

AGRICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

July 2022

795 Anderson Street, Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington, County Of Wellington

Our File: 1285P



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Ltd (MHBC) has been retained by Biltmore Homes Ltd. to prepare this Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) for the lands located at 795 Anderson Street, Fergus, in the Municipality of Centre Wellington, the County Of Wellington (the 'subject lands'). This report has been prepared to assess the suitability of the lands for agricultural purposes in relation to the Prime Agricultural designation.

The subject lands are located immediately adjacent to the north of the Township of Centre Wellington Urban Boundary, and are comprised of one 7.3 hectare (ha) parcel (Figure 1). The subject lands are bounded by the Township Urban Boundary to both the east and the south, residential uses to the west, and contain a woodlot on the north half of the property. The subject lands vary significantly in elevation, with a drop near the south of the site. Beyond the subject lands, the majority of the uses are consistent with the urban uses within the Township, including low density residential, institutional (John Black School, Maranatha Christian School), and employment uses. Outside of the Urban Area, a mix of rural residential uses, rural employment uses, and agricultural uses predominate.

The purpose of this Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) is to evaluate the subject lands' suitability to contribute to the agricultural system in relation to its Prime Agricultural designation. This report also identifies proposed mitigation measures to abate potential impacts on the agricultural system to the extent feasible. The AIA is based on the Province's Draft Guidelines for Agricultural Impact Assessments.

1.1 Methods

In preparing this report, the following documents were reviewed:

- Provincial Policy Statement (2020)
- Growth Plan (2020)
- County of Wellington Official Plan (Consolidated 2021)
- Township of Centre Wellington Zoning By-Law

In addition to these plans, the following materials were also reviewed:

- Soil data resource information which include Ontario Soil Survey reports and mapping, the provincial digital soil resource database, Canada Land Inventory Agricultural Capability mapping, Soil Suitability information and mapping (for specialty crops), and information from on-site investigations;
- Aerial photography (historic and recent) with effective user scale of 1:10,000 or smaller;

- OMAFRA's constructed and agricultural Artificial Drainage Mapping;
- OMAFRA's Agricultural System Portal for information on specialty crops, drainage, surrounding crops and livestock, etc.;
- Parcel mapping/fabric of the area;
- OMAFRA Guidelines for Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas; and
- Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture Data.

A land use survey and site visit was also conducted on May 25th, 2022 and information gathered from Google Satellite Imagery (2022) was utilized to gain a better understanding of the agricultural operations and activities on and surrounding the subject lands. A summary of the agricultural land use survey is included in Section 3.0 of this report. The potential for impacts on surrounding agricultural uses will vary and mitigation is dependent on the type and sensitivity of the agricultural activities identified in the Primary and Secondary Study Areas.

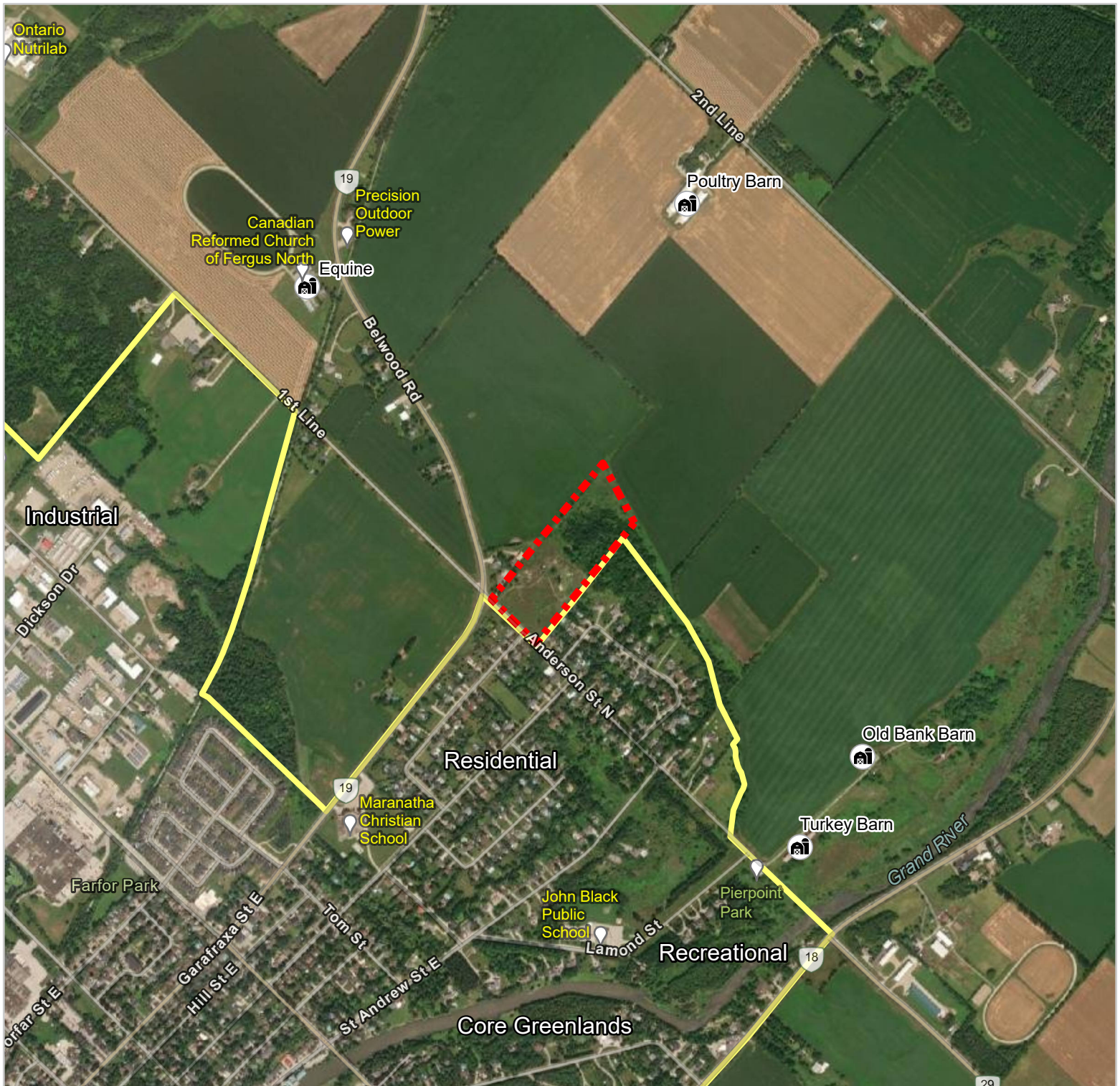





Figure 1:
Context Map

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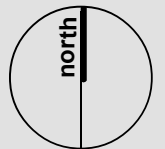
-  Subject Lands
-  Urban Boundary
-  Barn Locations

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795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

Service Layer Credits: Hybrid Reference Layer: Province of Ontario, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, NRCAN, Parks Canada
World Imagery: Maxar

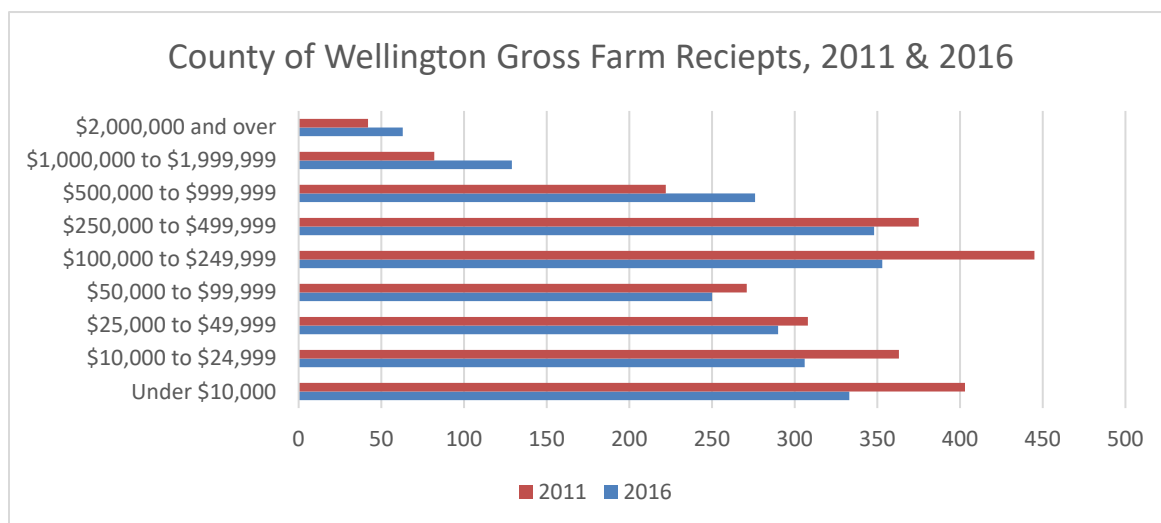
2.0 AGRICULTURAL BACKGROUND

The following section provides a summary of the agricultural industry in the County of Wellington and the Township of Centre Wellington. Using data from OMAFRA’s County Profiles (derived from StatsCan census of agriculture data), the following section will provide an understanding of agricultural trends in the County and Township.

2.1 County of Wellington

The County of Wellington has experienced a steady decline of farmland and number of farms from 2011 to 2016. In 2011, the County reported a total of 499,176 acres of farmland, with 2,511 total farms. Compared to 2016, where the Region reported 466,400 acres and 2,348 farms. The continued loss of farmland in the County can be related to the significant growth requirements faced by the County under the *Growth Plan*.

This trend of farmland loss and loss of the number of farms is also mirrored in the change in Total Gross Farm Receipts from 2011 to 2016. As shown in the graph below, the number of farms earning over \$500,000 dollars and the above categories has increased from 2011 to 2016, while the number of farms reporting below this amount has decreased. This is likely due to farms consolidating into larger operations to remain viable among increasing costs for land.



The top 5 agricultural operations by industry group in 2016 in the County are as follows:

- Grain and Oilseed Farming (557 farms)
- Beef Cattle Ranching and Farming (381 Farms)
- Other Animal Production (379 Farms)
- Dairy Cattle and Milk Production (351 Farms)
- Other Crop Farming (232 Farms)

Grain and Oilseed (Cash Cropping) is the predominant industry within the County of Wellington, followed by livestock operations and other crop farming. It is noted that the Township of Centre Wellington's agricultural trends are very similar to the trends of the County, experiencing a loss of agricultural land by 15% (11,711 acres) and farms by 13 % (53 farms). Further analysis of the agricultural resources and inventory on the Subject Lands and the Study Area are included in this Assessment.

As discussed in Section 3 of this report, the study area representative of the overall trends seen throughout the County, with a majority of operations being cash cropping operations, and some other livestock production (poultry, equine).

3.0 STUDY AREA

For purposes of this report, the subject lands are known as the property municipally known as 795 Anderson Street North. The subject lands are considered the Primary Study Area. The Secondary Study Area consists of an area with a radius of 1.5 kilometres around the subject lands.

3.1 Primary Study Area

The Primary Study Area is bounded by the Township Urban Area Boundary to the South and East, and two rural residential lots to the west (Figure 2). To the north of the subject lands are agricultural cropping operations. The subject lands are in fallow/open space.

3.1.1 *Physical Resource Inventory*

The following section is an outline of the Physical Resource Inventory onsite which contributes to the agricultural capability of the subject lands. As a note, this exercise was completed by desktop. No on site soil survey was completed onsite, as the subject lands have not been in an agricultural condition for over 50 years.

3.1.1.1 **Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability for Agriculture**

The Canada Land Inventory (CLI) system uses soil attributes to create a seven class system of land use capabilities. Class 1, 2, and 3 soils are capable of sustained common field crop production. Class 4 soils are limited for sustained agriculture while Class 5 is capable for use of permanent pasture and hay. Class 6 is best used for wild pasture. Class 7 is for soils and landforms that are not capable for use for arable culture or permanent pasture. According to the CLI Soil Capability mapping, the subject lands consist of Class 2 and 3 soils (Figure 3). This would be considered Prime Agricultural soils. It is important to note that the Class 2 soils on the property are located within the area of the subject lands which contains the woodlot. There are no Class 1 soils on the subject lands.

3.1.1.2 **Climate**

Climate data was obtained from the OMAFRA document titled "Agronomy for Field Crops – Publication 811" (2017). The subject lands are located within the 2700-2900 average accumulated Crop Heat Units (CHU-M₁) available for corn production in Ontario as depicted in Figure 1-1 of the Publication (Figure 4). The CHU ratings are based on the total accumulated crop heat units for the frost free growing season in each area of the province, and they range from 2700 east of Parry Sound to 3500 near Windsor.

The subject lands average accumulated CHU range would not be considered special climactic conditions, and thus would not indicate that it is located within a specialty crop area.

3.1.2 Primary Study Area Features

The subject lands consist of one, regularly shaped 7.3 ha parcel, being used for private recreation (beach volleyball court, trails) and open space. The lands are bounded by residential uses (both within the Urban Boundary and outside) on three sides, to the south, east, and west. The northern half of the parcel contains a large woodlot, which limits the area for potential agricultural production and acts as a natural buffer for the other parts of the subject lands from the larger agricultural parcels to the north. The subject lands vary fairly significantly in its elevation, generally peaking in the middle of the property and sloping downwards towards the south (Anderson Street) and the North. The subject lands contain several mounds and valleys within the varying elevations, as can be seen in the following images.

A large ditch was constructed in 2012 along the northwest limit of the property to capture surface water flow from surrounding farms. This drain acts as an additional barrier from the subject lands and surrounding agricultural operations.

The subject lands are currently used for private recreation type activities. A beach volleyball court was observed onsite, as well as several hiking/biking trails running throughout the property. The current landowner has confirmed that the subject lands have not been in agricultural production for the past 50 years.

The current land uses surrounding the subject lands, as well as the topography and the woodlot on site create significant constraints to its potential operability for agricultural production. Access to the parcel is limited to a primarily residential road (Anderson Street). On site agricultural investment was limited to the post and wire fencing. However, it is noted that no livestock production is occurring or permitted in the future on the subject lands (see Section 4.4 Township of Centre Wellington Zoning By-Law). No other agricultural infrastructure is located on site, and the lands have effectively been used for other, non-agricultural purposes.

Essentially, the subject lands are constrained for cropping purposes due to the size and topography. They are prohibited from containing a livestock operation due to the present zoning of the subject lands as well as the surrounding residential uses. For these reasons, the agricultural viability of the subject lands are significantly limited.



Subject Lands (Facing Southeast). Anderson Street Pictured on Right



Subject Lands (Facing South) Anderson Street Pictured front

3.2 Secondary Study Area

The Secondary Study Area includes an area with a radius of 1.5 kilometers around the subject lands. 1.5 kilometres was chosen based on the OMAFRA Draft Guidelines for Agricultural Impact Assessments, which indicates a 1.5 kilometre radius be used for settlement boundary expansions. While this application is not for a settlement boundary expansion, it is located immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary. As such, it was deemed appropriate to use a similar Secondary Study Area.

3.2.1 Physical Resource Inventory

The physical resource inventory of the Secondary Study Area is fairly similar to that of the Primary Study Area. When considering climate, the CHU of the Secondary Study Area is the same as the Primary Study Area, which would indicate that there are no specialty crop areas in the Secondary Study Area.

Of note, however, is that the Secondary Study Area consist primarily of Class 1 soils, with some Class 2 and 3 soils. The subject lands are of the lowest class of soil which are immediately adjacent to the Township Urban Boundary.

3.2.2 Secondary Study Area Land Use Features

The Secondary Study Area includes an area with a radius of 1.5 kilometres around the subject lands. The Secondary Study Area consists of a variety of Land Use types, including:

- Residential (Low Density & Rural Residential)
- Agricultural
- Employment (Rural & Urban)
- Institutional
- Recreational
- Natural Features

The variety of land uses is indicative of the area as the Secondary Study Area consists of land inside the Urban Area to the South and lands outside of the Urban Boundary to the North. Lands outside of the Urban Area to the north are somewhat fragmented, with Rural Residential lots located along County Road 19 as well as the 1st line to the northwest of the subject lands. Rural employment uses exist along County Road 19 within the Secondary Study Area, including Precision Outdoor Power (Lawn Mower Mechanic) and Jeni Mobile Wash, a mobile pressure washing business providing services to agricultural operations, as well as industrial and commercial operations.

Importantly, the southern portion of the Secondary Study Area consists of the Urban Area of the Township of Centre Wellington. The primary land uses to the south of the subject lands are low density residential uses. John Black Public School, and Maranatha Christian School are both located within the Secondary Study Area. Immediately west of the subject lands are two rural residential uses, and prime agricultural crop land which is surrounded on three sides by the Township Urban Area. Further west of this parcel, the Urban Area consists of Employment/Industrial lands, and lands owned by the Municipality which are intended for future employment uses.

Two recreational uses also exist in the Secondary Study Area, one within the Urban Area, and one that extends beyond the Urban Area. Pierpoint Park is located along the Grand River to the southeast of the subject lands, within the Urban Area. The Elora Cataract Trail runs within the Urban Area Boundary and extends out along County Road 19 (Belwood Road), adjacent to agricultural operations in the Secondary Study Area.

The agricultural uses in the Secondary Study Area are limited to the area to the north of the subject lands, including the northeast and northwest (Figure 2). Based on the site visit, these operations are consistent with agricultural cropping practices throughout Southern Ontario (soy, corn, wheat rotation). Based on the Province's Agricultural Mapping, there are significant investments in tile drainage located on agricultural lands surrounding the subject lands. However, this investment was not made in the subject lands themselves, and no change is proposed to the surrounding tile drainage. No additional agricultural investments such as irrigation, or other specialized cropping practices were observed in the Secondary Study Area. None of the lands in the Secondary Study Area are mapped as a Specialty Crop Area by the Province.

Three livestock operations were identified within the Secondary Study Area. Images of these operations and a brief description of the operations are included below.



18166 County Road 19 Equine Facility

An equine facility was identified in the Secondary Study Area to the north of the subject lands, located at 8166 County Road 19. The operation includes several fenced in pastures, as well as a full training track, and training ring. It is noted that there are over 4 residential lots located between the equine facility and the subject lands. These residential lots already constrain the equine facility from an MDS and possible expansion perspective. For this reason, MDS was not calculated for this facility.



6474 Second Line Poultry Barn

A poultry operation was identified to the north of the subject lands, at 6474 Second Line. The operation includes two large barns, as well as outdoor manure storage at the rear of the buildings. While there are no residential buildings located between this operation and the subject lands, MDS was not calculated due to the operation being over 1 kilometre away from the subject lands.



449 Anderson Street South Turkey Barn

A turkey barn was identified to the southeast of the subject lands at 449 Anderson Street South. The operation includes a turkey barn, and contains an old bank barn located at the rear of the property (north). Similarly to the equine facility, the Township's Urban Area (specifically residences in Sunnybrae Crescent) is located between the turkey operation and the subject lands. For this reason, MDS is not calculated from the turkey barn, as it is already constrained via the Urban Boundary and the Residential Uses located within that boundary.

3.2.3 *Minimum Distance Separation*

As discussed in the previous section, there were three livestock operations identified in the Secondary Study Area. For two of these operations, residential lots and the Township Urban Area exist between the operation and the subject lands, and thus are already constrained via those lots from an MDS perspective. The other livestock operation, to the north of the subject lands, is located over 1 kilometre away from the subject lands (beyond the woodland). For these reasons, MDS is not required to be calculated.

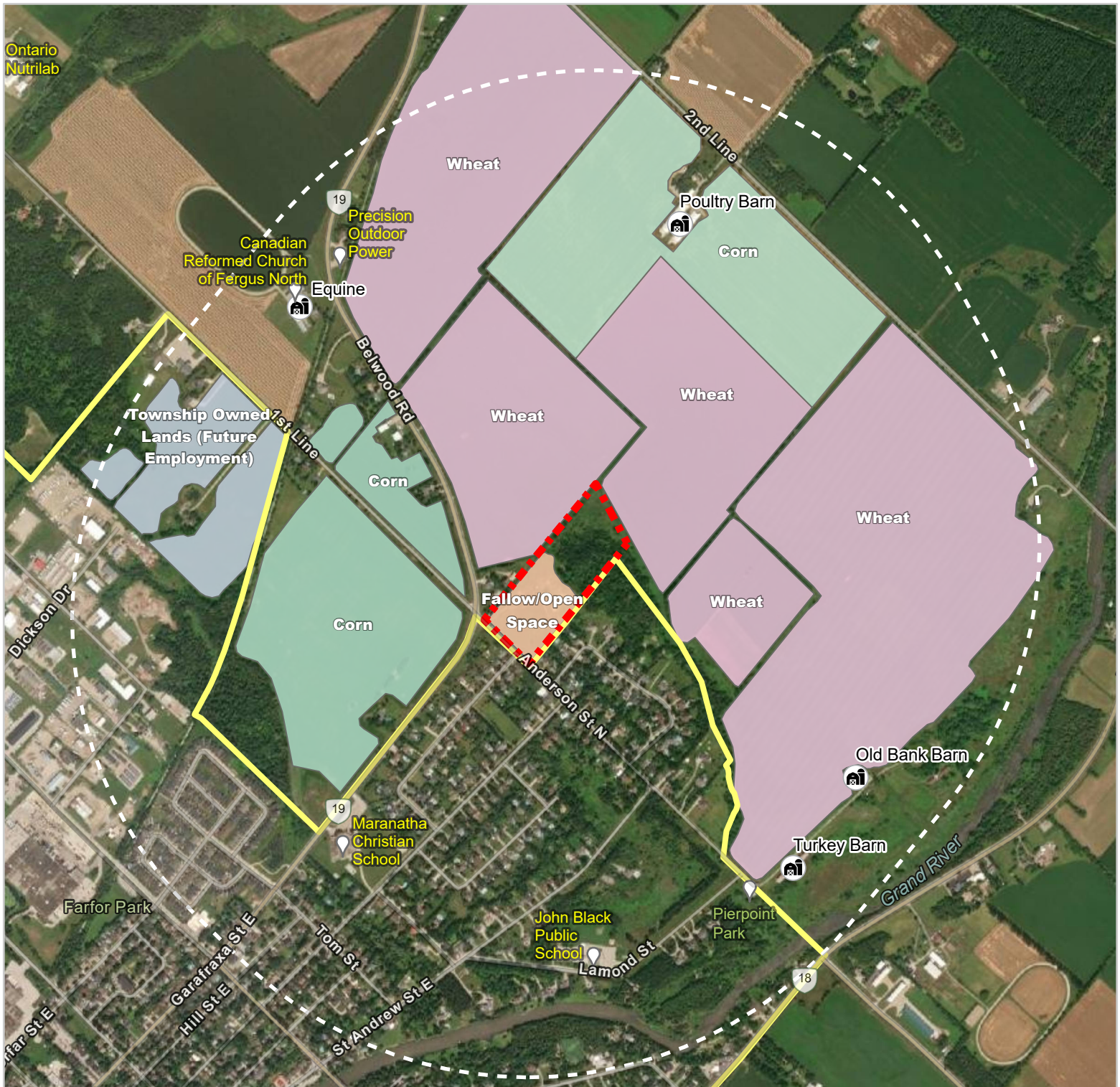


Figure 2: Agricultural Land Use

Legend

-  Subject Lands
-  Urban Boundary
-  Study Area (1.5km)
-  Barn Locations
-  Corn
-  Fallow/Open Space
-  Township Owned Lands (Future Employment)
-  Wheat

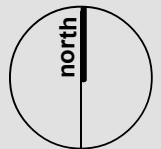
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795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

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World Imagery: Maxar



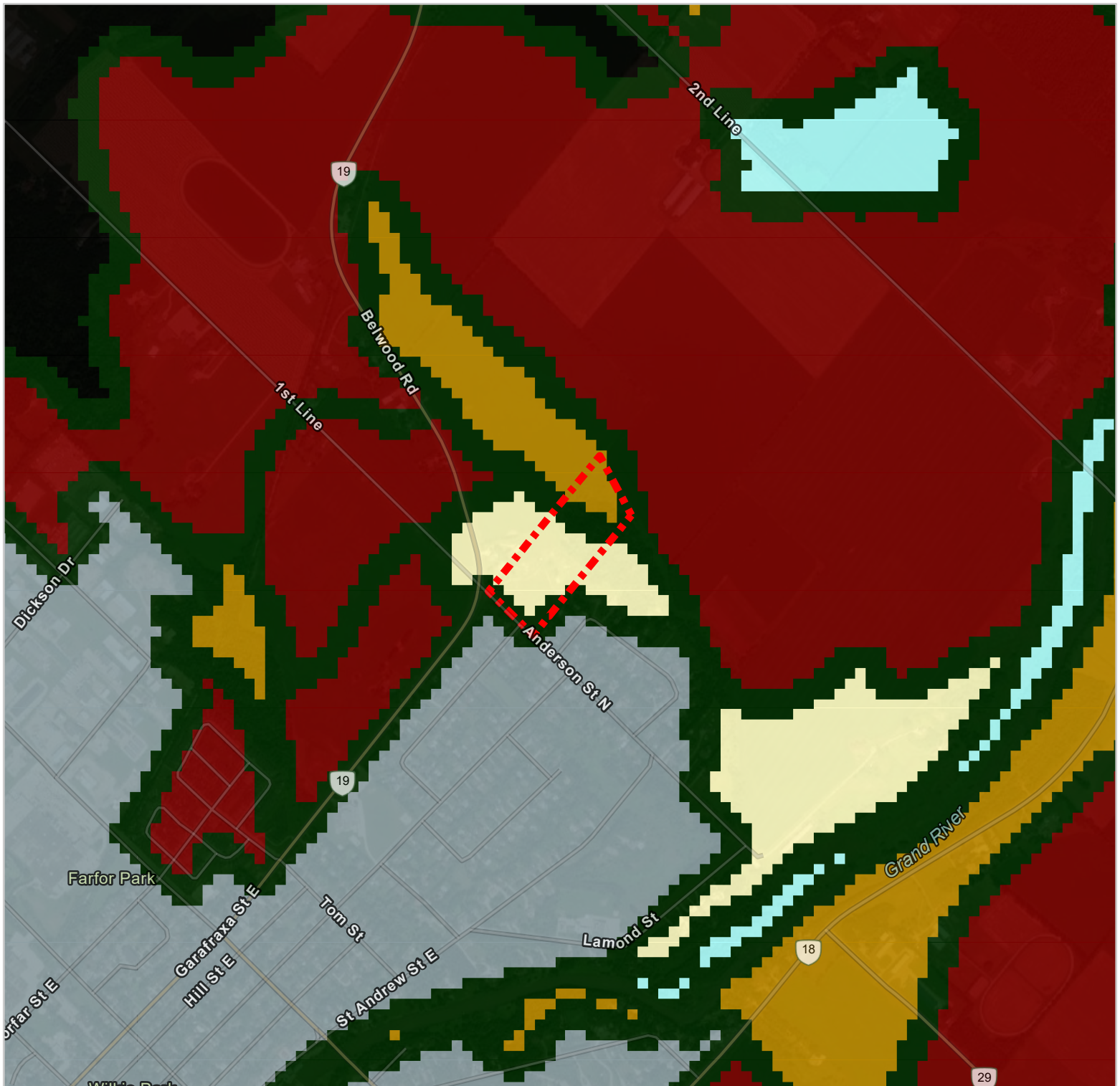













Figure 3: Soil Capacity for Agriculture

Legend

 **Subject Lands**

| Soil Capacity for Agriculture | |
|---|--------------|
|  | Unclassified |
|  | Class 1 |
|  | Class 2 |
|  | Class 3 |
|  | Class 4 |
|  | Class 5 |
|  | Class 6 |
|  | Class 7 |
|  | Organic Soil |
|  | Water |

Service Layer Credits: Hybrid Reference Layer: Province of Ontario, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, NRCAN, Parks Canada
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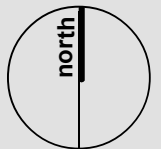
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795 Anderson St N
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Township of Centre Wellington



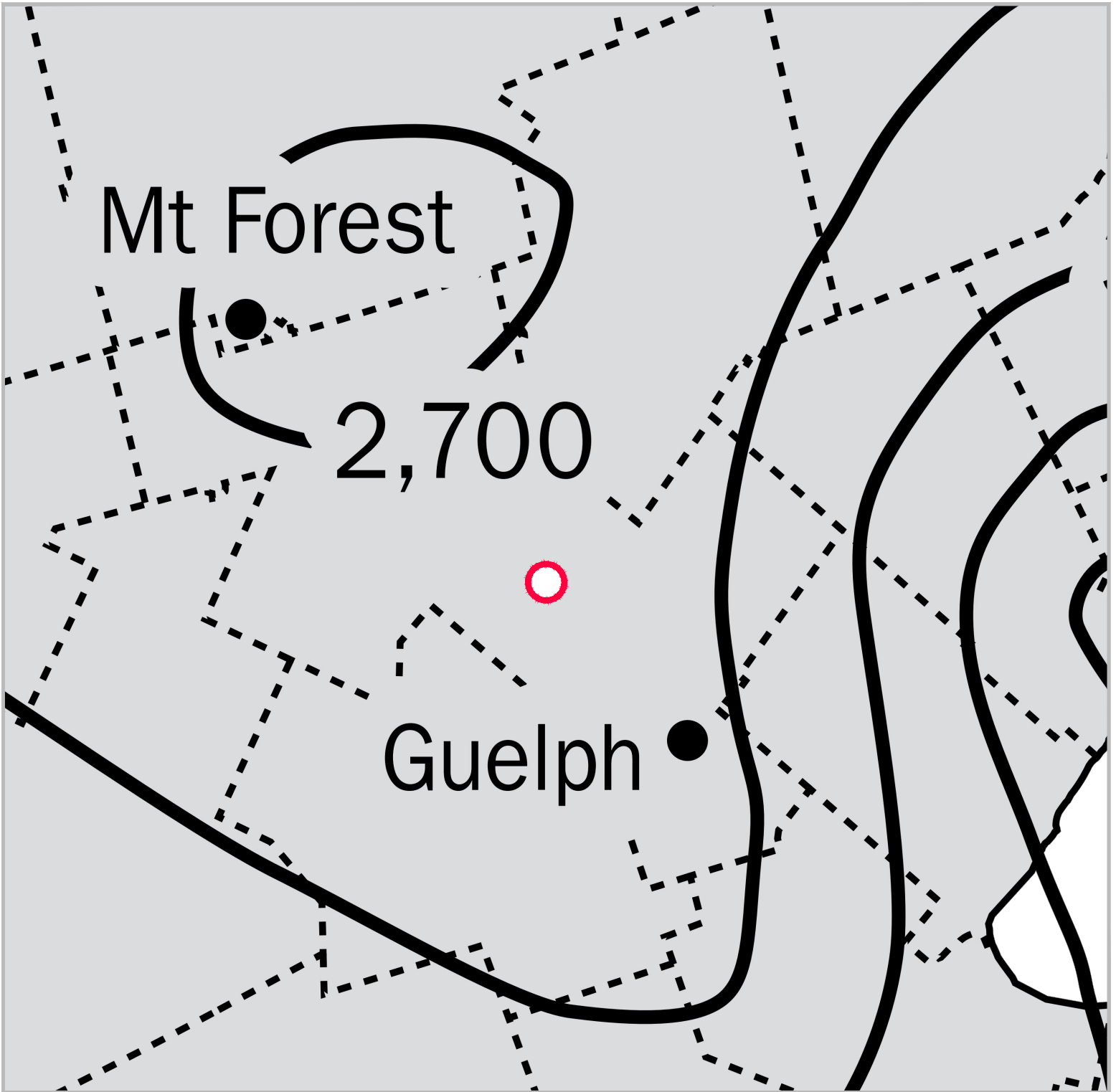



Figure 4: Crop Heat Units

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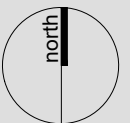
 Subject Lands

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795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

Source: Agronomy Guide For Field Crops Publication 811, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

MHBC PLANNING
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4.0 PLANNING ANALYSIS

As part of the Agricultural Impact Assessment, a comprehensive assessment of the planning policy framework from an agricultural perspective has been undertaken relative to the subject lands. The following is a review of the land use policy framework related to the subject lands.

4.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* and came into effect May 1, 2020. The PPS establishes the policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS provides for appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest such as agriculture, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. The PPS supports the provincial goal to enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians.

The PPS recognizes the provincial interest in agricultural resources in its “Vision for Ontario’s Land Use Planning System” where it states that agricultural resources, among other resources, provide important environmental, economic, and social benefits. The wise use and management of these resources over the long term is a key provincial interest.

Section 2 of the PPS outlines policies pertaining to the wise use and management of resources within the Province. Specifically, 2.3 provides policies relating to Agriculture. The following policies are relevant to the subject lands:

2.3.1 Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

Prime agricultural areas are areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the prime agricultural area, in this order of priority.

The subject lands consist of Class 2 and 3 soils (Figure 3). Surrounding lands are predominantly Class 1 soils and are considered prime agricultural lands. The PPS defines specialty crop areas as areas that predominantly grow specialty crops like tender fruits, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops and other crops developed in organic soil. This is usually the result of soil suitability, climatic conditions, farmers skilled in producing specialty crops, and long term investments in agricultural capital. There are no specialty crop areas identified by the province surrounding the subject lands.

2.3.2 Planning authorities shall designate prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas in accordance with guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time.

Planning authorities are encouraged to use an agricultural system approach to maintain and enhance the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the agri-food network.

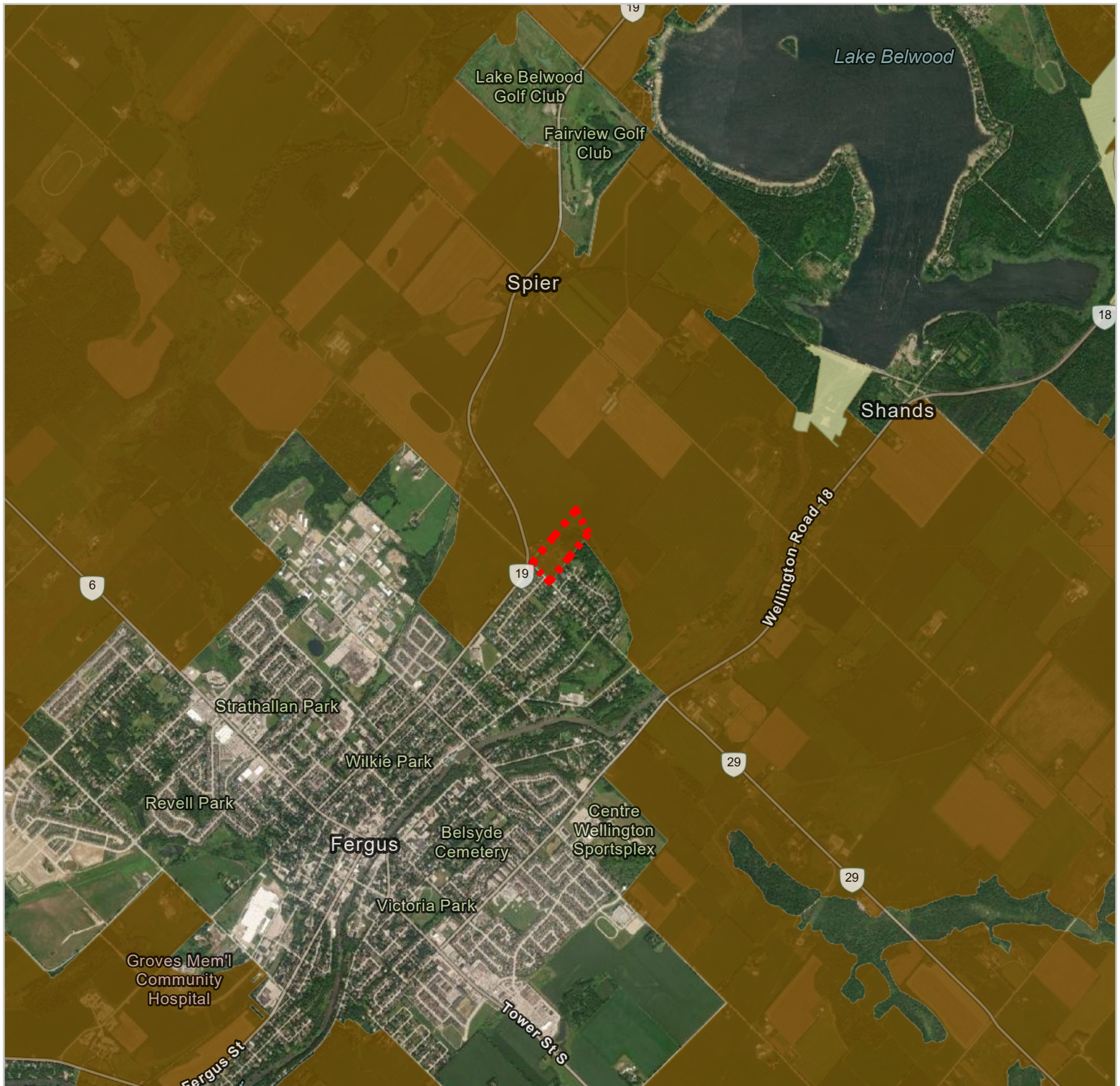
The subject lands are within the agricultural system as mapped by the Province (Figure 5). As such, the impacts on the continuity of the agricultural land base and the economic connections to the agri-food network are further analyzed within this assessment.

2.3.4.3 The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 2.3.4.1(c).

These lands are significantly constrained for agricultural production, and are zoned to prohibit agricultural uses (livestock). The result is land that is essentially not viable for agricultural production that is typical of the area. A further analysis of the zoning is considered in this section.

2.3.6.2 Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on surrounding agricultural operations and lands are to be mitigated to the extent feasible.

The surrounding areas within the Study Area are considered to be a mix of urban and agricultural uses. The uses located outside of the Township Urban Boundary are predominantly within a Prime Agricultural Area. This assessment provides considerations of the impacts on surrounding land uses and provides the necessary mitigation measures to ensure that impacts are mitigated to the extent feasible.



**Figure 5:
Provincial Agricultural
Systems**

Legend

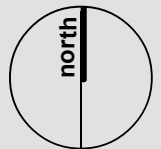
-  Subject Lands
- Agricultural Land Base**
 -  Prime Agricultural Area
 -  Candidate Area
 -  Specialty Crop Area

Date: June 9, 2022

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795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

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World Imagery: Maxar
Layer: Open



4.2A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) was prepared and approved in 2019 under the *Places to Grow Act*, and amended in 2020. The Growth Plan is the Government of Ontario's initiative to plan for growth and development in a way that supports economic prosperity, protect the environment, and help communities achieve a high quality of life. The subject lands are within the Growth Plan area (Figure 6), and any planning decisions made for lands within the plan area must conform to Growth Plan policies.

The Growth Plan recognizes the interest in protecting agriculture in its vision statement, where it states that one of the principles of the plan is to support and enhance the long-term viability and productivity of agriculture by protecting prime agricultural areas and the agri-food network.

Section 4 of the plan outlines policies pertaining to protecting what is valuable within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The section provides context on the agricultural system within the GGH, stating that it is home to some of the most important and productive farmland in Canada. Additionally, it outlines the implementation of an Agricultural System's approach to planning, which includes a continuous and productive land base comprised of prime agricultural areas and the complimentary agri-food network.

Section 4.2.6 outlines policies pertaining to the Agricultural System within the GGH. The following policies pertain to the subject lands.

3. Where agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses interface outside of settlement areas, land use compatibility will be achieved by avoiding or where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the Agricultural System. Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed. Where appropriate, this should be based on an agricultural impact assessment.

The subject lands are located directly adjacent to the settlement boundary for the Township of Centre Wellington. They are not used for agricultural purposes, and have not been used for production in over 50 years. The subject lands are buffered on all sides from agricultural production, with the exception of the northern woodlot located on the parcel. This assessment provides an analysis of the impacts and the appropriate mitigation measures required to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on the agricultural system.

4. The geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the agri-food network will be maintained and enhanced.

This assessment includes the impacts on the continuity of the agricultural system, which includes the land base and the connections to the agri-food network.

7. Municipalities are encouraged to implement regional agri-food strategies and other approaches to sustain and enhance the Agricultural System and the long-term economic prosperity and viability of the agri-food sector, including the maintenance and improvement of the agri-food network by:

- a) providing opportunities to support access to healthy, local, and affordable food, urban and near-urban agriculture, food system planning and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food, and agri-product businesses while protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts;*
- b) protecting, enhancing, or supporting opportunities for infrastructure, services, and assets. Where negative impacts on the agri-food network are unavoidable, they will be assessed, minimized, and mitigated to the extent feasible; and*
- c) establishing or consulting with agricultural advisory committees or liaison officers*

This impact assessment analyzes the impacts that the subject lands have on the surrounding near-urban agricultural operations. The lands are bounded by the Urban Area boundary and buffered via woodlot from agricultural operations. Recommendations to minimize and mitigate impacts on surrounding agricultural operations will focus on minimizing land use conflicts.

It is noted that the subject lands are not contributing to the agricultural system as they have not been in production for over 50 years. Additionally, the subject lands are significantly constrained in their ability to contribute to support agricultural production.

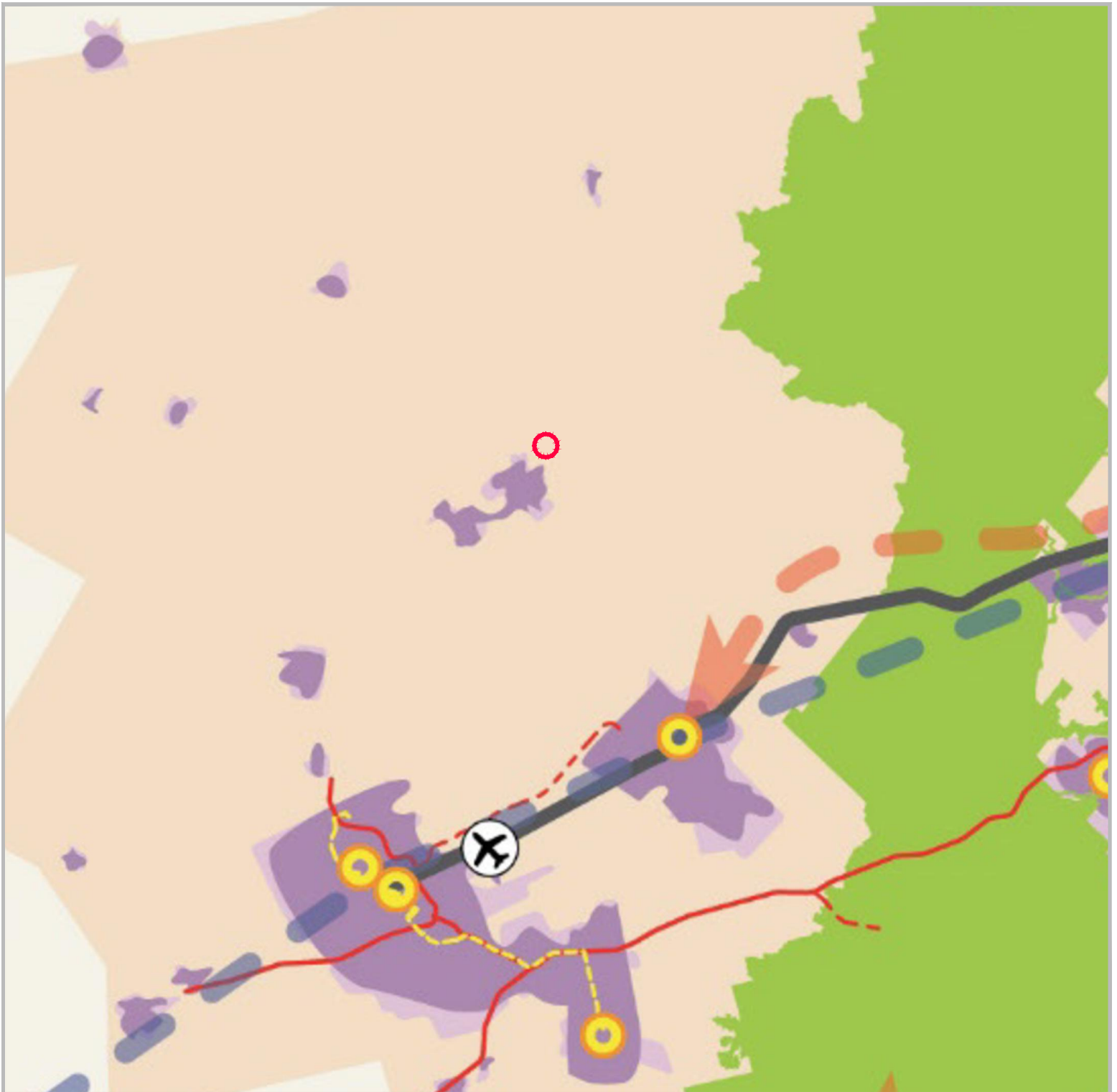



Figure 6:
Growth Plan

Province of Ontario, Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan, Schedule 2, 2020

LEGEND

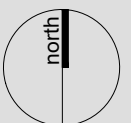
 Subject Lands

DATE: June 14, 2022

SCALE: NTS

FILE: 1285P

DRAWN: NDC



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795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

Sources:
Province of Ontario, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Schedule 2 - A Place to Grow Concept, 2020



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4.3 County of Wellington Official Plan

The County of Wellington Official Plan was adopted by County Council on September 24th, 1998. It was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on April 13th, 1999 and came into effect on May 6th. The most recent consolidation to the Official Plan occurred on June 1, 2022.

The County Official Plan intends to give direction to the physical development of the County, its local municipalities, and to the long term protection of County Resources. All land use and servicing decisions must conform to the policies of the plan.

The County Official Plan recognizes the importance of protecting Prime Agricultural Areas in Part 4, 6, and 10. The Plan recognizes that prime agricultural areas will be protected for farming uses, and that all types, sizes, and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices will be promoted and protected.

The following policies pertain to the subject lands from an agricultural perspective.

4.3.1 Prime Agricultural Areas Prime Agricultural Areas will be identified and protected so that normal farming operations are not hindered by conflicting development.

The subject lands are designated in the County Official Plan as “Prime Agricultural” (Figure 7). It is noted that the zoning of the property restricts normal farm practices due to the prohibition of normal farming operations on the lands.

6.4.2 Agriculture First In Prime Agricultural Areas, all types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices will be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards. As a general rule, land use activities which support agriculture will be encouraged and land use activities which do not support agriculture will be discouraged.

While the subject lands are designated Prime Agricultural in the County Official Plan, the Zoning on the property does not promote or protect all types, sizes, or intensities of agricultural uses on the subject lands.

6.4.10 The appropriate provincial minimum distance separation formula will be applied to new land uses, lot creation and new or expanding livestock facilities.

As discussed in section 3, there are no MDS concerns relative to the subject lands.

As discussed previously, the zoning of the subject lands restricts the agricultural viability of the site in prohibiting certain types of agricultural production. Further, the subject lands are already significantly constrained for cropping due to topography and size (which is constrained by the environmental feature and a ditch), and their location adjacent to the urban area. As such, the agricultural viability of the lot is essentially sterilized.

The County Official Plan also outlines guidelines for Agricultural Impact Assessments in section 4.6.5:

a) the opportunity to use lands of lower agricultural potential;

The subject lands contain Class 3 soils, which are of the lowest which surround the Township Urban Area according to CLI Soil Capability Mapping.

b) compliance with the minimum distance separation formula for livestock operations;

The subject lands are consistent with the minimum distance separation formulae for livestock operations, as discussed in section 3 of this assessment.

c) the degree to which agricultural expansion may be constrained;

Agricultural expansion on the subject lands is already constrained by the zoning by-law, which prohibits certain types of agricultural production. Further, the surrounding urban uses limit the viability of the subject lands to be used for agricultural purposes. The subject lands are primarily surrounded by the Township Urban Area and residential uses (south, east, west), and are buffered from agricultural operations to the north via the onsite woodlot. For these reasons, agricultural expansion of surrounding operations will not be constrained.

d) potential interference with normal agricultural activities and practices;

The subject lands are directly adjacent to the Township Urban Area. Access to the lands is from a residential road. Livestock operations nearby are already constrained via adjacent rural residential uses. Where agricultural production abuts the subject lands to the north, the subject lands are buffered from the cropping area via the woodlot and a ditch.

e) potential interference with the movement of agricultural machinery on roads;

As discussed above, the subject lands will have access onto Anderson Street N, which is a residential road within the Urban Area. It is unlikely that agricultural machinery use this road, and where they do, it is assumed that they are already used to the residential traffic which currently exists on the road.

It is noted here that the while the subject lands are located within the Township of Centre Wellington, the Township Official Plan only applies to lands within the Urban Area. The Township Official Plan Land use schedule is included to demonstrate how the subject lands are surrounded by low density residential land uses, and how the subject lands are currently constrained via residential uses.

4.3.1 Draft County Official Plan

The County is currently undergoing its Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process, which includes updating its Official Plan. The County is updating policies to prepare for future growth, which are aimed to support healthy, compact and complete communities in the County.

As part of the MCR, the County will review its potential land need to accommodate for new community and employment areas. At the time of writing for this report, the County is currently undertaking its phased Land Needs Assessment. Further, the County is also undertaking a review of the Agricultural System during the MCR process. Through this review, the County will refine the Province's Agricultural Systems mapping, and incorporate a final agricultural land base into the County Official Plan.

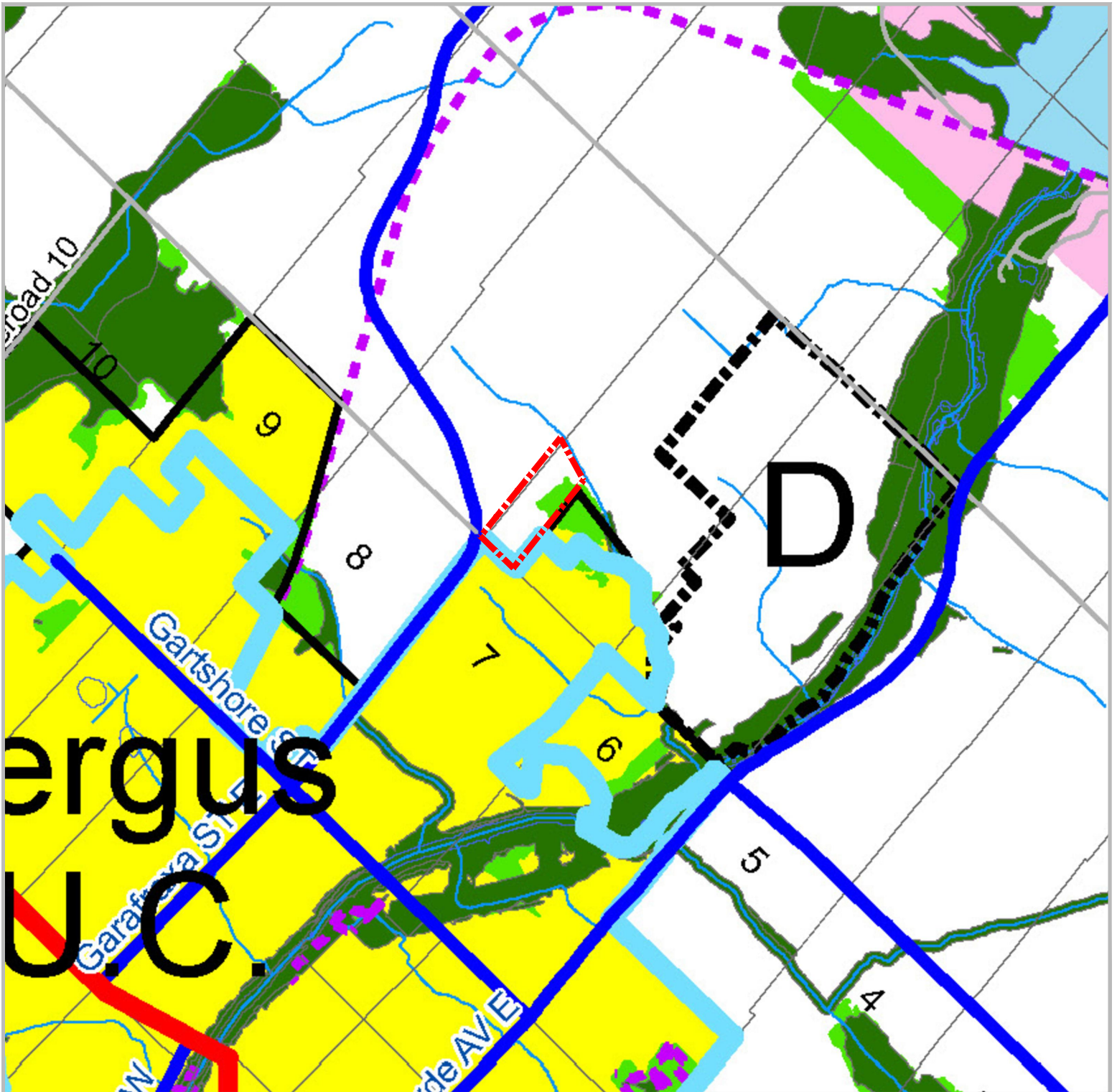




Figure 7:
Land Use


County of Wellington Official
Plan Schedule A1, 2021


LEGEND


 Subject Lands


 Core Greenlands

 Greenlands


 Prime Agricultural


 Recreational

 U.C. Urban Centre

 Deferral

 County Roads

 Provincial Highways

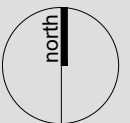
 Built Boundary

DATE: June 13, 2022

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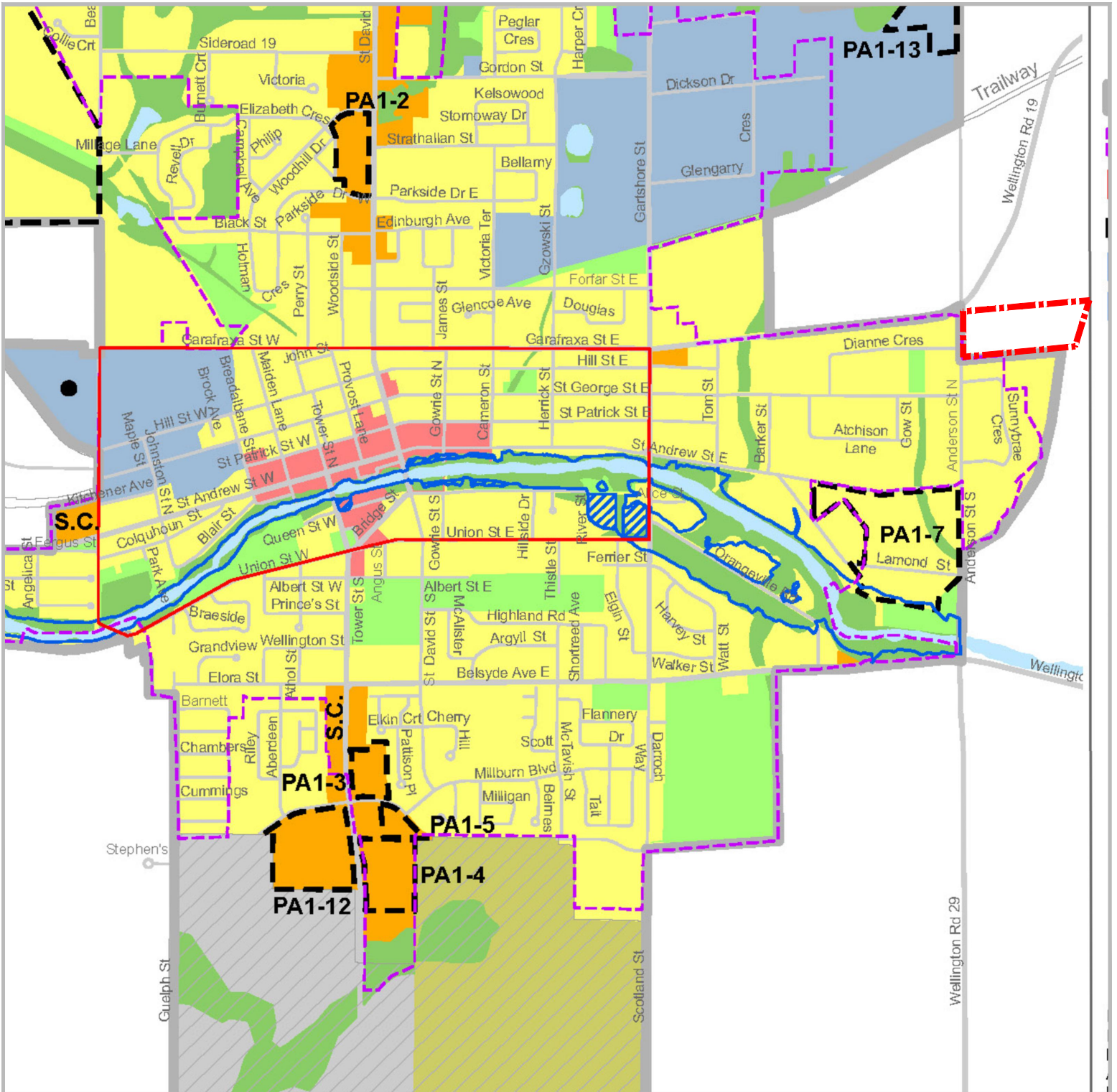


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795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

Source: Country of Wellington Official Plan, Schedule A1, 2021

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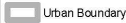

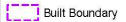





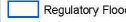

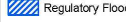

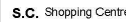

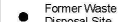





**Figure 8:
Land Use**

Township of Centre Wellington
Official Plan Schedule A-1, 2016

795 Anderson St N
Community of Fergus
Township of Centre Wellington

LEGEND

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Subject Lands |  | Urban Boundary |
|  | Residential |  | Built Boundary |
|  | Highway Commercial |  | Heritage Area |
|  | Central Business District |  | Policy Area |
|  | Industrial |  | Regulatory Flood Line |
|  | Core Greenlands |  | Regulatory Flood Fringe |
|  | Recreational |  | S.C. Shopping Centre |
|  | Future Development |  | Former Waste Disposal Site |
|  | Secondary Planning Area | | |
|  | Future Residential | | |
|  | Future Employment Lands | | |

Source:
Township of Centre Wellington Official Plan, Schedule A-1, Land Use
Plan Fergus, Elora-Salem, 2016

DATE: June 13, 2022

SCALE: 1:20,000

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4.4 Town of Centre Wellington Zoning By-Law No. 2009-045

The Township of Centre Wellington Comprehensive Zoning By-Law was approved in 2009, and recently consolidated in February 2021. The Zoning By-Law states exactly how land may be used, what types of buildings are permitted and how they may be used, lot sizes and dimensions, and where buildings can be located. The zoning by-law provides the day to day administration of land use as set out by the Official Plan.

The subject lands are zoned Agricultural (A) and are subject to a site specific zoning provision "A.91.1". The following provision applies to the subject lands:

Notwithstanding anything else in this by-law to the contrary, on lands zoned A.91.1 the following provisions shall apply: a) the existing livestock housing facilities shall not be expanded or enlarged and no new livestock housing facilities shall be constructed

It is noted that there are no existing livestock housing facilities located on the subject lands. As such, the zoning effectively prohibits any livestock production on site, as new livestock facilities are prohibited. While this is inconsistent with the Prime Agricultural designation of the subject lands in the County Official Plan and Provincial Mapping, livestock production would likely not be permitted due to required MDS setbacks which would apply from the nearby residential uses.

The site specific zoning of the property would indicate that the Township recognizes the subject lands are not suitable for all types and intensities of agricultural production.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

This section will provide an impact assessment on both the subject lands, and the surrounding area. This will include a discussion of impacts on the agricultural system, surrounding agricultural operations, and potential cumulative impacts from loss of agricultural land. Finally, a summary table of net impacts is provided.

5.1 Impacts on the Agricultural System

The subject lands are not currently in agricultural production, nor have they been for the past 50 years. The subject lands contain approximately 4 ha of prime agricultural land, however, this land is currently used for recreation and open space, not agriculture. It is highly unlikely, due to the size, topography, and zoning, that the lands could be viably used for agricultural purposes in the future. With no structures or other agricultural investment on the subject lands, there is no loss in agricultural infrastructure. Additionally, the surrounding residential land uses already constrain the subject lands from an agricultural use perspective. A physical barrier in the form of the ditch at the north end of the subject lands also constrains the access to agricultural operations to the north. Due to these constraints, the only viable agricultural production on the subject lands are small scale horticultural crops. However, topography, lack of access for farm vehicles, and minimal investment in the lands lowers the significance of the subject lands for agricultural production.

The Agricultural System in the Secondary Study Area is present, however is not proposed to be changed or impacted. The majority of land uses in the Secondary Study Area are rural residential, resulting from past severances and the location of the Urban Area. As discussed in Section 3 of this report, there are a limited number of land uses in the Secondary Study Area that are included in the agri-food network. While the rural employment uses of Jeni Mobile Wash and Precision Outdoor Power service agricultural operations, their sole purpose is not for agricultural servicing, and thus would not be considered an Agricultural Related Use according to the Province's Guidelines.

In summary, the lands within the Secondary Study Area are either within the Urban Area, or can be characterized as predominantly cash cropping, with some livestock uses. The subject lands are well buffered from any agricultural operation that exists, which will limit the potential for trespassing, littering, and complaints surrounding noise and odour which commonly occur from abutting residential and agricultural uses. Any potential impacts, if any, on surrounding cash crops can be mitigated, and thus these measures will be discussed in Section 6.0 of this report.

6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

The following Table is consistent with Table 3 found in section 3.2.2 of the Province’s Draft Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidelines. The Table provides a summary of how the subject lands minimize and mitigate impacts on surrounding land uses.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed Mitigation Measures

| Objective | Mitigation Measure | Description |
|--|---|---|
| Minimize the loss of Agricultural Land | Select an area that provides the most logical form of expansion for the Settlement area | The Urban Boundary abuts the subject lands to the south and east. Rural Residential lots abut the subject lands to the west. The subject lands are in an area characterized by low density residential uses and are in a logical location for residential uses. |
| | Phase Development | The subject lands are not in agricultural production, and as such phasing development will not result in minimizing the loss of agricultural land. |
| | Maintain Farm Parcels | The subject lands consist of one large parcel, however, as discussed previously, the parcel is not actively farmed, nor has been for the last 50 years, and features a large woodlot. |
| Minimize Impacts on Farmland and Agricultural Operations | Edge Planning | Edge planning will occur naturally along the north portion of the subject lands. The topography, as well as the existing woodlot, will buffer the subject lands from the agricultural operation to the north. No edge planning is required to the south, east, or west due to the surrounding uses being residential. |
| | Minimum Distance Separation | Surrounding agricultural operations are in compliance with the Minimum Distance Separation Formula as they are over 1 kilometre away or are buffered by residential lots/the Urban Boundary. |
| | Design Future Development to Support Agriculture | As discussed above, natural buffering will occur between the residential lots and the agricultural parcel to the north. This will support the existing agricultural operation to the north as the vegetative buffer and topographic changes already exist. |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Minimize and mitigate changes in water quality | Implement a ground water monitoring program. | As discussed above, the subject lands are well buffered from the agricultural operation to the north, via topography and the existing woodlot. It is not anticipated that there will be impacts to ground water from an agricultural perspective on the northern operation. |
| Mitigate Impacts during construction operations | Adjust operation procedures to accommodate agricultural development. | A phased approach to development should be used when constructing residences to minimize dust created by construction. |
| Mitigate ongoing impacts from new development | Implement measures to be in place post development to support compatibility | The subject lands are surrounded by residential lots in the area, and are buffered from agricultural operations on all sides. It is recommended that fencing be required to limit access beyond the existing woodland to prevent trespassing. |
| Educate to achieve a greater compatibility between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. | Education and awareness | <p>Should future residential development occur, warning clauses should be included as conditions of approval and purchase of sale agreements that advise future homeowners of surrounding agricultural operations to the north and the resulting noise and odour that occurs based on normal farm practices. Education materials can also include information on the financial and agricultural impacts of trespassing, vandalism, and other conflicts.</p> <p>Educational materials during the purchase of sale can also include a list of surrounding agricultural operations that can be supported directly through customers. This promotes and supports local agri-food industries in the area.</p> |

7.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this Agricultural Impact Assessment was to evaluate and assess the suitability of the subject lands for agricultural production in relation to the Prime Agricultural designation and the overall Agricultural System in the area. The proposal area was evaluated within the context of the existing Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan and the local municipal documents including the County of Wellington Official Plan and the Township of Centre Wellington Zoning By-Law. In addition, the scope of the assessment included site observations, an analysis of soil capability, and reviewing additional secondary sources.

Through this comprehensive review, it is concluded that there will be no impact to the ability of sustaining the long term agricultural uses and operations on the surrounding lands within the Study Area. This recognizes the significant constraints and prohibitions that the lands currently face from an agricultural perspective, which include outright prohibitions on livestock production, and physical constraints limiting the cropping viability of the lands.

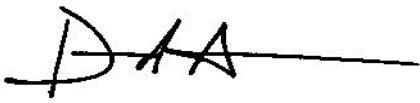
This opinion recognizes the following:

- Surrounding lands are currently comprised of a mix of agricultural, non-agricultural uses, physical barriers (ditch), and natural heritage features, which generally isolates the subject lands from the broader agricultural system;
- There has been no investment in agricultural facilities or structures on the subject lands, and has not been farmed in 50 years. There will be no impact to any other surrounding agricultural related uses that form part of the agricultural system;
- Loss of agricultural lands associated with the subject lands would have a negligible impact on the overall agri-food network in the Town and County. Based on a review of the existing operations in the area, there are operations in the area that contain significantly higher forms of agricultural investment in comparison to the subject lands.
- The Township has already restricted the subject lands' ability to contribute to the Agricultural System through site specific zoning prohibiting livestock production.
- Considering the extensive amount of prime agricultural land available in the Township, 4 hectares of land that is zoned to prohibit agricultural uses is a small loss in agricultural land that will have a negligible impact on broader agricultural system;

- Impacts on agricultural traffic in the area would not be affected by development of the development site as the subject lands are located on a residential road;
- Compliance with MDS guidelines has been met; and,
- Impacts on surrounding agricultural operations and lands will be mitigated with the implementation of mitigation measures such as natural buffering, fencing, and best management practices.

Respectfully submitted,

MHBC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DAA', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dave Aston, MSc, MCIP, RPP
Vice-President, Partner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D McKenzie', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dawson McKenzie, BA
Planner