

# Terms of Reference: Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)

## Purpose:

---

- To evaluate the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on surrounding agricultural operations and the Agricultural System and recommends ways to avoid or, if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to the extent feasible.

## Required in Support of:

---

- Through an Inquiry Meeting or Preliminary (PARC) Meeting, staff will confirm if an Agricultural Impact Assessment is required.
- These assessments will be required in support of applications where a change in land use is proposed, such as:
  - Official Plan Amendments (including Secondary Plans)
  - Zoning By-law Amendments (including Temporary Use By-laws)
  - Consents
  - Minor Variances
  - Site Plan Control
- At the discretion of the Town, these Assessments may be required in support of other development applications. This will be confirmed at an Inquiry Meeting or Preliminary (PARC) Meeting.

## Prepared By:

---

- Qualified Professional with knowledge 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, where relevant, a practical understanding of soil science, including the ability to review technical information from non-agricultural disciplines and assess its relevance and utility in identifying potential agricultural impacts; and,
  - Assessment and evaluation of the potential effectiveness of agricultural impact mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

## Peer Review and Scoping:

---

- The Town will require a peer review of this document at the sole cost of the owner/applicant submitting the development application.
- On a project-by-project basis, the Town will identify any possible scoping of the assessment, or alternatively, other considerations to be incorporated into the assessment.



# Terms of Reference: Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)

## Content:

---

- Section 1: Executive Summary
- Section 2: Introduction
  - Site Location and Context: Information on the site (location, property size, existing uses), surrounding land, access, servicing, etc.
  - Description of Proposal: Indicate the proposed development, type of development application and proposed activities and identify a need within the planning horizon of the Official Plan for the proposed use.
  - Purpose: Identify the reason and objectives for the AIA, including an explanation of how provincial, regional and municipal planning requirements and other provincial directives will be satisfied.
- Section 3: Planning Policy Framework
  - Review and assess the provincial, regional and municipal policy context and regulatory framework as it applies to the proposed development.
  - A description of how the assessment aligns with the economic development and tourism strategy, specifically related to agricultural uses and on-farm diversified uses.
- Section 4: On-Site Physical Resource Inventory
  - Soils: Describe the soil composition of the site including CLI agricultural capability ratings.
  - Climate: Describe climatic features most relevant to agricultural production including Crop Heat Units and number of frost free days. Include a description of any microclimatic conditions of the site that may impact agricultural capability.
  - Slope/Topography: Describe the general slope and topographic features of the site including contour mapping and any CLI notations regarding topography. Include a description of any related limitations to agricultural capability.
  - Drainage: Describe the drainage of the site focusing on any existing or past improvements (e.g. tile drainage).
  - Past Farming Practices: Outline the agricultural history of the site.
  - Type and Intensity of Existing Production: Describe current agricultural production on the site (e.g. cultivation patterns, livestock operations).
  - Non-Agricultural Land Uses: Identify non-agriculture uses on-site.
  - Parcel Size, Shape, Characteristics and Accessibility: Provide a description of the parcel and connectivity with the broader agricultural system (e.g. access to transportation routes and neighbouring farm properties).
  - Existing Farm Management: Describe land tenure and management on-site.
  - Capital Investment: Describe the degree of investment in improvements for agriculture (e.g. tile drainage, facilities, buildings, machinery, etc.).

# Terms of Reference: Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)

- Section 5: Off-Site Features
  - Surrounding Land Use Types: Describe the location, type, and intensity of surrounding agricultural and non-agricultural land uses and proposed land use changes.
  - Existing and Potential Constraints to On-Site Agriculture: Inventory existing and potential constraints to on-site agriculture that exist off-site.
  - Regional Land Use Lot and Tenure Patterns: Describe the broad rural area identifying patterns of fragmentation and tenure, agricultural capability resulting from soil and microclimate conditions, trends in agricultural production, and any non-agricultural land use commitments in applicable planning documents.
  - Availability of Other Agricultural Service: Indicate availability of agricultural support services to the site.
- Section 6: Assessment of Agricultural Viability
  - Discuss the viability of the site as an agricultural operation on its own and as part of the larger agricultural system. Consider the viability of the site under different types of agricultural production and related to alternative agricultural operations that could occur in the future.
  - Discuss the impact of the proposed development on the viability of surrounding agricultural operations.
- Section 7: Assessment of Impacts on Agriculture
  - Discuss the short and long term effects of the proposal on the agricultural community, including, but not limited to, consideration of:
    - Loss of Resources;
    - Effect on Surrounding Lands;
    - Agricultural Character of the Area;
    - Cumulative Impacts;
    - Minimum Distance Separations; and,
    - Nutrient Management Issues.
- Section 8: Alternative Location Analysis
  - Explain why the location of the use would have minimal impact on agricultural lands by demonstrating that:
    - There are clearly no other reasonable alternatives that are outside of prime agricultural areas;
    - There are no reasonable alternative locations in prime agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands and with few agri-food network components and investments; and,
    - The proposed use will not be located in an area that may have an impact on the efficient and logical expansion of nearby urban areas.

# Terms of Reference: Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)

- Section 9: Mitigative Measures
  - Describe any measures that could be taken to reduce the impacts of the proposal on both on-site and off-site agriculture, including:
    - The degree to which the impacts will be reduced;
    - Mitigation measures proposed by the proponent; and,
    - Notices that could be included as conditions of development.
- Section 10: Summary and Conclusion
  - Summarize the commercial impacts of the proposed development and provide an opinion on whether or not the development is appropriate.
  - Provide recommendations including any potential mitigation to impacts.
- Section 11: Background Information
  - Appendix 1: Aerial Photograph - Identifying the parcel of land and surrounding land uses
  - Appendix 2: Proposed Development or Concept Plan
  - Appendix 3: Applied Terms of Reference and Scope Details
  - Appendix 4: Literature Cited
  - Appendix 5: Other Data Sources Used
  - Appendix 6: Methodologies and List of People Contacted
  - Appendix 7: Curriculum Vitae (CV) of Those Who Prepared the Assessment

## Resources:

---

- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
- OMAFRA's Draft Agriculture Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance Document (2018)

