Planning Regional Food Systems

A guide for municipal planning and development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide focuses on the Growth Plan area for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) with particular relevance to the Greenbelt and adjacent municipalities. It explores the rich opportunities for regional food systems in rural planning and development.

In 2005, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Agricultural Action Plan directed the Ontario Farmland Trust (the Trust) to collaborate with planners in clarifying land use policy and incentives that would assist farmers in voluntary farmland preservation (RPCO 2005). The Trust has primarily accomplished this through the use of farmland conservation easements. With the publication of this guide the Trust continues its efforts to sustain both farmland and farming. The approach suggested in this guide is that municipalities develop sustainable regional food systems to support diverse rural economies. An emphasis is placed on food production and processing sectors.

The content of this guide is geared largely toward rural planning and economic development at the Region or County municipal level. Many of the ideas in this guide will require further collaboration between community leaders, health authorities, planners, economic development officers and decision makers.

The guide is organized into four sections that promote:

i) Updating Official Plans and zoning bylaws
ii) Engaging farm communities
iii) Renewing rural capacity building
iv) Connecting urban markets

This guide was shaped by a literature review and contributions from twenty-four practicing planners in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. It was reviewed by five provincial agencies. Sincere thanks are extended to all those who contributed.

Please note that the views expressed in this guide are those of the Trust and not necessarily those of contributors. This guide is not a substitute for legal or professional advice.

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ONTARIO FARMLAND TRUST

METCALF FOUNDATION

FOUR KEY AREAS OF PRACTICE

1) **Update the Official Plan and zoning bylaws with an assessment of the local agricultural resource, both in terms of economics and biogeography**

See page 10 to read the Official Plan and Zoning *section*

2) **Engage farm communities through public education and the coordination of Agricultural Advisory Committees**

See page 21 to read the Community Engagement *section*

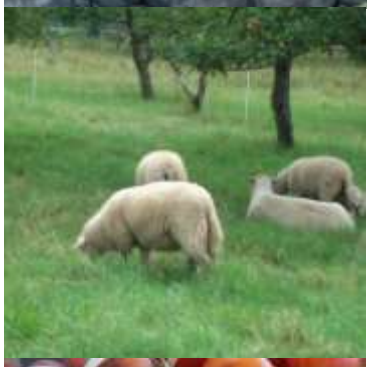
3) **Renew rural capacity by investing in new market research and regional food system infrastructure**

See page 26 to read the Rural Capacity *section*

4) **Connect urban markets to healthy food and farming systems**

See page 33to read the Urban Markets *section*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Our sincere thanks to all contributors

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- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Rural Ontario Municipalities Association
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute

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- Region of Niagara
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NOTES FOR READERS

This guide is divided into four sections: policy, engagement, rural capacity, and urban markets. Concise discussions and recommendations are offered in each section, along with case studies, tools and resources. Each section ends with a series of discussion questions. All references, hyperlinks and important resources are organized by chapter and alphabetical order at the end of this guide. Note: hyperlinks are embedded in text for online readers.

Discussions present questions or scenarios related to food systems that are meant to provoke problem-solving in common conflict areas. These discussion questions can be used during workshops and presentations.

Case studies provide credible examples of planning successes in developing regional food systems.

Tools and resources give readers access to information that will be useful in implementing regional food systems strategies.

Legend symbols for each type of information will allow for easy identification of materials. Please refer to the following legend.

Symbol	Meaning
	Discussion
	Case study
	Tool or resource

DEFINITIONS OF COMMON TERMS

• **Regional Food System:** a geographically defined social, environmental and economic cluster that connects food production, processing, distribution, consumption and recycling.

• **Agriculture:** Includes the production of crops and livestock and a range of associated activities.

• **Prime Agricultural Land:** Refers to lands that have Class 1, 2, and 3 soils (CLI 1969). These soils are the best soils in Ontario for agricultural production.

• **Rural Area:** Rural areas include a system of land uses and communities that comprise Ontario's countryside. They generally encompass those lands and livelihoods which depend upon agriculture, forestry, natural resources, tourism and recreation.

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

PLANNERS AND AGRICULTURE

Regional food and agriculture are often discussed within health and environment contexts. It is less well known that regional food systems are a growing area of municipal economic development, zoning and policy for agriculture.

Many elements of regional food systems are best approached from a municipal perspective, although much change is also required at provincial and federal levels. Ontario municipalities are well suited to address food systems through knowledge of local climate, land use, food culture and capacity. Although jurisdictional influences on food systems will continue to shift between municipal, provincial and federal governments, the current policy framework provides a number of opportunities for municipal leadership.

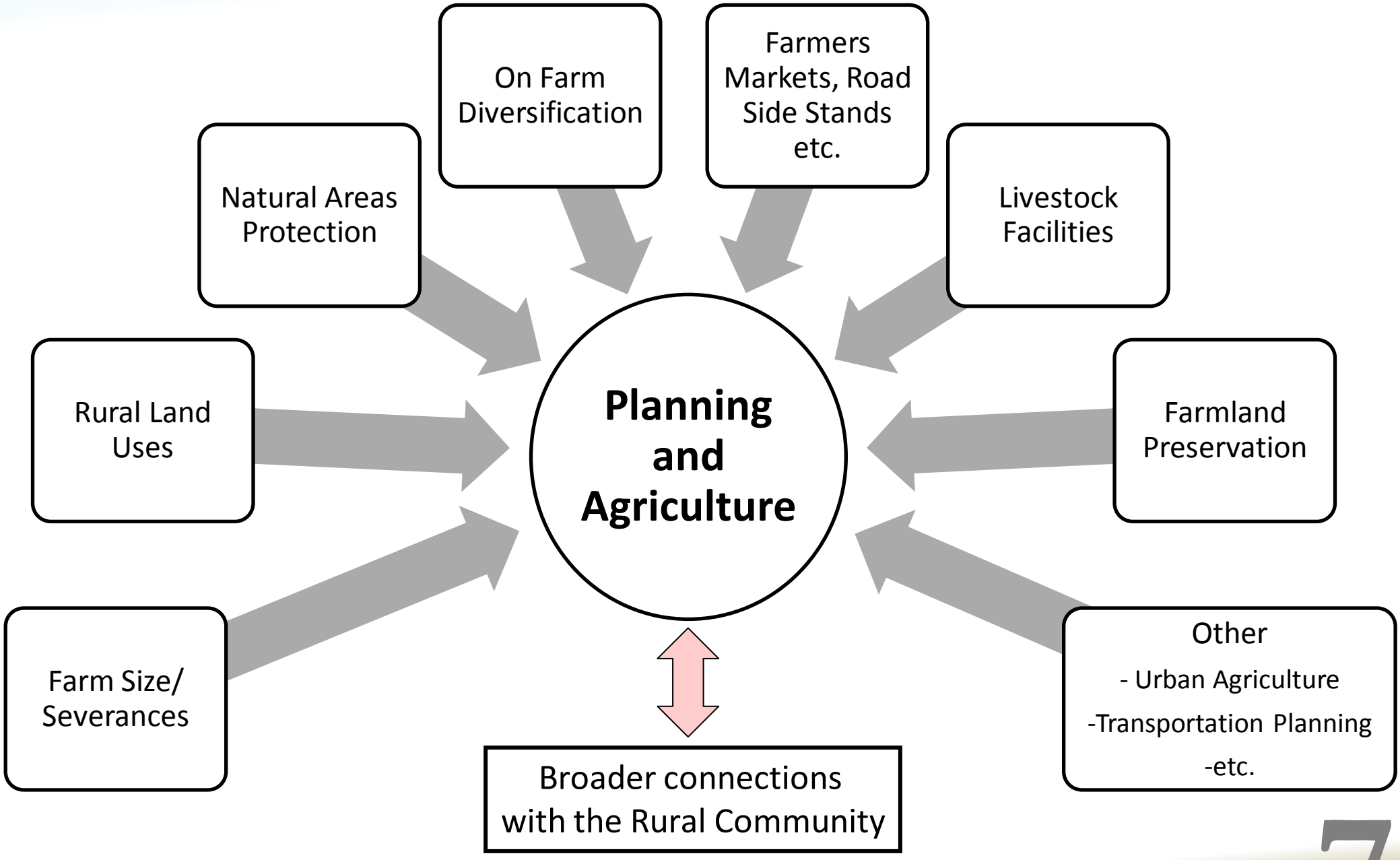
A primary area of municipal influence is the formation of Official Plans and zoning bylaws that relate to agricultural lands and food operations. Much of planning work includes the design and implementation of these plans and bylaws. In addition, planners' values orient them towards a regional food system approach. As an illustration, 90% of planners in a 2008 survey rated farmland preservation as a significant or top priority in food systems planning (Raja et al. 2008).

A second area in which planners influence food systems is through community engagement and economic development. Planners permit signage, write zoning, diffuse liability by ensuring safety standards are met, and influence local policy decisions. An example of this is demonstrated by the role that planners can play in the establishment of Farmer's Markets. As of 2009, over $4 million has been invested in regional food initiatives such as Farmer's Markets by the Ontario Market Investment Fund to stimulate vibrant rural economies (OMIF 2009). This growth in Farmer's Markets is primarily attributed to a cultural shift which values seasonal, whole-food diets while providing farmers a higher share of food dollars spent.

Finally, planners provide informed feedback to appropriate ministries. Areas in which planners have been involved as policy shapers include: the *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS), the *Greenbelt Act*, and the ongoing implementation of the *Places to Grow Act*. The capacity to influence and inform policy is of direct relevance to the establishment and sustainability of regional food systems.

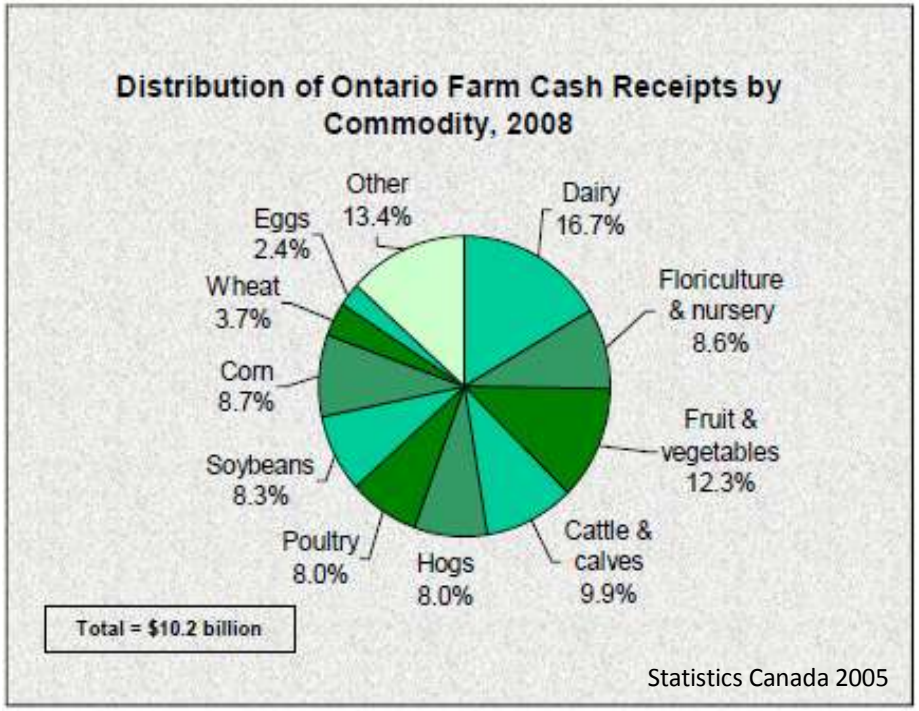
Rural and farming communities have faced a prolonged crisis in population decline, deteriorating services, and reorganization of local governance, as highlighted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM 2009). Ontario's planning policies are currently unbalanced in their treatment of urban and rural areas. In 2007, then-OPPI president Gary Davidson identified a lack of planning tools for sustainable rural development in the *Planning Act* and PPS, both of which focus more on urban development (Davidson 2007). This guide is intended to address some of the rural-urban imbalance by engaging planners in the opportunities, challenges, and tools which exist for the development of regional food systems.

The Relationship Between Agriculture and Planning



ONTARIO'S AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ontario's agri-food industry is highly adaptable and diverse. It represents the second largest industry in Ontario, with $32.7 billion in processing alone and representing 700,000 jobs in 2008 (OMAFRA 2009). The industry continues to experience growth. Since 1991 the overall agriculture and agri-food system in Canada has been growing at an average annual rate of 2.4% (AAFC 2008).



Ontario currently imports three dollars of food products for every two dollars exported (OMAFRA 2009). From 1999 to 2006, Ontario's food imports grew 32%, compared to exports at 28%. Farms in the GGH have access to one of the most densely populated urban centres in North America, the GTA, providing a distinct advantage in direct marketing.

In the coming decades, Ontario's agri-food industry will see new opportunities as some international competitors fall out of competition due to increasing energy prices and environmental shifts. For example, half of North American fruit production occurs in California. Continued water shortages are likely to decrease Californian production (Pacific Institute 2009). Regional food systems are not the only solution to problems faced by Ontario's agri-food industry, but they do represent a growing opportunity (Gooch 2009).

MARKETING CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL FOOD-SYSTEMS

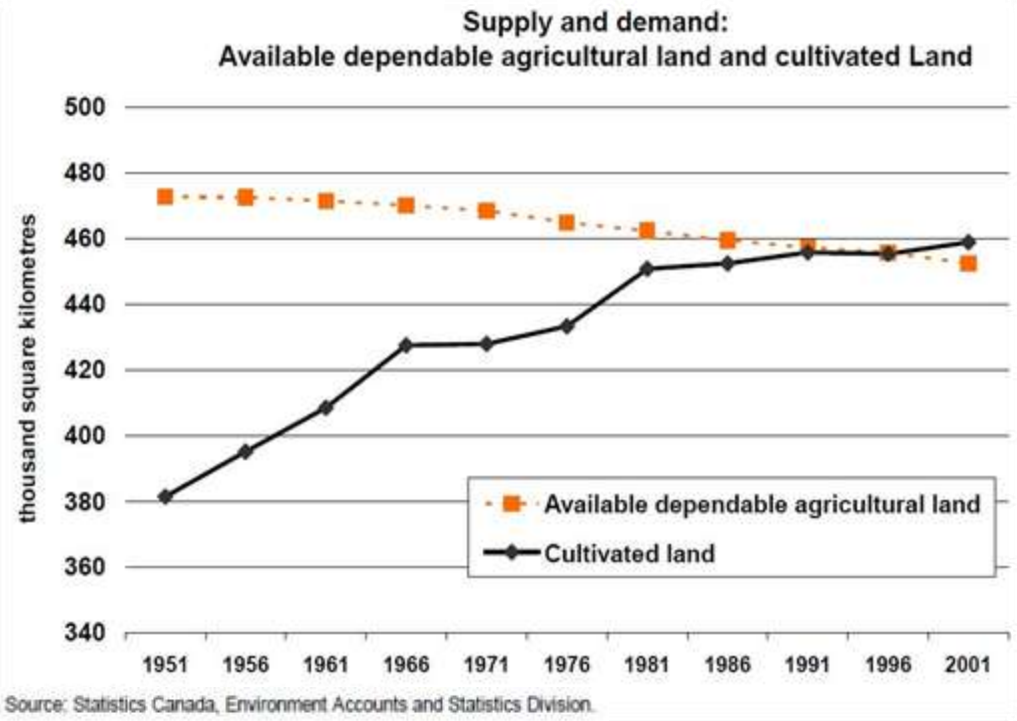
• Regional links between processors, distributors, retailers and the food service industry, including waste recycling, are under developed.
• Farmers in direct-marketing business models are expected to consistently deliver high value and quality products that respond to consumer demands. The majority of farmers in Ontario are export oriented and are not focused on local marketing strategies.
• High standards for supply management and inspection ensure public safety and increasing efficiency, but more mechanisms are required to support innovation and new market entry.
• Growth of food preservation technologies will be required in conjunction with increased greenhouse production and sustainable trade options to address the seasonality of production.
• Producers and processors must adapt to rapid currency value shifts and increasing input prices.

CULTURAL CHALLENGES

• Farm amalgamation has led to fewer farmers on larger farms.
• Establishing regional food systems requires long-term planning and a vocal consumer base.
• Many farmers have increased dependence on off-farm income due to stable or decreasing farm-gate revenue.
• Aging farm operators demonstrate need for succession planning.
• Urban expansion into agricultural areas reduces dependable agricultural lands and is accompanied by vandalism, traffic, noise and odour complaints.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

• Long-term problems such as energy price spikes and climate change are difficult to address with short-term political decisions.
• Adaptation to climatic uncertainty affects growing season, rainfall patterns and disease severity and incidence (IPCC 2008).
• Addressing soil erosion and loss of dependable farmland. See graph below.



1) UPDATE OFFICIAL PLAN & ZONING

Update the Official Plan and zoning bylaws with an assessment of the local agricultural resource, both in terms of economics and biogeography

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

The Ontario Farmland Trust's primary objective is to protect agricultural lands for future generations. Part of this objective is acknowledging and enhancing the relationship between food systems, farm viability and farmland preservation, and highlighting the inter-dependence of urban and rural areas.

Loss of farmland is of particular concern given that only 0.5% of Canada's land is Class 1 agricultural land, with no significant limitations to agriculture. More than half of that land is in Ontario (CLI 1969). Ontario also has 95% of Canada's best climatic zones for diverse production, comprising index 2.4 to 3.0 (Agro-Climatic Resource Index 1975).

Farmland preservation is motivated by:

- Fostering stewardship of the land
- Maintaining an agricultural land base for future generations
- Mediating market externalities to ensure fair tax distribution and affordable near-urban land for new farmers
- Providing accessible food for all levels of income and ability
- Enhancing community health through compact, multifunctional design
- Providing environmental services (clean air, water and soil)
- Conserving and enhancing biodiversity (Brethour 2006)

I) REVIEWING THE OFFICIAL PLAN

Current protection for farmland in the GGH is achieved through Ontario's Greenbelt Plan which protects natural heritage lands and agricultural lands (over 50% of the Greenbelt is owned by farmers), including the Niagara tender fruit lands and the Holland Marsh (Greenbelt Foundation 2009). However, the plan does not protect large 'whitebelts' of prime agricultural land between the GTA and the Greenbelt. Many Greenbelt landowners are concerned about the effect of protection on land values (Cummings and Juhasz 2008).

Additional plans, such as the Growth Plan for the GGH, also protect prime agricultural land, but some have suggested they lack detailed planning policies that encourage vibrant rural economies (Davidson 2007).

Leapfrog development pressure is rising and primarily affects outer-ring municipalities such as Brant County. In 2005 the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) was revised to require that Official Plans be consistent with the PPS, strengthening protection for prime agricultural lands that had been adopted from the earlier Foodland Guidelines. Yet, even if Official Plans are aligned, more stringent requirements could be used to discourage residential lot and urban expansions.

REVIEWING THE OFFICIAL PLAN - *Recommendations*

- Continue Official Plan harmonization with provincial and federal agriculture-related legislation. Be aware of the policies of neighbouring municipalities to ensure fairness across jurisdictions.

- To reduce fragmentation and support contiguous farm areas, prohibit new non-farm residential development in existing agricultural zones.

- Work with the Trust to facilitate property-specific preservation mechanisms such as farmland conservation easements that are financially attractive to farmers.

- Consider using Secondary Plans and Community Improvement Plans to support agriculture. See page 28 for more information.

REVIEWING THE OFFICIAL PLAN – *Tools & Resources*

❖ The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is currently developing a renewed Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) tool, which has been used by municipalities to identify and protect prime agricultural lands in Official Plans. This assessment tool is regional rather than property specific. In the future, regional food systems could figure prominently in the Area Review component of the assessment via the interaction between the suitability of land for local food production and its proximity to urban areas.

❖ OMAFRA has also produced a set of online Land Use planning guidelines, including guidelines for Soil Survey methods. (OMAFRA 2008).

TOWN OF CALEDON OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

The Town of Caledon amended its Official Plan (OPA 179) with a series of policies designed to encourage the continued economic growth of agricultural communities. The rationale behind the amendment was to preserve Caledon's rural heritage while providing family farmers opportunities to complement their agricultural business with other on-farm businesses. Additionally, these amendments are designed to promote:

- Value-added agriculture
- Farm diversification
- Prevention of non-farm development and land uses
- Consumer education on the importance of local agriculture
- Protection of soil and water resources
- Enhancement of the industry by partnering with other organizations.

The three main land use designations of OPA 179 are:

- Prime agricultural area
- General agricultural area and
- Rural area.

Specific permitted uses exist for each of these designations. Landowners must continue to meet planning requirements to confirm that any subsequent use falls under the OPA 179 policies. In addition, the OPA offers clarity on the requirements and flexibility for appropriate secondary land uses.

II) ZONING BYLAWS

Permitted Uses

Zoning is of particular importance to the viability of on-farm processing and marketing at a local scale. Through the identification of permitted uses, zoning can influence the viability of value-added enterprises, farm stands, and farm tourism (Caldwell 2006).

Severances

In order to protect a critical mass of high priority agricultural land, lot creation restrictions were included in section 2.3.4 of the 2005 PPS. These restrictions set the baseline from which municipalities can be more restrictive. For example, the County of Huron restricts severances to uses directly related to the farm on prime agricultural land. In the County of Perth, residential lot creation in agricultural areas was restricted long before the introduction of the 2005 PPS. According to a review of severances in Ontario counties and regions before the 2005 PPS, the strength of the agricultural industry affects total numbers of severances (Dodds Weir 2002). Without a strong agricultural sector, farm-related severances do not remain connected to agriculture as they are often developed for residential uses (Caldwell and Dodds Weir 2003).

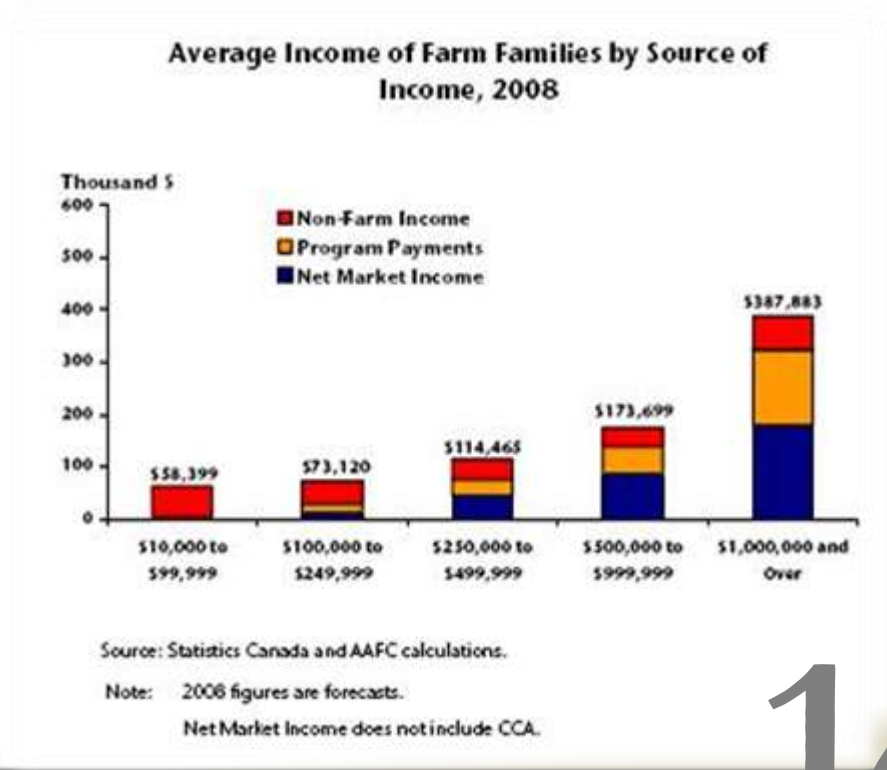
Farm Size

Farm size is frequently a zoning consideration. The continued trend is towards fewer, larger farms. In the last 25 years, the total number of farms in Canada declined by 28% (AAFC 2008). Most conflicts over farm size are a response to agricultural practices rather than physical size (Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario 2007).

Farm Revenue

Planning decisions affect economic viability of various farming operations. Competition on the global market and technological change has fueled the growth of higher revenue farms in Canada. Million-dollar farms more than doubled their share of gross Canadian farm revenues from 18% in 1986 to 40% in 2006. Average income within this bracket was $387,883 (AAFC 2008).

In contrast, almost a quarter of farm families remain below the Statistics Canada low income line, with an average net family income of $11,660 (AAFC 2008). Non-farm income remains important for all income classes.



REVIEWING ZONING BYLAWS – *Recommendations*

Permitted Uses

➢ Zoning must provide clear definitions and rules for what is and is not permitted on farmland. Meet with farm community leaders to understand how local zoning bylaws affect value-added operations on farms.

➢ More specific policies allow farmers to plan ahead. This may require the redefinition of permitted agricultural and secondary uses to include value added opportunities. Planners at the municipal level can provide leadership as they are mindful of the specific farming opportunities and challenges of their jurisdictions.

➢ Zoning applications cost farmers time and money. The combination of minor variances, site approvals, environmental assessments and other requirements can often prevent rural economic development by reducing farmer initiative. Establish zoning in a way that creates optimum opportunities for farmers without requiring amendments.

➢ Use zoning to support cooperative food processing capacity. Local food processing cooperatives provide small scale farmers with the opportunity to achieve economies of scale. Note that the PPS permits small scale commercial uses in agricultural zones. Some municipalities have requested clarification concerning the definition of small scale.

COUNTY OF HALDIMAND ON-FARM USES

The County of Haldimand is currently exploring a number of options for on-farm uses, most currently operating in Ontario:

- On-farm bakeries, wineries, restaurants;
- Artisan factories for cheese/yoghurt;
- Resort ranches, heritage tours, on-farm festivals, mazes and farm vacations or bed & breakfasts;
- Community Supported Agriculture, delivery services, meals-on-the-go or frozen foods;
- Cooperative and specialty products such as wool, feeds, hay, pellets, wood products;
- Biomass facilities;
- Small abattoirs and exotic meats;
- Recreational use of private lands (swimming, hiking, skiing);
- Aquaculture;
- Corporate and wedding occasions.

Severances

➢ A prime agricultural land base should remain intact to reduce fragmentation and maintain contiguous agricultural areas; the PPS discourages creation of new lots in prime agricultural areas. Require succession strategies for agriculture related severances.

➢ OMAFRA has published a draft Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas (OMAFRA 2008).

REVIEWING ZONING BYLAWS – *Recommendations continued*

Farm Size

➢ There is reason to plan for and support both small and large farms in Ontario. Agricultural production types vary, commodity types vary, and farmer and consumer interests vary. For example, a market gardening operation is likely to occur on a much smaller land-base than a modern dairy farm.

➢ Plan for a range of farm sizes, with designation of a locally appropriate minimum farm size to prevent fragmentation. Additionally, require size-appropriate business plans.

➢ Consider cultural factors. For example, Amish and Mennonite communities have established viable small farm zones in a number of locations such as Waterloo, Floradale, Woolwich and Kitchener. It is important for planners to consider a long term perspective on this issue. In Ontario, small farms encourage farmer-buyer relationships and accountability at the community level, and tend to be more mixed farms that contribute higher levels of environmental services such as biodiversity (Andre 2009). Because they are highly adaptable, small farms can also provide security for regional economies in times of border closings, fuel or energy shortages, and food recalls (McIntyre 2009).

REVIEWING ZONING BYLAWS – *Tools & Resources*

❖ The British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has sponsored a local government and farming partnership called the Strengthening Agriculture Program. This program has two key components: Farming Practices Protection and Planning for Agriculture .

❖ A working document of zoning bylaws and ideas for local food production and food security are available online from the University of Denver, Rocky Mountain Land Institute: Sustainable Community Development (Beta Version).

❖ For a long term perspective, look to the 2009 International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, co-sponsored by the World Bank and United Nations. This landmark report explains the need for sustainable, locally controlled, smallholder agriculture and encourages international investment in crop and livestock breeding programs and infrastructure (McIntyre 2009).

III) VALUING FARMLAND

Natural resources drive Ontario's economy. Farmland is fundamental for Ontario's strategic industrial investments in green energy and bioproducts, in addition to food. Given that these investments will increase demand for land, the permanent loss of highly productive land to urbanization and non-farm uses carries an opportunity cost not recognized by many currently planned developments on greenfields.

On a global scale, the permanent loss of Ontario's prime agricultural lands is also a concern given land investment trends. In recent years, large funds have invested in farmland to hedge against food and fuel volatility. For example, AgCapita has purchased thousands of acres in Saskatchewan, which has experienced a 15% rise in farmland values since May 2009 (FCC 2009). Land investments and acquisitions are also occurring oversees, such as the purchase of Sudanese and Pakistani lands by United Arab Emirates investors (UNCTAD 2009, Reguly 2009). The international demand for farmland requires that Ontario protect and support agricultural resources.

In order to encourage landowners to preserve land, Environment Canada provides tax incentives for donations of land and conservation easements through the Ecological Gifts program. Planners could push for similar incentives for donating farmland conservation easements.

The Kawartha Heritage Conservancy and the Ontario Farmland Trust recently released a report on tax benefits of farmland conservation easements for land, available online (OFT 2009).

A number of Ontario municipalities have recognized the value of local farmlands by conducting Economic Impact Assessments for regional agriculture (OFA 2009). The Ontario government has also published a guide for economic impact assessment (REDDI 2009).

COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (CCS)

The American Farmland Trust has completed a CCS study for many communities in the United States. The purpose of CCS is to evaluate the costs and benefits of various developments from a municipal tax perspective. Red Deer County, Alberta, had also completed a CCS study and found that residential development cost of services outweighed tax gains by 1.81 times. The table below indicates municipal expenditures divided by revenues (values greater than one indicate a net cost).

Cost-Benefit Ratios of Community Services in Red Deere

Commercial	0.74
Industrial	0.09
Residential	1.81
Agriculture	0.70

(Red Deer 2006)

IV) PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND – A DIMINISHING RESOURCE

Prime agricultural land has the capacity to produce a wide diversity of agricultural products. Soil genesis occurs over millennia. Once agricultural lands are urbanized they are essentially lost to future production (Statistics Canada 2005).

Almost half of Ontario's urban land is built on former prime agricultural lands (Statistics Canada 2005). In total, about 2 million hectares of farmland have shifted from agricultural cultivation in the last 30 years. Since 1951, the Canadian demand for cultivated soil has increased 20% due to urban expansion and other economic factors. This increased demand for land forces agriculture onto marginal, erodable and sensitive land or forested slopes that yield less and cost more to farm. Canadian demand for cultivated land (crops, summer fallow and pasture) now outstrips supply of Class 1 to 3 lands (Statistics Canada 2005).

Currently, municipalities can use soil classifications based on data from the 1969 Canada Land Inventory which identifies seven broad land classes based on restrictions for agriculture. This information is available in digital format through Land Information Ontario (LIO 2009). Note that the PPS requires municipalities to consider all lower land class alternatives before developing prime agricultural land.

A satellite change analysis project for the Ontario Greenbelt Foundation documented land use conversions in the greenbelt area from 1993 to 2007, and is illustrated on the following page (Cheng and Lee 2008).

BC AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE (ALR)

Up to the 1970s nearly 6000 hectares of prime agricultural land were lost each year to urban development and other uses in British Columbia. The provincial government responded to this by introducing the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* in 1973.

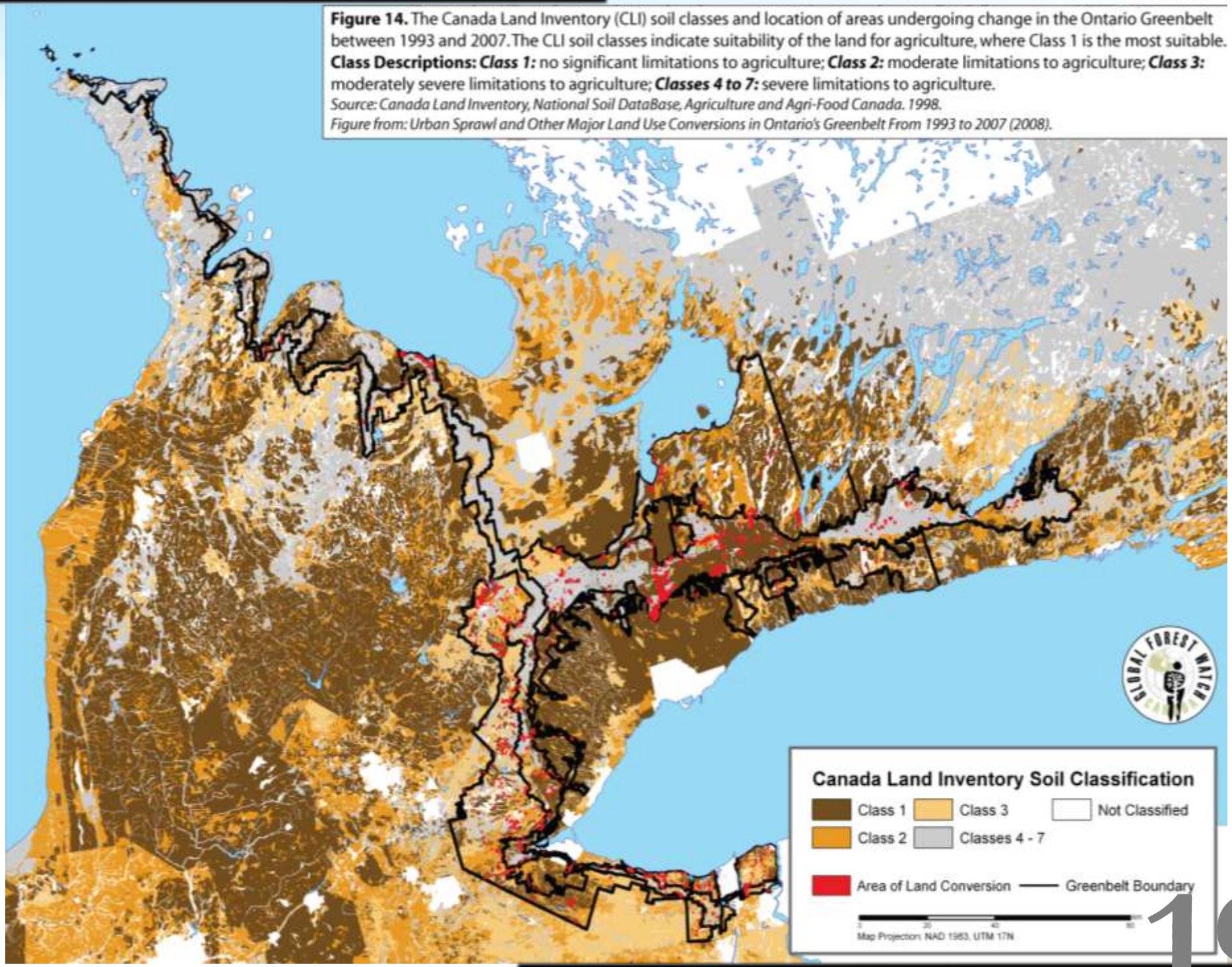
This act provides a legislative framework for the establishment and administration of an agricultural land preservation program.

The ALR protects virtually all BC prime agricultural lands within a 4.7 million hectare reserve (5% of the province). Although the ALR net area has remained relatively constant, exclusions have been made for high quality agricultural lands while inclusions tend to be lower quality lands.

The ALR includes private and public lands that may be farmed, forested or left vacant. Some ALR blocks cover thousands of hectares while others are small pockets of only a few hectares.

(Curran 2005)

Figure 14. The Canada Land Inventory (CLI) soil classes and location of areas undergoing change in the Ontario Greenbelt between 1993 and 2007. The CLI soil classes indicate suitability of the land for agriculture, where Class 1 is the most suitable.
Class Descriptions: ***Class 1:*** no significant limitations to agriculture; ***Class 2:*** moderate limitations to agriculture; ***Class 3:*** moderately severe limitations to agriculture; ***Classes 4 to 7:*** severe limitations to agriculture.
Source: Canada Land Inventory, National Soil DataBase, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 1998.
Figure from: Urban Sprawl and Other Major Land Use Conversions in Ontario's Greenbelt From 1993 to 2007 (2008).



REVIEWING OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING BYLAWS

Protecting natural heritage features

Much of Ontario's privately owned farmland could meet the criteria for natural heritage zoning. What issues are raised that will affect agricultural production? Could planners establish specific policies that incentivize on-farm natural heritage features and farm services (e.g.. species protection, water catchment)? An example of a related program is the Alternative Land Use Services model in the County of Norfolk.

Protecting cultural heritage features

Should planners identify priority and future rural heritage buildings, landscapes and vistas for preservation? What is the planner's role in protecting cultural heritage features? Should strategies focus on incentives or regulations?

Protecting farmland

Should rural uses (aggregate and non-agricultural industrial) that result in net-loss of farmland be considered in agricultural areas? Criteria to consider include: contribution to agricultural economy; loss of prime farmland; grandfathering of industries; compatible uses with neighbouring farms; and long-term viability.

Conditions of consent

Should surplus residential severances be permitted on amalgamated farms or for retiring farmers? How can this be managed between upper and lower tier municipalities?

Under Section 51.25 of the *Planning Act*, a municipality can require a *condition of consent*, which may require an agreement be reached between the municipality and the landowner. The condition could include that the new and/or remnant parcel be for agricultural purposes only, which has traditionally been attempted through zoning. What issues might this raise?

The Trust specializes in establishing farmland conservation easements with landowners, particularly on lands with a high risk of conversion to non-farm use, such as severances. Could municipalities explore collaboration with the Trust when protecting agricultural lands?

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

The David Suzuki Foundation developed a report: Ontario's wealth Canada's future - Appreciating the Value of the Greenbelt's Eco-services. For lands in Ontario's Greenbelt, the report finds that ecosystem services alone are valued at $3,571 per hectare annually (Suzuki 2008). Does this measure resonate with planning decisions in the GGH? What is the relative value of agricultural activities per hectare? Are there opportunities to revise financial accounting with these considerations at the municipal level?

BIOPHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

The Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure Renewal is required to conduct further assessment of sub-area agricultural resources under Section 4 of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. Would this information assist in planning regional food systems? Should planners push for delivery of this assessment tool?

2) ENGAGE FARM COMMUNITIES

Engage farm communities through public education and the coordination of Agricultural Advisory Committees

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Planners are skilled at understanding, interpreting and acting upon complex community feedback. Societies are becoming increasingly complex with different worldviews and conflicts of interest arising over land and other scarce resources. Farmers, as land stewards, are often underrepresented in community consultations. Poor representation can occur particularly in areas with urban-biased ward systems resulting from the amalgamation of rural and urban municipalities.

As a result, it is important to include county federations of agriculture and county commodity organizations as key contacts for soliciting farmer input and comment on municipal planning proposals.

This section addresses farm community consultation as it relates to farmers. Some common conflicts associated with farm communities include:

- Non-farming vs. farming rural landowners
- Urban jobs vs. rural labour shortage
- Rural decline vs. urban expansion
- Provincial vs. municipal authority

I) AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As municipal meetings become increasingly dominated by urban interests, it is important to maintain a source of agricultural knowledge in the public process. Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) draw stakeholders from local farm organizations and commodity groups to ensure wise, technically informed counsel in planning decisions. The following section provides recommendations for establishing or improving existing AACs.

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – *Recommendations*

➢ Empower an AAC that proactively consults on matters that affect farming and farmland, including :
• Official Plan review
• Rural property adjustments
• Transportation policy decisions
• On-farm health and safety policy decisions
• Decisions about employment lands and affordable housing
• Farm group advocacy and cooperation
• Other policy issues where the municipality is looking for an agricultural perspective (Caldwell 2007)

➢ An AAC can assist in conflict resolution by encouraging voluntary settlements based on a 'good neighbor policy' and mutually agreed upon principles and goals. Develop a set of guiding principles in a planner-public dialogue for the AAC.

➢ Most AACs have a conflict of interest policy. Committee participants should be familiar with and involved in the creation of the criteria of the policy.

➢ The AAC may prevent future conflicts by creating an orientation package for developers, real estate agents, and new rural/urban fringe landowners that explains normal farm practices and the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act*.

➢ Orientation materials should contain zoning details, past land-uses, a history of the area acknowledging First Nation's land claims, and a concise summary of the various roles and services offered by the municipality, including the AAC.

➢ Participants on the AAC could include: municipal staff, councillors, farmers and members of the public. All participants should be familiar with the business of farming and/or legal parameters. Potential legal parameters of relevance:
• Minimum Distance Separation requirements
• Normal Farm Practices
• Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources regulations for pesticide use, species at risk, and nutrient management
• On-farm renewable energy (*Green Energy Act*)
• Source Water Protection and catchment areas
• *Line Fences Act*, *Livestock, Poultry and Honey Bee Protection Act*
•*Trespass to Property Act*, *Occupiers' Liability Act*
• Farm tax assessment protocol (Minister of Finance, OMAFRA)

➢ Members of the AAC should be familiar with the workings of the municipality. This can be accomplished via training, workshops and access to information. Relevant materials include the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Citizens' Guides to Land-use Planning. (MAH 2008). If AAC participants cannot comment directly on the proposal at hand or on matters within municipal jurisdiction, their input may be ineffective.

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tools & Resources

❖ Several resource manuals on establishing an AAC to deal with nutrient management and rural conflict resolution have been prepared at the University of Guelph (Caldwell 2007).

LAKE HURON WATER QUALITY: CIRCLE TALKS

Contentious issues are often at the heart of important planning decisions. For several years, water quality issues along Lake Huron created conflict between lakeshore residents and farmers.

Poor communication about septic tanks and farm practices contributed to threats of lawsuits. With no formal mechanism for dialogue, few could see the potential for positive outcomes.

Preliminary findings from the Lake Huron case indicate that Circle talks can effectively bring people together while encouraging dialogue and deep understanding of issues.

Circles draw on the First Nations tradition of using a talking piece, an object passed around a group, to grant the holder sole permission to speak, while requiring all others to listen.

Lake Huron Circles were initiated through a partnership between local planning departments, farm groups and community members. Small groups of farmers and lakeshore residents met to discuss their perspectives on water quality.

In spite of real concerns and trepidation before the meeting, the Circle process met the challenge. Participants had an in-depth and passionate conversation, expressing divergent opinions on potentially divisive issues in their community.

(Ball 2007)

II) PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings ensure accountability and informed decision making, but it is increasingly difficult for farmers and agricultural stakeholders to participate. Seasonal demands and second jobs create time constraints. It is of great concern to increase participation of those most affected by the decision making process. The following section provides recommendations for creating better farm community engagement opportunities.

PUBLIC MEETINGS – *Recommendations*

➢ When scheduling meetings, be considerate of participants' unique schedules, such as farmers and the time of season. Understand your farm constituency and their work schedule. Some municipalities tend to schedule major consultations for the winter months. Provide multiple meeting opportunities during the growing season. Obtain feedback from a farm community leader on applications that farmers were not able to attend.

➢ Design public meetings that welcome and support farmers by serving food from local farms. Lay clear consultation ground rules to establish social norms. When promoting the event, indicate that farmers are part of the community invited to participate.

➢ Distinguish between mandatory participation, which often involves strict deadlines such as Ontario Municipal Board hearings, and additional public consultation as part of an Official Plan review.

➢ At least one planner at public meetings should have a professional knowledge of agriculture and be able to recognize key factors affecting farm viability. Foster opportunities among municipal employees to build agricultural expertise. First-hand knowledge can take the form of direct conversations with farmers, on-farm site visits or field trips, university courses in agriculture, or even professional agrologist training.

➢ Help to initiate and implement a Local Food Policy Group to connect food industry partners. Build municipal action into the process and involve all stakeholders to avoid harmful assumptions. This group will strengthen interactions between urban and rural food consumption and production.

PUBLIC MEETINGS – *Tools & Resources*

❖ While there are standard approaches that are often successful, planner mediation is also a tool promoted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The MAH has published a guide to mediation that will assist planners in dealing with complex issues (MAH 2008). This strategy helps to avoid costly OMB hearings.

3) BUILD RURAL CAPACITY

Renew rural capacity by promoting sustainable rural livelihoods and investing in bio-economic infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Agricultural land protection policies are growing stronger, and the *Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* are both committed to vibrant rural economies. Some planners have suggested that current planning policies are not attuned to the long-term needs of rural economies (Davidson 2007). This policy gap is an area in which planners can provide input. Rural areas contribute substantially to Ontario's quality of life and should not be merely regarded as space between urban areas, as implied by the PPS.

I) COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* provides Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) as a tool for addressing challenges and future needs. CIPs can be used to encourage private investment, renew infrastructure and waive various development fees (MAH 2008). Agricultural landscapes may qualify for a CIP if:

- The area shows signs of disinvestment or underinvestment
- There is a decline in the use of agricultural lands for agricultural purposes
- There is pressure to use lands for purposes other than those identified in the local Official Plan

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

The Town of Halton Hills council approved a Community Improvement Strategy in July 2009. The strategy recommends developing an Agribusiness Economic Development Strategy. With this strategy in place, the Town may offer:

1) An Agricultural Feasibility Study/Business Plan Grant Program
2) Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Revitalization Grant Program, a tax increment grant program.

(Halton Hills 2009)

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL – *Recommendations*

➢ Invest in infrastructure that encourages farmers to live on site, develop the farmstead and eventually attract new farmers.

➢ Investment in agricultural infrastructure and capacity includes: seed and equipment dealers, grain elevators, abattoirs, processors and feed mills, barns and driving sheds, access to irrigation, tile drainage, fencing, veterinarians, extension services, roads to market, and on-farm housing. If farm numbers do not warrant the presence of these services, farmers must pay to travel farther.

➢ In addition to basic infrastructure needs, some innovative solutions may include:
1) **Mobile abattoir:** a provincially approved and inspected mobile abattoir could serve remote areas; this typically requires a local cutting and hanging operation
2) **Port facilities:** water transportation is more efficient than land
3) **Rail infrastructure:** for example, a new flour mill will be located in Wellington County with access to the Guelph Junction Railway

➢ Design simple incentive structures that can be quickly grasped to encourage new projects that replace existing, underused buildings rather than building on greenfields or on heritage sites. For example, in its award-winning brownfields strategy, the City of Guelph has considered:
• Tax Increment-Based (or Equivalent) Grant Program
• Tax Arrears Cancellation
• Tax Assistance Policy During Rehabilitation
• Consideration of Possible Development Charge Incentives (Guelph 2008)

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL
Tools & Resources

❖ The Ministry of Municipal Affairs published a CIP Handbook in 2008 (MAH 2008).

❖ A Canada – Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Agreement 2004-2011 offers funding related to basic infrastructure improvements for municipalities (COMRIF 2004) .

II) GUIDING ON-FARM MARKETING AND PROCESSING

Regional food systems create many opportunities to commercialize and industrialize on-farm operations on both small and large scales. These new operations will act as long-term economic generators for the municipality and will also encourage agri-tourism and culinary tourism.

The number of regions and counties in Ontario with agri-tourism strategies is growing rapidly, from Norfolk to Halton to Prince Edward County. Niagara wine is an internationally recognized example of an industry that can drive both commercial and tourism profits.

The Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association recently prepared an analysis of how planning practices affect direct marketing and agri-tourism operations in Ontario (Caldwell 2006). It found that almost all direct marketing operations were growing. However, many planning-related concerns remain for on-farm marketers:

- Ease of access (parking and traffic)
- On-farm food safety and client safety
- Food preparation standards
- Septic and building permits
- Permission to sell produce from nearby farms
- Fire code
- Commercial or industrial zoning
- Insurance costs
- Other (eg. cost of washrooms)

GUIDING ON-FARM MARKETING AND PROCESSING – *Recommendations*

➢ Designate on-farm marketing and food processing as a strategic industry. Work with the Minister of Finance, OMAFRA and MPAC to remove tax and zoning barriers to localized, small-scale processing (Carter-Whitney 2008).

➢ Zone for year-round food storage facilities to encourage fresh distribution of food and to avoid a trip to the Toronto food terminal.

➢ Educate farmers about financial support programs already available to diversify their operations.

GUIDING ON-FARM MARKETING AND PROCESSING
Tools & Resources

❖ The Soil and Crop Improvement Association delivers the Growing Your Farm Profits initiative, which provides $2,000-8,000 for farms to participate in business assessments, advanced business planning, and implementation (OSCIA 2009).

III) RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS

Several trends dominate agriculture in central Ontario today:
• Larger farms and economies of scale
• Fewer skilled operators (40% of farmers are over age 54; 10,000 farmers left agriculture from 1996 - 2006)
• Larger proportion of rented land (in 2001, 38.4% rented vs. 61.6% owned in the GTA; a higher proportion is rented near cities) (Walton 2003)

Demand for local food is increasing and with it, the diversification of operations that add value to farm products and attract visitors to farms (Campsie 2008). A portion of new and second-career farmers do not have assets tied into large-scale conventional agriculture. As such, they are well positioned to establish agri-tourism operations, country restaurants and market gardens. This presents opportunities for new rural investment without competing against conventional agriculture. The demand for such multifunctional uses increases near urban areas, including pick-your-own produce, special event bookings, and Community Supported Agriculture.

Where will new farmers come from? A 2008 study of new farmers in Grey, Bruce and Wellington counties found that the majority of skilled farm operators will continue to be raised in farm families (Monllor 2008). These farmers generally have family support in the management and eventual purchase of the farm. The same study finds an increasing minority of new farmers are drawn to farming while in a non-agricultural university program. More than half of these farmers are women.

New farmers are motivated by working outdoors, entrepreneurship, principles and tradition. It should be noted that farmers without farm backgrounds focus more on local markets for organic crop and vegetable production, with fewer in animal production and almost none in supply managed commodities (e.g. dairy) (Monllor 2008).

For many new and second-career farmers mentorship and technical skills are fostered through internships and farm manager positions.

Several municipal planning-related barriers remain for new farmers:
• **Land:** access, prices
• **Knowledge:** ecological and mechanical
• **Financing:** finding investment, justifying new business plans for government support programs, taxes, and business planning
• **Marketing:** networks, communications, access to supply chains, and retail venues for direct marketing

RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS –
Recommendations

Education and training

Connect or initiate local organizations and training farms to help new and existing farmers initiate new farm enterprises. Examples of initiatives include the FarmStart New Farms Incubator Program, the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training, Everdale's Farmers Growing Farmers program, and Ignatius Farm internships.

School boards, schools and teachers can support programs to raise student awareness and enthusiasm for farming through a number of programs: field trips, co-op placements, and gardening and cooking classes. Ontario Agri-Food Education provides numerous Ontario curriculum teaching resources and a training program for local agri-food groups. Cooking programs are effective in schools such as Centre Wellington High School (Jess 2009).

Through such programs, a small proportion of new farmers will emerge from non-farm youth demographics and international migration.

Access to land

Raise awareness in the community about alternative ownership and long-term leasing options that assist farmers' access to land:

- Pooling investments or buying shares to cooperatively manage land
- Leasing agreements for municipal lands and regional conservation authorities
- Retiring landowner and new farmer partnerships (e.g. 'Sweat equity' - work in exchange for a lower up front purchase price)
- Land trust purchase of land and resale or lease to new farmers

RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS
Tools & Resources

❖ In recognition of the farming expertise of new Canadians, the Ontario Institute of Agrologists has a specific certification assistance program for internationally trained agrologists (OI 2009).

❖ Some farmers may feel that selling land to developers is the only viable retirement plan. For those interested in the continuity of the agricultural sector, OMAFRA has a number of Farm Succession Publications.

❖ Excellent resources on alternative ownership and long-term leasing options have been prepared by the New England Small Farm Institute:

- Holding Ground: A Guide to Northeast Farmland Tenure and Stewardship
- Farmland Transfer and Protection in New England

EXPLORING ENERGY AND BIOPRODUCTS

Are there ways in which planners can encourage energy projects that have a low land footprint? With the *Green Energy Act* assuming authority for much of the planning involved, what role can planners play?

Renewable energy produced on farm can directly benefit the farmer's budget and decrease energy requirements. Industries with high proportions of energy use, such as egg production, will be early adopters. For example, Leeming Farms in Huron County has already saved 75% on its energy costs in collaboration with the Huron Centre for Applied Renewable Energy (CFARE). Is there a way to use CIPs to promote on-farm energy generation?

Maintaining prime agricultural land can still be valuable within new developments, as community gardens or other small scale food production enterprises. When considering proposals, could municipalities seek developments that retain agricultural lands where possible?

How could the construction industry use renewable feedstocks to support local fibre and biomass industries? These kinds of feedstocks require well-stewarded farmlands integrated at the rural-urban edge.

GUIDING ON-FARM MARKETING AND PROCESSING

Would it be possible to encourage multifunctional building plans that are convertible to several farm uses? For example, a farm store with running water and electricity could be planned to include farm labor accommodations.

Would it be beneficial or detrimental to establish a maximum square footage for each type of on-farm commercial use?

RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS

Ontario is one of the most multicultural regions in North America, and new farmers are increasingly seeking to meet demand for culturally appropriate foods such as bitter melon, okra, green chilies and sweet potatoes (Mitchell et al. 2007). In 2009, an incubator farm was launched by FarmStart in cooperation with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority in Brampton, giving new farmers and new Canadians opportunities to grow traditional crops and build farm businesses (Mitchell et al. 2007). What is the role local Conservation Authorities and NGOs may play in developing your regional food system? How can cultural diversity be supported through regional food systems?

4) CONNECT URBAN MARKETS

Connect healthy urban communities to local food systems.

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Cities rely on agriculture. Vibrant rural communities can thrive around cities that have a focus on developing regional food systems. Part of this is achieved through multifunctional urban design contained within the built urban boundary. A bourgeoning urban market for locally grown foods provides a way of linking rural towns and farm-friendly urban fringes within regional planning.

I) MINIMIZING URBAN EXPANSION

As urban areas expand, they remove valuable agricultural land from production for development. An important strategy to reduce urban expansion is to increase density (Hemson 2005). The *Places to Grow Act* mandates higher densities in places that the province considers to have the best capacity for growth. A significant challenge in urban growth areas in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is the expected accommodation of 40% of population within current build boundaries by 2015.

With the introduction of the *Brownfields Act*, there is an opportunity to revitalize urban growth by redesigning communities with common spaces for health and well-being.

MINIMIZING URBAN EXPANSION - *Recommendations*

Places to Grow Act

➢ Increase the proportion of mixed-use zones; include small and medium sized food retailers close to new and existing residential areas.

➢ Consider promoting farmland conservation easements in partnership with third-party organizations such as local land trusts and conservation authorities.

WATERLOO REGION FOOD SYSTEMS PLANNING

In June 2003, Waterloo Regional Council approved its Regional Growth Management Strategy, which included a Community Food System Plan. Waterloo Public Health and the Planning, Housing and Community Services departments engaged stakeholders in a broad consultation. An advisory group was convened in 2005 and the Plan was released in April 2007 following a series of studies and focus group sessions.

One of the highlights of the plan is the protection of agricultural lands, accomplished by supporting the Region's efforts to establish and maintain a proposed countryside line to contain urban areas.

Other highlights include a strategy for branding local food, a food flow study for the region, and methods for increasing local food processing and distribution mechanisms.

Miedema 2009

Brownfield Act

➢ New developments could be pursued within existing brownfield sites. Thus, brownfields should be developed before greenfields. Calculate the total acreage of brownfield and greyfield sites as defined in the *Places to Grow Act* and include this total when determining land need estimates. Use CIPs to improve the economic feasibility of developing brownfields first.

Rural/Urban Fringe Planning

➢ Develop hard countryside lines that protect agricultural land and encourage long-term investments by farmers. This would help to discourage land speculation (eg. Waterloo).

➢ Encourage maintenance of agricultural lands for as long as possible with innovative leasing options. Those renting farmland should consider a 10-20 year lease with incentives for renewal. Include incentives for intergenerational transfer of farms.

II) GROWING REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Local food systems will likely become more relevant to food security in future decades due to rapid climate changes, increasing fuel costs and water scarcity. At present, 15% of Canadians are food insecure, which means they lack access to healthy, culturally appropriate foods (DOC 2007). This is related to the underdevelopment of local food systems through a lack of funding and political support, barriers to urban markets, and data gaps for urban food capacity and consumption (DOC 2007, ICMA 2006). Developing regional food systems involves increasing access to fresh, whole foods that replace unhealthy processed products in local diets.

GROWING POWER: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Growing Power is a two acre greenhouse operation that serves as a food distribution hub and training centre on the outskirts of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The farm is located in a low-income area where the food is typically supplied by fast food restaurants and convenience stores.

The founder of Growing Power, Will Allen, sees the farm as a way to combat rising levels of obesity and diabetes in the community through access to fresh foods. Growing Power is part of a cooperative of family farms that delivers 350 Market Baskets year-round to distribution centres in nearby communities.

Allen is part of the larger Growing Food and Justice Initiative that fights the structural denial of wholesome food to low-income neighborhoods, specifically African-American and Latino neighborhoods. It provides a source of 35 jobs in an area of high unemployment.

Growing Power also operates a volunteer farmer-training program in cooperation with four local high schools and a summer camp. About 3,000 youths and adults from around the world participate in formal training programs on site. Many of the young farmers go on to college with first-hand knowledge of unique practices such as aquaponics and vermiculture.

(Bybee 2009)

GROWING REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS – *Recommendations*

➢ Establish a Local Food Coordinator that can:
• Organize local food promotion campaigns, farm tours, farm fairs, and events celebrating farmland conservation easements.
• Promote local food partnerships with neighbouring counties.
• Provide research support for city staff and connect to local research institutions.

➢ Establish institutional local food procurement arrangements for city hall events, regional hospitals, public-private partnerships, school boards and correctional centres. For example, the municipality of Oro-Medonte recently established a Local Food Procurement Policy. Local Food Plus is an organization which networks sustainable food services in the GTA.

➢ Conduct a food flow study to track the degree to which locally produced foods end up on local plates. An example would be the food flow study prepared for the Region of Waterloo Public Health agency by Harry Cummings and Associates (Cummings 2005).

REGION OF DURHAM – PORT PERRY MARKET

Working in conjunction with the Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, the Durham Agricultural Economic Development Officer helped to organize a farmers market in Port Perry.

The market is located in a small parking lot adjacent to a popular park on Saturday mornings. The organizers aim for a ratio of 6 farmers to 1 artisan vendor, and 70% of food sold must be local.

Fresh local products include produce, honey, maple syrup, condiments and baking.
(Greenbelt 2009)

GROWING REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS – *Recommendations continued*

➢ Implement a Market Action Plan that consults farmers and clarifies which neighbourhoods or demographics will be most interested in Farmers' Markets. This can build upon a food flow study and community food assessments (see Tools). Farmers should ensure they have appropriate liability insurance when participating in farmer's markets. This coverage may be underwritten by the municipality. Consider to what degree market sales should be locally grown or produced.

➢ Ensure easy access to markets for farmers by providing more farmer's market locations in satellite neighbourhood centres such as a YMCA or parking lots. Use existing venues and community centres for farmers' markets to keep costs low. Strip mall parking lots and corner stores also provide prime locations for direct-sales, but require municipal and private cooperation. Generally, the municipality can assist with site location (on public land, commercial or residential), traffic and parking, promotion and signage, set-up and maintenance.

GROWING REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS – *Tools & Resources*

❖ Regional food systems have received much attention in American municipalities and two excellent resource guides for local governments were recently published:
1) A Planner's Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning (American Planning Association 2008)
2) Community Health and Food Access: The Local Government Role (International City/County Management Association 2006)

❖ The Ontario Market Investment Fund currently funds a long list of initiatives, including the establishment of Local Food Coordinators (OMIF 2009).

❖ The Greenbelt Foundation has a published report on Legal Barriers to local food systems (Carter-Whitney 2008).

❖ The BC Health Services Authority has published a Community Food Assessment Guide (BC HSA 2008).

III) TRANSPORTATION

Many of the *Places to Grow* recommendations related to transportation identify a need for increased corridors between growth centres and more planning for public transit. These corridors and transit systems must consider agriculture. One of the major challenges to regional food systems is transportation. In particular, competition with highway traffic may frustrate farm operations and the additional time requirements may limit farmers' access to markets, retailers and restaurants. Transportation planning must be balanced by considerations of where further development should or should not be encouraged, and how best to avoid dividing farm communities.

TRANSPORTATION - *Recommendations*

- Work to improve ease of access for local food entering the market. Encourage more public transit and carpool lanes to reduce traffic congestion. This can be accomplished via carpooling programs or federal programs such as EcoMobility.

- Work with the Ministry of Transportation to reduce peak-demand of road usage and avoid new road construction costs. If possible, to address safety and mobility issues, work with the Ministry to include a wide shoulder on specific roads to accommodate movement of slower farm vehicles.

- A creative approach would be to convert existing highway lanes into commuter or freight rail lines. This would prevent additional lands lost to transportation facilities.

MINIMIZING URBAN EXPANSION

Changing municipal boundaries (amalgamations and annexations) can create the perception that the area is intended for long term urban use even though the planning documents may not intend that. How might this relate to Part 5 of the *Municipal Act,* which sets out the conditions under which municipalities may apply for boundary changes?

Annexation can lead to hyper-speculation beyond urban boundaries, which pushes farmers to sell and defer investments. Farmers within and beyond annexed lands may also be undermined by property tax spikes. What urban expansion practices would reduce this kind of impact on farmers?

FOOD RETAIL

What are the possibilities in using urban zoning to limit the number of restaurant chains, drive-thrus and quick service establishments? Many American municipalities have similar restrictions – in California, these actions have been successful in Berkeley, Carlsbad and San Francisco (Unger and Wooten 2006).

Does retail size relate to the type of food sold? Some local grocers are breaking away from large grocery chains and stocking local, provincially-inspected meat. Small grocers are more independent with an increased flexibility to deliver local or culturally appropriate foods. Would it be possible to use as-of-right zoning to permit small grocery stores in residential zones?

Some areas of cities can lack access to healthy, affordable food if these areas are unprofitable for supermarkets. In Pennsylvania this process was turned around by providing funding to grocery stores willing to locate in underserved, low-income areas. New York, New Jersey and Illinois are following with similar programs. Is there potential for Ontario planners to promote similar programs?

TRANSPORTATION

The planning of the Windsor-Essex Parkway, much of it built on prime agricultural land, has involved lawsuits over compensation to landowners and debates about the health impacts of increased traffic. What is the appropriate response to Ministry of Transportation initiatives in agricultural areas? How does this relate to available funding for major public transit programs?

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban agriculture is on the rise in many urban centres. This topic has received much attention in various other guides. These strategies can equally be applied to municipalities. Roof top gardens and greenhouses are one example. Greenhouses extend the growing season into the colder months, providing more food, while cutting down heating costs and energy use in the adjacent building. Green roofs are now mandatory for large Toronto developments, and a database has been developed for Ontario-related green roof research (Greenroofs Ontario 2009). What are the opportunities and challenges for municipalities in developing similar initiatives?

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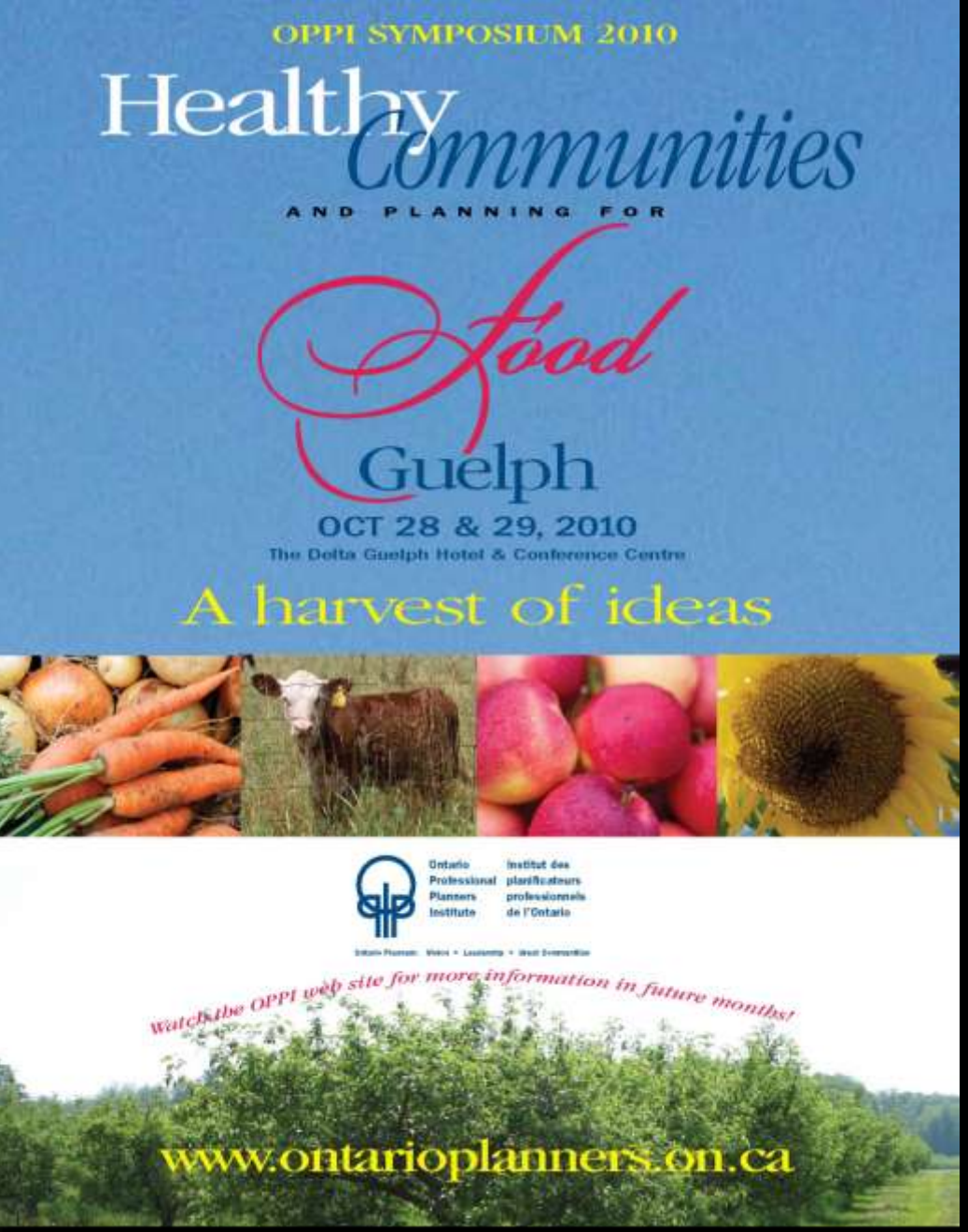

Places to Grow Food Project

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