Agricultural Impact Assessment

PURPOSE:

This document provides guidance for the preparation of an Agricultural Impact Assessment which may be required for the submission of an application under the *Planning Act*. All Agricultural Impact Assessments shall follow the guidelines referenced in this document.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment provides information to evaluate the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on existing agricultural operations and the agricultural system and recommend ways to avoid or, if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment may be requested where a development is located within the City's rural area or where a development is in close proximity to the rural area. An applicant should contact the Planning Division if there are any questions about whether this study would be required. Assessments are normally required for larger greenfield developments adjacent to the rural area.

PREPARED BY:

An Agricultural Impact Assessment must be prepared by a qualified professional or consulting group with experience in evaluating and assessing agricultural impacts with university or college degree(s) in one or more of the following:

- agriculture, soil science, geoscience, landscape architecture, resource management-related disciplines, environmental related disciplines, agricultural engineering, or land use planning.

Qualified professionals should be experienced in:

- Agri-businesses, agricultural supply chain linkages, rural/agricultural economic development in Ontario, and within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the agri-food network, where relevant;
- Rural and agricultural land use planning;
- Canada Land Inventory (CLI) classifications of capability for agriculture assessment and a practical understanding of soil science; and,
- Assessment and evaluation of the potential effectiveness of agricultural impact mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

CONTENTS:

The content of an Agricultural Impact Assessment may vary depending on the type of non-agricultural use being proposed as well as other factors including scale, location, and relevant land use designations. Clarification on the exact scope of work for a required Agricultural Impact Assessment will be provided as part of the Formal Consultation Application process. A pre-study consultation with staff may be required to confirm a terms of reference prior to initiating the assessment.

All Agricultural Impact Assessments must be prepared in accordance with the standards outlined in the *Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance Document* from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), as amended from time to time.

Please refer to the resource(s) below for more details on required components of the study.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance Document, January 2026

Archived - A Place to Grow: Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe | ontario.ca

Greenbelt Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 1 | ontario.ca

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

Development Planning, Planning and Economic Development Department.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment may also require a peer review.

CONTACT:

Development Planning, Planning and Economic Development Department

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