



Farmland Preservation & Minister's Zoning Orders: Impacts for Grey County Agriculture

Presentation to Grey County Agricultural Advisory Committee

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A thriving agricultural industry depends on the knowledge and support provided by municipal governments.”

Enhancing Municipal Capacity to Support Agriculture in the Greenbelt
Greenbelt Occasional Paper Series #27, 2021

Agriculture Land Use Topics...

Growth Management
Urban Boundary Expansions



Farmland Preservation

On-Farm Diversified Uses
Succession Planning
Urban Intensification



Minister's Zoning Orders

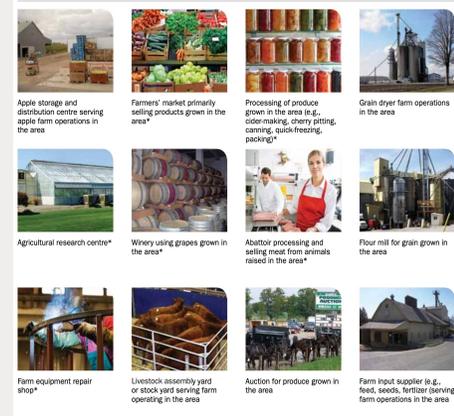
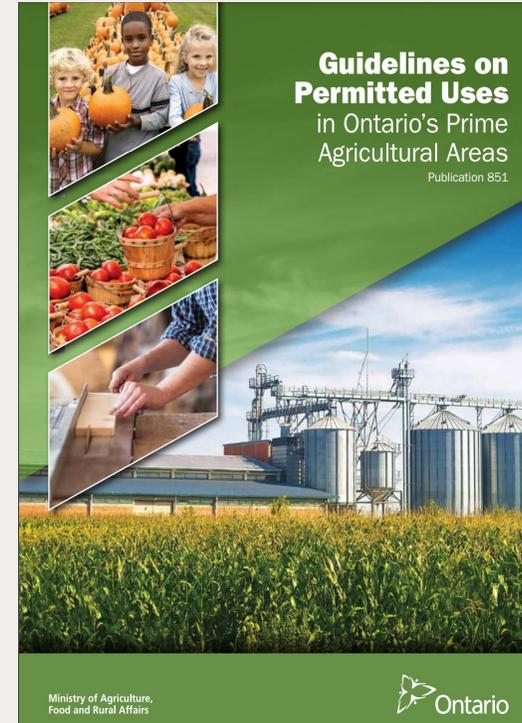
Cannabis Production
Climate Change
Normal Farm Practices
Affordable Housing
Natural Heritage Protection
Merged Property Titles
Surplus Farm Dwelling Severances
Farm Labour Residences
Ag System & Agri-Food Network
Minimum Distance Separation
... and more!

Farmland Preservation & Census

- 2011-2016, Ontario lost 175 acres of farmland a day (StatsCan, 2016)
- 2016-2021, Ontario lost 319 acres of farmland a day (StatsCan, 2021)
- “How many acres of farmland are available on Census day?”
- We lose farmland in multiple ways (development, tenure, commodity prices, farmers leaving)
- Planning needs to consider all reasons for farmland loss and create policies to protect farmers/farmland

“To preserve agriculture, it is not enough to preserve the land; society must also preserve the farmer.”

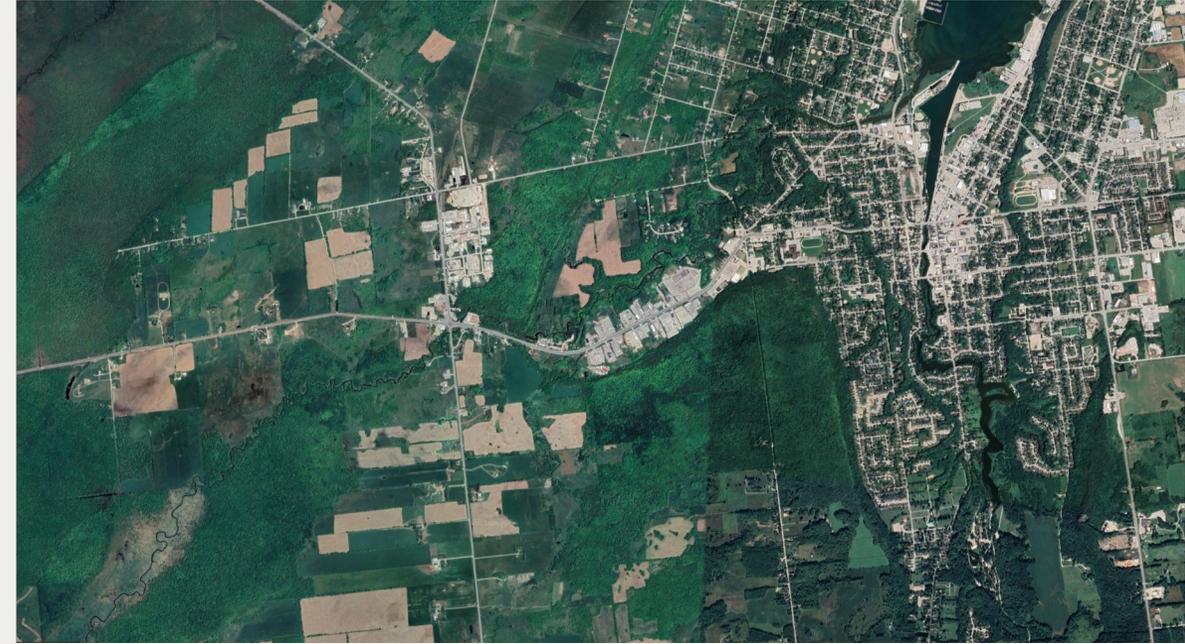
Source: M. Walton (2003)



OMAFRA [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Prime Agricultural Areas](#) (2016) outline tactics and policies for planners to preserve farmland and enhance economic opportunity for farmers

Farmland Loss & Urban Development

- OPAs would be the most reliable way to determine farmland lost to urban development
- Farmland protection and growth management are two sides of the same coin
- OFA believes in designing land use policies and making decisions which keep growth within fixed urban boundaries and intensify urban areas where possible



Urban uses sprawling into the agricultural area (Grey County)
Credit: Google Earth, 03/23/2022

From 2000-2017, 545 official plan amendments led to 72,196 acres of prime farmland loss in Ontario.

Source: W. J. Caldwell *et al.* (2022)

Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs)

- The present provincial government has issued more MZOs than any other government from 1995 to 2018 combined
- Since 2019, over 2,000 acres of farmland have been lost to MZOs
- Does not have to be consistent with PPS policy, be informed by public input or approved by municipality, and it cannot be appealed to the OLT

“

Land use planning matters; where our food comes from matters too. When we lose agricultural land to urban sprawl, it is lost forever.”

OFA President Peggy Brekveld
OFA Viewpoint, 19 April 2021

What is a Minister's Zoning Order?

Under Section 47 of the *Planning Act*, an MZO is a measure that Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing can implement to control any use of land in the province to bypass 'normal' municipal planning approval processes.

Community Infrastructure and Housing Order (‘CIHA’ or MZO 2.0)



- NEW - Section 34 of the Planning Act (as of April 2022, More Homes for Everyone Act)
- Draft “Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator Guidelines” (Final Guidelines to be released)
- Made at the request of a single- or lower-tier municipality
- Does not have to conform to the Official Plan
- Requires public consultation
- Cannot be used in the Greenbelt
- Can exempt MZO from planning policies
- [See OFA’s comments on the CIHA tool](#)

“These proposed changes effectively bring the ‘unwritten rules’ that the Ford Administration has been using when issuing MZOs over recent years into legislation.

These changes now put municipalities in the driver’s seat.”

Source: OFA Submission to ERO #019-5284 (2022)

Thank You For Listening!

Questions?

“

Similar to how we view climate change, policymakers need to look to the future. When it comes to farming, OFA wants to ensure the next generation has the resources and land to food, fibre and fuel for the future.”

OFA President Peggy Brekveld
OFA Viewpoint, 19 April 2021

Let's Connect!

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