Attachment 4

MARCH 5, 2025

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORT NO. PAC-001-2025

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO REPORT NO. PAC-004-2024 (OPTIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL MAPPING)

CHERIE MILLS
MANAGER OF PLANNING SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three options presented to Committee and Council for consideration:

Option 1
THAT the Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the properties identified by local municipalities for review and reconsideration, as reviewed and recommended by staff, be removed from the Agricultural Area designation and that the updated agricultural mapping and the Draft Official Plan Amendment be presented to the Committee as part of the statutory public meeting; **or,**

Option 2
THAT the Planning Advisory Committee recommends a transfer of $80,000 from the Legal/Planning Reserve to retain a consultant to undertake sensitivity testing of some of the mapping variables used in the methodology for preparing the initial agricultural mapping, as outlined in Report No. PAC-004-2024; **or,**

Option 3
THAT the Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Agricultural Area Review be deferred and considered as part of the Counties Official Plan Update in 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should Option 1 proceed to an Official Plan Amendment there will be costs associated with the advertising of the statutory public meeting. If the Official Plan Amendment is approved and appealed then there will likely be legal and planning consulting costs associated with the Counties participating in any Ontario Land Tribunal process.

Should Option 2 proceed, the funds to undertake testing of some variables used in the methodology for preparing the agricultural mapping are not currently allocated in the Planning Department's draft budget for 2025. The Planning Reserve which is currently at $348,873 could be used to fund the review.

There are no costs associated with Option 3 at this time, although it may result in higher costs for the Counties Official Plan Update.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The Planning Act, the Provincial Planning Statement and the Counties Official Plan have land use planning policies encouraging the minimization of negative impacts of climate change. Preparing for the impacts of a changing climate includes maintaining agricultural lands, which are a non-renewable resource, and encouraging opportunities to support local food, and promoting the sustainability of agri-food and agri-product businesses by protecting agricultural resources, minimizing land use conflicts, and supporting on-farm diversified uses.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This report can be provided in alternative accessible formats on request. Under the Planning Act, accessibility is a provincial interest that the Counties shall have regard to for all facilities, services and matters to which the Act applies.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been posted on-line as part of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) agenda. There is a dedicated study webpage on the Counties' website that is kept up-to-date and there has been a continuing comprehensive consultation program for the Agricultural Area Review.

BACKGROUND

On November 6, 2024, the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) considered a report on options for revised agricultural mapping using an adjusted planning methodology. At that time, a resolution was recommended to Council to defer the report and staff were requested to bring the matter back to the Committee. As part of the Committee

discussion (and reflected in the meeting minutes), staff were requested to consult with each local municipality and ask municipal staff to work with their mayor and council to review the proposed agricultural mapping in order to identify if there are any lands the municipality would like reviewed and potentially added or removed from the proposed agricultural mapping.

Accordingly, the purpose of this report is to provide information on the local municipal consultations and proposed revisions to the agricultural mapping, to bring back the report on options for agricultural mapping and to provide options on the agricultural study for consideration by PAC. Further, the November meeting minutes expressed other Committee concerns with the agricultural mapping such as the amount of remaining land for potential development (by overlaying OP schedules), the status of the aggregate study, consultation undertaken and constraints to future settlement area expansion that staff will address briefly in this report. If more information is required on any of these concerns, PAC can request detailed reports from staff.

DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES

Over the last few months, PAC have been contemplating options for moving forward with the Agricultural Area Review while seeking to resolve outstanding Committee concerns. As a result of the deferral of the mapping options report in November 2024 and the additional consultation with local municipalities undertaken from November 2024 to January 2025, staff are proposing three options for consideration by the Committee and Council. The three options discussed below correspond with those in the recommendation to the Committee.

Option 1 – Local municipal consultations and proposed mapping revisions

As part of the November 6th discussion, PAC recommended allowing municipalities more time to validate and review the consultant's recommended agricultural mapping in the context of local goals and considerations. As a result, Counties staff undertook to re-consult with local municipal staff offering to assist or be a resource to the local municipality in their review process. Further, Counties staff asked municipal staff to seek input from their Mayor and/or their Council to review the final recommended mapping and advise of any land areas that the municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered. A general rationale for each inclusion or deletion of lands was also requested.

From the consultation, Counties staff received comments from 9 local municipalities. As set out in Attachment 1, 6 of the 9 municipalities did not identify specific properties for further review. While there were no formal comments provided by the Municipality of North Grenville by the report deadline, it is our understanding that they are still reviewing the information and comments may follow. Properties were requested for further review in the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal, the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands and the Township of Rideau Lakes. Attachment 2 sets out all the municipal responses.

Each request for further review was assessed by Counties staff according to the criteria of the LEAR based agricultural area study (such as soil type and fragmentation by residential uses). Each property/area is described and reviewed in the table on Attachment 1 with corresponding area maps set out in Appendices 1 to 9. For each review area, the maps show the area and its surroundings on an air photo, the proposed agricultural area and the soil type.

There are two large areas, shown on Appendices 1 and 2 that were requested to be removed from the agricultural designation mapping to enable future expansion of the settlement areas in Johnstown (67 ha./166 ac.) and Cardinal (1,040 ha./2,569 ac.). These areas are recommended to be referred to the Growth Management Strategy consultants for consideration for future settlement area expansion, if needed, as settlement expansion areas over agricultural lands are permitted, where required.

Two other areas requested for review, shown on Appendices 4 and 5, were recommended for removal with minor changes to keep a small portion of currently farmed lands along the road in the agricultural designation while removing another small area along a logical boundary and to remove other lands to remove other isolated areas that would no longer meet the 250-hectare minimum block size. All other reviewed areas were recommended by staff to be removed from the agricultural designation mapping, most often due to being small existing residential lots located on the fringe of the agricultural designation (Appendices 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

From the analysis of properties identified by local municipalities for review, the recommendation in Option 1, as supported by the criteria of the study, is preferred by planning staff. Areas not recommended at this time will be reviewed as part of settlement areas through the Growth Management Strategy process. If PAC/Council choose to exclude proposed agricultural mapping areas that do not meet the criteria of the study (nor the recommendation of staff), at this time, and the redesignation of these

lands is appealed, the Counties will be required to retain additional planning/agricultural expertise to defend that position at any potential Ontario Land Tribunal hearing.

Option 2 – Undertake sensitivity testing of some of the mapping variables used in the methodology for preparing the initial agricultural mapping

As noted previously, on November 6, 2024, Report No. PAC-004-2024 - Options for Agricultural Mapping using an Adjusted Planning Methodology, being Attachment 3, was presented by staff, discussed and deferred by PAC. Based on the earlier discussions of PAC and Council and further reflected in the June 5, 2024 PAC minutes, the most significant concerns with the methodology appear to be with the initial evaluation area block size (40 ha./100 ac.) and the chosen threshold for scoring (at 60%, although with refinements, it is believed to be closer to 70%). As a result, staff suggested that the testing of the mapping initially focus on these two variables with four other mapping variables or options identified that could be considered by the consultant for further testing.

Once the sensitivity testing is complete, the mapping scenarios would be reviewed and compared and potentially a preferred mapping scenario endorsed by PAC/Council. Then the consultant would undertake a policy review and recommend to Council a draft official plan amendment to implement the preferred mapping scenario.

Staff estimate a consultant's cost of approximately $80,000 to undertake this option based on the cost of previous work and discussions with technical staff. This work is currently not anticipated in the 2025 draft budget but could be funded from the Planning Reserve. This costing does not cover any public consultation or public meetings. Further, staff estimate that the work will take 4 to 6 months given that the consulting team will be reporting twice to PAC.

Option 3 – Defer the Agricultural Area Review until Counties Official Plan Update in 2026

Another option to be considered by PAC is to defer the Agricultural Area Review and undertake the updated mapping as part of the Official Plan Update in 2026. As part of the June 2024 PAC report, staff did note that option would not meet the policy and timing of the current Counties Official Plan (COP) policies which the Province had added during COP approval. Attachment 3, the November PAC report, contains the June PAC report as an attachment to it. In the June PAC report, staff provided some comments regarding this option.

Other Issues Discussed

Remaining Developable Lands - Counties Official Plan Schedule and Policy Context

The Committee may recall how the policies and schedules of the COP work together. The COP itself is made up of policy text, 5 schedules and 4 appendices. The main schedule is the Schedule A – Community Structure and Land Use map. It sets out the land use designations across the Counties which include settlement areas, provincially significant wetlands, agricultural areas, rural lands, and regionally/locally significant employment areas. All lands across the Counties are covered by one of these designations with corresponding designation policies covering its objectives, permitted uses and land use policies.

The other schedules in the COP identify development constraints and other information such as mineral aggregate resources (bedrock, sand and gravel), natural heritage features (valleylands, wildlife habitat), natural and human-made hazards (waste disposal, unstable soils). These schedules contain screening maps and are related to Official Plan policies. These policies need to be considered along with the policies of the land use designation found on Schedule A. Lands covered by these other 4 schedules are not lands that are automatically prohibited for development. They are lands that may be constrained and trigger policies such as a study or special review prior to considering development. These studies may provide recommendations or mitigation measures in order for development to occur or limit or prohibit development.

As requested by several PAC members in November, Attachment 4 shows the Schedule A land use designations, the proposed Agricultural Area designation and the proposed Aggregate Resources Master Plan proposed designations. Overlaying screening maps on top of land use designations does not provide an accurate picture of developable lands, it does however, indicate land use designations and potential constraints to development. While the proposed aggregate map has extensive coverage of the existing bedrock resource, the proposed policies have been drafted to be more permissive than existing policies.

Status of the Aggregate Resources Master Plan (October 2020-February 2022)

The Aggregate Resources Master Plan (ARMP) was another study the Province required be completed through a policy put into the COP. The purpose of the ARMP was to consider all available mapping, potential constraints, the official plan policy framework and schedules, and recommend potential criteria to be considered with development applications. The study, undertaken by Meridian Consulting, resulted in a report and an implementing draft Official Plan Amendment with mapping.

This study was deferred by Counties Council on February 24, 2022 without any direction regarding next steps. Counties staff did invite ministry staff to attend PAC to discuss the provincial aggregate mapping but it was during the election period in 2022 and they were unable to attend. It is noted that the municipal election was on October 24, 2022 so any new Counties Council members will not have the benefit of being involved in the study.

At the time the study was considered, the major concern of the previous Council was the amount of the bedrock resource area shown on the mapping. Under provincial policy, all types of mineral aggregate resources including bedrock and sand and gravel shall be protected for long-term use and where provincial information is available the deposits of mineral aggregate resources shall be identified. The mapping identifies bedrock and sand and gravel but must be considered with the policies proposed. If the mapping shows aggregate resources (i.e. bedrock), it does not mean it cannot be developed, but that relevant policies should be referenced triggering perhaps a study or review by an expert. It is through the policies that implementation would occur.

Should PAC/Council wish to reactivate the study, staff would suggest that the consultant (Meridian Consulting) could be reengaged to provide some education on the process undertaken for the mapping and the policy development, especially for those Committee members that were not involved in the original study. Or alternatively, PAC could choose to retain another consultant to undertake further work through a more detailed review of the aggregates layer against existing development (as existing houses or clusters of houses could limit aggregate extraction) to potentially refine the mapping. The consultant could also look at more recent approaches taken in official plans for aggregate resources mapping to see if there are alternatives.

Consultation undertaken to date

There have been concerns expressed by PAC regarding the amount of public and local municipal consultation throughout the process. Attachment 5 sets out a summary of events and consultation that has occurred throughout the project with the public, stakeholders, local municipalities, technical advisory group members and PAC for Committee's information.

Settlement Area expansion onto lands designated as Agricultural Area

The policy changes in the Provincial Planning Statement, which came into effect October 20, 2024, have made it easier to undertake a settlement area boundary change, at any time outside of a comprehensive review, subject to a set of criteria which include the need to designate and plan for additional lands. Once the need is demonstrated, the

other criteria appear to be less difficult to meet. There are a few settlement area expansion criteria that are specific to agricultural lands including: whether the lands are specialty crop areas, the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas, and whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae.

At the November PAC meeting, staff advised that settlement areas will be reviewed as part of the Growth Management Strategy (GMS). The intent of the GMS is to undertake and allocate population, dwelling and employment projections for land use planning purposes and identify areas where growth and/or development will be focused. These upper-tier responsibilities are set out in the Planning Act and in the Provincial Planning Statement. It is anticipated this will provide information for the COP review in 2026 and amendments to the COP of a time sensitive nature (if any).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Summary of Local Municipal Comments Received
Appendices 1 to 9 (maps in support of Attachment 1)
Attachment 2 - Municipal Submissions
Attachment 3 - Report No. PAC-004-2024, Options for Agricultural Mapping using an adjusted Planning Methodology
Attachment 4 - Schedule A to the Counties Official Plan with proposed Agricultural Area and proposed Aggregate Resource designations
Attachment 5 - Agricultural Area Review Timeline (February 5, 2025)

The report set out above has been reviewed and the information verified by the individuals listed below.

CHERIE MILLS	**FEBRUARY 11, 2025**
MANAGER, PLANNING SERVICES	**DATE**
BILL GUY	**FEBRUARY 14, 2025**
INTERIM DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS	**DATE**
ALISON TUTAK	**FEBRUARY 24, 2025**
INTERIM CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	**DATE**

Summary of Local Municipal Comments Received – Attachment 1

Municipality	Appendix	Summary of Comments Received	Recommended Exclusions			
			Location/Address Description	Municipal Rationale	Counties Staff Comment	Counties Planning Staff Recommendation
Athens	N/A	Confirms the recommendations and no reconsideration requests.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes
Augusta (See Attachment 2 for formal submission)	N/A	No areas of concern.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes
Edwardsburgh/ Cardinal (See Attachment 2 for formal submission)	**1**	Concern with certain areas to be added to the agricultural area due to local goals and considerations. Two key locations. <u>1. South of 416</u> Location for industry due to border crossing, infrastructure improvements made for future growth, area for future settlement area expansion (will add additional approval process). Removal will allow for future agricultural growth until settlement expansion is necessary.	Location 1 - **Area A** (67 ha. East of Rural Lands, East of Johnstown)	-There are development applications for eastern portions of Johnstown which will necessitate expansion of the Settlement Area, which the Township envisions will expand easterly	- Johnstown is currently approximately 275 ha. - There is approximately 80 ha. of rural lands located east of Johnstown not recommended for agriculture which can accommodate settlement area expansion -Growth Management Strategy (GMS) will examine and allocate where expansions of settlement areas is needed/desired on a County basis -Predominately class 2 and appears actively farmed -Score around 67	Refer to GMS that will examine settlement area boundaries and employment area expansion

Summary of Local Municipal Comments Received – Attachment 1

Municipality	Appendix	Summary of Comments Received	Recommended Exclusions			
			Location/Address Description	Municipal Rationale	Counties Staff Comment	Counties Planning Staff Recommendation
Edwardsburgh / Cardinal (See Attachment 2 for formal submission)	**2**	2. North Part of Township Scattered residential, agricultural and undeveloped lots. Increased severances along street frontages seen.	Location 1 - **Area B** (1,040 ha. surrounding Cardinal)	-Cardinal has full municipal services -The Township envisions: - expansion of Cardinal north and west - highway commercial uses along County Road 22, creating need for residential and expansion of services to the north - mix of land uses focussed west of village to limit of Area B (Blair Rd) - Scott Road (diagonal road on west of Village) mix of waste disposal, industrial, agricultural and residential and not conducive for agriculture	-Cardinal is approximately 210 ha. -Cardinal has approximately 50 ha. of undeveloped settlement area lands in large blocks (excluding active subdivision applications/inquiries) -Growth Management Strategy (GMS) will examine and allocate where expansions of settlement areas is needed/desired on a County basis -Staff recognize designated industrial lands may be needed due to the nearby Port -Appears majority of lands are farmed -Largely Class 2 soils -Scores generally 68-77	Refer to GMS that will examine settlement area boundaries and employment area expansion
	3		Location 2 – **Area C** (71.5 ha. south of Groveton)	-Proximity to County Road 44 and Highway 416 gives it potential for growth -Envision interchange development in area due to development pressures from Kemptville	-There is already scattered rural residential development between Area C and Hwy 416 which will be a constraint -Located on fringe -Two lots are larger/part of a larger lot (total area 50 ha.) with one smaller rural residential -Some actively farmed -Soil classifications are 3, 4 and 5 -Relatively low scoring lands (approximately 61)	Remove area

Summary of Local Municipal Comments Received – Attachment 1

Municipality	Appendix	Summary of Comments Received	Recommended Exclusions			
			Location/Address Description	Municipal Rationale	Counties Staff Comment	Counties Planning Staff Recommendation
Edwardsburgh / Cardinal (See Attachment 2 for formal submission)	**4**		Location 2 – **Area D** (25.9 ha. west of Village of Ventnor)	-Want to allow for severance along north side of roadway -Lots are small rural residential along South Nation River	-Currently designated agricultural area -Would create a hole in the system, which LEAR methodology generally discourages -Majority of area is small lots with front of one large farm parcel (approx. 155 ha.) -Soil classifications are 3 and 5 with small area of 2 -Scored 69-78	Remove area with minor refinements to keep portion of farmland frontage designated
	5		Location 2 – **Area E** (64.9 ha. west of Village of Hyndman)	-Interest in severances -Would allow new residential lot creation while protecting lands to the rear for agriculture	-Removal will fragment remaining parcels into areas less than 250 ha. -Mix of soil classifications, mostly 3 and 6 with some 2, 4 and 5 -Relatively low score, 62-64	Remove area with refinements to also remove remaining isolated parcels that do not meet 250 ha. minimum
Elizabethtown -Kitley (See Attachment 2 for formal submission)	N/A	Shared report and minutes which included various comments about process.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes
Front of Yonge	N/A	No further comments.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes

Summary of Local Municipal Comments Received – Attachment 1

Municipality	Appendix	Comments Recevied	Recommended Exclusions			
			Location/Address Description	Municipality	Counties Staff Comments	Counties Planning Staff Recommendation
Leeds and the Thousand Islands (See Attachment 2 for formal submission)	**6**	No concerns subject to the following removals:	**7 smaller lots in Escott area** *1348, 1354, 1356, 1358 & 1376 County Rd 2 and two vacant lots on Escott/Rockport Rd*	-Lots are not agricultural lots, are generally in cluster areas, and removal will provide more flexibility for long term use	-Smaller rural residential lots -Generally on fringe areas -One is in centre of a designation but was a former school, would enable adaptive reuse -Connectivity of land base is maintained if lots are removed along Escott/Rockport Rd -Soil classifications are 2 and 7 -Scores 67-77	Remove lots
	7	No concerns subject to the following removals:	**2 smaller lots on Maple Grove Rd** *361 & 395 Maple Grove Rd*	-Lots are not agricultural lots -Removal will provide more flexibility for long term use of lots	-Smaller rural residential lots -On fringe area -Soil classification is 2 -Scores 78 & 82	Remove lots
	8	No concerns subject to the following removals:	**2 smaller lots on County Rd 4** (Blue Mountain Rd) *2171 & 2181 Blue Mountain Rd*	-Lots are not agricultural lots -Removal will provide more flexibility for long term use of lots	-Small rural residential lots -On fringe area -Soil classifications are 3 & 7 -Score 76	Remove lots
Merrickville-Wolford	N/A	Satisfied with the mapping.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes
North Grenville	N/A	Comments pending.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes
Rideau Lakes (Also see Attachment 2 for formal submission)	**9**	One lot should be removed.	**276 Sunnyside Rd**	-Multiple dwelling lot already zoned	-Existing zoning precludes agriculture except as legal non-conforming use -On fringe - Soil classification is 2 -Score 64	Remove lot
Westport	N/A	No additional comment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No changes

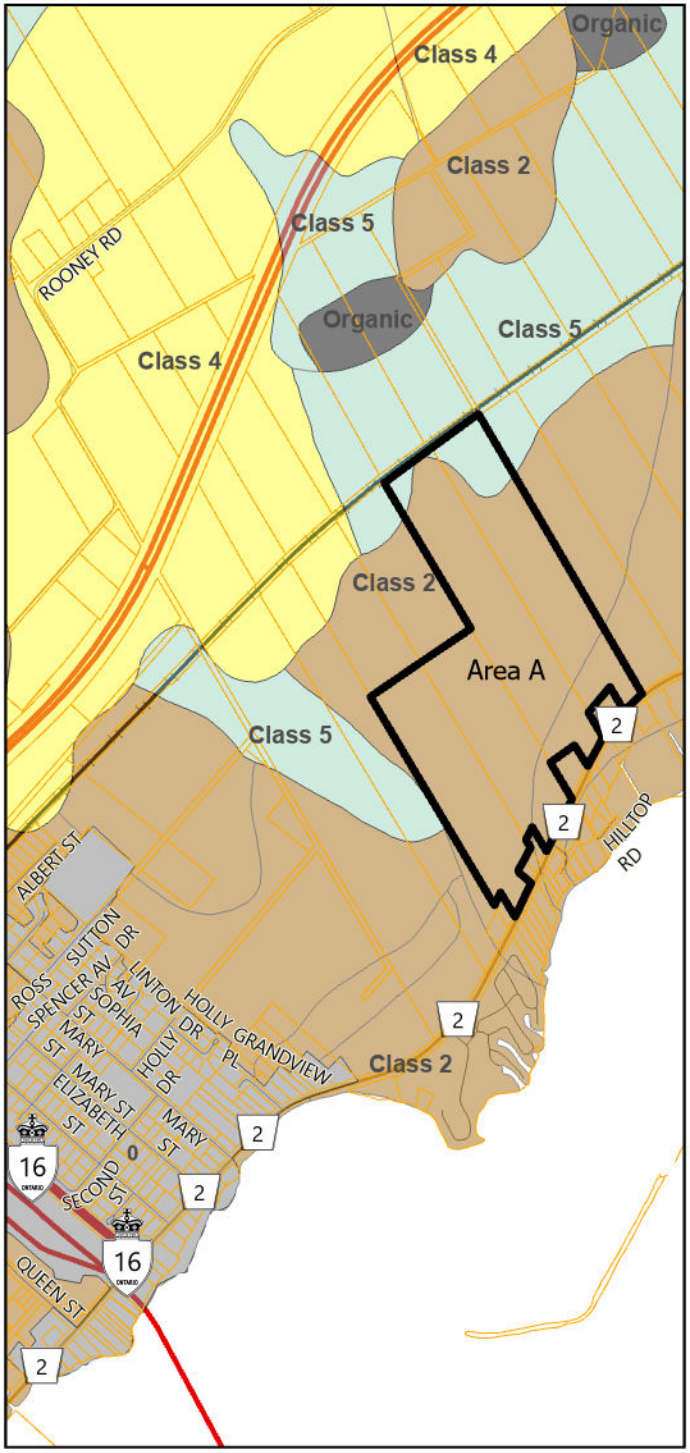
Appendix 1: Area A, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land

Soil Survey Complex



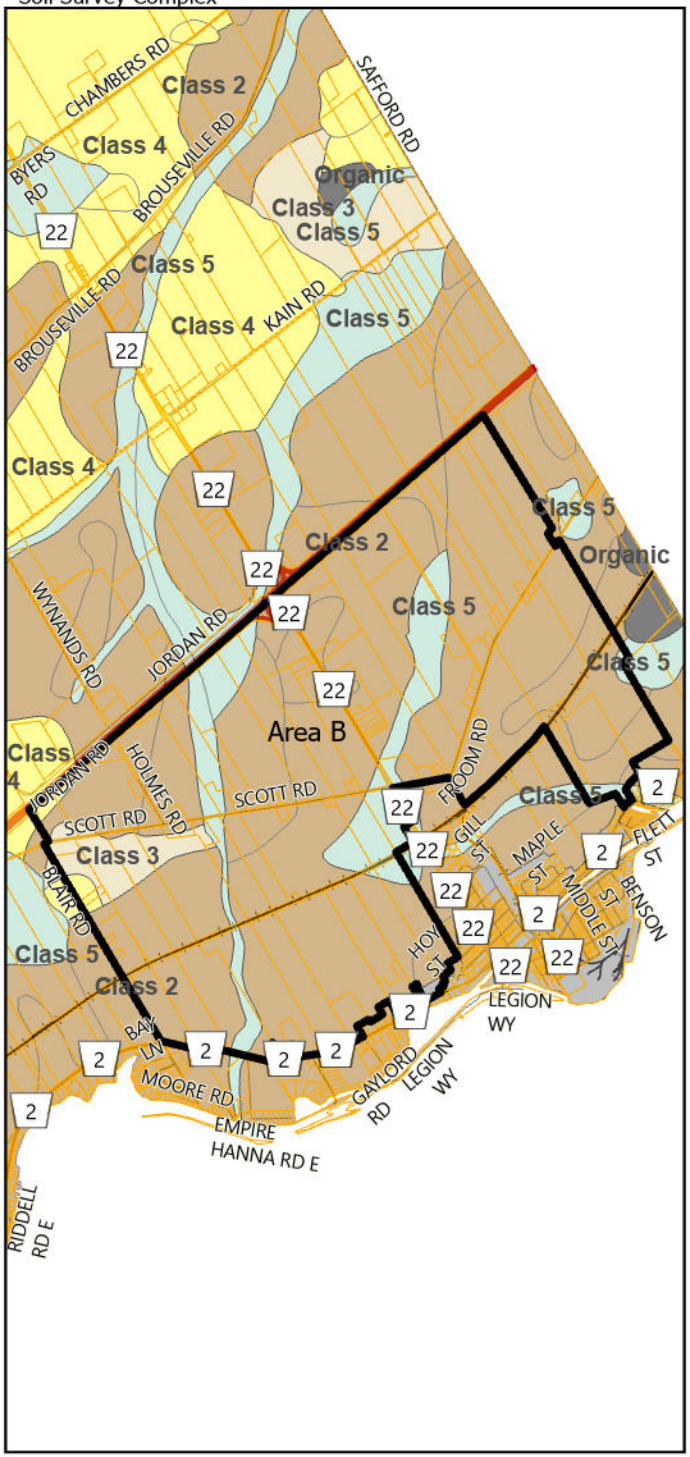
Appendix 2: Area B, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land

Soil Survey Complex

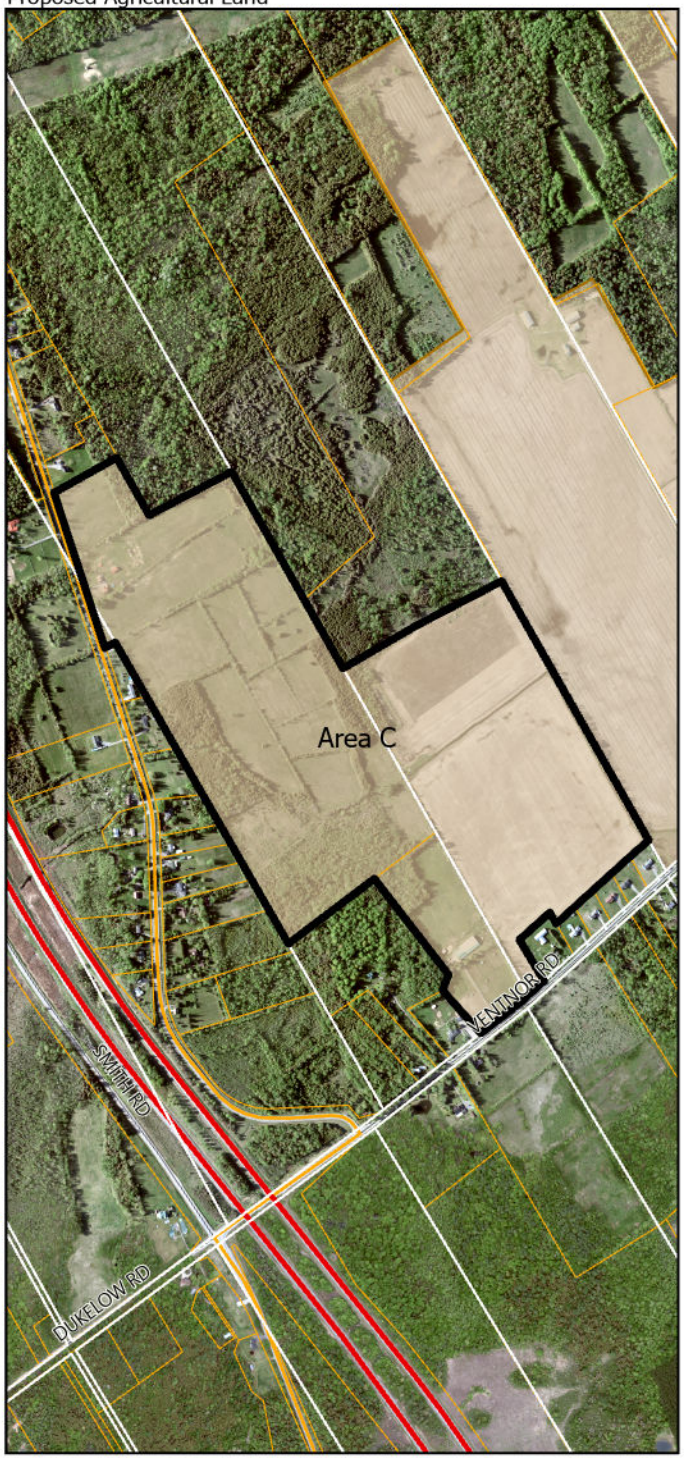


Appendix 3 Area C, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

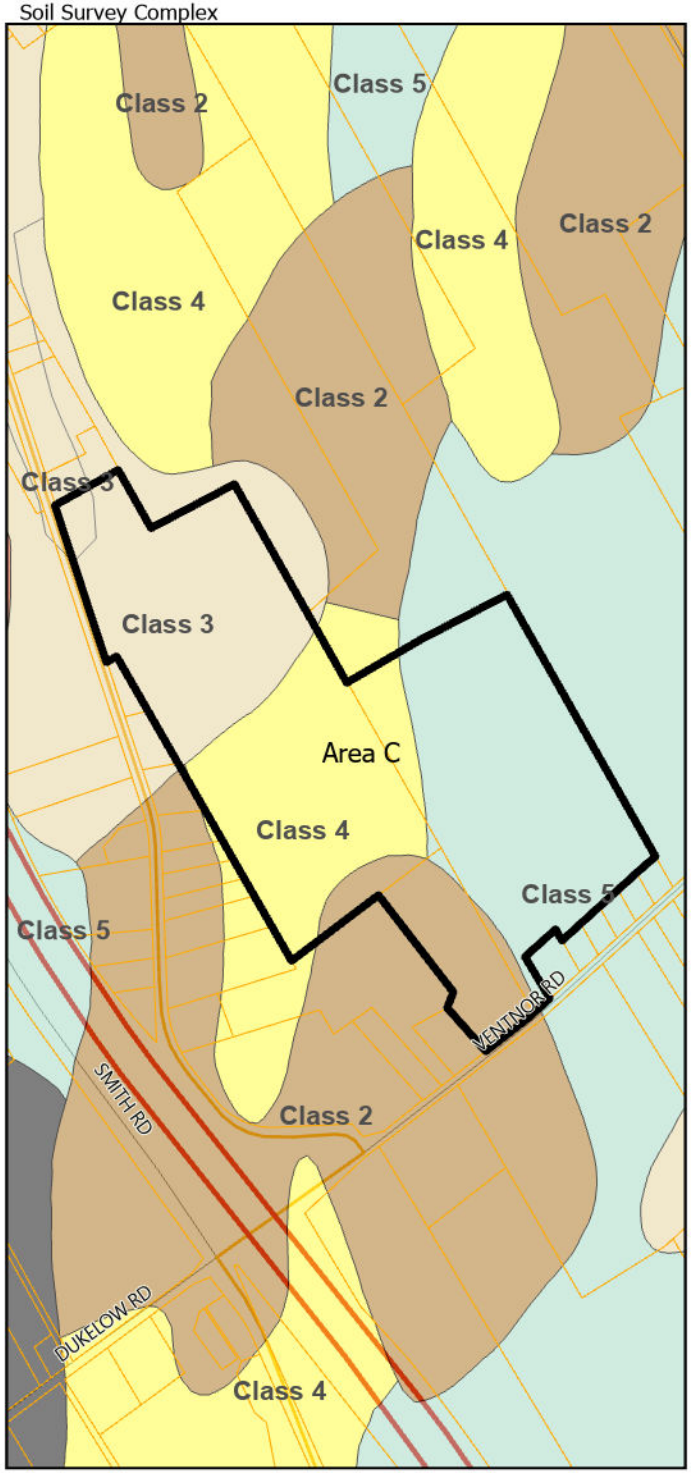
Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land



Soil Survey Complex

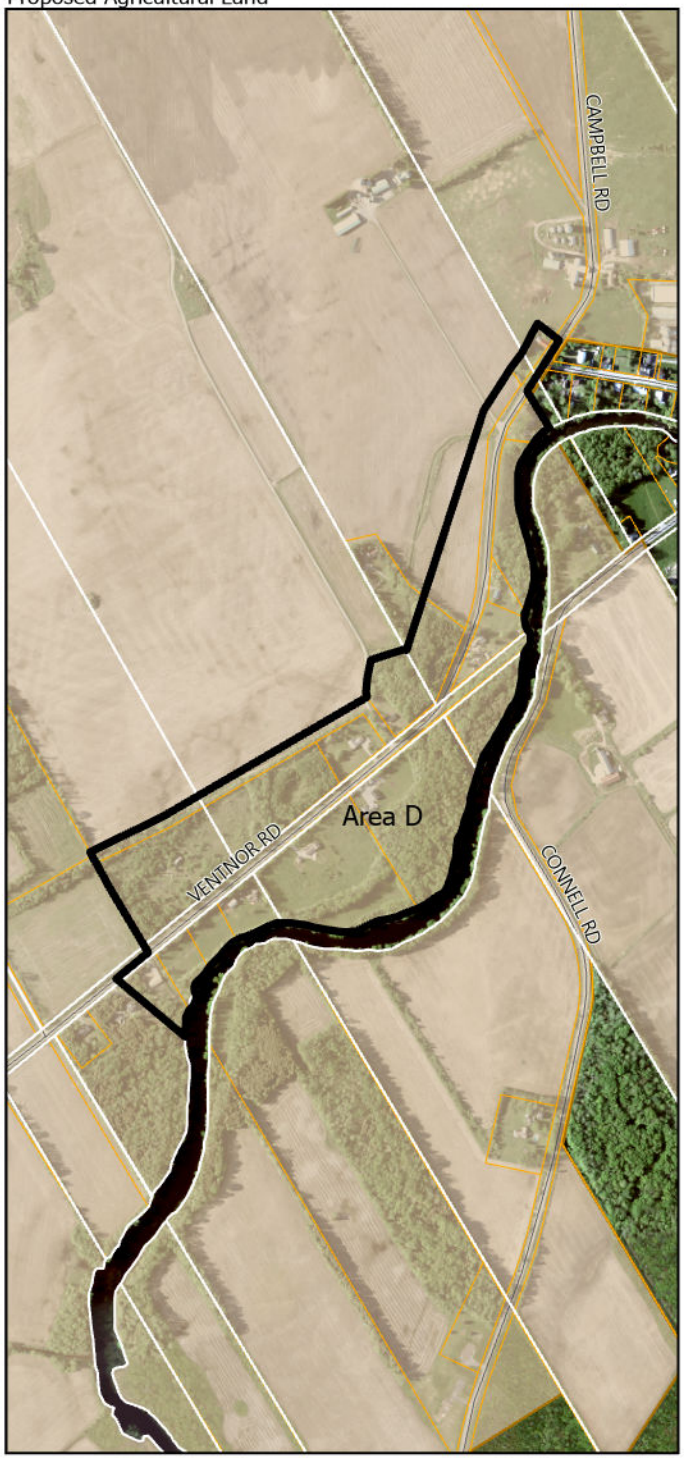


Appendix 4 Area D, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

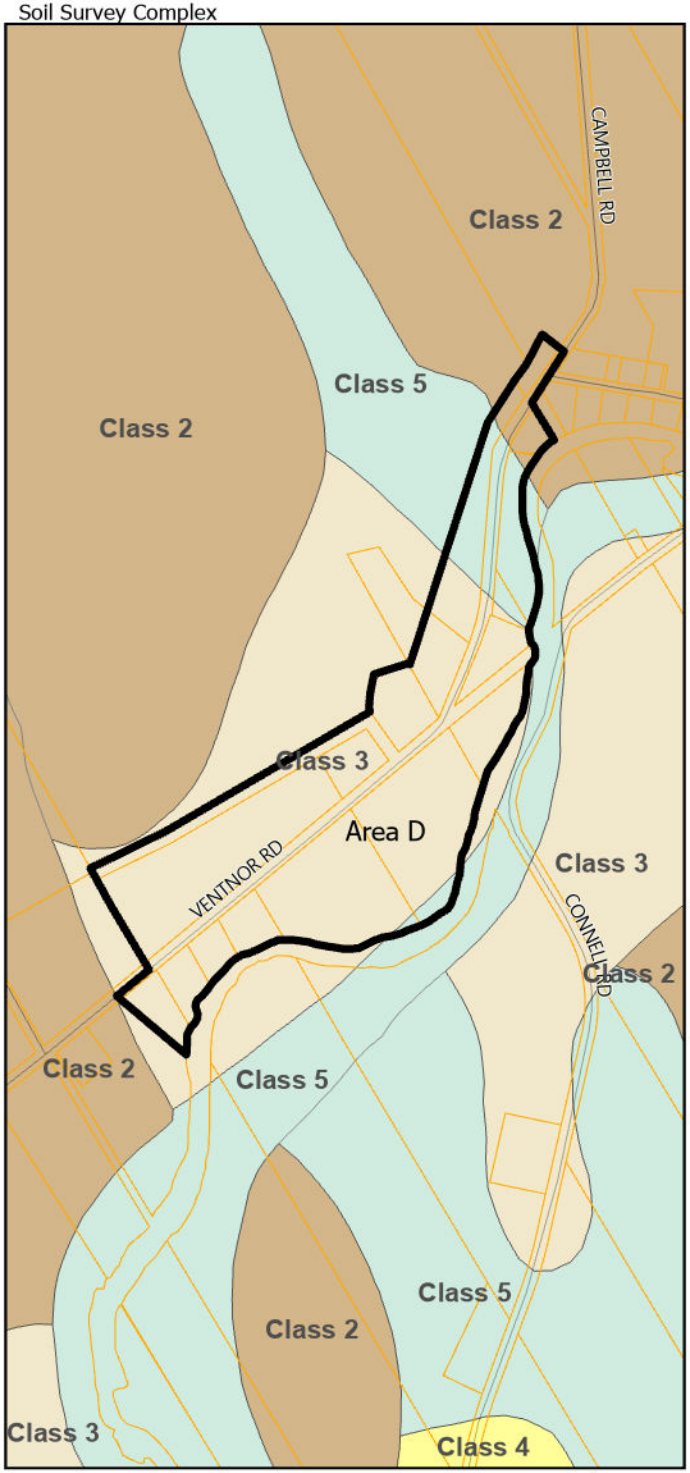
Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land



Soil Survey Complex



Appendix 4: Area D, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

Date created: January 22, 2025

Recommended Removal

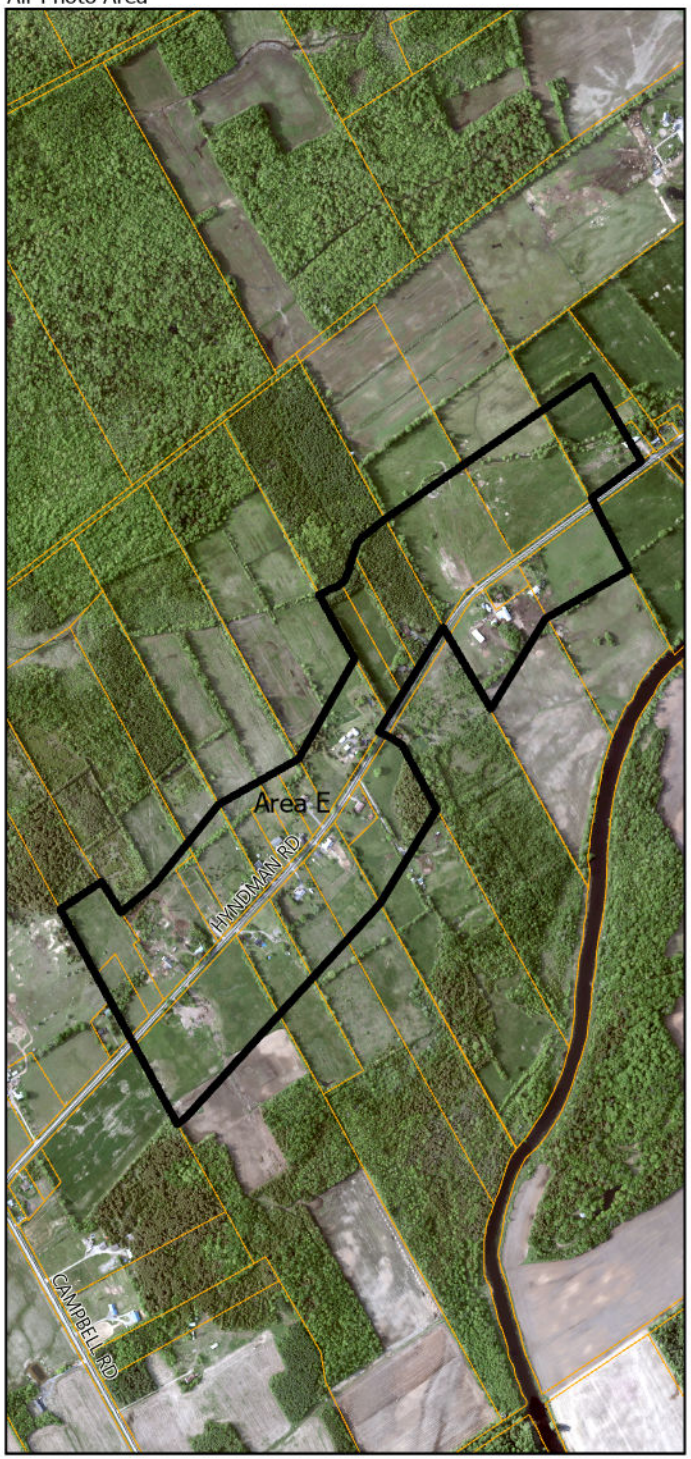
Recommended Removal Lands

Municipal Requested Removal Lands

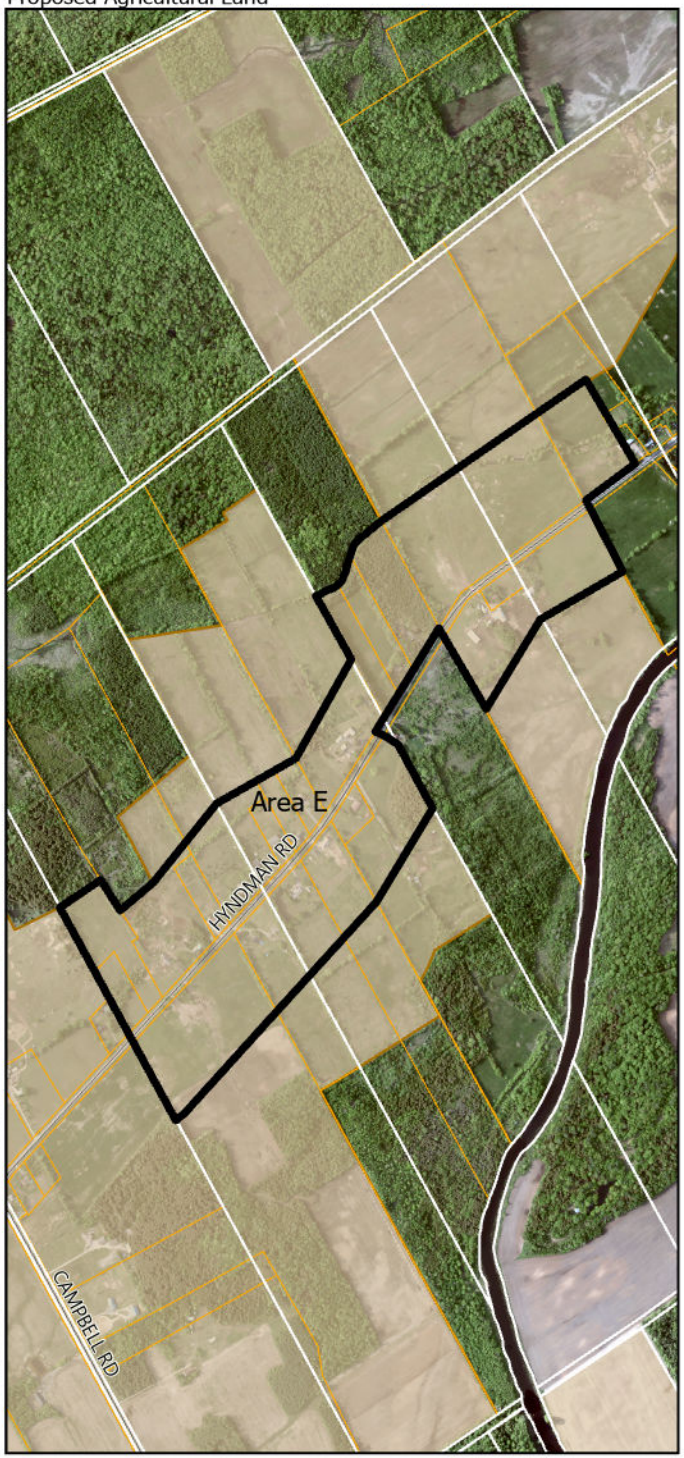
Appendix 5 Area E, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area



Proposed Agricultural Land



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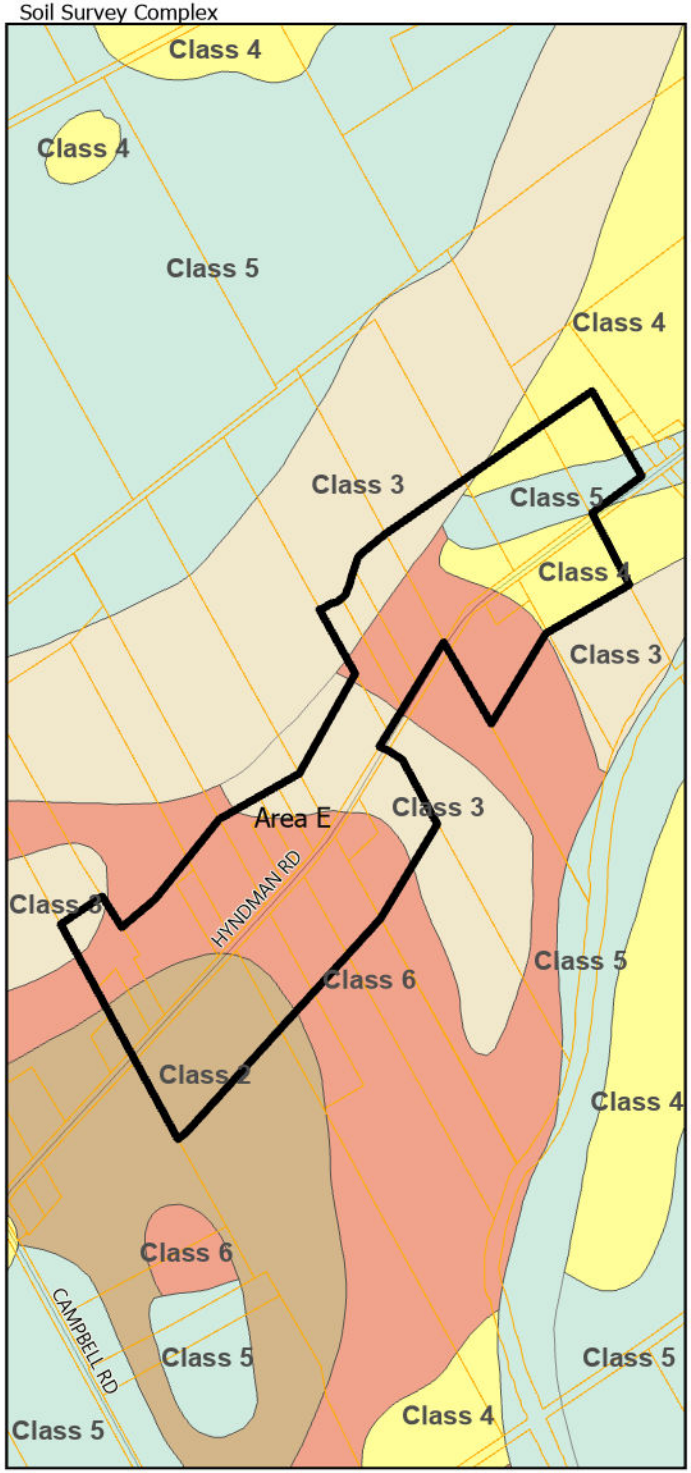
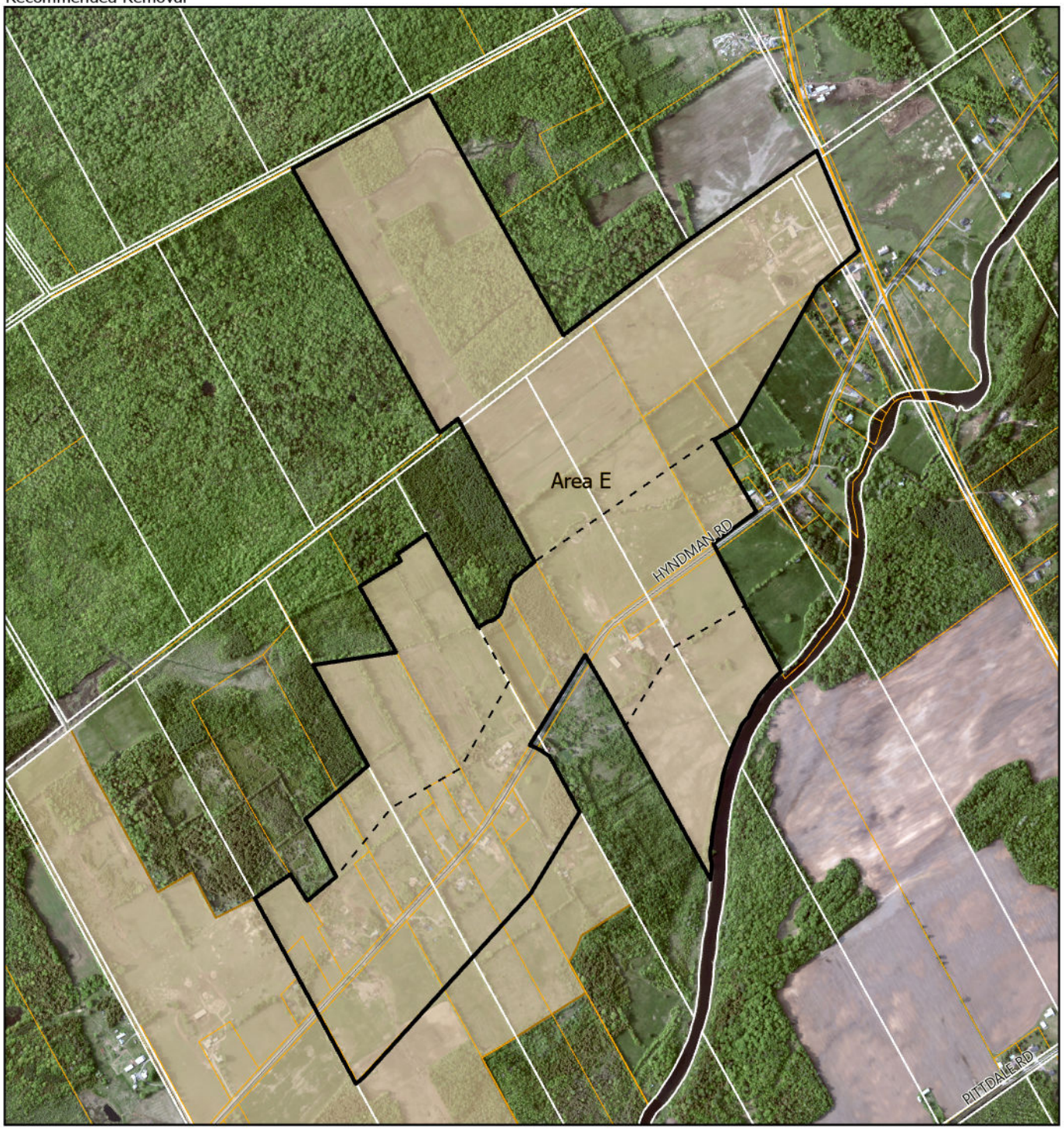


Appendix 5: Area E, Edwardsburgh/Cardinal

Date created: January 22, 2025

Recommended Removal



Recommended Removal Lands

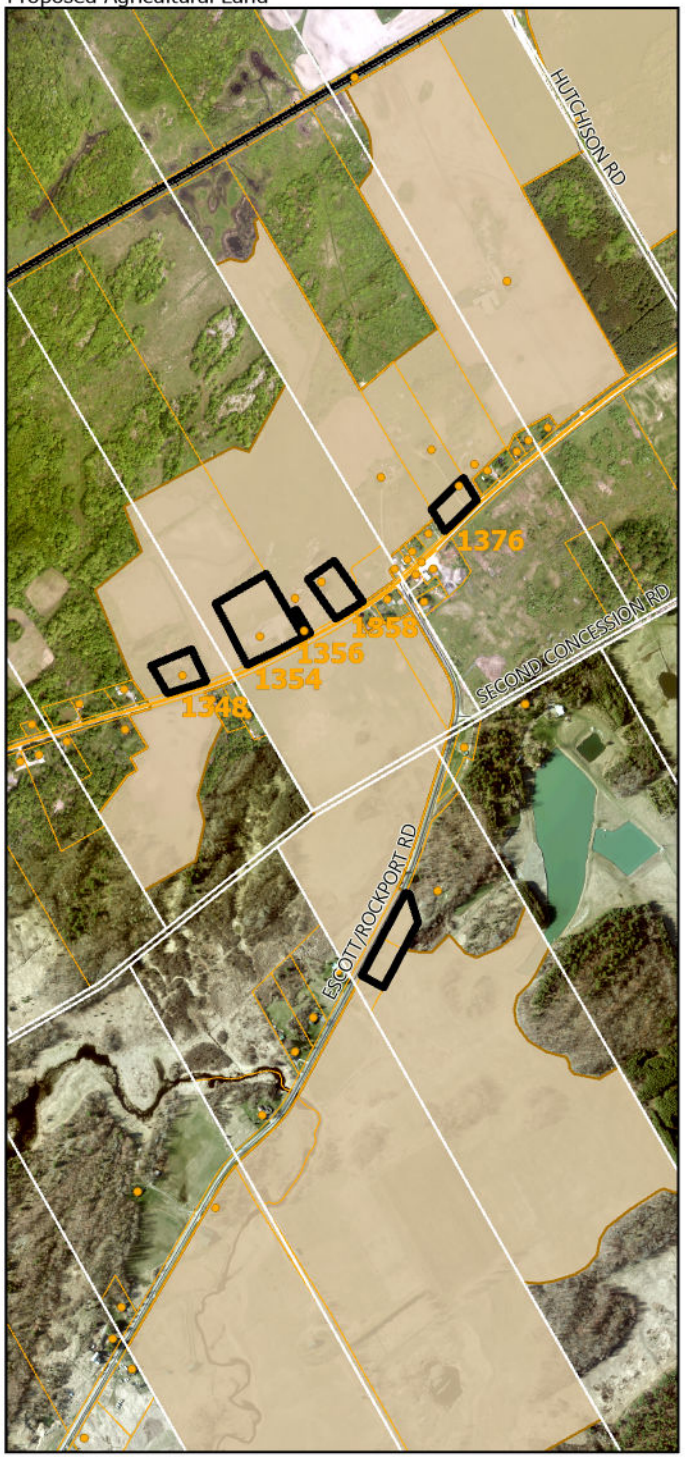
Municipal Requested Removal Lands

Appendix 6: Area 1, Leeds and the Thousand Islands

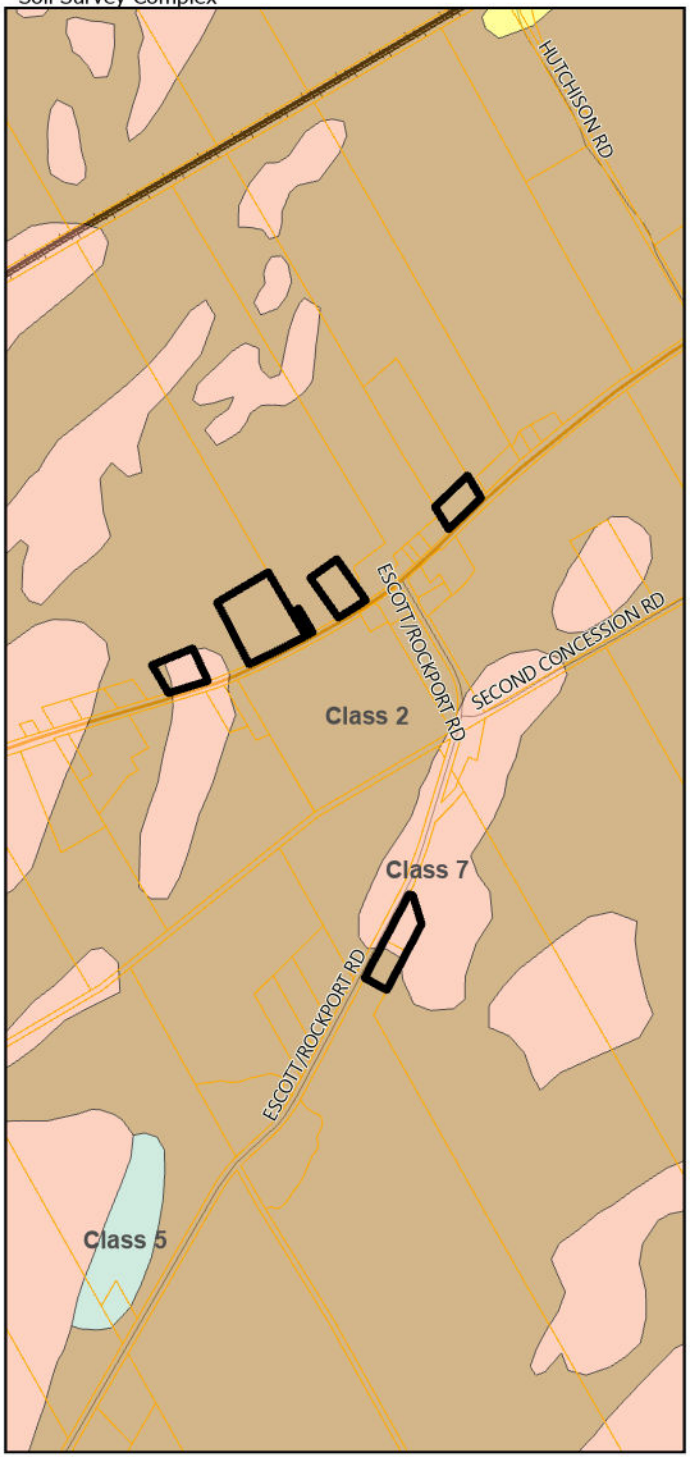
Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land



Soil Survey Complex



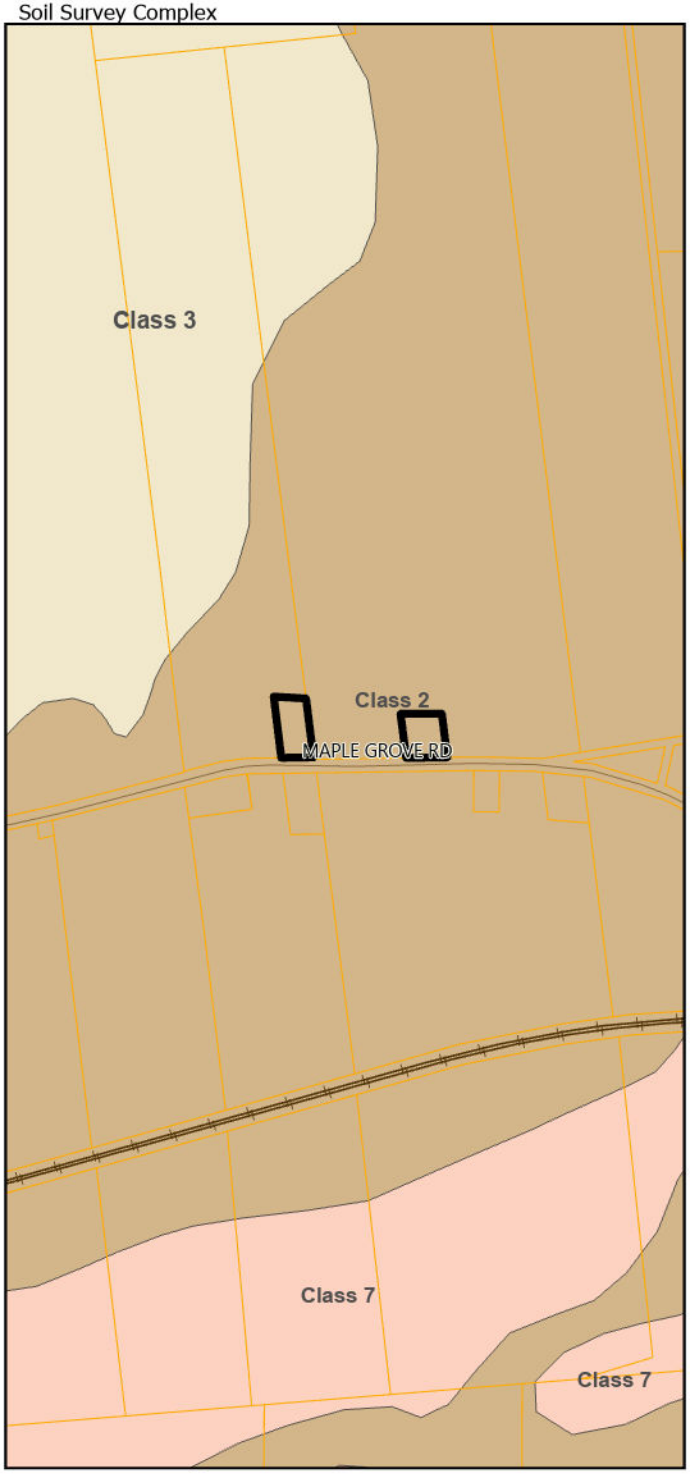
Appendix 7: Area 2, Leeds and the Thousand Islands

Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land

Soil Survey Complex

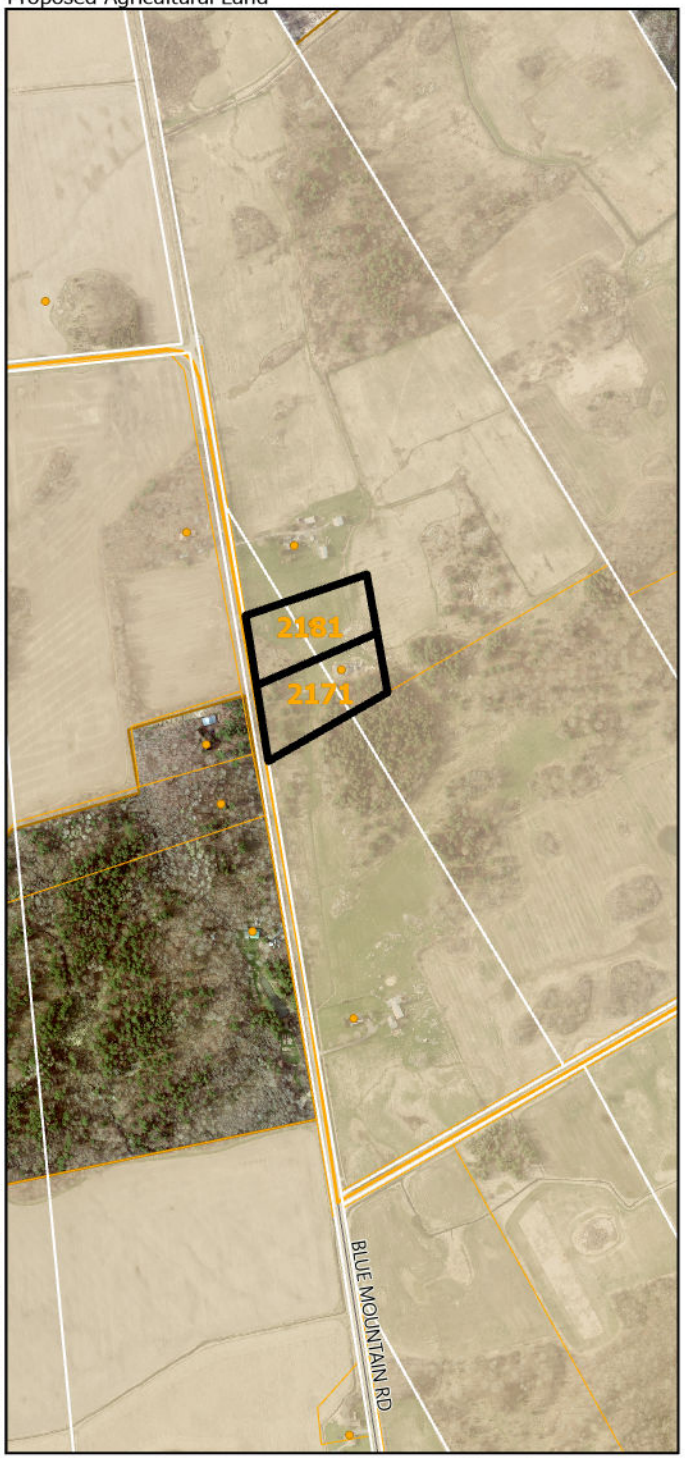


Appendix 8: Area 3, Leeds and the Thousand Islands

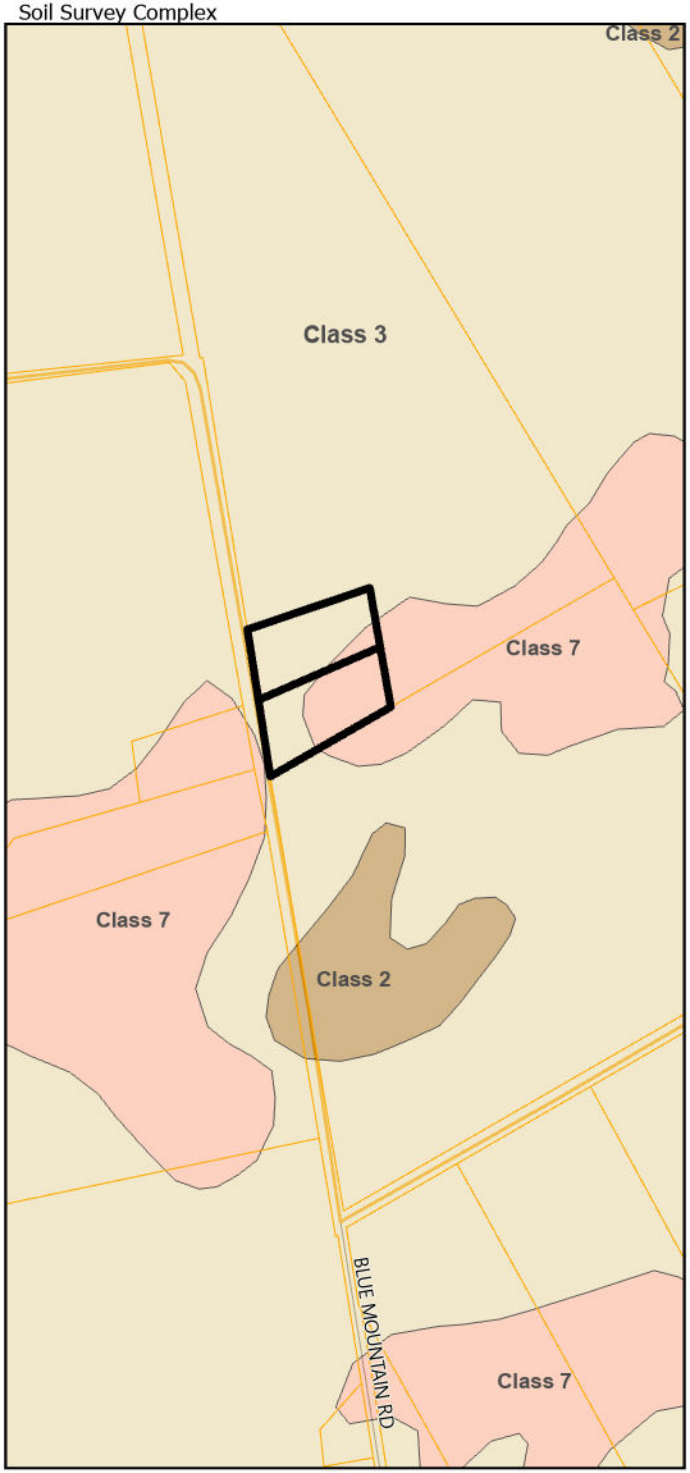
Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land



Soil Survey Complex

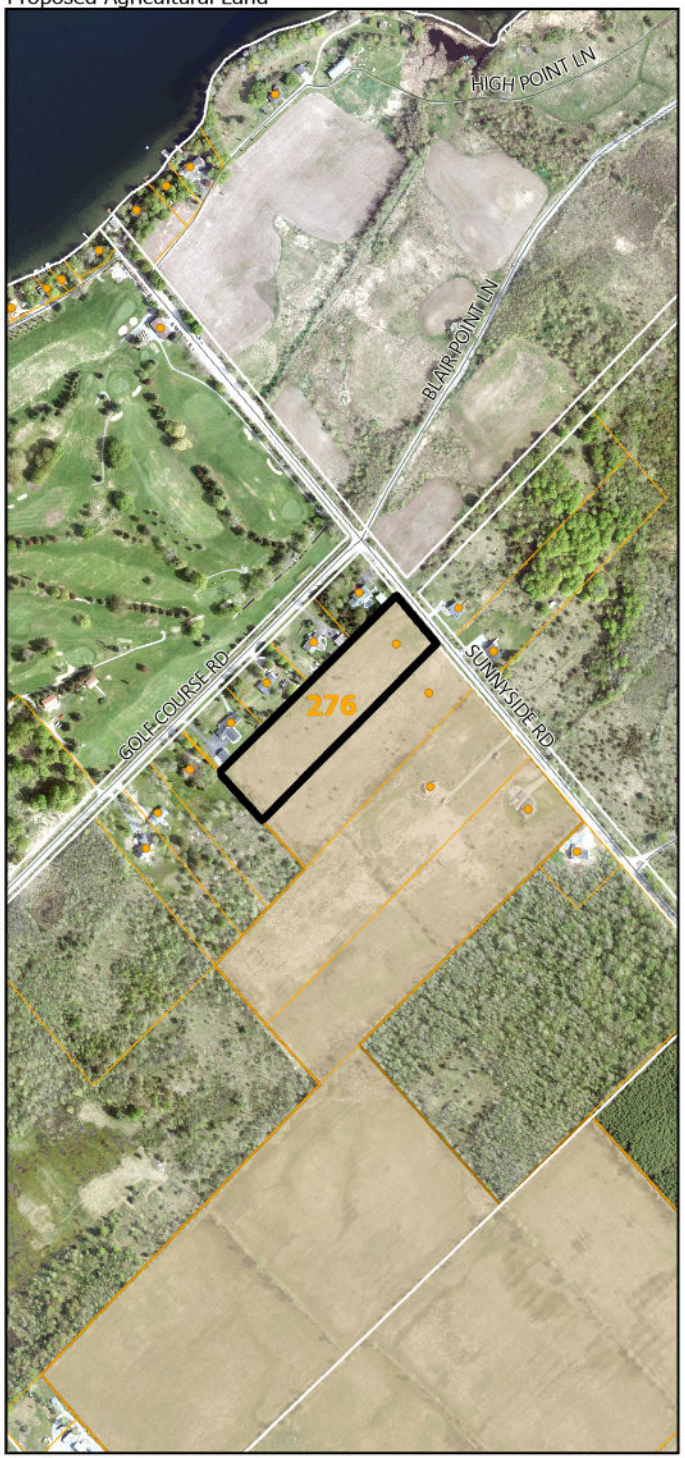


Appendix 9: Area 1, Rideau Lakes

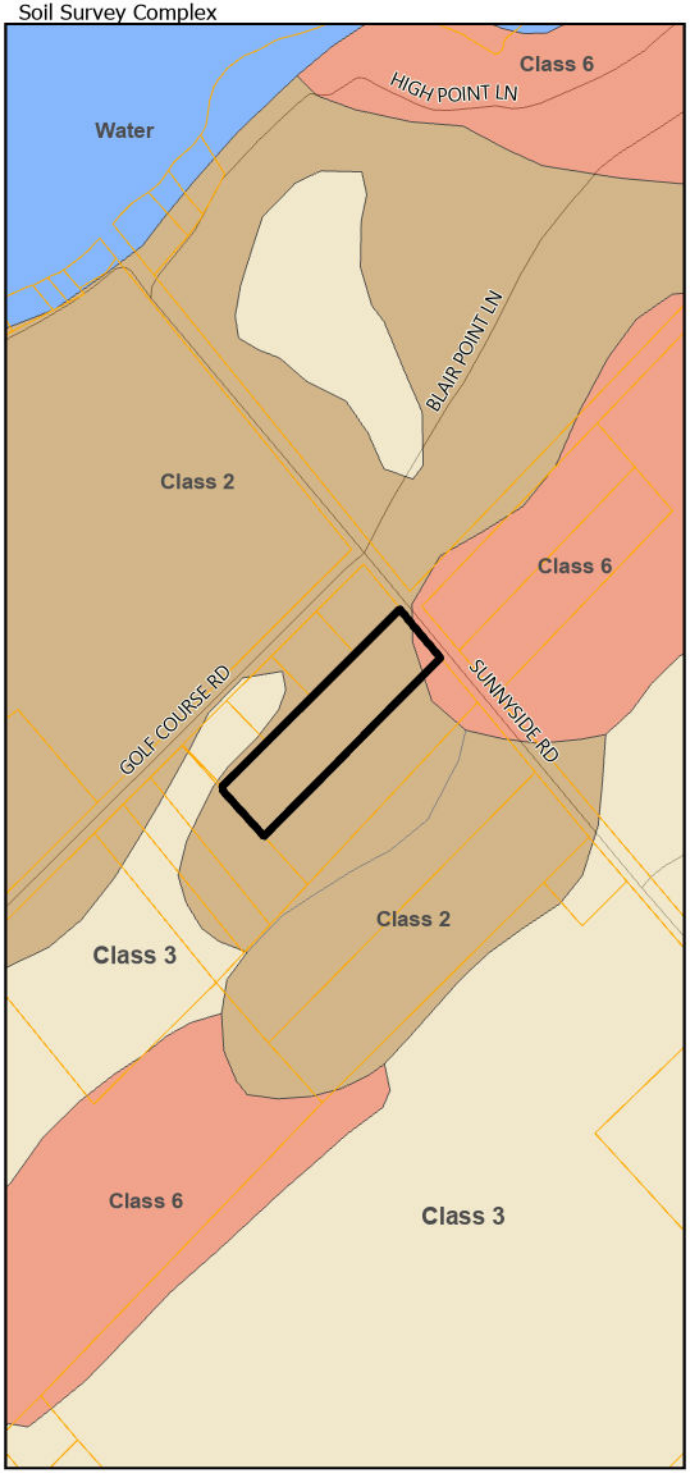
Date created: January 14, 2025

Air Photo Area

Proposed Agricultural Land



Soil Survey Complex



Mills, Cherie

From: Darlene Noonan <athens@myhighspeed.ca>
Sent: December 17, 2024 9:29 AM
To: Mallory, Elaine
Cc: Mills, Cherie
Subject: RE: ATHENS - Agricultural Area Review

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
Good morning, please be advised that Council of the Township of Athens reviewed the attached, at their regular meeting Monday December 16th 2024. Council confirms the recommendation and does not have any reconsiderations or review for any inclusions or exclusions. Thank you

Darlene Noonan, AMCT, CEMC
CAO/Clerk Treasurer, Tax Collector
613-924-2044

From: Mallory, Elaine <Elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca>
Sent: November 18, 2024 3:53 PM
To: athens <athens@myhighspeed.ca>
Cc: Mills, Cherie <Cherie.Mills@uclg.on.ca>
Subject: ATHENS - Agricultural Area Review
Importance: High

Hi Darlene:

Please refer to these attachments rather the those which were attached to the below email.

Regards,
Elaine Mallory, Planner II
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
800-770-2170/613-342-3840 Ext. 2422
elaine.mallory@uclg.on.ca / www.leedsgrenville.com

From: Mallory, Elaine
Sent: November 18, 2024 3:51 PM
To: 'Darlene Noonan' <athens@myhighspeed.ca>
Cc: Mills, Cherie <Cherie.Mills@uclg.on.ca>
Subject: Agricultural Area Review
Importance: High

Good afternoon:

Please see attached a letter from the Manager of Planning Services requesting consideration of the final recommended mapping in the Agricultural Area Review.

TOWNSHIP OF AUGUSTA

Date: 25 Nov 2024 Resolution No: 5

MOVED BY	SECONDED BY
☐ Deputy Mayor Wynands	☐ Deputy Mayor Wynands
☑ Councillor Bowman	☐ Councillor Bowman
☐ Councillor Henry	☑ Councillor Henry
☐ Councillor Pape	☐ Councillor Pape

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council recommend to the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville that there are no areas of concern for addition or removal in Augusta Township for the proposed Agricultural Area designation in the Agricultural Area Review.

RECORDED VOTE:

	FOR	AGAINST
Councillor Bowman	___	___
Councillor Henry	___	___
Councillor Pape	___	___
Mayor Shaver	___	___
Deputy Mayor Wynands	___	___

☑ CARRIED ☐ DEFEATED ☐ DEFERRED

Mayor

Declaration of pecuniary interest by: _____

Nature of interest: _____

- ☐ Disclosed His/Her/Their Interest
- ☐ Vacated His/Her/Their Seat
- ☐ Abstained from discussion & did not vote on the question

TWP EC .ca | EDWARDSBURGH CARDINAL

Phone: 613-658-3055
Fax: 613-658-3445
Toll Free: 866-848-9099
E-mail: mail@twpec.ca

P.O. Box 129,
18 Centre St.
Spencerville, Ontario
K0E 1X0

January 14, 2025

Sent by Email

Cherie Mills, Manager of Planning Services
25 Central Avenue, Suite 100
Brockville, Ontario K6V 4N6

RE: Agricultural Area Review – Mapping Review Comments
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal
County File No: D23-2022-01 – Agricultural Area Review

Dear Mrs. Mills:

The Mayor, Council and staff of the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal, appreciate the Counties Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) decision to allow additional time for municipalities within the County to validate the consultants' recommended Agricultural Mapping in the context of local goals and considerations. Municipal staff have been working with our Mayor and members of Council to review and provide comments on the recommended mapping.

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal have fundamental concerns with some areas which are recommended to be added as agricultural designated lands based on the recommended Agricultural Area Mapping prepared by Planscape, dated November 18th, 2024.

Our review focused on two key areas of the municipality. The first area are the lands south of the 401 which includes the Villages of Johnstown and Cardinal settlement area and its potential future expansion. The second key area focuses on lands in the northern portion of the municipality and east of Highway 416.

The two key areas have been further broken down into five distinct areas which provides brief rationale for the townships recommendation to remove from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping.

Key Area 1:

The area south of Highway 416 to the St Lawrence River is primarily developed with settlement and industrial areas. The area between the Village of Johnstown and Village of Cardinal are developed with small clusters of residential, agricultural and undeveloped parcels.

This type of development is common in municipalities within the County which have access to Highway 401 and the St. Lawrence River.

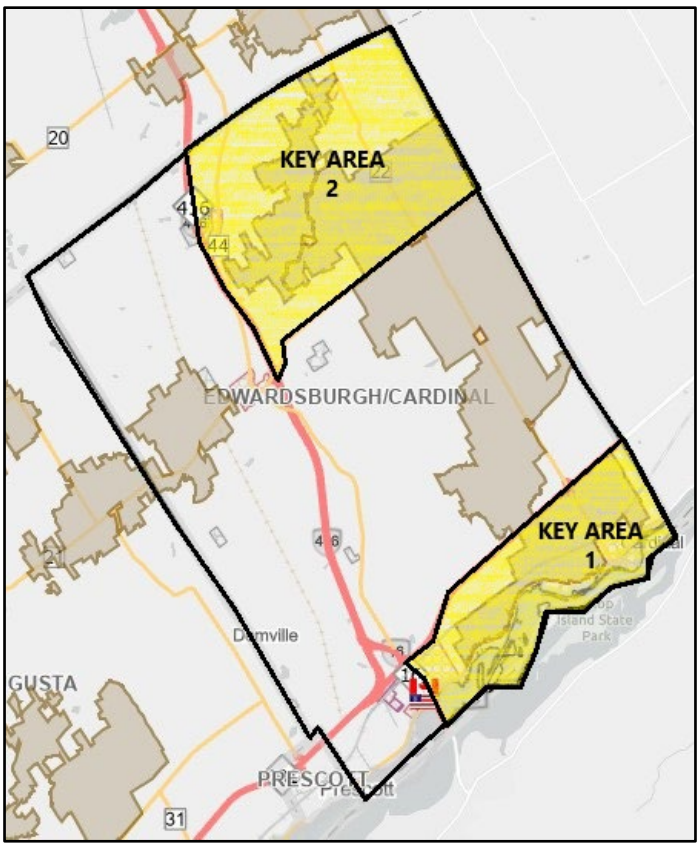


Figure 1: Key Study Areas

Area's south of Highway 401 and along the Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River have a history of land development. Our municipality is unique as a result of the location of Highway 401 and 416, the location of Highway 2 (County Road 2), the rail system, the Port of Johnstown and water access to the St. Lawrence River. Our municipality is one of the few in Ontario with boarder access to the United States of America making this a highly traveled route for commerce and location for small- and large-scale industries.

Lands south of Highway 401 have had infrastructure improvements to accommodate future growth and to meet the demands of existing development in the municipality.

Based on the recommended agricultural mapping, the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal is the only municipality which has lands proposed to be designated Agricultural between Highway 401 and the St. Lawrence River.

The Villages of Johnstown and Cardinal are the two largest settlement areas within our municipality and are subject to development applications which will result in the loss of future growth lands. Placing the abutting lands in the Agricultural Area will render future expansion of settlement areas and development outside of settlement areas with another layer of approvals making it harder for economic growth in our rural municipality. The Mayor, Council and township staff recognizes the need to protect agricultural lands; however, keeping some lands as Rural will maintain the existing

agricultural uses and allow for future agricultural growth until such time as settlement area expansion is necessary.

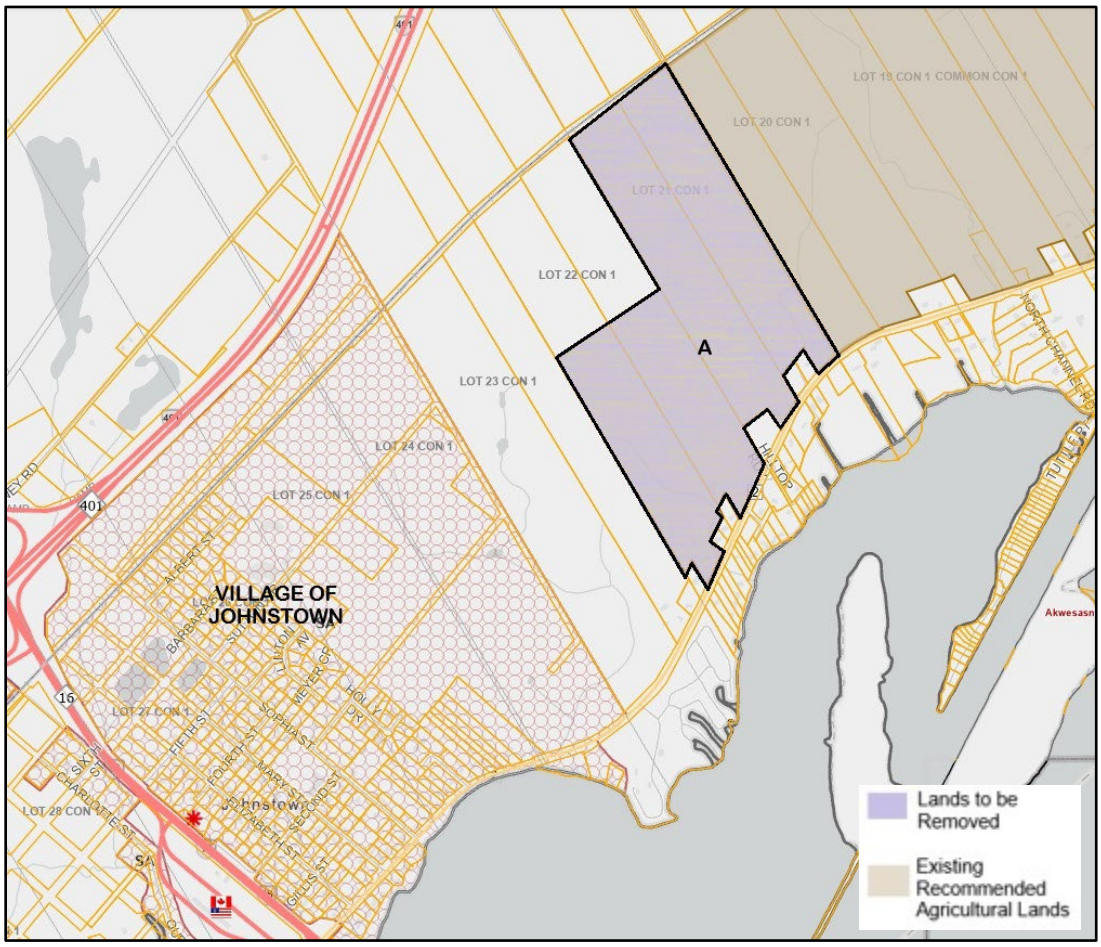


Figure 2: Proposed Changes in Key Area 1, Village of Johnstown

Area A: The Village of Johnstown is a settlement area with a mixture of development on private onsite well and sewage disposal system. The village is adjacent to a large industrial and employment area to the west which is serviced. The village also has direct access to Highway 401, Highway 416, Country Road 2, the Port of Johnstown and the international border crossing into the United States of America. There are development applications for the eastern portions of the village which will result in the need to provide additional lands for the expansion of the settlement area. The township envisions the Village of Johnstown to expand easterly and therefore recommends the removal of an approximate 67 hectare area which is currently recommended to be placed in the agricultural area (see area A in figure 2 above).

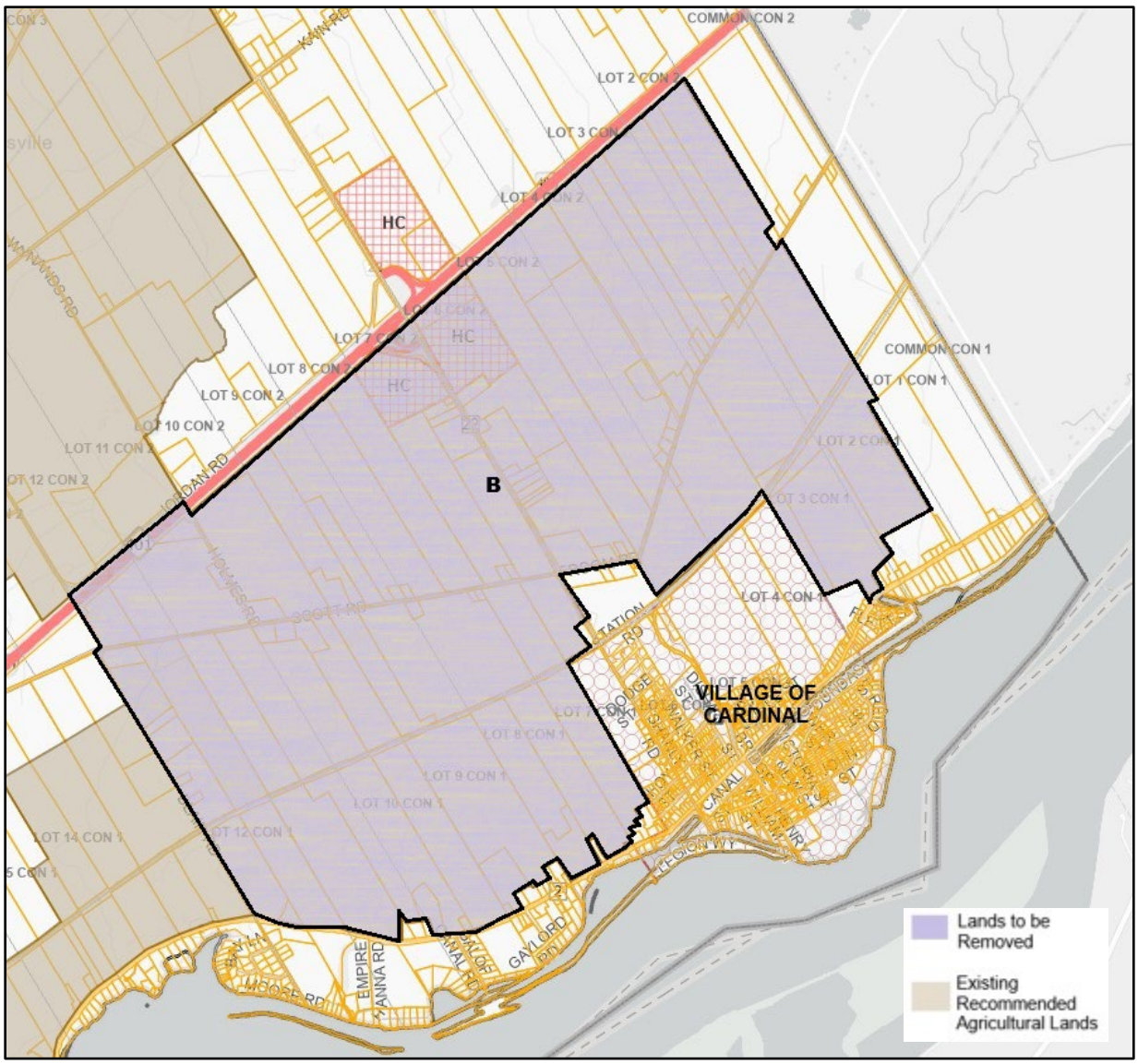


Figure 3: Proposed Changes in Key Area 1, Village of Cardinal

Area B: The Village of Cardinal is the only settlement area which has full municipal services. There are proposed development applications within the existing vacant lands within the settlement area. The proposed development will remove future growth lands in the settlement area. The township envisions future expansion of the settlement area to the north and west.

An existing industrial node is located at the intersection of County Road 22 and Highway 401. Development within this node is on individual, private water and sewage disposal system. The township envisions highway commercial uses to be located south along County Road 22 and into the Village of Cardinal, which will result in the need for residential development and expansion of municipal service to the north.

The township also envisions that a mixture of residential, institutional, commercial and industrial development would be focused west of the village to Blair Road. Scott Road is developed with a mix of uses such as Waste Disposal, Industrial, agricultural and residential. These lands are not conducive for agricultural uses regardless of the MNR soil classification type mapping.

The township recommends the removal of an approximate 1,040 hectare area which is currently recommended to be placed in the agricultural area (see area B in figure 3 above).

Recommendation:

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal requests that the following changes be applied to the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping, as per Figures 2 and 3:

1. That, Area A containing an approximate area of 67 hectares, be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping and remain in its existing rural designation, for future expansion of the Village of Johnstown.

2. That, Area B containing an approximate area of 1,040 hectares, be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping and remain in its existing rural designation, for future expansion of the Village of Cardinal.

Key Area 2:

The northern portion of the municipality is developed with scattered residential lots, agricultural uses and undeveloped lots. This area has seen an increase in severances and development along the street frontages.

The Township recognizes that there are areas which are adjacent to the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping which currently are developed with agricultural uses or have the ability to be used for an agricultural use and should be protected.

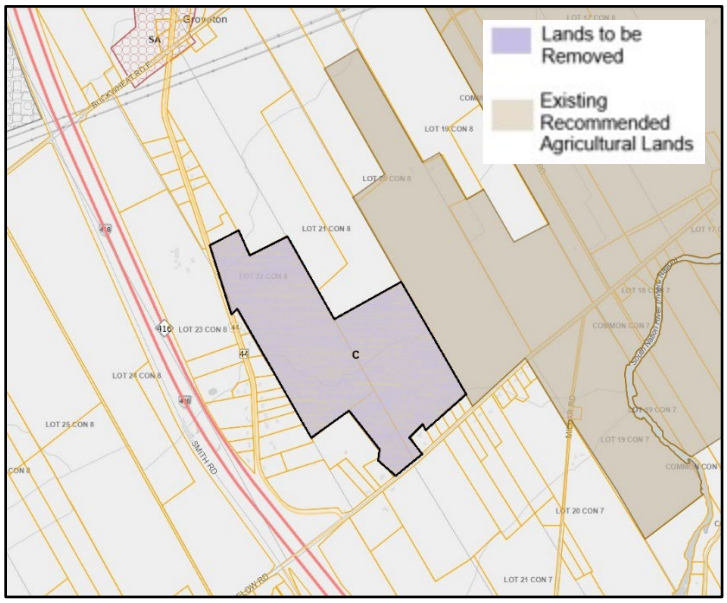


Figure 4: Proposed Changes to Key Area 2, County Rd 44 and Ventnor Rd

Area C: Based on the townships review, we request that Area 'C' which is approximately 71.5 hectares in area should be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping. This area has potential for future development resulting from its proximity to Highway 416 and County Road 44. The township envisions this area in the future having direct access on and off Highway 416 as development pushes south from Kemptville.

Area D: The Village of Ventnor is a small community within an area predominantly developed with agricultural uses. As with small villages in the rural area, new lot creation by way of severance, are typically along the major roadways close to the Village. The township has identified a 25.9 hectare area along Ventnor Road, west of the Village as having potential for development and shown as Area 'D' in figure 5.

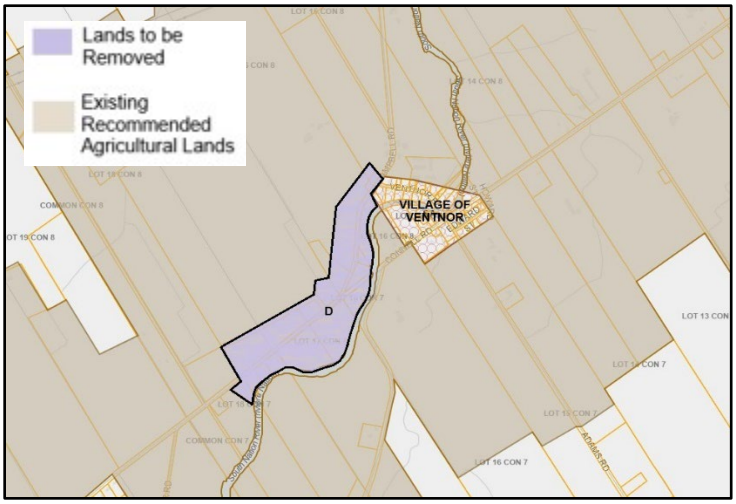


Figure 5: Proposed Changes to Key Area 2, Ventnor Rd

The lands on the south side of Ventnor Road back onto the South Nation River. There are a number of existing residential lots along the south side and the remaining lots are too small to sustain an agricultural use. The lands are better suited for residential development on private services and typical rural uses. It is also recognized a portion of the lands on the north side Ventnor Road remain outside of Agricultural Area to provide further flexibility for future development along the roadway. The larger tracts of land will be maintained and protected for agricultural use.

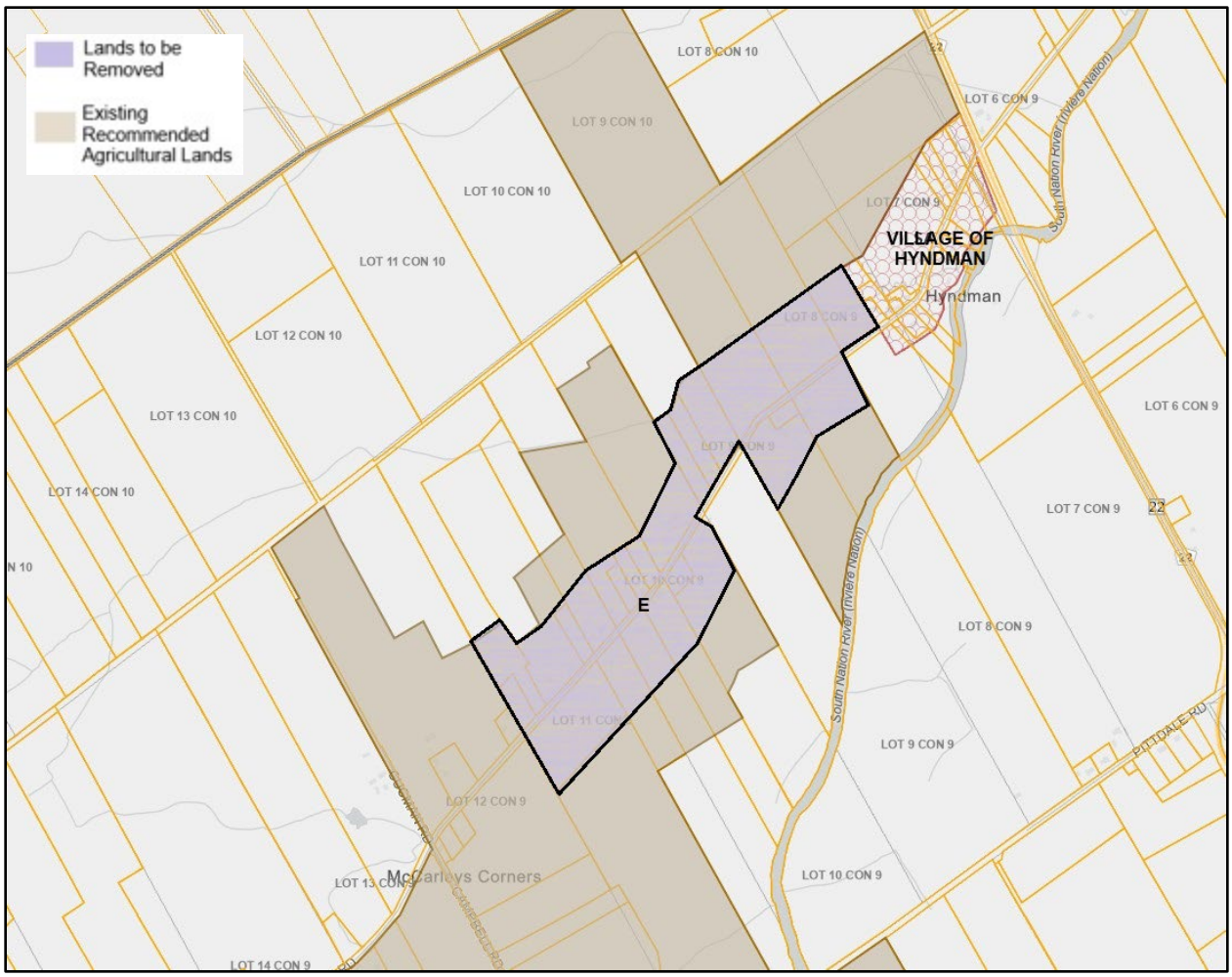


Figure 6: Proposed Changes to Key Area 2, Hyndman Rd

Area E: The roadway west of the Village of Hyndman is within the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping. There's been an interest in new lot creation along this portion of Hyndman Road. Providing a portion of land along either side of the road will provide owners with the flexibility and possibility for new lot creation and residential development while protecting the majority of the lands to the rear for agricultural uses.

Based on the townships review, we request that Area 'E' which is approximately a 64.9 hectare area, should be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping.

Recommendation:

The Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal requests that the following changes be applied to the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping, as per Figures 4, 5 and 6:

3. That, Area ‘C’ containing an approximate area of 71.5 hectares, be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping and remain in its existing rural designation, for future development.

4. That, Area ‘D’ containing an approximate area of 25.9 hectares, be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping and remain in its existing rural designation, for future development.

5. That, Area ‘E’ containing an approximate area of 64.9 hectares, be removed from the Recommended Agricultural Area Mapping and remain in its existing rural designation, for future development.

In Conclusion:

The township is requesting a total land area of 1,269.3 hectares to be removed from the recommended agricultural land area of 9,370.28 hectares within the Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal. The lands to be removed are not currently designated prime agricultural in the townships Official Plan.

We appreciate the work and collaboration that has taken place from all parties that have contributed to this work. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Recommended Agricultural Area mapping at this stage.

Sincerely,

Tim Fisher
Municipal Land Use Planner,
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ELIZABETHTOWN-KITLEY

January 13, 2025 Session **RES. NO. 010-25**

Moved by: E. Brayton

Seconded by: R. Smith

That Report P-25-02 Correspondence for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review be received;

And That Council direct staff to forward Report P-25-02 and minutes from the January 13, 2025, Council meeting to the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

☑ Carried
☐ Lost
☐ Tabled

Brant Burrow, Mayor

TOWNSHIP OF
Elizabethtown-Kitley

STAFF REPORT
Department: Planning

Report Number: P-25-02
Date: 2025-01-13

To: **Mayor Burrow and Members of Council**
From: **Michael Czarny, Planner**

Subject: **Correspondence for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report P-25-02 Correspondence for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review be received;

AND THAT Council direct staff to forward Report P-25-02 and minutes from the January 13, 2025, Council meeting to the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

BACKGROUND

Two years ago, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG) embarked on a review of agricultural lands through their Agricultural Area Review (AAR) to determine if there are any additional prime agricultural lands that should be included in the Agricultural designation of the County Official Plan. The UCLG are on stage 3 of their AAR which includes revisions to their draft mapping and report.

The Counties Planning Advisory Committee on November 6, 2024 recommended allowing more time to validate the consultant's recommended Agricultural Area mapping in the context of local goals and considerations and that Counties staff re-consult with local municipalities to identify any or ensure there are no land areas of concern for addition or removal from the proposed Agricultural Area designation.

As a result, the UCLG are requesting that municipal staff work with their Mayor and Council on the final recommended mapping and advise of any land areas that your municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered. UCLG recognize and appreciate that some local municipalities have already reviewed the mapping in detail and provided their recommendations to the Counties.

If there are areas desired for reconsideration and review, the UCLG request that municipalities provide a general rationale for the land area's inclusion or exclusion. The UCLG is asking for input by January 15, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Previous Comments from Council Members

- Critique of LEAR tool which led to more lands redesignated to Agriculture than appeared to be appropriate.
- Members of Council have not received many inquiries from the public.

Comments summarized from Correspondence with Mark Wales

Mark Wales is part of the Technical Advisory Group for the AAR as a representative of the Leeds Federation of Agriculture. Mark did not identify any specific areas in the Township for reconsideration but provided the following comments about his experience in the process:

- Interests of the farming community were not consistent, some residents wanted options for future severances through the Rural designation while others opposed land division and wanted Agricultural designation for protection from land division and development regardless of soil class.
- The remapping process is not completely accurate due to working from old, inaccurate maps, limited ground truthing, budget constraints and variable public opinion resulting in properties designated to Agriculture when they should not be.
- Landowners in the Township had plenty of opportunities to provide and receive input through the process leading to a satisfactory result despite some inaccuracies.
- Compared to other nearby Townships, Elizabethtown-Kitley did not have large amounts of land change classification. Other Townships have problems as much of their land area identified for future development could now be undevelopable.

Comments from Staff

Draft maps showing the first round of proposed changes from AAR were made available at the Township office and staff fielded several inquiries. Staff explained the implications of these changes regarding Township regulations and advised the public to connect with the UCLG directly with comments. Most inquiries were regarding severance capability.

Due to the concern with the proposal, the County Planning Advisory Committee asked County staff to directly notify every landowner in the County affected by a change in land use designation as a result of the review. Once the direct notice to ratepayers went out, we received several further inquiries and again directed them to the County for review of specific properties. Overall, staff did not field many inquiries and there was not much negative feedback in the Township. Staff do not have any areas identified that require reconsideration.

Discussion will be included in the minutes from this meeting which will be sent to the UCLG along with this report.

It is important to note that recommendations from the AAR will be implemented through an amendment to the UCLG Official Plan. This will require public meetings and public notification before the amendment is considered by UCLG's Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nonapplicable at this time.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This initiative is linked to Priority One – Governance and Organizational Management, Customer Service Initiative 1, being Increase trust and transparency, improve approachability, and provide responsive follow-ups.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Mark Wales – representative for Leeds Federation of Agriculture on the Technical Advisory Group for the AAR.

Attachments:

- Notice dated November 18, 2024 – United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
- Data Tables for lands within Elizabethtown-Kitley

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

Public Works Division
Consent Granting Authority
Forestry
Planning
Roads

25 Central Ave. W., Suite 100
Brockville, ON K6V 4N6
T 613-342-3840
800-770-2170
TTY 800-539-8685
F 613-342-3069
www.leedsgrenville.com

November 18, 2024

Via email only (rnolan@ektwp.ca)

Mr. Robert Nolan, C.A.O./Clerk
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
6544 New Dublin Road, R.R. No. 2
Addison, ON K0E 1A0

RE: Agricultural Area Review – Mapping Review
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
Our File: D23-2022-01 – Agricultural Area Review

Dear Mr. Nolan:

As you are probably aware over the last few months, Counties Council have been contemplating options for moving forward with respect to the Agricultural Area Review. In considering Council's position, the Counties Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on November 6th recommended allowing more time to validate the consultant's recommended Agricultural Area mapping in the context of local goals and considerations. It is understood that PAC would like Counties staff to re-consult with local municipalities to identify any, or ensure there are no, land areas of concern for addition or removal from the proposed Agricultural Area designation.

As a result, we are requesting that municipal staff work with their Mayor and Council on the final recommended mapping and advise of any land areas that your municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered. We recognize and appreciate that some local municipalities have already reviewed the mapping in great detail and provided their recommendations to the Counties.

If there are areas desired for reconsideration and review, please provide a general rationale for the land area's inclusion or exclusion.

We would appreciate input prior to January 15th, 2025. We have been asked to report back to Counties PAC on the consultation results so we appreciate hearing from you even if it is to confirm the recommended mapping for your municipality. If this date poses a challenge, please let us know.

The interactive mapping of the consultant's recommended agricultural area designation layer is available at Agriculture Area Review. PDF documents of the consultant's recommended agricultural area designation layer, by County and by municipality, can be found at www.leedsgrenville.com/agriculture.

If you would like a large printed version of mapping for your municipality, please reach out and we can arrange to have it provided.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request. If we can assist you in any way or be a resource to you in this process, please let me know.

Yours truly,

Cherie Mills

Cherie Mills, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP
Manager of Planning Services

c. Jim Hutton, Planner, Via Email Only (jhutton@ektwp.ca)

Lands within Elizabethtown-Kitley

	Area in Hectares	Area in Acres	Percentage of lands in Township
Existing Agricultural Lands County Official Plan	6,326.5 ha	15,633.1 acres	11%
Proposed Agricultural Lands County Official Plan	8,827.8 ha	21,814.0 acres	15.3%

Mail Notification to Landowners in Elizabethtown-Kitley

Land Designation Change	# of people notified
Agricultural to Rural	121
Rural to Agricultural	219
Total	**340**

Councillor Smith requested to ask the applicant, who was in attendance a question however as per Procedural By-law 22-44, the majority of Council needed to support this and Council was not in favour to include the applicant in the discussion.

RES. NO. 009-25

Moved by: H. Oosterhof
Seconded by: R. Smith
That Report A-25-02 Request to Waive Planning Fees be received;

And That Council deny the request to waive fees for a Zoning By-law Amendment application.
DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

P-25-02 Correspondence for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review

Planner, Michael Czarny

Staff provided direction to include Council's comments with their correspondence to the Counties.

Council's comments included such items as:

- surprised more comments had not been received from residents considering the comments received personally
- the rationale used to identify 'new' agricultural land is not understood and compared it to making something out of nothing
- Confused on how combining lower class agricultural land (such as 2, 3, and 4) makes class 1 agricultural land
- frustration with the difficulty experienced by individual councillors when trying to talk and question those associated with the Counties Agricultural Area review

RES. NO. 010-25

Moved by: E. Brayton
Seconded by: R. Smith
That Report P-25-02 Correspondence for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review be received;

And That Council direct staff to forward Report P-25-02 and minutes from the January 13, 2025, Council meeting to the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.
DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

P-25-03 Proposed Amendment to By-law 13-21 to lift H-holding Symbol

Planner, Jim Hutton

RES. NO. 011-25

Moved by: R. Smith
Seconded by: E. Renaud
That Report P-25-03 be received.
DISPOSITION: Motion Carried

PW-25-01 Kitley Line 9 Bridge Replacement Design Update

Public Works Technical & Compliance Advisor, Royal Metcalfe

Staff confirmed that realistically we are potentially looking at a fall start and we could see the road closed for at least a week, but no schedule has been set yet. Staff noted proper notice would be given prior to any construction and/or closures.

RES. NO. 012-25

Moved by: E. Brayton
Seconded by: H. Oosterhof
That staff report PW-25-01 Kitley Line 9 Bridge Replacement Design Update be received for information.

Mills, Cherie

From: Jennifer Ault <jault@frontofyonge.com>
Sent: January 7, 2025 3:50 PM
To: Mills, Cherie
Subject: RE: Counties Agricultural Area Review - Request for Local Municipal Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Cherie,

Like Westport, Front of Yonge does not have any further comments.

Jennifer

Jennifer Ault, Clerk/Zoning Administrator
Township of Front of Yonge
1514 County Rd. 2, PO Box 130
Mallorytown, ON K0E 1R0
Tel: 613 923-2251
Fax: 613 923-2421
www.Mallorytown.ca

MALLORYTOWN
FRONT OF YONGE TOWNSHIP

From: Mills, Cherie <Cherie.Mills@uclg.on.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:15 PM
To: athens <athens@myhighspeed.ca>; Melissa Banford <mbanford@augusta.ca>; Wendy Van Keulen <wvankeulen@twpec.ca>; Jim Hutton (jhutton@ektwp.ca) <jhutton@ektwp.ca>; Marnie Venditti <directorplanning@townshipleeds.on.ca>; Amy Martin <amartin@northgrenville.on.ca>; Foster Elliott (felliott@rideaulakes.ca) <felliott@rideaulakes.ca>; Kimberly Westgate <cao@villageofwestport.ca>; Darlene Plumley <cao@merrickville-wolford.ca>; Jennifer Ault <jault@frontofyonge.com>
Cc: 'Shannon Geraghty (sgeraghty@augusta.ca)' <sgeraghty@augusta.ca>; 'Sean Nicholson (snicholson@twpec.ca)' <snicholson@twpec.ca>; rnolan@ektwp.ca; cao@townshipleeds.on.ca; Karen Dunlop <kdunlop@northgrenville.on.ca>; Shellee Fournier (sfournier@rideaulakes.ca) <sfournier@rideaulakes.ca>; Mallory, Elaine <Elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca>;

Guy, Bill <Bill.Guy@uclg.on.ca>
Subject: RE: Counties Agricultural Area Review - Request for Local Municipal Comments

Good afternoon,

Happy New Year! Just a reminder, please see the below email that was sent out before the holidays.

Thank you to those local municipalities who have already provided their input on the proposed Counties Official Plan Agricultural Area designation mapping.

If you have not yet had a chance to respond to the below December 16, 2024 email or the November 13, 2024 letter, we recognize everyone is busy catching-up but would appreciate a response before **January 15th** so that we can include a summary in our staff report to Counties Planning Advisory Committee. Even if you have no additional comment on the proposed mapping, we would appreciate being advised of that, as we would prefer not to report that no response has been received.

As a final follow up, we will be reaching out later this week or early next week by phone, to try to touch base with any municipalities that we have not yet heard from by that time.

Thank you and if we can assist you in any way, please contact me or Elaine Mallory at elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca,

Cherie

Leeds Grenville
where lifestyle grows good business

Cherie Mills, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Planning Services
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
25 Central Ave W. Suite 100, Brockville, ON K6V 4N6
T 613-342-3840, ext. 2419 | 1-800-770-2170 | F 613-342-2101
Cherie.Mills@uclg.on.ca | www.leedsgrenville.com

From: Mills, Cherie
Sent: December 16, 2024 11:13 AM
To: Darlene Noonan (athens@myhighspeed.ca) <athens@myhighspeed.ca>; 'Melissa Banford (mbanford@augusta.ca)' <mbanford@augusta.ca>; Wendy Van Keulen (wvankeulen@twpec.ca) <wvankeulen@twpec.ca>; Jim Hutton (jhutton@ektwp.ca) <jhutton@ektwp.ca>; Marnie Venditti <directorplanning@townshipleeds.on.ca>; Amy Martin <amartin@northgrenville.on.ca>; Foster Elliott (felliott@rideaulakes.ca) <felliott@rideaulakes.ca>; Kimberly Westgate (cao@villageofwestport.ca) <cao@villageofwestport.ca>; Darlene Plumley; jault@frontofyonge.com
Cc: 'Shannon Geraghty (sgeraghty@augusta.ca)' <sgeraghty@augusta.ca>; 'Sean Nicholson (snicholson@twpec.ca)' <snicholson@twpec.ca>; rnolan@ektwp.ca; cao@townshipleeds.on.ca; Karen Dunlop <kdunlop@northgrenville.on.ca>; Shellee Fournier (sfournier@rideaulakes.ca) <sfournier@rideaulakes.ca>; 'Elaine Mallory '; 'Rick Kester (Rick.Kester@uclg.on.ca)' <Rick.Kester@uclg.on.ca>
Subject: Counties Agricultural Area Review - Request for Local Municipal Comments

Good Morning,

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Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request. If we can assist you in any way, please contact me or Elaine Mallory at elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca.

Regards,

Cherie

Leeds Grenville
where lifestyle grows good business

Cherie Mills, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Planning Services
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
25 Central Ave W. Suite 100, Brockville, ON K6V 4N6
T 613-342-3840, ext. 2419 | 1-800-770-2170 | F 613-342-2101
Cherie.Mills@uclg.on.ca | www.leedsgrenville.com

Mills, Cherie

From: Marnie Venditti <directorplanning@townshipleeds.on.ca>
Sent: December 2, 2024 12:42 PM
To: Mills, Cherie; Mallory, Elaine
Subject: Comments on Updated LEAR mapping
Attachments: Document6.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Good Afternoon Cherie and Elaine,

Last week our Mayor and I toured the areas proposed to be designed as agriculture to review the mapping that you provided. Based on our review I have attached a document that shows a number of smaller lots that are not agricultural lots that are proposed to be included in the designation. We would like to see those lots removed and left in a rural designation which will provide more flexibility for the long term use of the lot. For example the lots the front onto County Road 2 in Escott are located in a cluster area where there are a number of properties used for various uses. If someone wanted to rezone a property for a more diversified use the agricultural designation would be very limiting regarding what could be done on the lot.

Outside of this we have no concerns with the areas proposed to be added or removed.

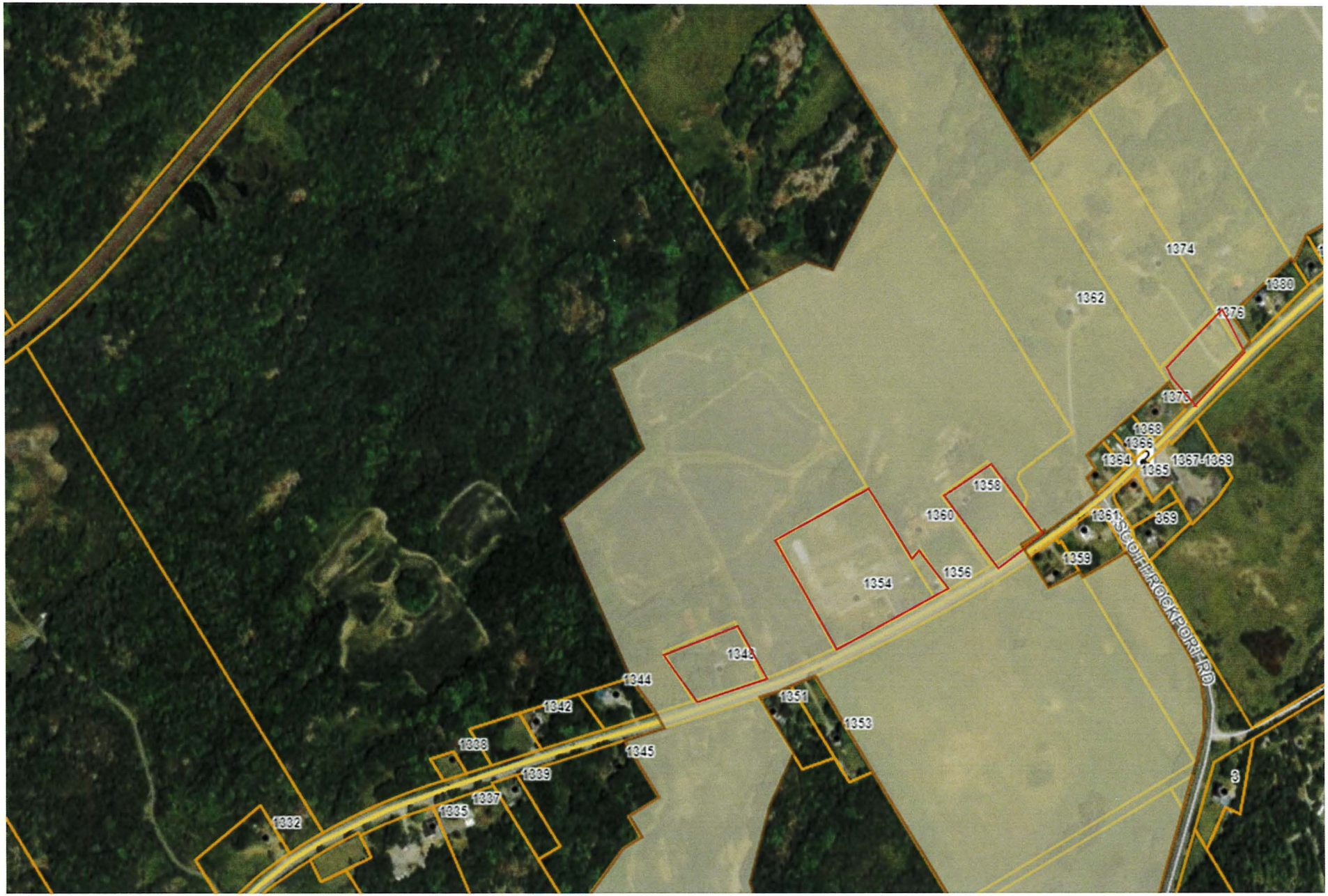
Thanks,
Marnie

Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

Marnie Venditti
Director Planning and Development
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

P.O. Box 280, 1233 Prince Street
Lansdowne, ON K0E 1L0

613.659.2415 ext. 212 or 1.866.220.2327
Fax: 613.659.3619
After Hours Emergency: 1.855.961.7018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Mills, Cherie

From: Darlene Plumley <cao@merrickville-wolford.ca>
Sent: January 7, 2025 3:51 PM
To: Mills, Cherie
Subject: RE: Counties Agricultural Area Review - Request for Local Municipal Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
Hi Cherie, I don't remember if I responded but Forbes has informed me that he was satisfied with the mapping.

From: Mills, Cherie <Cherie.Mills@uclg.on.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2025 3:15 PM
To: athens <athens@myhighspeed.ca>; Melissa Banford <mbanford@augusta.ca>; Wendy Van Keulen <wvankeulen@twpec.ca>; Jim Hutton (jhutton@ektwp.ca) <jhutton@ektwp.ca>; Marnie Venditti <directorplanning@townshipleeds.on.ca>; Amy Martin <amartin@northgrenville.on.ca>; Foster Elliott (felliott@rideaulakes.ca) <felliott@rideaulakes.ca>; Kimberly Westgate <cao@villageofwestport.ca>; Darlene Plumley <cao@merrickville-wolford.ca>; Jennifer Ault <jault@frontofyonge.com>
Cc: 'Shannon Geraghty (sgeraghty@augusta.ca)' <sgeraghty@augusta.ca>; 'Sean Nicholson (snicholson@twpec.ca)' <snicholson@twpec.ca>; rnolan@ektwp.ca; cao@townshipleeds.on.ca; Karen Dunlop <kdunlop@northgrenville.on.ca>; Shellee Fournier (sfournier@rideaulakes.ca) <sfournier@rideaulakes.ca>; Mallory, Elaine <Elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca>; Guy, Bill <Bill.Guy@uclg.on.ca>
Subject: RE: Counties Agricultural Area Review - Request for Local Municipal Comments

Good afternoon,

Happy New Year! Just a reminder, please see the below email that was sent out before the holidays.

Thank you to those local municipalities who have already provided their input on the proposed Counties Official Plan Agricultural Area designation mapping.

If you have not yet had a chance to respond to the below December 16, 2024 email or the November 13, 2024 letter, we recognize everyone is busy catching-up but would appreciate a response before **January 15th** so that we can include a summary in our staff report to Counties Planning Advisory Committee. Even if you have no additional comment on the proposed mapping, we would appreciate being advised of that, as we would prefer not to report that no response has been received.

As a final follow up, we will be reaching out later this week or early next week by phone, to try to touch base with any municipalities that we have not yet heard from by that time.

Thank you and if we can assist you in any way, please contact me or Elaine Mallory at elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca,

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From: Mills, Cherie
Sent: December 16, 2024 11:13 AM
To: Darlene Noonan (athens@myhighspeed.ca) <athens@myhighspeed.ca>; 'Melissa Banford (mbanford@augusta.ca)' <mbanford@augusta.ca>; Wendy Van Keulen (wvankeulen@twpec.ca) <wvankeulen@twpec.ca>; Jim Hutton (jhutton@ektwp.ca) <jhutton@ektwp.ca>; Marnie Venditti <directorplanning@townshipleeds.on.ca>; Amy Martin <amartin@northgrenville.on.ca>; Foster Elliott (felliott@rideaulakes.ca) <felliott@rideaulakes.ca>; Kimberly Westgate (cao@villageofwestport.ca) <cao@villageofwestport.ca>; Darlene Plumley; jault@frontofyonge.com
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We are asking that municipal staff work with their Mayor and/or Council on the final recommended mapping and advise of any land areas that your municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered.

We appreciate that some municipalities have already responded to our request and provided input - you do not need to do anything further.

As mentioned previously, we would appreciate input **prior to January 15th, 2025**. We have been asked to report back to Counties PAC on the consultation results with each local municipality so we appreciate hearing from you even if it is to confirm the recommended mapping for your municipality or advise of no further comment.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request. If we can assist you in any way, please contact me or Elaine Mallory at elaine.Mallory@uclg.on.ca.

Regards,

Cherie

Rideau Lakes

TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Planning Advisory and Committee of Adjustment

RESOLUTION 143-2024
Title: Manager's Report
Date: Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Moved by Ron Pollard
Seconded by Arie Hoogenboom

That the Planning Advisory and Committee of Adjustment recommends to the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Rideau Lakes that staff have identified one area that should be removed from the proposed agricultural designation. This area was previously subject to an approved zoning by-law amendment to permit a multiple dwelling (6-plex) along Sunnyside Road in the Ward of North Crosby-Newboro identified as 276 Sunnyside Road which staff believe is not appropriate to be located within the agricultural designation.

AND FURTHER that this change be sent to the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville for updating.

Carried **Recorded** **Defeated**

Joan Delaney, Chair

Mills, Cherie

From: Kimberly Westgate <cao@villageofwestport.ca>
Sent: January 7, 2025 3:27 PM
To: Mills, Cherie; athens; Melissa Banford; Wendy Van Keulen; Jim Hutton (jhutton@ektwp.ca); Marnie Venditti; Amy Martin; Foster Elliott (felliott@rideaulakes.ca); Darlene Plumley; Jennifer Ault
Cc: 'Shannon Geraghty (sgeraghty@augusta.ca)'; 'Sean Nicholson (snicholson@twpec.ca)'; rnolan@ektwp.ca; cao@townshipleeds.on.ca; Karen Dunlop; Shellee Fournier (sfournier@rideaulakes.ca); Mallory, Elaine; Guy, Bill
Subject: RE: Counties Agricultural Area Review - Request for Local Municipal Comments

Hi Cherie,

The Village does not have any further comments on this review.

Thanks,

Kimberly Westgate, Dipl. M.A
CAO/Clerk
Village of Westport
cao@villageofwestport.ca
Tel: 613-273-2191
Fax: 613-273-3460
www.villageofwestport.ca

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Sent: January 7, 2025 3:15 PM
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NOVEMBER 6, 2024

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORT NO. PAC-004-2024

OPTIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL MAPPING USING AN ADJUSTED PLANNING METHODOLOGY

CHERIE MILLS
MANAGER OF PLANNING SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the Planning Advisory Committee recommends a transfer of $80,000 from the Legal/Planning Reserve to retain a consultant to undertake sensitivity testing of some variables used in the methodology for preparing agricultural mapping, as outlined in Report No. PAC-004-2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funds to undertake sensitivity testing of some variables used in the methodology for preparing agricultural mapping is not currently allocated in the Planning Department 2024 budget. There is $15,000 remaining in the agricultural study budget which could be allocated to the sensitivity testing of some variables used in the methodology for preparing agricultural mapping. The Planning Reserve which is currently at $348,873 can be used to fund the review.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Counties Official Plan have land use planning policies encouraging the minimization of negative impacts of climate change. Preparing for the impacts of a changing climate includes maintaining agricultural lands, which are a non-renewable resource, and encouraging opportunities to support local food, and promoting the sustainability of agri-food and agri-product businesses by protecting agricultural resources, minimizing land use conflicts, and supporting on-farm diversified uses.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This report can be provided in alternative accessible formats on request. Under the *Planning Act*, accessibility is a provincial interest that the Counties shall have regard to for all facilities, services and matters to which the Act applies.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been posted on-line as part of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) agenda. There is a dedicated study webpage on the Counties' website that is kept up-to-date and there has been a continuing comprehensive consultation program for the Agricultural Area Review. As per the Council resolution of June 20, 2024, the current consultation process was closed on June 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND

On June 5, 2024, the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) considered a report on staff recommended next steps for the Agricultural Area Review and recommended the following resolution which was endorsed by Counties Council on June 20, 2024:

> **THAT Report No. PAC-003-2024: Agricultural Area Review – Recommended Next Steps, be deferred: and,**
> **THAT staff be directed to identify options for agricultural mapping using an adjusted planning methodology for comparative purposes and report to the Planning Advisory Committee by October 2024; and**
> **THAT the current Agricultural Area Review consultation process and the contract of the current consultant be closed.**

The purpose of this report is to advise PAC on the potential options for an adjusted planning methodology for agricultural mapping and the next steps that staff are proposing to address the above resolution.

DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES

The Provincial Policy Statement sets out that Planning authorities shall designate prime agricultural areas in accordance with guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time. The policy added to the Counties Official Plan by MMAH at the time of approval required that a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or

equivalent study be undertaken to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the next review of this Plan under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* (10-year review in 2026).

In consultation with MMAH and OMAFRA, the LEAR method was chosen as the preferred method to be undertaken as specified in the Provincial "Guide to the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) System for Agriculture". This 32-page document serves as the guideline for the consultants in carrying out the LEAR methodology.

The Ministry website describes two methodologies for developing mapping but the LEAR is the preferred approach by the Ministry. LEAR has become the methodology of choice because of the highly integrated GIS information/analysis and its more scientific-based approach. The Agricultural Area Review was undertaken as more of a "modified" LEAR due to review/refinements that were undertaken along the edges of the proposed Agricultural Area designation.

Council has identified their concerns with the draft agricultural area mapping as relating to the methodology and the variables or factors used during development of the LEAR mapping. Therefore, a tabletop approach is a way to complete sensitivity testing of the mapping by changing some of the mapping variables, to test for how changes to specified variables could impact the mapping. By demonstrating the impacts of changing the variables or options through several scenarios, Council will be able to compare the scenarios to each other and the existing mapping that has been completed.

Undertaking a peer review of the existing agricultural work was discussed by the Committee and captured in the PAC minutes, and subsequently following the June Council meeting, staff contacted three consultants with agricultural expertise to gauge their interest in undertaking a peer review of the agricultural area work completed to date. Two firms were not interested in undertaking the work and one firm did not respond back after repeated contact.

The final draft report with proposed mapping was provided to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (formerly OMAFRA) and they provided a letter of review and support for the work undertaken, particularly for the amount of public consultation undertaken to date, which is attached as Attachment 1.

Using the LEAR methodology, the Committee may recall that lands across the Counties were initially assessed using a grid of 40-hectare (100 acre) blocks. The evaluation

criteria used included the soil quality (60%), lands in agricultural production (30%) and the amount of fragmentation (impacts by residential development) (10%). In order to be considered an "agricultural area" (as per the province's guideline for conducting LEAR studies) a contiguous area of 250 hectares (618 acres) must be achieved. A scoring threshold for the LEAR scores was chosen at 60% initially but at the end of the refinements was noted by the consultant to be closer to 70%.

Staff identified Options

Based on the discussions of Committee and Council and reflected in the minutes, the most significant concerns with the methodology appear to relate to the initial evaluation area block size and the chosen threshold for scoring. It is suggested that the sensitivity testing initially focus on these two variables. Specifically, the variables or options for sensitivity testing would include:

1. Modifying the evaluation unit size from 40 hectare (100 acre) blocks to 20 hectare (50 acre) blocks and undertaking LEAR scoring; and,
2. Adjusting the threshold of LEAR scoring from an initial 60% to 65%, 70% and 75% (all unrefined without public consultation).

Undertaking the first option is costly as it is starting at the beginning of the process with evaluation unit definition and would be doubling the number of evaluation units from approximately 9,000 to 18,000. The evaluation unit size would impact all the other options.

There are other mapping variables or options that could be considered for sensitivity testing including:

1. Changing the Land Evaluation weighting score – currently relies on soil classification and Ministry weighting recommendations;
2. Changing the Land Area Review factors – currently with Fragmentation and Agricultural Lands in Production;
3. Changing the Area Review factor weighting - Fragmentation is currently at 10% and Agricultural Lands in Production is currently at 30%;
4. Altering the LEAR factor weighting - Land Evaluation is currently at 60% and Area Review is currently at 40%.

Staff are proposing that the consultant who is undertaking the sensitivity testing for agricultural mapping could, as part of the RFP submission, comment on the other

mapping variables and confirm one or two additional sensitivity tests that could be undertaken using the above 4 mapping options.

Once the sensitivity testing is complete, the mapping scenarios will be reviewed and compared and potentially a preferred mapping scenario endorsed by Committee/Council.

Following this, the consultant will review the existing Counties Official Plan, the staff proposed OPA wording and recommend to Council draft policy wording to implement the preferred mapping scenario.

Request for Proposal

An RFP will be issued in November 2024, to implement this report, if Committee determines that proceeding with the tabletop approach to undertake variable sensitivity testing is an acceptable method to address their agricultural mapping methodology concerns.

The RFP will be looking for a planner with expertise in LEAR methodology, agricultural planning policy and GIS expertise to bid on undertaking the variable sensitivity testing and policy review to be completed within the next few months. It is expected that the consulting team will provide a written report of their process and results. As well, the consultant will make at least two presentations to the Committee, to present the draft sensitivity testing mapping results, provide an overview of the justification for their chosen options and discuss a preferred scenario. The second presentation will be to present and discuss any potential policy changes to the Counties Official Plan. Any public consultation or public meetings would be additional items to the contract depending on the direction of Council.

Prior to starting the sensitivity testing of the mapping, in order to address some of the concerns of members of County Council, the consultant would request to meet with any members of Counties Council that wish to discuss their underlying concerns with the existing LEAR mapping as it relates to agricultural protection and community development. These meetings would be a self-selected option by the members of Counties Council that have an interest in meeting with the consulting team.

Anticipated Cost and Timing

Staff estimate the costing to undertake the above RFP, based on the costing of previous work and discussions with technical staff, to be approximately $80,000 to $95,000. This costing does not cover any public consultation or public meetings. Staff also estimate

that the work will take 4 to 6 months given that the consulting team will be reporting twice to PAC.

As directed in the third clause of the resolution, staff closed off this phase of the consultation as of June 30, 2024 and completed the initial consultant's Agricultural Area Review report so that it may be provided to any consultant chosen to undertake the variable sensitivity testing and policy review.

Staff wish to advise the Committee of potential risks with undertaking new agricultural mapping. There could be hundreds of residents that provided input into the earlier process that may have their property's Official Plan designation proposed to be changed again. As well, with new agricultural mapping, all the refinements and public input into the initial mapping will be lost. Staff are aware of some landowners who are waiting for the completion of the study and the redesignation of their lands. This approach does have the risk of adding time, money and staff resources to the study process. Further, if there is added public consultation on the new agricultural mapping, the timing of it will likely overlap into the 2026 Official Plan review.

As requested by a Committee member on June 5, 2024 at the PAC meeting, staff have also included an attachment to this report setting out the summary of proposed Agricultural Area changes by each Municipality so that Committee members can see the amount of change from the existing Agricultural Area to the initial consultant's recommended Agricultural Area designation. Other responses to outstanding Committee questions and commonly received community input have been included in previous reports and in a "Frequently asked Questions" attachment in the deferred June 5, 2024 report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness letter
Attachment 2 - Summary of Proposed Agricultural Area Changes by Municipality
Attachment 3 – June 5, 2024 -Agricultural Area Review – Recommended Next Steps (Report Deferred)

The report set out above has been reviewed and the information verified by the individuals listed below.

CHERIE MILLS	**OCTOBER 9, 2024**
MANAGER, PLANNING SERVICES	**DATE**
RICK KESTER	**OCTOBER 11, 2024**
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS	**DATE**
PAT HUFFMAN	**OCTOBER 21, 2024**
TREASURER	**DATE**
ALISON TUTAK	**OCTOBER 28, 2024**
INTERIM CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	**DATE**

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness

2nd Floor
1 Stone Road West
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
Tel: 519-826-4151

Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroalimentaire

2e étage
1, rue Stone ouest
Guelph (Ontario) N1G 4Y2
Tél. : 519-826-4151

Food Safety and Environmental Policy Branch
Land Use Policy and Stewardship Unit

Date: September 4, 2024
To: Cherie Mills (UCLG)
From: Ken Mott (OMAFA)
c.c.: Elaine Mallory (UCLG)

Re: LEAR Study – United Counties of Leeds & Grenville

Hello Cherie and Elaine,

As your work continues, I just wanted to take a moment to congratulate you on the work your department has done to date to help identify Prime Agricultural Areas in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

Working with your staff and the Advisory Committee since 2022 I have seen the hard work and effort put into undertaking the land evaluation process for the County. The Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) study implemented by the County can be a challenging and time-consuming process to implement, but it provides a quantitative method to evaluate the relative importance of lands for agriculture based on the land's characteristics and other factors affecting agricultural potential. This methodology has been used successfully in a number of other regions in Ontario. The findings should help protect the County's agricultural land base and will inform the County's landuse planning decisions going forward. I have been particularly impressed by the amount of public consultation done in this project.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this project further, please feel free to contact this office at the number indicated below.

Sincerely,
Ken Mott
Ken Mott
Rural Planner, OMAFA
(613) 290-9112
Ken.mott@ontario.ca

Summary of Proposed Agricultural Area Changes by Municipality

	Land Area by Hectare	Existing Agricultural Area in OP		Final Recommended Agricultural Area		Difference
		Hectares	Percent of Total Land Area in Municipality	Hectare	Percent of Total Land Area in Municipality	
Athens	14,182.6	1,603.8	11.3%	2,424.1	17.1%	5.8%
Augusta	32,634.0	3,355.2	10.3%	5,876.9	18.0%	7.7%
Edwardsburgh Cardinal	32,221.7	7,070.6	21.9%	9,403.5	29.2%	7.2%
Elizabethtown-Kitley	57,696.6	6,326.5	11.0%	8,827.8	15.3%	4.3%
Front of Yonge	15,668.4	-	0.0%	659.3	4.2%	4.2%
Leeds and the 1000 Islands	73,456.4	7,588.0	10.3%	10,655.3	14.5%	4.2%
Merrickville-Wolford	22,695.2	3,791.9	16.7%	3,787.6	16.7%	0.0%
North Grenville	35,835.6	10,336.6	28.8%	11,264.6	31.4%	2.6%
Rideau Lakes	86,385.0	2,597.2	3.0%	7,871.8	9.1%	6.1%
Counties	**370,775.5**	**42,669.8**	**11.5%***	**60,770.9**	**16.4%***	**4.9%***

* The overall Counties percentages are based on the main dataset. To average the percentage by municipality, a weighted calculation would be required.

JUNE 5, 2024

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORT NO. PAC-003-2024

AGRICULTURAL AREA REVIEW – RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

CHERIE MILLS
MANAGER OF PLANNING SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the Planning Advisory Committee recommends that staff be directed to close the public consultation period on June 30th and finalize the Agricultural Area Review Report and Draft Official Plan Amendment; and,

THAT staff undertake the circulation of and advertising for the Official Plan Amendment Public Meeting to be held in September 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If the Official Plan Amendment is approved and appealed then there will likely be legal and planning consulting costs associated with the Counties participating in any Ontario Land Tribunal process.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Counties Official Plan have land use planning policies encouraging the minimization of negative impacts of climate change. Preparing for the impacts of a changing climate includes maintaining agricultural lands, which are a non-renewable resource, and encouraging opportunities to support local food, and promoting the sustainability of agri-food and agri-product businesses by protecting agricultural resources, minimizing land use conflicts, and supporting on-farm diversified uses.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This report can be provided in alternative accessible formats on request. Under the *Planning Act*, accessibility is a provincial interest that the Counties shall have regard to for all facilities, services and matters to which the Act applies.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been posted on-line as part of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) agenda. There is a dedicated study webpage on the Counties' website that is kept up-to-date and there has been a continuing comprehensive consultation program for the Agricultural Area Review. Should the Official Plan Amendment implementing the study proceed, it will be advertised according to/exceeding the regulations of the *Planning Act*.

BACKGROUND

As part of the approval of the Counties Official Plan (COP), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing added a policy to require a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the next review of the COP, expected in 2026.

In 2022, the Agricultural Area Review (AAR), was initiated using a LEAR methodology, to identify, preserve and protect the best agricultural lands across the Counties for future generations. The study product is a consultant's report, an Official Plan Amendment including a map of the recommended Agricultural Area designation and implementing policies.

The AAR has been undertaken using a three-stage process. Stage 1 was the Project Introduction and Stage 2 was the Technical Analysis. The study is near the end of Stage 3 - Recommended System whereby the map refinements from additional public consultation feedback have been incorporated onto the maps (dated March 15, 2024) on the Counties' website. The technical analysis (LEAR) resulted in an increase in the Agricultural Area designation from 12% to 24% (prior to refinements). Following refinements, 16% of lands in the Counties are proposed to be designated as Agricultural Area. Any further comments received from March 15 onward resulting in refinements will be reflected in the final mapping and reported to PAC.

The purpose of this report is to provide PAC with some general and background information on Official Plans and the Draft Official Plan Amendment to assist PAC in their discussion of the potential options and next steps towards concluding the AAR.

DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES

On February 7, 2024, a staff report discussed the additional public consultation undertaken at the request of Counties Council. As follow up to the PAC meeting, staff updated the study webpage to indicate comments would continue to be accepted, a media release was issued and all stakeholders were advised of the continued public consultation. Since the last map updates on March 15, 2024 and the press release in early April, there have been 5 new inquiries from the public. Three of the inquiries were in support of the study and did not request map changes and two of the inquiries were reviewed in detail using the refinement criteria and will result in map changes.

The following provides some general information and background on Official Plans and the Draft Official Plan Amendment to assist the Committee in consideration of the options and next steps to conclude the study. Some of the frequently asked questions by the Committee are summarized in Attachment 1, as many of these issues have been discussed in previous staff reports.

Official Plan - Policies and Land Use Schedules

The Counties Official Plan (COP) is made up of policy text, multiple schedules and appendices. The Schedule A – Community Structure and Land Use map is the main schedule in the COP, it sets out the framework or structure for land uses across the Counties. It contains land use designations such as settlement areas, provincially significant wetlands, agricultural areas, rural lands, and regionally and locally significant employment areas. All lands across the Counties are covered by one of these designations. There are policies for each land use designation setting out the designation's objectives, permitted uses and land use policies.

There are other schedules in the COP that identify development constraints and other information such as mineral and mineral aggregate resources (sand and gravel), natural heritage features (wetlands, valleylands, wildlife habitat), natural and human-made hazards (waste disposal, unstable soils) and transportation (roads). These schedules contain information, overlays of information and screening maps and are related to Official Plan policies. These policies will need to be considered along with the policies of the land use designation found on Schedule A.

When, for example, aggregate resources or unstable soils appear on an OP schedule, it does not mean that the lands cannot be developed. Instead, the applicable polices should be referenced, as a study or specialized review may need to be undertaken prior to considering development. These studies may provide recommendations or mitigation measures in order for development to occur or limit or prohibit development.

Planning Policy Hierarchy

Under the Provincial Policy Statement, and reflected in the Counties and local official plans, there is a policy hierarchy. For example, in the Agricultural Area designation (prime agricultural areas), mineral aggregate extraction is permitted as an interim use provided that the site will be rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition. Lands in and adjacent to natural heritage systems (wetlands, valleylands, wildlife habitat) can continue to be used for agricultural purposes unless a planning application is triggered or conservation permits for development or site alteration are needed.

In terms of wetlands, they are all are not treated the same in policy. Provincially Significant Wetlands are subject to more stringent policies than are locally significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands. From the Schedules, if there are multiple layers of information/designations such as natural heritage systems and an agricultural layer, properties are subject to both sets of applicable policies.

Official Plan Update

Under section 26 of the *Planning Act*, municipalities with a new Official Plan shall revise the Plan no less frequently than every 10 years initially and every five years after that, unless the Plan has been replaced by a new OP. The *Planning Act* sets out that as part of the review, the Official Plan will need to:

- be reviewed to ensure it conforms with provincial plans (none impact the Counties);
- have regard to matters of provincial interest (such as protection of natural areas and agricultural resources); and,
- be consistent with the policy statements (such as the Provincial Policy Statement).

The Official Plan Update is also an opportunity to ensure the Official Plan continues to address the Counties' vision, priorities and changing community needs. As part of the COP Update, an extensive consultation program will be undertaken. The Counties Official Plan was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2016, therefore the Counties' review is due in 2026.

Draft Official Plan Amendment

The implementation of studies, such as the AAR, often result in an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) that has both schedule changes and amended policies. For the AAR, through the OPA, the existing Agricultural Area designation will be replaced with an updated Agricultural Area designation on Schedule A – Community Structure and Land Use. The percentage of lands in the Agricultural Area designation, following the map refinements, will be increasing from 12% to 16% of total lands in the Counties.

The implementing Draft OPA for the study, attached to the staff report of February 7, 2024, has been added to this report as Attachment 2. It should be noted that this Draft OPA has not yet had a formal circulation. Generally, it is the wording of the policies that establish the intent (purpose) of the designation, what can be done within a designation (including the permitted uses) and the land use policies to apply to lands in the designation. Specifically, the AAR Draft OPA will:

- update the general intent, objectives and policies of the Agricultural Area designation in the COP to recognize the required agricultural study has been completed;
- clarify additional residential units are a permitted use in the designation; and,
- update the policies to provide guidance on what landowners will need to do in order to adjust and interpret the Agricultural Area designation boundary.

The Draft OPA has built-in flexibility to accommodate anomalies and permits the Agricultural Area designation boundary to be refined in a minor manner without a COP amendment, however, it must be supported by an opinion from a qualified professional that the removal is minor, in accordance with the study refinement principles and that it won't compromise the integrity of the surrounding Agricultural Area.

Options for Concluding the AAR

OPA Approach

Provincial direction is that this study be completed before the County Official Plan Update in 2026. In order to meet this timing and initiate work on the Growth Management Strategy, the option that staff suggest to the Committee to move the study is forward is to close the public consultation period as of June 30th and finalize the study report and the Draft OPA. Staff would then circulate and advertise the Official Plan Amendment Public Meeting to be held in September 2024 (tentatively).

Staff recommend undertaking an OPA to the current Official Plan to implement the AAR due to the following:

- approval of the OPA can be done by Counties Council;
- the mapping reflects the extensive public, local municipal and agency consultation;
- the mapping of the Agricultural Area designation represents the recommendation of a qualified agricultural expert, who can defend the study OPA, if it is appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal;
- there were many opportunities for focused public consultation for impacted residents;
- the mapping refinements along the edges of the Agricultural Area designation and the local knowledge applied to the mapping represents consultation with thousands of residents and individual discussions with hundreds of residents;
- preparation of the Agricultural Area designation has considered other land uses such as wetlands, settlement areas and employment areas;
- OPs are not static documents and they can be changed at any time, if needed; and,
- the policies in the Draft OPA include flexibility for further Agricultural Area designation boundary refinements for specific properties with the support of a qualified professional and without a Counties Official Plan Amendment.

OP Update Approach

Another option that could be considered to conclude the study is to defer the AAR and undertake the Agricultural Area designation review as part of the OP Update, although this does not meet the Province's COP policy and timing. Staff offer the following comments regarding this option:

- approval of the 10-year update, under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, will be done by MMAH;
- Ministry mapping and policies may be provided and required for use by the Province;
- there is no appeal to the MMAH OP decision;
- all the refinements and added local information from public consultation on the study would be lost if the Ministry mapping is used;
- there is no mechanism to obligate the Ministry to conduct local consultation similar to the extensive consultation the Counties have already undertaken;

- the Agricultural Area designation will be one of many topics to be addressed in the OP Update and it may not receive priority; and,
- the policies approved by the Ministry may not be flexible enough to easily accommodate changes to the designation.

Next Steps

If the staff recommendation is supported by PAC and Council, staff will close the public consultation period on June 30th; have the AAR Report and Draft Official Plan Amendment finalized for the public meeting; and, undertake the circulation of and advertising for the Official Plan Amendment Public Meeting to be held tentatively in September 2024. In accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*, a notice of the statutory public meeting for the Draft OPA will be advertised and both the notice and Draft OPA will be made widely available.

If PAC and Council recommend deferral of the AAR, then the Agricultural Area designation review will need to be undertaken as part of the OP Update. If this is the preferred direction, then staff suggest that the public consultation period be closed and that the draft report and Draft OPA be completed to end the consultant's contract. All of the study information will be considered by staff as input into the OP Update, unless the Province requires the use of Ministry mapping and policies. As there are residents interested in the study, staff would need to contact the stakeholder list and update the website to reflect that the study has been deferred and that the information will likely be considered as part of the OP Update in 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Frequently asked Questions by the Committee
Attachment 2 – Draft Official Plan Amendment (February 7, 2024)

The report set out above has been reviewed and the information verified by the individuals listed below.

CHERIE MILLS	**MAY 17, 2024**
MANAGER, PLANNING SERVICES	**DATE**
RICK KESTER	**MAY 23, 2024**
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS	**DATE**
ALISON TUTAK	**MAY 28, 2024**
DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/CSS DIRECTOR	**DATE**

Attachment 1 – Frequently Asked Questions by the Committee

How much land is being added to the Agricultural Area designation?
According to the consultant's calculations, the existing Counties Official Plan Agricultural Area designation is 12% of the total lands in the Counties. When the LEAR was initially undertaken at a 60% threshold score, the percentage of lands to be included in the Agricultural Area designation rose to 24%. Interestingly, the percentage of Soil Classifications 1 to 3 across the Counties is 30% of the total lands in the Counties. Following refinements, the Agricultural Area designated lands will be increasing from 12% to 16% of the total lands.

What public consultation has been undertaken for the study?
Overall this study has had an extensive public consultation program with:

- 2026 residents that are to be impacted by proposed changes received direct mailouts;
- over 300 resident discussions/meetings as a result of mailouts;
- approximately 60 individuals attended local area consultation meetings held in four municipalities;
- 2 advertised public consultation sessions (an open house and an information session);
- 2 meetings offered with representatives of each Ontario Federation of Agriculture branch (Leeds and Grenville);
- 3 meetings of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG);
- on-site visits from the consultants requested by residents;
- on-going Counties website updates, stakeholder list updates (almost 500 persons); and,
- 6 presentations/reports to PAC/Council.

What's the difference between Prime Agricultural Areas and Prime Agricultural Lands?

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS) sets out that "prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term agricultural use" and defines a Prime Agricultural Area and Prime Agricultural Land as follows:

Prime agricultural area: means areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using guidelines developed by the Province as amended from time to time. A prime agricultural area may also be

identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province.

Prime agricultural land: means specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection.

Why is the study using a threshold of 60% instead of 70%?
The idea of using 70% was considered earlier in the study and the consultants noted that using the higher score of 70% would exclude too much agricultural land by default. Further, 60% most closely matched the existing agricultural mapping of the local official plans. It was also the score that appeared acceptable to the Ministries at the Technical Advisory Group meetings.

The 60% threshold score was used to create the basis of the agricultural area map that has been refined since June 2023. Through the refinement process of the mapping, the consultant considered and included local area, property specific information from residents. Where appropriate, lands located on the "fringe" of the proposed system that would not compromise the integrity of the large agricultural system, were removed from the Agricultural Area designation.

The study methodology and additional refinement efforts have resulted in a thorough Agricultural Area designation recommendation. The consulting team advised the "fringe" lands of the system are more likely to score between 60 and 70%, whereas lands more central to an agricultural area often score greater than 70% and therefore, as a result of the extensive consultation, the representative average scoring of lands has in effect shifted closer to the 70% score. Going forward, the draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to implement the study has built in flexibility to accommodate any anomalies and permits the agricultural boundaries to be refined in a minor manner without a COP amendment, if supported by a qualified professional.

What are the alternative methodologies to LEAR?
The policy added to the COP by MMAH at the time of approval required that a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study be undertaken to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the next review of this Plan under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* (10-year review in 2026). In consultation with MMAH and OMAFRA, a LEAR method was chosen and was undertaken using the Provincial "Guide to the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) System for Agriculture".

The other provincially accepted equivalent methodology is called Agricultural Land Evaluation System (ALES). The main difference between a LEAR and ALES study from the OMAFRA website is: "The ALES approach is best described as a 'table-top' exercise, where relevant information sources (e.g., soil capability, land use, etc.) are analyzed to determine if areas meet the characteristics of a prime agricultural area. In comparison, the LEAR approach relies on Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling to assist with the identification of prime agricultural areas."

The study undertaken is more of a "modified" LEAR with the amount of refinement that was done to the edges of the proposed Agricultural Area designation. Using the LEAR methodology, lands across the Counties were initially assessed using a grid of 40-hectare (100 acre) blocks. The evaluation criteria used included the soil quality (60%), lands in agricultural production (30%) and the amount of fragmentation (impacts by residential development) (10%). In order to be considered an "agricultural area" (as per the province's guideline for conducting LEAR studies) a contiguous area of 250 hectares (618 acres) must be achieved.

Can settlement areas be expanded onto lands designated as Agricultural Area?
If during a comprehensive review (10-year review), a settlement area expansion is identified to be located on an Agricultural Area designation, Provincial policy sets out the conditions under which settlement areas can grow onto Agricultural Areas as follows:

- is not in a specialty crop area (such as tender fruits -apples, cherries, plums);
- alternative locations (other directions) have been evaluated;
- there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid the agricultural areas;
- there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands;
- the new or expanding settlement area meets the minimum distance separation formulae (separation from livestock barns); and,
- impacts from new or expanding settlement areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the settlement area are mitigated to the extent possible.

Schedule "A"

OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 5

TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

FOR THE UNITED COUNTIES OF LEEDS AND GRENVILLE

(Agricultural Area Review)

February 7, 2024

File D09-COPA-LG-2024-01

Amendment No. 5

To the Official Plan for the

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

The following Amendment to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville consists of two parts.

PART A – THE PREAMBLE consists of the purpose and effect, location and basis for the Amendment and does not constitute part of the actual Amendment.

PART B – THE AMENDMENT sets out the actual Amendment along with the specific schedule and policy changes to be made to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

PART A – THE PREAMBLE

TITLE

The title of the Amendment is "Official Plan Amendment No. 5 to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville", herein referred to as Amendment No. 5.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT

This is a Counties initiated Amendment to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. The main purpose of this Amendment is to update policies in Section 3.2 Agricultural Areas of the Official Plan and to amend Schedule "A", Community Structure and Land Use to update the existing "Agricultural Area" land use designation in the schedule to reflect the updated agricultural system as developed through a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study as required by the Province.

LOCATION

Official Plan Amendment No. 5 studied all lands in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. It applies to various lands throughout the Counties being redesignated to, from or being maintained as Agricultural Area. Policies will apply to all lands designated Agricultural Area by this amendment.

BASIS

Official Plan Amendment No. 5 has two components. The first component involves the inclusion of additional and amendment to existing agricultural policies in Section 3.2 of the Official Plan to recognize the agricultural systems approach to updating and protecting the agricultural resources in the Counties of Leeds and Grenville. The second component involves a revision to Schedule "A" to replace the "Agricultural Area" mapping layer to reflect the updated agricultural system. Below is a rationale for these proposed changes.

Land Evaluation and Area Review Study

In 2015, the Counties of Leeds and Grenville adopted its first Official Plan, approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in 2016. Due to a compressed timeline for the Official Plan preparation, it was not possible to review the status of the lands included in the Agricultural Area designation. As a result, the Agricultural Area designation consists primarily of the agricultural areas as identified in the local municipal Official Plans that were in place in 2015. At that time, it was known/suspected that the agricultural land mapping was not comprehensive

and that some agricultural areas were missing. Many of these local official plans and their mapping were developed under previous provincial policies and using varying definitions of prime agricultural lands. MMAH recognized this issue by modifying the Counties Official Plan to add policy 3.2.3 (a), which states: "The Counties, in consultation with the local municipalities and the Province, will undertake a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the next review of this Plan under Section 26 of the Planning Act."

On July 29, 2022, the Counties of Leeds and Grenville released a Request for Proposals for the preparation of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Agricultural Area Review, based on a modified Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) approach.

A modified LEAR methodology, suitable and tailored to the Counties identified candidate Agricultural Area lands following a comprehensive review and evaluation of all lands currently designated Agricultural Area and Rural Lands. A final agricultural system was developed to address this provincial requirement.

For the purposes of this study, the 2018 Agricultural System Mapping Method Technical Document from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) was used as a baseline methodology and adjusted to the specific needs of the Counties, as appropriate.

Extensive consultation with Counties staff, OMAFRA and MMAH staff, local municipal staff and their Councils, the Planning Advisory Committee and Counties Council, the Technical Advisory Group (formed for this project) and specific outreach to the agricultural community through meetings with the Leeds Federation of Agriculture and the Grenville Federation of Agriculture have further informed the final LEAR mapping product. Public notification occurred throughout the process.

Additionally, all landowners impacted by a recommended change in their land use designation because of the recommended agricultural system were informed by individual letters and a project website was maintained to provide consistent access to project documentation. There were 2026 letters mailed to residents. There were 276 residents who followed up the letter by contacting Planning Department staff. Where appropriate, the consulting team provided follow-up correspondence to residents. Staff attempted to reach out to each resident that contacted the project team by email, survey response, letter or phone call to respond to each inquiry.

The final agricultural system is a system of connected lands that form agricultural areas based on the LEAR methodology of scoring lands based on their calculable agricultural potential (mainly based on soil classification), then refined to: include lands over the selected scoring threshold; add lands where connected upon land-owner request; adjust boundaries to identifiable landmarks (road, parcel fabric, natural heritage feature); and reflect local agricultural knowledge. The resultant agricultural system forms the revised "Agricultural Area" land use designation on Schedule "A" of the Official Plan.

Proposed Policy Changes

The revised Agricultural Areas designation represents a net addition of ___ ha of land that are now subject to the Agricultural Area designation in the Official Plan. The main impact to residents who had lands added to the Agricultural Area designation is that agricultural policies restrict the ability to subdivide (including severance) their property in the future except for surplus dwellings or farm lots. Agricultural policies are meant to protect the agricultural land base from fragmentation, and agricultural policies limit conflicting land uses in the Agricultural Area designation. Existing uses, additional residential units, residential development on vacant lots, agricultural uses and agriculture-related uses remain permitted under the Counties Official Plan, subject to local Official Plan policies and zoning provisions.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is issued under the authority of section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on May 1, 2020. Section 3 of the Planning Act requires that decisions affecting planning matters "shall be consistent with" policy statements issued under the Act.

The PPS provides policies regarding agriculture. The Official Plan policy amendments are consistent with these applicable statements.

2.3 Agriculture

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.

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.

2.3.3 Permitted Uses

2.3.3.1 In *prime agricultural areas*, permitted uses and activities are: *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses*.

Proposed *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be based on guidelines developed by the Province or

municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents, which achieve the same objectives.

2.3.3.2 In *prime agricultural areas*, all types, sizes and intensities of *agricultural uses* and *normal farm practices* shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.

2.3.3.3 New land uses in *prime agricultural areas*, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

2.3.4 Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments

2.3.4.1 Lot creation in *prime agricultural areas* is discouraged and may only be permitted for:

a) *agricultural uses*, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;

b) *agriculture-related uses*, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;

c) *a residence surplus to a farming operation* as a result of farm consolidation, provided that:
   1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate *sewage and water services*; and
   2. the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective; and

d) *infrastructure*, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights-of-way.

2.3.4.2 Lot adjustments in *prime agricultural areas* may be permitted for *legal or technical reasons*.

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).

2.3.5 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas

2.3.5.1 Planning authorities may only exclude land from *prime agricultural areas* for expansions of or identification of *settlement areas* in accordance with policy 1.1.3.8.

2.3.6 Non-Agricultural Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas

2.3.6.1 Planning authorities may only permit non-agricultural uses in *prime agricultural areas* for:

1) extraction of *minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources*; or

2) limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated:
    1. the land does not comprise a *specialty crop area*;
    2. the proposed use complies with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;
    3. there is an identified need within the planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2 for additional land to accommodate the proposed use; and
    4. alternative locations have been evaluated, and
        i. there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid *prime agricultural areas*; and
        ii. there are no reasonable alternative locations in *prime agricultural areas* with lower priority agricultural lands.

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.

PART B – THE AMENDMENT

INTRODUCTION

Part B – The Amendment, outlines the changes that constitute Amendment No. 5 to the Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

DETAILS OF THE AMENDMENT

The Official Plan for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville is hereby amended as follows (modifications noted in red and with ~~strikethrough~~ text):

1) That Schedule "A", Community Structure and Land Use, to the Official Plan is hereby amended by replacing the existing "Agricultural Area" adopted in July 2015 and replacing it with the "Agricultural Area" mapping layer adopted by Council attached hereto as Schedule A to this amendment.

2) That Section 3.2 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows:

3.2 Agricultural Areas

Lands within the Agricultural Area designation consist primarily of *prime agricultural lands* as defined by a comprehensive County level Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study and designated on **Schedule A**. The Agricultural Area is based on a systems approach to preserving the long-term viability and potential for agriculture by including Class 1, 2 and 3 lands primarily as well as supporting lands that may be considered more marginal in nature but provide an overall strengthening of an agricultural area where appropriate. The Agricultural Area designation represents the Counties *prime agricultural areas*. ~~are based on the agricultural areas established in the local municipal Official Plans, and are designated on **Schedule A**. *Prime agricultural areas* will be designated in local municipal Official Plans in accordance with Provincial guidelines. This Plan requires that these lands will be protected for agricultural uses unless appropriate justification is provided for alternative uses.~~

Lands designated as Agricultural Area are intended to preserve and strengthen the continued and long-term viability of the agricultural community. Lands designated Agricultural Area are to be protected from fragmentation and incompatible uses, while accommodating a diverse range of agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses.

3) That Section 3.2.1 e) of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows:

e) Promote a diverse, innovative and economically strong agricultural industry that includes *agri-tourism* and the *agri-food network* and associated activities, including local food production, by enhancing their capacity to contribute to the economy by accommodating a range of agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses.

4) That Section 3.2.2 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows by inserting a new subsection (c) as follows, and that the remaining policies are re-lettered accordingly:

c) Additional Residential Units and Garden Suites shall be permitted in accordance with Section 2.7.4 of this Plan, local municipal Official Plans and local zoning by-laws. Additional Residential Units are to be located in proximity to the existing dwelling or the farm building cluster or on non-Prime Agricultural Lands. As per Section 3.2.5 of this Plan, Additional Residential Units and Garden Suites in the Agricultural Area would not be eligible for severance.

5) That Section 3.2.3 a) of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows:

a) Local municipalities will designate and protect the Agricultural Areas ~~*prime agricultural areas*~~ in local municipal Official Plans in accordance with **Schedule A**. ~~designate prime agricultural areas in their Official Plans, through procedures established by the Province. Prime agricultural areas are designated as Agricultural Area Any reduction in the Agricultural Area designation will require an amendment to this Plan and an amendment to the local municipal Official Plan. The Counties, in consultation with the local municipalities and the Province, will undertake a comprehensive Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or equivalent study to assist in identifying and designating prime agricultural areas in the Counties prior to the~~ next review of this Plan under Section 26 of the Planning Act.

6) That Section 3.2.3 f) of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows and Section 3.2.3 of the Official Plan is hereby modified by inserting new subsections g) to h) as follows:

f) Land may only be removed or excluded from the Agricultural Area ~~*prime agricultural areas*~~ for expansion of *settlement areas* in accordance with the policies of this Plan or at the time of an Official Plan update.

g) Notwithstanding Section 3.2.3 f) of this Official Plan, the boundaries of the Counties Agricultural Area designation may be refined (reduced) without amendment to this Plan in a minor manner subject to the following:

i. The lands are part of the boundary of the Agricultural Area; and

ii. A Qualified Person provides a professional opinion the removal is minor, in accordance with the refinement principles of the 2024 comprehensive LEAR

and will not compromise the integrity of the surrounding Agricultural Areas to the satisfaction of the Counties; and

iii. An amendment to the local municipal Official Plan.

h) An Agricultural Impact Assessment may be required to evaluate the impact of any proposed new, or expanding, non-agricultural use on surrounding agricultural operations and lands. Impacts will be mitigated to the extent feasible.

7) That Section 3.2.5 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows to add subsections h) and i):

h) The creation of a new lot on lands that have both the Rural Lands and the Agricultural Area designation will be permitted on the Rural Lands portion of the land subject to all applicable policies including the minimum distance separation formula being met and provided the Agricultural Area lands are not reduced in size.

i) Interpretation of the Agricultural Area designation boundaries shall recognize the intent to have the boundaries align with 2024 parcel fabric, roads and/or natural heritage features. Where the interpretation of the boundary on a parcel is unclear, the preference is to maintain as much Agricultural Area as possible.

8) That Section 7.8.2 of the Official Plan is hereby modified as follows and renumbering of all definitions as appropriate:

6. **Agricultural condition:** means

a) in regard to *specialty crop areas*, a condition in which substantially the same areas and same average soil capability for agriculture are restored, the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area can be achieved, and, where applicable, the microclimate on which the site and surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production will be maintained or restored; and

b) in regard to *prime agricultural land* outside of specialty crop areas, a condition in which substantially the same areas and same average soil capability for agriculture are restored. (Source: PPS ~~2014~~2020)

7. **Agricultural System:** A system comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:

a) an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture; and

b) an agri-food network which includes infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.

~~7.~~ 8. **Agricultural uses:** means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agri-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment. (Source: PPS ~~2014~~ 2020)

9. **Agri-food network:** Within the agricultural system, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional infrastructure and transportation networks; on-farm buildings and infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.

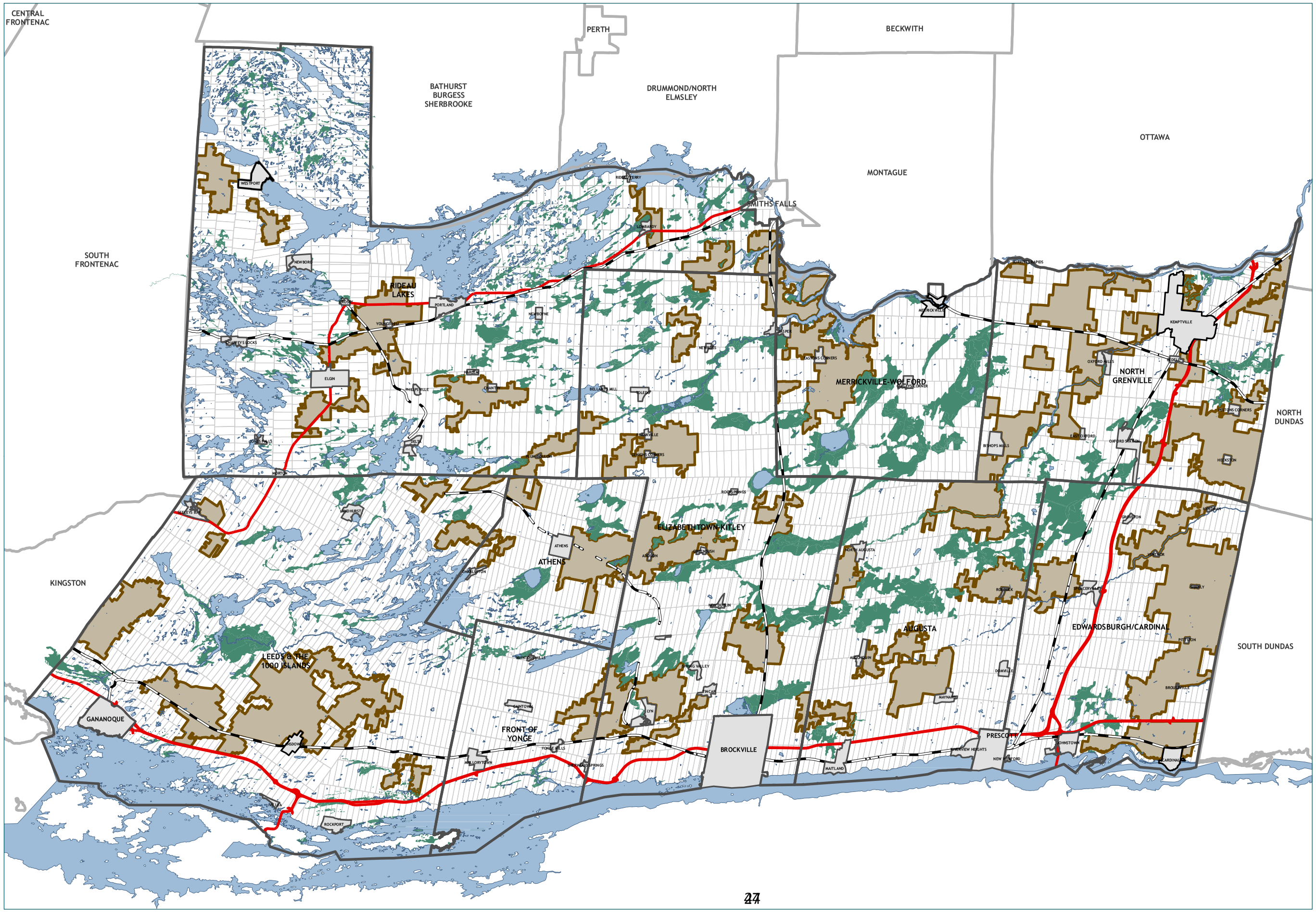
~~8.~~ 10. **Agri-tourism uses**: means those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation. (Source: PPS ~~2014~~ 2020)

~~9.~~ 11. **Agriculture-related uses:** means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity. (Source: PPS ~~2014~~ 2020)

~~79.~~ 81. **On-farm diversified uses:** means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products. Ground-mounted solar facilities are permitted in prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, only as on-farm diversified uses. (Source: PPS 2020)

~~88.~~ 90. **Prime agricultural land:** means specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection. (Source: PPS, ~~2014~~2020).

SCHEDULE 'A' to OPA 5



Leeds Grenville

RECOMMENDATION

Prime Agriculture

NATURAL FEATURES

Provincially Significant Wetlands

Active/Abandoned Railway

DRAFT

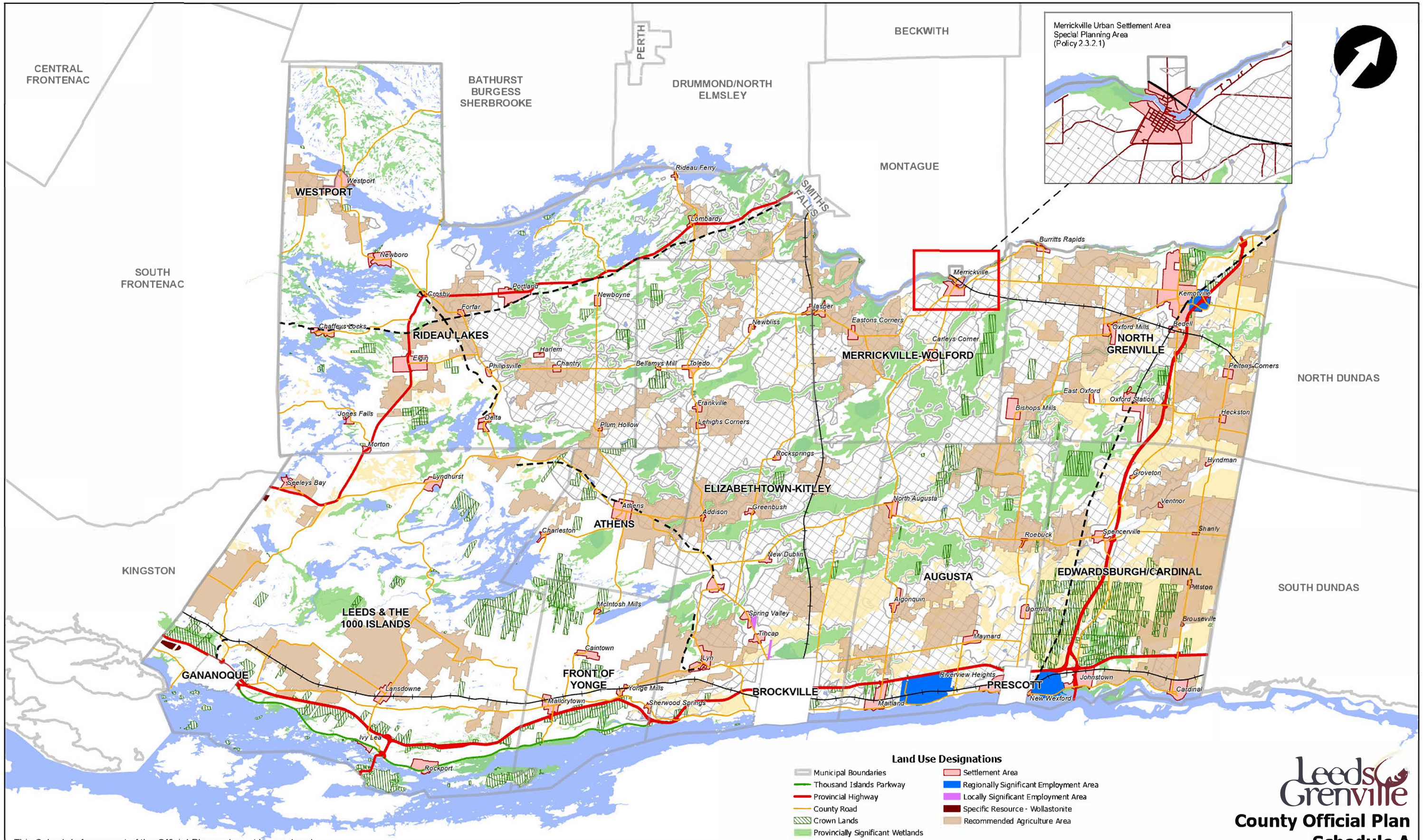
0 1,500 3,000 6,000 Metres

SRG
SOIL RESOURCE GROUP

PLANSCAPE
BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH PLANNING

January 2024

Attachment 4



Agricultural Area Review Timeline (February 5, 2025)

July 29, 2022	Request for Proposals issued in compliance with Purchasing By-law
August 26, 2022	Email to all local municipalities providing background information and requesting interest in being on the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)
October 3, 2022	Contract entered to retain Planscape
November 1, 2022	Project kick-off with Planning staff
December 6, 2022	Meeting with consulting team and Planning staff to discuss methodology as per OMAFRA document
December 12, 2022	First Technical Advisory Group meeting held – overview of study – members are self-identified local municipalities, Counties staff, ministries, OFA representatives
December 12, 2022	***Public Open House** held with consultants, Planning staff and public – study approach and draft soils mapping
December 13, 2022	Emails to all local municipalities advising them of Open House results and requesting the municipality review the early mapping to identify local farms operating successfully
January 4, 2023	**PAC presentation** by consulting team – overview of study and methodology
February 8, 2023	Update to TAG and non-TAG municipalities on status
February 8, 2023	**PAC report** on Agricultural Area Review Study - follow up answers to questions from January PAC meeting (also provided to local planners and TAG members)
March 3, 2023	**Meeting** with Ontario Federation of Agriculture – Grenville group
March 24, 2023	**Meeting** with Ontario Federation of Agriculture – Leeds group
May 9, 2023	**Survey launched on-line**

Agricultural Area Review Timeline (February 5, 2025)

May 11, 2023	Second Technical Advisory Group meeting held – draft report/technical mapping (members are self-identified local municipalities, Counties staff, ministries, OFA representatives)
May 25, 2023	**PAC presentation** by consultants of draft report/technical mapping
June 21, 2023	***Public information session** – Draft LEAR report and technical mapping
June 22, 2023	**Consultants conduct site visits** and meet with stakeholders on their properties by request
July 7, 2023	Email update to local municipalities, stakeholders, TAG with base mapping
August 1-16, 2023	Distribution of refined mapping to local municipalities
August 23, 2023	**OFA – Leeds working session** with consulting team and staff on refined mapping (Elgin)
August 29, 2023	**OFA – Grenville working session** with consulting team and staff on refined mapping – cancelled
August 31, 2023	Third Technical Advisory Group meeting held on refined mapping (members are self-identified local municipalities, Counties staff, ministries, OFA representatives)
September 6, 2023	**PAC presentation** of refined mapping
September 15, 2023	Email update to all local municipalities on next steps and also **request map posting in municipal offices**
September 21, 2023	**Report to Counties Council** - on additional individual consultation (also provided to local planners and TAG members)
Sept. 28-Oct. 3, 2023	**2026** letters out to impacted property owners

Agricultural Area Review Timeline (February 5, 2025)

September 28, 2023	**Refined mapping** on Counties website for final review and paper maps couriered to **local municipalities for posting in municipal offices**
October 30, 2023	End of commenting period for letter recipients
Nov./Dec. 2023	All comments continue to be received to year end
December 22, 2023	Email update to municipalities, stakeholders, TAG, and PAC with refined mapping notice of next consultation.
February 4, 2024	Email to TAG (members are self-identified local municipalities, Counties staff, ministries, OFA representatives) regarding PAC and the related report
February 6 & 7, 2024	***Local Area Consultation** Meetings in local municipalities – MNG (21), RL (16), Aug. (9), EC (11) (57 total people consulted)
February 7, 2024	**Report to PAC** – outcome of additional landowner consultation (also provided to local municipal planning group and TAG members)
February 7, 2024	Counties website updated to indicate consultation is on-going and that comments continue to be received.
March 15, 2024	Last date of mapping changes reflected
April 9, 2024	Draft AAR report received
April 10, 2024	Media release and stakeholders advised of on-going consultation regarding the study *(note commenting period extended until June 30, 2024)*.
June 4, 2024	TAG and local municipalities advised of report regarding next steps and provided copy of report
June 5, 2024	**Report to PAC** – Recommended next steps -report was deferred, with a request for a further report on options, document to be finalized and public consultation closed for this round

Agricultural Area Review Timeline (February 5, 2025)

November 6, 2024	**Report to PAC** - Options for Adjusted Planning Methodology – report was deferred and a request made to provide draft mapping back to local municipalities
November 13, 2024	Letters sent to each Local Municipal CAO and Planner requesting they review and advise of any land areas that their municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered by January 15, 2025
November 14, 2024	Stakeholder list (includes local municipalities, TAG) advised of status update
November 15, 2024	Local Planners advised of next steps in process and final review of mapping
December 16, 2024	Email sent to each Local Municipal CAO and Planner asking they review and advise of any land areas that their municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered by January 15, 2025. Paper copies of the draft mapping provided to several municipalities upon request
January 7, 2025	Reminder email sent to each Local Municipal CAO and Planner requesting they review and advise of any land areas that their municipality would like reviewed and/or reconsidered by January 15, 2025
January 20, 2025	Email to local municipalities thanking them for AAR comments and advising of the moving of the PAC meeting/report until March 2023
March 6, 2025	Report to PAC on proposed Agricultural Area Designated properties reviewed at the request of local municipalities

***For consultation events** – local newspaper ads placed, dedicated Counties webpage, request to local municipalities to put on local webpages, social media multiple times (Twitter/X), stakeholder list members advised (several hundred members gathered throughout the study), Technical Advisory Group advised, Counties Council, Local Planners/Clerks/CAOs advised