.

On July 7, 2014 the Town adopted a new Official Plan which was approved by the Region on April 30, 2015. Provided there are no appeals, the new Official Plan will come into effect upon expiry of the appeal period. On April 7, 2015 the Town adopted a new Economic Development Strategy. Both of these documents provide the framework for the future direction of the Town.

The key directions include:

- Establishing Lincoln as a “Centre of Excellence for Agriculture”;
- Preservation of agricultural lands and promoting agriculture, agri-tourism and farm diversification to improve the sustainability of agriculture;
- Supporting opportunities for employment;
- Reinforcing the need for a Go Train Station in the Town; and
- Encouraging diversity in housing.

The Region is undertaking a comprehensive review of their Official Plan. As well, the Region is proposing to complete a Mobility Hub Study to facilitate future Go Train Service in the Region. Both of these actions play a role in the future direction of the Town.

The Provincial Review needs to ensure that the Strategic Directions of the Town to promote the movement of people and goods, to promote the Town as a “Centre of Excellence for Agriculture”, to encourage opportunities to support and attract new business and promote a healthy and viable community to ensure prosperity are realized. Increased flexibility of Provincial Policies will assist the Town in facilitating its local strategic directions.

## STAFF COMMENTS

The Provincial Plans need to provide some flexibility to recognize local circumstances. The Town has firm settlement boundaries and highly productive specialty crop agricultural lands on small farm parcels. The current policies in the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan limit the ability of the Town to ensure the economic viability of farming as well as the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses in the Town. The following changes are recommended.

### Agriculture

Agricultural lands in the Town are much smaller due the intensive nature of farming in the area. Approximately 10.8% of the farm parcels in the Town are 2 hectares to 4 hectares in size (5 to 10 acres). Approximately 15.4% of the farm parcels are over 4 hectares but less than 10 hectares (over 10 to 25 acres). These agricultural lands represent specialty crop lands and include orchards, vineyards and greenhouses. These types of agricultural uses represent significant investment in buildings and crops. For orchards and vineyards it is

several years before crops are produced and therefore any return on investment. The Town attracts tourists through farm diversification uses and agri-tourism uses which provide an economic benefit to the local economy.

The environmental setbacks (setbacks from wetlands, woodlots, creeks containing fish habitat) required by Provincial Policies on small farm parcels can severely limit or eliminate the ability to establish new agricultural buildings or agriculturally related development. This impacts the ability of the farm to be profitable and sustainable and the success of local businesses. In many instances agricultural lands would need to be removed from production. In order to consider a reduction to the setback from an environmental feature, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is required to review the impact of the development on the environmental feature. This is not an affordable option for farmers.

Many farmers have Environmental Farm Plans. Environmental Farm Plans allow farmers to identify practices to improve environmental conditions on their property. Flexible setbacks should be permitted for farmers who have prepared Environmental Farm Plans. Within specialty crop areas, agricultural policies need to be prioritized over natural heritage objectives. The environmental contribution of agricultural lands needs to be recognized in Provincial Policies because agricultural lands include a large area of privately owned open space. The mapping used by the Province in Provincial Plans is not as detailed as mapping prepared by the Region or the Conservation Authority due to the scale of the mapping. Municipalities should be permitted to refine the mapping for environmental areas since the mapping prepared at the local level is done at a more detailed scale.

The success of Provincial Policies requires buy-in from farmers given that they play a key role in the stewardship of agricultural lands and already use best management practices to protect their agricultural lands. The policies need to recognize that it is farmers who are responsible for ensuring that agricultural lands remain in production which benefits society as a whole and provides access to local food. People living in urban areas may view sustainability of agriculture as important but do not understand the pressures faced daily by farmers, including low profitability, limited access to markets, transportation of products to market, access to water for irrigation and knowledge of new consumer demands. Farming needs to be recognized as a business and an industry. Productive agricultural lands are a fundamental component of a healthy rural community.

Agricultural viability needs to be recognized in Provincial Policies. This is necessary for the Province to achieve its goal of 120,000 new jobs in the agri-food sector by 2020. In order address agricultural viability, Regional Staff have suggested that the following be considered:

- Include agricultural viability as a key objective;
- Add the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) definitions for agri-tourism uses and on-farm diversified uses;
- Recognize that agriculture varies across the Province and create provisions in Provincial Policy for other types of agricultural infrastructure such as abattoirs, processing plants, equipment sales and services;
- Modify the definition of key hydrologic features to distinguish between natural and man-made features;
- Invest in infrastructure for food production;

- Provide incentives for new technology, ecological goods and services, conservation easements;
- Invest in programs that help encourage agricultural succession planning;
- Review tax policies for agriculture, including using tax dollars to fund agricultural incentives; and
- Recognize that agriculture in Niagara is unique and that a local solution to implementing to Provincial Policies is required.

There is a need to provide for proper infrastructure for agriculture to ensure the success of the local agricultural community. The Vineland Research and Innovation Centre is an example of how private and public interests can work together for the benefit of farmers and consumers. There is a need for public dollars to support the needs of the agricultural community. Farmers need a reliable and cost effective system of water for irrigation for their crops as well as access to processing facilities. This is a need that benefits the entire Province, since it supports the viability of farming and provides access to local food, and therefore needs to be funded at the Provincial level.

The 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) now recognizes the need for agricultural uses to have more flexibility with the introduction of policies related to agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses. Both the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan need to be updated to reflect the new PPS policies. Agricultural viability needs to be considered a high priority within the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Alternatively, agricultural lands could be removed from the Niagara Escarpment Plan and placed within the Greenbelt Plan (provided the Greenbelt Plan is updated to reflect the agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses policies in the PPS. This would allow the Niagara Escarpment Plan to focus on the protection of environmental lands.

#### Timing of Boundary Refinements

Changes to settlement boundaries can only be completed through a municipal comprehensive review. Within Niagara Region settlement boundaries are established by the Region. The Region has initiated their review and is currently working on their background studies (Urban Visioning Strategy, Transportation Master Plan, Water and Wastewater Master Plan and Go Mobility Hubs). Their timeline for review will extend past the timelines for the Provincial Review. The Region needs to be provided with the opportunity to review the settlement boundaries through their review process. This review process requires consultation with the public, local municipalities and agencies, including the Province. The Region should be permitted the opportunity to amend the settlement boundaries upon completion of their municipal comprehensive review. Any changes to the settlement boundaries would require Provincial approval.

#### Mapping/Policy Changes

Within the Town, there are lands which are located outside of the settlement boundary but are developed for urban type uses. These lands can be described as follows:

- Lands containing urban uses where the property is partly in a settlement area;

- Lands containing urban uses which are fully serviced and located contiguous to an existing settlement boundary;
- Lands physically separated from agricultural uses by a Provincial Highway; and/or
- Existing institutional, commercial and industrial uses within the agricultural area.

The above noted existing urban uses are not currently located within a settlement boundary and cannot be included in a settlement boundary except through a comprehensive Regional review. Changes to boundaries must consider matters such as land use, servicing and transportation, and must be considered through a detailed public consultation process. Given the location of some of these urban uses, they are not candidate sites for inclusion within a settlement boundary.

The Greenbelt Policies do not provide any flexibility to expand these urban type uses, add additional uses or even change the land use since the existing policies require that any change in use be more in conformity with the Greenbelt Plan. Municipalities should be permitted to allow a change to these uses, subject to meeting appropriate criteria.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan policies do not provide a lot of flexibility to expand these urban type uses, add additional uses or even change the land use, since the existing policies only permit an existing use to change to a similar use or a more compatible use provided it can be demonstrated that it meets the objectives of the applicable designation in the Niagara Escarpment Plan. There have been situations in the past where the Town has supported a change in use (using the Town Official Plan and Zoning By-law as a guideline), and the proposal has been refused by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The comments of the local municipality should have some weight on the Commission's decision.

There are properties that have multiple plans affecting a single property. For example, there are properties in the Town where the Greenbelt Plan line goes through a building. It is recommended that minor boundary adjustments be permitted that do not create developable land.

When the Town is proposing to update its Official Plan or Zoning By-law mapping, Staff has previously been advised by the Niagara Escarpment Commission that the Town is not correctly depicting the boundary of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. It would appear that the Niagara Escarpment Plan boundary is being changed or refined without notification to the local municipality.

For the settlement areas municipalities are required by the Growth Plan to depict the Built-Up Area and the Greenfield Area. These boundaries were set in 2006 and reflected existing development at that time. As part of the Town Official Plan Update, the Town was able to refine the Built-Up Boundary and the Greenfield Boundary through the support of the Region, since the Province only mapped the larger settlement areas. It does not make sense to include areas that are now fully developed (newer subdivisions for example) in the Greenfield Area. They should be included in the Built-Up Boundary. The Province needs to update the mapping in consultation with the Region to reflect the development that has occurred. Alternatively, the Growth Plan could permit the upper-tier municipality to amend the boundary in their Official Plans.



### Complete and Viable Rural Communities

The Town includes both settlement areas (urban areas) and agricultural areas. The settlement areas include Beamsville, Vineland, Vineland East, Jordan, Jordan Station Prudhommes and Campden. These settlement areas are not one contiguous settlement area, but are dispersed throughout the Town. Municipal water and sanitary sewer services extend through the agricultural to connect the different settlement areas. The Town also has 310 kilometres of road, the bulk of which is roads constructed to a rural standard and service the rural area. As a result, the Town infrastructure is more expensive to maintain. The need for improvements to our rural road system is necessary to accommodate agricultural uses, agriculture related uses and agri-tourism uses.

The standard for a complete community in a rural setting with smaller settlement areas is different from a larger urban centre. The components of a complete community include open space and recreational facilities, emergency and health facilities, fire halls, educational facilities, places of worship, places of employment, residential uses and commercial facilities and access to transit. The current policies of the Greenbelt Plan make it difficult for rural municipalities to provide for all of the components of a complete community. For example, fire halls need to be located to optimize their response times, but Provincial Policies do not permit municipal facilities within the agricultural area. There is a need to provide some flexibility, as well as criteria, for establishing emergency services outside of settlement areas.

The Town owns properties that are within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. Some of these properties are used for parks and open spaces purposes (Kinsmen Park for example) and some are used for municipal facilities (former Quarry Road Works Yard for example). The uses and buildings on these properties may need to change over time due to municipal requirements. Municipalities are reluctant to remove old buildings due to the difficulty in obtaining approval to construct new facilities in the future. The Niagara Escarpment Plan policies need flexibility for municipalities to address their municipal requirements.

The settlement area boundaries are surrounded by lands considered as specialty crop lands within the Greenbelt Plan Area. As a result, the Town has limited opportunities for new growth. Since municipalities rely on assessment growth to fund municipal services, once the settlement areas are fully developed, there will be a lower increase in assessment and therefore a shortfall to fund municipal services. As the same time the Town understands the need to protect specialty crop lands that are an important Provincial resource. Agricultural lands are taxed at 25% of the residential rate, but municipalities still have to provide a full range of municipal services. If the specialty crop lands are considered a Provincial resource, then the Province as a whole needs to pay for the protection of agricultural lands in order to ensure the viability of rural communities.

### Removal of Urban Lands from the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area

All lands within the settlement boundaries should only be subject to the municipal development process and not have to obtain an additional approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Growth Plan requires municipalities to build compact, vibrant and complete communities. Municipalities are also required to have approved Official Plans

and Zoning By-laws in place. They are more familiar with local issues, and are therefore capable of making planning decisions.

### Alignment of Provincial Policy

There needs to be alignment between the various Provincial Policies and how the policies are implemented across Provincial Ministries. The definitions and policies in the various plans need to be aligned and be updated to reflect the new PPS. It can be difficult to know which policies take precedent. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is supportive of agriculture and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is encouraging redevelopment and intensification within urban areas. The Ministry of Natural Resources updates their environmental feature mapping which establishes setbacks from those new environmental features (For example wetlands in the agricultural and urban areas). In some instances it restricts or eliminates economic development opportunities. This creates difficulty for municipalities to implement Provincial Policies.

The 2006 Growth Plan recognizes that improved Inter-Regional Transit to 2031 is required. The Region and local municipalities are working together to create a business plan for the expansion of Go Train Service into the Region which is essential for economic prosperity in the Region. The Region is initiating a Mobility Hub Study to facilitate future Go Train Service to provide Metrolinx with the information that they require to support the development of Go Train service into the Region. However the current Provincial Policies do not permit the expansion of the settlement boundary to address the objectives for a Mobility Hub.

### Provincial Funding for Policy Creation and Community Infrastructure

Municipalities need additional funding from the Province to help build and repair the necessary infrastructure to support the goals and objectives in Provincial Policy. This includes infrastructure to accommodate additional growth such as water and sanitary sewers, roads and bridges, parks, recreational centres and pools, trails, fire halls, libraries and museums. To build a complete community, this type of infrastructure is required.

Whenever there are changes to Provincial Policies, municipalities are required to update their Official Plans to bring their plans into conformity with Provincial Policies. This is an expensive and time consuming process for municipalities since these changes require background studies, the preparation of policy, agency review and public consultation.

Changes to local Official Plans to implement Provincial Policy can also be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board which then requires further staff and legal resources. Municipalities need additional funding to keep their Plans up to date.

### Community Consultation

The current time frame and process does not allow for appropriate consultation by the community or allow adequate time to submit comments. The session in St. Catharines was well attended. Only a short time was provided for the public to ask questions. The input was limited to answering a set of questions put forth by the Province. There was great interest in the session from the agricultural community as was as interest by members of the public who had questions about particular situations. Regional Staff have recommended that the

Province attend site tours of problematic areas, provide an economic analysis of the Greenbelt Plan, prepare an inventory of existing uses, carry out a review of other jurisdictions and consult with the stakeholders in the Tender Fruit and Grape Area (specialty crop area). Municipalities and individuals need to have enough time to comment during the review process.

### Public Education

There needs to be better education regarding the Greenbelt Plan and agriculture. This is to ensure that the public recognizes that agriculture is an industrial operation and that agricultural lands are not public open space.

### Implementation Guides and Training

In order to ensure consistency in the interpretation of Provincial Policies, detailed implementation guides as well as Staff training is needed to assist Staff in interpreting new policies. For example, the Growth Plan requires that Greenfield Areas achieve a minimum density target of not less than 50 residents and jobs per hectare. This is easily translated for areas intended for residential use, but more difficult to determine for development in commercial and industrial areas. The guidelines need to be practical and be able to be implemented.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The municipality will incur costs to amend its Official Plan and Zoning By-law to implement the changes to the Provincial Policy.

### OPTIONS

Council has three options with respect to the proposed amendments. Council may:

1. Approve the recommendations; or
2. Modify the recommendations; or
3. Adjourn the recommendations if Council requires additional time or information before a decision is made.

### ATTACHMENTS

1. Map of the Provincial Plan Areas (See Appendix A to PL 16-15)

Report Prepared On: May 6, 2015

Respectfully submitted by:

Reviewed by:

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Kathleen Dale, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development

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Bob Spadoni, CPA, CGA  
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Report # PL 16-13  
CN: 1-2-03-02



## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF LINCOLN

REPORT TO: Chairman and Members of the Committee of the Whole  
DATE OF MEETING: February 29, 2016  
SUBJECT: Provincial Plans Review - Potential Mapping Changes  
CN: 1-1-03-01

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons outlined in PL 16-13 it is hereby recommended:

1. That this report be received for information; and
2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Niagara for consideration in their Municipal Comprehensive Review.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Committee and Council regarding the Provincial Plans Review and Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) potential mapping changes.

This overview highlights the previous position by Council and the comments provided to the Province through the Region. The minor suggestions and recommendations contained in our submission are areas of our community that have been discussed before and are the subject of future consideration (i.e. Prudhommes, areas around the Ontario St. GO Mobility Study).

Our submission also identifies a few minor anomalies and looks to correct them. Staff has taken a prudent and conservative approach to these suggestions, subject to and waiting for, more information from the Province's Coordinated Review. The information contained in this report provides Council with the details and a more in-depth look into our approach and position.

### BACKGROUND AND STAFF COMMENTS

At the February 8, 2016 Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting Staff were directed to provide an update to the Committee of the Whole regarding the Provincial Plans Review. This report provides a summary of the actions to date and outlines in more detail the potential mapping changes.

In May 2015 the Town provided comments to the Province regarding the 10 year review of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Greenbelt Plan (GB) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GP) (PL 15-35).

The new Official Plan (which has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board) and the new Economic Development Strategy provide the framework for the future direction of the Town. The key directions include:

- Establishing Lincoln as a “Centre of Excellence for Agriculture”;
- Supporting opportunities for employment (including a focus on our industrial properties);
- Preservation of agricultural lands and promoting agriculture, agri-tourism and farm diversification to improve the sustainability of agriculture;
- Reinforcing the need for a GO Train Station in the Town; and
- Encouraging diversity in housing.

The Region is undertaking a comprehensive review of their Official Plan. As well, the Region is undertaking a MCR and a GO Hub and Transit Station Study to facilitate future GO Train Service in the Region. Both of these actions play a role in future development in the Town.

Also in May of 2015, the Region provided their comments regarding the 10 year review (PDS 22-2015). The Regional and Town comments were aligned and included the following requests.

### Agriculture

- Flexible setbacks from environmental features be permitted for farmers who have prepared environmental farm plans.
- Priority for specialty crop lands over environmental features.
- Use of local mapping for environmental features.
- Include agricultural viability as a key objective.
- Add the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) definitions for agri-tourism uses and on-farm diversified uses to both the GB and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP).
- Recognize that agriculture varies across the Province and create provisions in Provincial policy for other types of agricultural infrastructure such as abattoirs, processing plants, equipment sales and services.
- Modify the definition of key hydrologic features to distinguish between natural and man-made features.
- Invest in infrastructure for food production.
- Provide incentives for new technology, ecological goods and services, conservation easements.
- Invest in programs that help encourage agricultural succession planning.
- Review tax policies for agriculture, including using tax dollars to fund agricultural incentives.
- Recognize that agriculture in Niagara is unique and that a local solution to implementing to Provincial policies is required.

- Need to public dollars to support the needs of the agricultural community such as water for irrigation systems and processing facilities.
- That the agricultural lands within the NEP be placed in the GB provided the GB is updated to include the PPS definitions for agri-tourism uses and on-farm diversified uses.

#### Timing of Boundary Refinements

- The Region be permitted the opportunity to amend the settlement boundaries upon completion of their MCR. This includes the recommendations resulting from the GO Hub and Transit Station Study.

#### Mapping/Policy Changes

That refinement to the settlement boundaries be permitted for the following situations:

- Lands containing urban uses where the property is partly in a settlement area.
- Lands containing urban uses which are fully serviced and located contiguous to an existing settlement boundary.

That flexibility be provided (subject to appropriate criteria) to permit expansions to uses or changes in use for the following situations:

- Lands physically separated from agricultural uses by a Provincial Highway.
- Existing institutional, commercial and industrial uses within the agricultural area.

#### Complete and Viable Rural Communities

- Recognition that because municipal water and sanitary sewer services extend through the agricultural area to connect the different settlement areas, that services are more expensive for the Town to maintain over the long-term.
- That improvements to the rural road system are necessary to accommodate agricultural uses, agriculture related uses and agri-tourism uses.
- The need to provide flexibility (subject to appropriate criteria) for establishing emergency services outside of settlement areas.
- If specialty crops are considered a Provincial resource, then the Province as a whole needs to pay for the protection of agricultural lands in order to ensure viability of rural communities.

#### Removal of Urban Lands from the (NEP)

- Removal of lands within settlement boundaries from the NEP.

#### Alignment of Provincial Policy

- Policies and definitions need to be aligned and updated to harmonize Provincial Policies.

### Provincial Funding for Policy Creation and Community Infrastructure

- The need for funding to build and repair infrastructure to support the goals and objectives in Provincial Policy. This includes infrastructure to accommodate additional growth such as water and sanitary sewers, roads and bridges, parks, recreational centres and pools, trails, fire halls, libraries and museums. To build a complete community, this type of infrastructure is required.

In July of 2015, the Region provided a subsequent report (PDS 31-2015) to the Province outlining their requested mapping changes. PDS 31-2015 was prepared in consultation with local Planning Staff. The mapping changes as they related to the Town are summarized as follows.

### Removal of Land from the NEP and Changes to Designation Boundaries

- Removal of urban lands from the NEP which includes a section of the urban area in Campden.
- Removal of agricultural lands from the NEP so that only the GB policies apply. This is to allow for greater economic potential and value added opportunities. Currently approximately 50% of the lands within the NEP in the Region are considered as farmland.
- That the changes to the NEP designation boundaries not be supported as they will limit potential reasonable development opportunities. The Escarpment Natural Area designation in Niagara has grown from 23% of the lands in 1985 to 32% currently. The proposed changes to this designation in Niagara would increase the designated area to 36%.

### Recognition of Special Policy Areas within the GB

- Policies be added to the GB to allow for Special Policy Areas in order to permit these uses to expand or change. This includes the existing urban type development along Victoria Avenue north of the existing Vineland Urban Area and the area to the east of the Prudhommes Urban Area to the north of the QEW North Service Road. These areas would be further refined through discussions with local municipalities to determine the vision, the boundaries and the types of redevelopment.

### Environmental Mapping and Setbacks

- The mapping of the NPCA and the Region be used to establish natural features.
- Flexible setbacks from environmental features be established which consider the parcel, the proposed use or change in use and the functional use of the farm property.

### MCR and GO Hub and Transit Station Study

- That under the Metrolinx Act that the Region be included as part of the GO Transit Service Area and that the definition of Regional Transportation Area include the Region. This is being requested to recognize that GO Rail to Niagara is a significant priority to the Region in order to support growth and prosperity.

- The Province recognize through policy that the MCR may alter the boundaries of settlement areas, even onto specialty crop areas. The purpose of this request is to recognize that that the GO Hub and Transit Station Study may require changes to the urban boundaries in order to achieve appropriate densities, connections to local transit and a mix of uses that support GO Rail. It is also being requested since a component of the MCR is to determine the appropriate location of future growth in the Region.

Recognizing and Supporting Niagara’s Economic Prosperity Goals

- In addition to managing growth, that the GP place emphasis on creating growth opportunities that will enhance Niagara’s prosperity. This is being requested to help Niagara foster greater economic prosperity and address the type of growth being experience in Niagara, since Niagara tends to attract retirees and commuters who work outside the Region who are seeking lower priced housing. The Region advises that a similar strategy was used for Northern Ontario which focuses on creating an economy that offers a range of career opportunities for residents and developing a highly educated and skilled workforce to support knowledge based economy and skilled trades.

Policy for Parcels with Multiple Designations

- Policy be included in each of the Plans that allow for minor boundary adjustments to Provincial Plan boundaries that allow for redevelopment opportunities that meet the intent of the Plan. This request was included to provide redevelopment opportunities on the urban portion of the lands. There are a number of properties in the Beamsville and Vineland areas that are currently affected by multiple plan designations.

In order to provide a local context, Staff has prepared some additional mapping of potential mapping changes. Staff anticipates that if the Province agrees with the comments of both the Town and the Region, that these potential mapping changes will be considered as part of the MCR and the GO Hub and Transit Station Study, since the Region is responsible for allocating growth to the local municipalities. An amendment to the Town Official Plan would be required upon approval of the changes to the Regional Official Plan resulting from the MCR.

Map No.	Location	Comments	Potential Change
1	East and West Sides of Lincoln Avenue & the North Side of Greenlane in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the 800m radius of the future transit site which is intended to achieve appropriate densities, connections to local transit and a mix of uses that support GO Rail.</li> <li>• Serviced with municipal water.</li> <li>• Existing sanitary sewer would need to be extended westerly along Greenlane and northerly along Lincoln Avenue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> <li>• Future industrial lands north of railway and future mixed use, commercial and residential lands south of the railway.</li> </ul>



Map No.	Location	Comments	Potential Change
2	East Side of Bartlett Road in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently serviced with sanitary sewers.</li> <li>• Municipal water would need to be extended southerly in Bartlett Road</li> <li>• The existing creek to the west provides a natural boundary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> <li>• Future industrial lands.</li> </ul>
3	East and West Sides of Lincoln Avenue & the South Side of Greenlane in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The northern part of this area is within the 800m radius of the future transit site which is intended to achieve appropriate densities, connections to local transit and a mix of uses that support GO Rail.</li> <li>• Serviced with municipal water.</li> <li>• Existing sanitary sewer would need to be extended westerly along Greenlane and northerly along Lincoln Avenue.</li> <li>• Future road connections exist from Meadowood Lane and Friesen Boulevard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removed from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> <li>• Future residential lands.</li> </ul>
4	North Side of King Street to the west of Lincoln Avenue in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>• Serviced with municipal water.</li> <li>• Existing sanitary sewer would need to be extended westerly along King Street.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> <li>• Future commercial lands.</li> </ul>
5	East Side of Mountain Street, South Side of Hillside Drive & West Side of Hixon Street in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing single detached dwellings, care facility and apartments.</li> <li>• Serviced with municipal water and sanitary sewers.</li> <li>• The Town has previously supported the removal of these lands from the NEP to allow for redevelopment and intensification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove from NEP and include in the Urban Area.</li> <li>• South end of the site which contains the natural features would remain in the NEP.</li> </ul>
6 & 7	West Side of Lincoln Avenue to the south of King Street in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>• For two of the properties their lands extend beyond the current Urban Area boundary into the NEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove from NEP and include in the Urban Area.</li> </ul>

Map No.	Location	Comments	Potential Change
8	West side of Aberdeen Road to the south of King Street in Beamsville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The properties are within the Urban Area, the GB and the NEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include the portion of the lands that are within the GB within the Urban Area.</li> <li>Future residential uses.</li> <li>Existing environmental lands would remain in a Natural Environment designation.</li> </ul>
9	North of Rittenhouse Road in Vineland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rear of the lands extends beyond the current Urban Area into the GB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include the portion of the lands that are within the GB area within the Urban Area.</li> </ul>
10	South of King Street and west of Victoria Avenue & South of King Street to the East of Twenty Third Street in Vineland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm use.</li> <li>The lands extend beyond the current Urban Area boundary into the NEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from NEP and include in the Urban Area.</li> </ul>
11	East and West Sides of Victoria Avenue to the north of Culp Road in Vineland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm uses</li> <li>Serviced with municipal water and sanitary sewers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from the GB and include in the Urban Area for those lands that are contiguous to the existing Urban Area boundary.</li> <li>Include within a Special Policy Area to provide flexibility for expansion to an existing use or a change in an existing use for those lands removed from the Urban Boundary.</li> </ul>
12 & 13	To the east of Twenty-third Street in Vineland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>The lands extend beyond the current Urban Area boundary into the GB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> </ul>

Map No.	Location	Comments	Potential Change
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lands are serviced with municipal water and/or sanitary sewers.</li> <li>Sanitary sewers would need to be extended easterly along King Street.</li> </ul>	
14	West side of Nineteenth Street to the south of Fourth Avenue in Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>The lands are serviced with municipal water and sanitary sewers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> <li>The rear of the parcels would remain in the NEP.</li> </ul>
15	East Side of Nineteenth Street to the north of King Street in Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>The lands are serviced with municipal water and sanitary sewers.</li> <li>The lands extend beyond the current Urban Area boundary into the GB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> </ul>
16 to 19	East and West sides of Jordan Road in Jordan Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>For two of the properties the municipal services would have to be extended.</li> <li>For two of the properties part of the lands extend beyond the current Urban Area boundary into the GB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from GB and include in the Urban Area.</li> </ul>
20	North side of the QEW North Service Road between Prudhommes and Charles Daley Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing non-farm uses.</li> <li>The area from Jordan Road to the Prudhommes Urban Area is currently serviced with municipal water.</li> <li>This water service is required to be upgraded to permit development to occur within the Prudhommes Urban Area.</li> <li>The area from the Beacon to the Prudhommes Urban Area is currently serviced via a sanitary sewer forcemain.</li> <li>The sanitary sewer services are required to be upgraded to permit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from the GB and include the commercial and industrial uses within the Prudhommes Urban Area or establish a Special Policy Area in the GB.</li> <li>Remove the residential uses from the GB and establish a Special Policy Area in the GB.</li> </ul>

Map No.	Location	Comments	Potential Change
		development to occur within the Prudhommes Urban Area.	
21	Campden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some of the lands within the Campden Urban Area are located within the NEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove from NEP.</li> </ul>

Note: Municipal Services would only need to be extended where the lands are redeveloped.

As outlined in this report, in Niagara the Region is responsible for allocating growth. As part of the Provincial Review, the Town has asked that the Region be permitted the opportunity to amend and refine the settlement boundaries upon completion of their MCR. This will include recommendations resulting from the GO Hub and Transit Station Study. In order for the Region to determine its land supply to 2041 and determine the appropriate location for future growth, de-designation and/or phasing may be required in municipalities that have an oversupply of land. Some of the lands that are identified for growth by the Region may be within the GB. This is the situation in Lincoln since all of the Town Urban Areas are surrounded by lands in the GB or the NEP. Both the Town and Regional submissions have requested that the policies of the Provincial Plans be aligned and that provision be made for local flexibility in order to recognize local circumstances and permit the Region and the Town to grow and prosper.

The proposed amendments to the Provincial Plans are expected to be released for comments in the next few months. The Town in consultation with the Region will be submitting comments regarding the proposed amendments put forth by the Province. Should the changes to the Provincial Plans provide the Region with the opportunity to amend and refine the settlement boundaries, the proposed changes outlined in this report will be considered as part of the MCR. It is important for the Town to continue to work with the Province and the Region to ensure that the position of the Town is known.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The municipality will incur costs to amend its Official Plan and Zoning By-law to implement the changes to the Provincial Policy and the Regional Official Plan.

### ATTACHMENT

- Potential Mapping Changes

Report Prepared On: February 25, 2016

Respectfully submitted by:

Reviewed by:

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Kathleen Dale, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development

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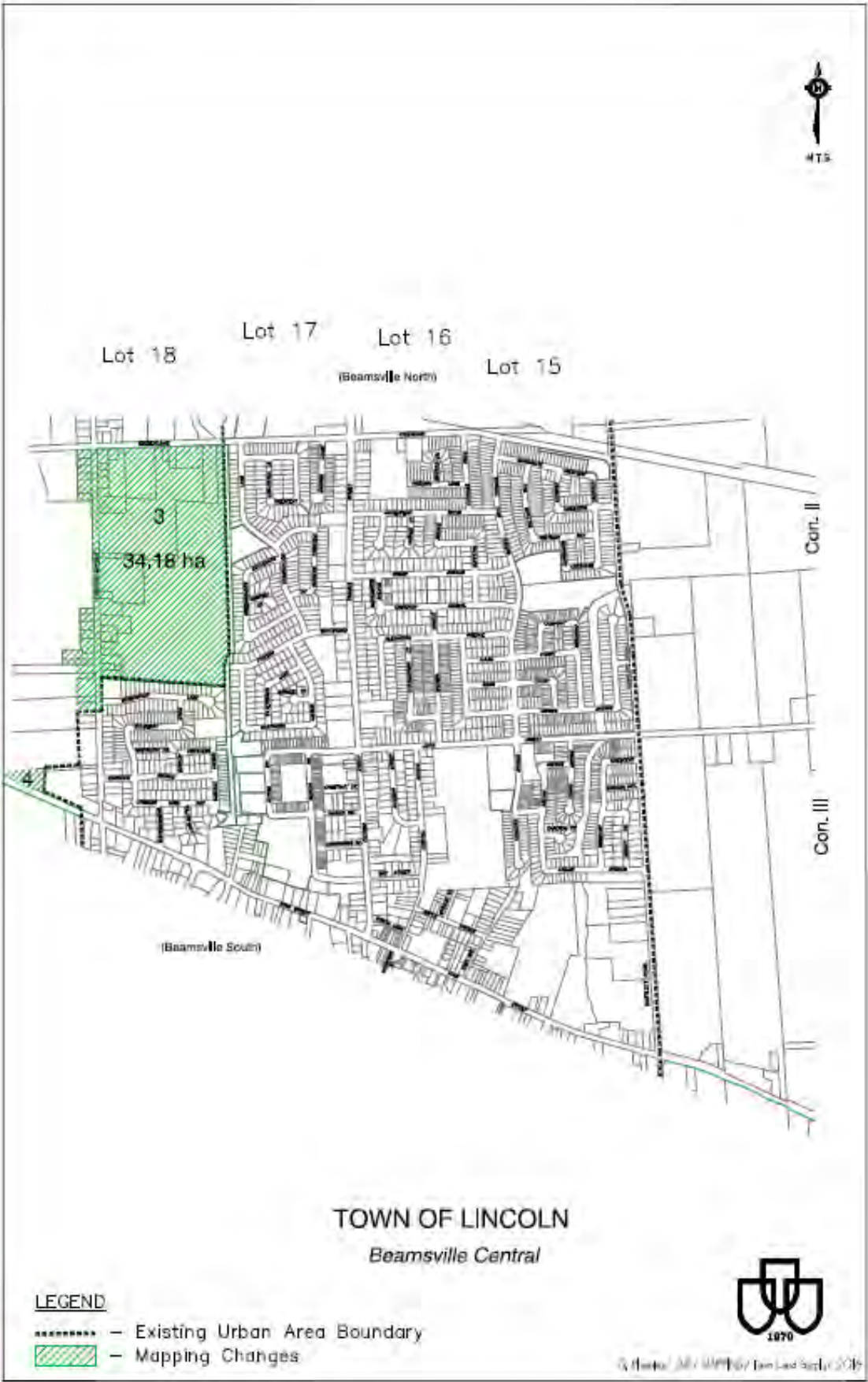
Michael Kirkopoulos, B.Sc., M.A., CMP  
Chief Administrative Officer

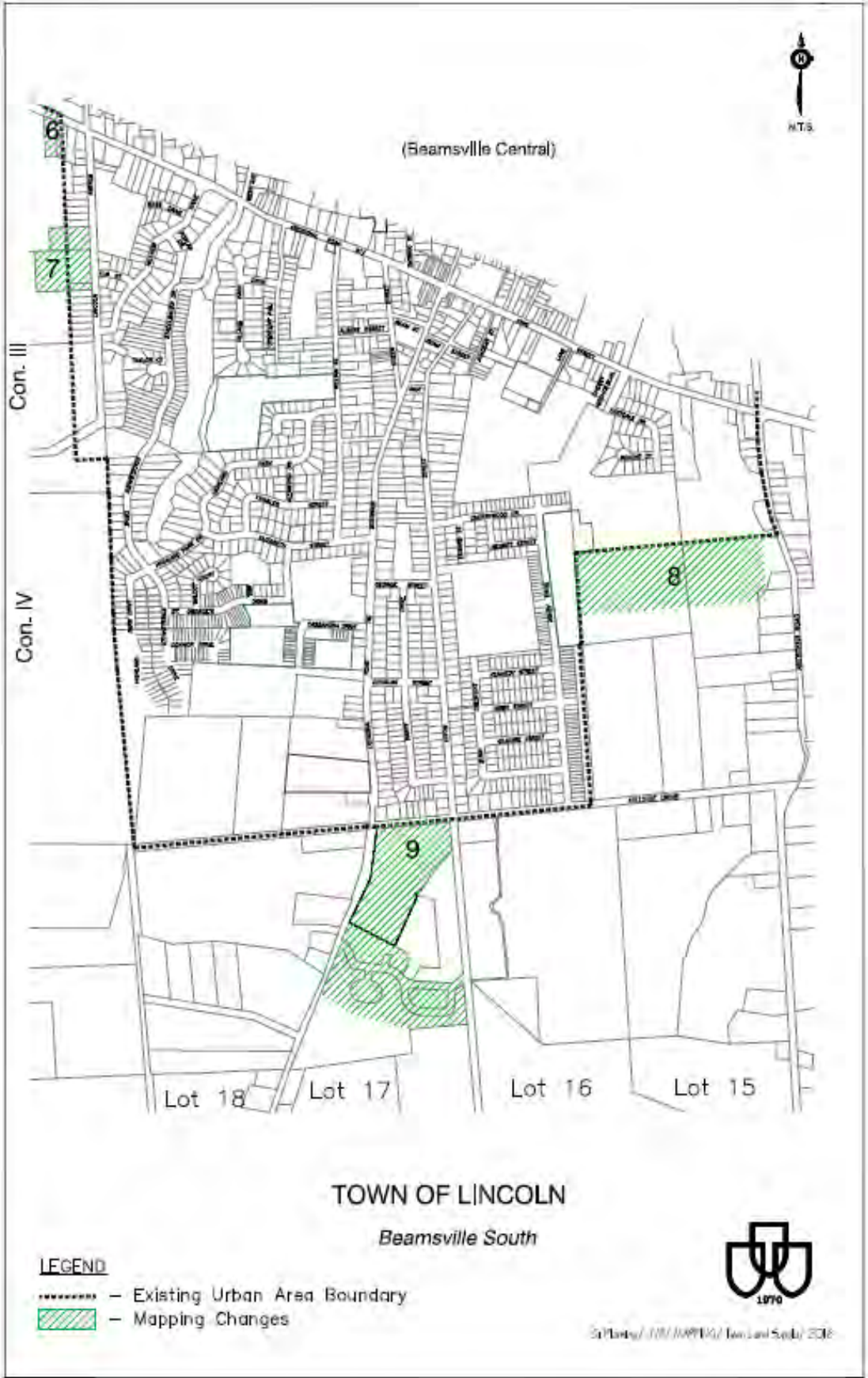


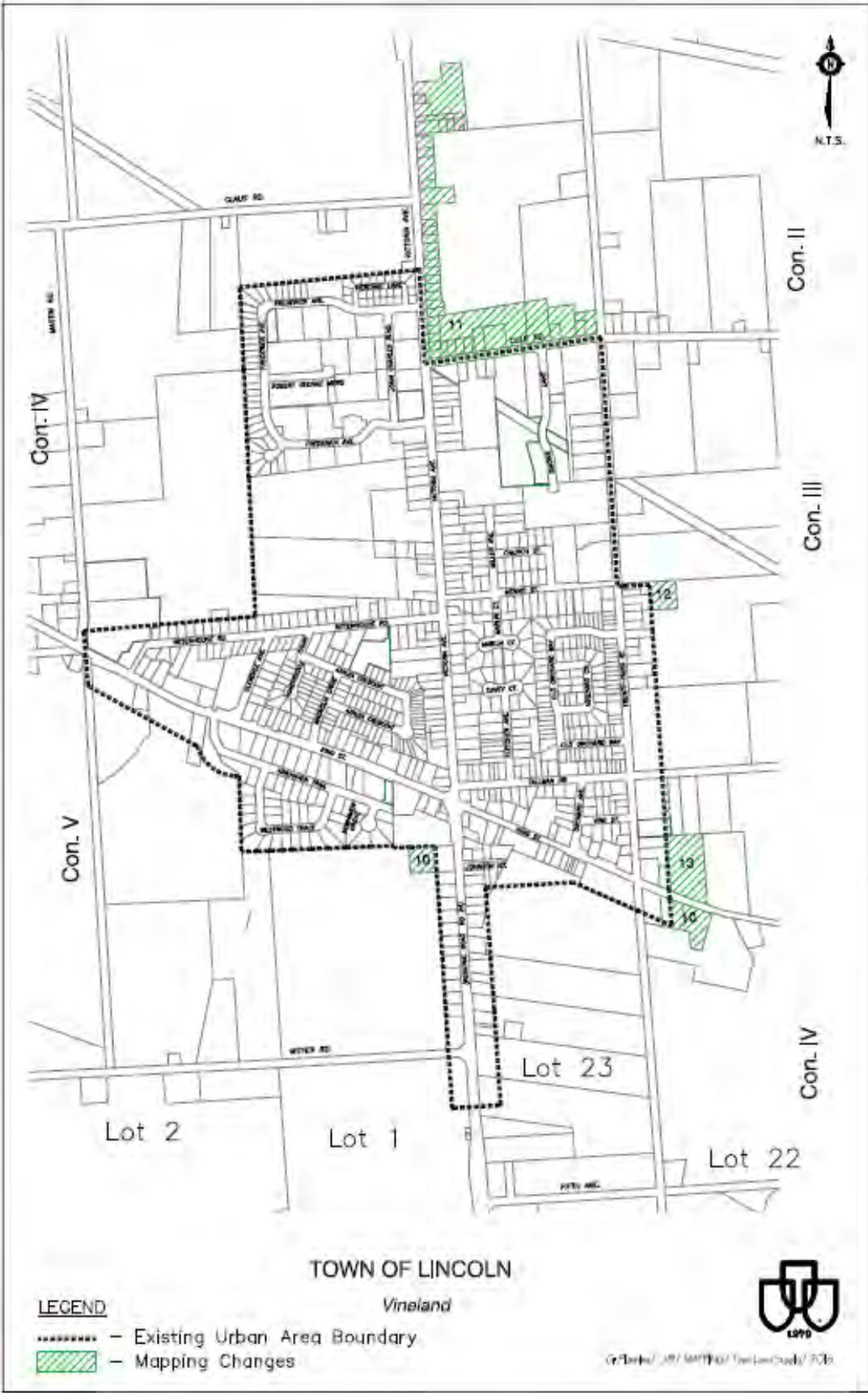
Map by JRC/MAPPING/ Town Land Dept/ 2016

**TOWN OF LINCOLN**  
Bearsville North

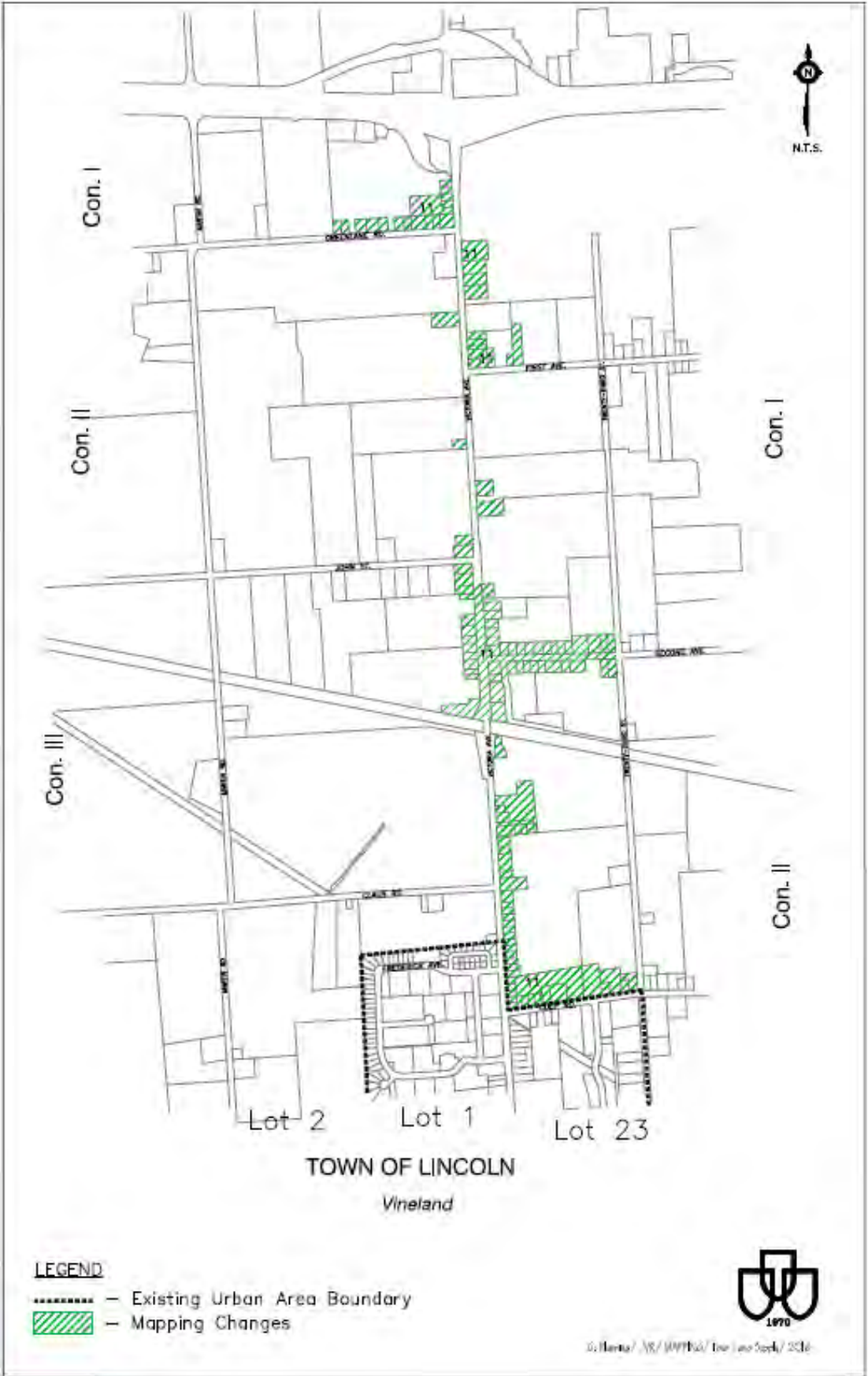
- LEGEND**
- Existing Urban Area Boundary
  - ▨ Mapping Changes
  - Future Transit Site

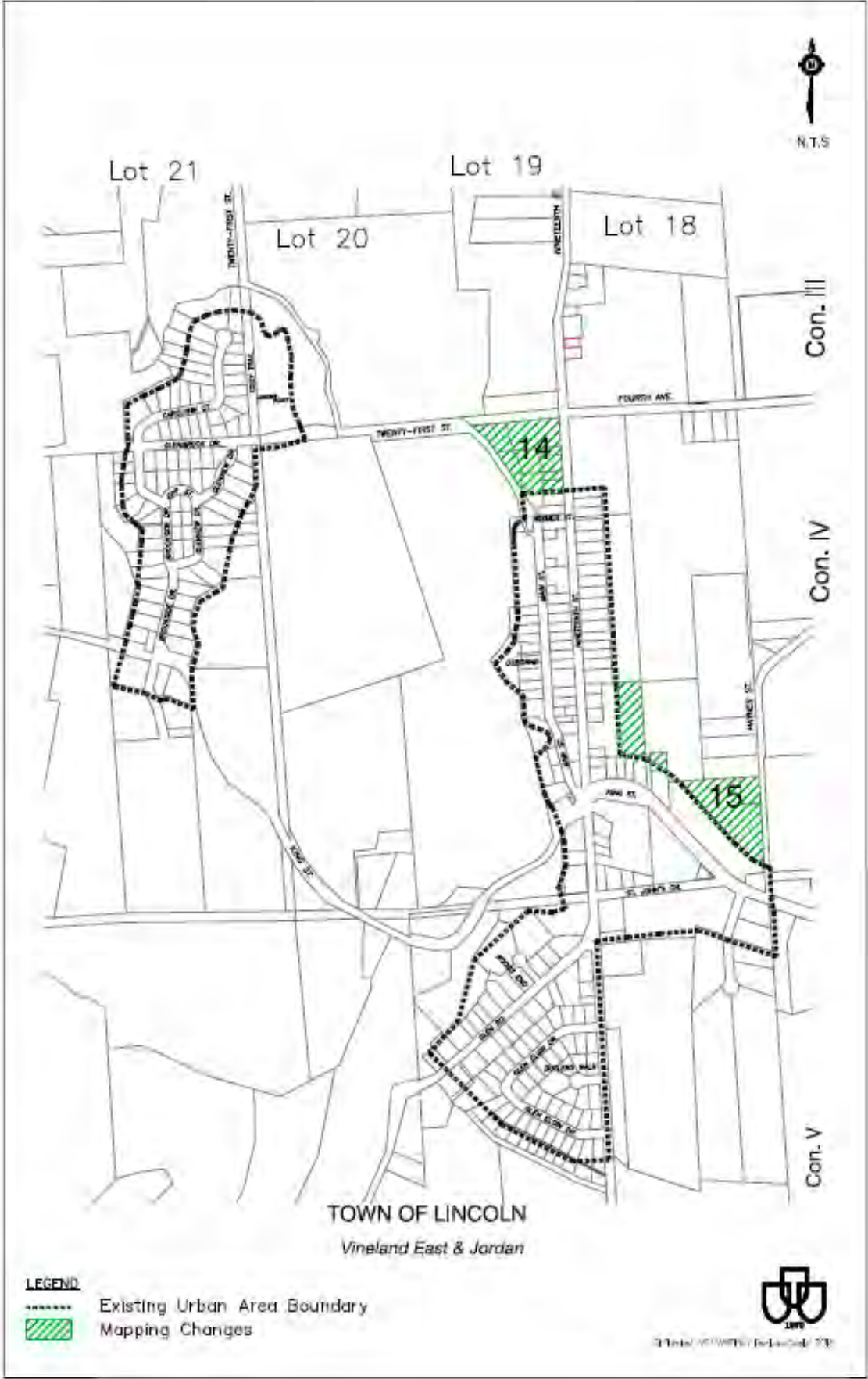






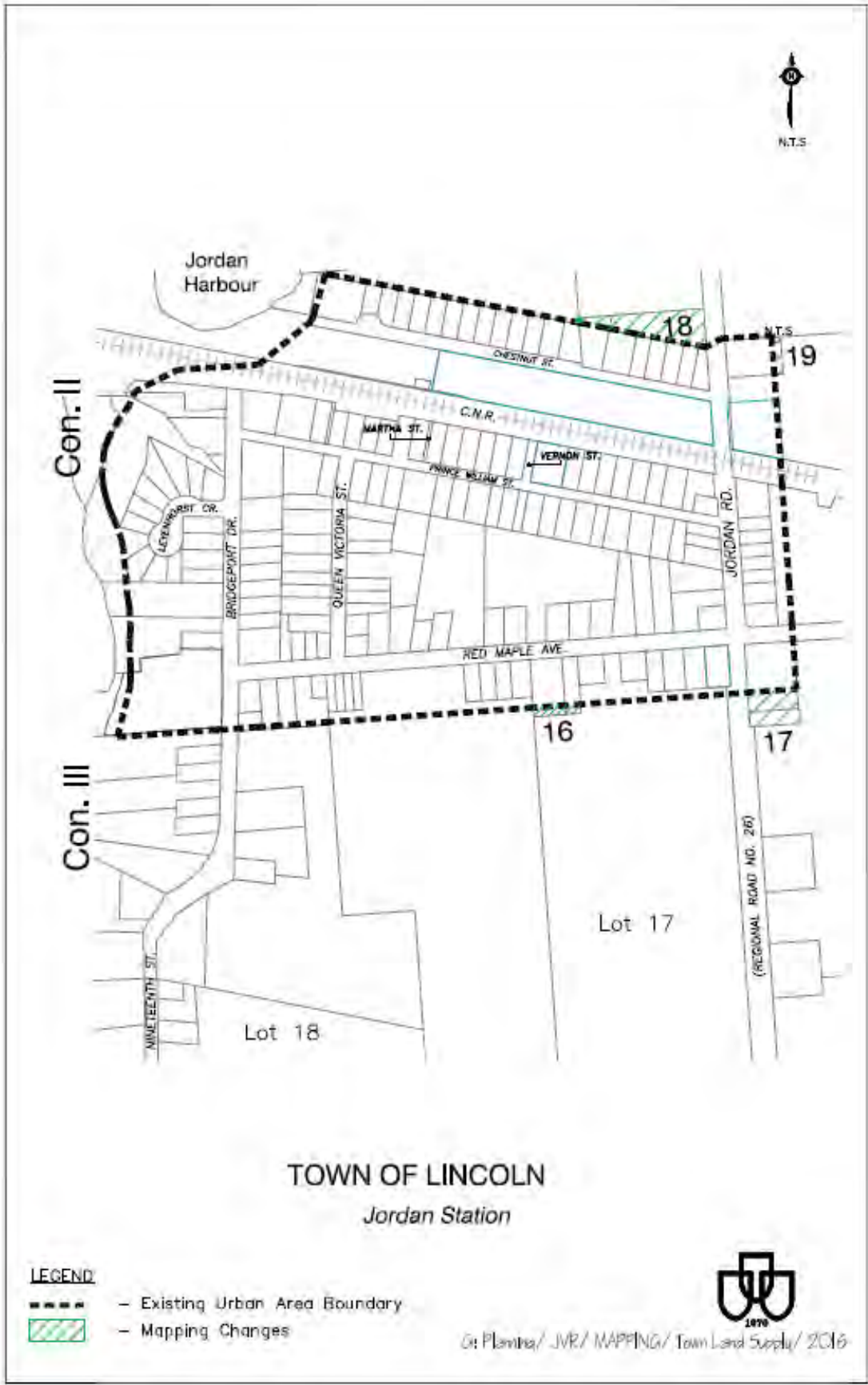






**LEGEND**  
----- Existing Urban Area Boundary  
[Green Hatched Box] Mapping Changes



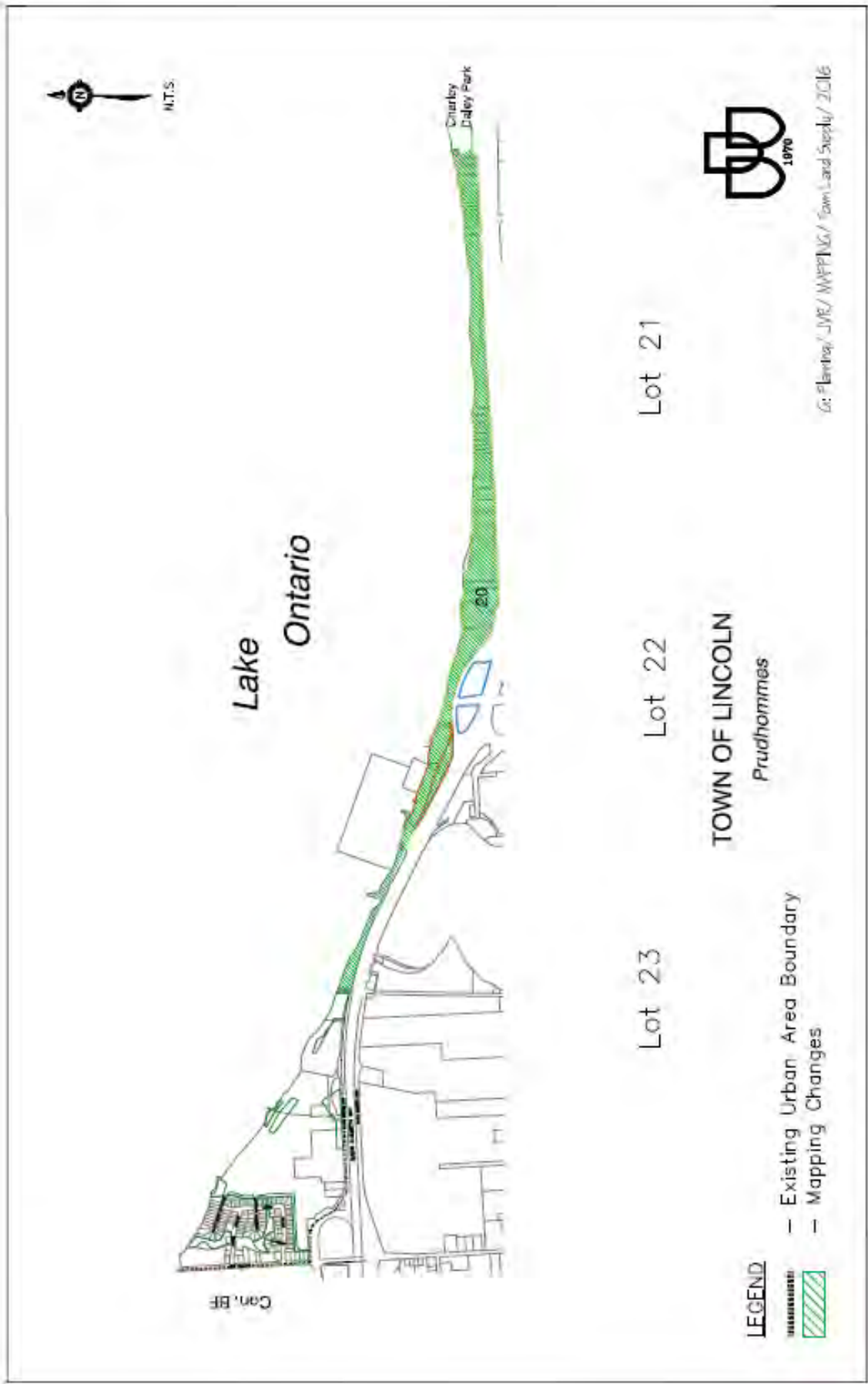


TOWN OF LINCOLN  
Jordan Station

- LEGEND**
- Existing Urban Area Boundary
  - ▨ Mapping Changes



City Planning / JVR / MAPPING / Town Land Supply / 2016



NTS

Lake  
Ontario

Can. BF

Charley  
Daley Park

Lot 21

Lot 22

Lot 23

TOWN OF LINCOLN  
Prudhommes

**LEGEND**

- Existing Urban Area Boundary
- Mapping Changes



Co. Fleming, JVR, WPPING / Town Land Supply / 2016



The following tables contain a summary of comments previously submitted to the Province concerning the respective plan reviews and the results showing whether or not the comments resulted in plan changes or other actions of the Province.

In total, Town and Regional Staff put forward 42 requests that were relevant to the Town. Of those 42, eight were addressed positively by the proposed amendments to the three Plans. A further nine were addressed, but with neutral results. These include cases where a specific request was not directly addressed, but had the underlying problem solved by a different policy change, or cases where a specific request was not addressed, but procedures for implementing the request are proposed. The remaining 25 requests put forward by Town and Regional Staff had negative outcomes. These include cases where requests were simply not addressed by any changes or cases where the proposed amendments strengthen the Plans contrary to the requests.

	Total Requests	Positive	Neutral	Negative
All Plans	6	2	2	2
Growth Plan	8	1	3	4
Niagara Escarpment Plan	10	2	0	8
Greenbelt Plan	18	3	4	11
Total	42	8	9	25

The results of these requests are broken down by Plan in the tables below.

RELEVANT TO ALL PLANS		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows settlement boundary changes through a Municipal Comprehensive Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3.4.3 of the Greenbelt Plan permits settlement boundary expansion through a Municipal Comprehensive Review provided certain requirements are met</li> <li>- 2.2.8 of the Growth Plan permits settlement boundary expansion through a Municipal Comprehensive Review provided certain requirements are met</li> <li>- The NEP does not address Municipal Comprehensive Reviews</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Settlement boundaries within the Plans can be expanded, however, the lands must not comprise specialty crop areas</li> </ul>

RELEVANT TO ALL PLANS		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give greater priority to agricultural viability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3.1.5 of the Greenbelt Plan speaks to developing an Agricultural Support Network, however, these initiatives are without Provincial support</li> <li>- 4.2.6 of the Growth Plan speaks to developing an Agricultural Support Network, however, these initiatives are without Provincial support</li> <li>- 1.3.3.2 1.4.3.2, 1.5.3.2, 1.8.3.15 and 1.9.3.1 of the NEP allow for broader agricultural uses in certain areas</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While these new policies recognize the need to support the agriculture industry, they provide little to no support for local municipalities to implement these policies</li> <li>- The NEP does allow for some expanded agricultural uses within certain protected lands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Add urbanized Greenbelt and NEP lands contiguous to Settlement Areas to the Settlement Areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3.4.3 of the Greenbelt Plan permits settlement boundary expansion contingent upon certain requirements</li> <li>- 2.2.8 of the Growth Plan permits settlement boundary expansion contingent upon certain requirements</li> <li>- The NEP fails to address this request</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While this request was not implemented by the proposed amendments, a process by which these changes can be made (Municipal Comprehensive Review) has been added</li> </ul>

RELEVANT TO ALL PLANS		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognize that agriculture in Niagara is unique and requires locally-developed solutions to implementing the Provincial Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 4.5.4 of the Greenbelt Plan offers more permissive regulations for expansion and alteration of agricultural buildings</li> <li>– 3.2.5.9 of the Greenbelt Plan recognizes the unique agricultural conditions in the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area and allows for reduced setbacks from a stream which is an agricultural swale, roadside ditch or municipal drain (man-made hydrologic features) where previous policies had greater setbacks</li> <li>– The NEP does not specifically address the unique agricultural conditions in the Niagara Region</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Certain new policies have been adopted by the Plans that recognize agriculture in Niagara’s unique situation. However, this recognition falls short of offering the Region the opportunity to create locally-developed solutions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Pay municipalities for the protection of land so that local infrastructure can continue to be maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced that support this request in any of the Plans</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide greater clarity to ensure that definitions and are consistent in all Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– An effort has been made to bring all definitions in line with the Provincial Policy Statement</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request has been implemented</li> </ul>



<b>GROWTH PLAN</b>		
<b>Request</b>	<b>New Policies</b>	<b>Result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop a process for reviewing boundary adjustments on an ongoing basis which permits minor changes at a Regional level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to allow the Region this authority</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Consider a range of Growth Projections and Targets rather than one estimate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2.1 states that the growth estimates are to be reviewed at least every five years in consultation with municipalities</li> <li>– 2.2.1.1 confirms that the population and employment forecasts in Schedule 3 are to be used for planning and managing growth</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop standardized, consistent Provincial growth estimates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2.2.1.1 confirms that the population and employment forecasts in Schedule 3 are to be used for planning and managing growth</li> <li>– 5.2.4 stipulates that the population and employment forecasts are to be added to all municipal Official Plans and be the numbers that apply to all planning matters</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not addressed, but the forecasts in the Growth Plan are now the only numbers to be used in Official Plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide greater funding to help municipalities implement infrastructure goals of the Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to provide funding for implementation of infrastructure goals in the Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>

<b>GROWTH PLAN</b>		
<b>Request</b>	<b>New Policies</b>	<b>Result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Offer support and flexibility for developing communities oriented around unique place-making features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 4.2.7 recognizes the importance of “cultural heritage resources” and their place-making attributes</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While cultural heritage resources have been recognized as benefitting communities and contributing to sense-of-place, this policy does not provide support or flexibility for developing communities oriented around these features</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide staff training to municipalities so that practical and proper implementation of Growth Plan targets can be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1.2.3 indicates that the Province may produce guidance material and provide technical criteria to assist decision-makers with implementing the plan</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While non-committal, this at least recognizes that stakeholders have requested further guidance material</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allow upper-tier municipalities to amend built-up boundaries in their Official Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2.2.2 requires municipalities to identify the built-boundary area in their official plan</li> <li>– 2.2.7 requires municipalities to delineate designate greenfield areas in their Official Plan</li> <li>– 5.2.2 states the Minister will identify, establish or update the built boundary</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Although it states that the boundaries will be updated, municipalities should be permitted to amend their built-up boundaries given their local knowledge.</li> </ul>

<b>GROWTH PLAN</b>		
<b>Request</b>	<b>New Policies</b>	<b>Result</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow expansion of urban areas in order to accommodate Mobility Hub requirements for potential GO expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2.2.1.2 e) indicates support for focusing growth in areas with existing/planned transit, with priority given to higher-order transit</li> <li>- 2.2.1.5 states that a methodology for assessing land needs to implement the Growth Plan will be forthcoming</li> <li>- 2.2.4.5 indicates that major transit stations will be planned to achieve 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare within a 500m radius of a major transit station area</li> <li>- 2.2.4.6 negates the density requirements in 2.2.4.5 for lands designated as prime employment areas</li> <li>- 2.2.4.10 allows the Province to further identify additional priority transit corridors in the future</li> <li>- 2.2.8 identifies transit infrastructure that supports proposed need for growth as necessary for a settlement area expansion</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion not explicitly permitted. The policies conflict with one another. Upon the development of methodology for assessing land needs, the capacity for Beamsville to expand and include the GO Transit Station will be better understood, but given that the proposed GO Transit Station is located in an employment area, expansion to a settlement boundary may not likely be permitted.</li> </ul>

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establish clear communication from the Commission regarding their decisions, especially when they conflict with their staff opinions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reword Section 2.3 to be more permissive towards expanding existing uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2.3 has been amended to permit limited expansion of existing uses provided certain requirements are met</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request has been added to the NEP, and hopefully it will be implemented in a more flexible manner</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Exempt public agencies from the requirements of NEP development control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to provide this exemption for public agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure potential mapping changes are reflective of ground-truthed data, and are consistent with other provincial land-use planning documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No references to changing the mapping process were added to the NEP</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Removal of agricultural lands from NEP and added to the Greenbelt's Protected Countryside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There were no boundary adjustments implemented in the Town of Lincoln</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No boundary adjustments were implemented in the Town which would have provided consistent application of policy in all agricultural areas of the Town</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop a process for reviewing boundary adjustments on an ongoing basis, and making minor changes at a Regional level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to allow for minor boundary adjustments to occur at a Regional level</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request</li> </ul>

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allow municipalities to refine Provincial mapping using their own, more detailed scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All maps have been updated using Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry data</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Respect and defer to decisions made by local municipalities regarding uses within urbanized lands within the NEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to allow municipalities this authority</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to address this request</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Add the Provincial Policy Statement definitions for agri-tourism and on-farm diversified uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Definitions section of the NEP Plan now more closely reflects the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– These definitions have been adopted</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 4 minor NEP boundary adjustments adding lands to the Urban Areas and the removal of the NEP on lands that are already within an Urban Area (See Sites 6, 7, 10 &amp; 21 in PL 16-13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There were no boundary adjustments implemented in the Town</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No boundary adjustments were implemented in the Town</li> </ul>

GREENBELT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allow for more Regional control over mapping and the determination of environmentally significant natural features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.2.5.9 allows for provincially-approved mapping to be used to distinguish between man-made hydrologic features (agricultural swales, roadside ditches, and municipal drains) and natural features</li> <li>– 5.3 obligates municipalities to collaborate with the Province regarding the identification, mapping, and protection of the agricultural system</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Province still maintains ultimate control over mapping</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Give municipalities the authority to permit change of urban type uses in the Greenbelt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to allow municipalities this authority</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establish an ongoing source for Greenbelt information and clarification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 5.8 establishes a monitoring program measuring the effectiveness of the Greenbelt Plan</li> <li>– 5.8 seeks to develop key performance indicators with municipalities, and then hold municipalities accountable for monitoring and reporting on progress made towards implementing the Greenbelt Plan and meeting the key performance indicators</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While the inclusion of municipalities in the creation of the new performance measures represents an opportunity to increase dialogue with the Province, these initiatives ultimately do not go far enough to meet our request for an ongoing resource to obtain up-to-date Greenbelt information and clarification</li> </ul>

GREENBELT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognize Niagara specific farming characteristics (i.e. smaller lots) when applying environmental setbacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.2.5.9 of the Greenbelt Plan recognizes the unique agricultural conditions in the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area and allows for reduced setbacks from a stream which is an agricultural swale, roadside ditch or municipal drain (man-made hydrologic features) where previous policies had made it more difficult for farm-infrastructure expansion</li> <li>– However, 3.2.5.5b) requires a natural vegetative buffer whereas agricultural crops should also be considered a buffer</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The new policy takes into consideration the unique agricultural conditions of Niagara Greenbelt farmers and allows for reduced setbacks</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allow more Regional control over location and setback provisions for agricultural buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.2.5.8 allows for a reduced setback from key hydrologic and key natural heritage features without the need for specific evaluations provided certain criteria are met</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While these new policies do not allow for more Regional control over locations and setback provisions for agricultural buildings, they do amend the existing policies that created the conditions causing the Region to make this request</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Create “Special Policy Areas” that permits development on already-developed properties in the Greenbelt (See Sites 20 and the north part of 11 which is separated from the Urban Area, in PL 16-13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to allow the creation of “Special Policy Areas”</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>

GREENBELT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop a process for reviewing boundary adjustments on an ongoing basis, and making minor changes at a Regional level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.4.3 stipulates that the only process for reviewing boundary adjustments shall be through a Municipal Comprehensive Review</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This change in policy, while allowing for potential expansion to the urban boundary area, does not create a process for ongoing boundary adjustment and change</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Add the Provincial Policy Statement definitions for agri-tourism and on-farm diversified uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Definitions section of the Greenbelt Plan now more closely reflects the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement</li> </ul>	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– These definitions have been adopted</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Modify definitions of key hydrological features to distinguish between natural and man-made features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– These definitions were not modified</li> </ul>	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While this request was not granted, policies were added to the Greenbelt Plan that addressed the concerns underlying the definition changes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allow greater flexibility for the location of emergency services and other municipal service facilities throughout the Greenbelt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 4.2 still only permits infrastructure within their own limited definition, excluding emergency services and broader community service facilities</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Emergency services and municipal service facilities are still not permitted outside of Settlement Areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Review tax policies for agriculture, including using tax dollars to fund agricultural incentives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to change tax policies for agricultural lands</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide incentives for adopting new technology, ecological goods and services, and conservation easements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to change tax policies for agricultural lands</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>



GREENBELT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Invest in programs that help encourage agricultural succession planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No new policies were introduced to encourage agricultural succession planning</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– This request was not implemented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Invest in infrastructure for local food production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.1.5 speaks to developing an Agricultural Support Network, however, all initiatives are to be undertaken by municipalities without Provincial support</li> <li>– 4.2.1.3 speaks to infrastructure serving the agricultural sector. However, 4.2.2.2 does not permit the extension of municipal water outside of the Urban Area</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While this new policy section recognizes the need to support the agriculture industry, it leaves the implementation of these policies to local municipalities</li> <li>– To sustain crops and provide for processing, there is a need for agriculture to have access to water</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 15 minor Greenbelt boundary adjustments adding lands to the Urban Areas throughout the Town (See Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, part of 11 adjacent to the Urban Area, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, in PL 16-13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There were no boundary adjustments implemented in the Town</li> </ul>	<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No boundary adjustments were implemented in the Town</li> </ul>

GREENBELT PLAN		
Request	New Policies	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Allow expansion of Urban Areas in order to accommodate the GO Transit site (See Sites 1, 2 and 3, in PL 16-13)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.4.3 stipulates that a Municipal Comprehensive Review can enable an urban boundary expansion in accordance with Policy 2.2.8 of the Growth Plan</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expansion not explicitly permitted. The policies conflict with one another. Upon the development of methodology for assessing land needs, the capacity for Beamsville to expand and include the GO Transit Station will be better understood, but given that the proposed GO Transit Station is located in an employment area, expansion to a settlement boundary may not likely be permitted.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Emphasize public education about the Greenbelt, including that agriculture is an industry, and agricultural lands are not public open space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3.3.1 encourages municipalities to implement measures that prevent trespassing on farm properties</li> <li>– No other policies regarding public education and awareness were proposed</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– While this new policy section recognizes the need to educate the public about the Greenbelt Plan, it leaves the implementation of these policies to local municipalities</li> </ul>

In addition to these requests, there are also nine amendments to the Niagara Escarpment Plan boundary areas that are proposed. Five of these are deletions from the NEP proposed by private interests, and four are additions to the NEP proposed by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The locations proposed were:

Deletions:

- 4818 King Street;
- 3874 Victoria Avenue;
- 4019 Fly Road;
- 5050 Hillside Drive, 5032 Mountain Street and 5037 Edelheim Road; and
- East-Side of Nineteenth Street, Concession 5, Part Lot 18.

4818 King Street; 5050 Hillside Drive, 5032 Mountain Street and 5037 Edelheim Road; and 3874 Victoria Avenue were previously supported for removal from the NEP (Identified as Sites 8, 9 and 10 in PL 16-13) and Staff continue to support their removal from the NEP.

Additions

- Jordan Harbour, north of current NEP extents to Lake Ontario;
- Ball's Falls Conservation Area, unprotected lands north of King Street and south of Twenty-First Street;
- Fifteen and Sixteen Mile Creek Valley, from King Street north; and
- The Beamsville Toe, all Beamsville Urban Area lands west of Ashby Drive and south of James Street.

The above properties were not supported by the Niagara Escarpment Commission for inclusion within the NEP. This position is supported by Town and Regional Staff.

## City of Niagara Falls

September 7, 2016

Terri Donia, Senior Planner  
Community and Long Range Planning  
Niagara Region  
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 1042  
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Donia:

**Re: Province of Ontario Coordinated Plan Review: Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan  
and Niagara Escarpment Plan  
Comments from the City of Niagara Falls**

Please find attached a copy of Planning Report PBD-2016-34. This report was endorsed by Niagara Falls City Council at their meeting of August 23, 2016 and represents the City's position with respect to the Province's Coordinated Plan Review.

As detailed in the Report, the City is:

- seeking to have intensification targets adjusted for the City. A target of 60% is too high and may be unachievable. Furthermore, questions remain as to how the target will be phased-in between now and 2041;
- not supportive of an 80 resident and jobs per hectare target which is too high for greenfield density. Additionally, high rise development within built-up areas to meet intensification targets may reduce opportunities to achieve the intended greenfield densities. Higher employment densities would be dependent on Government incentives for industry and jobs in the City;
- seeking that the Province consider an economic corridor along the QEW from Lyon's Creek Road to Netherby Road;
- seeking to have all of the lands along the Fruitbelt Parkway designated as Escarpment Urban in the Niagara Escarpment Plan;
- seeking to have all of the lands south of Highway 405 to Portage Road re-designated as Escarpment Urban in the Niagara Escarpment Plan in order to allow the rehabilitation of the spent sand and gravel operations;
- continuing to seek the removal of the lands in the northwest and northeast quadrants of the QEW and Mountain Road designated as Escarpment Urban to recognize the role of this major 400 series interchange as a Gateway Economic Zone in Niagara;
- not opposed to the Niagara Escarpment Commission request to re-designate lands north of Calaguiro Estates and the VIA Rail Line to Niagara Escarpment

Parks and Open Space System but recommends a modification to exclude lands east of Mewburn Road as they would form part of the Gateway Economic Zone noted above and that the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System be extended eastwards to include Fireman's Park; and

- is supportive of the request by Walker Industries to expand the current waste management facilities to the extent that it does not infer any municipal obligations.

The City of Niagara Falls appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments and working with the Region and Province on the Coordinated Plan Review.

Yours truly,

Alex Herlovitch, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning, Building and Development

FB:mb  
Attach.

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**REPORT TO:** Mayor James M. Diodati  
and Members of Municipal Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Planning, Building & Development

**SUBJECT:** **PBD-2016-34**  
**Changes to Provincial Planning Documents**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approve the report and that it be sent the Regional Niagara and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs as the City's response to the Ministry's Coordinated Plan Review.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA) has undertaken a review of the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, referred to the Coordinated Plan Review (CPR). MMA has released the draft plans for review. This report highlights some of the plan changes and comments on the impacts on municipal planning. The report also contains a synopsis of the Province's recent Climate Change Strategy and the impacts on planning.

## **BACKGROUND**

Within the Niagara Region, municipal land use planning as well as the planning for services and transportation is governed by four documents issued by the Province:

- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the Growth Plan);
- The Greenbelt Plan;
- The Niagara Escarpment Plan (the NEP); and

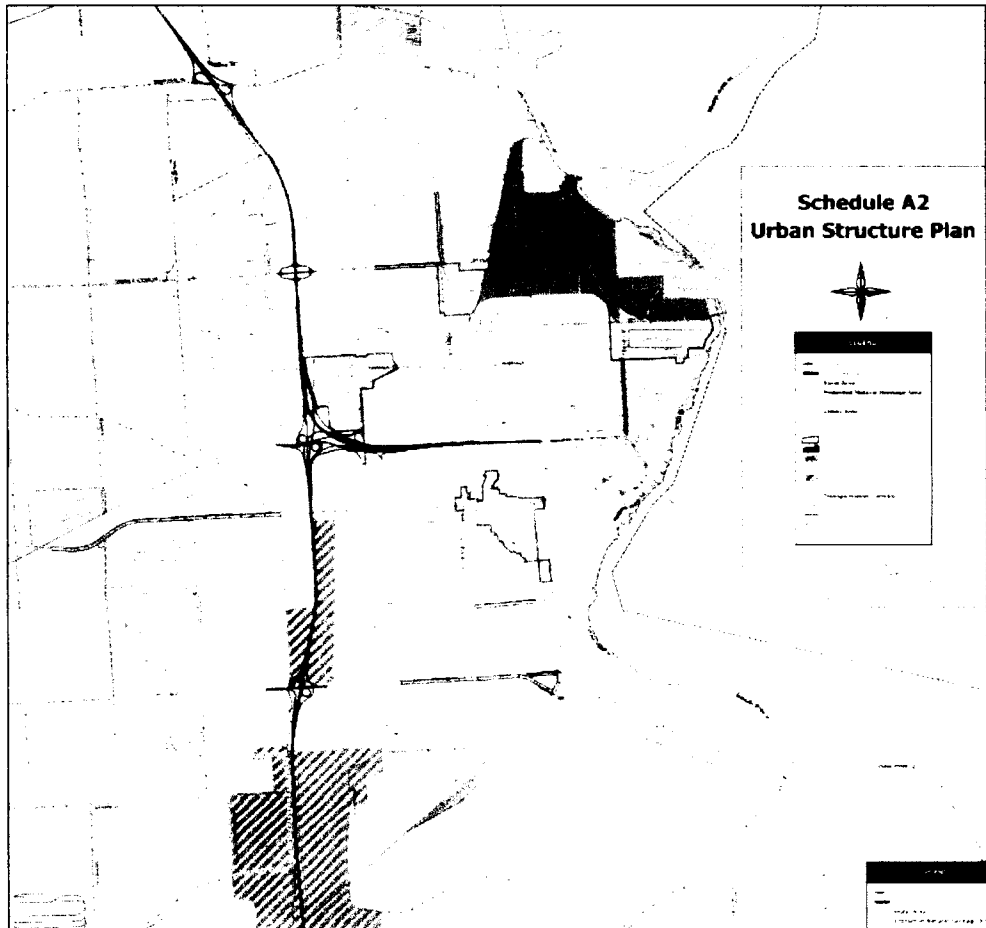
As the Growth Plan came due for a 10-year review this year, the Province has undertaken a review of all four plans – the Coordinated Plan Review (CPR). The Province in its review has undertaken public consultation in various forms including a discussion document issued last fall on which the City provided comments. (See PBD-2015-18, attached.) The Province has now issued its proposed plans for comment. This report will constitute the City's response to the Province and to Niagara Region as part of its coordinated response to the Province.

In addition, the Province has also issued its Climate Change Strategy which is partly implemented by the above planning documents. This report will also provide Council with information on how the Climate Change Strategy will affect its approach to planning and its operations.

## 1. The Growth Plan

Established in 2006, the Growth Plan has changed the manner in which municipalities throughout the Golden Horseshoe have conducted planning for growth and development. Although its basic tenants of curbing urban sprawl, protection of natural heritage and farmlands and providing for a strong economy have not changed, the Growth Plan has undergone a substantive revision that is broad-based and affects all aspects of the Growth Plan with new and expanded policies. A number of these revisions are highlighted below.

- **Intensification Targets.** Currently municipalities are required to achieve on an annual basis 40% of all housing starts in the “Built-up Boundary”



(the white area on the map). The proposed policies are to increase this level of intensification to 60% annually.

- **Implications:** *Currently the City lags behind other Niagara area municipalities and does not achieve the 40% intensification annually. Last year was the highest over the past five years at 37%. The City has a large supply of lands that have been rezoned to higher densities, so there is the potential to achieve the proposed 60% in the future. Despite this, it will be difficult to achieve this*



*level of intensification in the current market conditions. Moreover there is a concern as to how the target will be phased in between now and 2041.*

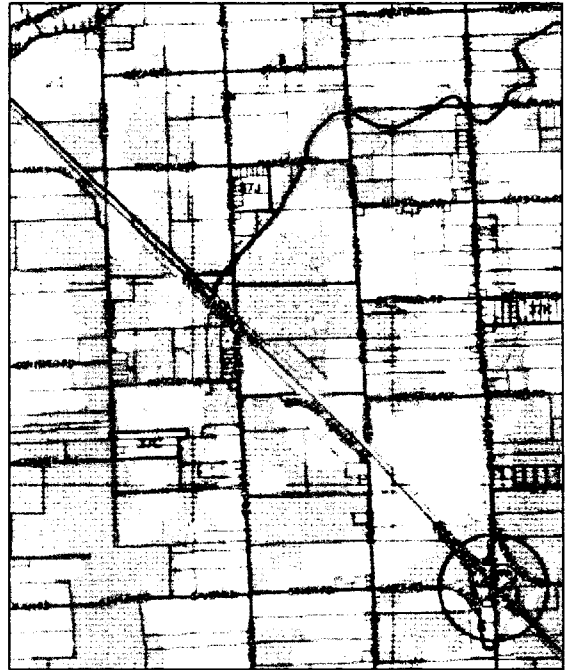
- **Greenfield Densities.** The Growth Plan currently requires that the Region achieve 50 residents and jobs per hectare (the City's target is 53 residents and jobs per hectare) within Greenfield lands (those shown in light green). The City has been attaining these densities in most subdivision developments. This has resulted in small lot singles and on-street townhouses primarily. The Province proposes to increase this density by approximately 63% to 80 residents and jobs per hectare. Both increases in intensification and Greenfield density have to be achieved by 2041.
  - **Implications:** *To achieve 80 residents and jobs per hectare, secondary plans and plans of subdivision will have to include apartment-type housing and other higher density forms as well as employment uses. The concern is that the provision of apartment-type housing may reduce the opportunities for achieving the intensification target. Despite the inclusion of higher density forms in the Greenfields, employment density will be the critical component of reaching the density target. Until such time that the Province is willing to incentivize the location of industry into Niagara, the achieve a higher employment densities will be problematic. The City has previously requested lower targets for Niagara Falls which is an outer ring municipality.*
  
- **Transit Station Areas.** The Growth Plan will require that municipalities intensify residential and employment uses around major transit station areas. Major transit station areas are lands within a 500m radius around stations that areas are served by higher order transit such as rail and LRT's, as well as municipal bus service. Within the City, the lands within 500m of the VIA Station would be the major transit station area, and would be subject to these policies.
  - **Implications:** *Downtown is currently targeted for higher densities as an area for intensification in the Official Plan. There is also the Downtown CIP which contains incentives for the creation of residential units as well as improving the condition of existing buildings. The City is also partnered with the Region is undertaking a GO Transit station study which will provide for a secondary plan for the transit station area. Further incentives may be needed to stimulate growth within the Transit Station Area prior to full GO service extension.*
  
- **Urban Boundaries.** The Region, through a Municipal Comprehensive Review, to identify a hierarchy of urban areas, determine Urban Area Boundary expansions and identify urban lands that are surplus to that needed to accommodate growth to 2041. (The latter are referred to as

excess lands.) Development on excess lands would have to be prohibited. Should a municipality propose an urban boundary expansion, another municipality with excess lands would have to relinquish sufficient lands so that there is a net loss of urban land.

- ***Implications:** The Region is essentially in the “driver’s seat” with respect to urban boundar expansions. While there would have to dialogue with the lower tier municipalities, should an urban boundary expansion be proposed for the City, it would mean that excess lands from another municipality would have to be redesignated to non-urban to allow for the expansion. Such a proposal would be contentious and likely be very difficult to negotiate. Unless the Region changes the Urban Boundaries, the City will have to accommodate growth within its current urban boundaries.*
- **Employment lands.** The Growth Plan expands the policies respecting employment lands. Municipalities should make more efficient use of existing employment lands and integrating land use planning with economic development strategies. Lands are to be identified as prime employment for uses such as manufacturing and warehousing (low density, high land consumption) and protected over the long term and cannot be converted to non-employment uses. Employment areas and existing office parks are to be supported by improving connectivity with transit and active transportation networks.
- ***Implications:** While the City has (numerically) a large supply of vacant and underutilized industrial lands, a number of precincts or parcels are constrained in various forms (e.g. potential contamination, separation distances from sensitive land uses) or are poorly located. In addition, there are no large tracts of employment land that are available for the development of large-scale manufacturing. The proposed policy framework contained in the Growth Plan essentially demands that the City undertake a detailed review of its industrial land supply together with an economic strategy that would identify the potential future uses for the current land base. Staff is recommending an approach to providing additional long term supply which is detailed below.*

There is an opportunity to add lands in order to provide for a future reserve as well as provide for industry that require large land areas. The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) allows municipalities to plan for employment (industrial) uses beyond the statutory 20-year time horizon. In addition, the Official Plan provides for the lands east of the QEW between Lyon’s Creek and Ussher’s Creek as well as the land at the Sodom Road/QEW interchange to be considered for urban uses through the Region’s Growth Management Strategy (GMS). Moreover, the Sodom/QEW lands have Official Plan policies that allow for industrial

development. These lands have proximity and exposure to the QEW, Niagara's most significant goods movement corridor and a fundamental link in the transportation network of the GGH. A study done by MMM Consultant Group for the Walton Group found that the pre-existing policy framework can be leveraged to create opportunities for investment, economic growth and job creation through the development of manufacturing and industrial uses. It is therefore recommended that the Province be requested to allow for the creation of such a corridor along the QEW from Lyon's Creek Road to Netherby Road.



- **An integrated approach to infrastructure planning.** The proposed Growth Plan requires the integration of infrastructure planning with land use planning. Such an approach is key to the planning for growth in that appropriate levels of infrastructure are provided for targeted areas such as transit station areas and intensification corridors.
  - ***Implications:*** *The City is, to a certain extent, following this approach. The Official Plan provides direction in the preparation of the Transportation Master Plan and the Pollution Control Plan. The latter two documents also provide for policies to be included in the Official Plan.*

In connection this, it is apparent that there will be greater needs placed on infrastructure to accommodate growth. With respect to servicing, given that the remaining Greenfield land is south of McLeod Road, a substantial amount of infrastructure facilities (pumping stations, force mains, for example) will be required to be constructed. The resulting flows from these lands would have to be conveyed to the Stanley Avenue Waste Water Treatment Plant, which may result in upgrades to the conveyance system. Alternatively, a South End Waste Water Treatment Plan could be constructed. This would allow for sanitary flows south of Lundy's Lane to be redirected south resulting in:

- Alleviate the potential for upgrades to the conveyance system north of Lundy's Lane;
- Greater ability to accommodate the increased Greenfield densities as required by the proposed Growth Plan;

- Accommodation of the South QEW Industrial Corridor proposed previously in this report.

In terms of transportation, there are at least two major pieces of infrastructure that are needed to accommodate future growth and development.

- The need to provide for more direct routes to the proposed South Niagara Hospital from other centres in the southern part of the peninsula. These may take a variety of forms including the widening of Montrose Road and connecting it to the proposed Niagara East-West Corridor. A widening of Schisler Road together with intersection improvements at the intersection with Montrose Road may also be an option. Other options should be explored through the Region's study as the routes are likely to be affecting Regional roads primarily.
- The Thundering Waters Secondary Plan Area that contains the Paradise development proposal will likely place additional pressures on the transportation network beyond what was considered in Transportation beyond Tomorrow. Such a bridge spanning the Welland River would be an option as this would direct traffic to the Lyon's Creek interchange. Moreover, it would increase the developability of the lands south of the Welland River.

It is recommended that the Region be advised of the above and that City staff be included in the discussions of these matters.

- **Other highlights.** There are several other policy changes to the Growth plan which are briefly noted below:
  - **Natural Heritage.** The Province will be identifying the natural heritage system in the Growth Plan area similar to what has been done in the Greenbelt. Watershed planning is to play a major part in any type of larger scale development planning, from urban boundary expansions and secondary plans to plans of subdivision.
  - **Agriculture.** The Province will also be identifying an agricultural system throughout the Golden Horseshoe and permitting value-added uses to farms to allow for greater economic diversity.
  - **Housing.** Municipalities will have to provide for a mix of housing that allows for the achievement of the new intensification and density targets.

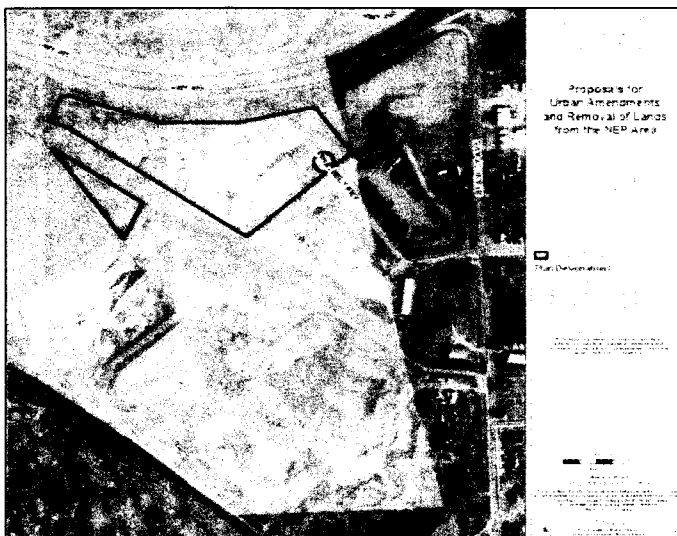
## 2. The Niagara Escarpment Plan

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) affects a relatively small area within the City being the majority of the lands north of Mountain Road. These lands are designated in the NEP mostly Escarpment Rural with significant portions designated Escarpment Natural and Escarpment Protection. There have been substantive modifications to the NEP; an overview of the nature of the changes to the land use policies is noted in the box above, with proposed mapping revisions noted as follows:

### Land Use Designations

- Land use designation descriptions modified to acknowledge role in providing resilience to climate change; changes proposed to update language of land use designation objectives to reflect modern terminology and to reflect defined terms in the Plan; changes to Minor Urban Centres, Urban Areas and Escarpment Recreation Areas to clarify existing policy intent and clearly set out criteria for development and growth related to natural heritage, water resources, cultural heritage, scenic resources and agricultural systems; incorporation of the concept of community hubs into minor urban and urban areas.

- a) **Fruitbelt Parkway.** The City made a request to the NEC to remove all the lands along Fruitbelt Parkway from the NEP Area and include them within the City's urban boundary. Cotton Inc. also made a request for its own lands (shown) but to have them remain in the NEP Area with a change in designation to (Escarpment) Urban Area.



### Support as part of the Plan Review.

- Accept for consideration as Urban Area in conjunction with the City's request for re-designation of the larger area
- Official Plan amendments (regional and local) will also be required
- The NEC has previously suggested that these lands be considered for an Urban Area designation

- **NEC Staff comments.** NEC staff is in support of the request for the larger area of Fruitbelt Parkway.
- Staff should be authorized to comment in support of the request and to further request that all of the lands that front onto Fruitbelt

Parkway that are within the NEP Area be designated Urban Area in the NEP.

- Staff also recommend all lands south of Hwy. 405, including the former sand pit south of the Fruitbelt Parkway be designated as Urban Area in the NEP as these lands should be afforded the opportunity to redevelop with urban uses and rehabilitate the mined out sand pit from the landscape.

b) **Mountain Road/QEW.** A request was made previously to remove 167.5ha from the NEP Area or to designate (Escarpment) Urban Area to facilitate the implantation of the Gateway Economic Zone.

- **NEC staff comments.** NEC staff does not support the request as it does meet the NEC's evaluation criteria.
- The City continues to request the removal as these lands are a gateway location into the city and could provide a nucleus for development consistent with the Gateway Economic Zone.



**Not support – does not meet evaluation criteria:**

- The Commission does not support the removal of lands from the NEP Area
- The predominant soil types are Class 2 and 3 indicating prime agricultural land. The lands are classified in the Niagara Region Official Plan as "Unique Agricultural Area". Re-designation to Urban Area would not be consistent with the agricultural capability of the land
- Not consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (growth management and prime agricultural land policies)
- The subject lands are located to the northwest of the Gateway Economic Zone as identified in the Growth Plan (not within the Gateway Economic Zone as implied in the City's submission to the Co-ordinated Review)

c) **Walker Environmental Group Inc.** A request has been made to re-designate a portion of its landfill and waste management operation to (Escarpment) Urban Area to recognize its current waste management facilities and to allow for future similar uses.

- **NEC staff comments.** NEC staff has yet to comment.
- The City's comments should support the request insofar as to recognize the existing waste management operation and limited expansions. The Urban Area designation will not infer any municipal obligation.



- d) **Mountain Road/Mewburn Road; North of Calaguire Estates.** The NEC is proposing to redesignate two tracts of land north of Mountain Road to Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space (NEPOSS):
- east of Mewburn Road; and
  - north of Calaguire Estates and the VIA Rail line.

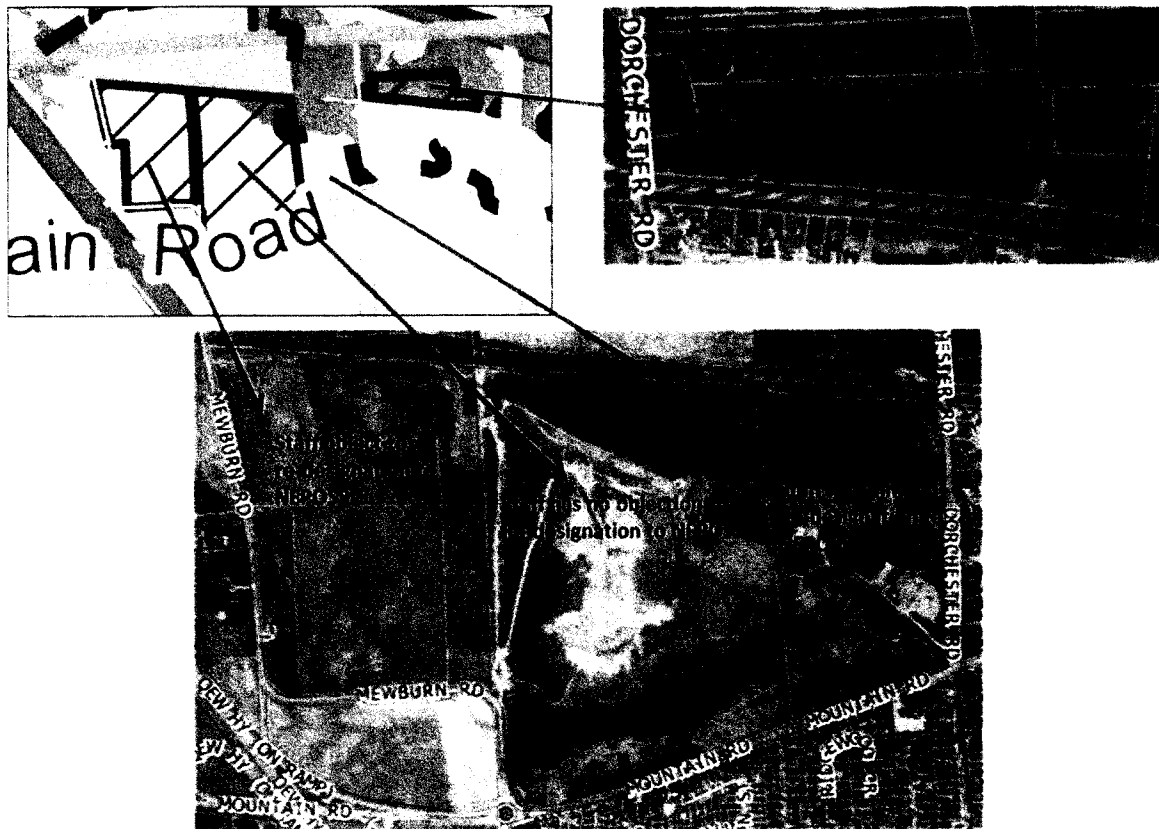
**Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS)**

NEPOSS lands are publically-owned lands along the escarpment that:

- Protect natural and cultural resources;
- Provide opportunities for outdoor education and recreation; and
- Provide public access to the escarpment.

The lands will retain the NEP designation but the NEPOSS policies override once there is a Master/Management Plan (MMP) approved for a park. MMP's have to be prepared by the public agency that owns the land in consultation with the NEC and MNRF. The MMP will establish zones, policies and mapping for the long-term protection, development and management of the park. In addition:

- The zones and zone policies of the MMP take precedence;
- The City may be exempt from Development Control for "undertakings" within a MMP;
- Changes in classification with a MMP do not need an amendment to the NEP;
- Development and secondary uses can be permitted under the NEPOSS classification; and
- Retail and visitor services may be permitted if appropriately scaled.
- **City staff comments.** As noted in the graphic below, staff has no objection to the re-designation of the lands north of Calaguire Estates and the VIA Rail line. Staff is, however, recommending a modification to the re-designation for the lands at Mountain Road/Mewburn. First, the lands east of Mewburn Road should be excluded as they are part of the request for removal from the NEP Area as noted above. Secondly, the NEPOSS designation should extend eastwards to include Fireman's Parks as this park is a recent addition to the City's holdings north of Mountain Road and will allow for a comprehensive approach to the planning of the parkland.

**Proposed NEPOSS****CONCLUSION**

This report provides for an overview of the proposed changes to the Growth Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan. These documents will have short and long term impacts on the way the City accommodates growth and development. The changes to the Provincial documents and the Regional studies will result in amendments to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law ultimately. Staff will continue to keep Council abreast of developments.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There could be substantial financial implications resulting from the changes to the Growth Plan and the infrastructure improvements. Some of these will impact future development charges as well as potential assessment.

**CITY'S STRATEGIC COMMITMENT**

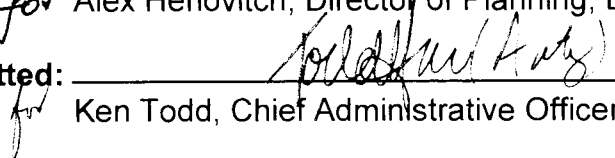
Approval of this report will support Council's directions on City planning and economic development.



**LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

➤ No attachments.

**Recommended by:**  \_\_\_\_\_  
for Alex Herlovitch, Director of Planning, Building & Development

**Respectfully submitted:**  \_\_\_\_\_  
for Ken Todd, Chief Administrative Officer

J.Barnsley:mb

S:\PDR\2016\PBD-2016-34, Changes to Provincial Planning Documents.docx

## Niagara on the Lake



### Council Amendments

for CDS-16-055 - Provincial Comprehensive Review

Enter your recommendation(s) here:

Moved by Councillor Maria Bau-Coote, seconded by Councillor Paolo Miele that report CDS-16-055 be amended by adding the following recommendation:

- 1.2 That changes to the comprehensive review by staff be considered and also request that consideration be given to expand the response by staff to include reference to specific greenbelt policy sections including existing uses, surplus farm dwellings, irrigation and other infrastructure requirements, self-sustaining vegetation adjacent to specialty crop farms, contradictory policy sections, reduced building setbacks, support for regional watercourse mapping, support for a specialty crop zone and request for Provincial mapping to be taken at a different time of the year.

**APPROVED.**



Department of Community  
& Development Services  
Telephone (905) 468-3266  
Facsimile (905) 468-0301

# The Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

1593 Four Mile Creek Road  
P.O. Box 100  
Virgil, Ontario  
L0S 1T0

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**Report:** CDS-16-055 **Committee Date:** **October 17, 2016**

**Due in Council:** October 24, 2016

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**Report To:** **Community & Development Advisory Committee**  
**Subject:** **Provincial Comprehensive Review**

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## 1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

1.1 the Committee forward this report to Council with a recommendation to endorse the report together with Appendix A - Planning Analysis, and to direct staff to file the same with the Province in response to the Province's request for comments on the Draft Provincial Plans by the October 31, 2016 deadline.

## 2. PURPOSE / PROPOSAL

The purpose of the current report is to provide comments on the Draft Provincial Plans issued for public review and comment earlier in the year. Staff from the Town have collaborated with Niagara Region and Niagara area municipalities in preparing a coordinated response to the Draft Plans, highlighting concerns unique to the Niagara Region. This report, together with Appendix A, articulates the anticipated impacts of the Draft Plans on land use and community development in the Town.

## 3. BACKGROUND

Land use planning in the Province of Ontario is established by the Planning Act, and directed at the highest level by the Provincial Plans and the Provincial Policy Statement. In the Niagara Region, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan are the applicable Provincial Plans guiding land use and development. The Plans inform regional and local planning policy, and have significant implications for community form and function.

The Provincial Plans are reviewed approximately every 10 years, with the last review taking place in 2005. The current review is intended to update population and employment figures, improve alignment and consistency between the Plans, and address several themes as noted in the Planning Analysis included as Appendix A to this report.

## 4. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

This report, together with Appendix A, serves as the Town's comments on the

Proposed Provincial Plans. The comments highlight key areas of concern with respect to the proposed Provincial Plans. The justification for many of the concerns is rooted in the fact that the Town is unique among GGH (Greater Golden Horseshoe) municipalities in many respects, particularly in relation to its cultural, natural and agricultural assets. Please refer to Appendix A to this report for additional detail.

## **5. OPTIONS**

Staff advises that due to the commenting deadline of October 31, 2016, deferral is not an option.

1. Council endorse the staff report and Appendix A - Planning Analysis, and direct staff to file the same with the Province. (recommended option)
2. Council endorse the staff report and Appendix A - Planning Analysis, with modifications, and direct staff to file the same with the Province.
3. Council not endorse the staff report, and that comments not be submitted to the Province.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are wide-ranging, stemming from impacts to land development and assessment base, lifecycle costs of servicing and transportation infrastructure, and viability of agricultural operations.

Financial implications (i.e., Town staff resources) are also associated with the *Planning Act* requirement of bringing the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws into conformity with the revised Provincial Plans.

## **7. COMMUNICATIONS**

Comments on the Draft Provincial Plans are due by October 31, 2016. Once in force, the Plans are not subject to appeal.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

While staff supports the goals of the Province's review of the Provincial Plans, due consideration of the concerns described in Appendix A to this report is requested prior to finalization of the Plans.

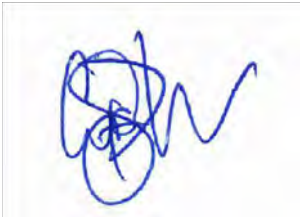
**Respectfully submitted,**



**Eric Withers, MCIP, RPP  
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Director, Community &  
Development Services**



**Milena Avramovic, CMO  
Chief Administrative Officer**

ATTACHMENTS



Appendix A - Planning Analysis - Coordinated Plan Review 2016-10-03 (Final).pdf

WEB ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENTS FOR LINK

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First Capital of Upper Canada - 1792

## Planning Analysis

### Co-ordinated Review of the Provincial Plans – Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Comments on the proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Greenbelt Plan

#### 1.0 BACKGROUND

##### 1.1 *The Provincial Planning Framework*

The Province of Ontario initiated a Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review (CPR) of its four provincial plans in 2015. For the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the pertinent plans are the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), the Greenbelt Plan, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) (together, “the Plans”). Each Plan is enabled by the provisions of subsection 3(5) of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13* (Planning Act), and by their respective enacting legislation (i.e., the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*). The Plans are intended to be read in conjunction with the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014* (PPS), and generally where the Plans and the PPS conflict, the policies of the Plans prevail to the extent of the conflict. The Plans work together with the PPS to guide land use and development, inform local planning policy (e.g., the Regional and Town Official Plans) and local planning decisions. Clauses 5(a) and (b) of the Planning Act establish that in respect of any planning matter, decisions of Council “shall be consistent with” the PPS, and “shall conform with...or shall not conflict with [the Plans], as the case may be.”

The chronological history of the Provincial Plans is summarized as follows:

- a) Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe – initial release 2006; amended 2012 and 2013.
- b) Greenbelt Plan – initial release 2005; amended 2013.
- c) Niagara Escarpment Plan – initial release 1985; revised 2005; 200+ site-specific amendments.

The 2015 Co-ordinated Review is the first review of the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan, and the second review of the NEP.

##### 1.2 *Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review*

The CPR is being undertaken by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, in consultation with the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC). The former Ministry is primarily responsible for the review of the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan, while the latter two agencies are responsible for the review of the NEP.

As articulated by the Province, the goals of the CPR are as follows:

- a) Building Complete Communities
- b) Supporting Agriculture
- c) Protecting Natural Heritage and Water
- d) Growing the Greenbelt
- e) Addressing Climate Change

- f) Integrating Infrastructure
- g) Improving Plan Implementation
- h) Measuring Performance, Promoting Awareness and Increasing Engagement

The Province has issued drafts of the Provincial Plans and is soliciting comments from the public, including municipalities. Comments on the Draft Plans are due by October 31, 2016. The Province intends to review all comments and issue final versions of the revised Plans by January 2017. The Draft Plans, along with a summary of proposed changes, are available online at [ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview](http://ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview).

Niagara Region, together with its area municipalities, is preparing a co-ordinated response to the Draft Plans. Area municipalities are being encouraged to submit comments independently, with the goal of communicating a strong and cohesive message on the key issues affecting the Niagara Region. This planning analysis, together with the associated staff report, constitutes the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's comments on the Draft Provincial Plans.

## **2.0 PLANNING ANALYSIS AND POLICY COMMENTS**

### *2.1 Where We Agree: Goals and Intended Outcomes of the Provincial Plans and Plan Review Process*

The Town is in agreement with the overarching themes of the CPR process. Specifically, the following comments are provided with respect to each theme:

- a) Building Complete Communities
  - i) The presence of, and easy access to, important community elements such as homes, schools, community services, parks, and recreation facilities, is fully supported by the Town. The Town acknowledges the need to encourage active transportation, support transit where appropriate densities exist, and plan for spaces that encourage human interaction and connection.
- b) Supporting Agriculture
  - i) As the key economic engine of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Town fully endorses the goal of protecting agriculture and agribusiness, including agricultural land, supportive infrastructure, value-added processing, and other agriculturally-related uses.
- c) Protecting Natural Heritage and Water
  - i) The Town is surrounded by, and benefits from, significant and valuable natural heritage assets and water resources, and fully supports their continued protection and preservation.
- d) Growing the Greenbelt
  - i) The Town acknowledges the need to protect valuable agricultural land and natural resources. Being wholly within the Greenbelt Area, however, the Town has valuable experience with respect to implementation challenges and unintended consequences of well-meaning Greenbelt Plan policies, which are described in greater detail below.



- e) Addressing Climate Change
  - i) The Town acknowledges the need for both mitigative and adaptive responses to climate change.
- f) Integrating Infrastructure
  - i) The Town supports policies that lead to integrated planning, management and use of community infrastructure, including those that promote sound financial accounting of the lifecycle costs of maintenance, repair and replacement of infrastructure.
- g) Improving Plan Implementation
  - i) The Town supports consistency of direction, policy, and terminology among the Provincial Plans.
- h) Measuring Performance, Promoting Awareness and Increasing Engagement
  - i) The Town is in favour of continuously evaluating the effectiveness of the Provincial Plans against actual community development outcomes. Stakeholders, including municipalities, should be regularly consulted on the real impacts of provincial policy, and their comments meaningfully incorporated through Plan reviews and amendments.

## 2.2 *Where Change is Needed: Conflict Between Proposed Plans and Local Realities*

While the Town agrees with the themes of the CPR process, some of the proposed policies in the Draft Plans are deficient or undesirable with respect to the use and development of Town lands, and in particular threaten or fail to consider the unique character, structure and economy of the Town, where it differs from most GGH municipalities.

### 2.2.1 *Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2016*

The Town is concerned with the proposed Growth Plan policies affecting the following matters:

#### a) Population and Employment Allocations:

While the population and employment allocations in Schedule 3 of the proposed Growth Plan have not changed from the 2013 update, the Town continues to have limited opportunities for accommodating population growth due to having almost entirely built-out settlement areas, limited greenfield potential, and limited opportunities for infilling. The Town also contains areas of Provincial and Federal cultural heritage significance, which would experience additional development pressure as a result of the allocation of additional population and employment to the Town. The conservation of such assets is identified as a matter of Provincial interest in clause 2(d) of the Planning Act and subsection 2.6 of the PPS.

As the population and employment allocations in Schedule 3 are applied at the regional scale, the Town reinforces the need to direct growth to primarily urban areas, particularly those with an Urban Growth Centre and current or planned infrastructure capable of supporting higher-order, regional transit systems.

b) Increasing Greenfield Density Targets from 50 to 80 Combined Residents and Jobs Per Hectare:

The Town continues to struggle to meet the current Growth Plan target of 50 combined residents and jobs per hectare in its greenfield developments. A recent analysis of approved greenfield development in the Town showed an overall density of 46.94 residents and jobs combined per hectare, just below the current Growth Plan target. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the Town would continue to fall below the proposed greenfield density target of 80 combined residents and jobs per hectare. This deficit is due to the primarily rural and historic character of the Town, with settlement areas characterized principally by a low-to-medium density built form and commercial areas primarily oriented to a local and tourism market. The Town is also opposed to greenfield development that would be incompatible with the character of the existing built form in its Settlement Areas. Since the greenfield density targets are applied at a regional scale, the Town requests that higher density targets be implemented in area municipalities with higher average existing densities of residents and jobs than the Town, higher servicing capacity, and with an existing built form character that more closely matches that of the proposed target. Greenfield densities should reflect the existing built form of the Built-Up Area to ensure that the periphery of a Settlement Area is not more intensive than the core.

The Region of Niagara is also submitting comments on the proposed greenfield density targets, including recommendations for phasing-in the new targets over the horizon of the Plan, and differentiating between greenfield lands previously planned for 50 residents and jobs per hectare, and those that would be required to achieve the new target. The Town is in agreement with the comments of the Region in respect of greenfield density targets.

c) Urban Boundary Expansion

A review of the Town's Official Plan is currently underway. Concurrently with this review, the Region is undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive review, which includes consideration of an expanded Urban Boundary (i.e., Settlement Area boundary) for the Glendale Settlement Area, as shown below:

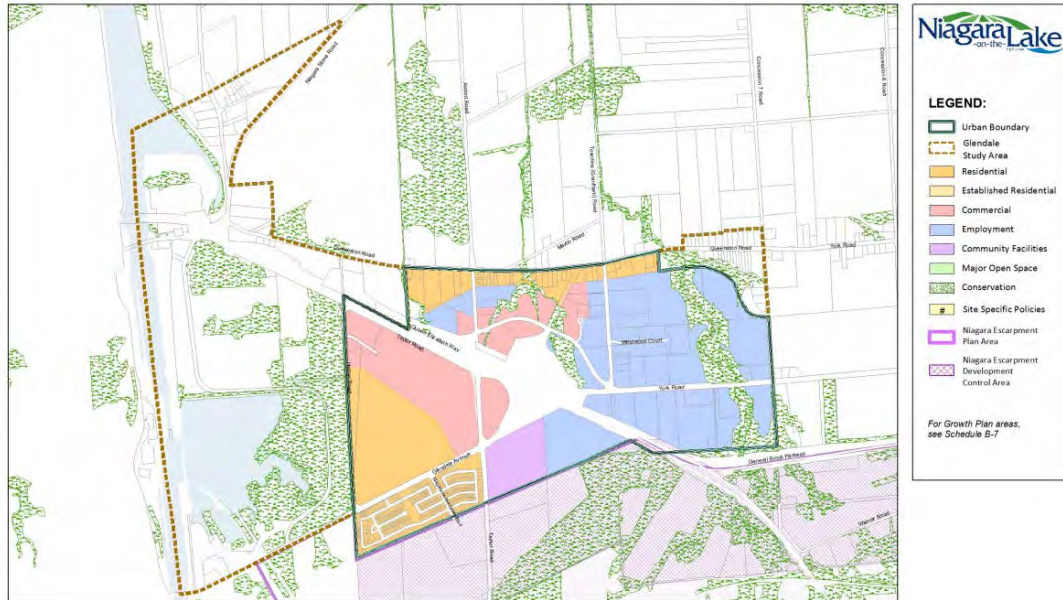


Figure 1: Proposed Glendale Settlement Area Boundary Expansion

The majority of the lands proposed for inclusion in the Glendale Settlement Area boundary are currently federally-owned lands managed by the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation (SLSMC). A smaller portion of the lands are owned by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario. It is anticipated that within three (3) to five (5) years, the SLSMC lands will be divested and transferred to non-federal ownership, making them available for inclusion in the Glendale Settlement Area. It is requested that the Province permit a Settlement Area boundary expansion in this location in consideration of the Municipal Comprehensive Review currently being undertaken by the Region. The expansion could be permitted subject to the completion of an Agricultural Impact Assessment by a qualified professional, in order to determine the agricultural potential of the SLSMC lands, and their suitability for inclusion within the Glendale Settlement Area.

- d) Increasing Intensification Targets from 40% to 60% of All Residential Development:

While the current Growth Plan allocates a 40% density target to the Region of Niagara, the Regional Official Plan of Niagara allocates a 15% intensification target to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. As a result of the limited greenfield development potential in the Town, a significant proportion of residential development has occurred within the existing Built Up Area. Accordingly, since 2011, the annual average proportion of residential development in the form of intensification has ranged from 38% in 2011 to 84% in 2015. While, based on recent trends, it is not anticipated that increasing the Regional target from 40% to 60% will result in an unattainable local target, and while the Town recognizes that Intensification Areas can be used to redirect growth away from areas where intensification is not appropriate, the Town requests that it nevertheless be granted flexibility in determining the most appropriate location for development in its Settlement Areas in consideration of its unique context, character, and natural and cultural heritage assets. This flexibility is essential where pressure to meet targets

will result in proposals to sever significant cultural heritage resources, such as the estate lots that characterize the Town's Settlement Areas, and which distinguish the Town from most GGH municipalities. This flexibility would include the ability to refuse planning applications where Council determines that approval would erode the heritage character of the Town, including anticipated adverse impacts on adjacent or nearby properties or districts of cultural heritage value. This flexibility is consistent with the intent of clause 2(d) of the Planning Act and subsection 2.6 of the PPS.

e) Complete Prohibition on Settlement Boundary Expansions in Specialty Crop Areas:

The Town fully supports the protection and promotion of its unique agricultural assets. In certain limited circumstances, however, particularly where the designation of those assets conflicts with ground-truthing of existing land use and development, or where the configuration of the Settlement Area boundary makes the cultivation of those assets unfeasible, the Town requests that flexibility be provided to include those areas in the Settlement Area boundary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review. An example of this is the current situation of the Virgil Fire Hall, on full municipal services, outside and immediately adjacent to the Virgil Settlement Area boundary, being within the Specialty Crop Area designation of the Greenbelt Plan.

In other cases, the settlement boundary mapping in the Growth Plan superimposes irregularly and illogically onto the property fabric in the Town, often bifurcating existing lots of record arbitrarily where no real division of land exists, leading to difficulty at the level of local implementation. It is therefore requested that the policies of the Growth Plan provide for the flexibility to consider Settlement Area boundaries as approximate only, where they do not follow a defined physical feature or property boundary. This would allow for the rationalization of settlement area boundaries in regional and local Official Plans, in limited circumstances, subject to the completion of a Municipal Comprehensive Review. As an example of this circumstance in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Figure 2 Illustrates the proposed rationalization of the Old Town Settlement Area boundary.

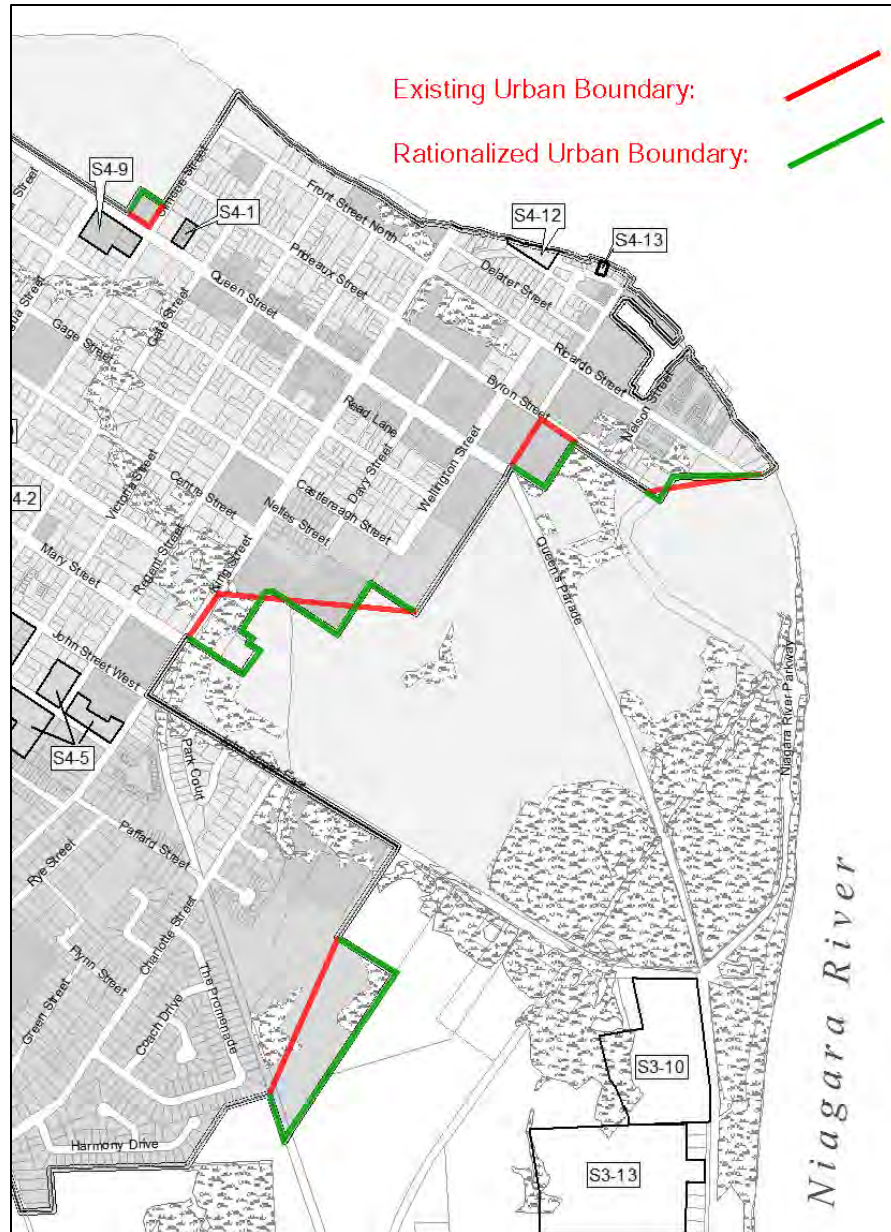


Figure 2: Settlement Boundary Rationalization: Old Town

### 2.2.2 Proposed Greenbelt Plan

The Town is concerned with the proposed Greenbelt Plan policies affecting the following matters:

#### a) Natural Heritage Features Mapping:

Being a small rural municipality entirely within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt, and having abundant natural heritage features, the Town is concerned with the accuracy of mapping of Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. In many cases the features mapping is vastly different from the actual location, characteristics and function of features on the ground. Accurate mapping is

foundational to the successful implementation of land use policies related to those features.

b) Adverse Impacts on Agricultural Uses in the Tender Fruit and Grape Growing Area:

On August 14, 2016, Pat Darte, Lord Mayor of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake met with Lou Rinaldi, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to request an exemption from the Greenbelt Plan's requirement for Vegetation Protection Zones, setbacks and evaluation areas where they would apply to irrigation channels in the Town. Due to the unique characteristics of agricultural production in the Town, the average farm parcel size is significantly smaller than is typical for more common agricultural operations (e.g., cash crop, livestock). As a result, any limitations on agriculture and related land uses imposed by Greenbelt Plan policies can have a significant detrimental impact on the viability of tender fruit and grape production in the Town.

Bill Pr88, Ch. Pr31, S.O. 1990, gives the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake the authority to establish irrigation systems in the Town for the purposes of crop irrigation. Since that time, the Town has established and maintains a network of irrigation systems in the Protected Countryside in accordance with Bill Pr88, which appear to fall within the definition of a Key Hydrologic Feature in the Greenbelt Plan. The Town is opposed to any restrictions on agricultural production in relation to these irrigation systems, including development setbacks, evaluation areas, and requirements for maintenance of Vegetation Protection Zones other than zones composed of tender fruit and grape crops. Tender fruit and grape crops are distinct from most other farm crops in that they are permanent crops, consisting of plants and trees that are cultivated to maturity over decades and in some cases centuries. Accordingly, erosion, filtration and coverage characteristics of this form of cultivation are distinct from that of annually-harvested crops, which contribute to significant exposure of topsoil to erosion, reduction in surface water and groundwater filtration capacity, and absence or immaturity of a viable root system for much of the agricultural cycle.

Consistent with the above comments, the Town fully supports the findings and recommendations of the *Collaborative Response to "Guidance Document for Maintaining and Repairing Municipal Drains"*, dated August 16, 2016, prepared and endorsed by a consortium of municipalities and agencies including the Town of Lincoln, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Region of Niagara, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Region of Niagara's Agricultural Policy and Action Committee. Town Council has expressed this support by resolution of the Committee of the Whole on October 17, 2016. The recommendations of the Collaborative Response highlight the potential for adverse impacts on tender fruit and grape crops as a result on unmanaged, naturalized riparian areas, particularly the riparian areas of farm swales, ditches and drains used and maintained for irrigation purposes. The recommendations also identify the adverse impacts that the identification of such drainage features as "fish habitat" can have on the viability of agricultural operations, which is related to the mapping accuracy concerns identified in comment 2.2.2(a) above.

*2.2.3 Proposed Niagara Escarpment Plan*

No additional lands in the Town appear to have been designated in the proposed NEP. The Town requests that no further extension of the NEP occur within the Town. With the exception of the existing Settlement Areas and the lands subject to policies of the NEP, all of the lands within the Town are designated under the Greenbelt Plan as being within a Specialty Crop Area (Tender Fruit and Grape Lands), and are subject to the policies of the Protected Countryside, which significantly restricts permitted land uses. It is a concern of the Town that any expansion of the NEP would subject additional lands in the Town to Niagara Escarpment Development Control, which would have the effect of reducing local decision making ability without providing further protection of the lands.

The Town further requests that, where concentrations of testamentary lots legally created under the Planning Act exist adjacent to a Settlement Area boundary within the Niagara Escarpment Development Control area, the NEC consider recognizing such lots within the NEP for the purposes of future development.

**2.0 CONCLUSION**

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake supports efforts to ensure that future growth in the Niagara Region occurs in an efficient, coordinated and consultative manner, and leads to complete, livable, healthy and productive communities. The Town is submitting comments on the proposed Provincial Plans to ensure that its unique interests and character are accommodated in plan preparation and implementation. As a community containing unique cultural, natural and agricultural assets, the Town takes seriously the responsibility of stewarding those resources to the benefit of its residents, the Region and the Province. Given the significance of the resources and the distinctiveness of the Town's context, the Province should exercise caution in the imposition of a one-size-fits-all policy approach on the Town, particularly in consideration of the concerns described above.

**Respectfully submitted,**



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Senior Planner**



**Jesse Auspitz  
Planner II**



**Shirley Cater, MCIP, RPP, EcD  
Manager of Planning**



**Craig Larmour, MCIP, RPP  
Director, Community &  
Development Services**

## **Town of Pelham**



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Comments on Provincial Plans Coordinated Review  
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Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Policy and Priorities Committee with a review of the proposed 3 Provincial Plans that were released on May 10, 2016 being the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Province is seeking feedback on the proposed changes to the Provincial Plans and has requested feedback and comments be received by October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

Background:

In February, 2015 the Province initiated their coordinated review of four Provincial Plans; the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan); the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Oak Ridges Moraine Plan does not impact the Town of Pelham so for the purpose of this report, the focus of the comments will be on the three other plans.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan came into effect in June, 1985 and had been amended through reviews in 1994 and 2005. The Greenbelt Plan came into effect in December, 2005 and Growth Plan came into effect in June, 2006. This is the first review for the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan and this is the first time that there has been a coordinated review undertaken of the Provincial Plans. The Province undertook a coordinated review of the Provincial Plans, recognizing their common geography and the interconnected nature of their policies.

As part of the coordinated review process, the Province established an Advisory Panel at the beginning of the review of the Provincial Plans in February, 2015. The Advisory Panel provided consensus based recommendations to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources and Forestry on ways to amend the plans and provide improvements. The Advisory Panel conducted consultations throughout the Plan areas including 17 Town Hall meetings, received submissions from stakeholders and municipalities, conducted site visits and reviewed background papers prepared by staff of the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources and Forestry in collaboration with other partner Ministries in coming up with its recommendations. The Advisory Panel released its report in December, 2015 and made 87 recommendations for changes and improvements to the four Provincial Plans.

On May 10, 2016 the Provincial Government released drafts of the proposed four Provincial Plans for feedback and comment before finalizing the Plans and requested comments be submitted to the

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Province by September 30, 2016. On August 10, 2016 the Province provided notice that they had extended the deadline for comments to October 31, 2016.

Through May – July the Province held a series of Open Houses to receive input on the proposed Plans. In Niagara an Open House was held on Tuesday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 staff also attended a session hosted by the Province where presentations were made with regards to the proposed changes made to the Plans.

Links to the proposed Provincial Plans can be found at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page10882.aspx>.

#### Review of Proposed Changes to the Plans:

There are similar themes introduced to the Plans. For example, the Plans make reference the climate change provisions and introduce the concept of net zero communities. Net zero communities are defined in the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan, but not in the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan also align policies related to the identification and protection of natural heritage systems, water resource systems and the agricultural systems. This alignment resulted in greater change to the Growth Plan versus the Greenbelt Plan. The Niagara Escarpment Plan policies with regards to these concepts do not align as well as compared with the other two Plans. Overall, there is better alignment between the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan and less so with the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

#### Greenbelt Plan

The proposed Greenbelt Plan introduces the Province's Climate Change Strategy and the government's commitment to meet its long term targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; protection of agricultural lands and natural areas; building compact and complete communities toward the goal of net zero communities. Net zero communities are defined as *"communities that meet their energy demand through low-carbon or carbon-free forms of energy and off-set, preferably locally, any releases of greenhouse gas emissions that cannot be eliminated. New zero communities include a higher density built form, and denser and mixed use development patterns that ensure energy efficiency, reduced distances travelled and improved integration with transit, energy, water and waste systems."* The policies that link the Province's Climate Change Strategy and net zero communities are referred to in both the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan. There are specific policies aimed at integrating climate

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change considerations into planning and managing the agricultural system, the natural heritage system and water resource system and by incorporating techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed Greenbelt Plan builds on the reference of an agricultural system and agricultural support network. These two terms were not previously defined. The proposed Greenbelt Plan defines the agricultural system term *“as a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components: 1) an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas including specialty crop areas and rural lands that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture; 2) an Agricultural Support Network, which includes infrastructure, services and agri-food assets important to the viability of the sector”* and defines agricultural support network as *“within the agricultural system, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional agricultural infrastructure and transportation networks, on-farm buildings and infrastructure, agricultural services, farm markets, distributors and first-level processing, and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.”* The proposed changes to the Greenbelt Plan enhance the agricultural system to include not only the land base, but also the infrastructure and other assets (food and beverage processors, cold storage, grain dryers, abattoirs, etc.) that collectively support a the economy of the agricultural sector and the network that is necessary for long term agricultural viability. As a result there is stronger reference to agricultural viability than previously in the Greenbelt Plan.

The proposed changes to the Natural Heritage system identify the external connections of the natural heritage system beyond the Greenbelt Plan area in the Growth Plan area and have introduced policies relating to Urban River Valley areas. The Growth Plan has also been amended to recognize these connections of the natural heritage system in the Greenbelt Plan area. The Greenbelt Plan provides greater emphasize on requiring watershed planning and a watershed management approach across the Protected Countryside and that municipalities consider targets set by the *Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015* as part of the watershed planning.

At the same time, there are new policies that provide flexibility for new agricultural buildings and structures, agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses within 30m of a stream that is an agricultural swale, roadside ditch or municipal drain without a hydrological evaluation provided a minimum 15m vegetative protection one is maintained, the sewage system is not located within 30m of the stream, there is no alternative location for the building(s) or structure(s) on the property without impacting lands that are in specialty crop production, use of best management practices to protect the

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stream/key hydrological feature and stormwater management and erosion control measures are employed to mitigate against potential impact before, during and after construction. A policy has been added that municipalities map key hydrologic areas and have policies in their official plans.

The Settlement Area policies encourage complete communities with the goal of becoming net zero communities and direct municipalities to facilitate community hubs. These settlement policies align with the policies of the Growth Plan.

Policies have been added to include the requirement of an agricultural impact assessment for new or expanding infrastructure within the specialty crop areas and prime agricultural areas and for new mineral aggregate operations proposed in prime agricultural areas to determine how adverse impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, minimized and mitigated.

There are also stronger policies regarding the requirement that significant cultural heritage resources, built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources be conserved. Also there are policies that encourage municipalities to consider archaeological management plans and municipal cultural plans in their decision making. These policies align with the Provincial Policy Statement.

There were no changes to the lot creation policies in the specialty crop and prime agricultural areas. The minimum lot size remains at 16 hectare (40 acres) within specialty crop areas and 40 hectares (100 acres) in prime agricultural areas. Also a new policy is proposed that provides direction for upper tier municipalities to refine mapping in their official plans to bring prime agricultural areas, specialty crop areas and rural lands in conformity with provincial mapping through a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan.

Mapping changes to the Greenbelt Plan include identifying Ridgeville as a Hamlet which is considered to be a settlement area. The identification of Ridgeville as a Hamlet will provide the opportunity for the Town to amend its Official Plan to establish a hamlet boundary for Ridgeville and recognize this long standing settlement area.

Other mapping changes include the addition of land to expand the Greenbelt Plan area by adding areas in Thorold, Grimsby and Hamilton to the Protected Countryside. There are no lands proposed to be removed from the Greenbelt Plan.

## Growth Plan

Currently, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe includes measures to encourage the development of complete communities. Municipalities are already required to:

- Develop and grow with a mix of uses, such as residential, employment, cultural, recreational and other uses that contribute to building complete communities.
- Intensify by accommodating a residential growth in areas that are already built-up, especially around transit and in urban growth centres (existing and emerging downtowns).
- Plan for a minimum density of people living and working in designated greenfield areas at a density of 50 persons and jobs/hectare.
- Protect land used primarily for employment from being converted to non-employment uses, such as housing.

The proposed changes to the Growth Plan take the Plan further towards the objective of building complete communities. The changes propose to increase density and intensification targets, promote transit supportive density, encourage the development of community hubs and provide greater protection for agricultural land and natural heritage features. The proposed changes:

- Provide more guidance on achieving complete communities and require municipalities to plan for sustainable and livable communities.
- Increase the intensification target in the Growth Plan to a minimum of 60 per cent of all new residential development occurring annually in the existing built-up area.
- Increase the designated greenfield area density target in the Growth Plan to a minimum of 80 residents and jobs per hectare (excluding certain non-developable natural heritage features, such as wetlands and woodlands, rights of way for certain infrastructure, and prime employment areas).
- Require municipalities to plan for density targets around major transit stations which support that type of transit.
- Show priority transit corridors in the Growth Plan where municipalities would focus transit-related planning, zoning and development efforts. New policies would also provide the province with the authority to identify additional priority transit corridors.

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- Support the development of community hubs by encouraging public services to be located together in existing facilities near strategic growth areas, accessible by active transportation and transit. Establish stronger environmental, agricultural and planning criteria in the Growth Plan for settlement area boundary expansions that aligns with the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Require municipalities to identify and protect prime employment areas. Prime employment areas, as defined in the Growth Plan, typically accommodate uses such as warehousing, logistics, and manufacturing that require a lot of land and access to transportation infrastructure, such as highways and railway lines. Certain employment uses, such as stand-alone office buildings, would be permitted in employment areas that are not identified as “prime”. New policies would serve to improve transit connections for employment areas.
- Require the province, through direction in the Growth Plan, to establish a standard methodology used by all municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe for assessing land needs.
- Provide new policies in the Growth Plan to help municipalities in the outer ring, of which Niagara is, manage any lands that are designated but not required for growth to 2041, and provide specific tests and flexibility for appropriate growth in these municipalities.
- Strengthen policies regarding the preservation of cultural heritage to align with those in the Provincial Policy Statement.

In rural areas, the Growth Plan proposes protections of the natural heritage system similar to those that exist in the Greenbelt Plan. In existing settlement areas, the protections in the Provincial Policy Statement for natural heritage systems would continue to apply. Municipalities would be required to maintain the interconnections and diversity of the natural heritage system on any new lands added to a settlement area.

#### Niagara Escarpment Plan

Some general changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan include the addition of language to acknowledge the significance of Aboriginal culture and histories within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area as well as the recognize the significance of the Escarpment and associated environment that support ecosystems and mitigate the effects of climate change. The proposed changes to the Plan also build on the concept of a landscape approach that seeks to protect the geological feature of the Niagara Escarpment lands and lands in its vicinity as a continuous natural environment while allowing compatible development.

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No new land use designations are proposed in the Plan, however there has been some minor changes to the descriptions of the designations acknowledging the role in providing resilience to climate change and to update terminology.

The Plan also proposes better alignment with the Provincial Policy Statement as it relates to agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses and agricultural purposes only lots. There have also been some revisions to the water resource policies to align with the systems approach and protection of key hydrological features set out in the Greenbelt Plan.

The mineral aggregate policies have been revised to update terminology and to better coordinate policy with the *Aggregate Resources Act*.

The Province also considered requests to add lands to the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) area. The proposed additions were to conform to three or more of the following attributes:

- Contains Escarpment brow, toe, slope, secondary scarp, or outlier;
- Contains a significant Escarpment-related landform (e.g. moraine, karst) as defined in the NEP; Constitutes part of a Provincial Park, nature preserve, Conservation Area or similar public holding that is only partially within the NEP Area;
- Includes portions of Escarpment-related natural heritage features that are partially outside of the NEP boundary and are essential to maintaining the ecological integrity of the entire natural heritage feature. These lands would include Provincial and Regional Life Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), Significant Woodlands, Provincially or Locally Significant Wetlands (PSW or LSW), headwaters, waterfalls and environmentally sensitive areas (ESA);
- The lands have been assigned a high scenic value (i.e., those ranked as attractive, very attractive, or outstanding) in the Niagara Escarpment Landscape Evaluation Studies; or
- Contains an Escarpment-related cultural heritage feature (e.g. lime kiln, mill) as defined in the NEP.

Based on the review of the following criteria, Provincial staff are recommending the adding 6.9 ha (17 acres) of land associated with the former Lathrop property now owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada to the Plan Area, identified as N8 in Appendix A which is an excerpt from a summary of the proposed additions to the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The lands are owned by the Nature Conservancy

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and contain Escarpment brow and Escarpment related features and are considered to be part of the Short Hill/St. Johns Environmentally Sensitive Area. (See Appendix A) Should these lands be added to the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, there will be the need to provide for some housekeeping amendments to the Town planning documents as well.

The Town along with the Region had requested that that portion of the Fonthill Kame as depicted by Dr. Menzies be included in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, identified as N9 in Appendix A. Based on their review of the above criteria, the Province is not proposing to add those lands to the Niagara Escarpment Plan area as only 2 criteria were met, being within the original Niagara Escarpment Plan area and containing a significant Escarpment related feature, i.e. ANSI associated with the Fonthill Kame. (See Appendix A notes.) It is noted that these lands are within the Greenbelt Plan area.

There was also a small area along Cream Street, identified as N11 in Appendix A, which was requested to be included within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. This area also meant only two criteria and is not being recommended by the Province to be included in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. These lands are also within the Greenbelt Plan area. (See Appendix A)

**Public Comments Received:**

For Committee's information, a request was received in July, 2015 that Council referred to staff to comment on regarding property at 205 Highway 20 West at the northwest corner of Highway 20 West and Lookout Street. This property is located within the Greenbelt Plan area and is on the edge of the Urban Area boundary of Fonthill. The owner has requested that this property be considered to be removed from the Greenbelt Plan.

The property is 1.15 ha (2.86 acres) in area and is bisected by a watercourse and valley system that is part of the natural heritage system. Approximately 0.7ha (1.72 acres) consists of table lands. The property is currently used for residential purposes and contains a single detached dwelling, accessory building and is serviced by private water and sanitary sewage systems. Driveway access to the dwelling is via Highway 20 west and there is a second access off Lookout Street as well. A coniferous treeline screens the dwelling from view from Highway 20 West and Lookout Street.





Provincial staff indicated that with regards to changes to the Greenbelt Plan area boundary, the Province is focused on growing the Greenbelt versus removing lands from the Greenbelt Plan. Staff acknowledge that given the size of the property and the natural heritage features that exist on the lands, the property will not be used for agricultural purposes, however there are a number of non-farm residential properties within the Greenbelt Plan area and that these non-farm uses can continue. Also, the Greenbelt Plan provides for the protection of the natural heritage features.

The current property owner has indicated that continued use of the property for residential use is significantly impacted by the truck traffic on Highway 20 West and the institutional use opposite it. Planning staff acknowledge that while the property has some constraints for residential use, it also does have some features that are desirable. Also, there is the potential for the lands to be rezoned to permit an agriculturally related use on the property, in keeping with the objectives of the Greenbelt Plan, providing other options to the homeowner.

While roadways make clear boundaries for designations between land use designations, valley systems are also a physical boundary that could be suitable. Similar to what occurred across the

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road, where the valley system forms the Urban Area boundary adjacent to the Timmsdale subdivision, a similar approach could potentially be considered with this property. That being said, there remains no strong compelling reason to alter the Greenbelt Plan area boundary to request that the 205 Highway 20 West be removed from the Greenbelt Plan, however it is recommended that this request be forwarded to the Province for their consideration.

**Staff Comments:**

The majority of the changes to the Provincial Plans are aimed at providing alignment between the Plans as well as consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement. Significant and substantial changes to the Plans are not being proposed by the Province.

However, it is acknowledged that the recognition of Ridgeville as a hamlet in the Greenbelt Plan is considered positive and helpful to achieve recognition of this hamlet in both the Regional and Town planning documents. The request to have Ridgeville recognized as a hamlet in the Greenbelt Plan was supported by Town Council.

The proposed density and infill requirements in the Growth Plan will result in impacts on the character of Pelham's urban areas, Fonthill and Fenwick and could have other implications with regards to infrastructure. It is noted though that the density and infill targets are to be achieved over the life of the plan, i.e. 2041 which does provide the opportunity for the Town to plan for these types of densities. There will also be the challenge in getting both public buy-in and support for these types of densities as well as getting the development community to buy-in to building communities with these types of densities. Overall, staff feels that there needs to be some consideration with regards to different density targets for municipalities in the outer ring, which Niagara is, as opposed to achieving the same density and infill targets as the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton Area have. For these reasons, staff are recommending that more suitable density and infill targets be set for communities in the outer ring.

It is also noted though that there does not appear to be support by the Province for the inclusion of the Fonthill Kame as defined by Dr. Menzies to be included in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. Both the Town and the Region of Niagara supported the inclusion of Dr. Menzies Fonthill Kame ANSI in the Niagara Escarpment Plan and there does not appear to be a strong compelling reason to not include it within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area given the significance of the ANSI. Staff

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continue to support Council's previous position of inclusion of Dr. Menzies Fonthill Kame and ANSI in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area.

As the Town and other area municipalities are working together with the Region to provide comments to the Province on the proposed Provincial Plans and to speak with one voice to the Province, it is recommended that this report be forwarded to the Region and that the recommendations with regards to the density and infill target in the Growth Plan as well as that there be further consideration to have Dr. Menzies delineation of the Fonthill Kame ANSI included in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area.

With regards to the site specific request to have 205 Highway 20 West removed from the Greenbelt Plan Area, staff recommend that this be forwarded to the Province for their consideration.

Prepared by: Barbara Wiens, MCIP RPP, Director of Community Planning and Development

Recommendation:

**THAT**, the Policy and Priorities Committee receive this Report for information as it pertains to a summary of the proposed changes to Provincial Plans;

**AND FURTHER THAT**, Committee direct Planning staff to continue to collaborate with the Region to provide comments to the Province as it relates to Dr. Menzies Fonthill Kame ANSI in the Niagara Escarpment Plan and that the density and infill targets in the outer ring municipalities be distinguished from the density and infill targets in the inner ring within the proposed in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe;

**AND FURTHER THAT**, the specific request for the removal of 205 Highway 20 West from the Greenbelt Plan be referred to the Province for consideration.

**AND FURTHER THAT**, this report be forwarded to the Region of Niagara.

## **City of Port Colborne**

**SUBJECT: Review of the Draft Provincial Growth Plan (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe)**

**1) PURPOSE:**

Under the direction of the Director of Planning & Development, the purpose of this report is to provide Council with information and comments with respect to the current Coordinated Provincial Plans Review.

**2) HISTORY, BACKGROUND, COUNCIL POLICY, PRACTICES:**

In late 2015, the Crombie Panel, an advisory panel tasked with providing an advisory document to the Province to consider changes to the Growth Plan, released their recommendations "Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth" containing 87 recommendations to the Province for consideration on all four provincial plans (Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan) grouped into the following categories:

- Building Complete Communities;
- Supporting Agriculture;
- Protecting Natural Heritage;
- Providing Infrastructure;
- Mainstreaming Climate Change; and
- Implementing Plans.

From these recommendations, the Province is now in the process of undertaking a coordinated review of the four plans. The City of Port Colborne is only impacted by the Growth Plan and, as such, this report will only speak to changes and staff comments with respect to that plan.

As part of its review, the Province has introduced a set of draft policy changes to the Growth Plan, which include:

- Improved mapping accuracy;
- Improved alignment of definitions between plans;
- Clarification of Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) requirements;
- More focus on creating "Complete Communities";
- Reporting/monitoring by upper tier municipalities on implementation;
- Flexibility in dealing with older Draft Plans of Subdivision that are outstanding; and
- Creation/identification of linkages between infrastructure and land use to create more financially sustainable growth.

### 3) STAFF COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Staff has been working closely with the Region of Niagara Planning Department throughout this Coordinated Policy Review and provide the following key points that have been highlighted through this process for discussion and comment:

#### Greenfield Densities

The greenfield density target is proposed to increase from the current 50 people and jobs per hectare up to 80 people and jobs per hectare. This target will be a significant challenge to the City given its historic growth rates have remained relatively unchanged for the past 10 years. While some growth is anticipated with the recent approval of the Westwood Phase II Subdivision, the proposed greenfield density target will be difficult for the City to reach.

It is staff's recommendation that a lower greenfield density and/or a combined density (greenfield and built area) target for smaller communities be established. This will provide some flexibility in terms of the location of new development.

#### Residential Development in Built Up Area

The current requirement for residential development (intensification) in the built up area is 40% for the Region of Niagara as a whole and 15% for the City specifically. Again, based on historic growth, the City has had difficulty reaching its 15% target however, policy changes are being proposed to City's East Waterfront Secondary Plan area to support an increase in the density and type of residential development permitted. By permitting higher density land uses in this area, the City hopes to move closer to reaching the 15% intensification target.

It is staff's recommendation that the current intensification target of 15% be maintained through the MCR.

#### Land Supply

The Region of Niagara is currently undertaking their MCR which will examine the growth potential of existing urban areas and allocate growth that has been forecasted by the Province to 2041. The proposed Growth Plan policies support the Crombie Panel's recommendation that there is a need to increase the densities of urban communities, place limitations on urban area boundary expansions and de-designate or phase existing urban land intensification to reduce the oversupply of developable lands where they exist. What will be important is balancing efficient use of developable land with market conditions so that growth can occur.

Following the update of the Growth Plan, the Province has indicated they will provide a number of discussion papers and guideline documents aimed at providing greater clarity to specific sections of the plan. This will include specific guidelines for land budgeting, which will guide the Region through their MCR in determining municipal land supply and phasing.

From the City's perspective, there is work ongoing to service new employment lands east of the Welland Canal for development that needs to be recognized and deleted from the Region's de-designation attempts. The same is true for vacant residential lands as the City has seen an interest in their development. Staff's opinion is that the City should not be subsidizing its land to push other Regional objectives forward.

It is staff's recommendation that the City share this position and continue to monitor the Region's MCR and how it will impact the City's residential and employment land supply.

#### Plans of Subdivision

The Growth Plan proposes specific policies to address older draft plans of subdivision that may not take into consideration Growth Plan objectives or community needs. All Draft Plans of Subdivision currently have a lapse date and the proposed policies would ensure that the Growth Plan would have to be considered prior to granting any approvals to an extension. The Growth Plan further encourages municipalities to use their authority under the Planning Act to de-register Registered Plans of Subdivision that do not meet the objectives of the new Growth Plan and that are older than eight years.

Staff agree with these proposed policies and have no objections to assessing extensions and looking at older approved plans based on the proposed criteria. The City has two draft plan of subdivisions – Rosemount Estates (2013) and Rosedale Estates (1988) that would be assessed.

#### Natural Heritage System Mapping

Through the Growth Plan update, the Province has indicated they will be undertaking mapping the Natural Heritage System for the entire Plan area. There is little detail with respect to the level of mapping that will be provided (higher level landscape mapping or more detailed wetland, woodlot, wildlife/fish habitat mapping). It is also unknown how the Province intends to carry out the necessary field work that would be required for detailed mapping.

Staff are of the opinion that further information is required with respect to how this mapping will be undertaken and what ability local municipalities and the Region will have to feed information into the process in order to have an accurate representation of the natural heritage systems in the Region.

#### Additional Study Requirements

The proposed growth plan places a greater emphasis on watershed planning, sub-watershed based storm water master plans, source water protection plans and asset management plans for infrastructure planning.

While staff agree that these requirements can assist in helping to build strong, complete communities they will have an impact on the cost of development and on staff resources.

Further policy clarification will be necessary to determine the full impact of these additional study requirements.

### Climate Change

The Growth Plan policies propose that upper tier municipalities prepare climate change plans and incorporate policies into local Official Plans to advance good climate change practices, however no clear direction has been established by the Province at this time.

Staff, while supportive of policies that support climate change initiatives, will require further policy direction/framework in order to more fully achieve a clear understanding of the factors to be considered in climate change planning.

#### **4) OPTIONS AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

##### **a) Do nothing**

Doing nothing would result in no comments being provided to the Region of Niagara on the Coordinated Policy Review.

##### **b) Other Options**

Council can choose to submit entirely different comments to the Region.

#### **5) COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES:**

Not applicable.

#### **6) ATTACHMENTS:**

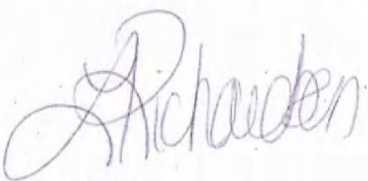
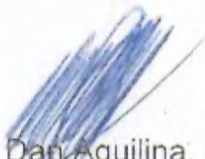

Not applicable.

#### **7) RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That PDS 2016-161 regarding the Province's Coordinated Policy Review (Growth Plan) be supported.
2. That staff be directed to forward a copy of PDS2016-161 to the Region of Niagara to be included with their coordinated response on the Coordinated Policy Review.



8) SIGNATURES:

<p>Prepared on September 28 by:</p>  <p>Lindsay Richardson Community/Policy Planner</p>	<p>Reviewed and Approved By:</p>  <p>Dan Aquilina, MCIP, RPP, CPT Director of Planning and Development</p>
<p>Reviewed and Respectfully Submitted:</p>  <p>C. Scott Luey Chief Administrative Officer</p>	



## City of St. Catharines



**3.3 Planning and Building Services, Planning Services  
Coordinated Review of Provincial Land Use Plans: City comments on  
Draft Amendments to the Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow (Growth Plan  
for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan**

Moved by: Councillor Siscoe

That Council advise the Province of the following matters with respect to the draft amendments to the Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan that is currently being considered as part of the 2015 Coordinated Provincial Review.

**1. Greenbelt Plan**

- a) That the minimum lot size requirement for farm parcels in Niagara be evaluated and appropriate viable farm parcel size requirements be established based on a Niagara perspective.
- b) That Natural Heritage policies provide greater flexibility in implementation and support for alternative measures and reduced buffer requirements to protect and integrate natural heritage with agricultural practices.
- c) That Natural Area and Heritage mapping be reviewed to ensure consistent application and interpretation with other provincial and agency mapping, to enable policy reliance on local ground tested mapping, and to ensure mechanisms are in place to update mapping on a continuous basis in response to the ever changing dynamics and evolution of natural features and hazard lands.
- d) That criteria or special policy be established in support of re-purposing non-agricultural uses in the Specialty Crop Area to permit alternative agricultural and non-agricultural uses.
- e) That the concept of the Agriculture Support Network (ASN) be further defined and broadened, and establish within, policies and implementation criteria to enable better connectivity and integration of urban uses and service models to support the agricultural community and economy in the Specialty Crop Area, including the re-purposing of existing non-agricultural uses for alternative non-agricultural uses; and

Consideration be given for defined special policy areas to recognize the prevalence of existing non-agricultural uses within existing corridors and nodes, and support expansion of alternative non-agricultural uses and operations within, where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that impact on agricultural lands and existing agricultural uses are minimized.

- f) That a minor boundary adjustment be approved for lands at 349 St Paul Street West, as identified in (Link provided for Appendix 8), to exclude all of the property from within the Greenbelt Plan boundary.



- g) That the Province prepare guidelines to assist local municipalities in the implementation of Agriculture Impact Assessments (AIA)

## 2. Places to Grow

- a) That implementation guidelines be established to provide consistent methodology and metrics for the measurement of people and jobs density.
- b) That policies be established to support greater flexibility in planning of employment land designations, in a manner to recognize the changing nature of employment, provide for more diverse application of land use permissions, and the integration of employment lands to support complete communities.
- c) That the Built Boundary established in the P2G be realigned to exclude Greenfield lands already developed or with existing planning approvals in order to better reflect current development patterns and the applicability of the new Greenfield density standard.
- d) That the Province defer any consideration of any additions, deletions or changes to the Greenbelt Plan boundary and the Urban Area boundary (with the exception of Recommendation 1.f)) that impact lands within the City of St. Catharines until the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan is completed. The Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review will confirm a Regional growth strategy for both jobs and population which will determine the capability of the current Urban Area to accommodate future growth. Any additions or removal of lands from the Greenbelt Plan boundary, as part of the Provincial review, may prematurely impact the City's Urban Area Boundary; and

That the Province allow municipalities to request changes to Greenbelt Plan designations and boundary, and the Urban Area boundary, at the conclusion of the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review provided the Municipal Comprehensive Review is completed in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), the Places to Grow (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe), and meets the goals and objectives of all other applicable Provincial land use plans.

- e) That the prohibition to consider changes to GB boundaries and Settlement Area (Urban Area) boundaries outside of a Provincial land use plan review be removed.

## 3. Niagara Escarpment Plan

- a) That through the CPR, the Province open the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (RSO 1990) for review and amendment to remove Development Control within local municipal Urban Area boundaries, and transfer planning authority for uses permitted in the NEP to local municipalities.
- b) That 'Escarpment Natural Area' and 'Escarpment Urban Area' designations within the City's Urban Area, be reviewed to determine a defensible boundary between the two designations.



CITY OF  
ST. CATHARINES

EXCERPT OF THE MINUTES OF THE

General COMMITTEE

DATE Oct. 24, 2016 ITEM NO. 3.3

RATIFIED BY COUNCIL October 24, 2016

- c) That prohibition to consider changes to NEP land use designations to permit urban uses outside of a 10 year review be removed.
- d) That re-designation of lands at 590 Glendale Avenue from 'Escarpment Protection Area' to 'Urban Area' be considered through the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Region of Niagara Official Plan.
- e) That the request for an urban area designation in the Niagara Escarpment Plan for 590 Glendale Avenue is supported subject to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process and site-specific studies to the satisfaction of the City.

**4. Both Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan**

- a) That consistent application of definitions, permissions and applicable regulations be implemented for uses that are permitted by both Plans where plan area boundaries overlap, and specifically in the GB Specialty Crop Area.

**5. Land Use Plans – Companion Guidelines for Policy Implementation**

- a) That the Province prepare and make available companion guidelines to support implementation of land use policies commensurate with the timing of formal approval of new Provincial land use plans.

**6. Climate Change**

- a) That greater clarity and direction be given in Provincial land use plans to climate change policies, and to establish guidelines in support of best practices and methodologies to implement and monitor climate change directives.

7. That a copy of this report also be forwarded to the Region of Niagara as information. FORTHWITH.

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Moved By: Councillor Sorrento

That staff be directed to fully analyze the specific requests for inclusion within the Urban Area of the City of St. Catharines as outlined in this report as part of the evaluation during the Municipal Comprehensive Review and subsequent City Official Plan update in compliance with criteria set out in the Provincial Plan Policy.

Yeas: Councillors Sorrento, Bellows, Britton, Harris, Siscoe, and Mayor Sendzik

Nays: Councillors Stevens, Williamson, Elliott, Garcia, Haywood, Kushner, and Phillips

**Amendment Lost**



CITY OF  
ST. CATHARINES

EXCERPT OF THE MINUTES OF THE

General COMMITTEE

DATE Oct. 24, 2016 ITEM NO. 3.3

RATIFIED BY COUNCIL October 24, 2016

*Councillor Williamson requested the following (Section 3 - Niagara Escarpment Plan, Item (e)) be voted on separately:*

That the request for an urban area designation in the Niagara Escarpment Plan for 590 Glendale Avenue is supported subject to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process and site-specific studies to the satisfaction of the City.

Yeas: Councillors Siscoe, Sorrento, Bellows, Britton, Harris, Haywood, and Mayor Sendzik

Nays: Councillors Stevens, Williamson, Elliott, Garcia, Kushner, and Phillips

**Carried**

*Council then voted on the main motion.*

Yeas: Councillors Phillips, Siscoe, Sorrento, Stevens, Williamson, Bellows, Britton, Elliott, Garcia, Harris, Haywood, Kushner, and Mayor Sendzik

Nays:

**Carried**



## Corporate Report

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**Report from** Planning and Building Services, Planning Services

**Date of Report:** October 5, 2016

**Date of Meeting:** October 24, 2016

**Report Number:** PBS-284-2016

**File:** 35.81.39

**Subject:** Coordinated Review of Provincial Land Use Plans: City comments on Draft Amendments to the Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan

### Recommendation

That Council advise the Province of the following matters with respect to the draft amendments to the Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan that is currently being considered as part of the 2015 Coordinated Provincial Review.

#### 1. Greenbelt Plan

- a) That the minimum lot size requirement for farm parcels in Niagara be evaluated and appropriate viable farm parcel size requirements be established based on a Niagara perspective.
- b) That Natural Heritage policies provide greater flexibility in implementation and support for alternative measures and reduced buffer requirements to protect and integrate natural heritage with agricultural practices.
- c) That Natural Area and Heritage mapping be reviewed to ensure consistent application and interpretation with other provincial and agency mapping, to enable policy reliance on local ground tested mapping, and to ensure mechanisms are in place to update mapping on a continuous basis in response to the ever changing dynamics and evolution of natural features and hazard lands.
- d) That criteria or special policy be established in support of re-purposing non-agricultural uses in the Specialty Crop Area to permit alternative agricultural and non-agricultural uses.
- e) That the concept of the Agriculture Support Network (ASN) be further defined and broadened, and establish within, policies and implementation criteria to enable better connectivity and integration of urban uses and service models to support the agricultural community and economy in the Specialty Crop



Area, including the re-purposing of existing non-agricultural uses for alternative non-agricultural uses; and

Consideration be given for defined special policy areas to recognize the prevalence of existing non-agricultural uses within existing corridors and nodes, and support expansion of alternative non-agricultural uses and operations within, where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that impact on agricultural lands and existing agricultural uses are minimized.

- f) That a minor boundary adjustment be approved for lands at 349 St Paul Street West, as identified in ([Link provided for Appendix 8](#)), to exclude all of the property from within the Greenbelt Plan boundary.
- g) That the Province prepare guidelines to assist local municipalities in the implementation of Agriculture Impact Assessments (AIA)

## **2. Places to Grow**

- a) That implementation guidelines be established to provide consistent methodology and metrics for the measurement of people and jobs density.
- b) That policies be established to support greater flexibility in planning of employment land designations, in a manner to recognize the changing nature of employment, provide for more diverse application of land use permissions, and the integration of employment lands to support complete communities.
- c) That the Built Boundary established in the P2G be realigned to exclude Greenfield lands already developed or with existing planning approvals in order to better reflect current development patterns and the applicability of the new Greenfield density standard.
- d) That the Province defer any consideration of any additions, deletions or changes to the Greenbelt Plan boundary and the Urban Area boundary (with the exception of Recommendation 1.f)) that impact lands within the City of St. Catharines until the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan is completed. The Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review will confirm a Regional growth strategy for both jobs and population which will determine the capability of the current Urban Area to accommodate future growth. Any additions or removal of lands from the Greenbelt Plan boundary, as part of the Provincial review, may prematurely impact the City's Urban Area Boundary; and

That the Province allow municipalities to request changes to Greenbelt Plan designations and boundary, and the Urban Area boundary, at the conclusion of the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review provided the Municipal Comprehensive Review is completed in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), the Places to Grow (Growth Plan for the

Greater Golden Horseshoe), and meets the goals and objectives of all other applicable Provincial land use plans.

- e) That the prohibition to consider changes to GB boundaries and Settlement Area (Urban Area) boundaries outside of a Provincial land use plan review be removed.

### **3. Niagara Escarpment Plan**

- a) That through the CPR, the Province open the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (RSO 1990) for review and amendment to remove Development Control within local municipal Urban Area boundaries, and transfer planning authority for uses permitted in the NEP to local municipalities.
- b) That 'Escarpment Natural Area' and 'Escarpment Urban Area' designations within the City's Urban Area, be reviewed to determine a defensible boundary between the two designations.
- c) That prohibition to consider changes to NEP land use designations to permit urban uses outside of a 10 year review be removed.
- d) That re-designation of lands at 590 Glendale Avenue from 'Escarpment Protection Area' to 'Urban Area' be considered through the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Region of Niagara Official Plan.

### **4. Both Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan**

- a) That consistent application of definitions, permissions and applicable regulations be implemented for uses that are permitted by both Plans where plan area boundaries overlap, and specifically in the GB Specialty Crop Area.

### **5. Land Use Plans – Companion Guidelines for Policy Implementation**

- a) That the Province prepare and make available companion guidelines to support implementation of land use policies commensurate with the timing of formal approval of new Provincial land use plans.

### **6. Climate Change**

- a) That greater clarity and direction be given in Provincial land use plans to climate change policies, and to establish guidelines in support of best practices and methodologies to implement and monitor climate change directives.

- 7. That a copy of this report also be forwarded to the Region of Niagara as information. FORTHWITH.

## Summary

The Province of Ontario is undertaking a coordinated review of Provincial land use plans, and has released draft amendments to the Greenbelt Plan (GB), the Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (P2G), and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP). Upper tier government and local municipal Official Plans (the Garden City Plan) must be consistent with Provincial land use plans, and all 3 of these plans have a direct and significant impact on the manner in which the City can plan to accommodate future growth at the local level.

The draft plan amendments propose many changes to existing plan policy. However, it is clear that the main thrust of the review, and draft amendments, is not to change, but rather to strengthen, the original intent and direction for which plan policies were initially conceived and adopted. The draft plan amendments continue to support:

- intensification within existing urban areas to accommodate forecasted population, housing and employment growth;
- promotion of land and service efficiencies in compact and complete communities;
- the protection, enhancement and viability of agricultural lands and community;
- protection and conservation of natural and cultural heritage;

In addition, the draft policies address climate change mitigation and promote the concept of net zero communities.

Staff support the overall directives of the Provincial plans, the principles of which have been enshrined within the City Official Plan for over 3 decades in support of achieving and maintaining a complete, integrated, interactive, economically viable, robust and sustainable community.

The overall impact of these policy changes will be to influence the Region of Niagara's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and, therefore, the City's Official Plan update. As well, some of the City's operational practices and standards, mostly related to engineering practices, may be impacted particularly through the Province's emphasis on mitigating climate change.

## Background

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an overview of the Provincial review process to date;
- highlight key changes to the Provincial land use policy plans and their intent;
- outline key implications to City of St. Catharines planning;
- provide recommendations to the Province on the draft policy documents.

### **Coordinated Review of Provincial Land Use Plans (CPR)**

Pursuant to Provincial legislation, upper tier government and local municipal Official Plans (Garden City Plan) must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

and Provincial land use plans established to implement the goals, objectives and policies of the PPS.

In February, 2015 the Province launched a coordinated review (CPR) of 4 Provincial land use plans: the Greenbelt Plan (GB), Places to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (P2G), the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. This review has culminated in the preparation of draft amendments to the Provincial land use plans, and request for comment from stakeholders.

While the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan is not relevant to Niagara, the other 3 Plans have a direct and significant impact on the manner in which we can plan to accommodate future growth and development at the local level.

The GB, P2G and NEP have direct implications on what, where and how lands can be used. They establish specific direction and parameters on upper tier and local municipalities for managing future housing, population and employment land needs and growth. They also establish specific direction for protection and management of agricultural lands and natural heritage. As well, new draft policies encourage climate change mitigation and the concept of net zero communities.

### **Phase One of Review**

- The first phase of the CPR commenced with the release of the Discussion Paper “Our Region/Our Community /Our Home” ([Link provided for Appendix 1](#)) prepared by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMAH). This paper provided an overview of the Provincial land use plans, and set out the major goals and scope of issues to be addressed through the CPR.
- In the Spring of 2015, the Province held a number of Town Hall meetings throughout the Golden Horseshoe to present the Discussion Paper (St. Catharines, April 15, 2015). Opportunity was provided for stakeholder input with respect to Plan policies, direction and implementation in a manner to help inform development of proposed amendments to the various Plans.
- In May, 2015 the City made a formal submission to the Province identifying a number of local issues and recommendations for consideration with respect to the CPR ([Link provided for Appendix 2](#)).
- Also in May, 2015, the Region of Niagara, in collaboration with the 12 local area municipalities, submitted a coordinated ‘Niagara’ response to the Province with respect to the CPR ([Link provided for Appendix 3](#)).

### **Release of Draft Plan Amendments**

In May, 2016 the Province released the report ‘Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015-2041’ prepared by the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review advisory panel, chaired by former Mayor of Toronto, David

Crombie. In consideration of the Phase One review, this report contains recommendations for proposed changes to the Provincial land use plan.

Based on the above recommendations of the 'Crombie' report, the Province released draft amendments to the Provincial land use policy plans, and has set a deadline of October 31, 2016 for submission of formal comments regarding the draft Plans.

## **Municipal Response**

### **Region**

The Region of Niagara, in collaboration with the 12 local area municipalities, has also prepared a 'Niagara' submission and recommendations for Provincial consideration in preparing final draft amendments ([Link provided for Appendix 4](#)). Local staff supports the recommendations of the 'Niagara' response. However, the 'Niagara' response provides a higher order review of the draft plan amendments as they relate to the Region as a whole, and in certain instances, does not specifically relate to or impact St. Catharines based on local context.

## **Report**

### **Provincial Plans - Local Context and Impact**

Staff supports the overall directives of the GB, P2G and NEP, the principles of which have been enshrined within the City's Official Plan since the 1970's and prior to the enactment of the Provincial and use plans:

- to support intensification, land and service efficiencies to provide for the accommodation of all forecasted housing, population and urban employment growth within the limits of the defined urban area boundary;
- to protect the City's valuable 'world renown' agricultural land base and enhance the viability of farming practices and employment opportunities;
- to protect, conserve and enhance natural and cultural heritage features and lands; and

All 3 Plans are intertwined, and cannot be looked at in isolation in addressing growth management.

The Province is recommending a number of changes to the Provincial land use plans through the CPR. However, it is clear that the main thrust of draft amendments is not to change, but rather to strengthen, the original intent and direction for which plan policies were conceived and adopted. A major addition to the 2016 draft policies relates to climate change mitigation and the encouragement of net zero communities.

The following provides an overview of the Provincial land use plans as presently constituted, and then outlines key components of the draft plan policies as they relate to, and impact upon, the City's land use planning context.

## Greenbelt Plan (GB)

- Enacted in 2005, this is the first comprehensive review of the Plan.
- The GB is directed towards the protection, preservation and use of lands for agriculture and natural heritage conservation.
- The GB governs all of the City's agricultural lands ([Link provided for Appendix 5](#)). These lands comprise 2720 hectares of land, 30% of the municipal land base, and directly border the City's Urban Area to the west and east.
- The City's agricultural lands contain some of the best soils in Canada (mostly class 1 out of 7 classes, 1 being the best and 7 being the worst). Together with the unique micro-climate created by the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario, these lands are considered to be some of the best tender fruit growing and specialty crop lands in North America.

In recognition of this valuable resource, the GB designates all of the City's agricultural land as Specialty Crop Area, the highest designation for protection of agricultural lands afforded in the GB. The only other area in the Provincial GB designated Specialty Crop is the Holland Marsh north of Toronto.

Within Specialty Crop Areas, normal farm practices and a range of agriculture, agriculturally related and secondary uses are permitted.

- Currently the GB does not permit urban uses or the re-designation of Specialty Crop Areas in upper tier government or local Official Plans for non-agriculture (urban) uses.

The GB plan boundary effectively defines the Urban Area for the City. New housing and urban employment uses may only be accommodated within the Urban Area. The Greenbelt Plan specifically directs that Urban Areas not be permitted to expand into the Greenbelt.

### Draft Plan Amendments – Staff Comment and Recommendations

Although the GB protects the agricultural land base, stakeholders have expressed concerns that it does not always support or enhance the viability of the agriculture industry. Many of these concerns relate to financing incentives, marketing boards, the LCBO, production standards and regulations. Certain of these also translate into land use issues, and are addressed as follows:

#### Farm Parcel Size

The GB establishes a minimum farm parcel size of 16 hectares (40 acres) and remains unchanged in the draft policies. The farm parcel size established

through the GB does not reflect the realities of farming in Niagara, where parcel sizes are generally much smaller. There are 850 properties in the Agricultural Area. The average size of properties is approximately 8 hectares (20 acres). A total of 50 properties exceed 8 hectares in size, with 25 over 16.8 hectares (40 acres) and only 8 over 32 hectares (80 acres).

The local soils and micro climate lends itself to supporting sustainable, viable farm operations on smaller properties. The nature of farming produce and practices on the tender fruit lands is different from elsewhere in the GB.

The minimum size requirement can serve as an impediment to support innovative farming, new operations, or expanded operations, leasing of lands to support other viable farm operations that may require smaller tracts of land, or subdividing to support new operations.

- Staff recommends the Province review and addresses the GB minimum size requirement for farm parcels in Niagara, and establish criteria or special policy for appropriate viable farm parcel size based on a Niagara perspective.

#### Natural Heritage Protection

The draft amendment to the GB recognizes and addresses, to some degree, the impact of natural heritage policies on the viability of farming practices. The vegetative buffer requirement has been reduced to 15 metres adjacent to certain types of natural heritage features.

There are many natural areas and natural heritage features within the agricultural area, and the GB places significant emphasis on their protection and enhancement. It has been argued that the GB places greater emphasis on protection of natural heritage than agricultural lands and practices.

The GB establishes significant and rigid buffer area requirements from natural features and natural heritage, such as watercourses, aquifers, wetlands, valleylands and woodlots. Currently a 30 metre self-sustaining vegetative buffer zone is required from all natural heritage features. In many instances, this constrains farm operations in locating out-buildings, irrigation and drainage infrastructure, pest control, undertaking best management practices and farming viable lands within or adjacent to natural feature.

Approximately 65% of the City's agricultural lands are within the screening and regulatory area of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and impacted, to varying degree, by the natural heritage policies of the GB.

Farmers generally consider themselves the best stewards of the land, striving for a balanced and sustainable approach to farming operations and natural area

preservation. Many farms rely on integration with natural area process and practices to support sustainable farm operations.

It is staff's position that a more flexible site specific approach and criteria may be more appropriate in addressing natural heritage protection while also supporting enhanced farming opportunities. Consideration should be given to reducing buffer requirements adjacent to all natural heritage features, where appropriate and flexibility as to the type of vegetative needs (e.g. self-sustaining vegetation combined with agricultural crops) to be established.

- Staff recommends the Province review GB natural heritage policies to provide greater flexibility in implementation and support for alternative measures to protect and integrate natural heritage with agricultural practices.

### Natural Heritage Mapping

The draft GB policies indicate that the Province will continue to map natural heritage features and hazard lands.

The current GB natural heritage features and hazard lands mapping has been prepared at a broad macro level, and are often inconsistent with other provincial mapping or ground tested local data. As well, when placed on a Schedule in the GB, it becomes a static representation of the mapping undertaken at that time. Natural heritage mapping should be revisited to ensure mapping is continually updated, accurate and consistent on a macro and micro basis.

- Staff recommends the Province review natural area and heritage mapping to ensure consistent application and interpretation with other provincial and agency mapping, to enable policy reliance on local ground tested mapping, and ensure mechanisms are in place to update mapping on a continuous basis in response to the ever changing dynamics and evolution of natural features and hazard lands.

### Re-Purpose Existing Non-Agricultural Uses

There are a number of non-agriculture uses within the Specialty Crop Area, including churches, schools, retail stores, gas stations, driving ranges and auto repair. Although not permitted as of right by the GB plan, these uses were in existence prior to the GB, and are effectively grandfathered.

The new draft GB policies now give greater recognition to the existence of these uses, and support the repurpose of these lands. However, draft policies only allow for re-purposing of lands which bring the use more into conformity with uses permitted in the GB (i.e. agriculture and agriculture related uses). The draft



policy does not allow for future rezoning or re-purposing of these lands to permit other alternative non-agricultural uses.

When businesses or other uses (ex. churches, schools, etc.) close or cease to exist, this often results in buildings and land being abandoned, and properties lying idle and unproductive.

These properties have already been effectively subtracted from the agriculture land base, are not viable farm parcels, and re-purposing of these lands for alternative compatible agricultural related or non-agricultural uses can only serve to benefit the agricultural area, and offer opportunity for new uses and services to support the viability of the agricultural industry and community.

Draft amendments to the GB support a greater range of value added agri-tourism uses, and the establishment of community hubs within the agricultural area. Community hubs typically include a range of uses that are not specific to agriculture (social services, libraries, community centres, recreation, etc.).

Supporting re-purpose of existing non-agricultural lands for only agricultural related uses is counter to other draft plan policies supporting alternative uses in the GB, such as community hubs.

- Staff recommends to the Province that criteria or special policy be established in support of re-purposing non-agricultural uses to permit alternative agricultural and non-agricultural uses.

#### Agriculture Support Network (ASN)

In the opinion of staff, draft GB policy restricting re-purpose of existing non-agricultural uses for alternative non-agricultural uses is counter to a new concept introduced in draft GB policies – the Agriculture Support Network (ASN).

Although not clearly defined in the draft policies, the Agriculture Support Network (ASN) recognizes that protection of agricultural lands alone is not enough to achieve and enhance a viable agricultural community and economic prosperity. The ASN promotes long term planning for economic development, agriculture infrastructure, goods movement for agriculture, agri-food strategies, and supports near urban agriculture, agri-food and agri-business.

The concept has a direct link to urban areas, and urban employment areas, which accommodate many agriculture related businesses and services to support the agricultural industry.

Enabling the re-purposing of existing non-agricultural uses in the GB for alternative agricultural or non-agricultural uses serves to strengthen the ASN concept, in support of greater connectivity, inter-relationships and integration of

urban type uses and services that support the agricultural community and economy.

- Staff recommends that the concept of the Agriculture Support Network (ASN) be further defined and broadened, thus providing policies and implementation criteria to enable better connectivity and integration of urban uses and service models to support the agricultural community and economy, including re-purpose of existing non-agricultural uses for alternative non-agricultural uses, and consideration for defined special policy areas to recognize the prevalence of existing non-agricultural uses within existing corridors and nodes. As well, policies should support the expansion of alternative non-agricultural uses where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that impact on agricultural lands and existing agricultural uses can be avoided.

#### Agriculture Impact Assessment (AIA)

The draft GB amendment establishes an Agriculture Impact Assessment (AIA) as a new and additional assessment tool which is to be completed when a non-agricultural use is proposed within Specialty Crop Areas. Additional draft GB policy indicates that land use compatibility must be promoted to minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on the agricultural system when agricultural and non-agricultural uses interface, based on Provincial guidelines.

Staff supports the additional assessment tool to further address issues related to re-purposing of existing non-agricultural uses for alternative non-agricultural uses and the Agriculture Support Network (ASN) as discussed above.

However, the guideline has yet to be specified in terms of those qualified to conduct an AIA, the extent and scope of the assessment, and criteria to be evaluated.

- Staff recommends that the Province prepare guidelines to assist local municipalities in the implementation of Agriculture Impact Assessments (AIA)
- Expanding the GB: Urban River Valley System

Urban River Valley Systems have been added to the draft GB plan, which recognize the importance of connections between the GB and Lake Ontario, and watershed planning to serve both the agricultural and urban area. The designation of Urban River Valleys only applies to publically owned land.

The 12 Mile Creek has been designated as an Urban River Valley in the draft GB plan. The addition of the 12 Mile Creek to the GB has no impact, as the valley is currently designated Natural Area in the City's GCP, and afforded natural area

protection under existing natural area policies of the PPS, the GCP, the Region of Niagara Official Plan and the NPCA

## Places to Grow (P2G) Plan

- Enacted in 2006, this is the first comprehensive review of the Plan.
- P2G designates the boundaries of the City's Urban Area (Appendix 5), and establishes policies and direction for the accommodation of housing, population and employment growth within.

The Urban Area comprises 7060 hectares of land, and makes up 70% of the City's land base.

- P2G promotes sustainable growth and sets out policies encouraging compact, land and service efficient development, infill and intensification, mixed use, and transit supportive intensification growth corridors and nodes within the Urban Area.
- The P2G currently establishes a minimum density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare as a measurement to achieve transit supportive development thresholds on Greenfield lands in the Urban Area.

Greenfield lands are vacant developable residential or employment lands within the Urban Area boundary, but are outside the defined Built Boundary which represents the limits of existing development within the Urban Area.

The Built Boundary for each municipality in the Greater Golden Horseshoe was established in a companion document issued by the Province in 2008 to support implementation of the P2G. The boundary is fixed in time. The Urban Area, the Built Boundary, and Greenfield lands designated for residential and employment lands in the GCP are identified on ([Link provided for Appendix 6](#)).

- For St. Catharines, the P2G minimum density target in Greenfields equates to a density of approximately 20 dwelling units per hectare (8 units per acre) for residential development. It represents a relatively small increase to housing density already established in some of the City's lower density neighbourhoods. Other neighbourhoods already exceed the minimum density target of the P2G.
- P2G also designates Downtown St. Catharines as an Urban Growth Centre, one of only 25 in the Golden Horseshoe, and the only one in the Niagara Region (Appendix 6).

Urban Growth Centres (UGC) are designated to support the highest concentration and mix of transit supportive residential, employment, institutional

and civic uses, and are intended to be catalyst areas for public and private investment and infrastructure.

As the only UGC in the Niagara Region, the Downtown has been recognized in P2G as a provincially significant node, and a primary node for the Region.

To support UGC objectives, P2G establishes a minimum density target of 150 people and jobs per hectare to be accommodated in the UGC by 2041. To achieve the minimum target would require an estimated 1100 new dwelling units, dependent on the extent of employment jobs that may also be generated.

#### Draft Plan Amendments – Staff Comment and Recommendations

- Minimum Density Targets - Methodology

The P2G requires that housing and employment density be measured in ‘people and jobs per hectare’.

This measurement is not well defined in P2G and may be interpreted and utilized in different ways from one municipality to the other.

Measuring the target to formulate minimum housing density requirements is contingent on identifying average people per dwelling unit ratios, which vary over time and from one housing type to another. It does not provide for consistent interpretation.

As well, estimating employment capacity based on the P2G density target is more problematic. Employment uses range greatly in number of employees and land needs, depending on the nature of the business. Some of the largest land expansive users, such as manufacturing, logistics and warehousing, may employ less people per hectare than other smaller and less land expansive uses, such as office and service industrial uses. This is becoming even more relevant with the continuous advance of new technologies to enable efficiencies.

#### Prime Employment Areas

Policy 2.2.5 of the draft P2G policies require municipalities to identify and designate within Official Plans suitable lands near major goods movement facilities and corridors as Prime Employment lands.

These lands are to be designated to support land expansive employment uses which have low densities such as large manufacturing, warehouse, transportation terminal, logistics, etc. Minimum density standards for development within Prime Employment lands would not apply to a municipality’s overall calculation of density because of the recognition that many of these uses employ small numbers in relation to the physical

size of the operation. Institutional uses, other sensitive uses, and office and commercial uses that are not ancillary to a prime employment use are prohibited to protect for the long term integrity of the prime employment area. The draft policies prohibit the conversion of prime employment lands for other non-employment uses in order to maintain the long term sustainability of employment opportunities.

#### Other Employment Areas

Other 'employment areas' designated within Official Plans are to be included in the P2G minimum density calculation. These areas are intended to support a greater range and mix of employment uses and related services, and integration of these areas within the community fabric.

To achieve the density target on employment lands may require realigning land use permissions in the GCP to preclude certain uses such as warehousing, and conversely, supporting other alternative uses on these lands,

The application of the minimum density target provides a broad metric, but does not provide a suitable measuring tool to forecast more specific employment densities on individual sites.

The minimum density target, especially as it applies to 'other employment' density, should be revisited to provide for a more concise and relevant metric to address forecasted employment needs and growth.

The Province has indicated that implementation guidelines as a companion document to P2G are being prepared to establish a consistent methodology for the measurement of density.

- Staff recommends the Province establish implementation guidelines to provide consistent methodology and metrics for the measurement of people and jobs density.

The draft P2G recognizes the distinction between land extensive uses versus other employment by establishing the 'prime employment area' designation. This however does not adequately address the changing nature of employment (service, technology, research vs. large scale manufacturing, etc.) and opportunities for supporting a wider range, mix, and diversity of uses (e.g. office, service, institutional, health, government, education, etc.) in 'other employment lands.

- Staff recommends that the P2G provide for greater flexibility in the land use planning of employment land designations, in a manner to recognize the changing nature of employment, provide for more diverse application

of land use permissions, and the integration of employment lands to support complete communities.

- Increased Minimum Density Targets – Greenfield Lands

Policy 2.2.7 of the draft P2G increases the minimum density target to 80 people and jobs per hectare on Greenfield lands. In St. Catharines, this equates to an approximate density of 32 dwelling units per hectare (13 units per acre).

The P2G currently establishes a minimum density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare. In St. Catharines, this equates to a density of approximately 20 dwelling units per hectare (8 units per acre).

The City's GCP establishes 3 Residential land use designations (Low, Medium and High). The Low Density Residential designation establishes a density range of 20 to 32 units per hectare (8 to 13 units per acre).

Both the 50 and 80 people and jobs per hectare standard fall within the GCP Low Density Residential density parameters.

The City's GCP designates the City's Greenfield lands as Medium Density Residential, which establishes a density range of 25 to 99 units per hectare (10 to 40 units per acre). To meet the proposed increase in the P2G density target will require a relatively minor increase to the low end of the Medium Density Residential designation, from 25 units per hectare (10 units per acre) to approximately 32 units per hectare (13 units per acre).

A number of municipalities have expressed concern with the proposed increase in the Greenfield minimum density target, identifying that existing or newly planned servicing infrastructure and capacity levels to accommodate Greenfield development are predicated on the 50 people and jobs per hectare density standard, and may not be adequate to support and accommodate the increased density standard proposed in the draft P2G amendment. Upgrades to existing servicing may be required at considerable cost and timelines, and as such, the ability to accommodate the P2G directive may be compromised.

Municipalities have requested that a transition period be established in the P2G to support incremental increases in the minimum density standard over time. This may ensure more appropriate long term planning of adequate service infrastructure and capacity to accommodate the increased density standard.

The density standards in the GCP are predicated, in part, on the availability of adequate servicing capacity to accommodate established density parameters, notwithstanding localized infrastructure improvements may be required in certain locations. Staff supports the implementation of a transition clause although this should have little bearing on the accommodation of growth within the City.

Certain municipalities have also requested that the P2G support the realignment of the Built Boundary, which was established in 2008, to exclude new subdivisions approved or developed on Greenfield lands since 2008, and planned under the current density standard of 50 people and jobs per hectare. The realignment would exclude these developments from now having to meet the new density standard of 80 people and jobs per hectare. The P2G density standard is to be applied over the entire Greenfield area. If not to exclude approved subdivisions planned at the current density standard of 50 people and jobs per hectare, it is argued that this would necessitate future developments to be approved at a much higher density than 80 people and jobs per hectare, so as to achieve an overall density over the entire Greenfield area of 80 people and jobs.

Staff supports the realignment of the Built Boundary to exclude Greenfield lands already developed or with existing planning approvals to best reflect current development patterns and the applicability of the new Greenfield density standard. However, it should be noted that this measure will have little impact on the City. Only recently has there been development activity on the City's Greenfield residential lands, with approval of a subdivision (39 Oliver Lane) at a density of 75 units per hectare (30 units per acre). Recent preliminary concept plans submitted for further development on the Greenfield lands identify a density of approximately 98 units per hectare (40 units per acre). These densities fall within the Medium Density designation parameters established in the GCP for residential development on Greenfield lands.

With minor realignment, the policies and density standards established in the GCP are well positioned to support the increased density standards proposed in the draft P2G.

- Staff recommends that the Built Boundary established in the P2G be realigned to exclude Greenfield lands already developed or with existing planning approvals to better reflect current development patterns and the applicability of the new Greenfield density standard.
- Intensification Target in the Built Boundary

The P2G, as presently constituted, requires a minimum 40% of housing accommodation to be within the built up areas of a municipal Urban Area on an annual basis. This is intended to slow the development on vacant greenfield lands outside the built up area within urban areas, and promote the efficient use of land and existing service infrastructure.

The draft P2G amendment increases this intensification target to 60%.

A number of municipalities have identified this as problematic, especially around the GTA where much of the available land within the built up area is being developed, leaving little opportunity but to accommodate the majority of growth on greenfield lands outside the built up area.

The St. Catharines Official Plan states that 95% of available developable land opportunities are to be within the built up area of the City's urban area. Based on current land needs assessment, the availability of lands and intensification opportunities within the built up area is adequate to accommodate forecasted housing growth. Staff supports the minimum intensification target in a manner to provide for the most efficient use of lands and existing service infrastructure within the urban area.

- Strategic Growth Areas

The P2G introduces new policy requiring municipalities to identify 'Strategic Growth Areas' in local Official Plans. These are areas within the Urban Area boundary identified by the Province or local municipalities as priority areas for the accommodation of intensification and higher density, mixed use and compact development and built form.

Strategic Growth Areas include Provincial designated Urban Growth Centers (UGC), intensification corridors and nodes, major transit stations, brownfield sites and major roads, arterials or other areas with existing or planned frequent transit service.

Municipalities are required to identify the type and scale of development within these areas to support achievement of the minimum density standards established in the P2G.

Staff supports the designation of Strategic Growth Areas, the concept of which is already fully enshrined within the City's Official Plan (GCP).

The GCP land use plan recognizes and designates the following:

- the Downtown as a Provincial UGC with land use permissions and regulations to support achievement of the UGC minimum density target established in P2G;
- 9 Intensification corridors and nodes currently planned for transit supportive medium density mixed use development;
- 2 Major Transit Station nodes (Downtown bus terminal, and the existing Via (future GO Transit) Rail Station in West St. Catharines) planned to accommodate transit supportive medium and higher density mixed use development, and;



- All of the City's major and community commercial centres are currently planned to support not only commercial uses, but mixed use development supporting the integration of medium density residential uses.
- Settlement Area (Urban Area) Boundary Expansion

Policy 2.2.8 of the draft P2G contains specific proposed policy direction and evaluation for consideration of Settlement Area (Urban Area) boundary expansions, as follows:

- May only be considered as part of Municipal Comprehensive Review;
- Expansion onto prime agricultural lands should be avoided where possible, and that expansion does not compromise Specialty Crop Areas (the City's agricultural land base).

Any consideration for expansion onto prime agricultural lands, and Specialty Crop Areas, must be evaluated through an Agriculture Impact Assessment (AIA) and include the following;

- evaluation of alternative locations on lower priority agricultural lands throughout the upper tier municipality as a whole;
- evaluation of the quality of lands to be considered Specialty Crop Areas;
- unique or impacting situations;
- compromised soils, climate;
- potential for alternative agricultural or agricultural related uses
- compromising a defensible boundary;
- impact to surrounding properties.

Policy 3.1.2 of the draft GB specifically does not permit the redesignation of Specialty Crop Areas for non-agricultural uses, except for infrastructure and cultural heritage uses subject to an AIA. The redesignation of Specialty Crop Areas would need to be based on the determination that the quality of agricultural lands and climate is not considered to be Specialty Crop Area.

- Based on land needs assessment, sufficient opportunities to accommodate growth within the existing Urban Area cannot be provided through existing intensification and Greenfield development opportunities;
- The expansion only makes available sufficient lands to accommodate growth within the existing and expanded urban area not exceeding the P2G planning horizon (2041).
- The expanded area must be planned to meet minimum Greenfield density targets (80 people and jobs per hectare), and not compromise achievement of the municipal intensification target (60 % across the Niagara Region)

- Where first justified through a land needs assessment, the feasibility and location of expansion must be based on:
  - the adequacy of existing or planned infrastructure, and public service facilities to support proposed growth;
  - cost benefit analysis to ensure the financial viability of required infrastructure and public service facilities over the full life cycle of these assets;
  - water, wastewater, and stormwater master planning;
  - subwatershed study to ensure no negative impact to water resources, quantity and quality;
  - avoidance of expansion onto key hydrologic areas and natural heritage systems;

### Boundary Expansion Requests

Through Phase One of the CPR, the City received 8 requests for property to be removed from the GB plan area and to be included within the Urban Area. These requests were forwarded to the Province as part of the City's formal submission on Phase One of the CPR (Appendix 2). Since then, an additional 4 requests have been received for removal from the GB and urban area boundary expansion.

Another request at 590 Glendale Avenue for a change in NEP designation to permit urban uses, and inclusion within the Urban Area boundary, has also been received and is discussed as part of the comments in this report pertaining to the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The correspondence received with respect to the 12 requests for removal from the GB is attached as ([Link provided for Appendix 7](#)) and the location of the lands is outlined in Appendix 8.

The subject properties are as follows:

- Kowalik - 1406 Third Street Louth
- Bakkers Nurseries - 1200 Old Martindale Road
- Trinity Christian Reformed Church - 1230 Old Martindale Road
- Smith – 1240 Old Martindale Road
- Goldfinch – 1244 Old Martindale Road
- Wiens - 1258 Old Martindale Road
- Aita -1233 Fourth Avenue
- Vahrmeyer - 2488 First Street Louth
- Wang – 2316 First Street Louth
- Pawlik - 2614 First Street Louth
- Bakkers Nurseries - 15 Courtleigh Road
- Burtch – 349 St. Paul Street West

As set out above, the P2G sets out specific direction and criteria to be evaluated in considering a Settlement Area (Urban Area) boundary expansion. As well, the proposed GB does not permit expansion of Settlement Areas (Urban Areas) onto GB designated Specialty Crop Areas (the City's agricultural lands).

Provincial policy dictates that expansions to the Urban Area be carefully considered and weighed against a number of criteria to ensure growth is managed responsibly and that prime agricultural land (Specialty Crop Area) is protected from urban development.

Considering all of the required information and studies that have been listed above for consideration of Settlement Area boundary expansion, there is little demonstrated or documented need, evaluation or substantiated evidence to identify that these properties warrant removal from the GB, or are not viable farm parcels, and cannot support other agricultural or related uses, such as greenhouses and farm related industrial /commercial uses. The staff review of each property is set out in ([Link provided for Appendix 9](#)).

#### Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)

The Region of Niagara is undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of their Official Plan. The P2G requires that any consideration of Settlement Area boundary expansion must be evaluated through an MCR and in accordance with the policies outlined in this report. The Regional MCR will confirm a Regional growth strategy for both jobs and population, which may impact the capability of the current Urban Area in St. Catharines to accommodate future growth. The MCR is addressing regional and local municipal housing and employment growth forecasts, and evaluation of urban area land supply and land needs in each of the local municipalities to support the forecasted growth.

Current land needs data, still under review, indicates no demonstrated need to expand the Urban Area Boundary in St. Catharines to accommodate future projected population, housing and employment growth to 2041.

The land needs assessment is part of the evaluation criteria in the draft P2G for assessing settlement area boundary expansions. The Province has indicated that a companion guideline to the P2G which will set out criteria and methodology for undertaking a land needs assessment is forthcoming. The land needs assessment currently being prepared by the Region must be weighed against the Provincial guideline to ensure consistent application with Provincial policy.

Unless there is a documented and demonstrated need to do so through the Regional MCR, it is unlikely that the Province will amend Plans to support removal of lands from the GB in favour of expansion to the Urban Area.

It is staff's position that consideration to support any of the requests for removal of lands from the GB, and inclusion within the Urban Area, is premature until such time as the MCR is complete. The requests for removal from the GB should be addressed through the Regional MCR, and evaluated based on the criteria set out in the P2G for Settlement Area boundary expansion, before any recommendations for removal from the GB are considered.

The one exception is the request for minor boundary adjustment at 349 St. Paul Street West. This is a small 0.5 hectare (1.2 acre) property which is divided in half by the GB and Urban Area boundary. The request is for minor realignment of the boundary line to encompass the whole of the property within the Urban Area

- With the exception of 349 St. Paul Street West, staff recommends that any consideration to remove properties from the GB and expand the Urban Area accordingly be addressed through the Region of Niagara MCR, and be subject to a robust review based on criteria established in the PPS and Provincial land use plans as set out above.

#### Request for Deferral

As stated previously, the P2G directs that any Settlement Area (Urban Area) boundary expansion may only be considered through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR).

The Province has also advised that following completion of the current CPR, a prohibition of applications for removal of lands from the GB and inclusion within the Urban Area will be reinstated, and the next opportunity to apply would be through the next Provincial plan review anticipated in 2025.

The Regions MCR is not anticipated to be complete until Winter 2018/2019, and well after the anticipated completion of the CPR and approval of amendments to the Provincial land use plans (Winter 2016/17). In consideration of these timelines, staff recommends the following:

- That the Province defer any consideration of any additions, deletions or changes to the Greenbelt Plan boundary and the Urban Area boundary (with the exception of 349 St. Paul Street West as identified above) until the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan is completed; and further

That the Province allow municipalities to request changes to Greenbelt Plan designations and boundary, and the Urban Area boundary, at the conclusion of the Region of Niagara Municipal Comprehensive Review provided the Municipal Comprehensive Review is completed in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), the Places to

Grow (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe), and meets the goals and objectives of all other applicable Provincial land use plans.

To date, the Province has not addressed any of the local requests for removal from the GB through the current CPR. If the Province does not address the 12 requests for changes to the GB boundaries through the current CPR, or defer consideration of these changes until after completion of the Regional MCR, the next opportunity to make such application would be through the next Provincial plans review anticipated in 2025.

The completion of an MCR may result in recommended changes to the Regional and local Official Plan to permit Settlement Area boundary expansion. Ultimately, it is the Province who is the approval authority for recommended changes to the Region of Niagara Official Plan resulting from their MCR.

Given that the P2G directs that Settlement Area boundary expansions may only be considered through an MCR, and that the Province is the ultimate approval authority for recommended changes to the Region's Official Plan, it is staff's position that the Province's prohibition to consider changes to GB and Urban Area boundaries outside a CPR is not justified.

- Staff recommends that the Province's prohibition to consider changes to GB boundaries and Settlement Area (Urban Area) boundaries outside of a Provincial land use planning review be removed.

### **Niagara Escarpment Plan**

- Enacted in 1985 and previously reviewed in 1994 and 2005.
- The NEP is directed toward natural area conservation and the long term protection of the world biosphere Niagara Escarpment.

The NEC Plan area runs along the southern boundary of the City (Appendix .5), with a portion overlapping onto the City's designated urban area and agricultural area. It not only includes the Escarpment face, but in certain areas extends south beyond the top of the escarpment brow for approximately 500 metres, and north beyond the toe of the escarpment, and onto the City's agricultural lands, for a distance of up to 2300 metres.

- The portion of lands within the NEP lands within the City's agricultural area fall under three NEP designations: 'Escarpment Natural Area', 'Escarpment Protection Area' and 'Escarpment Rural Area'.
  - The Escarpment Natural Area designation affords the highest level of natural heritage protection, allows existing uses and agricultural operations, and restricts new urban uses to single dwellings;

- The Escarpment Protection Area reflect lands modified by existing agricultural operations and residential uses, but still maintain valuable natural heritage and provides buffering from prominent Escarpment features. Agricultural operations and existing uses are permitted. New urban uses are restricted to single dwellings;
- The Escarpment Rural Area designation permits a broader range of uses, allowing agricultural operations, limited small scale agri-tourism uses, wineries, cottage industries, home industries, existing uses and new single dwellings.

Approximately 105 hectares (260 acres) of land designated Escarpment Rural in the NEP also fall within the GB Specialty Crop Area. In total, approximately 1250 hectares (3080 acres) of land, or approximately 13 % of the City's land base, is located within both the NEP and GB plan areas.

- The portion of lands falling within the Urban Area are under two NEP designations: 'Escarpment Natural Area' and 'Escarpment Urban Area'.
  - the Escarpment Natural Area designation affords the highest level of natural heritage protection, and restricts urban uses;
  - the land within the Escarpment Urban Area are permitted urban type uses, and are subject to NEP Development Control, where the City's zoning by-law is only used as a guide, and development is subject to NEP regulations and a development permit from the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Most of the lands within the NEP 'Urban Area' designation are built out, but there remain development opportunities, most significantly in and around Brock University.

#### Draft Plan Amendments – Staff Comment and Recommendations

- Removal of Development Control

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) area runs along the southern boundary of the City (Appendix 4), with a portion of the area overlapping into the City's Urban Area as well as onto some agricultural lands within the GB plan area.

The majority of lands within the Urban Area are subject to NEP Development Control, the authority of which is established under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (RSO 1990). Within the NEP Development Control Area, the City's zoning by-law is used only as a guide in addressing development proposals, and development is subject to NEC development permit application and approval.

While much of the Urban Area within the NEP boundaries is built out, there remains some significant development and intensification opportunities, such as lands in and around Brock University, and along Merritt Street.

Many landowners have expressed frustration and concern with the Development Permit System, which in many cases results in extended approval times in excess of a year, even for minor straight forward development proposals (garages, sheds, building additions, etc.). Economically, wait times associated with the Development Permit system have impacted business opportunities, loss of revenue, and in certain instances, the ability to secure incentive funding for projects.

The NEP sets out the broad land use permissions for each of their land use designations, and which local municipal planning documents must be consistent. Once these broad use permissions are established, there is little reason that development proposals cannot be processed and approved at the local municipal level.

Regulations established in the City's new Zoning By-law, adopted in 2013, align with the regulations and policies established within the NEP for urban type development within the Development Control Area. There is little justification to maintain Development Control on these lands, and which adds an unnecessary layer of review, processing time and approval of development applications.

Removal of Development Control requires amendment to the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (RSO 1990) which establishes the legislation to enable Development Control.

- Staff recommends that, through the CPR, the Province open the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (RSO 1990) for review and amendment to remove Development Control within local municipal Urban Area boundaries, and transfer planning authority for uses permitted in the NEP to local municipalities.
- Boundary delineation between Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Urban Area designations

In the development of the City's new zoning by-law, Brock University raised concerns as to the appropriate boundary determination between the 'Escarpment Natural Area' and 'Escarpment Urban Area' designation on lands just below the Escarpment face on the south side of Lockhart Drive. The University and the City have both sought clarification from the NEP on this matter as it affects potential opportunities for the future development of these lands, and what the appropriate designation and zoning of the subject lands should be.

- Staff recommends that the Province review the NEP as it applies to the boundary of the 'Escarpment Natural Area' and 'Escarpment Urban Area' designation within the City's Urban Area, and to evaluate and determine a permanent and defensible boundary between the two designations.
- Request for Change to NEP designation – 590 Glendale Avenue, St. Catharines

Under the CPR, Kaneff Properties has submitted a request to the Niagara Escarpment Commission to change the NEP designation for 590 Glendale Avenue ([Link provided for Appendix 10](#) - Location Map) from 'Escarpment Protection Area' to 'Urban Area'. The requested change is to facilitate future development of a residential subdivision.

The subject lands are approximately 16.7 hectares (41 acres) in size, and presently leased by Kaneff Properties from the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. It is staff's understanding that the lands are in the process of being declared surplus by Transport Canada, and that Kaneff Properties has first right of refusal to purchase the lands.

The lands are located on the south side of Glendale Avenue, east of the Welland Canal, and outside and immediately adjacent to the easterly boundary of the City's Urban Area.

An expansion to the City's Urban Area boundary would be required to facilitate the proposed development.

While an Official Plan amendment application has been submitted, it is incomplete since to date there has been no detailed documentation provided by the applicant (environmental assessment, servicing, traffic studies, storm water management, etc.) in support of this request.

On a preliminary basis, staff consider the application to re-designate the lands to permit urban uses, and for inclusion within the Urban Area boundary, to have some merit, subject to a number of supporting studies. The land is not within the GB Specialty Crop Area, and is essentially an isolated parcel of land between the limits of the City's urban area and the urban area boundary immediately to the east for the Glendale/QEW node in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

It is staff's position that this application should be addressed as part of the Regional MCR, and in the same manner as requests for removal of properties from the GB (addressed under the P2G section of this report).

The NEC has also advised that following the current CPR, a prohibition of applications to re-designate lands for urban uses will be reinstated, and the next opportunity to apply would be the next plan review anticipated for 2025. In consideration of the anticipated timeline for Provincial approval of the proposed



NEP (Winter 2016/2017) in relation to the anticipated completion of the Regional MCR (Winter 2018/2019), staff provides the following recommendation:

- Staff recommends that prohibition to consider changes to NEP land use designations to permit urban uses outside of a 10 year review be removed.
- Staff recommends that consideration to permit urban uses on 590 Glendale Avenue be addressed through the Region of Niagara MCR, and subject to review based on criteria established in the PPS and Provincial land use plans.
- Consistent policy application where GB and NEP Overlap

Approximately 105 hectares (250 acres) of lands designated ‘Escarpment Rural Area’ in the NEP extends onto the City’s agricultural lands designated Specialty Crop Area in the GB. In certain instances, some of the regulatory permissions for agricultural uses within the Escarpment Rural designation are incongruent with those of the GB Specialty Crop Area policies, such as size restrictions on wineries within the NEP area that are more restrictive than elsewhere within the GB.

The NEP and GB should provide consistent application of permitted uses and applicable regulations on the agricultural lands falling within both plan areas. The draft GB and NEP amendments provide greater uniformity of definitions, although not ubiquitous, but fail to provide a consistent approach to permitted uses and regulatory permissions.

- Staff recommends the Province apply consistent application of definitions, regulations and policies for uses that are permitted by both GB and NEP plans where plan boundaries overlap.

### **Additional Comment and Recommendation**

#### Provincial Guidelines to Assist Implementation of Plan policies

The Province has identified that a number of guidelines containing criteria, methodologies and matrixes are being prepared as companion documents to draft plan policies in order to assist municipalities in the implementation of said policies.

Examples identified in this report as to where guidelines are needed to implement plan policies include agriculture impact assessments, methodology for land needs assessment and measuring density, and implementation of climate change strategies.

The Province has indicated that these guidelines will likely not be available until 2018, and well after anticipated formal approval of the draft plan amendments. This is problematic to municipalities in developing policy and criteria within local Official Plans to ensure consistent application and monitoring of Provincial land use policy.

It is important that companion guidelines to Provincial land use policy be prepared and made available commensurate with the formal adoption of new Provincial land use policies.

- Staff recommends that the Province prepare and make available companion guidelines to support implementation of land use policies commensurate with the timing of formal approval of new Provincial land use plans.

## Climate Change

As presently constituted, the guiding principles and overall direction of the 3 Plans in of themselves promotes environmental sustainability and mitigating impacts to climate change. Through the draft plan amendments, the 3 Plans provide greater focus and emphasis on climate change as a key policy directive.

The draft P2G contains direction to integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth, such as planning for more resilient infrastructure and moving towards net zero communities by incorporating techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There is renewed emphasis on integrating green infrastructure and low impact development into planning communities, as well as active transportation and planning for local food and supports.

The draft GB contains similar policies integrating climate change consideration into planning and managing the agricultural system, the natural heritage system and the water resource system to reduce emissions and build resilience.

The draft NEP includes policies for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, reduced energy consumption, and working towards net zero communities to build resilience to climate change.

Staff support the emphasis on climate change in planning communities. However, certain policy directions are not necessarily the purview of land use planning per se, and will require implementation at the Provincial and local level through other tools, regulations, policies, guidelines, and corporate strategies.

There is also little direction given in the draft plan amendments as to how policies are to be implemented at the local level, including direction to develop strategies for reduction of greenhouse emissions, energy efficiency, low-carbon or carbon- free forms of energy, improving resilience to climate change through land use planning, establishing emission reduction targets towards achieving a net zero community, and establishing monitoring methodologies and matrixes. In addition, certain terms remain undefined, including 'climate change' and 'resilient communities'.

- Staff recommends that greater clarity and direction be given in the Provincial land use plans to implement the policies of climate change, and to establish

guidelines in support of best practices and methodologies to implement and monitor climate change directives.

## **Financial Implications**

Not Applicable

## **Relationship to Strategic Plan**

The proposed draft amendments to the Provincial land use plans support continued direction towards:

- the protection, enhancement and economic vitality of the agricultural land base;
- natural and cultural heritage protection;
- land, service and intensification efficiencies promoting sustainable and transit supportive housing and employment opportunities;
- climate change mitigation towards net zero communities;
- promoting active transportation, walkable neighbourhoods, complete communities;
- environmental sustainability.

In this respect, this report supports:

- Strategic Plan Goal 1 to attract private investment and support local business, and relates to Action 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4: to develop an integrated economic development strategy and attract business, to prioritize redevelopment initiatives consistent with provincial planning legislation and the City's Official Plan to intensify mixed-use residential developments and ultimately enhance the property tax base and support job creation; to focus on the redevelopment of the Port Dalhousie Commercial Core, the former Hotel Dieu Hospital, General Hospital sites and the former GM lands, and; and to develop funding formula for the Community Improvement Program and brownfield improvement programs that support the goal of community redevelopment with the ability for the City to manage financial impacts of the funding program on an annual basis;
- Strategic Plan Goal 2 to be an affordable city for young people, families and retired older adults, and relates to Action 2.4 to optimize capital infrastructure through effective asset management and sustainable;
- Strategic Plan Goal 3 to develop partnerships to enhance the economic vitality of the community, and relates to Action 3.1 to work with the Niagara Region to complete an integrated Transportation Master Plan by 2017, Action 3.2 and 3.3 to secure year round GO Train commuter service in partnership with the Niagara Region and local municipalities, and the development of a regionally integrated transit system in partnership with the Cities of Niagara Falls and Welland.
- Strategic Goal 5 to connect people, places and neighbourhoods, specifically as it relates to Action 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 supporting connectivity between people, places and neighbourhoods, redevelopment of properties to enhance the livability of

neighbourhoods and accelerate the implementation of active transportation networks that link people with parks, trails and waterfront and support the development of complete streets.

- Strategic Plan Goal 7 to lead in the protection of our environment for future generations, and specifically as it relates to Action 7. 3 to increase protection of our water resources by working with partners to reduce pollution and ensure long term sustainability.

## **Conclusion**

This report makes a number of recommendations to the Province in consideration of preparing final draft amendments to the Provincial land use plans. Notwithstanding, staff support the overall directives of the Provincial plans, the principles of which have been enshrined within the City Official Plan for over 3 decades in support of achieving and maintaining a complete and sustainable community.

## **Notification**

Notice will be sent to all the property owners who have submitted requests for removal of lands from the Greenbelt Plan area and inclusion within the Urban Area.

### **Prepared by:**

Bruce Bellows, Policy Planner

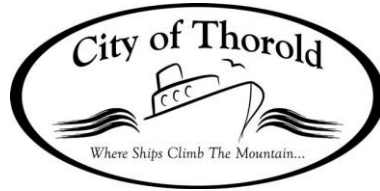
### **Submitted by:**

Judy Pihach, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Planning Services

### **Approved by:**

James Riddell, M.PL., MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Building Services

## City of Thorold



**Title:** Provincial 4 Plans Review and Lake Gibson Greenbelt Expansion  
**Report Number:** PBS2016-51  
**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, October 04, 2016  
**Report Prepared:** Monday, September 26, 2016

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1) That Report PBS2016-51 be received for information as it pertains to a summary of the proposed changes to Provincial Plans;
- 2) That Report PBS2016-51 is forwarded to the Region with the following recommendations:
  - a) That the density and infill targets in the Growth Plan be different for the outer ring municipalities versus the inner ring municipalities;
  - b) That the proposed mapping illustrating the Greenbelt boundary expansion be refined to exclude the existing urban type land uses; and
  - c) That consideration of a special policy area be created for the lands containing established Highway Commercial uses located along Highway 20.

### **REPORT:**

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a review of the proposed three (3) Provincial Plans that were released on May 10, 2016 being the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Province is seeking feedback on the proposed changes to the Provincial Plans and has requested feedback and comments be received by October 31st, 2016.

#### Background:

In February 2015, the Province initiated their coordinated review of four Provincial Plans; the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan); the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Oak Ridges Moraine Plan does not impact the City of Thorold, as such this plan is not discussed in this report.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan came into effect in June, 1985 and had been amended through reviews in 1994 and 2005. The Greenbelt Plan came into effect in December, 2004 and Growth Plan came into effect in June, 2006. This is the first coordinated review for the Provincial Plans, recognizing the interrelated nature of their policies.

As part of the coordinated review process, the Province established an Advisory Panel at the beginning of the review of the Provincial Plans in February, 2015. The Advisory Panel provided consensus based recommendations to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources and Forestry on ways to amend the plans and provide improvements. The Advisory Panel conducted consultations throughout the Plan areas including holding seventeen (17) Town Hall meetings, receiving submissions from stakeholders and municipalities, conducting site visits and reviewing background papers prepared by staff of the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources and Forestry in collaboration with other partner Ministries in developing their recommendations. In December 2015, the Advisory Panel released its report which included (eighty-seven) 87 recommendations for changes and improvements to the four Provincial Plans.

On May 10, 2016, the Provincial Government released drafts of the proposed four Provincial Plans for feedback and comment before finalizing the Plans and requested comments be submitted to the Province by September 30, 2016. On August 10, 2016 the Province provided notice that they had extended the deadline for comments to October 31, 2016.

Starting in the spring through July of this year, the Province held a series of Open Houses to receive input. Staff attended an Open House held in St. Catharines at the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre and also attended another session hosted by the Province.

#### Review of Proposed Changes to the Plans:

There are underlying themes introduced to the Plans. For example, the Plans make reference to climate change provisions as outlined in the Provincial Climate Change Strategy and introduced the concept of net zero communities. Net zero communities are defined in the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan, but not in the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan also align policies related to the identification and protection of natural heritage systems, water resource systems and the agricultural systems. The Niagara Escarpment Plan policies with regards to these concepts do not align as well as compared with the other two Plans.

#### Greenbelt Plan

The proposed Greenbelt Plan introduces the Province's Climate Change Strategy and the government's commitment to meet its long term targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; protection of agricultural lands and natural areas; building compact and complete communities toward the goal of net zero communities. Net zero communities are defined as *"communities that meet their energy demand through low-carbon or carbon-free forms of energy and off-set, preferably locally, any releases of greenhouse*

*gas emissions that cannot be eliminated. Net zero communities include a higher density built form, and denser and mixed use development patterns that ensure energy efficiency, reduced distances travelled and improved integration with transit, energy, water and waste systems.”* (The policies that link the Province’s Climate Change Strategy and net zero communities are referred to in both the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan.) There are specific proposed new policies aimed at integrating climate change considerations into planning and managing the agricultural system, the natural heritage system and water resource system and by incorporating techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed Greenbelt Plan builds on the reference of an agricultural system and agricultural support network. These two terms were not previously defined, but are now proposed to be defined as:

- *Agricultural system as “a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components: 1) an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas including specialty crop areas and rural lands that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture; 2) an Agricultural Support Network, which includes infrastructure, services and agri-food assets important to the viability of the sector.”*
- *Agricultural support network as “within the agricultural system, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional agricultural infrastructure and transportation networks, on-farm buildings and infrastructure, agricultural services, farm markets, distributors and first-level processing, and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.”*

The proposed changes to the Greenbelt Plan enhance the agricultural system to include not only the land base, but also the infrastructure and other assets (food and beverage processors, cold storage, grain dryers, abattoirs, etc.) that collectively support the economy of the agricultural sector and the network that is necessary for long term agricultural viability.

As a result there is stronger reference to agricultural viability than previously in the Greenbelt Plan.

The proposed changes to the Natural Heritage system identify the external connections of the natural heritage system beyond the Greenbelt Plan area in the Growth Plan area with the introduction of policies relating to Urban River Valley areas. The Growth Plan has also been amended to recognize these connections of the natural heritage system. The Greenbelt Plan provides greater emphasize on requiring watershed planning and a watershed management approach across the Protected Countryside and that municipalities consider targets set by the *Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015* as part of the watershed planning.



At the same time, there are new policies that provide flexibility for new agricultural buildings and structures, agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses.

Development within 30 metres of a stream that is an agricultural swale, roadside ditch or municipal drain can be completed without a hydrological evaluation provided that:

- a minimum 15 metres vegetative protection zone is maintained;
- the sewage system is not located within 30 metres of the stream;
- there is no alternative location for the building(s) or structure(s) on the property without impacting lands that are in specialty crop production;
- use of best management practices to protect stream/key hydrological feature;
- and
- stormwater management and erosion control measures are employed to mitigate against potential impact before, during and after construction.

A policy has been added that municipalities map key hydrologic areas and have policies in their official plans.

The Settlement Area policies encourage complete communities with the goal of becoming net zero communities and direct municipalities to facilitate community hubs. These settlement policies align with the policies of the Growth Plan.

Policies have been added to include the requirement of an agricultural impact assessment for new or expanding infrastructure within the specialty crop areas or prime agricultural areas and for new mineral aggregate operations proposed in prime agricultural areas. The agricultural impact assessment is to determine how adverse impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, minimized and mitigated.

There are also stronger policies regarding the requirement that significant cultural heritage resources, built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources be conserved. The policies encourage municipalities to consider archaeological management plans and municipal cultural plans in their decision making. These policies align with the Provincial Policy Statement.

There were no changes to the lot creation policies in the specialty crop and prime agricultural areas. The minimum lot size remains at 16 hectare (40 acres) within specialty crop areas and 40 hectares (100 acres) in prime agricultural areas. Also, a new policy is proposed that provides direction for upper tier municipalities to refine mapping in their official plans to bring prime agricultural areas, specialty crop areas and rural lands in conformity with provincial mapping through a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan.

Mapping changes include the addition of land to expand the Greenbelt Plan area by adding areas in Thorold, Grimsby and Hamilton to the Protected Countryside. The draft Greenbelt Plan reflects that no lands are proposed to be removed from the Greenbelt Plan.

## Greenbelt Study Lands – Boundary Refinement and Special Policy Area

The Lake Gibson Preservation Task Force has been working to achieve a number of objectives for the preservation and enhancement of the Lake Gibson natural area. Staff are working to assist the Task Force to designate the Lake Gibson Corridor as a Natural Heritage Park and to grow the Greenbelt boundary to include the majority of these lands, see Appendix A.

In March 2015, the City submitted information in respect to the expansion of the Greenbelt boundary for the Lake Gibson area. The principles of the expansion were summarized at that time. The reasons for consideration of an expansion initially in 2015 are as follows:

- 1) Primarily an Open Space, Environmental Protection 1 and 2 in draft Official Plan
- 2) Many areas designated as Provincially Significant Wetlands.
- 3) Characteristics of a cultural heritage landscape.
- 4) Diverse number of plant and animal species. (Including species at risk)
- 5) Lake Gibson and Marlatts Pond is owned by Ontario Power Generation for the purpose of producing hydroelectricity.
- 6) Areas of the Lake Gibson and Marlatts pond contain buried PCB's. The OPG risk assessment recommends that the areas remain undisturbed. The lake and pond would benefit from added protection.
- 7) Limited parcel fragmentation and ownership.
- 8) Lands south of the water bodies are primarily used for Agricultural purposes.
- 9) Intake protection Zone 1 within proposed expansion area. Affords added protection for drinking water.

Policy Reasons to support expansion:

- 1) Affords protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural heritage, hydrologic and landform features and functions, including protection of habitat for flora and fauna and particularly species at risk.
- 2) Logical extension of natural and open space connections with Short Hills Provincial Park.
- 3) Source for drinking water and contains large areas where highly vulnerable aquifers are present.
- 4) Supports the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources.
- 5) Provision of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas and trails.

In June 2015, report PBS2015-18 noted that there were a number of properties within the Greenbelt study area that should not be included in the proposed expansion area which include urban type uses such as the City of Thorold Public Works Yard and the Auto Wreckers business on Beaverdams Road.

Staff appreciate the efforts of the Province to consider an expansion and continue to support these efforts, however would like to request that the proposed boundary as identified on the mapping be modified to exclude these urban type uses, see Appendix B.

The expansion of the Greenbelt boundary into these urban type land use areas is not necessary as they are fragmented and segregated from natural heritage features and agricultural uses located south of Lake Gibson and they may require additional structures and/or additional ancillary uses in the future. All other lands within this area surrounding the urban land uses are protected with environmental policies and provisions contained in the City's local Official Plan and Zoning By-law. Added protection of these areas is not necessary. It is recommended that the proposed Greenbelt boundary expansion area be refined to generally follow the water course of the old canal and not encompass these lands these long standing and permitted urban type land use areas as shown on Appendix B.

The other issue noted is with respect to lands along Highway 20 west of Merrittville Hwy. These lands are not farmed and have been historically utilized as Highway Commercial uses and are unlikely to be used for farming purposes now or in the future. As such, staff recognizes that this area has the potential for consideration of a special policy area to allow for minor development. Appendix C illustrates the lands in question and are shown as Special Policy Area within the Official Plan.

### Growth Plan

Currently, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe includes measures to encourage the development of complete communities. Municipalities are already required to:

- Develop and grow with a mix of uses, such as residential, employment, cultural, recreational and other uses that contribute to building complete communities.
- Intensify by accommodating a residential growth in areas that are already built-up, especially around transit and in urban growth centres (existing and emerging downtowns).
- Plan for a minimum density of people living and working in designated Greenfield areas at a density of fifty (50) persons and jobs/hectare.
- Protect land used primarily for employment from being converted to non-employment uses, such as housing.

The proposed changes to the Growth Plan take the Plan further towards the objective of building complete communities. The changes propose to increase density and intensification targets, promote transit supportive density, encourage the development of community hubs and provide greater protection for agricultural land and natural heritage features. The proposed changes:

- Provide more guidance on achieving complete communities and require municipalities to plan for sustainable and livable communities.

- Increase the intensification target in the Growth Plan to a minimum of 60 per cent of all new residential development occurring annually in the existing built-up area.
- Increase the designated greenfield area density target in the Growth Plan to a minimum of eighty (80) residents and jobs per hectare (excluding certain non-developable natural heritage features, such as wetlands and woodlands, rights of way for certain infrastructure, and prime employment areas).
- Require municipalities to plan for density targets around major transit stations which support that type of transit.
- Show priority transit corridors in the Growth Plan where municipalities would focus transit related planning, zoning and development efforts. New policies would also provide the province with the authority to identify additional priority transit corridors.
- Support the development of community hubs by encouraging public services to be located together in existing facilities near strategic growth areas, accessible by active transportation and transit.
- Establish stronger environmental, agricultural and planning criteria in the Growth Plan for settlement area boundary expansions that aligns with the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Require municipalities to identify and protect prime employment areas. Prime employment areas, as defined in the Growth Plan, typically accommodate uses such as warehousing, logistics, and manufacturing that require a lot of land and access to transportation infrastructure, such as highways and railway lines. Certain employment uses, such as stand-alone office buildings, would be permitted in employment areas that are not identified as “prime”. New policies would serve to improve transit connections for employment areas.
- Require the Province, through direction in the Growth Plan, to establish a standard methodology used by all municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe for assessing land needs.
- Provide new policies in the Growth Plan to help municipalities in the outer ring, of which Niagara is, manage any lands that are designated but not required for growth to 2041, and provide specific tests and flexibility for appropriate growth in these municipalities.
- Strengthen policies regarding the preservation of cultural heritage to align with those in the Provincial Policy Statement.

In rural areas, the Growth Plan proposes protections of the natural heritage system similar to those that exist in the Greenbelt Plan. In existing settlement areas, the protections in the Provincial Policy Statement for natural heritage systems would continue to apply. Municipalities would be required to maintain the interconnections and diversity of the natural heritage system on any new lands added to a settlement area.

### Niagara Escarpment Plan

Some general changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan include the addition of language to acknowledge the significance of Aboriginal culture and histories within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area as well as to recognize the significance of the

Escarpment and associated environment that support ecosystems and mitigate the effects of climate change. The proposed changes to the Plan also build on the concept of a landscape approach that seeks to protect the geological feature of the Niagara Escarpment lands and lands in its vicinity as a continuous natural environment while allowing compatible development.

No new land use designations are proposed in the Plan; however there have been some minor changes to the descriptions of the designations acknowledging the role in providing resilience to climate change and to updated terminology.

The Plan also proposes better alignment with the Provincial Policy Statement as it relates to agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses and agricultural purposes only lots. There have also been some revisions to the water resource policies to align with the systems approach and protection of key hydrological features set out in the Greenbelt Plan.

The mineral aggregate policies have been revised to update terminology and to better coordinate policy with the Aggregate Resources Act.

#### Staff Comments:

The majority of the changes to the Provincial Plans are aimed at providing alignment between the Plans and consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

The proposed density and infill requirements in the Growth Plan will result in impacts on the character of Thorold's urban areas and could have other implications with respect to the City's infrastructure. The Growth Plan proposes that density and infill targets are to be achieved over the life of the plan (i.e. 2041) which provides the opportunity for the City and the Region to incorporate the proposed increased densities.

There is concern that it will be challenging to obtain support from the public and development community within Niagara with respect to the proposed density targets. Consideration should be made with regards to different density targets for municipalities within the outer ring, which includes municipalities within the Niagara Region, as opposed to achieving the same density and infill targets of the inner ring which includes Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. Staff recommend that more suitable density and infill targets be set for communities located within the outer ring.

#### Conclusion

As the City and other area municipalities are working together with the Region to provide comments to the Province on the proposed Provincial Plans and to speak with one voice to the Province, staff provide the following recommendations:

- a) That the density and infill targets proposed in the Growth Plan be different for outer ring municipalities such as Niagara versus inner ring municipalities;

- b) That the proposed mapping illustrating the Greenbelt boundary expansion be slightly refined to exclude the existing urban type land uses as shown in Appendix B; and
- c) That a special policy area be created for the lands containing established Highway Commercial uses located along Highway 20.

**BUDGETARY STATUS:**

Not applicable.

**CANADIAN CONTENT:**

Not applicable.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Well-Planned and Sustainable Development

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix A – 2015 Study Area

Appendix B – Refined Lake Gibson Greenbelt Expansion Area

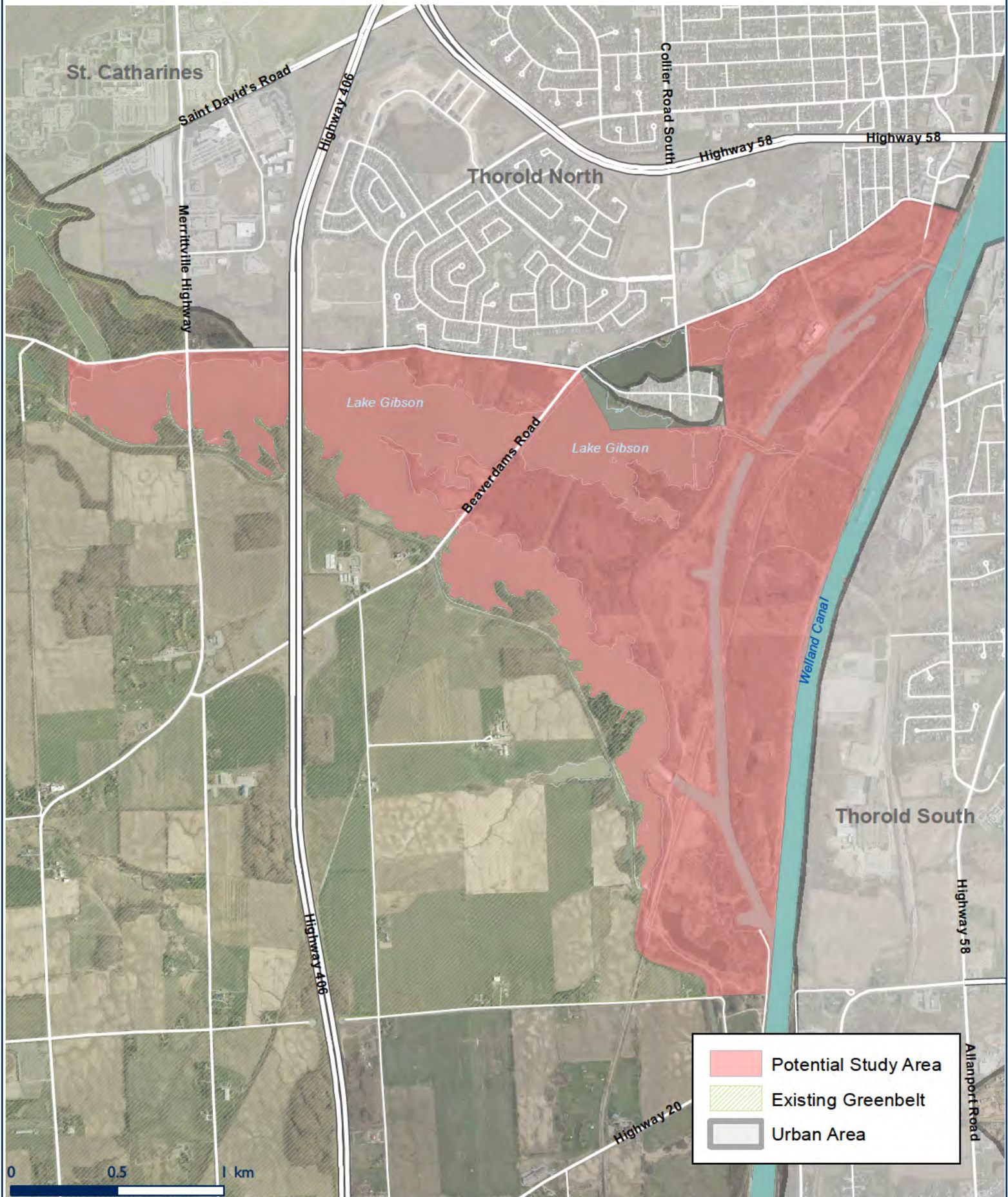
Appendix C - Highway 20 Special Policy Area

**PREPARED BY: “original signed” Eldon Darbyson, Senior Planner**

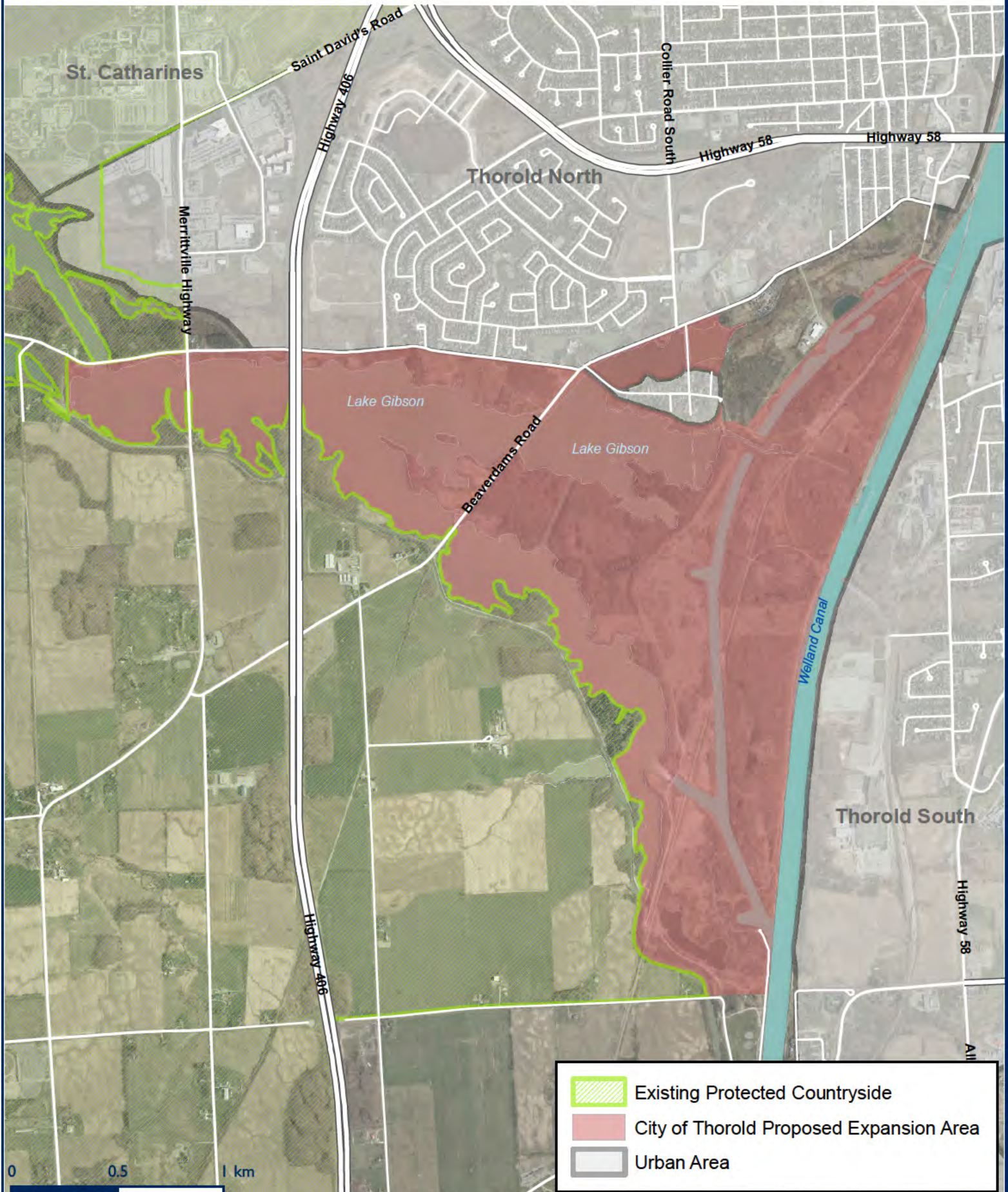
**SUBMITTED BY: “original signed” Lola Emberson, Senior Planner**

**APPROVED BY: “original signed” Frank Fabiano, Chief Administrative Officer**

# Potential Study Area: Thorold Greenbelt Expansion

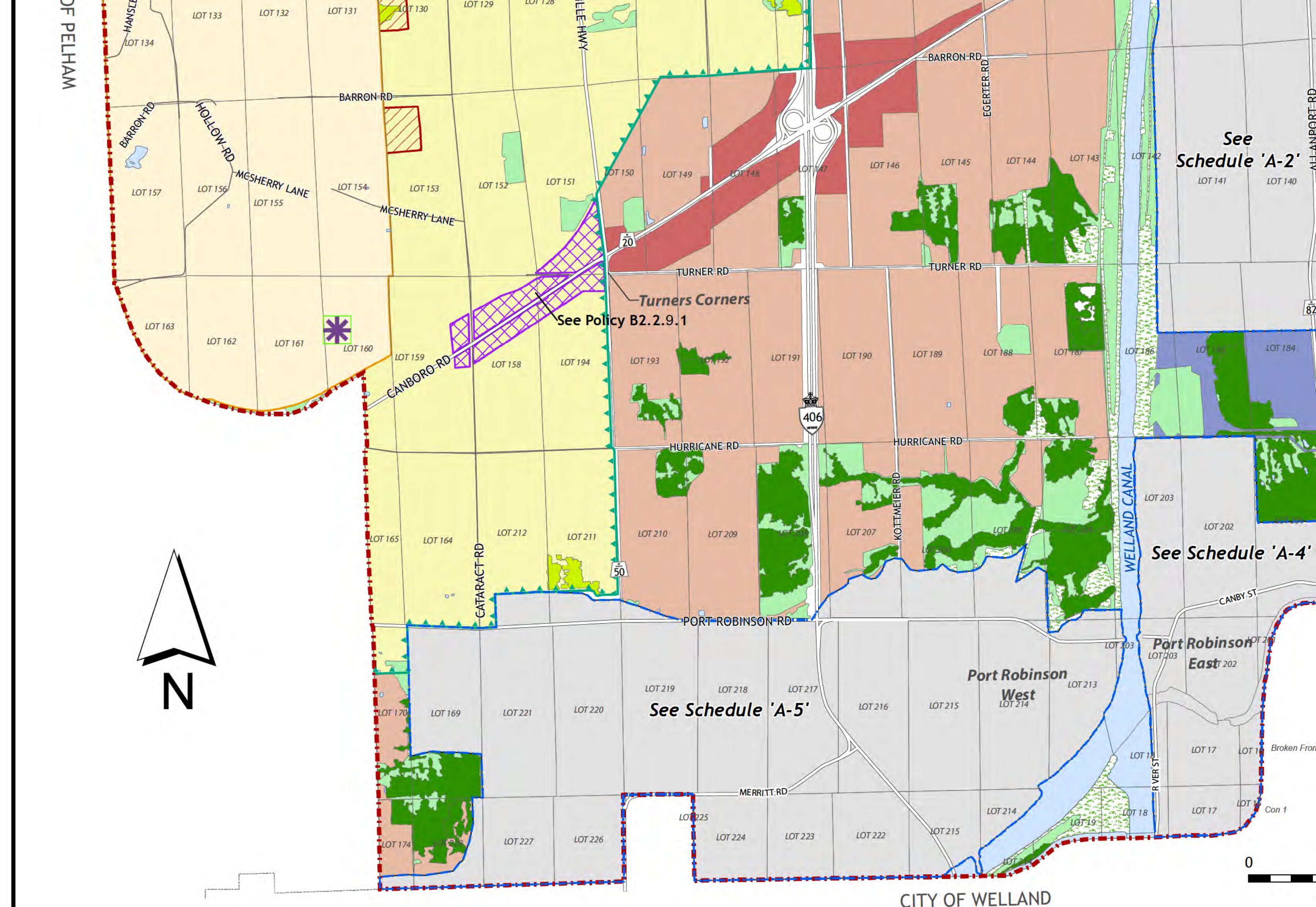


# City of Thorold: Proposed Greenbelt Expansion Lands



	Existing Protected Countryside
	City of Thorold Proposed Expansion Area
	Urban Area






## Legend

- |   |                            |   |                          |   |                                    |
|---|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|  | Former Waste Disposal Site |  | Rural Highway Commercial |  | Environmental Protection One       |
|   | Greenbelt Boundary         |  | Specialty Agriculture    |  | Environmental Protection Two       |
|   | Urban Area Boundary        |  | Agricultural             |  | Environmental Protection Three     |
|   | Municipal Boundary         |  | Rural                    |  | Greenbelt Natural Heritage Overlay |
|   | N.E.C. Plan Area           |  | Rural Industrial         |   |                                    |
|   | Special Policy             |  | Open Space & Parks       |   |                                    |

## City of Welland

APPROVALS	
GENERAL MANAGER	
TREASURER	
CAO	

**COUNCIL**

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**REPORT P&B-2016-64  
NOVEMBER 1, 2016**

**SUBJECT: COORDINATED LAND USE PLANNING REVIEW**

**AUTHOR: ROSE DI FELICE, M.PI., M.Sc. MCIP, R.P.P  
MANAGER OF POLICY PLANNING**

**APPROVING G.M.: SAL IANNELLO, P. ENG., B.B.A., M.A.  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES/CITY  
ENGINEER**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND receives Report P&B-2016-64 for information purposes regarding the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review being undertaken by the Province; and further

That Welland City Council directs Staff to forward Report P&B-2016-64 to the Regional Municipality of Niagara and to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs as the City's response to the Ministry's Coordinated Land Use Planning Review.

**ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND:**

On February 27, 2015, the Province initiated its Coordinated Land Use Planning Review of four (4) key Provincial Plans: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006); the Greenbelt Plan (2005); the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002); and, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (1985; revised 1994 and 2005). Of these four (4) Plans only the Growth Plan applies to the City of Welland.

To lead the coordinated review process, the Province appointed an Advisory Panel to develop recommendations on how to amend and improve these Plans. The Advisory Panel carried out an extensive public consultation process which included 17 town hall meetings held throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe resulting in over 19,000 submissions. The Panel's Report entitled Shaping Land Use in the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released in December 2015 wherein 87 recommendations for changes and improvements to the four (4) Plans were outlined.

The Province then developed a list of proposed recommended revisions to each of the four (4) Provincial Plans. More recently (May, 2016), the Province issued drafts of the proposed Plans. The Province is seeking comments and feedback on these draft Plans.

As noted, only the Growth Plan policies impact the City. The Province enacted the Places to Grow legislation to encourage the development of complete communities by encouraging mixed uses, infilling, and intensification. All planning decisions must take the Growth Plan policies into account. The City has been implementing the existing Growth Plan policies with the understanding and expectation that all new developments will incorporate said policies. Similarly, any new policies approved by the Province as a result of the ongoing review of the Plans will need to be implemented by the Region and the City.

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with information and comments on some of the more significant draft policy changes to the Provincial Growth Plan.

### **COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS:**

The existing Growth Plan includes measures to encourage the development of complete communities. The new draft of the Growth Plan includes revisions emphasizing further the importance of building/achieving complete communities. The most significant of the changes propose to:

- Increase the density and intensification target in the Growth Plan from 40% to a minimum of 60% of all new residential development occurring annually in the existing Built-Up area; and,
- Increase the designated Greenfield area density target in the Growth Plan from fifty (50) people and jobs per hectare to a minimum of eighty (80) people and jobs per hectare (excluding certain non-developable natural heritage features such as wetlands and woodlands rights of way for certain infrastructure and prime employment areas).

Currently, residential intensification is targeted at 40% annually of all new residential unit growth to be located within the existing Built-Up area across the Region. The City has achieved this intensification rate. However, given the decreasing amount of readily developable lands at the edge of the built boundary this rate may decrease. An intensification target of 60% will likely mean that development would take the form of medium and high density developments. It has been suggested that the proposed density and infill requirements in the Growth Plan may result in implications to a municipality's infrastructure as pipes currently in the ground may not be sufficiently sized to accommodate increased density as proposed in the Plan. Infrastructure Services Staff has confirmed that the City has sufficient servicing capacity to accommodate increased density as proposed in the draft Plan.

The Growth Plan currently requires that the Region achieve 50 people and jobs per hectare within Greenfield lands. The City has been achieving these densities in most subdivision developments resulting in developments composed primarily of small lot singles and street townhouses. In order to achieve 80 people and jobs per hectare, secondary plans and plans of subdivision will include apartment-type housing and other higher density forms as well as employment uses. It is suggested that achieving this proposed level of density will extend the land supply and ensure that new developments are developed at densities which promote economies of scale, transit use etc.

The proposed Growth Plan contains stronger policies to deal with older draft plans of subdivision that may not address the Growth Plan objectives or community needs. Draft Plans of Subdivision are approved to a certain date (lapse of approval date). The proposed policies would require that the Growth Plan be considered in granting any extensions to Draft Plan Approval. In addition, the Growth Plan encourages municipalities to use the authority under the Planning Act to de-register Registered Plans of Subdivision older than eight (8) years if said Plans do not meet Growth Plan objectives. The City has been reviewing its extension to draft approval practices and would recommend that Growth Plan policies be used to assess extensions to Draft Plan Approval for Plans of Subdivision.

The draft Growth Plan policies support the Advisory Panel's recommendations that there is a need to increase the densities of urban communities, place limitations on urban area boundary expansions and de-designate or phase existing urban land intensification to reduce the oversupply of developable lands where they exist. Following the update of the Growth Plan, the Province will provide discussion papers and guideline documents on land budgeting which, it is suggested, will provide greater clarity to specific sections of the Plan. The Region of Niagara, through a Municipal Comprehensive Review will examine the growth potential of existing urban areas, allocate growth that has been forecasted by the Province to 2041 across the Region, determine urban area boundary expansions and identify urban lands that are surplus to that needed to accommodate growth to 2041 (the latter referred to as excess lands). Should a municipality propose an urban boundary expansion, excess lands in another municipality would have to be re-designated to non-urban to allow for the expansion. The City has requested an urban area expansion so that development can proceed in a logical and orderly manner, meeting the immediate future growth needs of the City. This process would result in negotiations between the lower tier municipalities involved and the Region. It should be noted that the Province is to provide regulations on how expansions to urban areas can occur. Said regulations are to identify study requirements, however, it is anticipated that these regulations will not be released until 2018 or later.

The Growth Plan places a greater emphasis on watershed planning, sub-watershed based storm water master plans, source water protection plans and asset management plans for infrastructure planning for urban boundary expansions. Specifically, watershed planning is to play a major part in any type of larger scale development planning exercise. As noted, the City has requested Regional Niagara, as part of its Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Policy Plan, to include the northwest area of the City within its urban area boundary. Such additional studies are to be prepared as part of any planning exercise for the northwest area.

The draft Growth Plan expands the policies respecting employment lands. Municipalities should make more efficient use of existing employment lands while integrating land use planning with economic development strategies. Lands are to be identified as prime employment for uses such as manufacturing and warehousing (low density, high land consumptions), protected over the long term and cannot be converted to non-employment uses. Employment areas and existing office/business parks are to be supported by improving connectivity with transit and active transportation networks. While the City has a large supply of vacant and underutilized industrial lands many parcels are heavily contaminated. The proposed policy framework contained in the draft Growth Plan requires the City to undertake a detailed review of its industrial land supply together with an economic strategy that would identify potential future uses.

The draft Growth Plan incorporates themes from the Province's Climate Change Action Plan and requires municipalities to create climate change policies as well as to create "net zero communities". Policies must also be created to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to address the impacts of climate change. In addition, the creation of low impact development and green infrastructure policies must be included as a way to combat climate change. City Staff is supportive of the creation of policies as described above. It should be noted that the City's current Official Plan contains policies and strategic directions towards a sustainable city.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:**

There are no financial implications as a result of this Report

**OTHER DEPARTMENT IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no implications to other Departments as a result of the contents of this Report.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

This Report provides an overview of the proposed changes to the Growth Plan that are of significance to the City and as such it is recommended that this Report be forwarded to the Regional Municipality of Niagara and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

## **Township of West Lincoln**

**DATE:** October 11, 2016

**REPORT NO:** PD-122-16

**SUBJECT:** **Recommendation Report**  
Coordinated Provincial Review of Planning Documents –  
Recommended Response to the Province

**CONTACT:** Brian Treble, Director of Planning and Building

**OVERVIEW:**

- The Province is proposing changes to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Province has requested comments be provided by October 31, 2016.
- The Region has undertaken an extensive review of all of these documents except the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan. The Region’s draft submission is found at Attachment No. 1 to this report.
- Of the Provincial documents, the Greenbelt Plan impacts a small portion of our Township. The area affected by the Greenbelt Plan is proposed to remain unchanged.
- Township comments, as contained in this report, focus mainly on the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, since this Plan has the most impact on the Township of West Lincoln.
- A list of ten concerns is outlined in this report.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That, report PD-122-16, regarding “Coordinated Provincial Review of Planning Documents – Recommended Response to the Province”, dated October 11, 2016, BE RECEIVED; and,
2. That, this report and comments contained in this report be submitted to the Province as the comments from the Township of West Lincoln on the review of the provincial plans.

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

- **Value**  
Strive to remain a safe, caring and friendly community.



- **Objective**

Manage Growth and Protect our Natural Assets.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Province initiated a review of the Places to Grow Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan, as they are required to undertake a review every ten years. This is the first review of both the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan since they came into effect in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Only the Places to Grow Plan and the Greenbelt Plan policies impact the Township as the Township is entirely outside the Niagara Escarpment Control area.

The Province enacted the Places to Grow Plan and the Greenbelt Plan to encourage the protection of the natural environment and agricultural lands; and, to contain sprawl and encourage infill and intensification. All planning decisions need to take these policies into account when making planning decisions and all planning documents must conform with these plans. In terms of growth targets, municipalities must meet minimum density targets as well as minimum intensification targets. The Places to Grow Plan also provided growth targets for municipalities to meet for both population and employment.

Township Staff have been implementing the policies found in both plans for some time now and there is a requirement that all new developments will incorporate the policies found therein. The new policies of these provincial documents, once approved by the Province, will need to be implemented by the Region and the Township through a conformity exercise.

The Region has created a working group to review the proposed policies and create a coordinated response. The Township has been involved in this review group. Staff has been impressed by the extent of review and effort that has been incorporated into the Regional review. The Regional review document is found at Attachment No. 1 to this report and includes comment on many items, some of which are beyond the interest of the Township of West Lincoln.

**CURRENT SITUATION:**

The Province has proposed some significant changes to both the Greenbelt Plan and the Places to Grow Plan. Staff have not reviewed the proposed changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan as it does not impact the Township.

**The Places to Grow Plan (P2G)**

The Places to Grow Plan is proposed to be amended to include a number of significant changes to the policies found therein. The most significant change, in the opinion of Township Staff, is an increase to the required Greenfield density target from 50 persons

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and jobs per hectare, to 80. The intensification target for growth directed to the “built boundary” must be a minimum of 60% of all future development applications. This is an increase from the current requirement that 40% of all new development be constructed within the Built Boundary. Although these new targets have been created, as with the existing Growth Plan provisions, the intensification and density targets need to be achieved across the entire Region and there is an opportunity for the Township to see lower density and intensification targets than other municipalities within the Region, provided the Region applies different targets as part of their implementation strategy. How these will be implemented at the Regional level is not clear, however, since both new targets are high, even for the cities of the Niagara Region.

Although Township Staff feel that intensification and density targets are important to prevent sprawl and to encourage redevelopment, there are significant concerns with increasing the density immediately from 50 persons and jobs per hectare to 80. Part of the concern is that it will create a ring of higher density development surrounding the downtown core, which should be the focus for higher density development. There is also concern that this density target is more easily met by communities with transit, which the Township does not have at this time. When the Township does have some form of municipal or inter-municipal transit, this density will be easier and more appropriate. It may also be easier to achieve this density if it is phased in, rather than effective as of the date of passing. Despite this the proposed density target is not in keeping with the character of Smithville/West Lincoln.

Another concern that Staff have identified with the draft changes to P2G is that the infrastructure that is currently in the ground may not be sufficiently sized to accommodate an increased density of this nature. Municipal servicing is planned and installed for a long time period, and has a maximum capacity based on pipe size. The concern with immediately moving to a higher density may mean that the Township is unable to accommodate the servicing levels that are required or that it may result in costly and untimely servicing upgrades.

The “Protecting What is Valuable” section of the Places to Grow Plan has been greatly expanded to include policies regarding natural heritage systems and agricultural systems. The policies regarding the agricultural systems have been significantly increased and have created new requirements for these areas. The policies do encourage that municipalities and Regions maintain, improve and provide opportunities for agriculture-supportive infrastructure for farms, and encourages the creation of an agri-food strategy and/or an agricultural advisory committee. The Places To Grow Plan will also create mapping that identifies the agricultural areas throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). Watershed Mapping will also be created showing the watershed areas throughout the GGH.

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The P2G has also incorporated themes from the Province's Climate Change Action Plan and requires municipalities to create climate change policies, as well as to create "net zero communities." Policies must also be created to reduce green house gas emissions and to address the impacts of climate change. In addition to this, the creation of low impact development and green infrastructure policies must be included as a way to combat climate change. More policies are included in the Climate Change Action Plan and these are encouraged to be included in municipal documents.

The policies of the P2G allow for urban boundary expansions, however, the Region has the key role. A land needs assessment must be completed and the overall land supply of urban lands across the Region must not be increased. The policies also identify that a standard methodology for assessing land needs will be created so that there is a standardized method for assessing and addressing land needs. Growth in West Niagara, as proposed by the Niagara 2041 review, is challenged by these provincial changes. There may need to be a rationalization of lands elsewhere in the Region in order for the Township to grow. The P2G policies also will require an Agricultural Assessment to be completed as part of an urban boundary expansion, and criteria for how these studies are conducted will be provided at a later date.

A major complication and criticism of the proposed changes to the P2G is that the implementation tools, such as Land Needs Assessment methodology and the Agricultural Impact Assessment criteria have not been released. The Province has also indicated that watershed and agricultural mapping will also be created, however, it has not yet been completed. How can the Province propose policy changes with implementation materials not provided at the same time? The province has indicated that this later date will be 2018, which will make it difficult to interpret the policies as intended if the implementation tools are not released at the same time as the policy documents. The establishment of agricultural and watershed mapping at the Provincial scale appears to be overkill.

To compensate for the later release of the implementation plan documents, the province is proposing to provide municipalities with additional time to incorporate the policies into their Official Plans, however, as the Region and the Township are in the middle of a Municipal Comprehensive Review it is unclear how this should occur. As these proposed policies have not been approved by the Province yet, it is unclear if the new policies should be incorporated into our planning review without the implementation tools, or if we should proceed based on the existing, approved policies.

#### The Greenbelt Plan

The amendments to the Greenbelt Plan were intended to make the policies in the P2G and Greenbelt Plan consistent. The majority of the changes simply tie the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, Places to Grow Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan and

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Greenbelt Plan together for consistency. No mapping changes have been proposed to the Greenbelt area that affects West Lincoln.

Summary

The Region of Niagara has undertaken an extensive review of the proposed draft Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan, which were released by the Province in May 2016 for comment and review. Comments from the Region on these plans are found in the attached report (Attachment No. 1)

Comments to the province are to be submitted by October 31, 2016.

The following comments on the review are specific to West Lincoln:

1. The plan that affects West Lincoln the most is the Growth Plan. Only a small area of the Township of West Lincoln is affected by the Greenbelt Plan. The affected area is not changing. The concept of the growth plan is sound, utilizing land for its highest and best use, and minimizing urban boundary expansions. The Places to Grow Plan should establish key standards for Region and lower tiers to implement. Instead, this plan is now starting to contain detail that should not be in provincial plans. It is time that this plan be returned to an overarching provincial plan and policy guidance document only
2. The Township would like to ensure that any changes to the provincial plans contain the flexibility to be able to address the challenges forced by rural-lower-tier municipalities and that we be allowed to develop in a phased way that is in keeping with the character of the Township and its settlement areas.
3. The Township supports the resolution of conflicts and increased coordination between the provincial plans; specifically between the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, The Greenbelt Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).
4. The increase in the minimum intensification target across the Region from 40 percent to 60 percent is not reasonable. Certainly, within small municipalities with an even smaller serviced urban area (Smithville) an intensification target in excess of about 15%, based on the current built boundary is all that makes sense for our municipality. Flexibility must be available for recognition of local and regional characteristics. A “one size fits all” approach by the Province or Region is not reasonable.
5. The proposal that designated Greenfield areas should be planned to achieve a minimum density target that is not less than 80 residents and jobs per combined hectare is not reasonable. We have been able, in the case of Smithville, to achieve 50 people/hectare on average since 2008, but 80 people/hectare is not in keeping with the character of Smithville and would result in the Greenfield lands having substantially higher density than the built boundary is likely to be able to ever achieve.

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6. The designation of prime employment areas is a concept that should be given consideration by the Region of Niagara and supported to the extent that it will assist in making West Lincoln and Smithville a complete community.
7. The Township of West Lincoln is on record as requiring an urban boundary expansion for Smithville in order to achieve ongoing sustained residential growth to the year 2041. To the extent that provincial policy changes make this need tougher to achieve, is not supported. The Provincial Policy Statement has already increased study requirements and agricultural and environmental impact assessments. New studies are now also required such as financial assessments of infrastructure, viability, watershed planning, and stormwater planning. This work is problematic to complete by lower tier municipalities when such costly studies ultimately can only be given consideration as part of an urban boundary expansion that is approved by the Regional level of government. The lower tier municipality should be able to plan growth in a way that best accommodates our citizens and similarly, the Region should be provided flexibility to accommodate growth in a way that best suits its lower area municipality's needs. The Township of West Lincoln Official Plan is clear that growth and agriculture have important roles and agriculture is given priority for protection.
8. The need to make up for existing subdivision plan densities in remaining areas is not realistic. The application of higher density targets should not apply to plans that already have final subdivision approval.
9. The Township of West Lincoln requires assistance to implement a rural employment strategy, which would be a new designated employment park in the Township of West Lincoln. At present numerous, scattered value added and on-farm diversified use applications are being considered within the agricultural designation. If approved, these scattered developments will impact the intensive farming that should be allowed in our agricultural area. Non-farm uses should be directed to a rural employment area, especially when they do not fit into the character of an urban employment park and impact agriculture. Please ensure such a planning option is available.
10. The Township of West Lincoln supports the development of Smithville as a complete community. The Provincial and Regional policies must be established, however, to recognize that Smithville, as a complete community, will be different from other communities in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area and across the Region. No two complete communities should have to appear the same or grow in the same manner.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Future urban boundary expansion initiatives will require more extensive studies and justification which will cost more money to prepare more extensive justification reports. This will be a budget deliberation in future years.

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**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS**

Staff has consulted with the Region and our MCR and Secondary Plan consulting team. Further, Staff have reviewed response papers from the Region of Niagara, Township of Guelph/Eramosa, County of Wellington and County of Dufferin.

**CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends that this report be submitted to the Province of Ontario as the Township's response to the Provincial Policy Review.

**ATTACHMENTS**

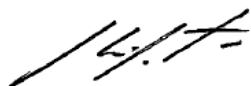
1. Region of Niagara's Draft Submission
2. Climate Change Action Plan

**Prepared by:**



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**Brian Treble, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Building**



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**Chris Carter  
CAO**

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**Town of Grimsby (1 of 2)**

## TOWN OF GRIMSBY



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October 27, 2016

The Honourable Bill Mauro, MPP  
Minister of Municipal Affairs  
c/o Land Use Planning Review  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Ontario Growth Secretariat  
777 Bay Street, Suite 425 (4<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
Toronto, ON  
M5G 2E5

Dear Mr. Mauro:

**RE: Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review – Town of Grimsby Submission**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. As Mayor of the Town of Grimsby I am making this submission on behalf of municipality of The Town of Grimsby. This submission is in follow up to the submission to the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review which I submitted on behalf of the Town of Grimsby on April 21, 2015 (See Attached), and is intended to provide additional explanatory and technical information in support of the Town's previous submission. Additionally, this letter will provide context related to new developments and studies that have occurred in our area since my submission in 2015, including:

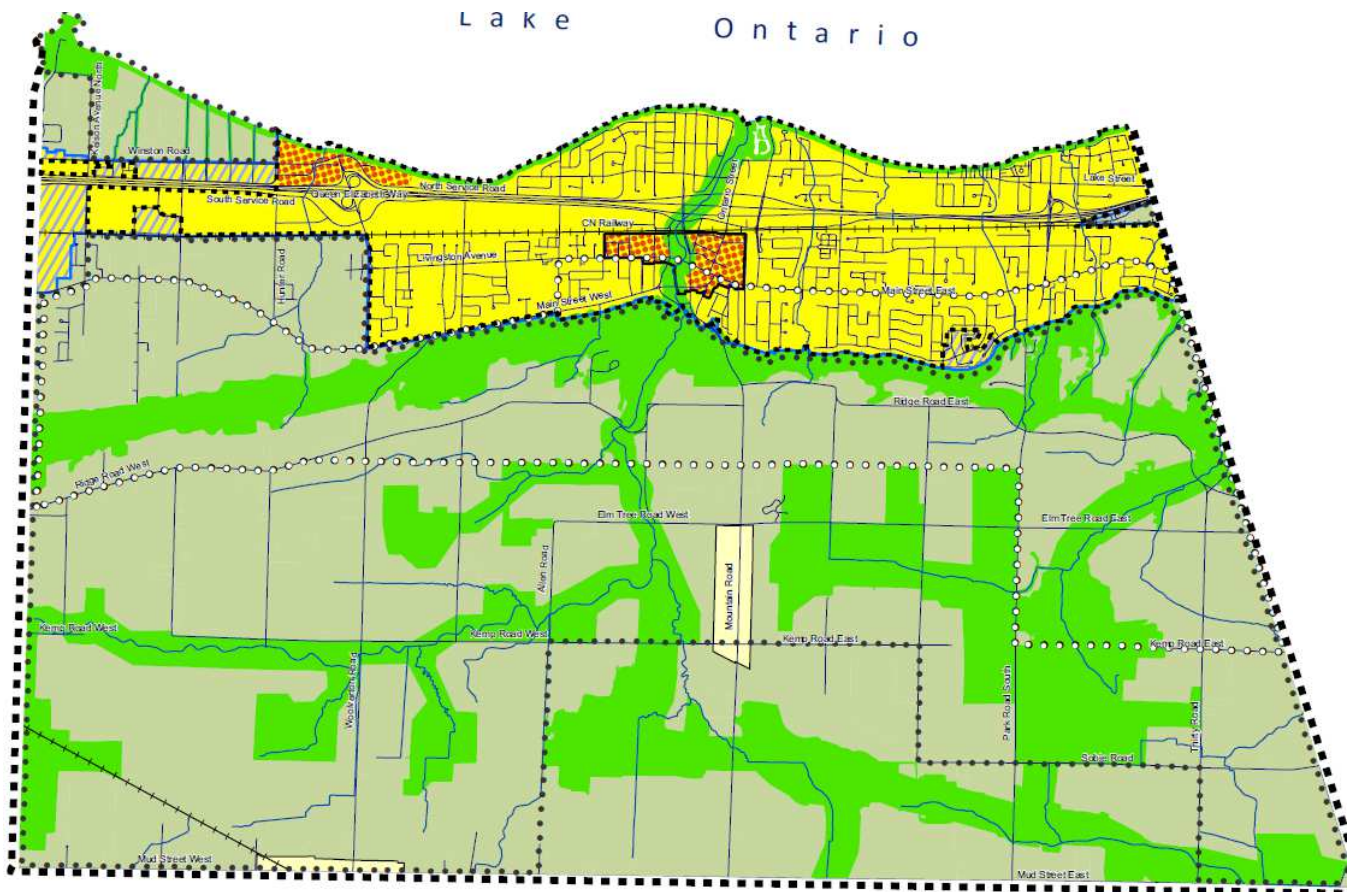
- Announcement of GO Train Service to Grimsby by 2021 by Minister Del Duca
- Niagara Region GO Station Hub Study (2016)
- Town of Grimsby Agricultural Viability Study – AgPlan Limited (2016)
- Meeting with Lou Rinaldi, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Municipal Affairs Staff at the AMO Conference, August 16, 2016.

The Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review is intended to review four provincial plans – the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan. Three of these plans have direct implications for the Town of Grimsby, a municipality of 26,000 located at the Western End of Niagara Region, abutting Lake Ontario (Figure 1).

First, I would like to commend the Province of Ontario for tackling these important issues of Provincial Interest. There are many issues, and layers of issues that the panel will be reviewing



**FIGURE 1**



**TOWN OF GRIMSBY OFFICIAL PLAN**

**SCHEDULE A – MUNICIPAL STRUCTURE**

**Legend**

- ■ Municipal Boundary
- ▭ Urban Settlement Area Boundary
- ▭ Built Boundary
- ▭ Downtown District Boundary
- ● Greenbelt Plan Area - Protected Countryside
- ○ Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
- Streams
- Roads
- + + CN Railway
- Urban Settlement Area
- Major Intensification Area
- ▨ Designated Greenfield Area
- Hamlets
- Natural Heritage System
- Countryside

that are important to the long term health, prosperity, and sustainability of Ontario, its natural environment, economy and quality of life.

Grimsby Council is supportive of the goals and objectives of the Provincial Plans that impact the Town. The major focus of Grimsby's commentary revolves around helping to ensure that the Provincial Plans align with the on-the-ground realities that we live with here in Grimsby every day. It also looks for ways that Grimsby can move forward as a balanced sustainable complete community, achieving provincial goals for a healthy life/work balance, using infrastructure efficiently and sustainably, having easy access to recreational, educational and healthy living opportunities, as well as public transit, protecting the environment and ensuring the health and prosperity of the local agricultural community.

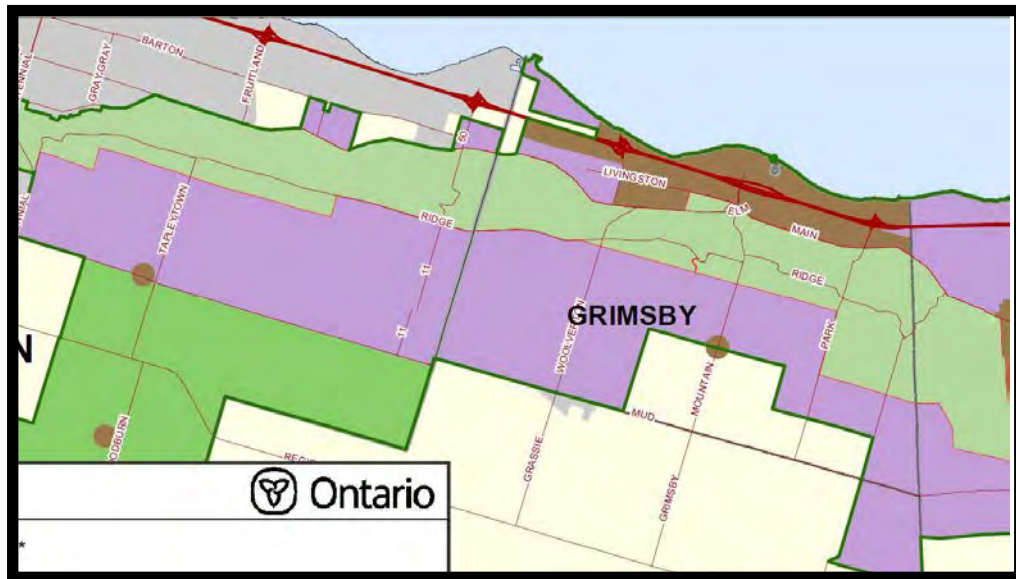
While there have been many positives to our community that have resulted from the introduction of the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan in 2005, looking forward, however, we anticipate that if the plans are left unchanged there will be significant challenges ahead as we strive to maintain a viable, progressive, sustainable and livable community which makes full use of the significant public investment in infrastructure. In considering our experiences as a community with the Provincial Plans as they have existed since 2005 the Town made a detailed submission of our particular issues. The draft updated plans were released in May of 2016 (Figure 2), however, it did not appear that our proposals had been properly considered as there were no proposed changes to the greenbelt designations or boundary in Grimsby, other than the addition of 923 hectares in the south end of Grimsby as Protected Countryside. In light of this we requested a delegation to speak to the Ministry at the recent AMO conference in Windsor, on August 16, 2016. The Grimsby delegation who met with Lou Rinaldi, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Marcia Wallace, Regional Director, Municipal Services Office - Central Ontario at Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs included myself, our Town Manager Derik Brandt, Director of Planning Michael Seaman and Niagara Region Economic Development Director, David Oakes.

### **KEY MESSAGES**

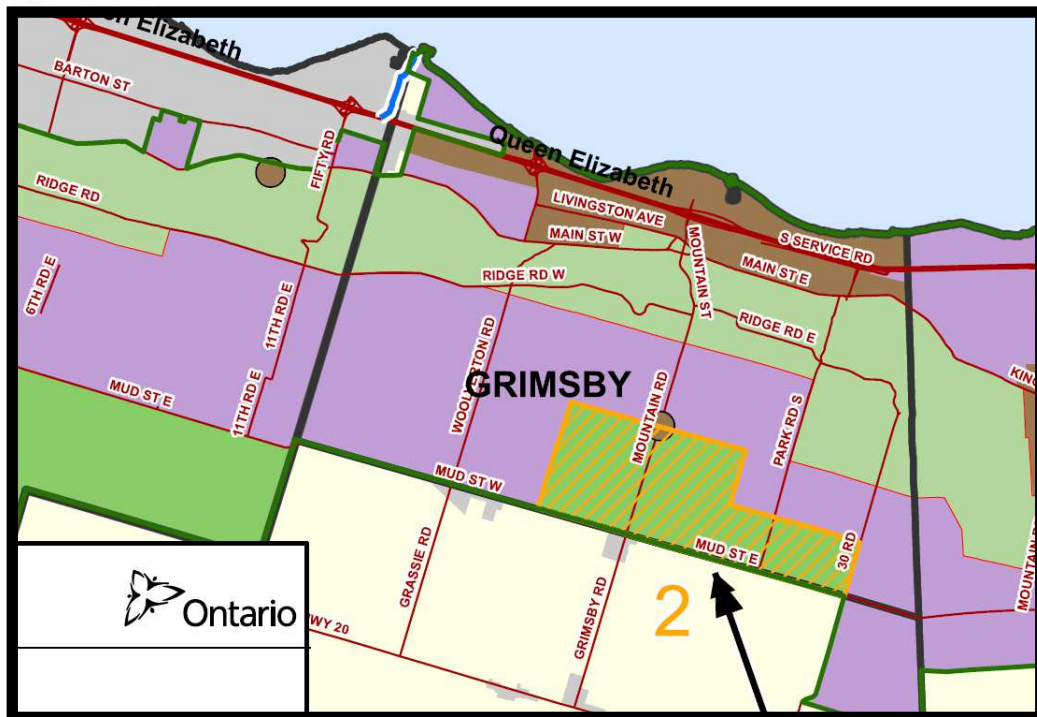
The key messages that we delivered to the ministry at the AMO meeting were as follows:

- When the Greenbelt was originally created in 2005 the western edge of Grimsby where it meets the boundary of Hamilton was drawn inconsistently from the rest of Niagara. East of Grimsby the specialty crop designation takes in a contiguous landscape of functional specialty crop agriculture. In Grimsby, north of the Niagara Escarpment, only one viable farm cluster comprising 33.5 ha of the total 250 ha of specialty crop lands located north of the escarpment is being used for farming.
- Some of the development patterns in the area date back to the 1950-1970s, well before the consideration of the Greenbelt, and even before the Region was created. Servicing has been provided over the years to many of these existing developments.

FIGURE 2



GREENBELT PLAN – GRIMSBY AND AREA 2005



GREENBELT PLAN – GRIMSBY AND AREA (Proposed 2016)

- The Specialty Crop mapping would have relied on the Soils Classification that was done in 1989 in Niagara, as well as the Region's agricultural mapping in the Official Plan. It did not consider existing uses. This mapping and classification, however, did not have the sophistication of today's mapping tools to properly delineate where this development has existed for the last 40-60 years. Therefore, there are many examples of small residential subdivisions, and large public uses such as schools, community sports grounds and facilities, rifle ranges or radio towers that were inappropriately designated Specialty Crop Area.
- Development in Grimsby over the last ten years or so has been progressing at a fairly rapid pace, at a much higher and more efficient rate of density than previously experienced. Development within Grimsby is not wasteful of the available land resources. The Crombie Report identifies Grimsby as one of the few municipalities in Ontario which is approaching the Provincial mandated density targets (page 61).
- The challenge is that we have built a complete community, have invested the infrastructure, but are limited in our expansion potential to fully use that capacity by draft policies in the Greenbelt Plan that prohibit expansion onto Specialty Crop lands and outdated mapping that does not properly consider the feasibility and viability of some of the lands for agricultural use versus appropriate urban development.
- Grimsby also faces a challenge in its efforts to achieve a complete community as there is a need for an opportunity to create a more balanced land-base to provide more local employment opportunities and assessment base with the addition of more employment lands. The specialty crop designation encompasses lands located adjacent to and in the vicinity of the QEW Highway and the CNR railway line and existing employment uses which would typically be prime employment locations. These lands are mostly fallow.
- Most of the specialty crop lands located north of the escarpment which the town is requesting be removed or re-designated are either already developed or so fragmented that it would be extremely unlikely that they would ever be used for specialty crop agriculture. The viability of Grimsby's west end lands for specialty crop agriculture is further analysed and detailed in the attached report **SPECIALTY CROP GREENBELT STUDY REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF GRIMSBY** by Michael Hoffman of AgPlan Limited (see attached).
- The Town and Region are pleased the Province has committed to providing GO Train service to Niagara and Grimsby. The site selected for Grimsby, however, is a site that is on the edge

of the Specialty Crop lands designation. In order to get the proper return on the Province's investment in the GO Train higher density development needs to occur around the proposed station. That means the Region, through their Municipal Comprehensive Review process needs to be able to expand the urban area of Grimsby around the site to develop it and the surrounding areas in a manner that properly supports the proposed higher order transit hub with higher density housing and employment.

- Through Town studies and the Official Plan process that was approved by the OMB in 2012 there was also a refinement of the Natural Heritage System boundaries. There was also recognition of some of these urban uses. These boundaries have not been recognized in the Greenbelt mapping provided by the Province as part of these draft Provincial Plans. (figure 3)
- Grimsby has followed the intent of the Section 11 of the Greenbelt Act (2005, as amended) related to Amendments to the plan by submitting a proposal which would result in a net increase of the total land area of the plan by 713 Hectares. Grimsby's proposal to add 923 Hectares to the greenbelt area located south of the escarpment area was intended to be in exchange for lands removed or re-designated north of the escarpment.

### **ASKS**

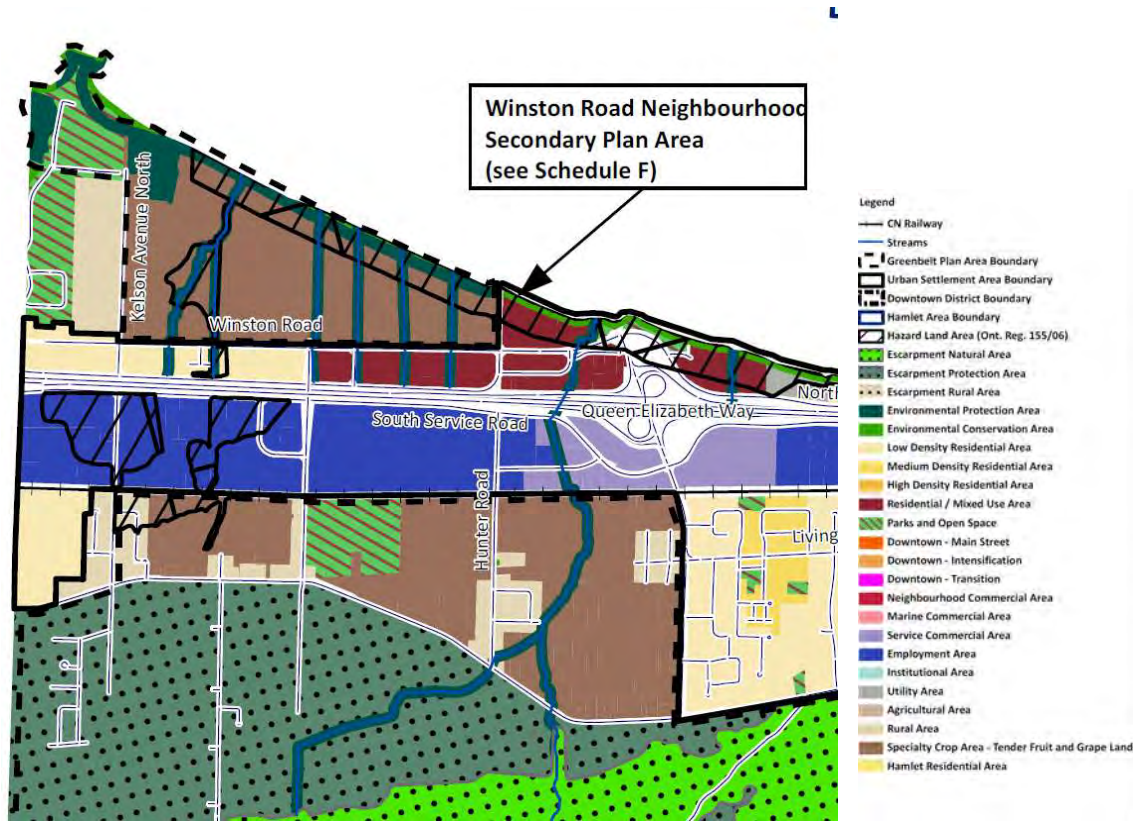
In the context of the key messages that we outlined to Assistant Minister Rinaldi, we detailed the following asks:

- The Province ensures that the mapping of the Specialty Crop lands is evidence-based, and reflects not only the soils, but also the land uses that exist on the ground.
- The Province ensures that lands already developed, and lands which due to fragmentation and other factors are unlikely to ever be utilized for specialty crop agriculture be removed from the greenbelt plan area or re-designated to another category within the greenbelt plan (e.g. Town's and Villages).

*We note that in Hamilton, lands which were in an advanced stage of the planning approval process at the time of the adoption of the Greenbelt Plan in 2005 are now being considered for removal from the Greenbelt. We believe that equal consideration needs to be given in Grimsby to lands which are already developed, in some cases since the 1960s.*

- The Province provides some conditions where development and public uses might be considered on Specialty Crop lands through the Municipal Comprehensive Review process.

**FIGURE 3**



*Town of Grimsby Official Plan – Land Use (2012) – Note Scoped Environmental Protection Areas north of the QEW following studies conducted during the secondary plan process which refined the Environmental Protection area boundaries to the watercourses, shoreline and the woodlot on the Winona Rifle Rane.*



*Greenbelt Plan Natural Heritage System Proposed (2016) Note Natural Heritage System is not scoped in accordance with the Winston Neighbourhood Secondary Plan (2012)*

*We note that since our original submission in 2015, the Niagara District School Board initiated Secondary Schools Accommodation review which proposes to close the existing Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln Secondary Schools, with a plan to establish a new up-to-date school in a location that will ideally be close to the major population centres in Grimsby and Beamsville. Unfortunately, all of the suitable land in this area is designated Specialty Crop or Niagara Escarpment Plan which would prohibit the establishment of a new school use. As a community we need to have the ability to locate schools, fire stations, parks and other essential public infrastructure in convenient proximity to our population centres.*

- The Province develops a system that would ensure that the mapping Natural Heritage features can be updated to reflect more current and specific study of a given area.
- The Province takes into consideration that Grimsby's proposal would result in a net increase in the land area of the Greenbelt Plan by 713 Hectares.

Our presentation was well received by Lou Rinaldi, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry staff who indicated their understanding of the dichotomy between this area being proposed in Grimsby for a GO Train hub, the Specialty Crop designation in the Greenbelt Plan both existing and proposed and the existing land-uses that exist on the ground. A delegation of ministry staff subsequently made further visits to Grimsby on September 21, 2016 with Town Staff and October 24, 2016 with Region of Niagara Staff to view and validate the land use situation as it exists currently in the Town of Grimsby. As a follow up to that meeting a draft copy of the Grimsby Specialty Crop Greenbelt Study Report was forwarded to Ministry of Municipal Affairs Staff for review.

In further support of Grimsby's submission to the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review I would like to provide the following background information and additional comments on each of the 3 Provincial Plans that impact the Town.

### **Greenbelt Plan (2005)**

Well before the Greenbelt Protection Act was tabled in the legislature, the Town was trying to formulate a plan to address urban land needs. In March 2003, Grimsby Council embarked on a Growth Management Strategy of its own to quantify the amount of land needed, and identify the most appropriate location for growth. The findings, of the Growth Management Study, suggests that all factors being considered, the only feasible option for growth is to the west, which were frozen in 2005 by the Greenbelt Legislation.

Grimsby is supportive of the goal stated by former Minister McMeekin at the launch of the Coordinated Review of Growing the Greenbelt to protect even more land, the intent of which in

Niagara would be to protect and support the viability of quality agricultural lands. After working with the Greenbelt Plan for a decade, however, with generations of local knowledge of the lands that are currently protected, the Town of Grimsby would like to propose an adjustment or re-designation of lands in the north end of Grimsby which are not viable for agriculture or natural habitat, while expanding the Greenbelt in the south end of Grimsby to include lands which are either hazard, conservation or agricultural lands.

There are 923 hectares of non-greenbelt lands south of the Niagara Escarpment. Of this there are 681 hectares of Agricultural/Environmental or Hazard lands and 100 hectares of municipal/utility or residential lands.

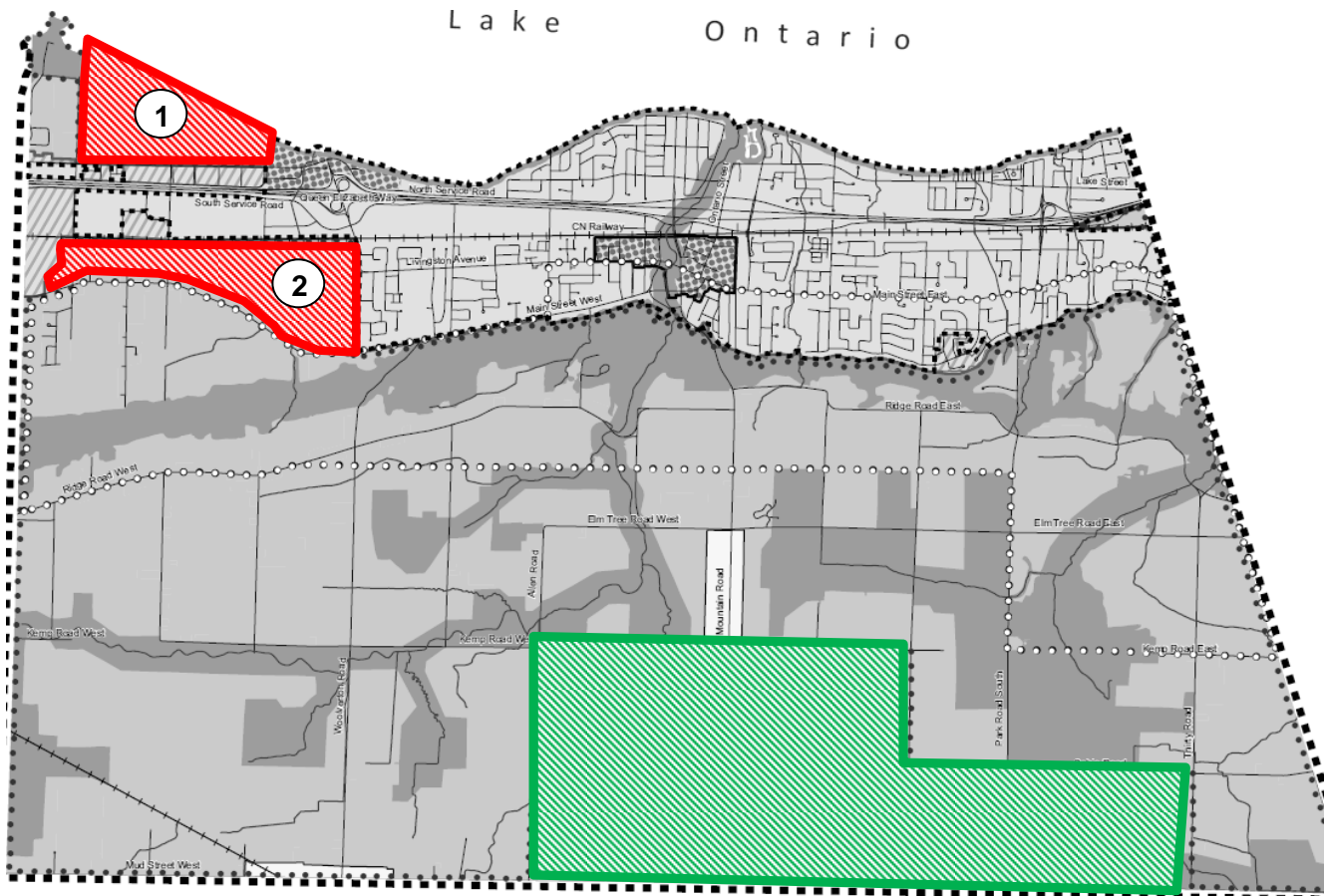
North of the Escarpment there are 251 hectares of Greenbelt lands (99 ha north of the QEW and 152 ha south of the QEW). Of this total 45.4 hectares are farmed, 8.5 hectares are EPA/ECA lands, 22.4 hectares are hazard Lands, 37.9 hectares are existing residential. There would appear to be clear opportunities for either removing lands from the Greenbelt located north of the Niagara Escarpment or changing from the existing designation to a designation such as towns and villages which would allow the area to be considered for a future urban expansion by Niagara Region, while providing the opportunity to significantly grow the Greenbelt in Grimsby (Figure 4). It is noted that the Greenbelt/Growth Plan compliant Winston Neighbourhood Secondary Plan (2009) and the Town of Grimsby Official Plan (2012) illustrate the following changes, approved by the Region of Niagara in compliance with Provincial Policy:

- The Natural Heritage System, shown as a large triangle of land between Hunter Road and Kelson Avenue on Schedule 4 of the Greenbelt Plan is refined to the shoreline, watercourses and woodlot in the northwest corner adjacent to and including fifty point conservation area.
- Existing rural subdivisions located south of the QEW which are identified as Specialty Crop, Tender Fruit and Grape area in the Greenbelt Plan area are identified as "Rural Area" in the Official Plan
- Smith School and the Town of Grimsby Soccer and Baseball Park which are identified as Specialty Crop, Tender Fruit and Grape area in the Greenbelt Plan are identified as "Parks and Open Space" in the Official Plan.
- The Irish Woodlot, which is identified as Specialty Crop, Tender Fruit and Grape area in the Greenbelt Plan
- The proposed Livingston Avenue extension, west of Casablanca indicated in part in the 2005 Greenbelt Plan, not at all in the proposed 2016 Greenbelt Plan is shown as a future route in the 2012 OMB approved Official Plan.

Lands already developed should be re-designated as Town's and villages in the Greenbelt Plan. This would include the Rogers Radio Tower Lands, School Lands, Park Lands, Private Park Lands, Rifle Range as well as rural residential subdivisions.



**FIGURE 4**



**AREAS FOR CONSIDRATION OF ADJUSTMENTS TO GREENBELT PLAN BOUNDARY**

 = AREAS CONTAINING LANDS CONSIDERED FOR EXCLUSION FROM GREENBELT PLAN AREA OR REDESIGNATION FROM SPECIALTY CROP (250 ha) TO A DESIGNATION WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR FUTURE URBAN EXPANSION (E.G. TOWN'S AND VILLAGES)

Area 1 - North of QEW = 100 ha

Area 2 - South of QEW = 150 ha

 = AREAS CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION IN THE GREENBELT PLAN AREA (923 ha)

*Opportunities for Employment Lands and Transit Supportive Densities*

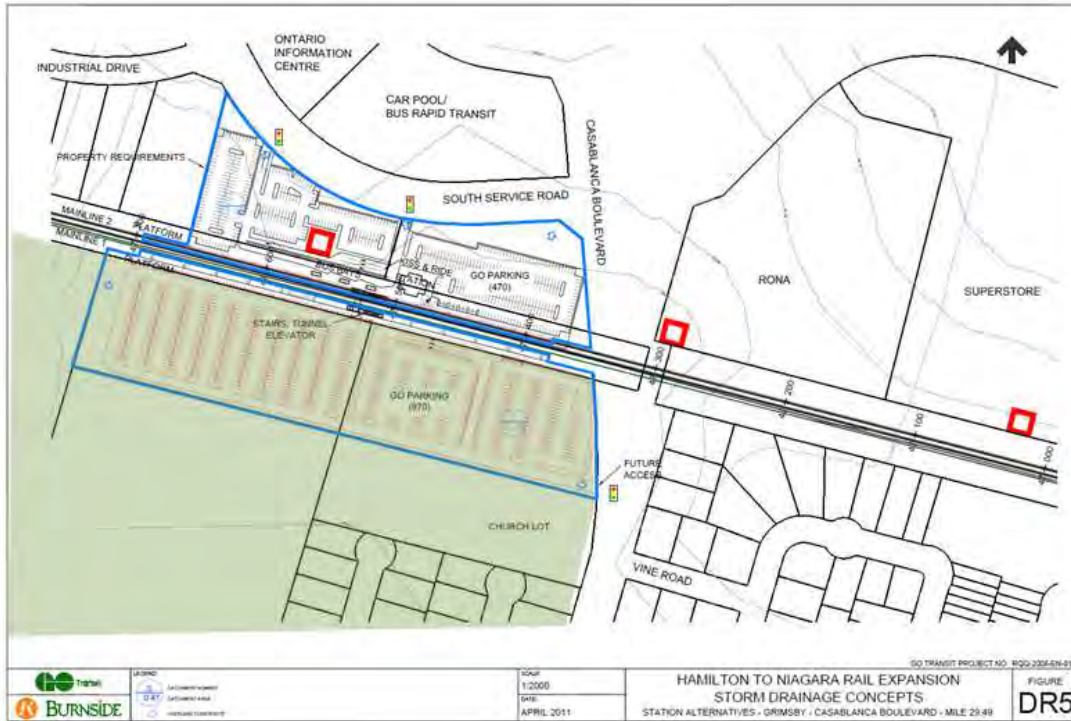
There have been many positives to the introduction of the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan. The combined effects of the Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan have resulted in the utilization of underdeveloped properties for new medium-density development, which enables a more efficient use of existing services. Most of this new growth has, however, been confined to residential uses. In consideration of employment uses, the Greenbelt Plan has had the effect of sterilizing lands that would naturally and normally provide locations for new employment generators to locate here. A significant portion of these lands are either adjacent or in close proximity to the Queen Elizabeth Way and two major interchanges, the CNR railway line, the future Livingston Avenue Extension and the existing GO Bus terminal and future projected GO Train Station located near the Casablanca Interchange. In fact, half of the lands identified by the Province for a future GO Train Station are located in the Greenbelt Plan Area under the Specialty Crop Designation (Figure 5)

In communities located outside of the Greenbelt Plan Area, a GO Train Station would typically serve as hub for both employment and high-density residential uses. In Grimsby, however, it is sterilized. Since my previous submission to the 2015 Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review panel in April 2015, The Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Steven Del Duca announced on June 28 of this year that Grimsby will be receiving GO Train Service beginning in 2021. Most of the proposed GO Station at Casablanca Boulevard and the immediate lands are located in the Greenbelt Plan Area under the Specialty Crop designation. It is The Town of Grimsby's submission that in order for the province to better realize its investment in public transit infrastructure and service to Grimsby and Niagara that non-viable agricultural lands in the vicinity of the proposed GO Train station should be placed in land-use designations which would allow their consideration for conversion to urban uses through a future Niagara Region Urban land needs review.

In order to validate the location of the GO Train station site at Casablanca and ensure that appropriate transit supportive uses are planned for in the vicinity of the proposed Casablanca Go Train Station the Region of Niagara and the Town of Grimsby have collaborated on the development of a GO Transit Hub Study for lands within 800 metres of the proposed Train Station. The result of this study would be the development of a secondary plan with transit supportive uses which would be adopted by the Town of Grimsby. The study, which began in June 2016, has validated the site of the Casablanca GO Train Station as appropriate and is currently in the process of developing a land use plan for the area and draft secondary plan. It is anticipated that this would be complete by the end of 2016.

It is estimated by the Town's Planning Department that if the Greenbelt Plan restrictions were lifted or modified in the area located north of Regional Road 81 and the CNR Railway line that an additional 30 hectares of new employment lands could be established to meet the long-term employment needs of the Grimsby community. Grimsby currently has a 90/10 residential to employment balance, and a limited supply of employment lands. By providing more lands for employment purposes it would help achieve a more complete community with a healthier

FIGURE 5  
GO TRAIN STATION – CASABLANCA BOULEVARD  
METROLINX – NIAGARA RAIL SERVICE EXPANSION STUDY  
CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



 = GREENBELT PLAN AREA

employment to residential balance and less out commuting. All three of these aims represent good planning and are consistent with Provincial Policy. In terms of residential, it is estimated that up to 5,500 new – high and medium density residential units, located within 1 kilometer of the proposed GO Train Station could be achieved in addition to the proposed employment lands. Most of these lands are not currently being farmed due largely to the unsuitability of the soils in the area, the difficulty of tender fruit farming (sprays, etc.) in close proximity to residential subdivisions and the decline in the tender fruit industry resulting from a lower market demand and lack of any canning facilities in Niagara or vicinity, so the impact on the intent of the Greenbelt Plan – to protect tender fruit and good grape lands would be minimal.

It must be understood that Grimsby is within only a few short years of being built out. The Greenbelt Plan has effectively stopped the Town of Grimsby from designating any additional urban land to accommodate growth. All lands outside the current urban boundary are either Niagara Escarpment Lands, or designated as Protected Countryside and as Tender Fruit and Grape in the Greenbelt Plan. Even though the plan states that modest growth may be possible for Towns in the Protected Countryside Area at the Ten Year Plan Review, expansions are not permitted in Specialty Crop Areas. So Grimsby cannot expand, even for employment or transit supportive densities in the vicinity of a proposed GO Train Station.

It is the opinion of Grimsby that for the lands in the Greenbelt Plan located in the vicinity of the proposed Grimsby GO Train Station, which are not viable for agriculture, buffering nor environmentally sensitive, the land use designation should be modified to allow for future employment uses, recreational uses or high or medium density housing, as part of a future Niagara Region Urban land needs review, that would be transit supportive, and contribute to the viability of the proposed GO Train Service to Niagara.

#### *Viability of lands identified for Tender fruit and Good Grape for Agricultural Purposes*

The basis of the tender fruit and grape designation in the Greenbelt Plan in West Grimsby is that the lands are good for Tender Fruit and Grape production. When the Greenbelt Plan was established, Grimsby Council agreed with the proposals of the Greenbelt Task Force that recommended that key agricultural lands be identified for protection using science, including considering the criteria and methodology of the Agricultural Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) system studies, and considering socio-economic factors such as fragmentation, urban/suburban encroachments and other factors that affect feasibility and viability of farming. Some lands designated as tender fruit have not been tender fruit growing or used for agricultural purposes for decades (i.e. Radio Tower Lands), some have had soils stripped and are surrounded by uses such as residential which render the lands inappropriate for tender fruit and good grape production. Figures 6 to 9 illustrate the existing conditions in Grimsby's west end and anomalies which would make the introduction of future specialty crop agriculture difficult.

FIGURE 6

EXISTING CONDITIONS IN GRIMSBY TENDER FRUIT AND GRAPE LANDS



# West end Grimsby Existing Land Uses 2016



North of Queen Elizabeth Way	
Existing	Provincial Plan
1 Conservation Area in Hamilton	Not included in Greenbelt
2 Farmed Lands - Corn	Not included in Greenbelt
3 Farmed Lands - Corn	Not included in Greenbelt
4 Conservation area in Grimsby	Specialty Crop
5 Woodlot - Federal Lands	Specialty Crop
6 Rifle Range - Federal Lands	Specialty Crop
7 Wetland - Federal Lands	Specialty Crop
8 Wetland - Regional Lands	Specialty Crop
9 Public Works Building - Town Lands	Specialty Crop
10 Pumping Station - Regional Lands	Specialty Crop
11 Radio Tower Lands - Rogers	Specialty Crop
12 Municipal Dog Park - Town Lands	Specialty Crop
13 Radio Tower Lands - Rogers	Specialty Crop
14 Private Open Space - Ukrainian Church	Specialty Crop

South of Queen Elizabeth Way	
Existing	Provincial Plan
15 Future GO Train Station & Existing Bus Station	Specialty Crop
16 Residential Subdivision and Church	Specialty Crop
17 Woodlot	Specialty Crop
18 Residential Subdivision	Specialty Crop
19 Rural Residential Lots	Specialty Crop
20 Sports Fields - Town of Grimsby	Specialty Crop
21 Elementary School - Public School Board	Specialty Crop
22 Community Park	Niagara Escarpment Plan
23 Greenhouse	Niagara Escarpment
24 Fallow Lands	Specialty Crop
25 Tender Fruit and Good Grape Farming	Specialty Crop
26 Residential Subdivision and Rural Lots	Niagara Escarpment Plan
27 Industrial/ commercial site	Niagara Escarpment Plan

# Specialty Crop Anomalies

## South of Queen Elizabeth Way in Grimsby



Residential Subdivision,  
Casablanca Boulevard and  
Livingston Avenue  
Built 1960s, fully serviced  
36 Homes



Residential Subdivision,  
Kelson Avenue  
Built 1960s, fully serviced  
41 Homes adjacent to a further 190 serviced homes  
In escarpment vista (2013) and 1960s subdivision



Residential Subdivision,  
Hunter Road  
Built 1960s, fully serviced  
90 Homes



Smith Public Elementary School, Grimsby Soccer  
Club and fields, Grimsby Baseball Stadium  
39 Homes Built 1930s to 70s, fully serviced



Carolinian Woodlot  
Bird Species Nesting ground  
Hunter Road  
Protected Natural Area



Grimsby GO Station site. Approved  
by MetroLink EA study in 2010. GO  
Train Service to Casablanca  
announced by 2021.

Niagara Region is currently  
undertaking a GO Transit Hub Study  
to consider the station design and  
transit supportive uses near the  
station site

- Area Totals:
- 226 Detached Homes
  - Apartment Building
  - Sports Park
  - Public School
  - Woodlot
  - EA approved Go Station
  - No Tender fruit farms west of Hunter Road





# Specialty Crop Anomalies

North of Queen Elizabeth Way in Grimsby



**Ukrainian Church Private Recreation Centre, Community Hall and Sports Facilities.** Area is surrounded to the east and south by medium and high density residential and mixed use. To the west is the Rogers Radio Towers.



The remainder and largest portion of the lands located in the specialty crop area in Grimsby are the Rogers Radio Tower lands. (680 News). **No lands within the Specialty Crop area are currently being farmed**



**Winston Neighbourhood – Mixed use high and medium density**  
The Specialty Crop area north of the QEW is part of the Winston Neighbourhood. The specialty crop lands are surrounded by medium and high density residential and mixed use development, and are adjacent to the Winston Neighbourhood Main Street a community hub for the Winston Neighbourhood area. In 2014 the Town adopted a Master Plan and Trial plan for the area.



At the western End of the Specialty Crop is the Federal Rifle Range. These lands contain a significant woodlot and habitat. To the east are the Biggar Lagoons which are an important Bird Habitat. The Town has adopted a trail plan to connect to the waterfront and the lagoons. The Area also contains a Regional pumping station and a Municipal public works building.



**Fifty Point Conservation Area**  
Fifty Point Conservation Area is only partially in the Greenbelt. The northern section in Grimsby is in the Specialty Crop whereas the south and western portions, mostly in Hamilton are not in the greenbelt at all which appears inconsistent.





We do **not** agree that all these lands are good tender fruit and grape lands. We can provide examples in Grimsby where site specific studies by respected viniculture experts have concluded that the lands proposed to be frozen are not viable vineyards. We also have Environmental Study Reports prepared for MTO acknowledging that fruit farms adjacent to the QEW are adversely affected by salt being used as a de-icing agent on the highway. These lands are not viable tender fruit or grape producing lands. The point we are making is that at the very minimum, appropriate analysis must be undertaken to demonstrate that these are valuable tender fruit lands, evaluated using appropriate methodology such as in the LEAR System.

The Town of Grimsby personally communicated this point to then Minister Gerretsen in August 2005, who at that time agreed that this was imperative.

In order to confirm our assumptions with respect to the viability of agriculture in Grimsby's west end below the escarpment and in the lands proposed for inclusion in the Greenbelt above the escarpment, The Town retained an agricultural consultant to provide an independent unbiased opinion on the viability of these lands for agricultural purposes. The study was completed by Michael Hoffman, of AgPlan Limited, an expert in the field of agricultural viability analysis. Mr. Hoffman's study concurred with the assumptions of the Town. I have attached the AgPlan report for your perusal as an attachment to this report.

#### *Efficient Utilization of existing Infrastructure*

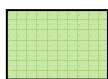
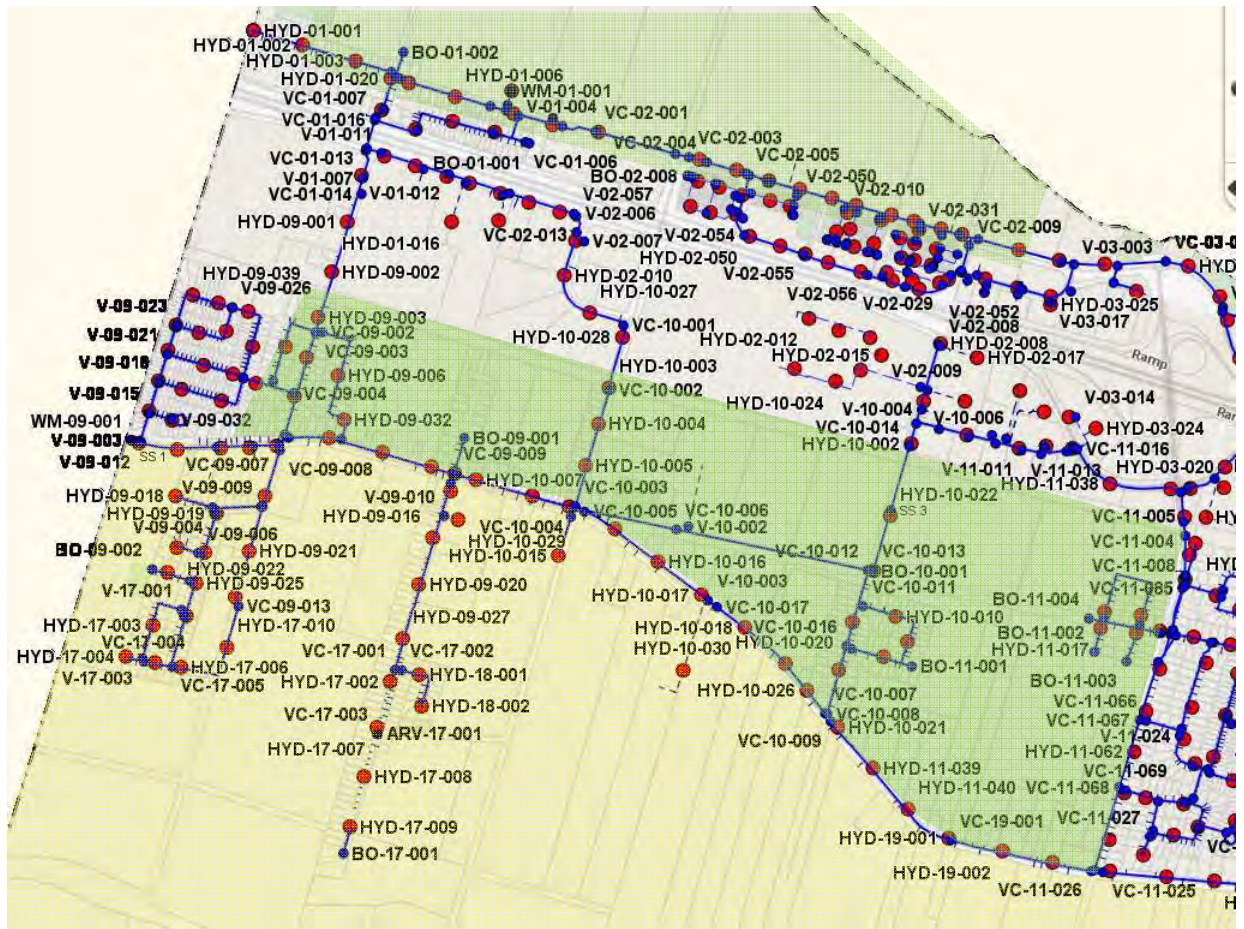
A substantial investment in public infrastructure has been made in the vicinity and through this area along the concession roads below the escarpment and the future Livingston Avenue extension (note: Greenbelt has encouraged more efficient use of land/use of existing infrastructure in the current urban area that would otherwise be less desirable for development - See Figure 10 and 11).

Much of the lands west of the Grimsby urban area are currently a mix of semi-urban and rural uses. There are over 200 residential lots interspersed throughout the area, all connected to the municipal sewer and water systems that have been sized to service the area. There is also an elementary school, sports complex and commercial lands. These lands are not virgin farmlands on the edge of an urban centre. They are surrounded by urban and semi-urban uses. A significant investment in municipal infrastructure exists in this area. Following the smart growth principle of making efficient use of existing infrastructure, it makes good financial sense and represents good planning to make use of this investment.

#### *Park, Schools and other essential public uses in the Greenbelt Plan Area*

In order to facilitate the growth of active healthy communities the Town would like to see greater flexibility to establish municipal parkland in the Greenbelt Tender Fruit and Good Grape and Niagara Escarpment Plan Areas. Restrictions on lands in the Greenbelt Plan Area currently prohibit the establishment of new municipal park, schools and other essential public uses on lands in the Greenbelt.

**FIGURE 10 – SERVICING NETWORK – WATER – WEST END GRIMSBY**



- GREENBELT PLAN AREA



- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA



As a result, instead of being able to acquire and establish new parkland within walking and cycling distance of the majority of the population of Grimsby, the Town has had to establish new parkland in the non-greenbelt area, above the escarpment in the very south area of the Town – parkland that the majority of Grimsby residents will need to drive to, in order to utilize.

We reiterate our earlier statement, that since our original submission in 2015, the Niagara District School Board initiated Secondary Schools Accommodation review which proposes to close the existing Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln Secondary Schools, with a plan to establish a new up-to-date school in a location that will ideally be close to the major population centres in Grimsby and Beamsville. Unfortunately, all of the suitable land in this area is designated Specialty Crop or Niagara Escarpment Plan which would prohibit the establishment of a new school use. As a community we need to have the ability to locate schools, fire stations, parks and other essential public infrastructure in convenient proximity to our population centers.

*Lack of clarity with respect to rationale for inclusion/exclusion in the Greenbelt*

A comparison of the Greenbelt Plan maps (2005) and Proposed Greenbelt Plan maps (2016) (see figure 2) illustrate a potential lack of consistency and clarity in the criteria used to delineate boundaries and determine inclusion/exclusion of essentially similar lands in a contiguous landscape in east Hamilton and west Grimsby. This should be considered and/or further explained through the review.

*Summary*

In summary the Town of Grimsby wishes to emphasize that it understands and supports the Province's objective of preserving valuable Tender Fruit and Grape lands. However, we do not think this Plan has got it completely right as it relates to Grimsby – lands which are not suitable for agricultural conservation, and/or which provide limited environmental benefit are sterilized and lay fallow, when they might otherwise contribute to a more complete, transit supportive community, while lands which are viable for agriculture or provide benefits to the natural ecosystem are not included within the Greenbelt Plan area boundary.

In 2016, the Town commissioned an independent agricultural viability study to determine the viability of agricultural lands being proposed for inclusion in the greenbelt and redesignation from specialty crop uses to designations which would enable the lands to be considered as part of an anticipated Niagara Region urban expansion review in the future. Attention needs to be paid to the fiscal, economic and sustainability implications on the taxpayers of communities such as Grimsby.

**Niagara Escarpment Plan (2005)**

The Town of Grimsby recognizes the many positive aspects of the Plan and the forward thinking provided by the Province when it protected approximately 480,000 acres (195,000 hectares) of land to support a continuous natural environment along the Escarpment; and to ensure that development on the Niagara Escarpment and in its immediate vicinity is compatible with protecting the natural environment. Figure 12 illustrates some of the existing anomalies in the Niagara Escarpment Area.

FIGURE 12

# Niagara Escarpment Plan Anomalies

## North of the Niagara Escarpment in Grimsby



NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA					
PARCEL	6 Hillview Woodcrest Subdivision				
LOCATION	Kelson Avenue, South of Main Street West				
EXISTING USES	Residential Subdivision, Auto Dealership, Apartment				
GREENBELT PLAN	Niagara Escarpment Plan Area				
ESCARPMENT PLAN	Escarpment Protection Area				
OFFICIAL PLAN	Escarpment Protection Area				
ZONING	N/A				
AREA	27.61 acres				
SOILS	Miscellaneous Man Modified Land Units				
SERVICES	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>WATER:</th> <th>SEWER</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </table>	WATER:	SEWER	Yes	Yes
WATER:	SEWER				
Yes	Yes				
ANALYSIS	1960s residential subdivision, apartment building and car dealership				
RECOMMENDATION	Consider redesignating as "Escarpment Urban" - transferring residential subdivision to municipal administration and zoning with NEC review				

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA					
PARCEL	5 Cline Mountain Road Settlement				
LOCATION	Cline Mountain Road and Cedar Glen Subdivision				
EXISTING USES	Residential Rural Subdivision				
GREENBELT PLAN	Niagara Escarpment Plan Area				
ESCARPMENT PLAN	Escarpment Protection Area				
OFFICIAL PLAN	Escarpment Protection Area				
ZONING	N/A				
AREA	24.758 acres				
SOILS	Miscellaneous Man Modified Land Units				
SERVICES	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>WATER:</th> <th>SEWER</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </table>	WATER:	SEWER	Yes	Yes
WATER:	SEWER				
Yes	Yes				
ANALYSIS	Rural Residential Subdivision - largely developed				
RECOMMENDATION	Consider redesignating as "Escarpment Urban" - transferring residential subdivision to municipal administration and zoning with NEC review				



With generations of local knowledge of the lands that are currently protected by the NEC Plan and thirty years of working with the plan, the Town of Grimsby would like to propose a number of adjustments as follows:

#### Boundary Adjustment

In the west end of Grimsby the Niagara Escarpment Area of Development Control contains a number mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century residential subdivisions which are likely to be in place for decades to come. It is the opinion of Grimsby Council that since these lands are already developed it is unreasonable to force a property owner located within the developed area, not part of an Escarpment view shed, to seek a Niagara Escarpment Development Permit for works on their property. It is also recommended that other areas adjacent to existing urban areas be considered for removal from the NEC Permitting area, replacing it with a process whereby the NEC is a commenting agency as opposed to an approval authority.

#### Process Improvements

It is the opinion of the Town of Grimsby that the NEC Permit Exemption process needs to be reviewed in order to allow for more municipal input. The Town is concerned that this has resulted in approval of a number of undesirable projects which have depreciated the visual quality and heritage character of the area. NEC staff have been working consistently with the Town of Grimsby Planning Department to close some of these loopholes, however, this should be clarified in the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

#### Alignment of Provincial Plans and PPS

The Town of Grimsby faced a difficult experience in the processing of its new Official Plan from 2009 to 2012, wherein, efforts to satisfy the Places to Grow Plan through allowing intensification downtown, were identified by the Niagara Escarpment Commission as being in conflict with the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The Niagara Escarpment Commission appealed the Town of Grimsby Official Plan for complying with the Places to Grow Plan. For Grimsby and other municipalities it is clear that greater alignment needs to be achieved between all the provincial plans, the provincial policy statement and other relevant provincial legislation.

#### Park uses in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area

In order to facilitate the growth of active healthy communities the Town would like to see greater flexibility to establish municipal parkland in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. Restrictions on lands in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area currently prohibit the establishment of new municipal park uses on lands in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. As a result, instead of being able to acquire and establish new parkland within walking and cycling distance of the majority of the population of Grimsby, the Town has had to establish new parkland in the non-greenbelt area, above the escarpment in the very south area of the Town – parkland that the majority of Grimsby residents will need to drive to, in order to utilize. The Town of Grimsby had identified lands approximately 1 kilometer away from the face of the Niagara Escarpment as potential municipal parkland. The subject lands were relatively close to the existing urban area and accessible on foot and by bicycle. The NEC refused the Town's efforts in this area.

No option was given by the NEC to refine the park plan to address NEC concerns while allowing the park to proceed. This refusal was concurrent with an approval of an extensive park in Burlington (New City Park), within a few hundred feet of the escarpment cliff, which significantly impacted the natural area of the escarpment. The apparent inconsistency in dealing with municipal parkland applications is a concern.

### **Places to Grow Plan (2006)**

The Town of Grimsby recognizes the many positive aspects of the Places to Grow Plan including the efficient use of existing infrastructure. The Places to Grow Plan and Greenbelt Plan has helped to encourage development of parcels in the urban area that might not have been developed for decades otherwise. The Town of Grimsby's Official Plan (2012) is in alignment with the objectives of the Places to Grow Plan. In accordance with the Growth Plan, the Town has set aside certain areas for intensification. As a balance, the Town was able to adopt certain policies which allowed it to protect stable residential neighborhoods and historic character areas of the community. These areas are inherently livable and maintain the stability of the character of the Town which makes it a desirable community to live in with a strong quality of life. **It is vitally important that municipalities be able to continue to protect stable residential neighborhoods and historic character areas in the future.**

Grimsby is the 2015 winner of the Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Heritage Leadership (Figure 13) and has one of the most significant collections of pre-war of 1812 building stock anywhere in Ontario and 30 Cultural Heritage Landscapes (Figure 14). The Places to Grow plan should ensure that communities like Grimsby for which heritage conservation and the conservation of cultural and natural heritage landscapes are a priority can protect these special places and not be penalized for doing so.

The bringing of the GO Train to Niagara is a significant development for municipalities across the Region. Grimsby has been working to deliver transit supportive densities which would support the proposed future GO Train Service when it arrives in 2021. Achievement of these densities should be considered as a trigger for the bringing of GO Train Service to the Region and the provision of subsidies to municipalities to establish local transit systems.

Places to Grow areas focus densities by and large in areas such as downtowns where there are the most significant concentrations of heritage resources in a municipality. Consideration should be given to assisting municipalities in protecting heritage resources in areas where market conditions make achieving innovative solutions for conservation of heritage resources more difficult.

**FIGURE 13 – AWARD CITATION  
2015 PRINCE OF WALES PRIZE FOR MUNICIPAL  
HERITAGE LEADERSHIP**



**Town of Grimsby, Ontario**



Situated at the base of the Niagara Escarpment on the shores of Lake Ontario, the small Town of Grimsby, Ontario (population 26,325) takes big pride in its heritage as evidenced in its well-preserved downtown, historic beachfront, and the palpable enthusiasm of its history-loving citizens.

Once known as "The Forty," Grimsby was founded in 1790 by a group of Loyalist families who settled at 40 Mile Creek following the American Revolution. Here, they found fertile soils and waterfalls to power mills, and their community flourished.

In 1859, a Methodist campground billed as "Canada's Chautauqua" was established at Grimsby Park. At its height, it drew as many as 50,000 summer vacationers from throughout the Golden Horseshoe who came to camp in the park and holiday in whimsical gingerbread house cottages. Grimsby remained a popular holiday destination through to the 1960s when its permanent population took off with the growth of the fruit industry.

Though faced with developmental pressures, Grimsby has recognized the importance of heritage conservation in improving quality of life and enhancing a sense of place and community. Thanks to this longstanding commitment, today more 95 percent of the town's pre-1939 building stock still stands.

Beginning with the conversion of a former blacksmith shop (circa 1800) into the first Grimsby Museum in 1963, the Town has demonstrated a firm commitment to investing in its heritage assets. In 1986, the Heritage Inventory was created which today lists 142 properties. A Cultural Heritage Landscape Inventory established this year includes 26 sites to date.



In Grimsby, heritage planning is integrated into the Official Plan. Its vision states that "Grimsby's future will build on its small town scenic character" and that "Grimsby's natural heritage, cultural heritage and arts will be celebrated and protected."

To demonstrate this commitment, Grimsby, in partnership with the Region of Niagara, has implemented a robust suite of policies and programs aimed at promoting heritage conservation. Financial measures include:

- *Designated Property Grant Program:* Provides grants up to \$30,000 for heritage-designated commercial property and \$10,000 for heritage-designated residential property for façade improvement projects.
- *Downtown Grimsby Property Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Tax Increment Rebate:* Owners who complete property rehabilitation projects are eligible for reimbursement in the form of an annual grant equivalent to 70% of the resulting municipal tax increment for up to 10 years
- *Residential Conversion/Intensification Grant:* Provides a grant equal to 50% of the cost of rehabilitation existing residential units, up to a maximum of \$75,000.

In addition, several zoning by-laws protect the town's historic character and ensure the sensitive integration of new developments within the historic context.



The residents of Grimsby celebrate their community's heritage, enthusiastically participating in the annual Doors Open Grimsby Festival, historic walking tours and the Grimsby Heritage Art Contest. This enthusiasm demonstrates how powerfully heritage connects citizens to their town.

The jury was unanimous in its selection of this impressive nomination, calling Grimsby's approach to heritage conservation "proactive" and "sophisticated."

"Grimsby has so many dedicated programs for such a small community, such as designated property grants, tax increments, special zoning, and main street façade improvement grants. They have

everything that you could possibly think of."



FIGURE 14  
GRIMSBY CULTURAL HERIATGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engagement at the Forty Battlefield</li> <li>2. Downtown Grimsby</li> <li>3. Old Grimsby Village</li> <li>4. Depot District</li> <li>5. Mountain Street</li> <li>6. Lakeview Survey – Garden Suburb – Shafer</li> <li>7. Patton Street</li> <li>8. Central School</li> <li>9. Robinson Street</li> <li>10. Park Road North</li> <li>11. Atchison Terrace – Victory Homes and Garden Suburb</li> <li>12. Grimsby Homebuilders Cooperative, 1955</li> <li>13. Main Street East – Queen’s Lawn</li> <li>14. Main Street East .- Park School</li> <li>15. Main Street West</li> <li>16. Kerman Avenue</li> <li>17. Grimsby Beach</li> <li>18. Garden of Canada</li> <li>19. Beamer Falls</li> <li>20. Old #8 Highway – First Nation’s Trail – HG and B Electric Railway</li> <li>21. Ridge Road</li> <li>22. Beamer Memorial Conservation Area</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24. Bruce Trail / Niagara Escarpment</li> <li>25. Centennial Park</li> <li>26. Fifty Point Conservation Area</li> <li>27. Nelles Beach Park</li> <li>28. Bell Park</li> <li>29. Victoria Terrace</li> <li>30. Irish Woodlot</li> <li>31. Forty Mile Creek Valley</li> <li>32. Lake Ontario Shoreline</li> <li>33. Thirty Mountain Cemetery</li> <li>34. Queen’s Lawn Cemetery</li> <li>35. Scenic Views</li> <li>36. Hamilton Grimsby and Beamsville Electric Railway</li> <li>37. Bent Tree Native Settlement Markers</li> <li>38. Trail to Nelles Settlement on the Grand River</li> <li>39. Neutral Indian Burial Ground</li> <li>40. War and Military Sites</li> </ol> |
|---|---|



**Conclusion**

We thank again the Panel for the opportunity to express the views of the Town of Grimsby with respect to the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review of the Four Provincial Plans and land use planning in Ontario.

I wish to emphasize that we understand and support the Government's objective of preserving valuable tender fruit and Grape lands and the unique natural treasure that is the Niagara Escarpment. We also support the Province's objectives of forging more complete communities and realizing more efficient use of valuable public infrastructure. This is demonstrated by the fact that Grimsby was one of the first municipalities in Ontario to adopt a new Official Plan and Zoning By-law that were compliant with the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan.

As a local municipality, however, we constantly have our feet on the ground and are able to see and know our community and the lands upon which it sits in intricate detail. The comments contained within this letter are our sound professional advice to the Panel and the Province based on our knowledge of our Town, its needs and its environment. It is clear that there is much good that has come from the Provincial Plans. It is equally clear however, that there are certain changes that need to be looked at to ensure that all provincial goals and objectives are properly considered. I hope that you will seriously consider our comments and recommendations and I would extend a warm welcome to members of the Panel and the Ministries to Grimsby for a tour of the community and provide an opportunity for the Town to describe, in more detail, the issues that we feel need to be considered and understood.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,



Robert Bentley,  
Mayor – Town of Grimsby

APPENDIX A: SPECIALTY CROP GREENBELT STUDY REPORT  
FOR THE TOWN OF GRIMSBY, Prepared by AG Plan Limited,  
2016

Copy to: Niagara Region  
The Honourable Bill Mauro, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
The Honourable Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Town of Grimsby Planning Department

**Town of Grimsby (2 of 2)**

**SPECIALTY CROP GREENBELT STUDY REPORT  
FOR THE TOWN OF GRIMSBY**

Prepared for: The Town of Grimsby

By: AgPlan Limited



October 28, 2016.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

AgPlan Limited was retained by the Town of Grimsby in July, 2016 to complete a study and provide an independent opinion on specialty crops. The study was:

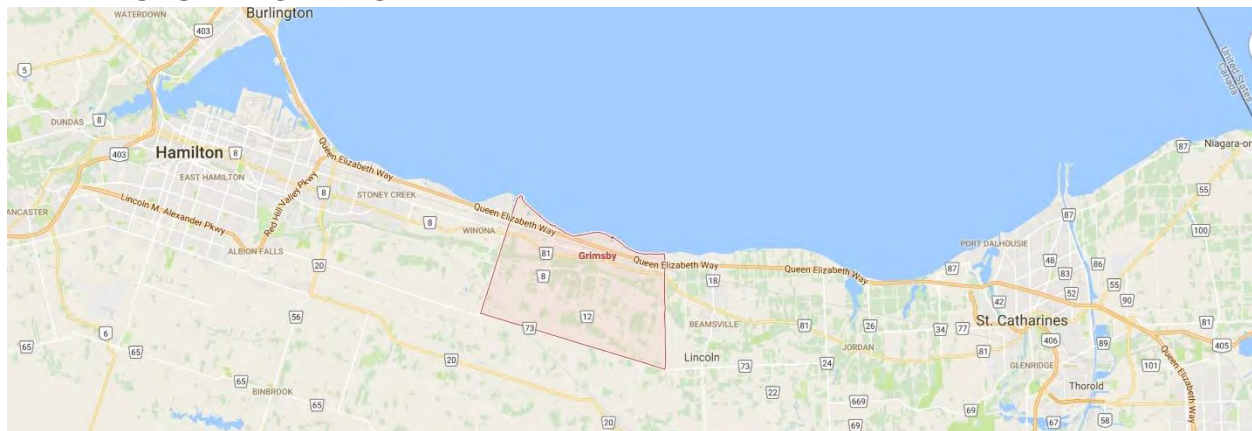
- to examine the agricultural characteristics of the designated *specialty crop area* within the Town of Grimsby objectively, that is, in a reasoned and reasonable way; and,
- to evaluate whether lands below (north) of the Niagara Escarpment can appropriately be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation.

In short, this study on the *specialty crop area* in the Town of Grimsby (Map 1) results because the Town wishes to remove two smaller areas below the Niagara Escarpment from the *specialty crop area* and has proposed an area to be added to the Greenbelt. These three areas are shown on Maps 2 through 6 as well as Map 8

For purposes of this study and report, specialty crops have been defined as fruit and vegetable production.

The following report sections predominantly describe physical characteristics as well as socio-cultural characteristics to demonstrate that the two smaller areas north of the Niagara Escarpment within Grimsby, which are designated as *specialty crop area*, have several limitations for the production of fruits and vegetables and can therefore reasonably be removed the designation.

### MAP 1 STUDY LOCATION



## 2.0 POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

All of policy from the provincial through to the local scales are governed by the definition of *specialty crop area* as outlined in the provincial policy statement (PPS, 2014) which is stated as follows:

*Specialty crop area: means areas designated using guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time. In these areas, specialty crops are predominantly grown such as tender fruits (peaches, cherries, plums), grapes, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops, and crops from agriculturally developed organic soil, usually resulting from:*



- a) soils that have suitability to produce specialty crops, or lands that are subject to special climatic conditions, or a combination of both;
- b) farmers skilled in the production of specialty crops; and
- c) a long-term investment of capital in areas such as crops, drainage, infrastructure and related facilities and services to produce, store, or process specialty crops.

The definition can be interpreted to mean that there are seven tests to be applied when designating *specialty crop areas*:

1. Current production of fruits and vegetables (land-based and/or in greenhouses) where,
2. greater than 50% of a given area is used for that production,
3. where soils are suitable (interpreted to mean have the potential for relatively high yields) for the production of those crops,
4. where climate conditions allow for fruit and vegetable production (and that climate is unusual in the context of the Province),
5. where the farm population has skills and experience in fruit and vegetable production, in addition to
6. where there is capital investment in infrastructure related to that specialty crop production and,
7. where there are facilities to produce, store or process specialty crops.

The PPS (2014) is mute with respect to how many of the seven tests need to be met in order to be able to designate a *specialty crop area* and does not provide any guidance with respect to the relative importance (weighting) of the seven characteristics. Additionally, the PPS (2014) provides no guidance with respect to a minimum size of area designated as *specialty crop area*.

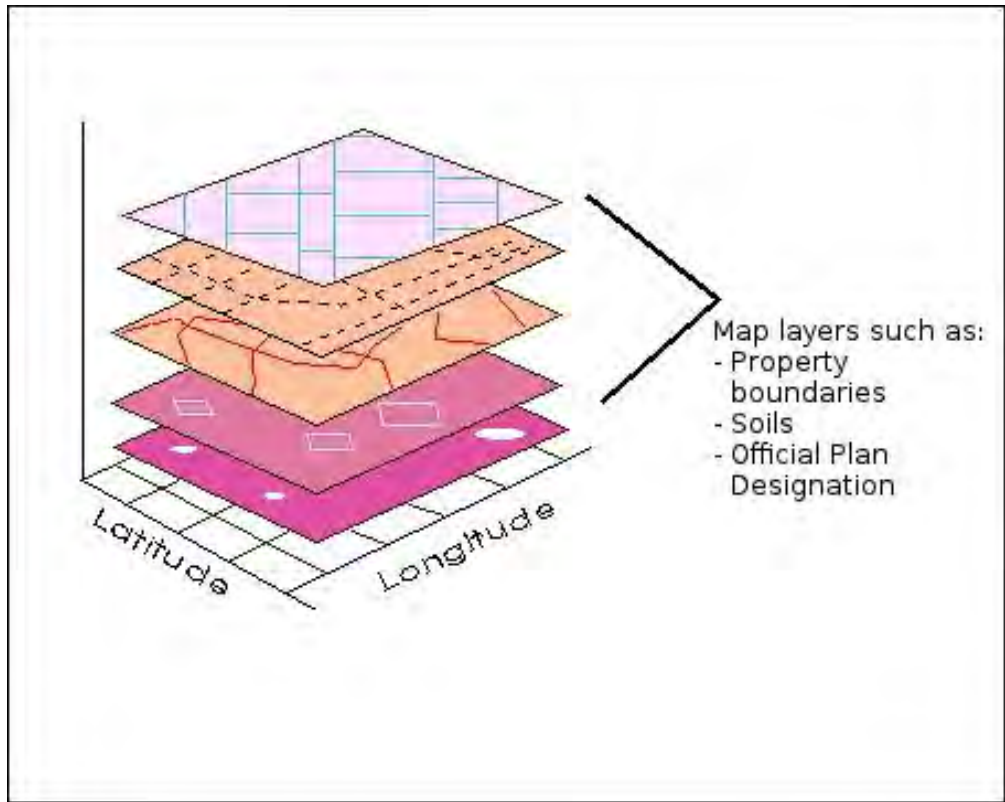
### 3.0 METHODS

The findings, described in the following sections, result, for the most part, from an analysis of existing Statistics Canada and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs databases (OMAFRA). Mapping is based on Land Information Ontario (LIO) information. Soil potential for the production of fruits and vegetables is adapted from the Niagara Region soil survey (Kingston and Presant, 1989).

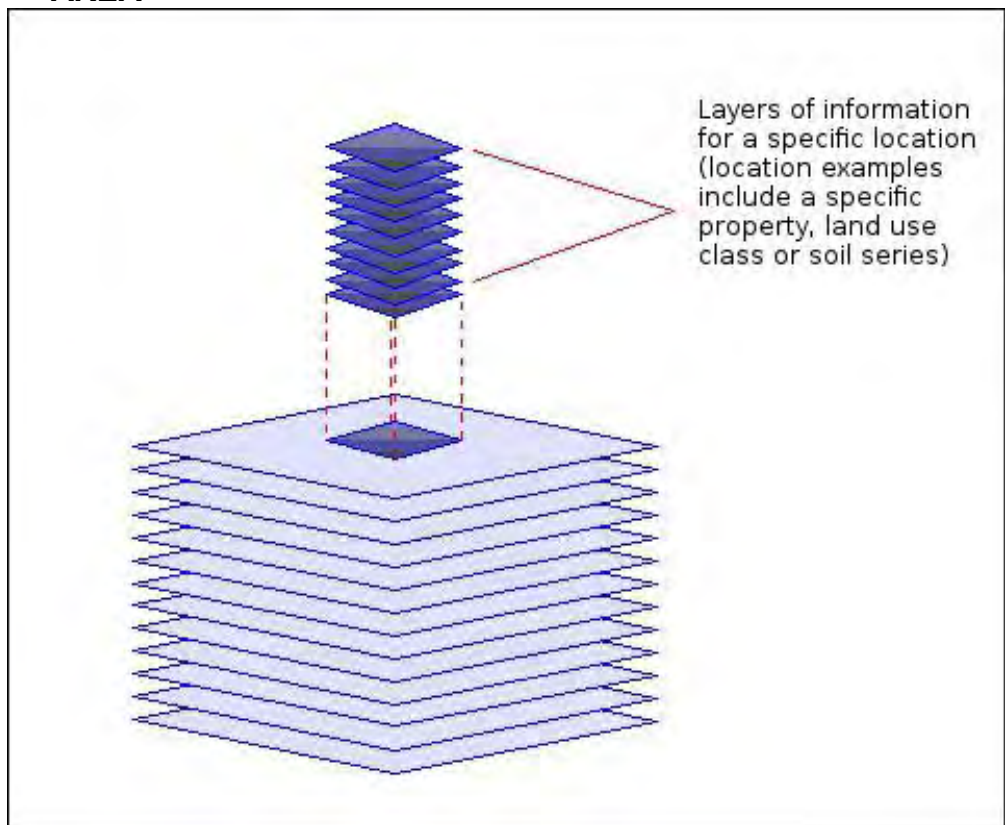
Several different methods have been used to characterize Grimsby, its farm operations and its agricultural land. The first principle method combined different layers of map information using a Geographic Information System (GIS). In general terms, GIS systems allow for an examination of spatial correlation amongst observed physical and sociocultural characteristics which, in the past, used to be accomplished with a manual technique called “sieve mapping” as described by McHarg (1969). In this Grimsby study, information on, soil series, agricultural land use and grape climatic zones were combined to identify the relative agricultural characteristics and value of different areas following a process outlined as a simple graphic in Figure 1. This information was subsequently subdivided using an additional layer of information on agricultural and non-agricultural designations to allow agricultural information to be subdivided into evaluation units that follow designation areas as outlined conceptually in Figure 2.



**FIGURE 1 GIS MAP LAYERS SCHEMATIC**



**FIGURE 2 GIS SCHEMATIC SHOWING SUBSET RELATIONSHIP FOR A SPECIFIC AREA**





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The agricultural and designation information generated using GIS was then graphed to summarize the relative differences based on different designations and/or specific geographic locations.

In addition, single factor analysis as well as the use of multi-attribute data analysis was used to compare the agricultural performance of Grimsby relative to other sub-tier municipalities/townships in Niagara Region. The multi-attribute data analyses were completed using two methods; simple additive weighted, and concordance which are described in more detail in Appendix 5.

## **4.0 DISCUSSION OF AGRICULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS IN, AND INFLUENCING, GRIMSBY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As described previously in the section on policy, the PPS (2014) can be interpreted to provide seven tests for the identification of *specialty crop areas*. Based on those seven tests, the following questions were used to guide the analyses and to subsequently put the Specialty Crop Area within Grimsby in context.

1. What are the predominant crops grown in Grimsby and Niagara?
2. Of the specialty crops (fruits and vegetables) grown in Grimsby and Niagara, which of those are predominant?
3. Are the specialty crops grown in Grimsby similar to those grown in Niagara?
4. Have the number of farms producing fruits and vegetable crops as well as the absolute and relative amount of specialty crop production area in Grimsby and Niagara changed over time?
5. Are there other areas in southern Ontario which produce more and a broader cross-section of fruits and vegetables than does Niagara Region and Grimsby?
6. How is specialty crop production distributed geographically within Grimsby and within Niagara?
7. What is the soil capability of Grimsby and Grimsby's specialty crop area?
8. What is the soil potential of Grimsby and Grimsby's specialty crop area?
9. What are the climate characteristics of Grimsby and Niagara in the context of southern Ontario?
10. Is there evidence that Grimsby provides specific agricultural economic characteristics that would benefit farmers producing fruits and vegetables relative to other parts of Niagara Region and the Province of Ontario?
11. Are there sociocultural characteristics within Grimsby that provide incentives/disincentives related to the production of fruit and vegetable crops?

These questions will be repeated as an introduction in the following subsections of the findings summarized within this report. Additionally, the report uses 4 phrases which are defined as follows:

- **Soil Capability Class** - This term is the one most often used in rating agricultural soils and is defined as part of the Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability Classification for Agriculture - Soil Capability for Common Field Crops. It is an interpretive classification of the soils maps produced within Canada where soils



are identified by texture, drainage class, layers (diagnostic horizons) etc. following the Canadian System of Soil Classification (1978, third edition 1989 [http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/references/1998sc\\_a.html](http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/references/1998sc_a.html) ). The soil capability rating is a seven-class system consisting of a class number (1 (best) – 7 (poorest)) and a subclass limitation component such as stoniness, slope or erosion (represented by an alphabetic code P, T, E, etc.). The best soils with no limitations for production of common field crops are ranked as class 1 and soils unsuitable for agriculture are rated as class 7. This information concerning capability classes and subclass limitations is provided as part of the relational database included with the soil mapping digitized by OMAFRA and provided by Land Information Ontario (LIO).

- **Soil Productivity Index** - The original soil capability classification classes one through seven have been converted from an ordinal to a ratio scale based on crop yields. For common field crops, such as grain corn, oats and barley, a relationship was measured to demonstrate that if class 1 land was assigned the soil productivity index value 1.00, then class 2 would be 0.80 and class 3 would be 0.64 etc. The use of the ratio scale allows for a mathematically acceptable measurement of mean value. Therefore, a given study area can have a single average value of a soil productivity index. When comparing different site alternatives, the use of the soil productivity index allows comparison of the alternatives using a single value. The use of the soil productivity index also provides a way to deal with soil complexes - where a soil complex is represented by a single polygon (in the past this was called a map unit) where there are two or more soil series/types present and mapped and where there is some likelihood to be a combination of soil capability classes such as 60% class 1 and 40% class 2T, for example.
- **Soil Potential Index** - Like the aforementioned Soil Productivity Index, the Soil Potential Index provides an “average” (single value) soil potential for agricultural production for a given area when that area contains more than one soil potential rank or rating. The Soil Potential Index is based on ranks which are part of an ordinal scale and provide a potential rating for the production of fruit and vegetable crops.
- **Agricultural Performance** - Agricultural performance is a single relative comparative measure that combines many agricultural characteristics of a given area in comparison to another given area (for example, one Region or County relative to another Region or County). The scoring, ranking or relative difference is quantitative. Agricultural performance includes economic, socio-cultural and physical variables and is described in more detail in Appendix 5.

## **4.2 General Context, Grimsby Niagara Region and Southern Ontario**

### **What are the predominant crops grown in Grimsby and Niagara?**

Niagara Region and Grimsby produce a broad range of agricultural crops. The predominant crops (based on area), that are grown in Grimsby and Niagara, are forage crops (alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures, tame hay and fodder) and common field crops (soybeans, corn and wheat). Fruit and vegetable crops account for 15% and 0.5% percent, respectively, of census farm area reported in Grimsby for the census year



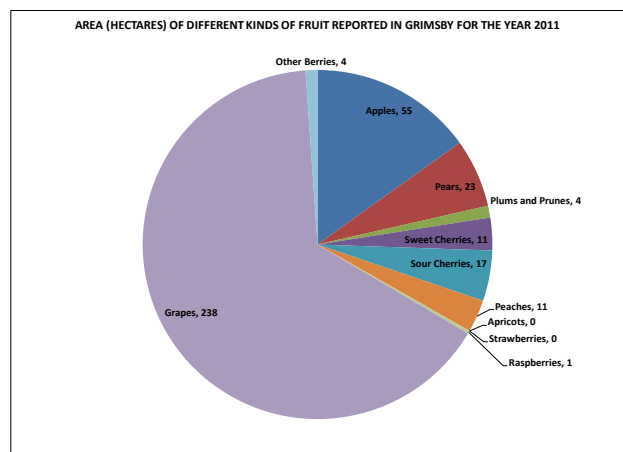
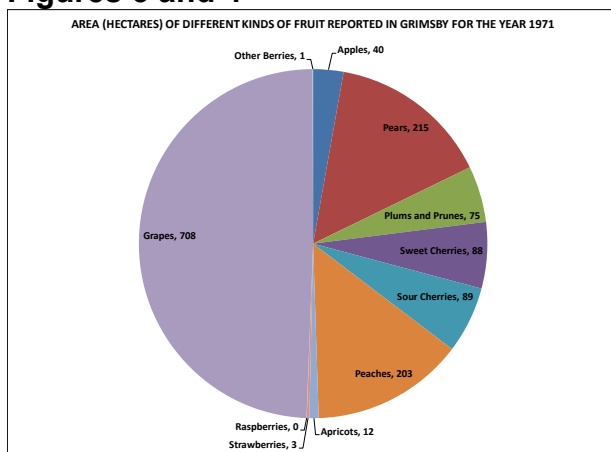
2011. For Niagara Region, fruit production is found on 12% and vegetable production (excluding greenhouse vegetable production) on 8% of census farm area in 2011.

### Of the specialty crops (fruits and vegetables) grown in Grimsby and Niagara, which of those are predominant?

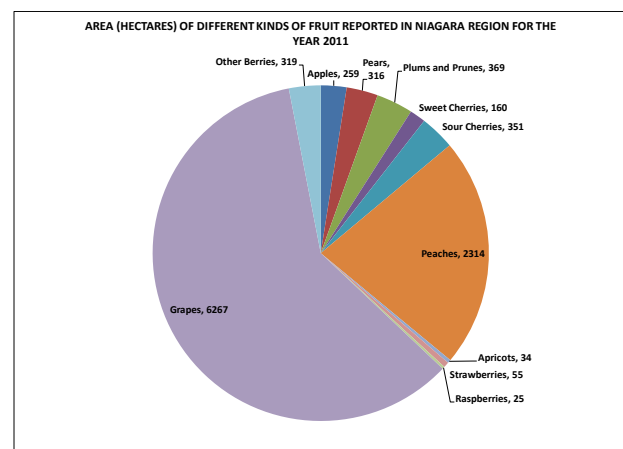
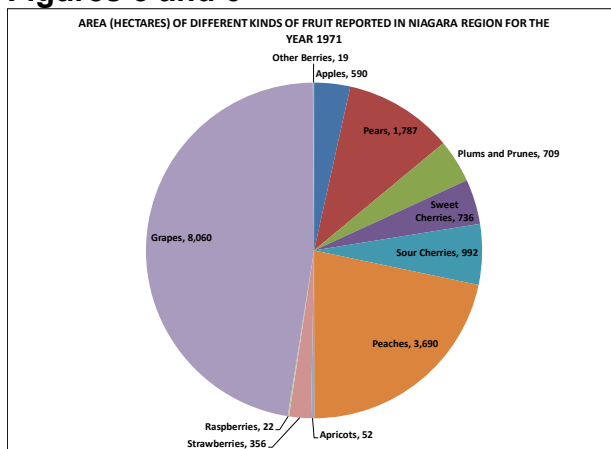
Fruit and vegetable production in Niagara Region and in the Town of Grimsby is unequal given that vegetable production accounts for only 6% of the total specialty crop (fruit and vegetable) area in Niagara in 2011. In Grimsby, vegetable production represented 3% of the total area reported producing specialty crops in 2011. The predominant vegetable crop in Niagara was sweet corn in 2011 and the relatively low levels of vegetable production in Grimsby and the resultant data suppression prevent a reasonable examination of vegetable crop predominance. Therefore, the following discussion relates to fruit production.

On an areal basis, grape production is predominant in both Grimsby and Niagara and that predominance has been present for over 30 years. Grape production area has increased from the census years 1971 to 2011 as summarized in Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Figures 3 and 4



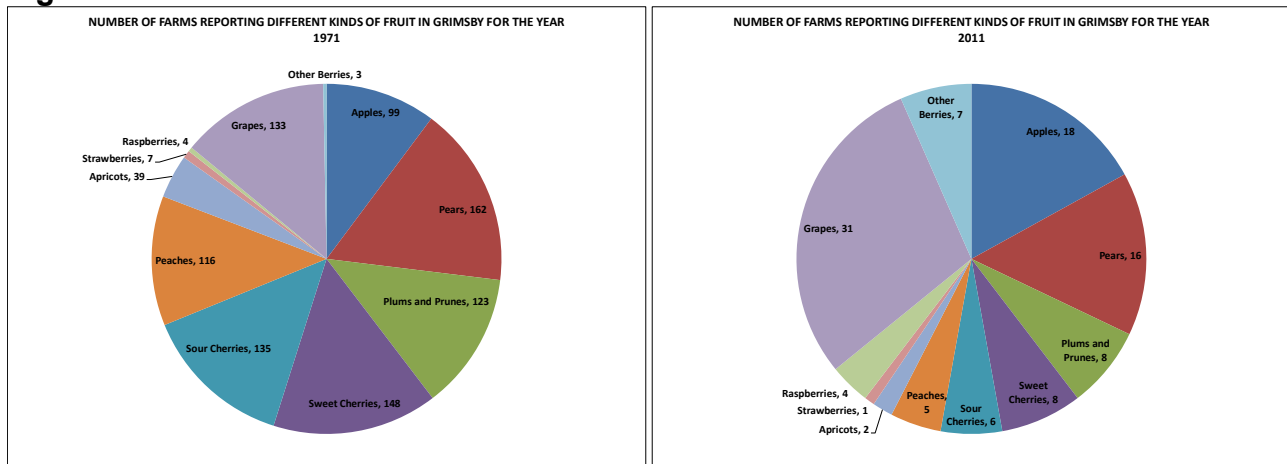
Figures 5 and 6



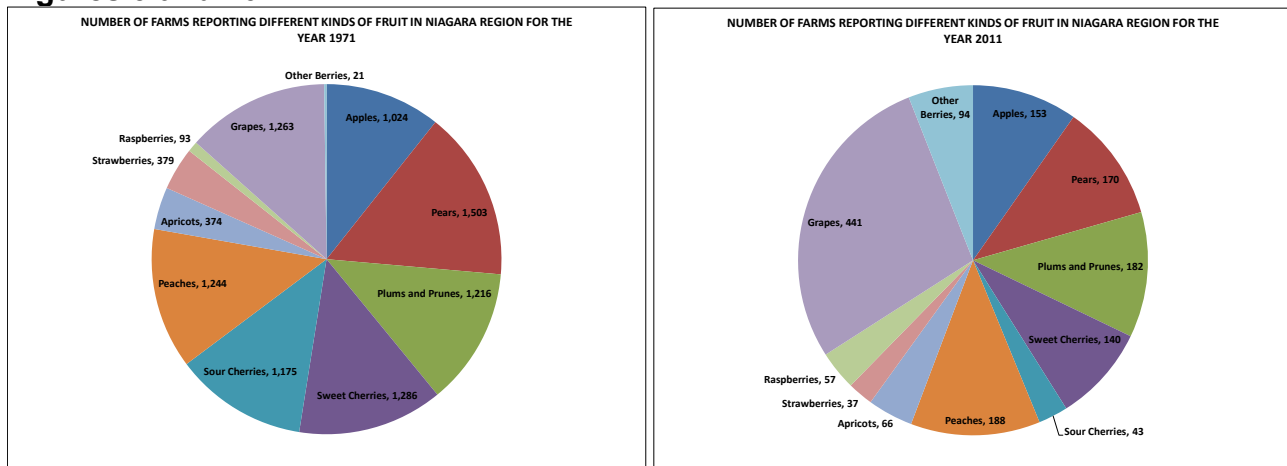


The number of farms reporting fruit production also indicates that more farms in 2011 report grape production than other fruit crops in both Grimsby as well as Niagara. However, in 1971, more farms were reporting sweet as well as sour cherry production than were reporting grapes in Grimsby. In 1971, in Niagara, more farms were reporting pears and sour cherries than were reporting grapes. Information on farms reporting different kinds of fruit production is summarized in Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10.

**Figures 7 and 8**



**Figures 9 and 10**



**Are the specialty crops grown in Grimsby similar to those grown in Niagara?**

A review of Figures 3 through 10 indicates that similar fruit and vegetable crops are grown in both Grimsby and Niagara. However, the relative area and the number of farms reporting different kinds of fruit and vegetable production vary over the past 30 years and between Niagara and Grimsby.

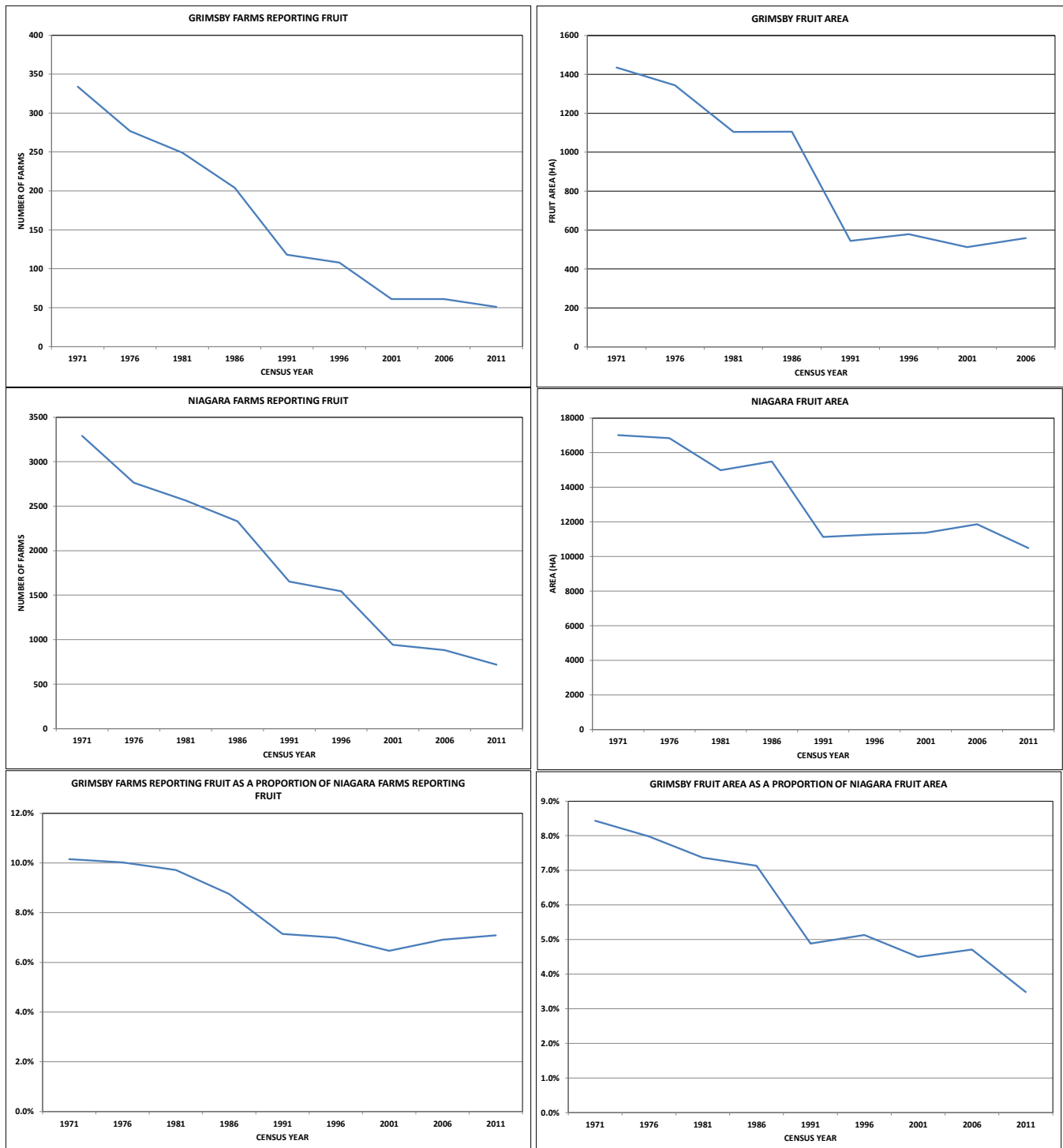
**Have the number of farms producing fruits and vegetable crops as well as the absolute and relative amount of specialty crop production area in Grimsby and Niagara changed over time?**

The area of fruit production and the number of farms reporting fruit production have diminished in both Grimsby and Niagara between 1971 and 2011. In Grimsby, approximately 340 farms reported fruit production in 1971 and by 2011 slightly over 50



farms reported fruit production. Fruit area reported was above 1400 ha in 1971 and is just below 600 ha in 2011.

**Figures 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16**



Approximately 3300 farms reported fruit production in 1971 in Niagara Region and by 2011 the number farms reporting fruit production had decreased to approximately 700.

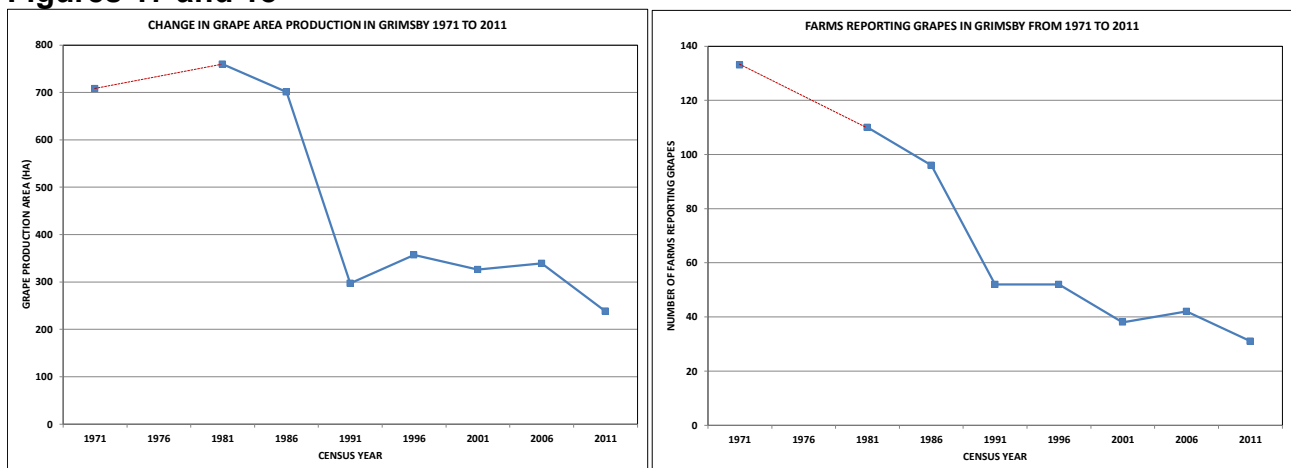




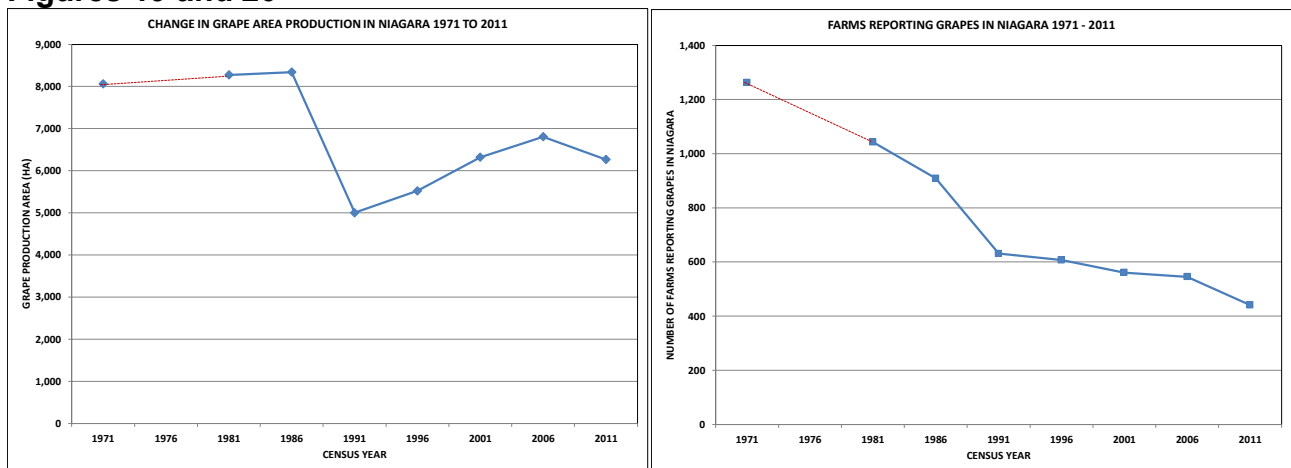
Grimsby's number of farms reporting fruit production as a proportion of Niagara's fruit farms had decreased from 10% to approximately 7% from 1971 to 2011. Grimsby's proportion of Niagara's area in fruit production decreased from 8.5% to 3.5% from 1971 to 2011. Therefore, Grimsby's fruit farm number reduction and reducing area of production happened at a greater rate than that for Niagara. The data supporting the aforementioned farm number and area for fruit production are taken from Statistics Canada information and are summarized in Figures 11 to 16.

Because of the increasing importance of great production and wineries in Niagara, a separate analysis on great production has been completed. Figures 17 and 18 demonstrate a decline in area in grape production and the number of farms reporting grapes in Grimsby between 1971 and 2011. Niagara Region also shows a decline in grape area production as well as farms reporting grapes (Figures 19 and 20). The decline in grape area production is more marked in Grimsby than it is in Niagara. Grimsby's grape production area as a proportion of Niagara's grape production area is diminishing as summarized in Figure 21. The number of farms reporting grapes as a proportion of the Niagara farms reporting grapes is also diminishing as shown in Figure 22. Therefore, Grimsby's grape farm number reduction and reducing area of production happened at a greater rate than that for Niagara between 1971 and 2011.

**Figures 17 and 18**

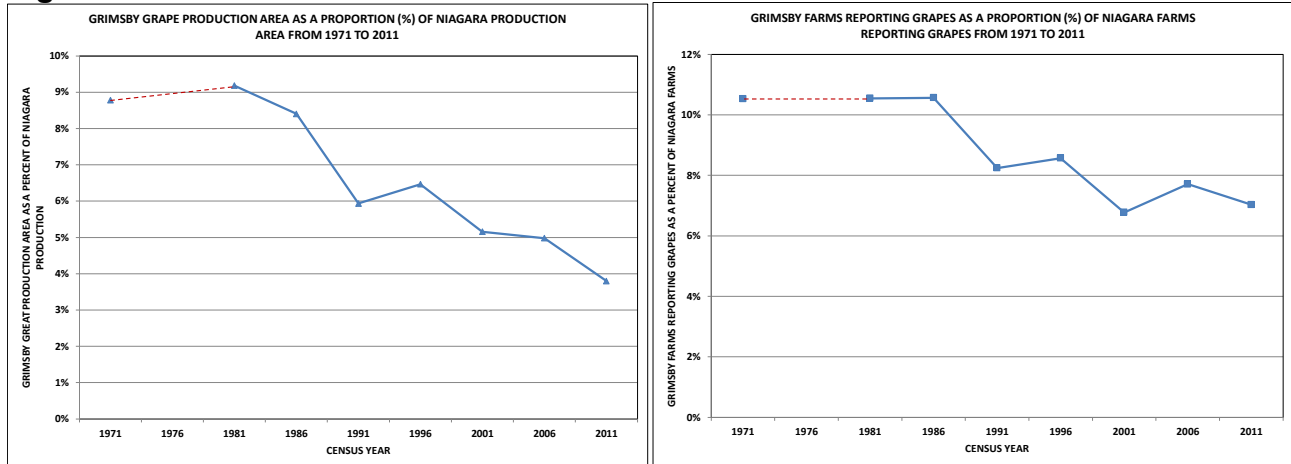


**Figures 19 and 20**





## Figures 21 and 22

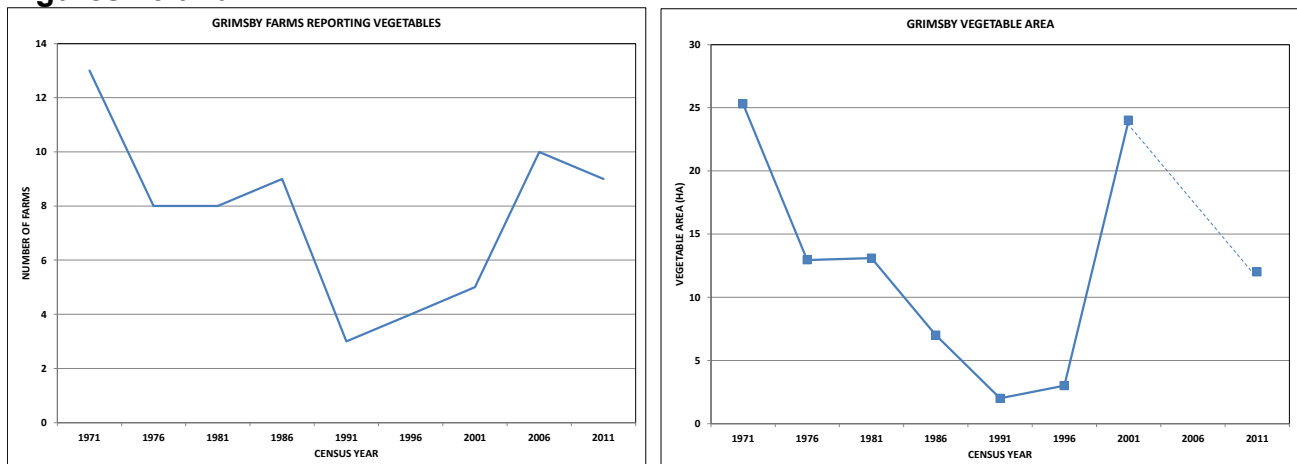


Vegetable production occurs less often than fruit production in both Grimsby and in Niagara. For example, in 1971, Grimsby had 13 farms reporting vegetable production and 334 reporting fruit production. In Niagara, in 1971, 516 farms reported vegetable production relative to approximately 3290 farms reporting fruit. With respect to area of specialty crop production, vegetable production area in Grimsby was 25 ha in 1971 and relative to 1435 ha of fruit production and in Niagara vegetable area was 885 ha relative to 17014 hectares of fruit production in 1971.

Grimsby has relatively few farms reporting vegetable production and, as a result, the actions of one or two farmers making decisions about the area to be planted can significantly affect the total area of vegetable production reported for Grimsby. As well, low farm numbers can result in data suppression for reasons of confidentiality and that occurred in 2006. Where data suppression has occurred, the line shown in the graph is dashed (Figure 24).

Vegetable production in Grimsby shows a relatively erratic pattern but there is a reduction in the number of farms reporting vegetable production and in the area of that production from 1971 to 2011 as shown in Figures 23 and 24.

## Figures 23 and 24

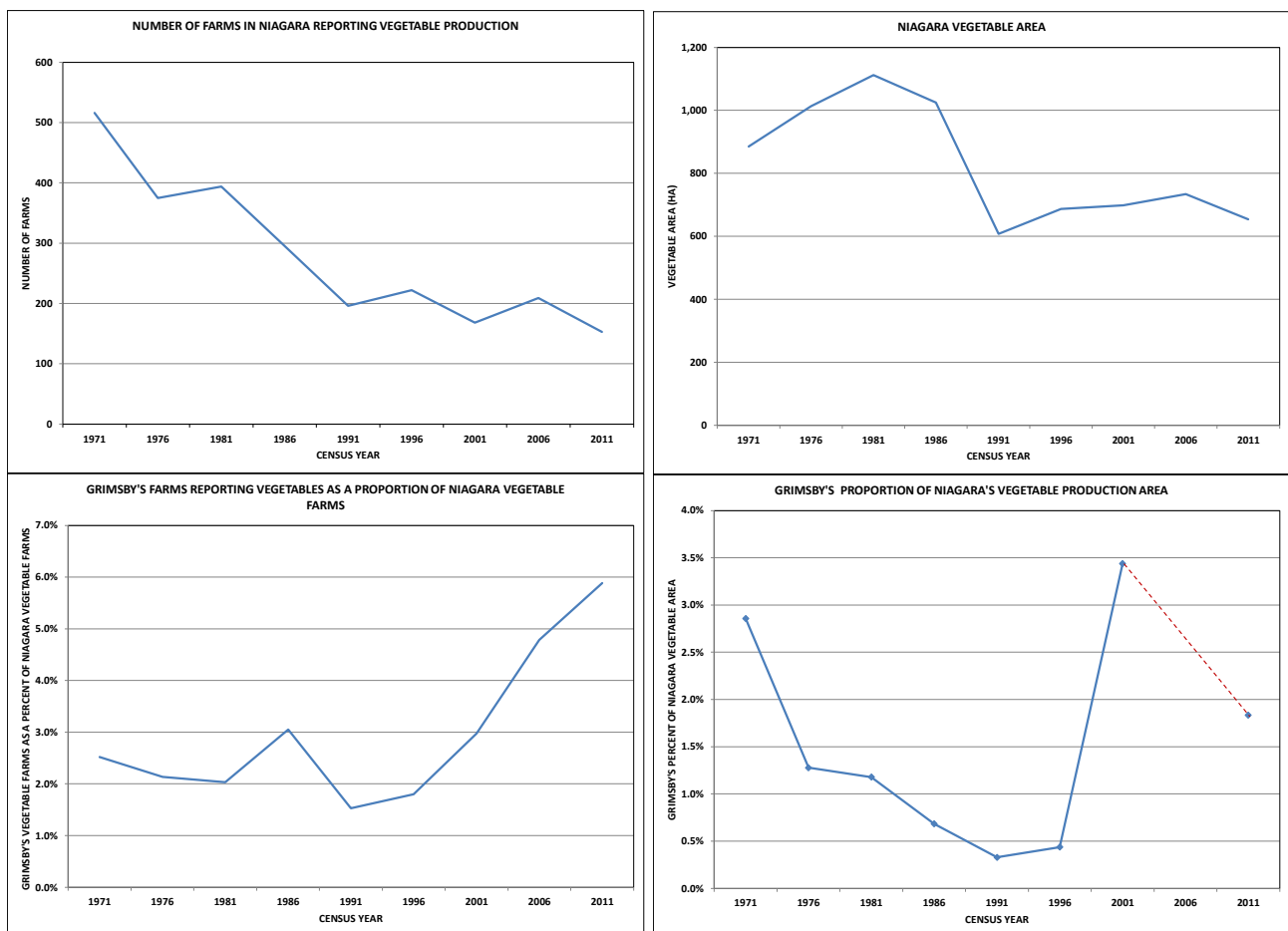




Niagara Region shows a distinct pattern where the number of farms reporting vegetable production has decreased from 516 in 1971 to 153 in 2011 (Figure 25). Vegetable production area in Niagara reached a high in 1981 of 1112 ha and diminished to 654 ha in 2011 (Figure 26).

Grimsby's farms reporting vegetables has increased as a proportion of Niagara's farms reporting vegetable production from approximately 2.5% to almost 6% between 1971 and 2011 (Figure 27). Grimsby's proportion of Niagara's vegetable production area decreased from 1971 to 1991 to a low less than 0.5%, increased to 2001 and has decreased again in the last census year where information is available (2011) to less than 2% (Figure 28).

**Figures 25, 26, 27 28**



Vegetable production in Grimsby and Niagara is relatively low and is not as significant as production in other Regions/Countries. The level of significance of fruit versus vegetable production is discussed in the following.

**Are there other areas in southern Ontario which produce more and a broader cross-section of fruits and vegetables than does Niagara Region and Grimsby?**

Historically, Niagara can be differentiated from most of southern Ontario based on the amount of its tender fruit and grape production. Several analyses using 2011 census

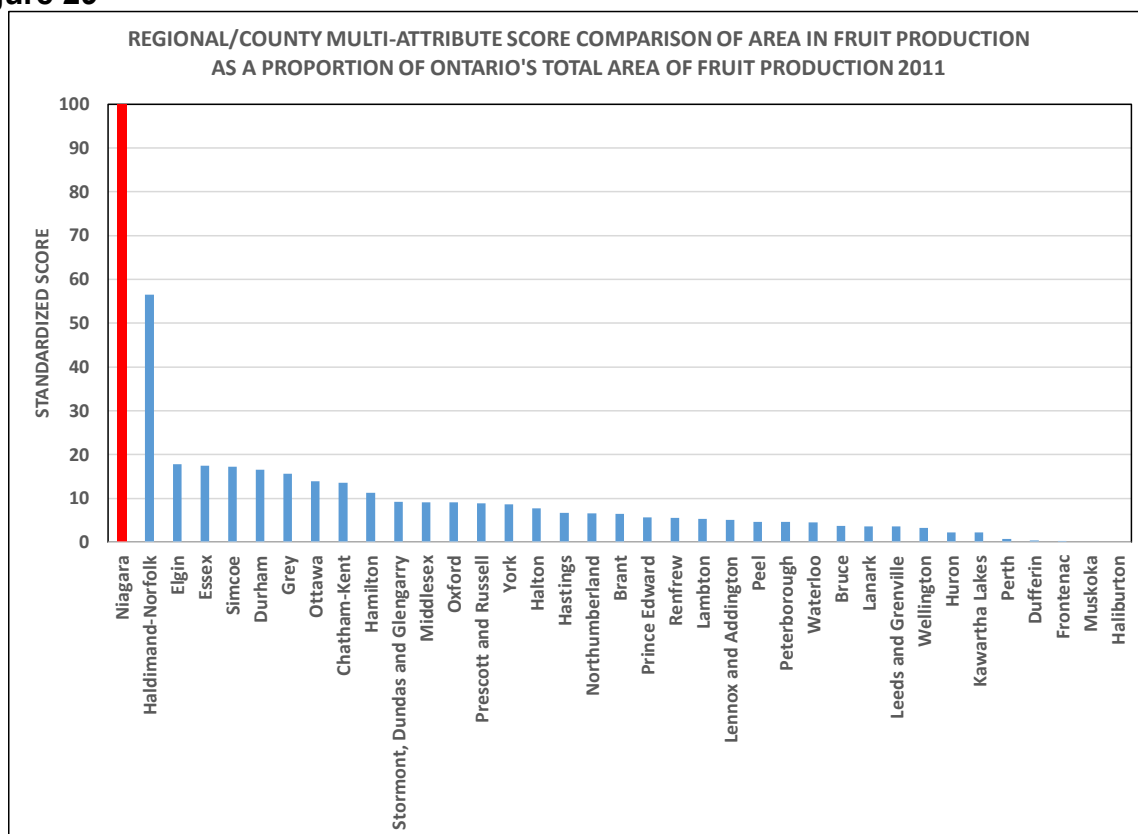


data are outlined in the following in support of Niagara's importance for fruit production. An additive multi-attribute analysis of area of fruit production, as described in Appendix 4, supports this historical perspective. Figure 29 shows Niagara as having the highest standardized score when compared to other Regions/Counties in southern Ontario

If the area measurements are proportional to the total census farm area of each Region or County, then Niagara ranks as fourth as summarized in Figure 30. Where Niagara Region is clearly unique is in grape production, where greater than 80% of the production area for grapes is located as summarized in Figure 31.

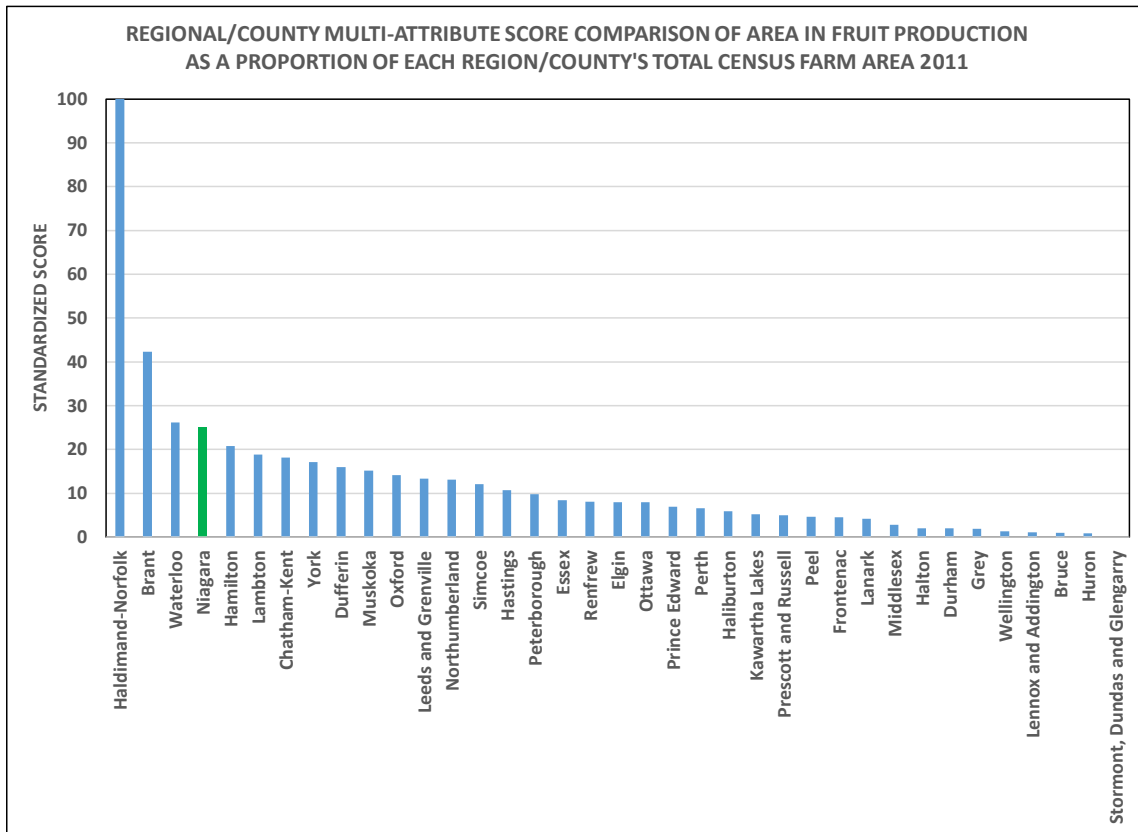
With respect to area of vegetable production, Niagara is less important, ranking 11<sup>th</sup> when the data are proportional to total census farm area (Figure 32). When the proportion of Ontario's total vegetable production area is calculated, Niagara ranks as 13<sup>th</sup> producing 13% as summarized in Figure 33.

**Figure 29**





**Figure 30**



**Figure 31**

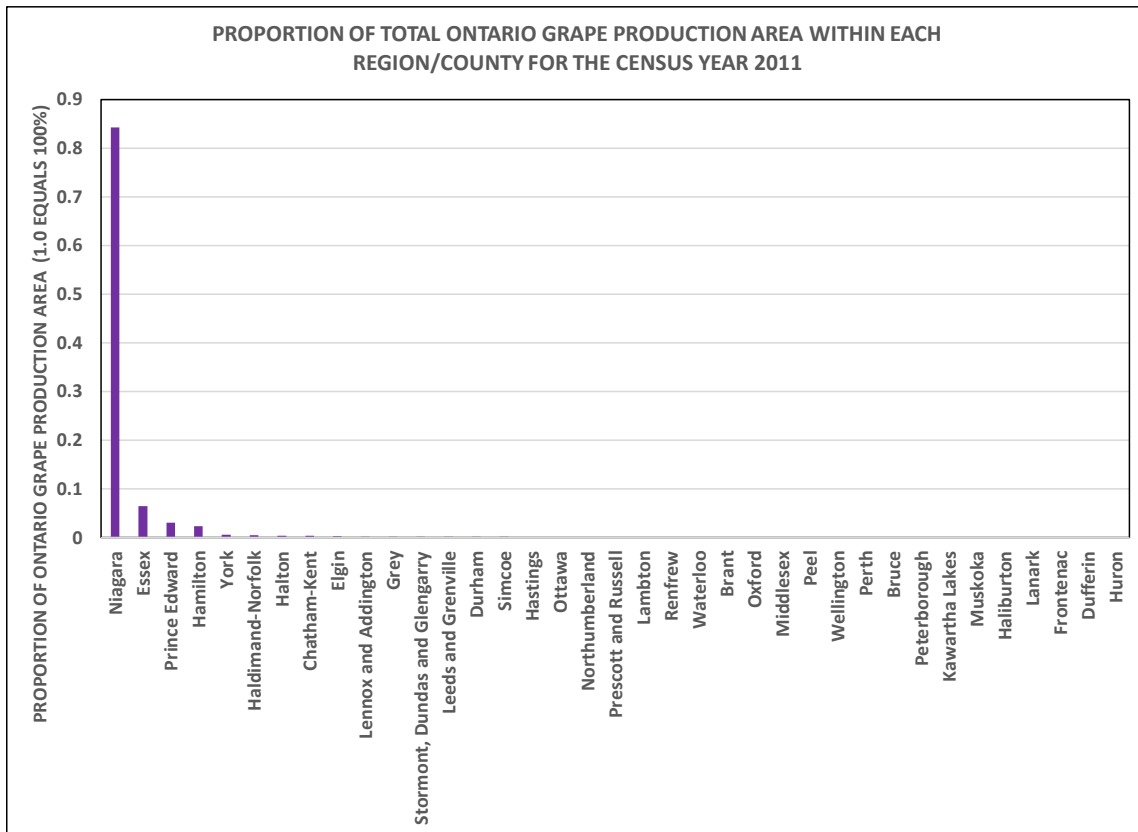




Figure 32

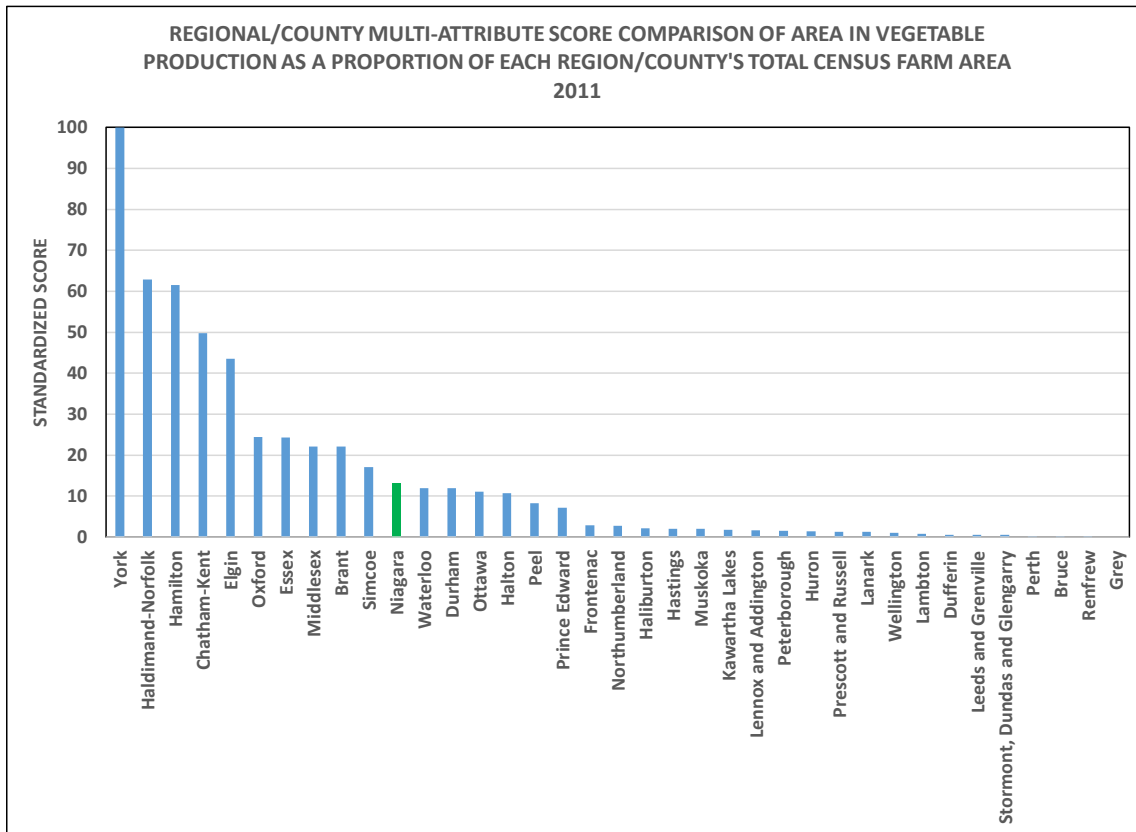
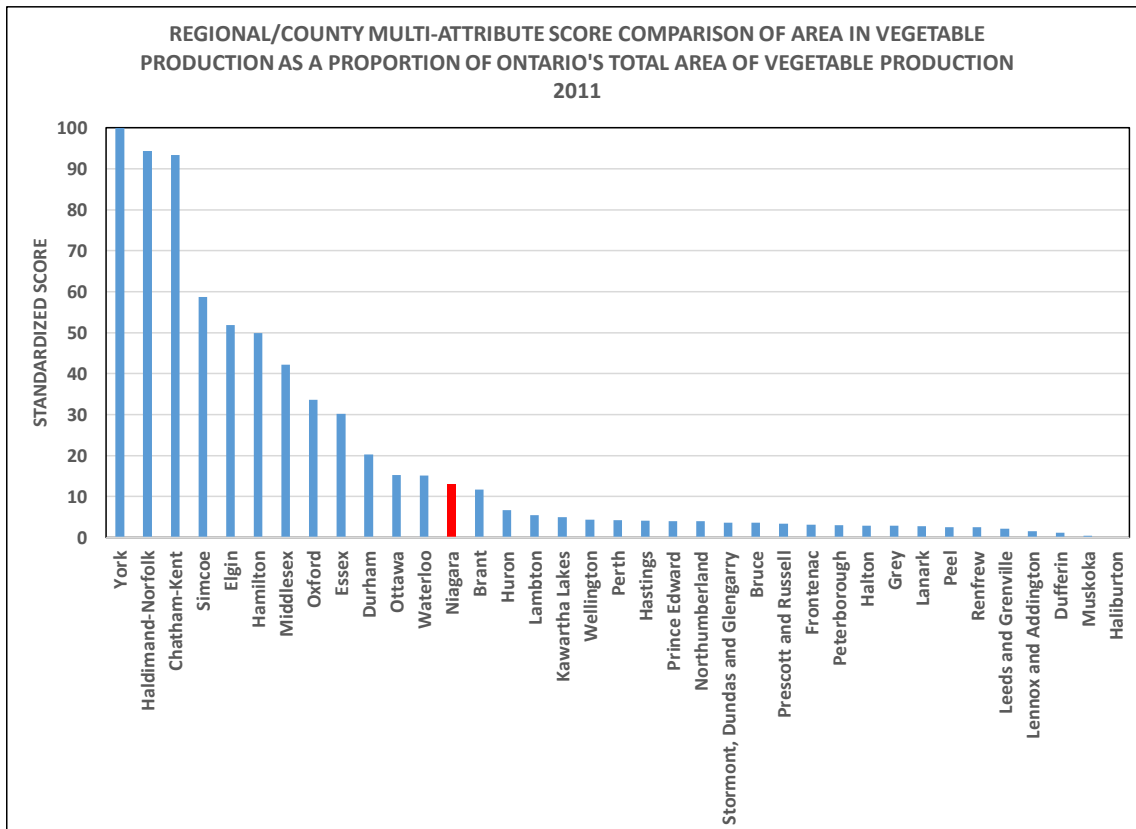


Figure 33





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### **4.3 Agricultural Land Use**

#### **How is specialty crop production distributed geographically within Grimsby and within Niagara?**

The previous sections of this report have outlined the absolute and proportional changes and/or relative ranking of Grimsby and Niagara with regards to fruit and vegetable production based on Census of Agriculture data. The following discussion will review the geographic distribution of specialty crop production within Grimsby based on a data set other than the census.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) produces agricultural land use maps for Canada and the portion of that mapping for Grimsby is presented as Map 2 within this report. The legend associated with the AAFC mapping is more extensive than that reproduced in Map 2. The generalization of the AAFC information was done primarily to differentiate specialty crops. Areas of nurseries were included in the following analysis because nurseries produce rootstock, vines and orchard tree stock in Niagara. However, nothing in the agriculture census or in the AAFC land-use information allows for the differentiation of specialty crop nursery stock versus landscaping stock.

The AAFC land-use mapping and subsequent area calculations are not comparable to the area values presented within the agricultural census. For example:

- the census differentiates dry field peas, chickpeas and green peas, whereas the AAFC has a single category labelled as peas;
- the census differentiates grain corn, silage corn and sweet corn, whereas the AAFC has a single category for corn;
- the census includes potatoes but groups them with field crops rather than as a vegetable and the AAFC has potatoes as a separate category;
- the AAFC has five vegetable categories including sugarbeets whereas the census as 26 vegetable categories providing area information with no category for sugarbeets;
- neither the AAFC nor the census differentiate between vinifera and labrusca grapes.

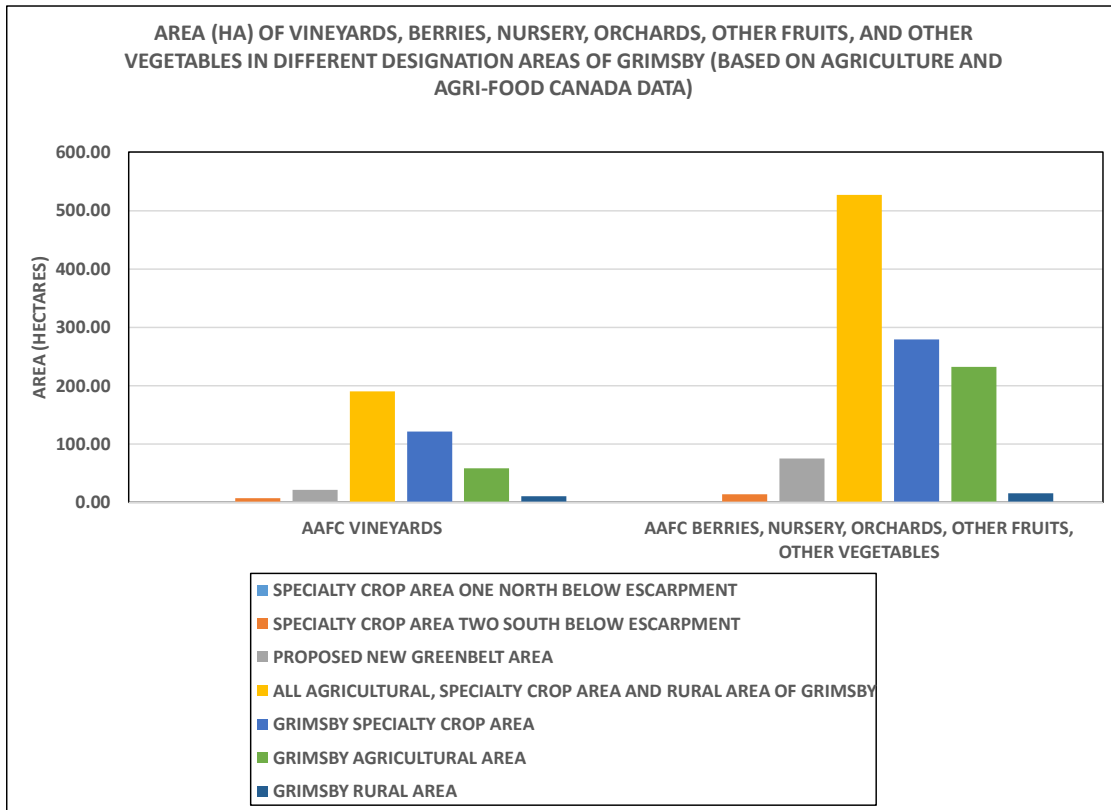
Regardless, the AAFC agricultural land use information can be used to compare production in different geographic areas within Grimsby. Therefore, measurement of vineyard area and area of fruits and vegetables based on Map 2 have been summarized for different planning area designations within Grimsby.

As summarized in Figure 34, the *specialty crop areas* one and two north of the Escarpment (the 2 areas that Grimsby proposes to be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation), have relatively small amounts of vineyards of 0.13 and 7.16 ha respectively. The highest amount of the vineyard area (greater than 50%) is present in the *specialty crop area* designation (outside of areas one and two). Similarly, relatively small amounts of berries, nursery, orchards, other fruits and vegetables are found in the specialty crop areas one and two (0.66 and 14.04 ha respectively). When a proportionate measure is made, as summarized in Figure 35, *specialty crop areas* one and two have less than 1% and slightly more than 4% of their total area in vineyards. When all vineyards fruits and vegetables areas are combined, *specialty crop areas* one and two have 1% and 13% of their total area in specialty crops. Interestingly,

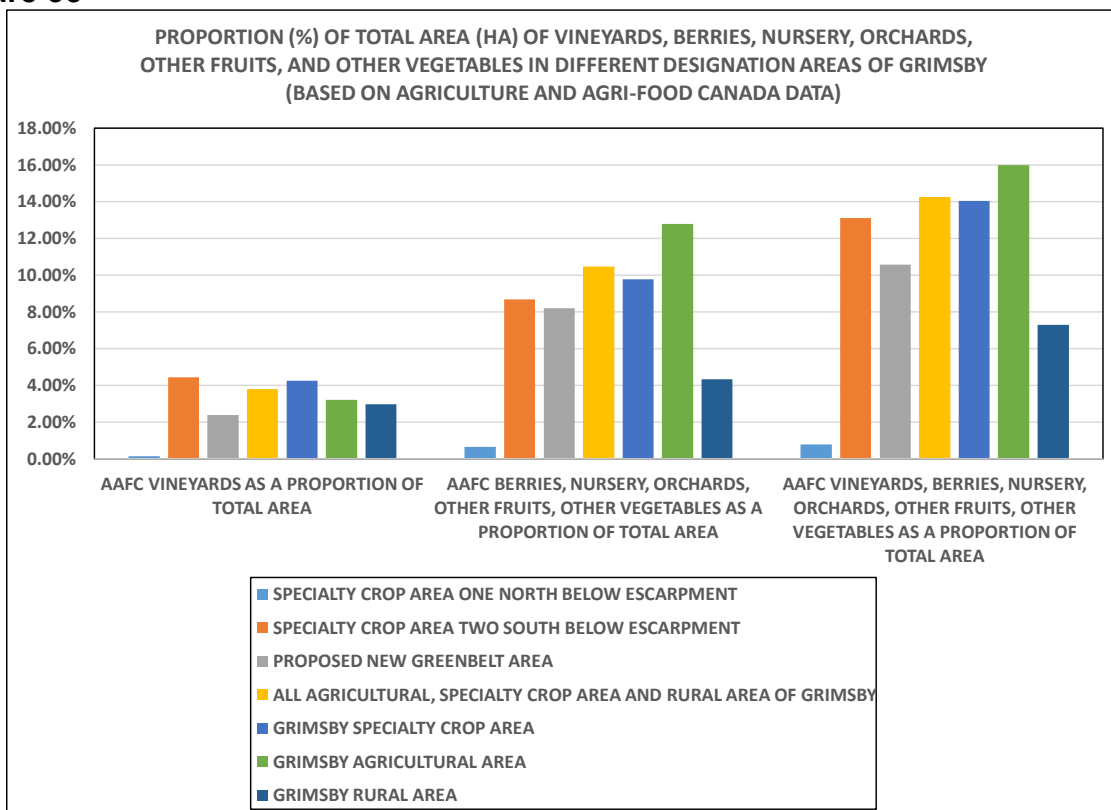


proportionately, more specialty crops are grown in the general agricultural designation as opposed to the *specialty crop area*.

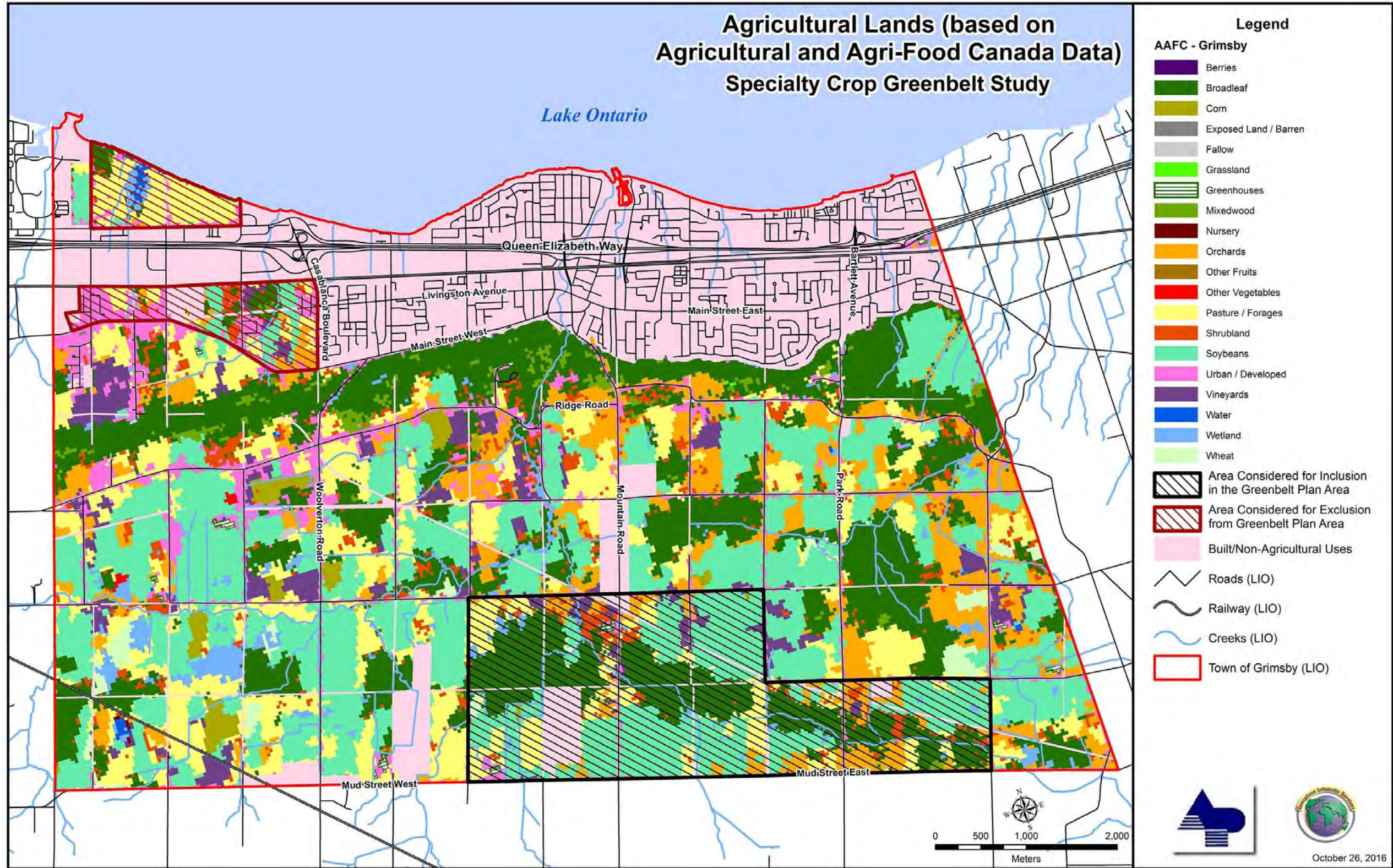
**Figure 34**



**Figure 35**







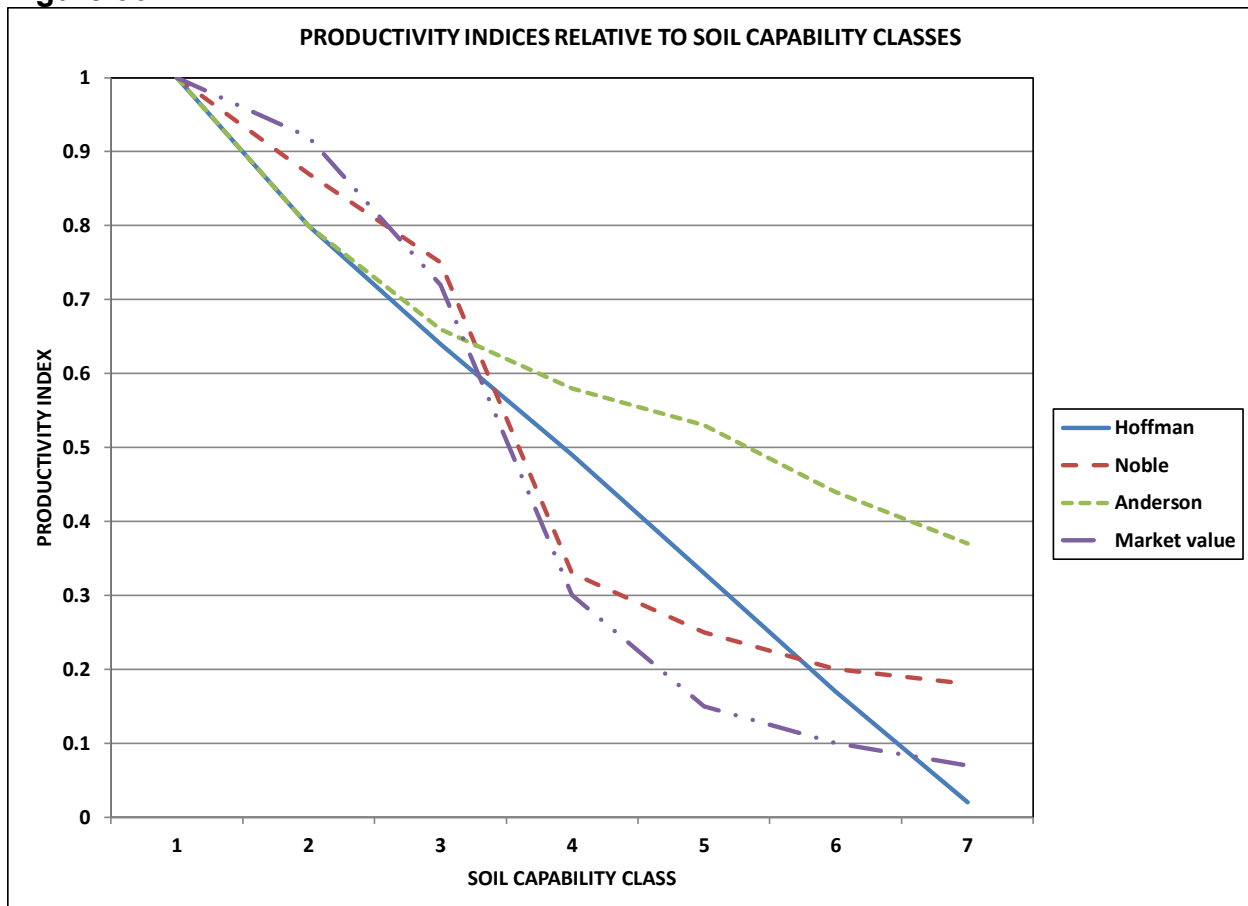


## 4.4 Soils, Soil Capability and Soil Potential

### What is the soil capability of Grimsby and Grimsby's *specialty crop area*?

The soil capability classification is described more fully in Appendix 3. It is a system for rating soils based on their continuing limitations for common field crop production where common field crops include, for example, corn, wheat, oats, barley etc. Soil capability classes have been linked to various productivity indices for common field crops, forage crops, farm assessment and economics. The Hoffman indices for field crops and the Anderson indices for forage crops provide an indication of yield variation with soil capability class. Noble's work relates economics of farming in Eastern Ontario to soil capability class and the Committee on Farm Assessment links soil capability class to assessed value. These 4 different indices are summarized by Hoffman (1973) and reproduced here as Figure 36.

Figure 36





Niagara Region has relatively good average soil capability/soil productivity for the production of common field crops with an average soil productivity index of 0.71 which is equivalent to soil capability class 3 based on the 1975 data summarized by Hoffman and Noble. There are several County/Regions with a higher average soil productivity index as summarized for central and southwestern Ontario in Figure 37. Using the soil survey produced in 1989, the average soil productivity index for Niagara Region is slightly lower at 0.67 but still equivalent to soil capability class 3 (Figure 38).

Grimsby is similar with an average productivity index of 0.68 which is equivalent to soil capability class 3 (based on 1975 data). Using the 1989 soil survey by Kingston and Presant, the average productivity index is slightly higher at 0.69, again, equivalent to an average soil capability class 3 as summarized in Figure 38. The difference between the productivity indices from the old data versus the 1989 data result because less class 2 and more class 3 lands were mapped in 1989 as shown in Figure 39.

The distribution of soil capability classes in Grimsby is shown in Map 3 where the predominant capability class in a soil polygon, formerly map unit, is shown. Because many of the soil polygons have more than one soil series and/or phase per polygon, soil productivity indices have been calculated and a soil productivity map for Grimsby created as Map 4.

**Figure 37**

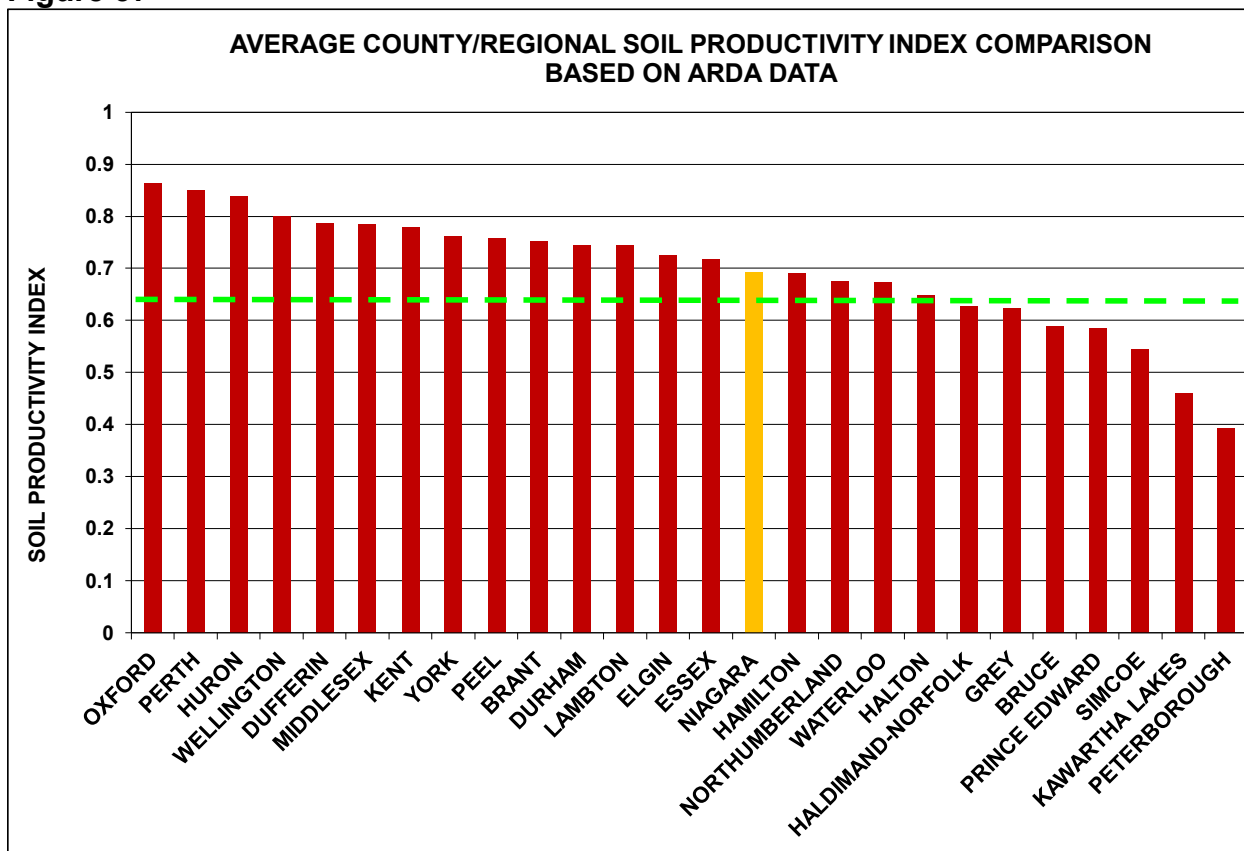




Figure 38

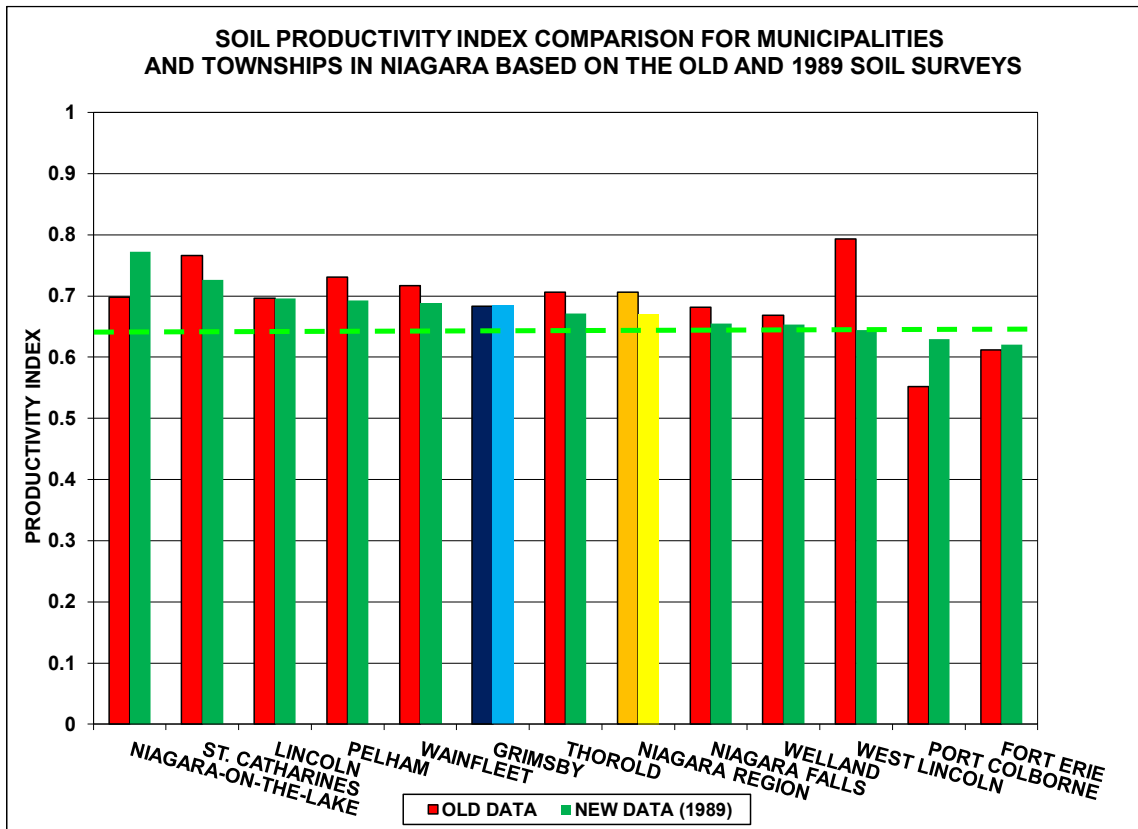
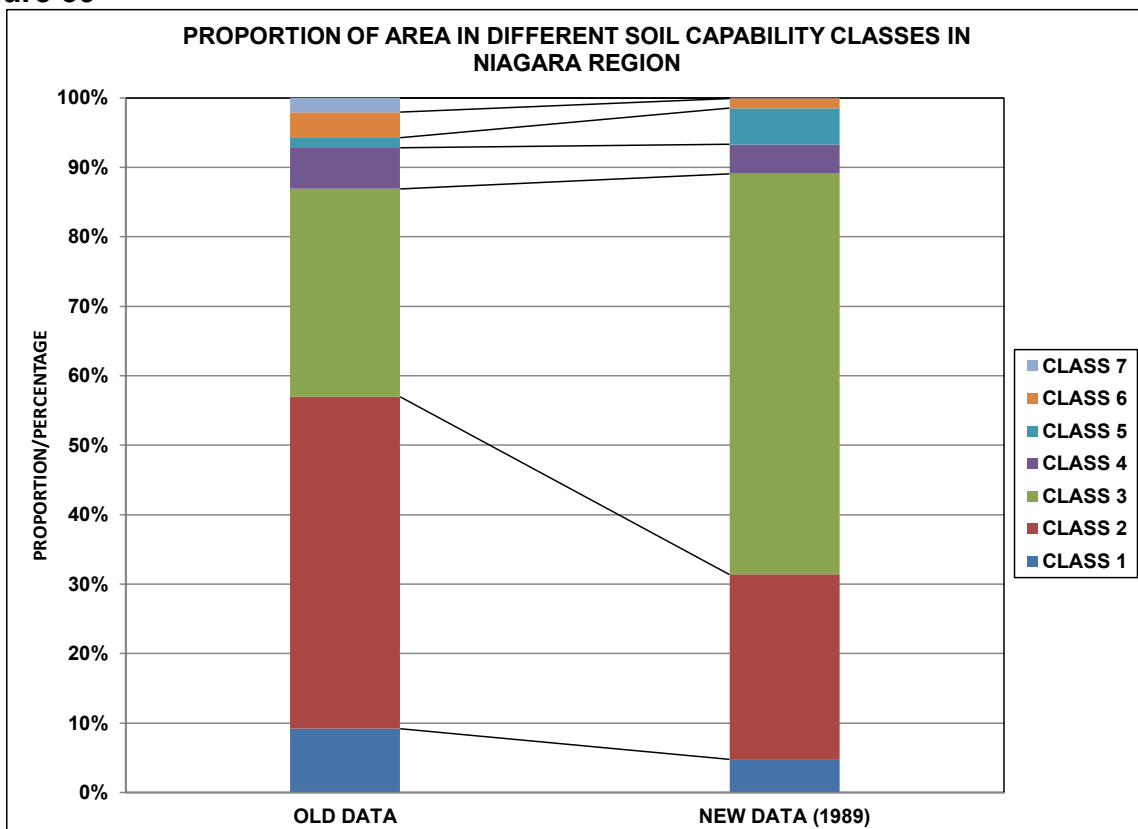
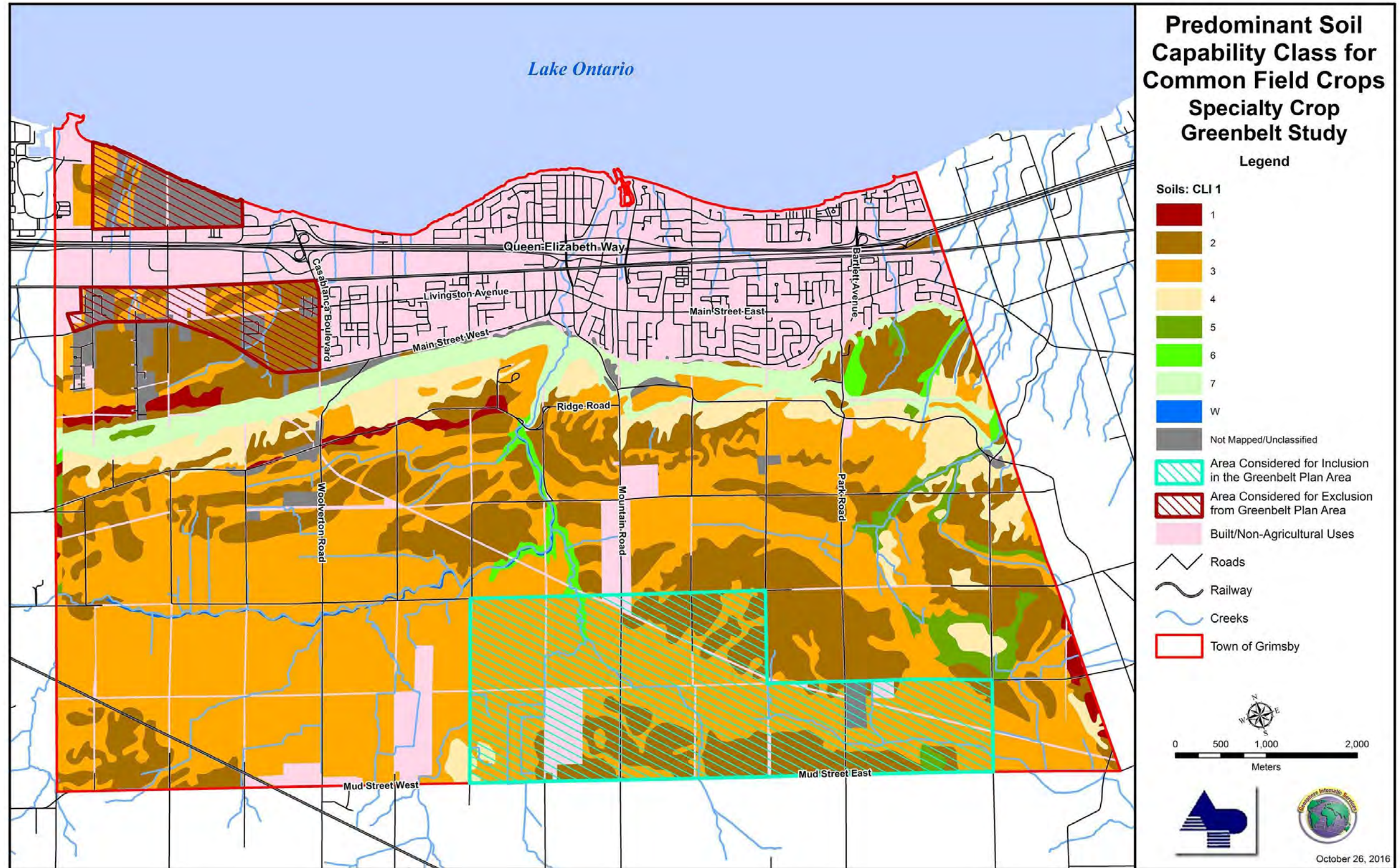


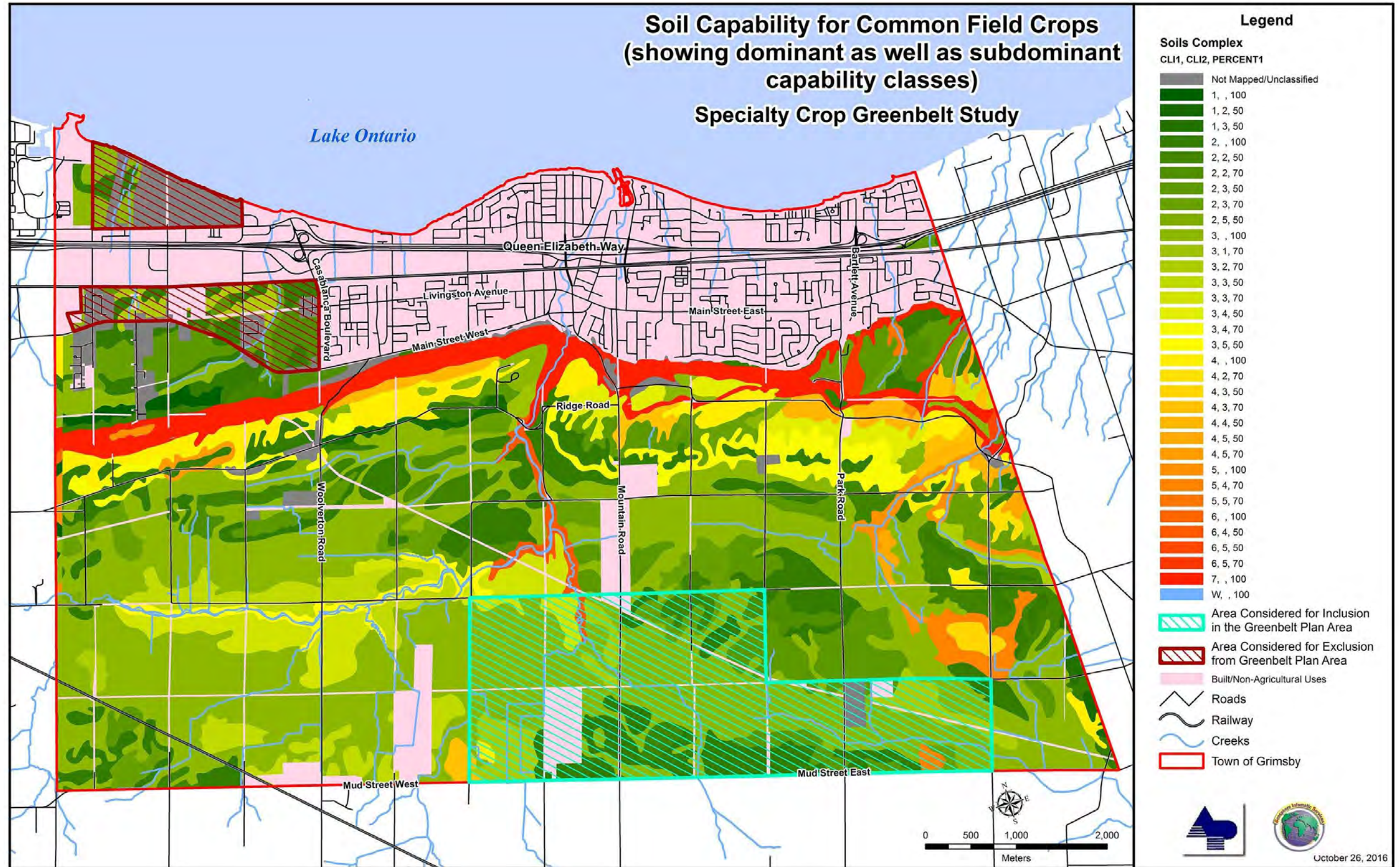
Figure 39





MAP 3

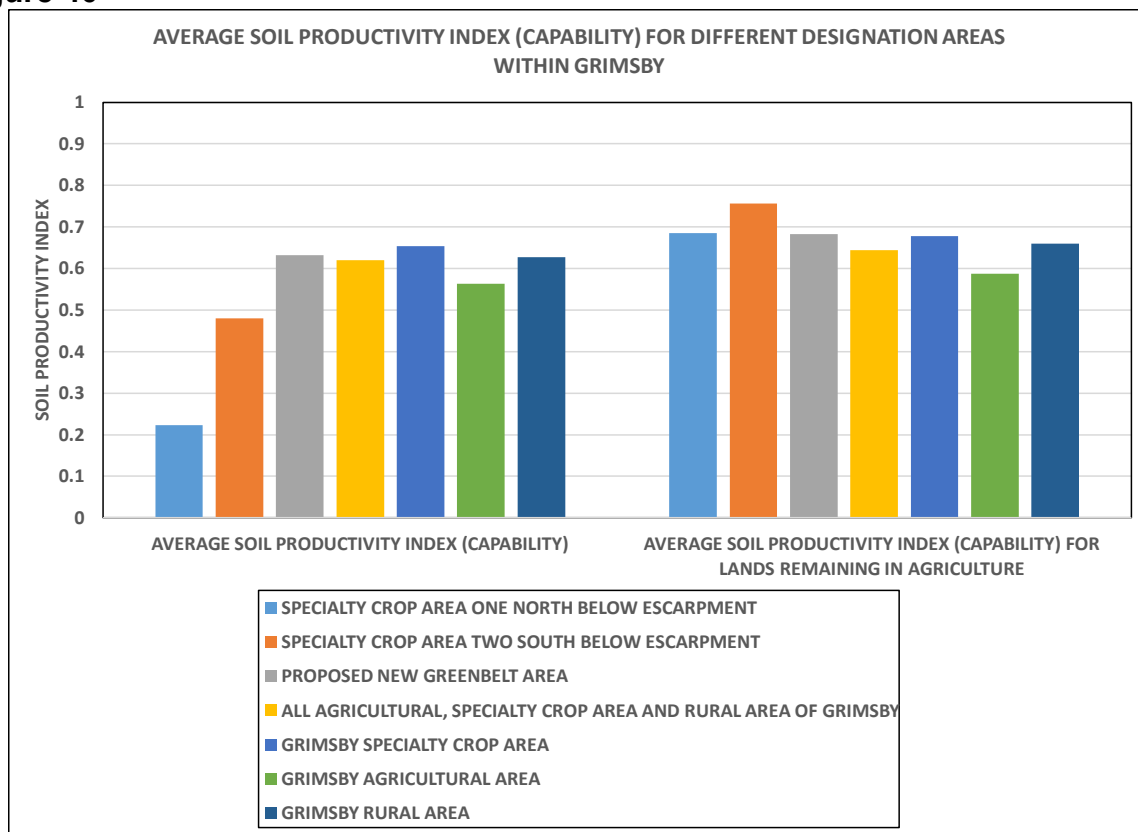






Average soil capability for different designations and Grimsby has been summarized in Figure 40 (longer bars in the graph indicate better soils).

**Figure 40**



### What is the soil potential of Grimsby and Grimsby's specialty crop area?

As previously described, the soil capability classification does not include fruit and vegetable crops. Thus, various classifications on the potential of various soils to produce fruits and vegetables have been published more recently for some Regions/Counties in southern Ontario. Specialty crop classification systems are described more fully and summarized in tabular form in Appendix 2. Niagara Region does have soil potential ratings for fruits and vegetables and these have been adapted within this report. There are 20 crop groupings in this specialty crop rating system and three different maps have been prepared to show the average for all 20 crop groupings, an average for tender fruit and vinifera grapes as well as a single factor map for vinifera grapes. The average 20 crop grouping map was produced because soils that have the potential to produce a broad cross section of different crops well, allow farmers to adapt to changes in consumer preferences and to changes in the market. Because Niagara Region has historically been used for tender fruit crop production, a separate map addressing those characteristics was produced. Finally, because grape production area (as a proportion of total fruit and vegetable production area) in Niagara and Grimsby has been increasing (as have associated wineries), the vinifera grape soil potential map was produced.



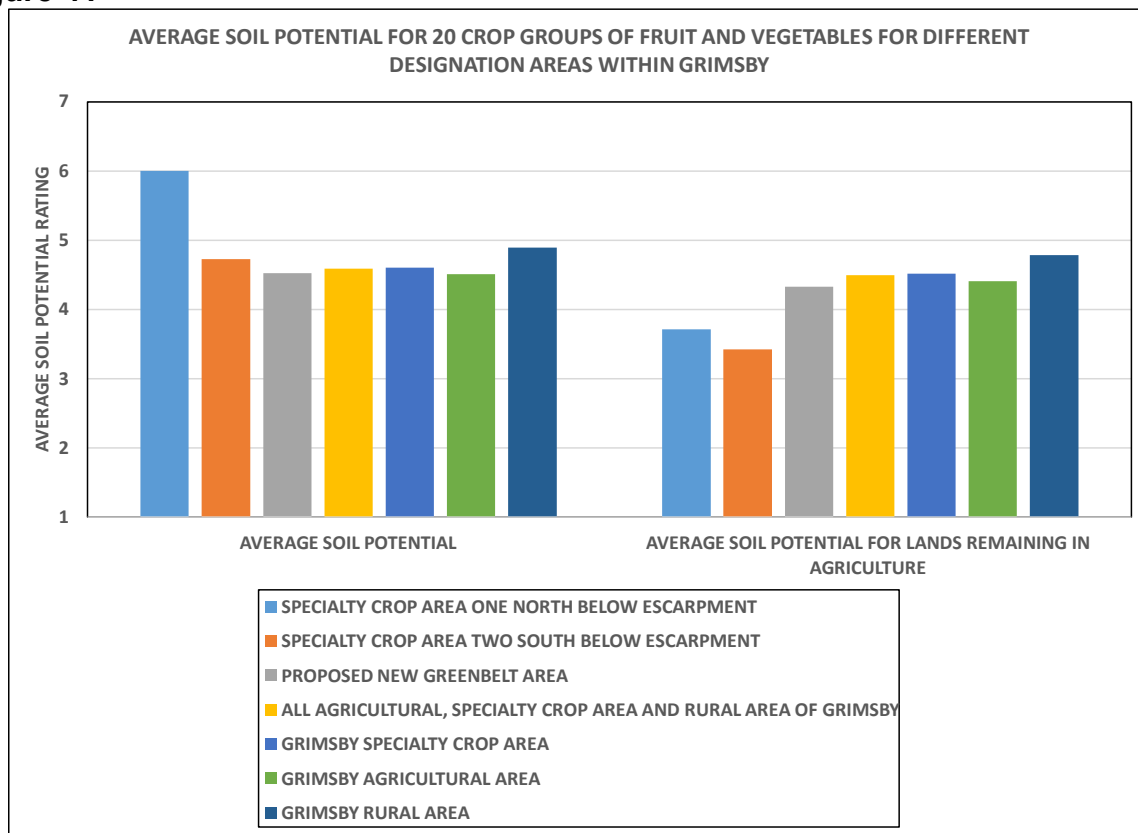
Some of the lands within Grimsby do not have information on soil potential for fruits and vegetables for two reasons:

- there is existing non-agricultural development and/or,
- the lands were not in agricultural use when the soil mapping was done by Kingston and Presant in 1989 and therefore were not mapped for soils.

This non-agricultural development is particularly important in the two *specialty crop areas* north of the Escarpment that Grimsby wishes to have removed from the *specialty crop area* designation. In *specialty crop area one*, 70% of the area has unclassified soils and/or has existing non-agricultural development. In *specialty crop area two*, 37% is unclassified and/or has existing non-agricultural development.

Very little average soil potential rating one soils are found within Grimsby and their distribution is shown on Map 5. Much of that rating one land, comprising approximately 28 ha, is found within *specialty crop area two* and is located immediately adjacent to non-agricultural development on three sides. The average soil potential rating for 20 crop groups in *specialty crop area one* and *special crop area two* is rating 6 and 5 respectively based on assigning a rating 7 (unsuitable for production) to the lands in non-agricultural development. If the fact that much of *specialty crop areas one* and *two* can't be used for agriculture is ignored, then the lands remaining have an average soil potential rating for fruits and vegetables of 4 and 3 respectively as summarized in Figure 41. In Figures 41, 42 and 43 shorter bars indicate better soils potential.

**Figure 41**

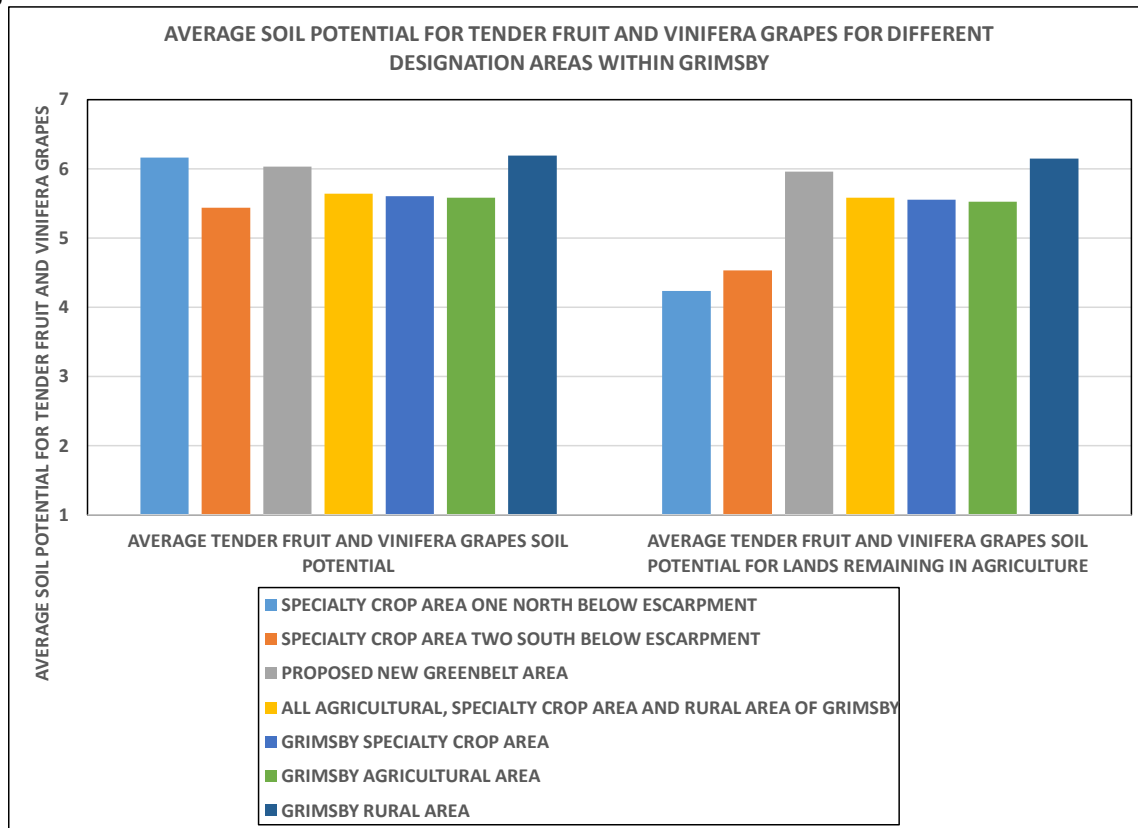






If the soil potential analysis is restricted to tender fruit and vinifera grapes, the average soil potential is relatively poor with all designated areas having a rating between 5 and 6 (Figure 42). If the lands not mapped and/or in non-agricultural use are not considered in the calculation of the average soil potential for tender fruit and vinifera grapes, then the *specialty crop areas* one and two have an average soil potential for tender fruits and vinifera grapes between class 4 and 5 (Figure 42).

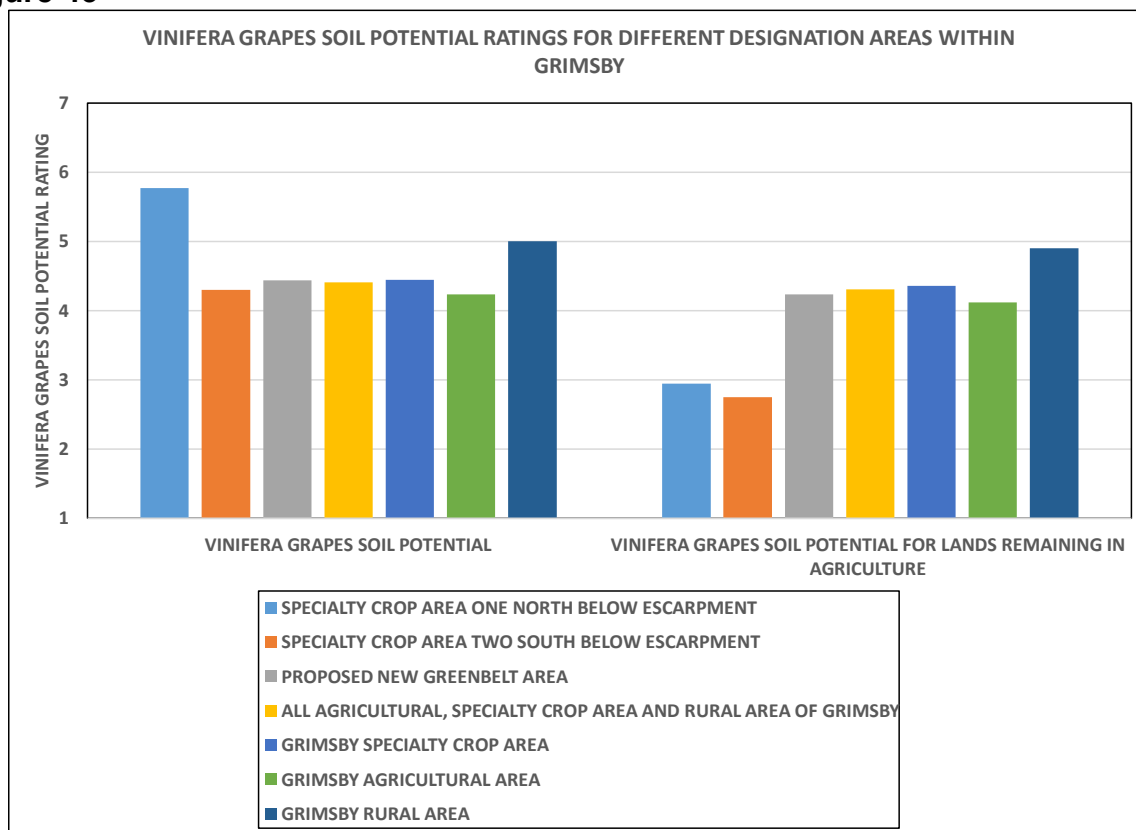
**Figure 42**



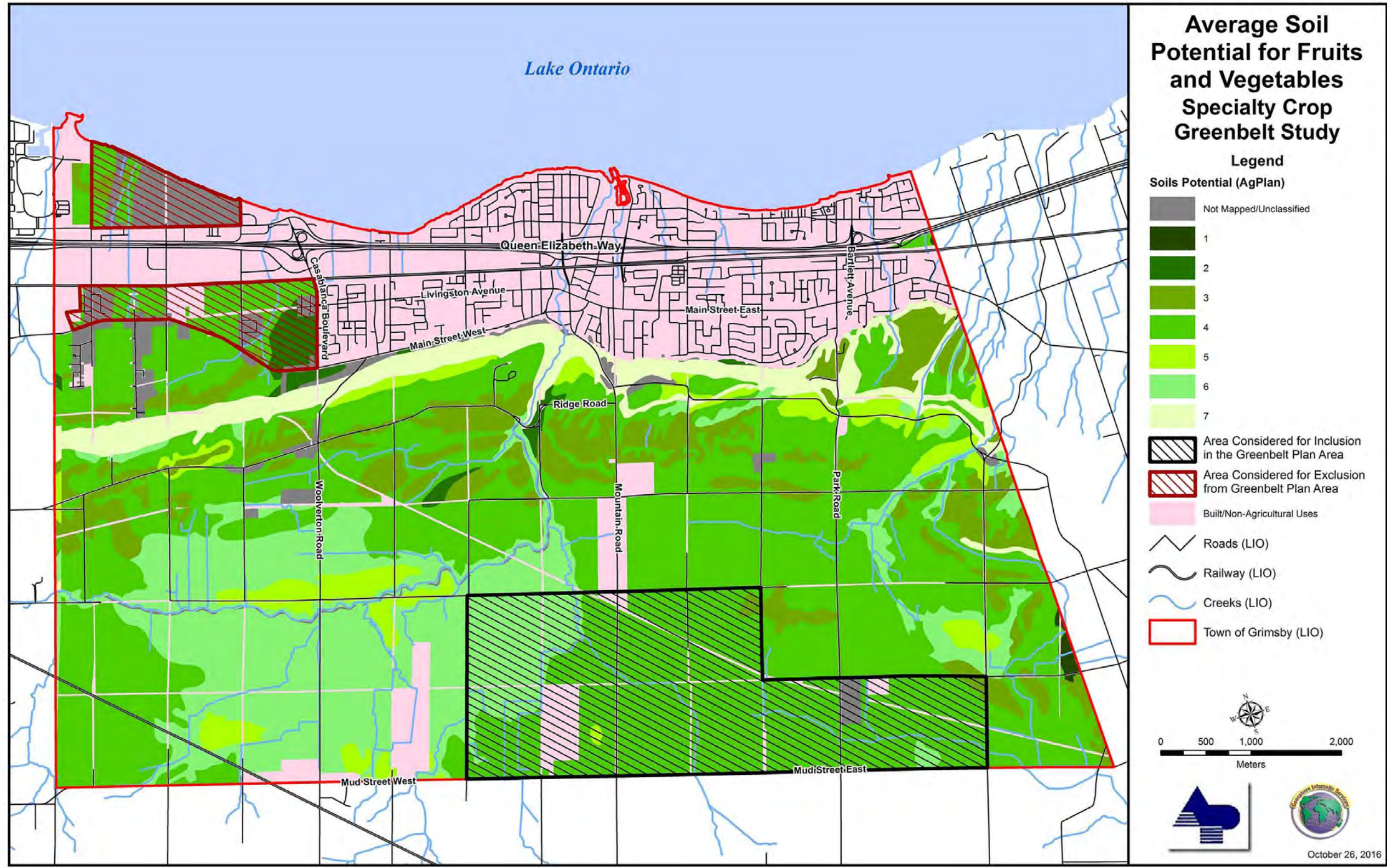
When soil potential for vinifera grapes is produced as a single factor map and an average is calculated for various designations, soil potential rating ranges from class 4 through 6. As has been done previously, if the fact that much of the land in *specialty crop areas* one and two is not agricultural is ignored, that is, it is treated as if it will be returned to agricultural use and therefore has potential for that agricultural use, then the soil potential for grapes of these two specialty crop component areas is ranked as between 2 and 3 (Figure 43).

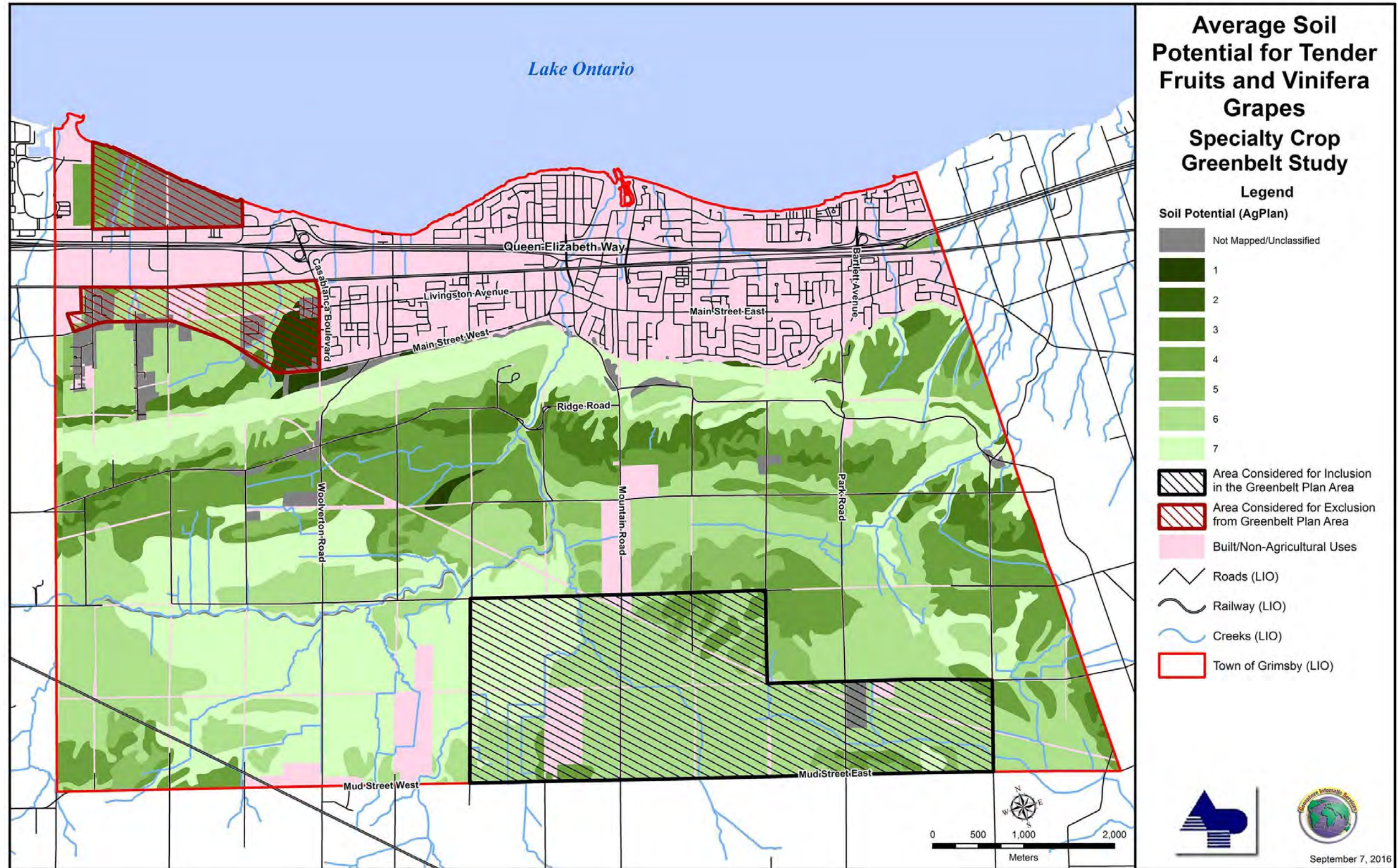


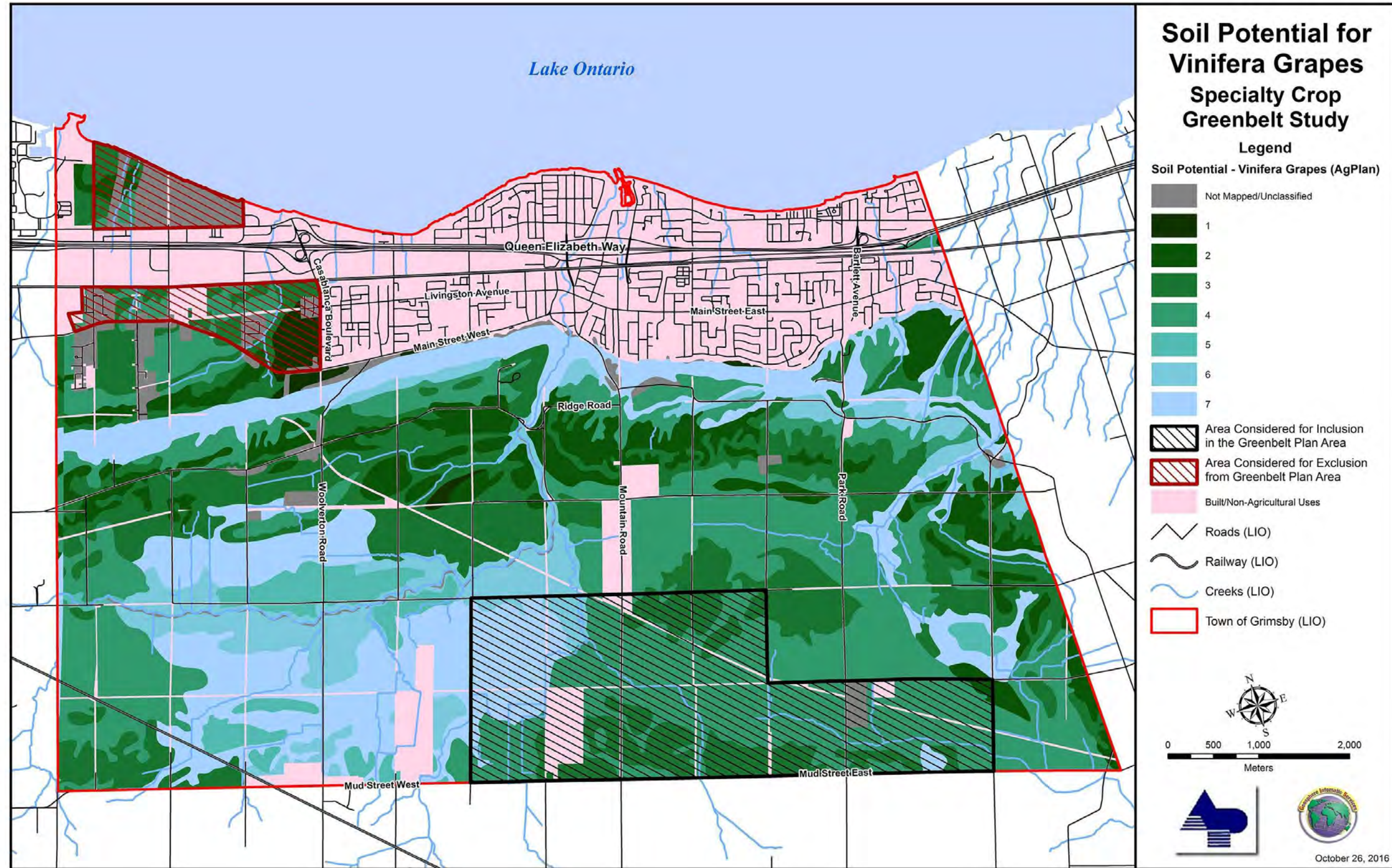
**Figure 43**



The very best soils having the “highest”, that is, having a soil potential between 1 and 1.99 are found relatively less within Grimsby. Map 7 shows the location of those better soils with the soil potential rank between 1 and 1.99 for fruits and vegetables (including vinifera grapes) within Niagara Region. Most of these better soils are not located within Grimsby. Those higher potential soils found within Grimsby tend to be located to the south above the Escarpment. The better soils for fruits and vegetables have an area of approximately 109 ha in Grimsby and comprise 1.5% of the better specialty crop soils found in Niagara.

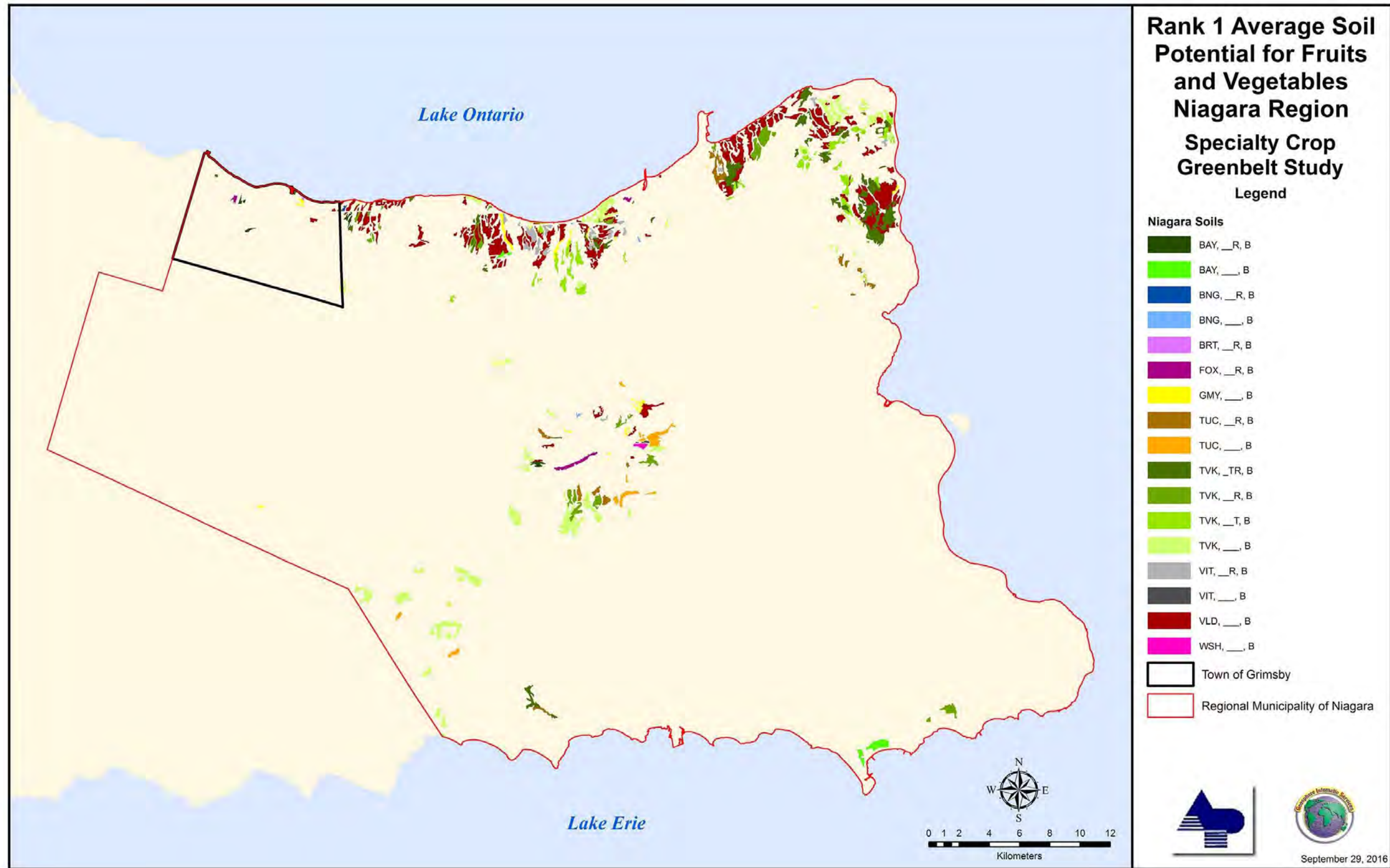








MAP 8





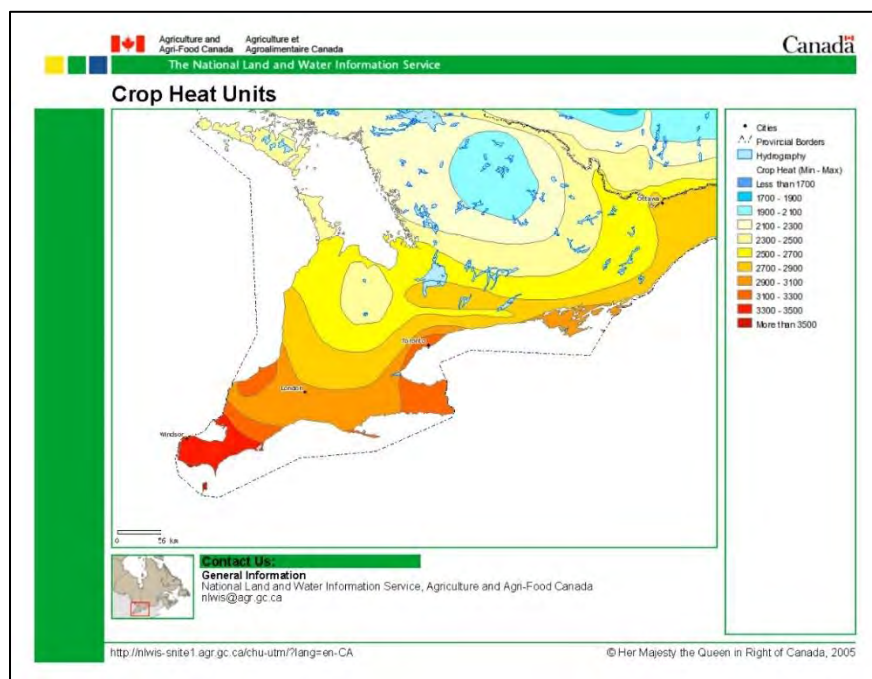
### 5.3 Climate

#### What are the climate characteristics of Grimsby and Niagara in the context of southern Ontario?

The climate of Niagara Region is relatively warm in the context of Ontario (but is not as warm as Essex County) as can be seen on Map 9. The higher average temperatures in Essex have resulted in the greatest amount of greenhouse production in Canada, where much of that production is for vegetables. The crop heat units information has been supplemented by additional mapping in both the Niagara Region and Essex County. In Niagara, Grape Climatic Zones were originally mapped by Weibe and Anderson (1976) and updated by Fisher and Anderson (2002). The Fisher and Anderson map has been reproduced in this report as Map 10. A review of this map clearly indicates that *specialty crop areas* one and two have a better climate for the production of specialty crops where that climate is modified by the presence of Lake Ontario.

Nevertheless, the grape growers of Ontario (2011) state that there is risk in each zone from A through to E for the production of grapes. For example, in Zone A, “sites have cooler conditions due to the lake effect which may result in higher risk of delayed fruit maturity for late-season cultivars” and in Zone E, the area “as the highest risk of winter injury due to cold midwinter temperatures” and “has the shortest growing season with highest risk of spring and/or fall frosts, effectively limiting tender and/or late maturing cultivars”. The George Morris Centre (Mussell et al., 2010) notes that “there is a notable distinctness regarding climate conditions across wine regions in Ontario. However, it is not evident that varietal choices have been driven by these climatic differences.” The AAFC land use data on vineyards supports this conclusion by Mussell et al. (2010) as vineyards are present in the general agricultural designation as well as the *specialty crop area* designation.

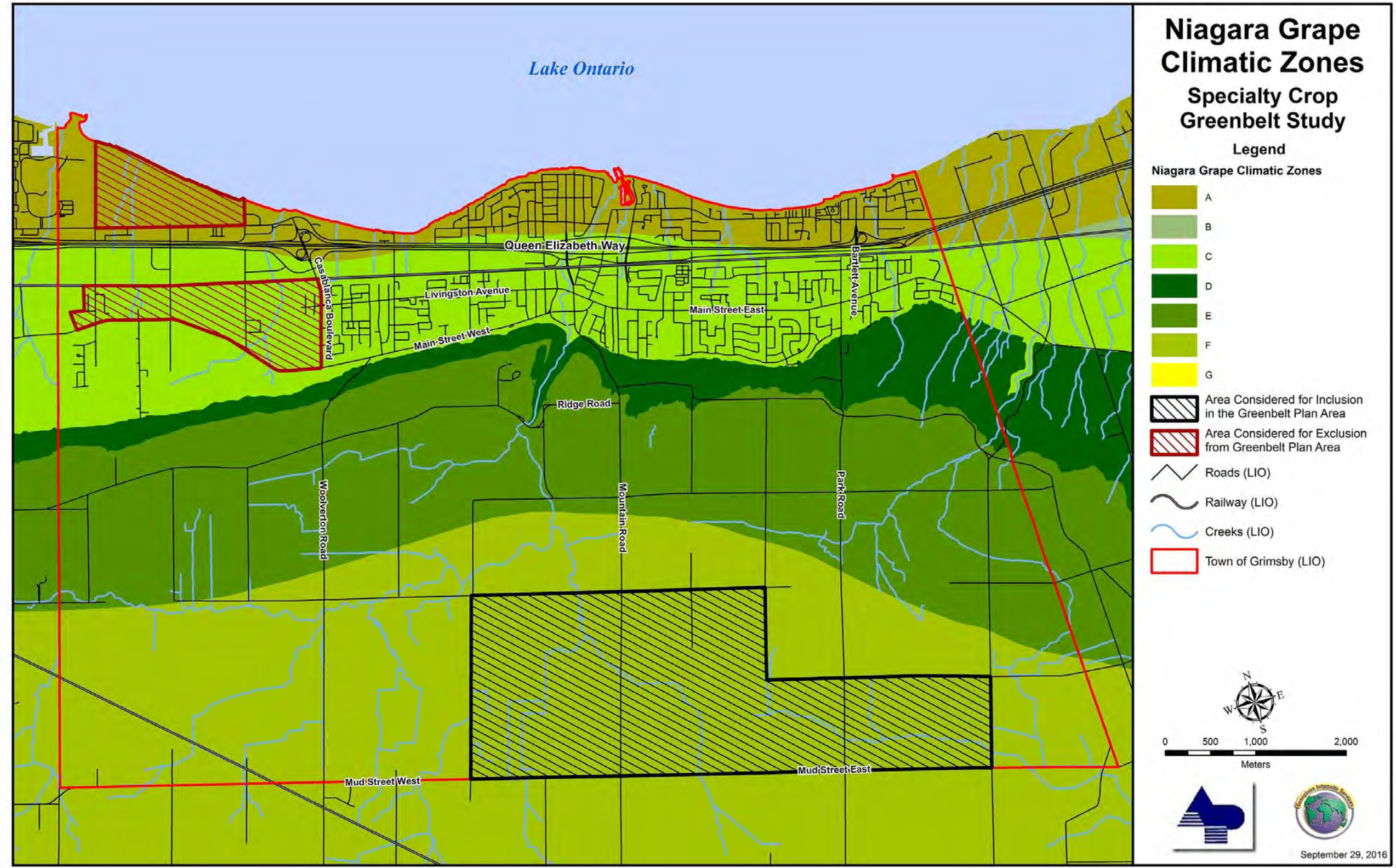
Fruits and vegetables benefit from good cold air drainage. This cold air drainage can be reduced or stopped by the presence of woodlots of high density and/or urban development. *Specialty crop areas* one and two in Grimsby have already been affected by urban development.



MAP 9



MAP 10  
(Fisher and  
Slingerland, 2002)





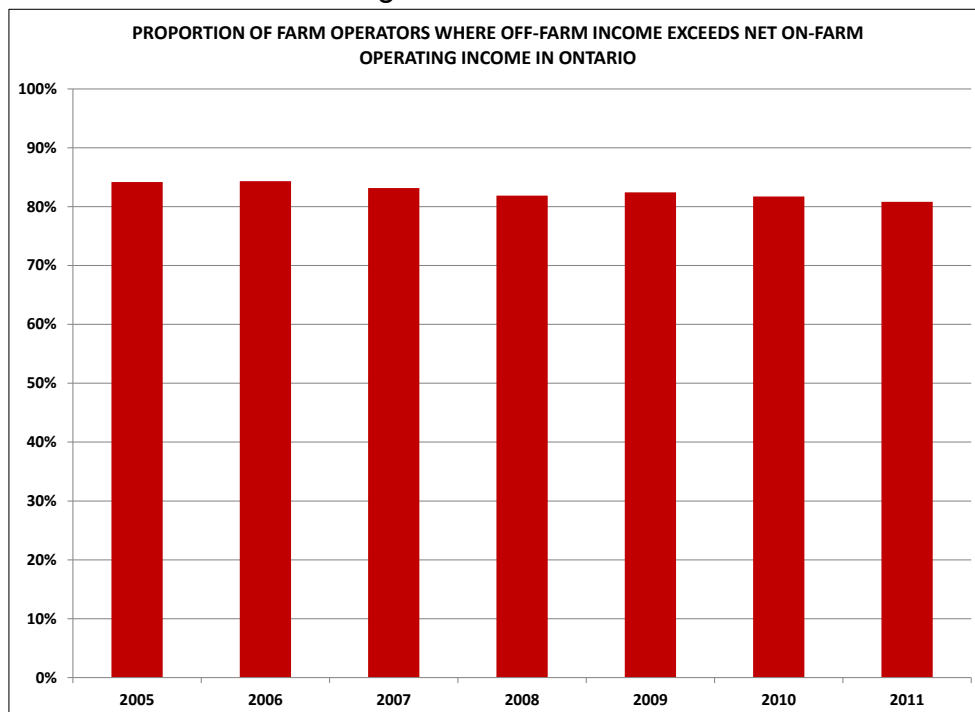


## 5.6 Economics

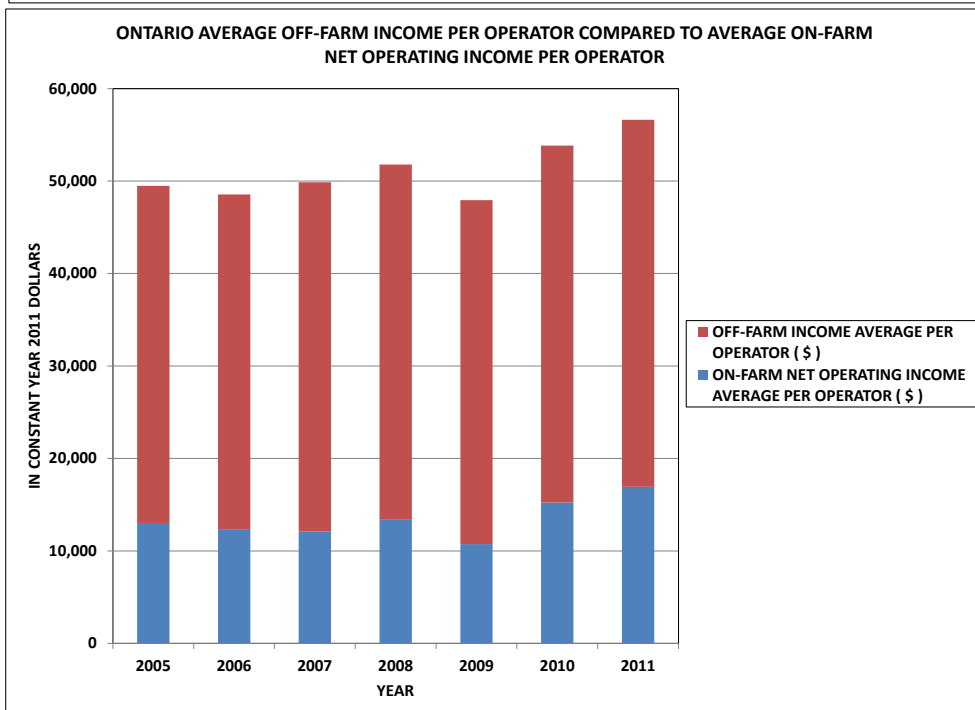
**Is there evidence that Grimsby provides specific agricultural economic characteristics that would benefit farmers producing fruits and vegetables relative to other parts of Niagara Region and the Province of Ontario?**

In general, it is difficult to make sufficient income from farming alone. In Ontario, 80% or greater of farms have greater off-farm income than net on farm operating income as summarized in Figure 44. The proportion of net on-farm income relative to off-farm income tends to be less as summarized in Figure 45.

**Figure 44**



**Figure 45**

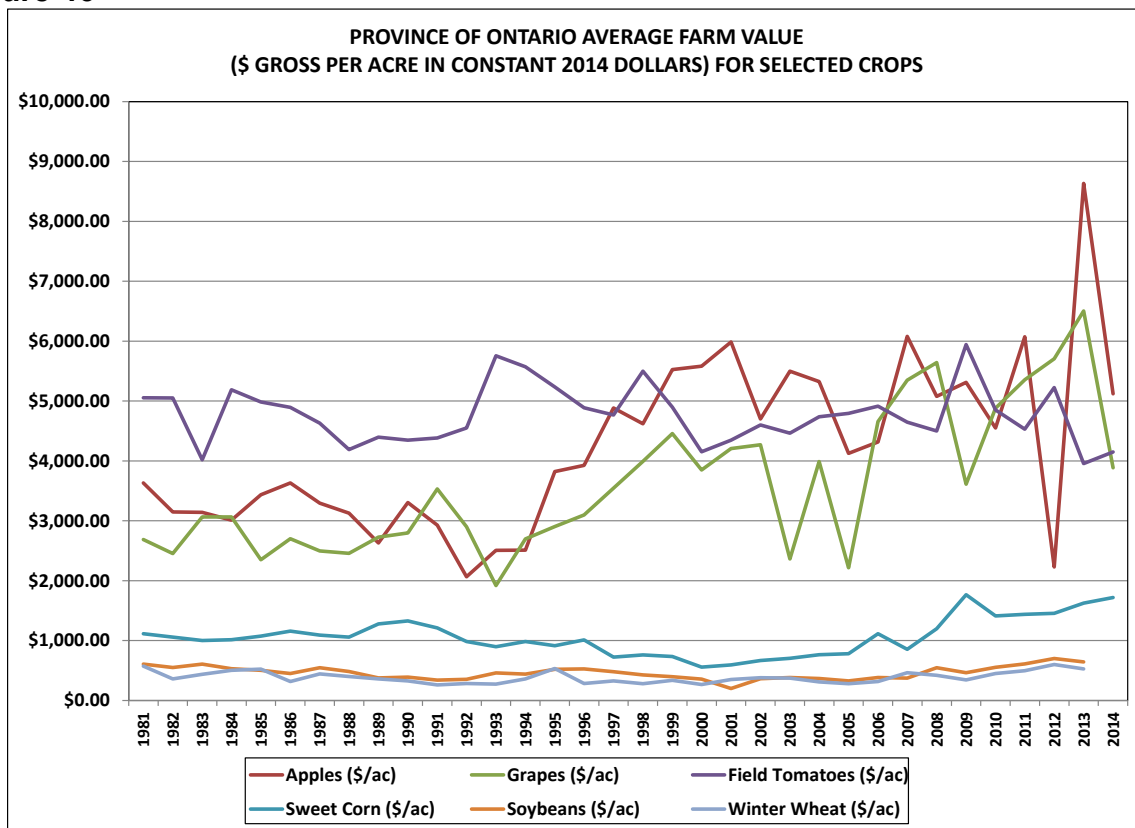




Products for direct human consumption (fruit and vegetables) have higher gross income per unit area as summarized in Figure 46. Marginal returns and net income associated with fruits and vegetables vary with the particular fruit and/or vegetable produced but also tend to be higher per unit area than what would be received for small grains. Prices received for various agricultural products can be presented differently from that shown in Figure 46. Average gross income and net income, based on data from 1981 to 2014, for some of the crops produced within Niagara Region, are summarized in Figure 47. In this graph, the average value over more than 30 years is plotted and the changes in that monetary value are represented by the standard deviation in price received (where standard deviation is the square root of variance). More specifically, there are significant variations in gross dollars from year to year for apples and grapes as noted by the standard deviation “whiskers” in Figure 47. Alternatively, soybeans and wheat have relatively low variations from year to year as shown by relatively low levels in standard deviation in price as shown by relatively short “whiskers” in Figure 47.

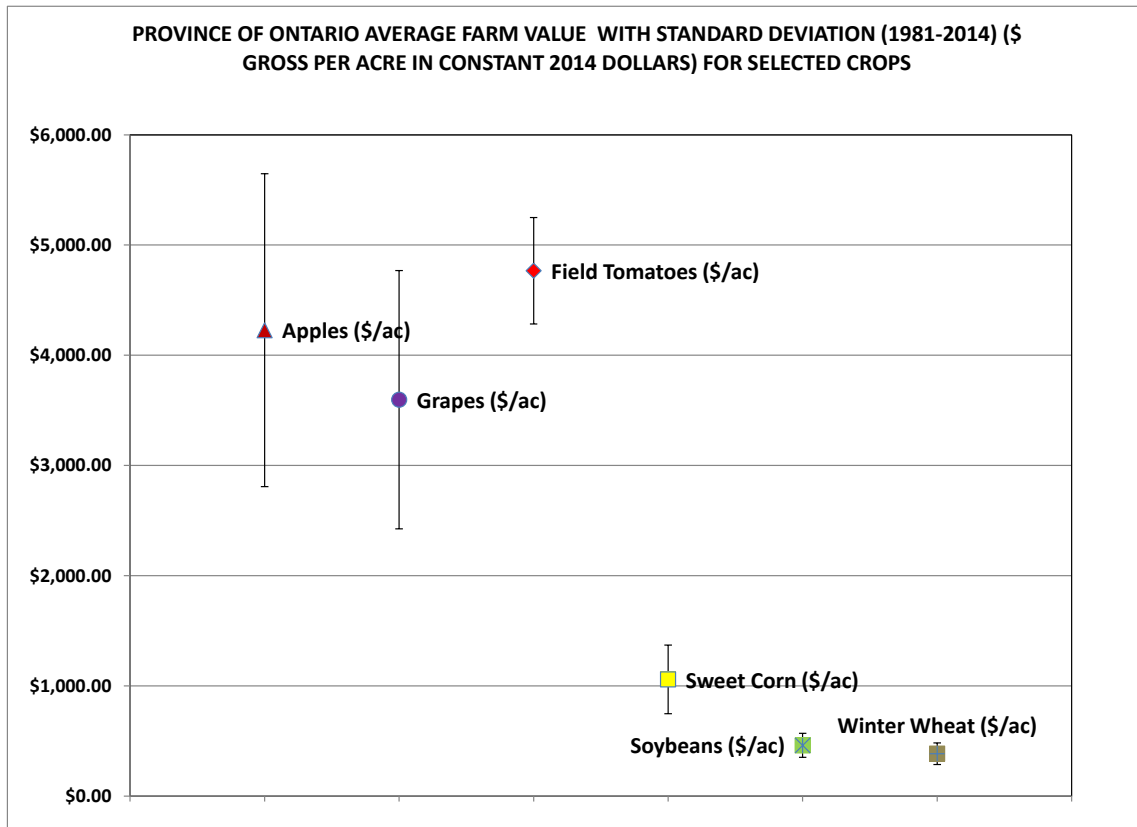
The gross income per acre values shown in Figures 46 and 47 are province wide. A single test was done to ascertain whether these values vary significantly within the Province. At least in the case of grapes (the most predominant specialty crop in Niagara Region), relatively little difference in gross income per unit area is present as summarized in Figure 48. This lack of variation is not surprising given that most of the Province’s grape production occurs in Niagara.

**Figure 46**

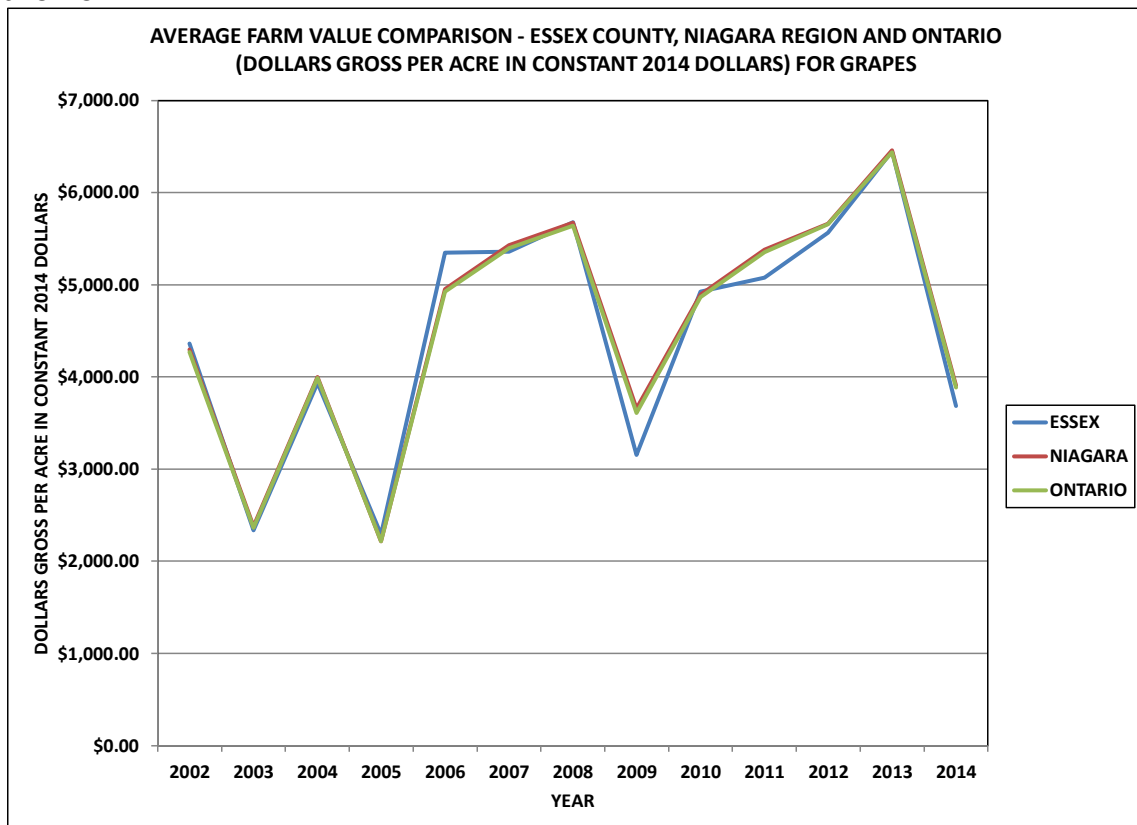




**Figure 47**



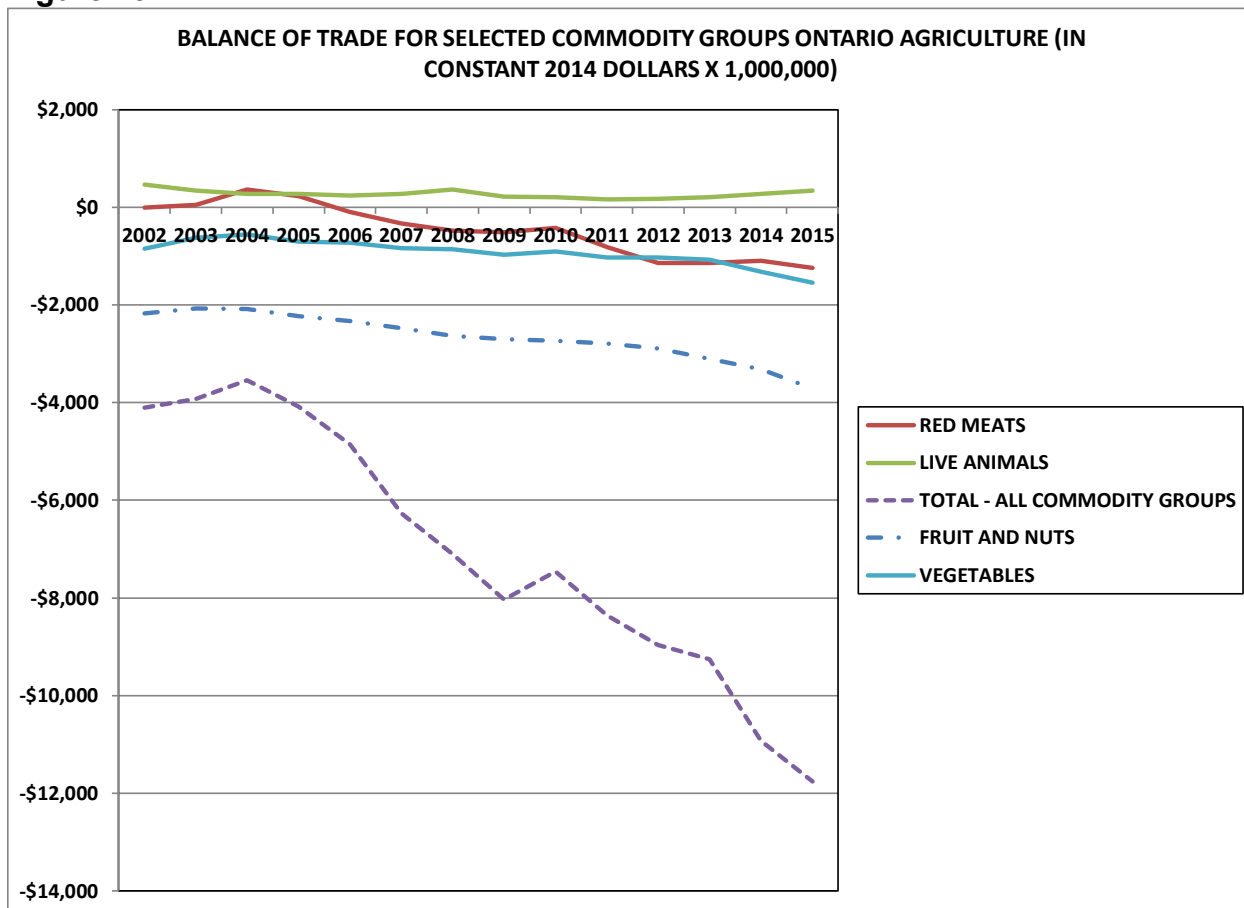
**Figure 48**





Given the relatively higher net income associated with fruit and vegetable production, one might hypothesize that more farmers would be producing specialty crops. However, as discussed previously, the number of fruit and vegetable farms in Grimsby and Niagara is diminishing. Balance of trade data (Figure 49) provide some insight into why this reduction might be occurring. Over time, more money is being spent on fruit, nuts and vegetable imports than is received from exporting those same commodities. With respect to Ontario's grape and wine sector, Mussell et al. (2010) state that the sector "is experiencing pressures related to production costs, increased import competition, and constraints on household budgets that influence consumer purchasing patterns".

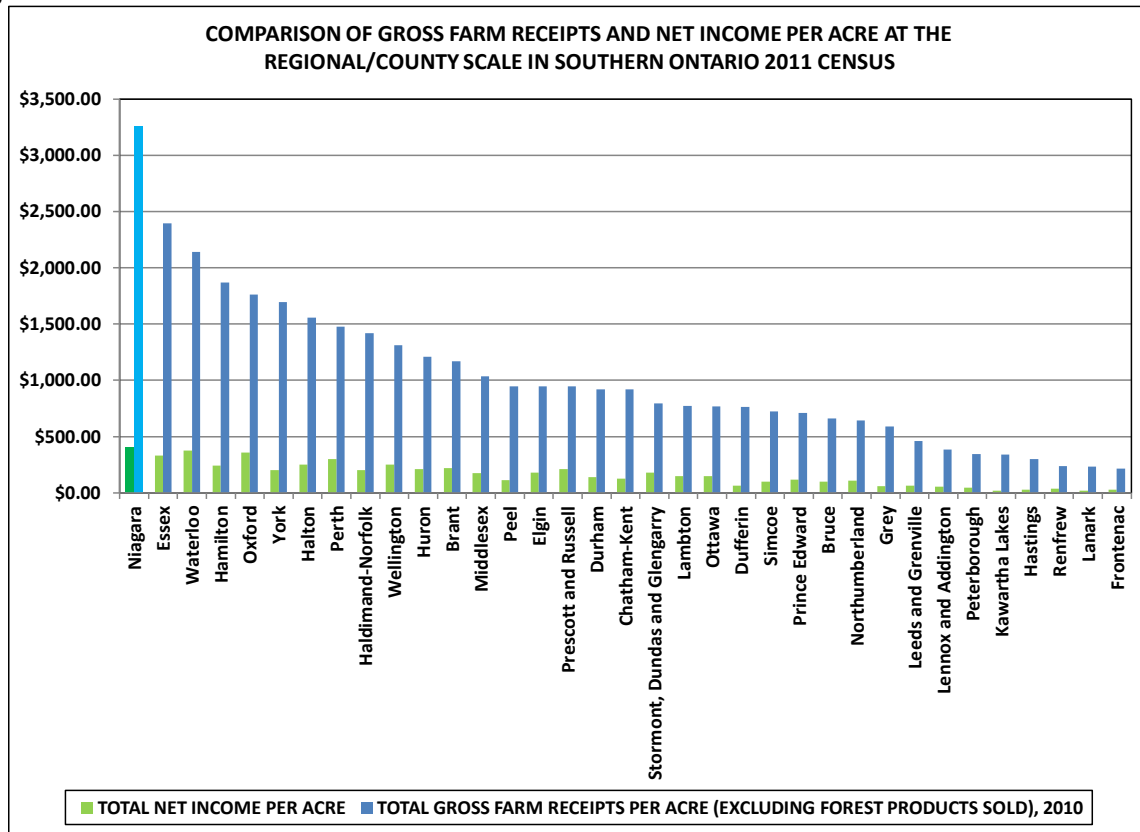
**Figure 49**



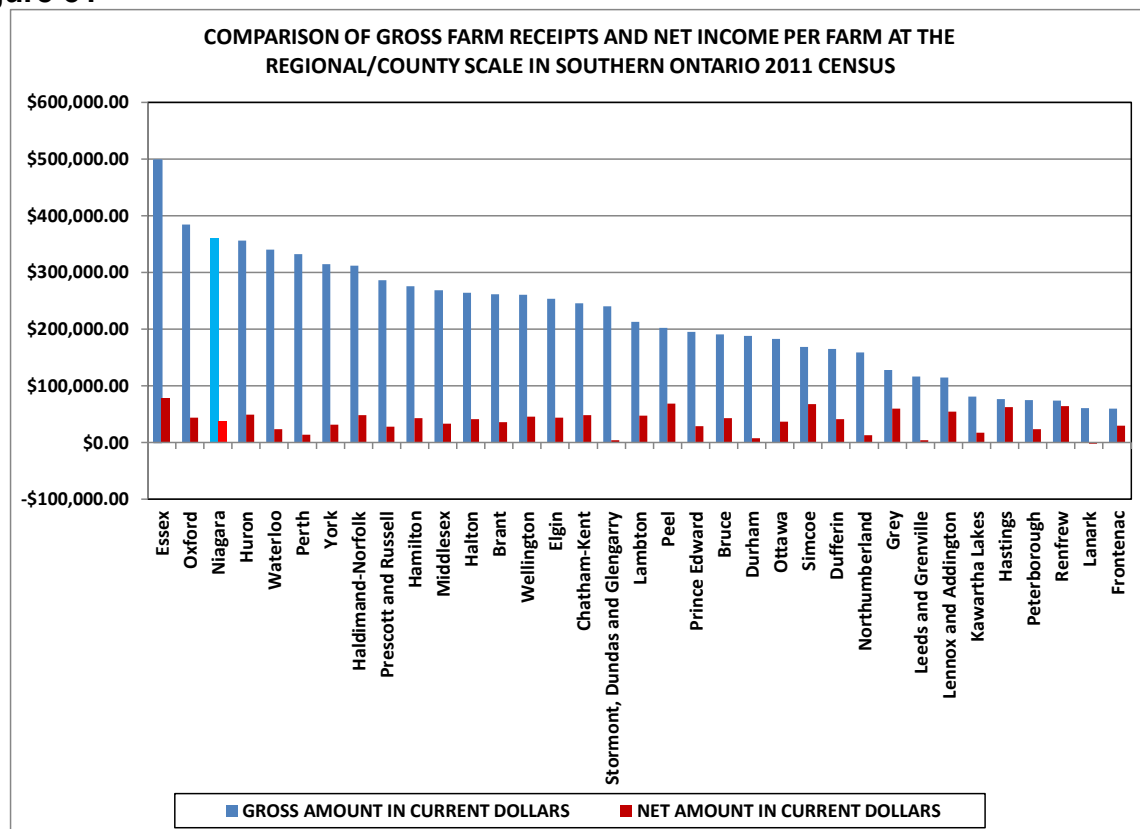
An analysis of economic data specific to Grimsby and Niagara Region is presented in the following paragraphs to ascertain whether it is likely that Grimsby and/or Niagara are special cases that tend not to follow the provincial data presented previously in Figures 44 to 49. Statistics Canada data for total/gross farm receipts, net income (defined as gross farm receipts minus farm business operating expenses), and total farm capital were evaluated on a "per unit area" as well as "per farm basis" at the regional scale for southern Ontario, Niagara Region and for the townships and municipalities within Niagara as summarized in Figures 50 through 57.



**Figure 50**

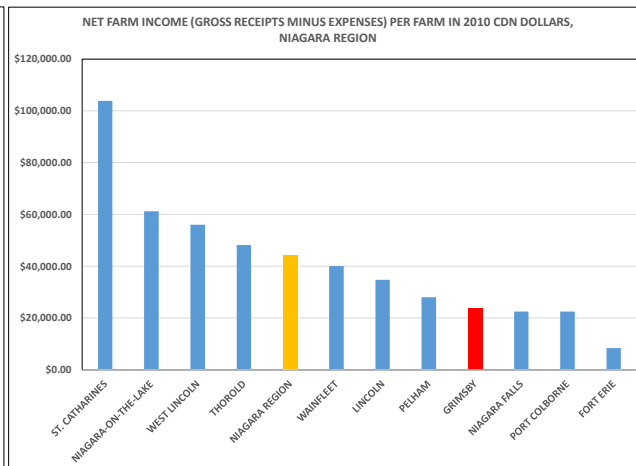
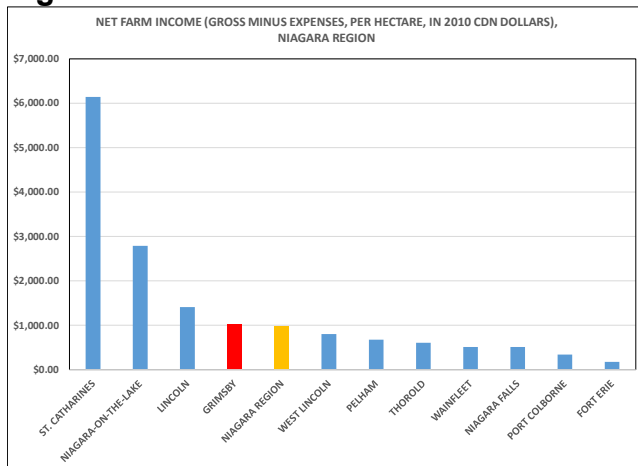


**Figure 51**

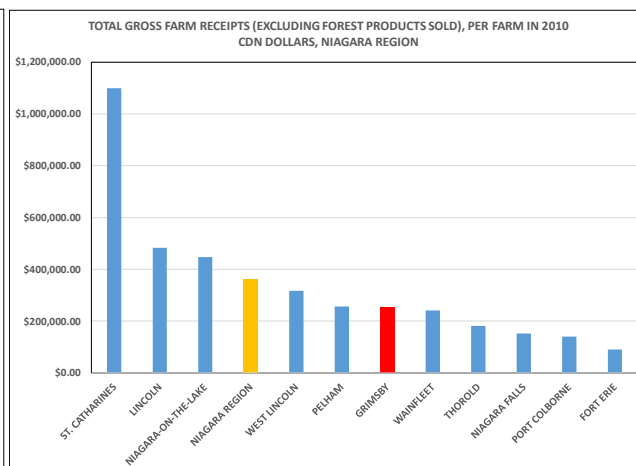
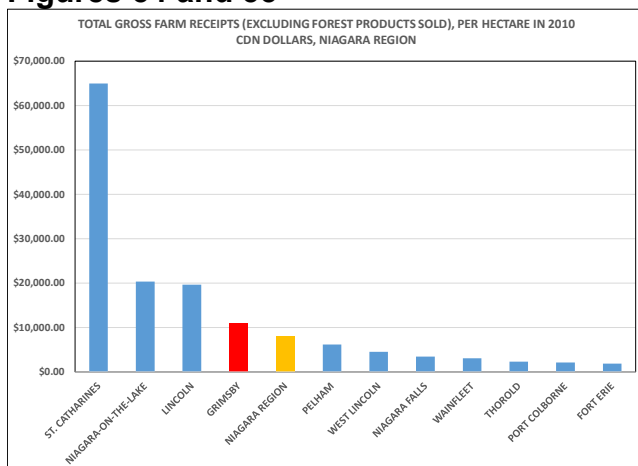




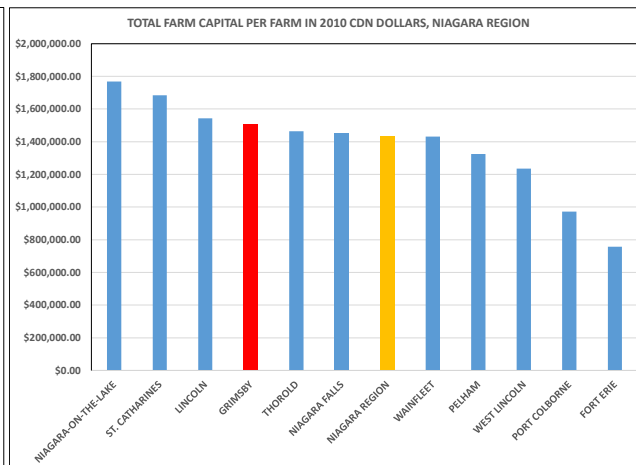
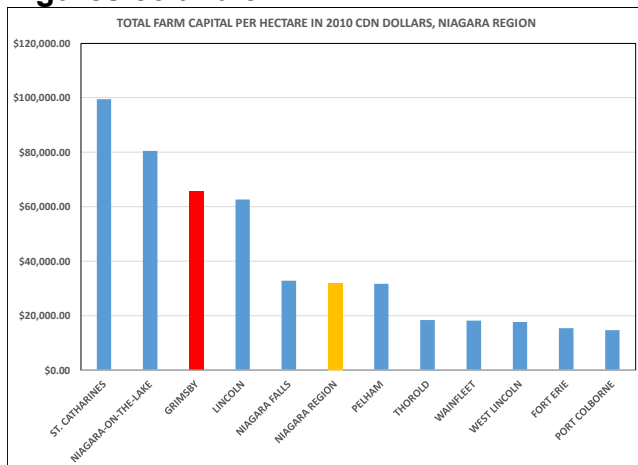
## Figures 52 and 53



## Figures 54 and 55



## Figures 56 and 57



Niagara has relatively higher net incomes and gross farm receipts on a per unit area basis as well as on a per farm basis when compared to other Regions/Countries as summarized in Figures 50 and 51. However, the relatively large differences amongst



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Regions/Countries is in gross farm receipts rather than the more important (from a business perspective) net income values. The net income values for Niagara support the view that Niagara farmers need to supplement their on-farm income with income from non-farm sources.

Grimsby's net farm income is slightly above the average for Niagara Region on a per unit area basis (Figure 52) but is much lower than the average for Niagara on a per farm basis (Figure 53). Gross farm receipts follow the same trend where they are slightly above the average for Niagara Region on a per unit area basis (Figure 54) but is much lower than the average for Niagara on a per farm basis (Figure 55).

Grimsby's total farm capital is relatively higher than that for Niagara Region both on a per unit area basis (Figure 56) and on a per farm basis (Figure 57). However, total farm capital is not very high in the context of the value of housing in Toronto, for example.

The data for Grimsby do not indicate that farmers in Grimsby are spared from the general perspective that "it's difficult to make a dollar farming".

## **5.7 Conflict**

### **Are there sociocultural characteristics within Grimsby that provide incentives/disincentives related to the production of fruit and vegetable crops?**

The Town of Grimsby has already documented land use characteristics within Grimsby and have included information specific to the *specialty crop area* in a letter sent to the 2015 Co-ordinated Review Panel (April 30, 2015). It is not the intent of this report to repeat the contents of this letter. However, I do agree with the statement within the letter that:

*Some lands designated as tender fruit have not been tender fruit growing or used for agricultural purposes for decades (i.e. Radio Tower Lands), some have had soils stripped and are surrounded by uses such as residential which render the lands inappropriate for tender fruit and good grape production.*

Grimsby's specialty crop areas one and two contain much non-agricultural development and are near or adjacent to urban development. The production of fruits and vegetables does require significant levels of management and these levels are outlined in detail by OMAFRA, (2016 a). This management is protected by legislation as a *normal farm practice* but those living adjacent to wind turbines being used to prevent frost damage, or within 2 km of farms using bird bangers to minimize bird damage to fruit, tend to complain about this kind of management which they find to be upsetting and/or intrusive (based on a web search of newspaper articles). The probability of complaint tends to make farming more difficult and to render some areas less desirable for crop production. Therefore, the 2 segments of *specialty crop area* below and North of the escarpment in Grimsby are less desirable given their proximity to non-agricultural uses.

The decline in the number of farms producing fruit and vegetables, in the area in fruit and vegetable production, as well as in the balance of trade, has not been halted by the "buy local" initiative/marketing nor by farmers' markets such as the summer/fall market held on Thursdays on the Main Street in Grimsby.



## 6.0 FINDINGS SUMMARY

In summary, the agricultural data examined as part of this study indicate that:

- Grimsby's fruit and vegetable production area has diminished from the census years 1971 to 2011;
- fruit and vegetable production area for Grimsby as a proportion of the fruit and vegetable production in Niagara Region has decreased from 1971 to 2011;
- the diversity of fruit and vegetable production within Grimsby and Niagara Region has been diminishing with more production area used for grape production (1971 - 2011);
- the areas proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation have a relatively small amount of fruit and vegetable production;
- the north section of lands proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation has 70% of the area not mapped for soils (in 1989 the land use was non-agricultural and therefore not mapped) or developed for non-agricultural uses;
- the south section of lands proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation has 37% of the area not mapped for soils (in 1989 the land use was non-agricultural and therefore not mapped) or developed for non-agricultural uses;
- in aggregate, the lands proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation have 51% of the area not mapped for soils (in 1989 the land use was non-agricultural and therefore not mapped) or developed for non-agricultural uses;
- the approximately 31 ha of land left in the north segment of the *specialty crop area* located below the Escarpment has an average soil capability between classes 2 and 3, but, if the lands developed for non-agricultural uses are given the appropriate soil capability class of seven, the average soil capability of the north segment is class 6;
- the approximately 103 ha of land left in the south segment of the *specialty crop area* located below the Escarpment has an average soil capability between classes 2 and 3, but, if the lands developed for non-agricultural uses are given the appropriate soil capability class of seven, the average soil capability of the south segment is class 4;
- the approximately 31 ha of land left in the north segment of the *specialty crop area* located below the Escarpment has an average soil potential for fruits and vegetables between rating 3 and 4, but, if the lands developed for non-agricultural uses are given the appropriate soil capability class of seven, the average soil potential for fruits and vegetables of the north segment is class 6;
- the approximately 103 ha of land left in the south segment of the *specialty crop area* located below the Escarpment has an average soil potential for fruit and vegetables between rating 3 and 4, but, if the lands developed for non-agricultural uses are given the appropriate soil capability class of 7, the average soil capability of the south segment is 5;
- the lands proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* designation are near urban development thereby increasing the probability of complaint related to factors such as noise (e.g. bird bangers, wind turbines) and pesticide spray drift.





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## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS/OPINIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that the lands proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* in Grimsby are relatively poor for the production of specialty crops. Several of the tests for the designation of a *specialty crop area* are not met:

- specialty crop production is not predominant,
- soil capability and soil potential in Grimsby is not the best found in Niagara and in some areas is diminished due to non-agricultural development,
- fewer farms and farmers are producing fruits and vegetables within Grimsby and, as a result, there is diminishing infrastructure as well as fewer farmers skilled in the production of fruits and vegetables.

Given the characteristics of the lands in Grimsby proposed to be removed from the *specialty crop area* (areas identified within this report as one and two and located north of the Niagara Escarpment), I am of the opinion that the lands can reasonably be removed from that *specialty crop area* designation.

AgPlan Limited

Michael K. Hoffman



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## APPENDIX 1 GIS ALGORITHMS



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## ALGORITHM 1 GENERAL PROCEDURE/PROTOCOL LIST FOR GIS MAPPING

### Work Description/List

#### Part One - existing published information

- 1 Obtain information (geo-referenced shape files and relational data bases) for the broadest scale used in the study (usually the County or Regional scale) from the municipality/Township, Region/County, MNR, LIO or OMAFRA for:
  - 1a base map information such as roads, rivers, lakes, site and/or study area boundaries political boundaries, climate etc. (LIO, Region)
  - 1b agricultural soils and Canada Land Inventory (CLI) information (LIO)
  - 1c geo-referenced aerial photo base (various sources)
  - 1d property boundaries and property area database (MPAC, County)
  - 1e agricultural land use (LIO, AAFC)
  - 1f farm tax rated parcels or agricultural land use fields (OMAFRA, LIO, Agricultural Atlas)
  - 1g planning designation and zoning (with emphasis on specialty crop areas, prime agricultural lands and rural areas), settlement area boundaries, natural heritage resource areas and other databases as necessary (Region/County, Municipality/Township).
- 2 Combine information from steps 1 a to g in appropriate layers.
- 3 Produce summary results of the data base matrices for soils, soil capability, agricultural land use, land use, planning designation, zoning, property size, farm tax rating, in the form of a multi-tabbed Excel chart (or as separate Excel files, whichever works best); these matrices will be used at 2 different scales, County/Region, Municipality/Township and will include all data layer polygons and their characteristics for a given area or a set of areas.
- 4 Produce single factor map examples for review.

#### Part Two - change and/or add information to database(s)

- 5 Examine each data layer singly and combined with other layers for correlations, anomalies/errors and modify information (if required). The data checking method for the soils map is part of a separate algorithm related to the production of a unique soil symbol list (algorithm 2).
- 6 Add new information to newly created columns in the database(s) (for example, add soil potential ratings for specialty crops to soil map database where such information is available. There will likely be changes to the agricultural land use map with emphasis on what areas are currently used for specialty crop production.)

#### Part Three - measurement

- 7 Planning designation information should be used to "blackout", where blacked out areas are not included in the calculations (those areas which are not agricultural or rural (e.g. urban settlement areas, industrial, commercial, institutional, residential uses in agricultural areas). Depending on whether agriculture can occur within natural heritage features, some natural heritage features may also need to be removed from the calculations.
- 8 Prepare a metabase of results from layer combinations, for example, soil capability class and soil productivity by property or property class, in Excel format at the broadest to the site-specific scales that are being used within the assessment (County and Township scales). The specific requirements are outlined in algorithm 3.



- 9 Prepare summary maps (formatted as PDF files, minimum size 11" x 17") that show the results of the combination of different data layers. For example, soil capability by property or by property class; property size in specialty crop areas versus common field crop and livestock areas. Interpret the distribution of the information within a county or study area.
- 10 Make newly created databases and maps available for public review and modify databases, metabases, maps, as necessary, based on local knowledge.
- 11 Repeat steps 7 and 8 to provide new or modified databases, metabases and mapping.

#### Part Four - Additional single factor and/or interpretive maps

- 12 There may be a requirement to produce single factor maps or additional interpretive maps. These maps would be based on a column or columns already part of the existing databases or metabases.
- 13 There may also be a requirement to add a map variable such as climate to subdivide a study area. Subsequently, separate interpretive classifications will need to be produced for each of the new areas subdivided based on the new variables such as climate added to the analysis

#### ALGORITHM 2 CREATING A UNIQUE SOIL SYMBOL LIST

- 1 Obtain/use the soils database for all soil map polygons (LIO/OMAFRA) provided with the shape files for the soil map.
- 2 Reduce database to columns providing data for soil series name, soil series symbol, slope gradient, slope class, stoniness class, soil capability class, drainage class, surface texture (SOIL\_NAME1, Symbol1, SLOPE1, CLASS1, STONINESS1, CLI1, DRAINAGE1, ATEXTURE1, SOIL\_NAME2, SYMBOL2, SLOPE2, CLASS2, STONINESS2, CLI2, CLI2\_1, CLI2\_2, DRAINAGE2, ATEXTURE2) for a total of 16 columns (for some Regions/Counties there are 3 possible soils in a soil complex; therefore, there would be 24 columns of information).
- 3 Set up the reduced database (only 16 columns have been selected but all soil polygons on the map are listed) from step 2 so that the 2nd component of soil complexes identified in the previous step with the suffix "2" are effectively listed sequentially within the 8 columns identified for the sole or primary (where primary and secondary soils are present for soil complexes) soil series information listed with the suffix "1". This could be done by "blocking on" the 8 columns for the 2nd part of soil complexes (all having the suffix "2") and physically moving it to occupy the rows "underneath" the soil information listed with the suffix "1". This database can be defined as the "all polygons data".
- 4 Program GIS to:
  - a) Choose 1st row of this 8-column data and "save" to the unique symbol list.
  - b) Choose the 2nd row in the "all polygons" data and compare it to the 1st row and if any one or more of the components in the 8 columns are different, "save" the information to the unique symbol list.
  - c) For each subsequent row in the "all polygons data" as set out in step 3, compare the values in the all polygons data to the 8 columns found within the unique symbol list and if any of the data in the 8 columns all polygons data is different from that in any row of the unique symbol list, "print" the information in that row to the unique symbol list.
  - d) Continue the comparison for all polygons identified on the soil map.
  - e) Produce the unique symbols list (that is, a list with no duplicates).

#### Subsequent steps

- 5 Send the unique symbol list in Excel format to the agrologist for review.



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- 6 Analyze unique symbol list for soil capability values that are incorrect given information in the remaining 7 columns (i.e., look for inconsistencies).
  - 7 Change soil capability based on Canada Land Inventory for Agriculture “rules” and/or newer published soil capability ratings.
  - 8 Add a column to the data for changes/corrections in soil capability class if errors are observed.
  - 9 Modify soil capability map based on corrections.
  - 10 Produce specialty crop group soil potential ratings for each unique symbol if this rating is part of the analysis.



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## APPENDIX 2 SOIL PRODUCTIVITY INDEX and SOIL POTENTIAL INDEX CALCULATION





Soil potential ratings for fruits and vegetables have data limitations associated with soil rating systems and climate as described in the following paragraphs. All the databases evaluated have limitations associated with scale, data availability or alternatively, data suppression. For example, a soil rating system for specialty crops was developed by Hoffman and Cressman in 1984 for Ontario Hydro (Ecologistics and Smith, Hoffman, 1984). This is a three-class system – good, fair or poor which uses crop groupings but has not been applied on a broad scale to the Province. The Ontario Institute of Pedology and subsequently the Ontario Center for Soil Resource Evaluation has compiled specialty crop capability systems for some areas within Ontario. However, the Province has not a single specialty crop soil potential rating for all of Ontario. Given this lack of comprehensive soil potential information for specialty crops, it is not possible to reasonably differentiate which soils are most unique for specialty crop production within the Province.

However, some soil potential ratings for fruit and vegetables have been produced for Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara, Elgin, Middlesex and Brant. Unfortunately, the fruit and vegetable crop groupings used in different soil surveys are dissimilar in number as well as in the kinds of fruits or vegetables included in each group. For example, Niagara has 20 crop groupings (9 for fruits and 11 for vegetables) whereas Haldimand-Norfolk has 15 groups that do not always separate fruit and vegetables into separate categories. More details about the soil potential ratings for specialty crops are outlined in a summary in the table following in this Appendix. In addition, both five as well as seven class soil potential rating systems have been used in published soil survey reports in Ontario.

As a second example of information limitations, climate data is limited due to scale and a lack of integration. Several single factor maps produced on a broad scale are available for crop heat units, plant hardiness zones, temperature minima and maxima as well as precipitation. More specific maps such as the map for *Site Selection for Grapes in the Niagara Peninsula* (Fisher and Slingerland, 2002) are not available for the province of Ontario. Additionally, specific studies on irrigation such as that done for Niagara Region (Stantec, 2007) are not available for southern Ontario.

#### ONTARIO SPECIALTY CROP SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Crop Grouping Description 1	Niagara Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 2	Haldimand-Norfolk Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 3	Middlesex and Elgin Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 4	Brant Crop Grouping
	Seven Class System		Seven Class System		Five Class System		Seven Class System
<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>	<b>Tree Fruits, Grapes and Small Fruits:</b>
Peaches, Apricots, Nectarines	A	Apricots, Sour Cherries, Sweet Cherries,	D1				



Crop Grouping Description 1	Niagara Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 2	Haldimand-Norfolk Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 3	Middlesex and Elgin Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 4	Brant Crop Grouping
		Peaches					
Sweet Cherries	B						
Sour Cherries	C						
Labrusca Grapes	D	Hybrid and Vinifera Grapes, Labrusca Grapes	D3				
Vinifera Grapes	E						
Apples	F	Apples	D4	Apples	2	Apples	D1
Pears, Plums	G	Pears, Plums	D2	Pears, Plums	3		
Strawberries, Raspberries	H	Peppers, Raspberries, Rhubarb, Strawberries	B3	Raspberries, Strawberries	1	Strawberries	B3
Currants, Gooseberries	I						
				Rutabagas	3		
		Peanuts	A2	Peanuts	2		
				Heart Nuts, Filbert Nuts	3		
				Walnuts	2		
<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>	<b>Vegetable Crops:</b>
Crop Grouping Description 1	Niagara Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 2	Haldimand-Norfolk Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 3	Middlesex and Elgin Crop Grouping	Crop Grouping Description 4	Brant Crop Grouping
Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower	J	Cabbage, Cauliflower, Canola, Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Turnips	C3	Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower, Cabbage	8	Cabbage, Cauliflower	C2
Bulb Onions, Garlic	K	Onions, Beets, Carrots	B1				
Green (Bunching) Onions	L						
Eggplant, Peppers	M	Peppers, Raspberries, Rhubarb, Strawberries	B3	Peppers	6	Peppers	B2
Cucumbers	N			Cucumbers	4		
Muskmelon	O	Ginseng, Muskmelon, Watermelon	B2			Ginseng	B1
Potatoes	P	Potatoes	A3	Irish Potatoes	3	Potatoes	A1
Tomatoes	Q					Tomatoes	C2
Sweet Corn	R			Sweet corn	7	Sweet Corn	C2
Celery, Lettuce	S	Cucumber, Lettuce, Radish	C4				
Pumpkins, Squash	T	Green Beans, Peas, Pumpkins, Squash	C2				
		Asparagus	A1	Asparagus	1		
		Fava Beans, Soybeans, White Beans	C1	Soybeans	4	Beans	C1
				Sweet Potatoes	2		
				White beans	5		



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## **SOIL PRODUCTIVITY INDEX CALCULATION**

The soil productivity index is an arithmetic mean that expresses the relative occurrence of soil capability classes 1 to 7 on selected properties or within specified boundaries. The index is most often based on soil productivity ratings (Hoffman, 1973). Areas with the highest soil capability index will have mainly class 1 land. Areas with a low index will consist of lower soil capabilities. The productivity index method has been used because it provides a single number derived from a listing, by proportion, of the soil capability classes 1 through 7 which allows for direct comparison among different areas or sites. Impacts on soil capability will generally be greatest on an area with a high soil capability index; that is, impacts will be highest when good (higher capability land) is lost to development.

### **Method**

$$\text{Soil Productivity Index} = (\text{proportion of area of class 1 soils} \times 1.0) + (\text{proportion of area of class 2 soils} \times 0.8) + (\text{proportion of area of class 3 soils} \times 0.64) + (\text{proportion of area of class 4 soils} \times 0.49) + (\text{proportion of area of class 5 soils} \times 0.33) + (\text{proportion of area of class 6 soils} \times 0.17) + (\text{proportion of area of class 7 soils} \times 0.02)$$

The area of each soil map unit was measured and areas of similar soil capability were summed for CLI classes 1 to 7 lands. The area was calculated for each CLI class and subsequently multiplied by a productivity index corresponding to each soil class. The productivity index is specific to each capability class. The proportion of each area occupied by each soil capability class was multiplied by the corresponding soil productivity value (following Hoffman, 1973) and products were subsequently summed to obtain a soil productivity index for lands affected by or potentially affected by development.

## **SOIL POTENTIAL RATING FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

Soil potential ratings are based on crop groupings and classes described for Brant County by Acton (1989) and for Niagara Region by Kingston and Presant (1989). Crop suitability class descriptors in the original Kingston and Presant's report have been placed in an ordinal scale for soil potential as outlined in the following:

- Good (G) – 1
- Fair to Good (F-G) – 2
- Fair (F) – 3
- Poor to Fair (P-F) – 4
- Poor (P) – 5
- Very Poor (VP) – 6
- Unsuitable (U) - 7

A matrix is created having rows which are the different soils found within a given area in the columns are for the crop groupings. The highest or best rating is class 1 and those soils that are unsuitable rated lowest as class 7. Climate has been assumed to limit the production of peaches, nectarines, apricots, cherries and vinifera grapes within some Counties/Regions and the soil potential rating has been modified to class 7 (unsuitable)



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based on that climate limitation. An average specialty crop soil potential rating was calculated by adding the classes for the separate crops or crop groupings and dividing it by the total number of those crop groups (8 crop groupings following Acton and 20 crop groupings following Kingston and Present).

The application of this average soil potential rating is limited to comparisons at a provincial and regional/county scale at its broadest extent but depending on variations in climate may only be suitable as a relative rating at the municipal or township level.

It should also be noted that the soil potential rating is an average and that there may be individual crops that will grow very well on a particular soil. In other words, a soil with an average specialty crop potential class 4 rating may actually contain one or two crop groupings with soil potential ratings at a higher level - that is, soil potential subclass 2, for example.

### **Soil Potential Index**

The average soil potential index is an arithmetic mean that expresses the relative occurrence of soil potential ratings 1 to 7 on selected properties or within specified boundaries. Areas with the highest soil potential index will have mainly rating 1 land. Areas with a low index will consist of lower soil potential (5-7) for specialty crops. The potential index method has been used because it provides a single number derived from a listing, by proportion, of the soil potential ratings 1 through 7 in a given area which allows for direct comparison among different areas or sites.

### **Method**

$$\text{Soil Potential Index} = \text{(proportion of area of rating 1 soils} \times 1) + \text{(proportion of area of rating 2 soils} \times 2) + \text{(proportion of area of rating 3 soils} \times 3) + \text{(proportion of area of rating 4 soils} \times 4) + \text{(proportion of area of reading 5 soils} \times 5) + \text{(proportion of area of rating 6 soils} \times 6) + \text{(proportion of area of class 7 soils} \times 7)$$

The area of each soil map unit was measured using GIS and areas of similar soil potential were summed for potential ratings 1 to 7 lands. The soil productivity index and the soil potential index both tend to correlate with soil capability class.



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**APPENDIX 3**  
**SOIL CLASSIFICATION AND SOIL SURVEY**



Ontario's published soil surveys follow a hierarchical system of soil classification to represent a three-dimensional area called a pedon (see <http://www.pedosphere.ca/resources/CSSC3rd/chapter02.cfm> ). This three-dimensional area is intended to be represented as a two-dimensional map polygon usually shown as the soil series on soil maps in Ontario. Soil characteristics such as texture and particle size are a part of a continuum and the soil map also must present a landscape continuum as part of a discrete map polygon. In short, soils are represented as discrete units on a map even though the soils themselves are not discrete. As a result, there can be, and there have been, different ways of representing changes in soils that have been mapped within Ontario and within parts of the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, the opportunity to represent soils in different ways has resulted in significant changes in the approach to mapping soils over the time within which soil surveys have been published in Ontario. The older soil surveys tend to lump large areas into soil map polygons, whereas newer soil surveys have smaller more detailed polygons. Newer soil surveys also tend to have complexes (which are soil map polygons containing 2 or more soil series and/or two or more soil capability classes and subclass limitations). Examples of more recent soil surveys include Niagara, Haldimand-Norfolk, Brant, Kent, Middlesex, Ottawa urban fringe, Ottawa-Carlton and the soils component within the report titled *State of the Resources for the Duffin-Rouge Agricultural Preserve*. A review of older as well as newer Ontario soil reports indicates the following:

- soil series with the same name may not have the same characteristics between Counties and/or Regions,
- some soil series identified in detailed field studies are not always represented in the County/Regional published soil survey within which the detailed work is being completed; and,
- not all the soil capabilities assigned to a particular soil series are consistent from one soil report to another soil report.

The significance of the difference between old mapping styles and newer ones can be illustrated by using an old soil report and comparing the old soil map to a newer map. Both maps were produced by government staff. Within Durham Region, as well as a part of York Region, an area identified as an Agricultural Preserve was remapped (Schut *et al*) at a scale of 1: 20,000 in 1994 relative to two maps produced in 1956 (Olding *et al.*) and 1955 (Hoffman and Richards) both at a scale of 1: 63,360. A review of these older and newer maps shows that:

- there are differences in the number and size of soil polygons and the differences in the soil polygons represent differences in soil series and soil phases, and
- soil capability values assigned to each of the soil polygons are different from older map to newer map.

When the soil capability information is calculated as a productivity index, the old map assigned a productivity index of 0.91 (equivalent to capability class 1 soils) to that part of the Agricultural Preserve located within Durham Region whereas the new map has a productivity index of 0.66 that is relatively equivalent to capability class 3 (0.64). This information demonstrates that the soil productivity within the Preserve is significantly lower than the original mapping by Olding *et al.* (1956) would indicate. Given that some of the soils mapped in the Preserve by Schut *et al.* (1994, OMAF) require tile drainage,



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this tile drainage would need to be in place to reach the average productivity index value of 0.66.

### **RATING FOR COMMON FIELD CROPS**

The original soil capability classification is part of the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) and used an ordinal scale having the numbers 1 through 7. (A discussion of the definition of different scales is available in many mathematics texts. Siegel (1956) outlines a good summary matrix of the definitions for different scales that can be related to statistical tests). Alternatively, Velleman and Wilkinson (1993) describe mathematical scales as part of a continuum and argue that the use of specific statistical tests for specific scales is inappropriate. Irrespective of scale, the CLI capability interpretation was derived based on “*research data, recorded observations, and experience*” and was not intended for use as an indicator of the “*most profitable use of land*”.

The class, the broadest category in the capability classification, is a grouping of subclasses that have the same relative degree of limitation or hazard. The limitation or hazard becomes progressively greater from class 1 to class 7. The class indicates the general suitability of the soils for agricultural use.

- Class 1 - Soils in this class have no significant limitations in use for crops.
- Class 2 - Soils in this class have moderate limitations that restrict the range of crops or require moderate conservation practices.
- Class 3 - Soils in this class have moderately severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices or both.
- Class 4 - Soils in this class have severe limitations that restrict the range of crops or require special conservation practices or both.
- Class 5 - Soils in this class have very severe limitations that restrict their capability of producing perennial forage crops, and improvement practices are feasible.
- Class 6 - Soils in this class are capable only of producing perennial forage crops and improvement practices are not feasible.
- Class 7 - Soils in this class have no capability for arable agriculture or permanent pasture.

Agricultural soils information is currently available in old-style printed format as well as in digital format. The original information with all presented as soil survey reports with accompanying soil maps. Some more recent soil survey publications include a separate interpretive map for soil capability following the rules outlined in the Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability Classification for Agriculture. However, most reports contain a section that has a matrix summarizing soil capability classes for different soil series and phases relative to slope class. The very early soil reports prior to the 1960s tend to have a descriptive summary of the relative merits of different soil series for common field crop production - a precursor to the CLI soil capability classification. When the CLI soil capability classification work was started, a list of all the soil series was compiled and a soil capability class assigned to each soil series having a given set of limitation such as slope class and stoniness class. This information served as a base and blueprint maps, produced by projecting soil polygon/map unit boundaries on to topographic maps at a scale of 1 to 50,000, summarized capability on a County basis. When the County work was being done, additional detailed soil surveys were completed in several smaller sample areas to assist in assigning soil capability classes to the soils/soil polygons found



within the County. The blueprint maps served (without edit) as the base for the production of generalized 1: 250,000 scale soil capability maps by the Federal Government in Ottawa. The same blueprint maps were also used as a data source when the soil surveys for Ontario were digitized by OMAFRA. The digitizing included matching soil polygon series and soil capability information at the boundaries between Counties/Regions. Additionally, several more detailed soil surveys have been completed and the soil capabilities outlined in these published reports do not always match the soil capability values assigned on the blueprint maps. Thus, soil capability values can come from several different sources as follows:

- the unpublished summary of capability classes assigned to all of the soil series present as a result of mapping up to the 1960s;
- the blueprint map soil capability classes;
- the separate County summary data prepared as the base for the blueprint maps;
- the soil capability classes assigned within published soil reports after the 1960s some of which result because of published scientific information about the effects of soil characteristics such as density on soil capability.

Other soil capabilities have been derived because of the identification of new soil series, new soil phases and differing opinions about the capability of different soils

Subsequently, research by Hoffman (1973) indicated that soil capability class was an indicator of common field crop yields and productivity (yield) indices could be derived based on those yields. The indices, described more specifically in Appendix 1, are used as an “average” for three crops: oats, barley, and corn.

The soil capability class ordinal scale could then be converted into an interval scale using Hoffman’s (1973) data. The data used to create the interval scale are based on older soil surveys and the soil capability class summaries associated with the older surveys are summarized by Hoffman and Noble (1975). New surveys have been completed for Regions such as Middlesex, Elgin and Niagara. In these new surveys, because of work by McBride (1983), the soil capability classes for some soils have been changed to a lower class, particularly for soils with a high clay content. While McBride’s work has been related to average yield data, on a County or Regional basis, no site-specific yield data has been used to confirm that the newer changes to soil capability class is supported by specific yields as was completed in Hoffman’s (1973) research. Therefore, the capability classes used in the newer soil surveys, such as the one for Niagara, might better be described as being part of an ordinal scale.

Regardless of the difference of opinion concerning arithmetic scale, yield data, and productivity indices, both data sources and methods have been investigated as part of the work described in this report.

The original soil capability rating report (Environment Canada, 1972) has assumptions which have been applied to the interpretation of soil capability. Two of these assumptions (Environment Canada, 1972) are germane to a discussion on the capability of the subject lands and are as follows:

- *Good soil management practices that are feasible and practical under a largely mechanized system of agriculture are assumed.*
- *Soils considered feasible for improvement by draining, by irrigating, by removing stones, by altering soil structure, or by protecting from overflow, are classified according to their continuing limitations or hazards in use after the improvements*





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*have been made. The term “feasible” implies that it is within present day economic possibility for the farmer to make such improvements and it does not require a major reclamation project to do so. Where such major projects have been installed, the soils are grouped according to the soil and climatic limitations that continue to exist. A general guide as to what is considered a major reclamation project is that such projects require co-operative action among farmers or between farmers and governments. (Minor dams, small dykes, or field conservation measures are not included).*

Therefore, these assumptions have been considered in the evaluation of soils in this specialty crop study. Soil capability mapping has been based on the original soil map which is now available in digital format from LIO based on information originally supplied by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

As discussed previously, the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) originally assumed that soil management that could be applied by a farmer would occur. Therefore, improvements such as irrigation and adequate drainage (both surface and subsurface) were already assumed to be applied in the rating of soils into capability classes.

### **Tile Drainage**

As noted previously, soil capability and therefore productivity makes assumptions about tile drainage (that is, that tile drainage is applied where it is needed and that capability class ratings reflect the fact that the drainage is already assumed to be in place). There are some differences of opinion about which soil drainage classes would benefit from tile drainage. However, it is likely that imperfectly and poorly drained soils would show improved yields when tiles had been installed. There is no doubt that poorly drained soils have better yields when tile drained. As well, it is likely that the imperfectly drained soils would benefit from tile drainage. Unfortunately, the newer soil surveys do not indicate how soil capability class levels would change if imperfectly drained soils are not tiled.

Some information is available to assist in estimating how productivity is diminished in areas requiring tile drainage. For example, yield data collected over 20 years and that were summarized and evaluated by Irwin (1999) indicate that, because of tile drainage, average yields have improved within a range where the least improvement was a 10 percent increase for coloured beans in contrast to a high increase of 38 percent for wheat. The summary by Irwin (1999) did not differentiate by soil series, soil drainage class, or by location in the Province. Based on a general interpretation of the data from Irwin (1999), it can be estimated that imperfectly drained soils in an undrained state could be poorer by a single capability class. However, the installation of tile drainage on the imperfectly drained soils is less likely than installation on poorly and very poorly drained soils.



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**APPENDIX 4**  
**MULTI-ATTRIBUTE ANALYSIS AND AGRICULTURAL PERFORMANCE**



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## MULTI-ATTRIBUTE ANALYSIS

Any multi-attribute analysis, including a LEAR analysis, may have different results based on:

- the number and kind of variables considered,
- the analysis method,
- the weights applied to the variables,
- whether the data was standardized, and
- whether all the data was presented consistently to mean that a high number is intended to indicate a high importance value.

A review of the literature did not present information suggesting that a single multi-attribute analysis method is the best method. Even the wording employed for the quantitative methods used to combine information varies. The University of Redlands and the Spatial Decision Support Consortium (2012) have prepared a summary of the language and definitions associated with Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA). Some of the work described by the University of Redlands is based on work by Malczewski (2006). Multi-attribute Combination Methods is a subset of MCDA having subcategories of Analytical Hierarchy Process, Concordance Methods, Fuzzy Aggregation Operation, Ideal/Reference Point Method, Value/Utility Function Method and Weighted Linear Combination. A LEAR analysis fits in to the subcategory of Weighted Linear Combination which is described on the Redlands website as "the most often used technique for tackling spatial multi-attribute decision making".

AgPlan Limited and Michael Hoffman have carried out various multi-criteria decision analyses at different scales throughout the Province of Ontario. The following paragraphs briefly describe the methods used to evaluate agricultural performance within different Regions or Counties in central to southwestern Ontario. Most of the variables used in the regional scale analyses are outlined in the Agricultural Census for Ontario. Additional variables for soil productivity and crop yields are available through OMAF(RA) for the years used in the analyses. The early census years had relatively few variables (in the order of 30) while later census years used many variables (in the range of hundreds). Some environmental variables used in the later analyses first appeared in 1996. There is the potential for an infinite number of ways to modify the data using the three ways described. Therefore, individual databases were designed to include some relatively different measures of agricultural performance/achievement.

### Regional Comparison

At the regional scale for example, environmental, economic, and production viewpoints were separated for some databases. In other instances, a modified characterization within a single category such as production was completed. For example, production was characterized as using total production values (volumetric or gravimetric) for some data sets and as production per unit area (yield) in other data sets. Multiple characterisations were used to represent different perspectives as well as different values associated with the agricultural indicators/metrics. Therefore, for example, total production values were included because they give a relative indication of a County's contribution to the total food production that occurred within a given year within southern to central Ontario. However, this production indicator tends to be correlated with the area of the County. Therefore, yield data was included and/or emphasized to minimize



any effect associated with a Region/County's size on that Region/County's performance rating. As well, each of the data sets was modified using different weighting schemes to represent disparate views about which indicators are better predictors of agricultural performance.

Different agricultural variables were grouped into databases to emphasize different parts of each year's agricultural indicators. In general terms, one database was prepared for fruits and vegetables and the second database produced so that the area and farm number data from the first a database was proportional to the total census farm area or total number of census farms.

### Methods and Standardization

The combination of different variables to produce a single value has traditionally presented problems and colloquially is known as the "combining apples and oranges" problem. The problem of combination has been reduced by choosing methods that compare indicators using a standardized quantitative scale. As described previously, each data set could be analysed using two different methods as follows:

- (1) Simple additive weighting (SAW);
- (2) Concordance (CCD); and

For the simple additive weighting and concordance methods, the data were standardized based on the maximum and minimum indicator values for each variable. Standardization used the following formula:

$$\text{Standardized Score} = 100 \times \frac{(\text{Raw Data Value}) - (\text{Minimum Raw Data Value})}{(\text{Maximum Raw Data Value}) - (\text{Minimum Raw Data Value})}$$

Therefore, all scores range between the values 0 and 100.

In addition to different data sets, and different agglomeration analysis methods, different weights were considered. However, in this instance all variables were given equal/unit weight. The agricultural analysis methods were also set up to allow for the calculation of the inverse of any variable. No inverse calculations were used in this analysis.



<b>Fruit and Vegetable Southern Ontario Proportional</b>	
farms reporting	Apples total area
acres	Apples total area
farms reporting	Pears total area
acres	Pears total area
farms reporting	Plums and prunes total area
acres	Plums and prunes total area
farms reporting	Cherries (sweet) total area
acres	Cherries (sweet) total area
farms reporting	Cherries (sour) total area
acres	Cherries (sour) total area
farms reporting	Peaches total area
acres	Peaches total area
farms reporting	Apricots total area
acres	Apricots total area
farms reporting	Grapes total area
acres	Grapes total area
farms reporting	Strawberries total area
acres	Strawberries total area
farms reporting	Raspberries total area
acres	Raspberries total area
farms reporting	Cranberries total area
acres	Cranberries total area
farms reporting	Blueberries total area
acres	Blueberries total area
farms reporting	Saskatoons total area
acres	Saskatoons total area
farms reporting	Other fruits, berries and nuts total area (47)
acres	Other fruits, berries and nuts total area (47)



<b>Fruit and Vegetable Southern Ontario Proportional</b>	
farms reporting	Potatoes
acres	Potatoes
farms reporting	Sweet corn
acres	Sweet corn
farms reporting	Tomatoes
acres	Tomatoes
farms reporting	Cucumbers
acres	Cucumbers
farms reporting	Green peas
acres	Green peas
farms reporting	Green and wax beans
acres	Green and wax beans
farms reporting	Cabbage
acres	Cabbage
farms reporting	Chinese cabbage
acres	Chinese cabbage
farms reporting	Cauliflower
acres	Cauliflower
farms reporting	Broccoli
acres	Broccoli
farms reporting	Brussels sprouts
acres	Brussels sprouts
farms reporting	Carrots
acres	Carrots
farms reporting	Rutabagas and turnips
acres	Rutabagas and turnips
farms reporting	Beets
acres	Beets



<b>Fruit and Vegetable Southern Ontario Proportional</b>	
farms reporting	Radishes
acres	Radishes
farms reporting	Shallots and green onions
acres	Shallots and green onions
farms reporting	Dry onions, yellow, Spanish, cooking, etc.
acres	Dry onions, yellow, Spanish, cooking, etc.
farms reporting	Celery
acres	Celery
farms reporting	Lettuce
acres	Lettuce
farms reporting	Spinach
acres	Spinach
farms reporting	Peppers
acres	Peppers
farms reporting	Pumpkins
acres	Pumpkins
farms reporting	Squash and zucchini
acres	Squash and zucchini
farms reporting	Asparagus, producing
acres	Asparagus, producing
farms reporting	Asparagus, non-producing
acres	Asparagus, non-producing
farms reporting	Other vegetables
acres	Other vegetables
farms reporting	Greenhouse vegetables
square feet	Greenhouse vegetables
Apple Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)	
Grapes Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)	



<b>Fruit and Vegetable Southern Ontario Proportional</b>
Peaches Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Strawberries Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Sweet Cherries Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Sour Cherries Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Pears Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Plums and Prunes Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Raspberries Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Cabbage Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Green and Wax Beans Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Carrots Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Sweet Corn Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Dry Onions Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Peppers Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Field Tomatoes Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Asparagus Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Beets Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Brussels Sprouts Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Broccoli Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Cauliflower Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Celery Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Field Cucumbers and Gherkins Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Total Lettuce Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Green Peas Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Radishes Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Rutabagas Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)
Spinach Average Yield ('000lbs/acre)