ALTERNATIVES AND INNOVATION ON SMALL ACREAGE IN HURON COUNTY

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report details the work of a graded assignment for Prof. Wayne Caldwell's Advanced Planning Practice (RPD 6280) course at the University of Guelph. A group of Masters students chose this assignment based on a project proposal submitted by the County of Huron Planning and Development Department. The project spanned the duration of the Winter 2014 semester, which is approximately January to April. The intent of the project was to explore the potential of small acreage farms in Huron County. Currently, under provincial policy, the minimum agricultural lot size standard in Huron County is between 30-38 ha (approximately 75-95 acres). Select groups within Huron County have expressed concerns about barriers to youth entering Huron's agri-food industry because of the high costs of obtaining farmland. In some ways, the minimum lot size standards in the County are viewed as an impediment to new entrants and young farmers. The research contained within this report provides a preliminary investigation of the potential of small acreage farms within Huron County. The students involved have no decision-making authority on the matter, but rather, examined the issues through a number of lenses to provide a deeper understanding of the issue.

In order to explore the issue through various lenses, a series of analyses were conducted. First, a review of land use planning policy as it relates to the topic was undertaken to examine the evolution and current state of planning guidelines, policies and regulations concerning agricultural lot size at both the provincial and municipal level. This provided both a foundational understanding of agricultural lot sizes in Ontario and Huron County specifically, and a framework through which any recommendations would have to adhere to be readily adopted. Second, a community outreach phase was conducted to communicate with groups who would potentially be interested in smaller acreage farms within the County. The data comprising the community outreach phase was collected by three separate methods. Community meetings were held with members of both Anabaptist communities within the County - the Old Order Mennonites and the Amish. Questionnaires were also given to interested parties at these community meetings in order to gain a better understanding of individual perspectives. In-person or telephone interviews, which generally adhered to the

same format as the questionnaires, were also conducted with young farmers within Huron's broader farming community. Third, a GIS analysis was conducted to provide data on existing agricultural parcels within Huron County. While only preliminary data from the GIS analysis is presented in this report, other useful information can be extracted from the raw data in the future if the County deems it desirable. Lastly, an examination of best practices was undertaken to provide insight into the approaches that other jurisdictions have implemented to tackle the issue of small acreage farms.

In order to obtain feedback, preliminary findings from the aforementioned lenses of analysis and some initial recommendations were presented to an Advisory Committee formed at the outset of this project. The report concludes by presenting recommendations that the students feel provide a balance of providing opportunities for the community while adhering to provincial policy. The students understand the need and purpose of current provincial policies that protect agricultural land, however, existing policy may also be a blanket solution that is not appropriate for all communities. It is hoped that this initial review of the potential of small acreage farms in Huron County will provide insight or direction for future investigation or implementation of policies or programs that provide opportunities for all forms, sizes, and intensities of agriculture to thrive in Huron County.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agriculture is a vital aspect of Huron County's economy, which is not surprising considering the entire County, is a prime agricultural area with only a few areas of low capability soil. Currently, the County does not permit the creation of agricultural lots smaller than 30-38 ha in size in order to prevent fragmentation of its agricultural resource and subsequently protect the long-term viability of agriculture. This is consistent with provincial policy. While this policy has contributed significantly to the preservation of agricultural land, it may not be appropriate in some local contexts. For example, in Huron County there are a number of Anabaptist communities who have voiced aspirations for small agricultural lots because their youth are having difficulty affording larger lot sizes among other issues. This highlights another issue more generally about the large number of farmers reaching the age of retirement and the comparatively small number of youth who are taking their place (Smithers and Johnson, 2004).

This report details a number of first steps in understanding the need and potential for small acreage farms within Huron County. Contained in the report: a policy overview; best practices of small acreage farm integration in other jurisdictions; findings from community meetings, surveys and phone interviews; a discussion of those findings; and a GIS inventory of small acreage agricultural parcels in Huron County. A number of recommendations are suggested that could be adopted by the County or members of the community-at-large. These recommendations may aid in generating momentum to support the farm community. Overall, it is suggested that Huron County support small acreage farms, to the extent possible, for a number of reasons: for the cultural dimensions of unique communities within Huron County; and for the resiliency small farms promote economically, socially, and environmentally by diversifying production, supporting local food, and embodying ecological stewardship. At the same time, the County needs to remain consistent with provincial planning policy, which in many ways, is appropriate as it relates to the issue of farmland loss.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Key informant interviews with three (non-Anabaptist) young farmers in Huron County were undertaken during the project. One interview was conducted face-to-face in a local café and the remaining two interviews were conducted via telephone. The student's Advisory Committee identified the three key informants. The informants were asked to volunteer; interviews were scheduled by phone and/or email. Our informants were an essential part of the project as views on the demand for small acreage farms from young farmers' perspectives were obtained.

An interview guide containing eight questions was designed and prepared for the interviews (Appendix A). A member of the Advisory Committee and Prof. Caldwell reviewed a draft copy of the interview guide. Key informants were asked to describe their involvement in agriculture, their perspectives on the demand for small farms, and their insights into how young people get involved in farming. Prior to developing the interview guide, a review of literature was undertaken in order to gain an understanding of potential options that might allow agricultural activities to be undertaken on small farm parcels in Huron County without necessarily changing existing lot boundaries or the existing provincial planning framework. We asked our informants to confirm their awareness of the options, along with their views of the advantages and disadvantages of each. Responses were repeated in real-time in order to check the accuracy of notes.

3.2 TWO COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The two community meetings were hosted in an informal focus group format; this gave the student's a unique opportunity to practice facilitation skills that they had acquired through other coursework. Every attempt was made to ensure the same information was presented at both meetings in generally the same way. Facilitating both meetings similarly was thought to be beneficial to standardize our information collection methods. Flip chart paper was used to communicate our agenda for the meeting, the purpose and scope of our research, and to

communicate discussion questions to the attendees. We provided the opportunity for questions at any time during the facilitation in an attempt to promote a comfortable and transparent environment. To gain a better perspective of Anabaptist farming practices we asked questions such as:

- Why would small acreage farms be beneficial?
- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of small acreage farms?
- Can you describe the typical geography of your farms (slopes, rolling hills, soils, etc.)?
- What kind of practices do you currently engage in on the farm?

The discussion was recorded on a flip chart directly in front of the attendees to ensure the discussion was appropriately captured. A "dotmocracy" process was also used to collect information. For example, one color of sticker was used to determine the size of farm that individual attendees currently operate and another was used to gauge what size of small acreage farm would be viable. This inquiry posed a problem for both communities because almost all the attendees expressed interest in owning a larger farm if they could afford it, but require small agricultural lots for young farmers to begin their enterprise. Following the meetings, minutes were mailed to both communities for review and comment.

3.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

We developed a questionnaire to obtain qualitative data from the Anabaptist community (see Appendix B). The interview guide and questionnaire were nearly identical. A member of the Advisory Committee and Prof. Caldwell reviewed a draft copy of the questionnaire. Prior to developing the questionnaire, a review of literature was undertaken in order to gain an understanding of potential options that might allow agricultural activities to be undertaken on small farm parcels within Huron County without necessarily changing existing lot boundaries or the existing provincial planning framework. In addition to our review of the literature, we relied on our Advisory's knowledge of Huron County's planning system to help us design the questionnaire. The options were summarized in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked to share their thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of each. Respondents were

also asked to provide general information on their role in agriculture and their thoughts on ways that young people within the community get involved in agriculture. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to members of the Anabaptist community at the end of the two community meetings after they were given the option to voluntarily complete the questionnaire. Community members took the questionnaire home and returned them by mail. A total of 12 questionnaires were returned.

3.4 ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

For the purpose of this project, an Advisory Committee was formed. It was comprised of five members including an elected official, municipal staff and members of the broader farm community. Two meetings with the Advisory Committee were held at the Township of Howick Council Chambers. The first meeting was in February 2014. At the first meeting, we presented the research plan to the Advisory Committee and facilitated an informal discussion. Committee members made comments on the research methodology and provided guidance and advice for further research. The second meeting was held in March 2014 when research was completed or ongoing. The objective of this second meeting was to report our preliminary findings. As a group, we also critically examined a number of options for small farm parcels in Huron County. We examined the feasibility of the options identified through an interactive discussion. Comments and recommendations from the Advisory Committee were recorded and compiled to incorporate into this report where applicable.

3.5 POLICY REVIEW

The current provincial land use policy direction on lot creation in Huron County's agricultural landscape is reviewed in Section 4. The intent of this review was to ground the research within the context of the current provincial land use-planning framework. To bring a unique historical perspective to the research, the evolution of land use guidelines and policy influencing lot creation in Huron County's agricultural landscape was reviewed; the write-up is included in Appendix C. This historical perspective is important, as it underscores the critical advancements in farmland conservation that provincial and local guidelines and policies have

been able to accomplish.

3.6 REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES

An examination of best practices from other jurisdictions was completed with regard to small acreage farms (e.g. lot creation policy) and support for young farmers aspiring to access productive farmland. The jurisdictions examined include Oxford County, Renfrew County, Brant County, Region of Waterloo, and Niagara Region. The primary purpose of this examination was to understand how other jurisdictions are responding to the demand for smaller agricultural lots. The examination involved a review of documents, including official plans (OPs) and relevant literature (see Subsection 5.4). The findings from this review will highlight potential alternatives for implementation in Huron County (see Subsection 6.3).

3.7 LOT INVENTORY

The GIS findings (see Subsection 5.5) were acquired using ArcGIS and shape files (.shp). The County of Huron provided these files. Using the shape files provided, parcels were isolated that contained agricultural zoning and designation. The tables included in this report are summations of parcel data collected when filtered through specific search criteria. More specific raw data files that contain all of the parcel fabric data have been submitted to the County should further research is to be conducted. Moreover, all map layers and ArcGIS files have also been provided to the County in order to provide the opportunity to replicate the research. Lastly, Appendix D contains a step-by-step guide, which details how the data provided in the report was created.

4 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This policy review will begin with a brief overview of land use planning in Ontario. Ontario's planning system is a policy-led system that supports provincial goals (Government of Ontario, 2010a; Government of Ontario 2005b). Since 1994, the Government of Ontario has issued a series of policy statements under the authority of the Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 13). These statements have set the overall direction for planning in Ontario. The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* is the latest rendition in this series of statements. Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities and other planning authorities[1] are required to be consistent with provincial policy. This top-down framework has placed important boundaries on this research. Although this research is about exploring the need and demand for small acreage in Huron County, it is also about exploring policy alternatives that *fit* within the existing provincial policy framework.

There has been a strong past history of planning for agriculture in Huron County. In Ontario's first countywide, provincially approved OP, the County of Huron laid the groundwork for land use policies that recognized the importance of agricultural land as a resource. In 1976, the County was selected as the site for a case study aimed at developing a planning methodology for rural areas- agriculture surfaced as a key consideration. The study, entitled *Countryside Planning*, acknowledged the potential for land use conflict between farm and non-farm uses in the County's agricultural landscape and laid the groundwork for the *Foodland Guidelines*, which became the Government of Ontario's statement on planning for agriculture for nearly 16 years. The *Foodland Guidelines* formed the basis for future policies on lot creation in Ontario by, for example, establishing clear planning criteria against which applications for

[1] In the context of this report, we use the term "planning authorities" to refer to municipalities, planning boards, government agencies and other planning authorities.

'farm splits' could be assessed: land capability, flexibility, suitability, and viability (Government of Ontario, 1978). Over the years, provincial policy has triggered a great deal of good work in farmland protection. An overview of this history and evolution is included in Appendix C.

The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* discourages lot creation in prime agricultural areas. However, lot creation for agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, residences surplus to farming operations, and infrastructure are permitted. The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas is prohibited, with the exception of severances for residences surplus to farming operations (Government of Ontario, 2014). Each of the eight municipalities in Huron County has established minimum lot size standards for lot creation in lands zoned for agriculture. These standards range from 30-38 hectares and are comparable with the standards set in other districts across Southern Ontario. There are examples from other districts where lot creation policies are slightly more flexible, but prescriptive. The setting of minimum lot size standards is not an exact science; the approach to date has been one centered on precaution that promotes the permanency of agriculture. Within this context, provincial policy is, in many ways, appropriate. Part and parcel with this approach, it appears that existing policies inherently prioritize large-scale agriculture.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF LAND USE PLANNING IN ONTARIO

According to the Government of Ontario (2010a):

> "Land use planning means managing our land and resources. It helps each community to set goals about how it will grow and develop and to work out ways of reaching those goals while keeping important social, economic and environmental concerns in mind. It balances the interests of individual property owners with the wider interests and objectives of the whole community".

Ontario's planning system is a policy-led system that supports provincial goals (Government of Ontario, 2010a; Government of Ontario 2005a). Section 3 of the *Planning Act* gives the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority to issue policy statements on matters related to municipal planning that are of provincial interest. Effective April 30, the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* will become the Government of Ontario's new policy statement on land use planning

in the province. The 2014 Provincial *Policy Statement* provides policy direction and guidance to municipalities and other planning authorities on matters related to land use planning that are of provincial interest, including agricultural land.

A fundamental requirement of the *Planning Act* is that any OP adopted by the council of a municipality "shall be consistent with" the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*. At the same time, provincial policies can be complemented by local government policies that focus on planning matters of municipal interest (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Briefly, an OP "describes [a municipality's] policies on how land in [a] community should be used" (Government of Ontario, 2010b, pg. 2). The County of Huron operates under a 'two-tier' system of local government. Within this context, the County comprises the 'upper-tier' level of local government. Eight 'lower-tier' (or 'local') municipalities comprise the second tier of local government. The County has prepared an OP that sets out a broad planning framework for each of the eight local municipalities within its geographical boundaries. Within this context, all local OPs and zoning by-laws (ZBLs) must conform to this plan (Government of Ontario, 2010b). A ZBL is a legally enforceable document that controls the use of land in any given municipality within the province. A ZBL accomplishes this purpose by implementing the objectives and policies of a particular municipality's OP. Within this context, an OP and ZBL operate in tandem (Government of Ontario, 2010c). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the relationship between the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*, OPs at two-tiers, and a ZBL in Huron County.

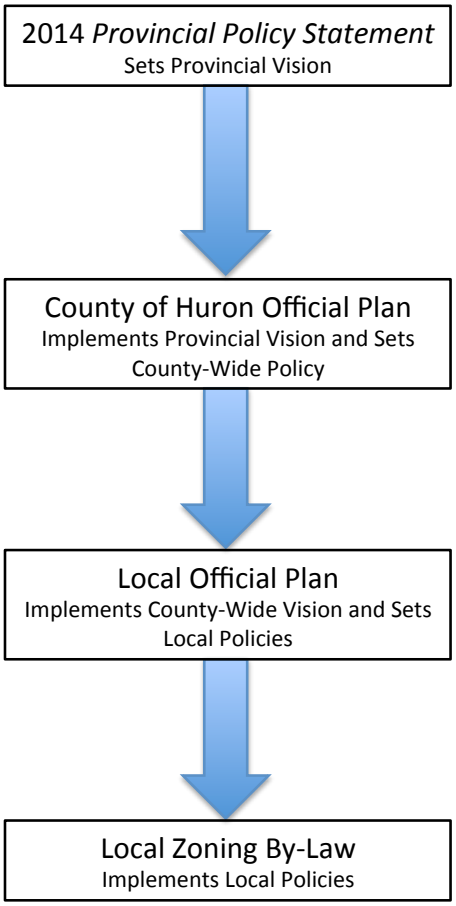

Figure 1 Relationship Between Key Documents in Ontario's Planning System

4.3 CURRENT PROVINCIAL LAND USE POLICY DIRECTION ON LOT CREATION IN HURON COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

4.3.1 A GUIDE TO THE LAND EVALUATION AND AREA REVIEW (LEAR) SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURE (2002)

In 2002, the Government of Ontario released *A Guide to the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) System for Agriculture*. The LEAR system is a provincial evaluation process used to identify prime agricultural areas by inventorying contiguous lands with agricultural potential within a defined geographical study area (Planscape, 2009). The results of the evaluation process are used to support the development of agricultural policies at both the provincial and local level. For example, a LEAR evaluation might be used to designate (or remove) lands for (or

from) agriculture within a particular municipality's OP or to set a minimum lot size for farm parcels within a particular municipality.

A LEAR evaluation uses both physical and socio-economic components to evaluate the potential for agriculture within a study area: Land Evaluation (LE) and Area Review (AR) components (Planscape, 2009). The LE component generally uses soil capability to evaluate the productivity of the soils within a study area. This evaluation is based on soil ratings from the *Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability Classification for Agriculture* (ARDA, 1965). The AR component evaluates non-soil factors that may improve or hinder agricultural activities in an area, such as contiguous lands in production and proximity to conflicting land uses (Planscape, 2009). The LEAR system is intended to be flexible and attentive to local objectives. In this regard, the guide sets out the conceptual framework of the LEAR system, but leaves the choice of evaluation unit, criteria, weighting and scoring of each element within the LE and AR components open to local deliberation (Planscape, 2009).

4.3.2 A GUIDE TO LOT CREATION IN PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREAS (2005)

In 2005, the Government of Ontario released *A Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas* to aid planning authorities with the development of lot creation policies. It covers, among other matters:

- Policy changes that had been made to the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement*[2] concerning lot creation in prime agricultural areas;
- The general issues that are related to lot creation in prime agricultural areas;
- The types of severances permitted by the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement*; and
- Tools and resources for developing lot creation policies at the local level (Government of Ontario, 2005a).

The *Guide* describes in no uncertain terms, the negative implications that lot creation can have

[2] The Guide has not yet been updated to reflect the release of the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*.

in Ontario's agricultural landscape: " [Lot creation] fragments the agricultural land base. If these new lots are then used for non-farming purposes, it takes away farmland that can't be replaced. Urban and rural non-farm development also interferes with agricultural production and operations" (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Within this context, any indiscriminate changes to lot creation policies could have wide reaching and profound impacts within Huron County's agricultural landscape. The significance of any impacts would become even more pronounced considering that farmland is a finite resource.

4.3.3 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (2014)

The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* was issued under the authority of Section 3 of Ontario's *Planning Act* and will apply to all planning matters after April 30, 2014[3]. Land capability for agriculture is central to agricultural land use planning in Ontario. The *Canada Land Inventory* (CLI) prescribes seven classes of agricultural land capability. In this regard, Class 1 lands have the highest capability to support agricultural activities (Government of Canada, 2013). Box 1 provides an overview of key terms related to land capability.

[3] At the time of writing, the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement* was still in effect.

Box 1 Overview of Key Terms, *Provincial Policy Statement*

1) Prime **Agricultural Areas**. The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* defines prime agricultural areas as "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".

2) Prime **Agricultural Land**. Prime agricultural land is defined by the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* as "*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".

3) Specialty **Crop Areas** are designated using guidelines developed by the Government of Ontario. There are no specialty crop areas in Huron County.

Source: Government of Ontario, 2014, pg. 46, emphasis in original.

The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* establishes that, "*Prime agricultural areas* shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture" (Government of Ontario, 2014, pg. 24, emphasis in original). Importantly, all of Huron County has been designated a prime agricultural area in the County's OP (County of Huron, 2010). Within this context, prime agricultural areas may exist in any one of a number of zones established in a particular municipality's ZBL. In the Municipality of Central Huron's (2010) ZBL for example, four zones for lands designated agriculture have been established:

- General Agriculture (AG1)
- Restricted Agriculture (AG2)
- Agricultural-Commercial Industrial (AG3); and
- Agricultural-Small Holding (AG4).

Box 2 contains the policies on lot creation in prime agricultural areas that are prescribed by the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*. Policy 2.3.4.1. a) through d) sets the minimum

standards for lot creation[4]. Municipalities and other planning authorities can choose to create more restrictive policies, so long as those policies are consistent with and do not conflict with the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Through requirements set out in OPs, municipalities can require that applicants submit certain documents when applying for a new lot including: servicing studies; site plans; environmental or agricultural impact studies; culture, archaeological or heritage studies/plans; and hydrogeological studies (Government of Ontario, 2005a).

Box 2 Policies for Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas, *Provincial Policy Statement*

Policy 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

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

[4] Of the four categories of lot creation permitted by the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*, it is felt that lot creation for agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, and surplus farm residences are most relevant to this research. As a result, lot creation policies for infrastructure are not considered.

> **Policy 2.3.4.2-** Lot adjustments in *prime agricultural areas* may be permitted for *legal or technical reasons*.
>
> **Policy 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).
>
> Source: Government of Ontario, 2014, pg. 25, emphasis in original.

Policy 2.3.4.1(a) speaks to lot creation in prime agricultural areas for agricultural uses. Two tests must be met before a planning authority can grant a severance in this context. First, any given farm parcel must be of a size that is appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area. Common agricultural uses vary across the province and statistics are sometimes used to help determine what types of farm operations are common to an area (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Second, a farm parcel must be sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for the future. The County of Huron's OP provides policy direction that is consistent with this approach (Table 1, Appendix E).

The County has opted to give the eight local municipalities within its geographical boundaries the task of establishing a minimum lot size in their OPs and ZBLs for new lot creation in lands zoned General Agriculture (AG1). In this regard, the minimum lot size standards range by municipality from 30 hectares (75 acres) to 38 hectares (94 acres). The County's Planning and Development Department, who performs a dual role over planning matters for both the County and its eight local municipalities, has deemed 30 ha as an appropriate *minimum* standard for the purposes of meeting the two tests prescribed by the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*. Several municipalities have chosen to include the caveat that a smaller farm parcel may be permitted in certain circumstances subject to additional policies (Tables 2 and 3, Appendix E). The minimum lot size standards set by each municipality in the County convey a powerful message about the significance of it agricultural economy and reflect how serious local governments are about protecting the County's agricultural resource (Smith, 1998).

Several tools are available to planning authorities charged with the task of determining an appropriate minimum parcel size for agricultural uses. For example, existing farm parcel fabric can help planning authorities understand the distribution and size of farm parcels within their jurisdictional boundaries. Original surveys divided much of Ontario into 40-hectare (100 acre) parcels and this pattern is still evident today. The *Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas* suggests that the local geography of a municipality is also a factor in determining an appropriate minimum farm parcel size within a particular area (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Setting a minimum lot size standard is not an exact science. Smith (1998) speaks to the difficulty involved in setting a minimum lot size standard and underscores the debate surrounding the approach:

> "Until a better method is implemented to deal with the subdivision of agricultural land, it can be assumed that zoning bylaws will continue to prescribe minimum lot size provisions. Trying to determine an appropriate minimum lot size for agriculture is not easy. Indeed it can be argued that the very concept of apply minimum lot size provisions to agricultural areas is an ill-suited regulatory technique. As a rule, minimum lot size provisions should be set relatively high to ensure the maintenance of parcels that promote, rather than deter, agricultural use and to discourage expectations of future subdivision" (pg. 56).

Indeed, the minimum lot size standards enforced by each of the eight municipalities in the County have become the subject of much debate. This is reflected in the reaction that this research garnered in the media and from one local Councilor who remarked "I am a bit dumbfounded because I thought we wanted to keep larger size farms? Now we are looking to allow smaller acreages" (Riggs, 2014). Beyond the County of Huron, other municipalities (e.g. the County of Perth) have opted to take a slightly more flexible, but prescriptive policy approach by establishing criteria that must be met when applying for a new lot for an agricultural use (Tables 4-6, Appendix E).

Policy 2.3.4.1(b) speaks to lot creation in prime agricultural areas for agricultural-related uses. The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* defines agriculture-related uses as "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" (Government of Ontario, 2013, pg. 39). The *Guide to Lot Creation in Prime Agricultural Areas* establishes that it is helpful to clarify what types of uses are considered agriculture-related uses in local OPs (Government of Ontario, 2005a). As one example, the Municipality of Central Huron's ZBL (2010) sets out the following permitted uses in lands zoned 'Agriculture-Commercial Industrial (AG3)':

- An agricultural industrial establishment;
- An agricultural processing establishment;
- An agricultural service establishment;
- An agricultural supply establishment;
- A bulk sales establishment;
- A commercial greenhouse operation greater than 2 acres covered by greenhouse; and
- A transport terminal or yard related to agriculture.

Within this context, accessory uses permitted include: one detached residential dwelling or mobile home; and storage containers. The minimum lot area for lands zoned 'AG3' is 1 acre (Municipality of Central Huron, 2010).

Policy 2.3.4.3 of the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* prohibits new residential lots in prime agricultural areas. The only exception is Policy 2.3.4.1(c), which permits lot creation in prime agricultural areas for a residence surplus to a farming operation due to farm consolidation. The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* defines a residence surplus to a farming operation as an "existing habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation)" (Government of Ontario, 2014, pg. 48). In order to secure consent for a severance for a residence surplus to a farming operation, the new lot must be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services. The planning authority with jurisdiction over the matter must also ensure that new residential dwellings are

prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance (Government of Ontario, 2014, pg. 25). In this context, a severance takes two lots (an original farm parcel with a dwelling; and a newly acquired farm parcel with a surplus residential dwelling) and creates three new lots (the original farm parcel with a dwelling; the newly created residential lot with the surplus residence; and the remnant agricultural lot). Some may argue that this policy means that many original farmsteads are being permanently lost to agriculture and it has become one of contention in some municipalities. In order to remain competitive in today's global economy, farms are getting bigger through an increasing number of farm consolidations, which is reflected in this policy. Given that planning authorities have the choice to be more restrictive, some municipalities in Ontario have simply chose not to allow severances for surplus residences. In Huron County, local planning documents set out specific policies lot creation in this context. Box 3 lists the policies that apply in the Municipality of Central Huron (2014).

Box 3 Example of OP Severance Policy for a Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation, Municipality of Central Huron, Huron County, Ontario

OP Policy 5.3.1.9.

"Where a dwelling is acquired through farm consolidation and is surplus to the needs of the farm operation it may be severed subject to the following policies:

- The residence is surplus to a farm operator (farmer) as defined in Section 3 of this Plan and was constructed prior to January 1, 1978; or is a residence built after 1978 but replaces a habitable residence which would have satisfied this date;
- That there is no other residence, or has been no previous separation on the original lot as described on Registered Plan 1;
- The residence is habitable. It is the intention to utilize the existing building and the Council and/or Building Inspector will not issue a demolition permit or building permit for a new residence unless the existing residence has been occupied for a minimum of 5 years, or has, after transfer, been partially destroyed by fire or other natural disaster;
- Where a barn exists in the immediate vicinity to the surplus residence, Council may require the demolition of the barn or its inclusion with the residential unit prior to approving the severance. The required zoning

amendment shall restrict the total number of livestock to be permitted in the severed barn. Adequate arrangements for manure disposal shall be required;

- The area to be severed be rezoned to a special agricultural category;
- The proposed severed lot comply with Minimum Distance Separation 1 (Type A Land Use) requirements (Amended by OPA 8, Municipality of Central Huron Zoning By-law 30, 2008)
- The general policies of Section 5.2 of this Plan are complied with;
- The separated parcel will not include any more Class 1 or 2 improved land than is required to support the residence but will be a minimum of 1 acre in size to accommodate the residence and accessory sewage and water systems".

Source: Municipality of Central Huron, 2014, pg. 87

5 FINDINGS

5.1 OVERVIEW OF FIELDWORK

During spring reading break, we went to Huron County for fieldwork for two days (February 19th and 20th). Over this two-day period, we had our first Advisory Committee meeting, facilitated two meetings with the Anabaptist community, and had an in-person interview with a young farmer. In March 2014, two more young farmers were interviewed by telephone.

5.2 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOUNG FARMERS

5.2.1 THE HIGH COST OF FARMLAND IS DRIVING THE DEMAND FOR SMALL ACREAGE

Our interviewees felt that most young farmers in Huron County participate in farming as a family business. The young farmers we interviewed see the high cost of farmland (in addition to operating expenses) as a major constraint of owning a large size farm. While the purchase price of modern equipment is high, at least one of our interviewees felt that the economies of scale that can be achieved with this equipment are beneficial over the long-term. Most of our

interviewees considered small acreage farms to be advantageous for new entrants or for young farmers looking to own and operate their own farms, in which case they could earn additional money from off-farm work. We were told that young farmers generally face the following issues when setting out to purchase and operate their own farms:

- Lack of financial support from lending institutions;
- High land values and associated upfront purchasing costs; and
- Operating expenses (e.g. seeds, sprays, etc.) in combination with the above.

5.2.2 YOUNG FARMERS GET SUPPORT FROM THEIR FAMILIES

Based on our interview feedback, it is common for young farmers in Huron County to take over a family farm that has been passed down to family members between generations. Although it is common, we were told that this transition is not always an easy process. Our interviewees described the following issues:

- Differences in opinion in how the farm should operate between new and previous generations;
- Upfront purchasing costs (in addition to operating costs); and
- High overhead for additional staff to distribute the workload.

5.2.3 FEEDBACK ON ALTERNATIVE AND INNOVATIVE OPTIONS

We inquired with our interviewees about alternative options that might permit agricultural activities to be undertaken on small farm parcels, along with innovative options that might give young people an opportunity to get involved in farming and eventually own their own farms. Because these options won't necessarily change the fabric of existing farm parcels in the County, it might be possible to pursue them without changing the provincial policy framework.

Option A: Farmers could enter into business agreements with each other. For example, farmers could divide the total cost of buying farmland and could cooperatively manage it.

Most of our interviewees were aware of this option, and one mentioned a farm called "Tourne Sol" in Quebec that operates under this concept.

Our interviewees described the following advantages of this option:

- Young farmers would have the opportunity to share their thoughts and experience with each other.
- It might be possible for people with land and/or farm equipment to come together in a sharing agreement.

Our interviewees described the following disadvantages of this option:

- This option risks ending in failure because of disagreements and other potential pitfalls (i.e. inequitable distribution of costs, poor credit, etc.) between partners.
- Profits that could be derived from this option are perceived as small to begin with and would become even smaller between partners.
- Partners have to know who they are getting into business with; it can take years to build trust.

Option B: Farmers could enter into long-term lease agreements with landowners, including a municipality or the County. By long-term, we mean an agreement over 21 years (less a day). Agreements longer than 21 years (less a day) would otherwise require municipal approval.

This option assumes that landowners (including the County and/or municipalities) have farmland available to rent. Most of our interviewees were not aware of this option. We were told by one of our interviewees that he is aware of this alternative, but not at the municipal level. With this option, it was not our intent to indicate that the County and/or municipalities have farmland available to rent, but rather to underscore it as a possibility.

Our interviewees described the following advantages of this option:

- An agreement over 21 years (less a day) would be adequate. Budgeting over 21 years (less a day) would be beneficial versus a shorter agreement.
- There are a lot of opportunities to rent land.
- Young farmers would benefit from the low overhead cost of renting land versus purchasing land outright.

Our interviewees described the following disadvantages of this option:

- There might be limited options available to live on rented land. On a farm, there are many small nuances that make living on the land a necessity (e.g. checking greenhouse temperatures, irrigation, livestock, snow removal, etc.). This was seen as a major disadvantage.
- Another possible disadvantage would be personal disagreements between landowners and tenants (e.g. disparities in the way the land should be managed, financial issues).

Option C: Young farmers could enter into partnerships with retiring farmers by exchanging their labor in return for a lower up-front purchase price.

Most of our interviewees were aware of this option. We were told by one of our interviewees that this alternative is also called “intensive farming” in some places.

Our interviewees described the following advantages of this option:

- Young farmers have the opportunity to gain experience from farmers that are retired or semi-retired.
- Retiring farmers can still be involved in farming through mentorship, etc.
- It might be possible for young farmers to purchase farmland from a retiring farmer gradually over a number of years.

Our interviewees described the following disadvantages of this option:

- There might be personal disagreements between retiring farmers and young farmers

in the way that farms should be managed.

5.2.4 DIFFERENCES IN OPINION ABOUT FARM SIZE AND VIABILITY

A training program exists in Huron County called the AG Ambitions Program. This program provides participants between the ages of 18-29 the tools and experience necessary to capitalize on agricultural opportunities in the County (AG Ambitions, 2013). The feedback we obtained from our interviews suggests that the majority of the program's participants are conventional farmers. We were told that alternative forms of agriculture (e.g. organic farming) would become increasingly common in the County over time. Compared to conventional farmers, we were told that these farmers generally require smaller farms, for their goal is to provide fresh products to meet the needs of local markets. We were told that more small acreage farms might attract young farmers to the County who are interested in serving these local markets. We were told that these farmers would appreciate access to viable and small-scale parcels of productive farmland for growing multiple crops. On the contrary, the young farmers we interviewed who are involved with conventional agricultural operations (e.g. cash crops, dairying, etc.) expressed concerns about an influx of non-farmers that small lots could potentially attract.

The young farmers we interviewed also expressed differences of opinion about the size of farm that farmers can earn a living from. One young farmer, who farms conventionally, informed us that at least 50 acres is required for cash cropping. Another young farmer, who also farms conventionally, informed us that at least 200-250 acres is required. For these farmers, the financial viability of a farm is centered on one's own ability to pay off mortgages, farm inputs and other expenses. They informed us that a lot of land is required to earn a family income within this context. By contrast, a young farmer who gardens intensively on a small scale, informed us that fewer acres are required to make a living because of fewer overhead expenses (e.g. the upfront purchasing cost of many acres).

5.3 COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND QUESTIONAIRES: WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY

5.3.1 THE HIGH COST OF FARMLAND IS DRIVING THE DEMAND FOR SMALL ACREAGE FARMS

A concern about the high cost of land was expressed repeatedly in the feedback we received from members of the community. We were told that 100-acre farms have been and are considered the "ideal" farm size within the community. However, we were told that 100-acre farms have become increasingly cost prohibitive in today's economic climate, especially for young farmers. We were informed that the community's desire for small acreage is being driven by "the economics of it". When we inquired about the need and demand for small acreage within the community, a typical response was: "The initial cost to buy a farm is out of our reach" or "It is almost impossible for the young guy to get started with farming at today's prices". We were informed that the price of a farm in Huron County might range between $750,000- $1 million. We learned that a further constraint is the additional cost of making a recently purchased farm "functional". We were told that it would be easier for young people within the community to make payments on small acreage. We learned that small acreage farms might be easier to manage. Within this context, we were told that small acreage farms might facilitate off-farm employment as a way to supplement income and make payments.

5.3.2 AFFORDABILITY ALONE IS NOT THE ONLY CONSIDERATION DRIVING THE DEMAND FOR SMALL ACREAGE FARMS

It is clear, based on the feedback we received, that affordability alone is not the only consideration driving the community's desire for small acreage farms. Concerns were expressed about a rural economy in decline, environmental stress, unsafe food, and loss of a way of life. We were reminded that small family farms were once the backbone of vibrant rural communities: "If we look back years ago when there were a lot more people living in country communities; they had a lot of country stores-churches-schools, businesses-etc.". We were told that Huron County's agricultural landscape feels increasingly empty because there are fewer and fewer families on every 100-acre farm parcel. We were told that a greater number of small acreage farms would provide more support for struggling rural communities and would

recreate a rural community "feeling". The increased tax dollars that could be derived from small acreage farms is perceived as a potential benefit.

We learned that the community has an interest in nurturing the health of the environment. We were told that small farms are generally more environmentally friendly by comparison to modern industrial-scale farms and that small farms generally produce safer food. We were given a pamphlet about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Based on the feedback we received, it appears that the demand for local food is at least one driving force behind the community's desire for small acreage.

Small acreage is perceived by the community as an opportunity to create a future in farming for young people. We learned that there is a strong desire among young people in the community to remain agrarian-based. We learned that there is a concern about how these young people are going to make a living from farming. Fewer and fewer young people are getting into farming despite their desire to farm. We were told that more small acreage farms might make it less cost prohibitive for these young people to get into farming. Within this context, we were told that there is a need for small, productive parcels, which can be transformed into farms that combine high labor crops (e.g. produce) with a productive home industry. Importantly, farming on small acreage is viewed by the community as a way to get young families started in farming and more broadly, as a means to preserve "a way of life". We were told that community members don't simply "move to town". Within this context, we learned that farming and the desire to farm is deeply ingrained within their culture.

Underlying these concerns, a broader issue was raised about government support for "big corporations". A concern was expressed that government policies will eventually "weed out the small traditional family farms". We were asked to consider if there is a relationship between the growing number of "bigger and bigger farms" and crime rates, drug use, and the number of people who utilize food banks, etc. We were presented with a striking illustration of two buggy wheels: an intact wheel spinning over smooth ground with a hub comprised of many small-farms and many intact spokes representing businesses; and a broken wheel spinning on

rough ground with a hub comprised of large farms and only a few spokes in disrepair (Figure 2).

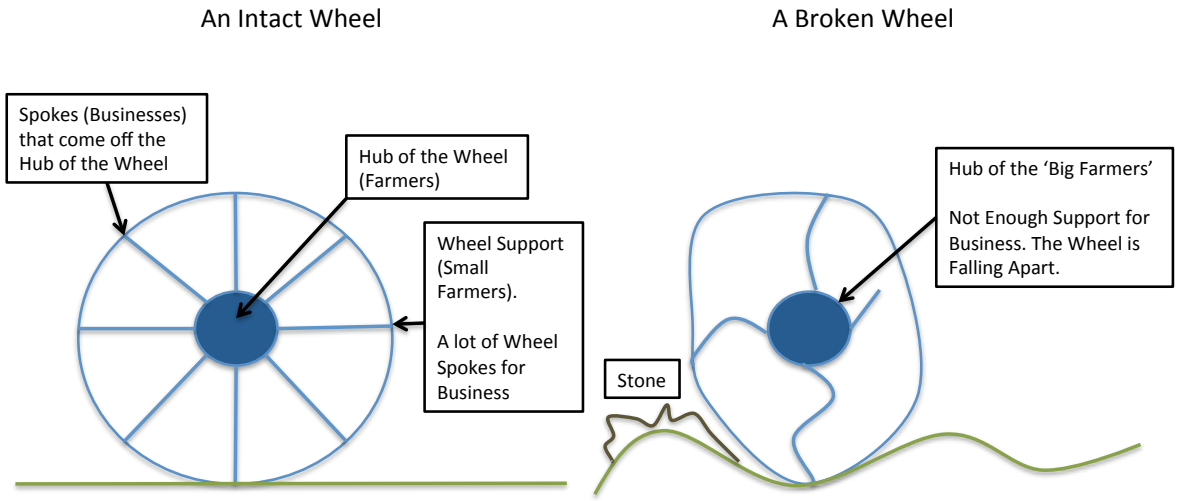

Figure 2 The Benefits of Small Acreage Farms from an Amish Perspective.

5.3.3 THE ANABAPTIST STYLE OF AGRICULTURE DIFFERS FROM THAT OF MODERN FARMING

Although there are likely discrepancies and exceptions from one Anabaptist community to another, just as there are in mainstream communities, the feedback we received for this report suggests that the style of agriculture practiced by the community is different from modern agriculture, which in this context, is considered to be an industrial process. It is clear from the feedback we received, that the community has different land requirements for farming by comparison to most modern farms. We were told that a reliance on horsepower for traction means that the community's style of agriculture simply can't compete with modern machinery on large acreage: "To compete with large mega farm operations with our way of farming by hand is not possible". We learned that large-acreage farms are simply too difficult to

manage. When we inquired about the community's capacity to farm large acreage, which in this context is considered to be farm over 100 acres, we were told that there are only a handful of individuals who could "get it done" with horsepower. We learned that the typical 100-acre farm in the community has acreage that is "unworkable", which in this context, means that it is not suitable for tillage. We were told that most farms are comprised of about 60-80 workable acres with some woodlot for maple syrup production. Bennett (2003) supports this finding: "It is rare to see an Amish farm with more than 80-100 tillable acres. They farm family-style on a human-scale" (pg. 158).

Diversification is one of the basic principles of Amish agriculture (Stinner, Paoletti & Stinner, 1989). It is clear from the feedback that we received that the community's approach to farming is highly diversified: "If we grow produce or have other agriculture related shops with intensive hand labour we do not need large acres". The community raises a variety of livestock, including beef cattle, goats, sheep and hogs. Some farmers produce grass-fed beef or veal for specialized markets. Poultry are raised. Horses and the "family milk cow" are essential. A few primary field crops are grown using a crop rotation of hay, pasture, corn and mixed-grain. Produce is grown and some farmers sell their harvest through home-market stands or cooperatives. Within this context, greenhouses are sometimes utilized. We also learned that the community is engaged in a number of business activities to supplement their income from farming (e.g. firewood, sawmills, furniture repair, machinery repair, tin-smithing, black-smithing, horse training, harness repair, tarp repair, among other activities).

5.3.4 IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO CREATE A FARM

It is clear from the feedback we received that the community places a strong emphasis on a style of farming that is small-scale and community-centered. We learned that an average family might be comprised of between 7-12 children. We were told that children become involved in farming at a young age. After school and in the summer, they help their parents and others in the community. Following marriage, young people generally endeavor to establish their own farms with the support of the community. In some instances, they inherit land from their parents, but very often at a price. Within this context, we were informed that a large

family size can complicate the passing on of farms between generations. We learned that young people also buy their own farms, which are generally purchased from other community members. For young people in the community, the financial risks associated with buying and owning farms are not unlike those experienced by the rest of society. In this context, young farmers in the community borrow money from lending institutions and make payments like any individuals. To help with these payments, we were told that a steady form of off-farm employment is often sought out of necessity, as the cost of land means that making a living from farming is not self-sustainable at the today's prices. Notably, we were informed that making a commitment to purchase and operate a farm takes a lot of courage.

5.3.5 EXISTING MUNICIPAL POLICIES FOR ATTACHED DWELLING ARE WORKING WELL

We were informed that existing municipal policies that allow more than one home per farm (by permitting multiple dwellings to be attached together) work well and are very much appreciated by the community. These policies are harmonious with the belief system and ideals of the Anabaptist community. In this regard, were informed that attached dwellings make it possible for the younger generation to care for aging parents.

5.3.6 CONCERNS ABOUT SMALL ACREAGE FARMS

Overall, we learned that the Anabaptist community has a good sense of the concerns and challenges presented by small acreage farms. Some community members acknowledged that the existing provincial planning framework is appropriate from a farmland conservation perspective. Although farmland conservation is perceived as a "government concern", we learned that the issue is also a concern of the community. New rural non-farm lots or country "estates" or "cottages" are also a concern for the community. We learned that this type of development could negatively impact land use, ecology, and the community's cultural values. We learned that the low supply of small acreage farms means that they are relatively expensive. More small acreage farms might translate into a lower price. We were told this availability and low price would be good for young farmers and new entrants into farming, but not necessarily if non-farmers purchased the farms. We learned that small acreage farms, if they were created, would need to be used for agriculture and not for "cottages".

5.3.7 FEEDBACK ON ALTERNATIVE AND INNOVATIVE OPTIONS

We inquired with the community about alternative options that might permit agricultural activities to be undertaken on small farm parcels, along with innovative options that might give young people an opportunity to get involved in farming and eventually own their own farms. Because these options won't necessarily change the fabric of existing farm parcels in the County, it might be possible to pursue them without changing the provincial policy framework.

Option A: Farmers could enter into business agreements with each other. For example, farmers could divide the total cost of buying farmland and could cooperatively manage it.

Several disadvantages were expressed. In the case of a single farm and multiple partners, we were told that it is unclear where the various partners (and their families) would live, as there would only be one farm and one homestead. We were told that it might be a challenge to create an agreement that is fair for everyone involved. In this regard, concerns were expressed about the longevity of partnerships- we were told that partnerships usually dissolve "sooner than later". At the very least, we were told it might be difficult to reach consensus when making decisions. Depending on the context, this option might not be financially feasible if it required a second mortgage. We were also told that family-style farming is an important part of the community's belief system and culture. Within this context, we were told that farms are intended to be a family setting where parents work alongside their children to forge a strong relationship- a cooperative would stand in tension with this objective. Very few advantages were expressed. We were told that it might be advantageous for one partner to work on the farm and for the other partner to work off-farm.

Option B: Farmers could enter into long-term lease agreements with landowners, including a municipality or the County. By long-term, we mean an agreement over 21 years (less a day). Agreements longer than 21 years (less a day) would otherwise require municipal approval.

Only disadvantages were expressed. We were told that this option presents no advantages for the community. The intent is for young people within the community to own their own farms where they can work together in a family setting. Even if the County had land available for lease, we learned that it would be impractical for the community to build homesteads on leased land. We learned that it is important for members of the community to live and work on the same farm. As the community is dependent on horsepower for transportation, travelling by horse and buggy to farm away from home would not be feasible. Further, it is important that parents are in close proximity to each other so that they can share in the responsibilities of parenting. We were also told that there is a certain unexplainable pride that comes with owning a farm, getting to know it, and caring for the land- being a tenant farmer would take away from this sense of pride and belonging.

Option C: Young farmers could enter into partnerships with retiring farmers by exchanging their labor in return for a lower up-front purchase price.

Several disadvantages were expressed. We were told that there are more young people in need of farms that there are people retiring from farming. We were told that this type of partnership might create some tension if the retiring farmer is hesitant to give up control. We learned that this option is already being practiced within the Anabaptist community, usually between a father and his sons or with other close family. This means that retiring farmer's farms are often already spoken for. We were informed that it would not be feasible for a young person within the community to enter into a partnership with a retiring farmer from outside the community due to the huge difference in farming practices. We were told that this option is a great idea in principle, but the reality is that the profitability of farming "is hardly enough that the retiring farmers would be willing to lower the up-front price enough for the young farmer to make ends meet". Very few advantages were expressed. We were told that a lower up-front purchase price would be an obvious advantage.

5.3.8 NATURAL SEVERANCES

As part of the feedback we received, we were asked if it might be possible to sever parcels from farmland where a natural severance already exists, such as a woodlot, river or road (see discussion in Subsection 6.2). At the same time, a concern was expressed that natural severances might result in increased pressure on natural spaces (e.g. along riparian areas in case of a river).

5.3.9 VIABLE FARM SIZE FOR THE ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY

To help us understand what would be viable in terms of a minimum lot size for the community, volunteers provided us with an estimate of the minimum number of acres that a family would require to make a living. Estimates ranged from 0-50 acres. We were told that 50 acres would be enough acreage to farm cattle and sheep or milking goats along with a few acres for produce gardening. We were told that 30 acres would likely provide enough pasture and feed for horses and a family milk cow, with some surplus acres for produce gardening. We were told that 15 acres would be enough acreage for a homestead, provided that the remaining acreage was utilized for highly intensive produce gardening (e.g. strawberries, raspberries, tomatoes, etc. with enough room for rotation). Within this context, we were informed that some feed for horses and the family milk cow would likely need to be purchased. We were told that 6-10 acres would be required to start into farming, provided there was “A market for local farm products with common sense rules so that people would prefer local food versus food that comes from grocery chains”. One estimate indicated between 0-5 acres would be required, provided the acreage could be gardened intensively and off-farm employment could be secured. We were told that 4 acres would likely suffice for a homestead, outbuildings, a garden, orchard, and a home industry. Within this context, feed for horses and the family milk cow would need to be purchased.

5.3.10 FARMS TOO CLOSE TOGETHER IN A CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL

We learned that several houses in a 'cluster development' would create privacy concerns between families in a cluster[5]. We were told that having multiple houses in a "barnyard setting" might also cause some problems. Having homes situated nearby one another creates problems. However, we were told that a cluster development would allow several families to occupy a 100-acre farm; this would be advantageous if labor-intensive crops could be grown. For a cluster to be effective, we were told that the houses would need to be "some distance apart".

5.3.11 DIFFERENCES IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

In the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (ACW), we learned that the geography where the vast majority of Amish farms are located is different from the surrounding landscape matrix of the County. There are more hills, more wet spots, and fewer large fields. We learned that ACW has the most tree-cover and the greatest number of sawmills in the County. We learned that the smaller farm parcels mean that they can be farmed efficiently with horses given that horse-drawn equipment is maneuverable by comparison to conventional farm equipment. Generally, we were told that ACW is perceived as being more suitable for small farms than other municipalities. In the Township of Howick, it is unclear if there are as many differences in geography by comparison with the surrounding landscape matrix. We were told that it is fairly common to have wetlands. The topography was described as more rolling than hilly. Soils are loamy. In this regard, we were told that there are not a lot of heavy soils that would make it difficult to farm with horses.

[5] There is no universal definition of a 'cluster development'. The Township of Wellesley's 'Rural Mixed-Use/Agricultural Cluster' consists of "lots on which a combination of compatible residential, industrial/commercial and limited, non-commercial farming uses are permitted" (Region of Waterloo, 2010). This concept is discussed in Subsection 5.4.4 and elsewhere throughout this report.

5.4 REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES

5.4.1 OXFORD COUNTY, ONTARIO

Oxford County has a number of small agricultural lots, which are protected by the County OP. Undersized Agricultural Parcel (UAP) is the term used in Oxford County's OP to describe agricultural lots that are smaller than the prescribed minimum lot size. In this regard, UAPs include existing lots under 40 acres or new lots under 75 acres (Hough, 2013). To some extent, the protection of existing UAPs diverts the demand for smaller farm parcels in the agricultural designation. The County recognizes that UAPs are a valuable resource for agriculture and that there is a demand for smaller agricultural lots. According to Oxford County's agricultural parcel inventory data, approximately 6.2% of agricultural lands within the County are undersized and this small area is comprised of 635 lots (Hough, 2013). Recognizing that the existing undersized lots are numerous, the OP includes rules to ensure that existing UAPs are only utilized for agricultural purposes; non-agricultural uses are prohibited. The permitted uses on an existing UAP do not include larger or intensive livestock farm uses, while development of farm buildings, structures, and accessory residential uses are permitted. Local municipalities have the responsibility to restrict the non-permitted uses (Oxford County, 1995).

Proposals for development on existing UAPs have to go through a range of stringent policy requirements to be permitted. This protects the primary function of existing small parcels and ensures the long-term viability of farmland. First, the applicant is required to submit a farm plan, which demonstrates the economic viability of the proposed farm. The level of viability is determined through a review of all necessary information in the farm plan:

> "The applicant shall provide information necessary to evaluate the viability of a new farming operation on an undersized parcel. Information pertaining to the scale and nature of the operation, projected revenues, expenses, financing and any other criteria deemed to be relevant to the proposal shall be provided to the satisfaction of the County of Oxford, at the expense of the applicant" (Oxford County, 1995, pg. 3.1-9).

Second, a third party reviews the farm plan, often with the assistance of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Hough, 2013). This allows the County to evaluate the proposals through informed professional knowledge in the interpretation of a viable operation. Third, prior to the construction of the accessory residential buildings, the applicant is required to enter into an agreement or fulfill a specific zoning requirement. In this regard, an agreement between the local municipality and the developer is necessary; this agreement requires a farm building to be constructed before the residential building (Oxford County, 1995).

The County OP not only includes policies for new development on the existing UAPs, but also permits the creation of new UAPs. Creating a new UAP employs a similar approach described above (Hough, 2013). For the severance of existing land for sale or mortgage, or in the circumstance that any agreement (at least 21 years) is struck, the submission of a consent application to the Land Division Committee of the County is required. However, if the farmland is split into two parts, by road or railway for example, the consent is not needed (Oxford County, 1995).

5.4.2 RENFREW COUNTY, ONTARIO

Numerous small parcel lands are scattered throughout Renfrew County's agricultural designation. These small lands are mostly used for residential purposes (County of Renfrew, 2012). The County therefore discourages the expansion of existing small residential lots and prohibits the severance for additional small lots in the agricultural designation. The severance of agricultural land in Renfrew County is seen as destruction of the sustainable use of farmland and hence, new lot creation is generally discouraged in order to protect farmland capacity. As summarized by a researcher, the conversion of agricultural land in Renfrew County is mostly seen as a "frown upon" issue (Cummings & Associates Inc. 2000). However, some types of smaller lot creation are permitted according to Renfrew County's OP. First, a new lot is permitted when a retiring farmer decides to sell the farm. As stated in the Renfrew's OP, retiring farmers are encouraged to stay in their farms using life-long lease, but building a new residence is not allowed on the farm. The severance of a new lot may be permitted only upon

the sale of the farm (2012). The approval of a second lot to accommodate the existing dwelling is subject to the following conditions:

- "The applicant is a bona fide farmer who has farmed for a minimum of 20 years, has resided on the subject property for the last 10 years and is retiring from farming for reasons of health or age;
- The proposed lot does not include any more land than necessary to support the residence, and, if possible, is on the poorer agricultural lands of the farm holding;
- The applicant has never before been granted a severance for the purposes of a retirement lot; and
- The applicant was farming on January 1, 1994" (County of Renfrew, 2012, pg. 55).

Second, a farmer is allowed to farm and build residential buildings on a small vacant parcel land. The condition to the approval is that the farmer demonstrates the land itself is not practical for agricultural uses and the criteria includes:

- "The lot cannot be used for farming on its own;
- The lot cannot be consolidated with an abutting farm and used for agricultural production;
- The site is suitable for a residence;
- The parcel of land is an existing lot of record; and
- The new use will not sterilize the abutting lands for agricultural purposes" (County of Renfrew, 2012, pg. 55).

5.4.3 BRANT COUNTY, ONTARIO

Brant County has made provisions in its OP to support varying scales of agricultural activities. 40 hectares is the minimum lot size set by the OP for new lot creation in the agricultural designation (County of Brant, 2012). However, consent may be approved to create a lot smaller than 40 hectares. One approach to acquire a smaller lot is through a consent and consolidation process. By consent, the proposed farm can be split into two parts, with one larger lot and one smaller with an existing dwelling (less than 40 hectares). The larger parcel is added to the neighboring property and the existing dwelling unit stays with the remaining parcel (County of Brant, 2012). Beyond that, the consent may be permitted if there is evidence to attest that the proposed farm is a sustainable operation. "Consents for farm parcels smaller than 40 hectares can be considered in special circumstances if the consent is considered

appropriate by OMAFRA or as a result of a peer review, and may be subject to the provision and review of business plans" (County of Brant, 2012).

5.4.4 REGION OF WATERLOO, ONTARIO

Over a number of years, the Region of Waterloo developed the concept of a "Rural Mixed Use/Agricultural Cluster" to satisfy local economic needs and reduce land use conflicts. In 1995, the Region's OP discouraged severances and increased the minimum lot size in the agricultural designation to 40 hectares. In response, the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture and the Region's Anabaptist community jointly developed a mixed-use model to accommodate the Mennonite mode of transportation and housing (McClung, 2003). According to the Region of Waterloo (2010), "Rural Mixed Use/Agricultural Clusters consist of lots on which a combination of compatible residential, industrial/commercial and limited, non-commercial farming uses are permitted" (pg. 81). The mixed-use lots are within two to four hectares in size, are located in the Township of Wellesley, and allow for necessary local facilities such as schools and churches (Region of Waterloo, 2010). In its OP, the Township of Wellesley has designated a total of 50.88 acres of land to the first 'cluster' in the Region; each lot ranges in size from 5.76 acres to 8.08 acres (Township of Wellesley, 2012). The chosen location for the cluster was found to be ideal because the lands were already fragmented and the topography made it less suitable for large-scale agriculture (Township of Wellesley, 2012).

5.4.5 OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Niagara Region has a general objective of protecting the agricultural land base and conserving natural resources for agriculture. Municipalities in Niagara Region are more restrictive than the Region in setting the minimum lot size. For example the Region requires a minimum lot size of 16.2 hectares while the Township of West Lincoln requires 32 hectares (Niagara Region, 2010; Township of West Lincoln, 1998). However, most municipalities, like the Township of West Lincoln, may permit the creation of undersized lots provided that the proposed farm is seen as viable. In the OP of the Township of West Lincoln, the following policy istates:

> "The size of farm parcels shall be maintained in units which are large enough to maintain flexibility to adapt to economic conditions in agriculture in the future. A minimum lot size of 32 hectares will generally be maintained in the Agricultural area; although smaller agricultural lots may be permitted for such uses as greenhouses, market gardening and intensive livestock operations. No farm parcel shall be reduced to a size that is not a viable economic unit" (Township of West Lincoln, 1998, pg. 18).

In several other jurisdictions of North America, there are many public and private sector programs that help young or new farmers access productive farmland. In British Columbia for example, a range of farm mentor programs are available to help young farmers and new entrants connect with retiring farmers and possibly enter into transfer arrangements (British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, 2011). In New York State, Cornell University operates a Small Farm Program to provide training and information to new farmers (Cornell University, 2014). A similar program is administered in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania State University, 2005).

5.5 GIS ANALYSIS AND LOT INVENTORY

Within Huron County there are 4823 parcels of land between one and twenty acres. Of those 4823 parcels, 1431 are completely designated agricultural and only 11 are zoned entirely agricultural. Alternatively, of the 4823 parcels within Huron County between one and twenty acres, 2271 contain at least some agricultural land designation, and 2684 contain at least some agricultural zoning. A further breakdown of this data is illustrated in Table 7, Appendix F. It is important to distinguish the difference between designation and zoning. Land designation is outlined in the County OP and outlines potential or planned uses. Zoning, on the other hand, is legally what is allowable on the parcel. Therefore, it is possible for land to be designated with one use and zoned another. While few of these parcels appear to be zoned completely for agriculture, it is not uncommon for a property to contain more than one type of zoning especially considering the riparian areas present throughout the County which can cause small areas of Natural Environment to be contained within agricultural parcels. Additionally, It is worthwhile noting the largest number of parcels are small (1-4.99 acres) and very large (50-100 acres). 98% of parcels 50-100 acres in size contain some agricultural zoning, while only 49% of

parcels 1-4.99 acres contain some agricultural zoning. While it is likely many of the parcels 1-4.99 acres are located in cities it may be worthwhile to examine the potential of putting more of these parcels into agricultural production. Moreover, Table 8 (Appendix F) details the number of parcels of a prescribed size in terms of their specific agricultural zoning. It is important to consider that because a parcel may contain more than one type of zoning a parcel may be counted more than once. This accounts for the high number of total parcels in Table 8. Table 8 indicates indicates that parcels zoned AG1 (General Agriculture) and AG4 (Agriculture Small Holdings) are most common. Limited agricultural use, as well as home occupation use, bed and breakfasts, and group homes are permitted under AG4. The County may benefit by examining if there is potential to more effectively use these AG4 spaces for intensive agricultural production. Additionally, an inventory was taken of parcels close to settlement areas. The criteria used to select these parcels were (1) Parcels between one and twenty acres, (2) Parcels within 3 Km of an urban center, and (3) Parcels with at least some agricultural zoning. The results are provided in Table 9, Appendix F. The results indicate there are over 650 lots with potential for agricultural production close to an urban area. While further research would need to be conducted to determine the current use, feasibility and appropriateness of agricultural production on these parcels, they may provide an opportunity for local food to be produced on small lots close to the place of consumption. Lastly, an inventory of parcels on low capability soils was taken. Finding parcels designated and/or zoned agriculture further isolated results (Table 10, Appendix F). While 39 parcels between 1 and 4.99 acres and designated agricultural exist, the relatively minute availability of these parcels provides less opportunities for small acreage farms on low capability soil. This is likely a product of the considerably small low capability soil area within Huron County. However, as discussed earlier, because land designation does not specifically indicate agriculture is taking place, there may be opportunities to have some of these parcels zoned agriculture, which would in turn, put some smaller, less productive parcels on the market for agricultural production.

The data indicates there are a large number of parcels between one and twenty acres with agricultural zoning or designation. Despite the large numbers of parcels, there is still

missing information that is necessary to conclude if there are sufficient parcels to support small acreage farms. For example, it is not possible to infer the proportion of the parcel that is zoned or designated agriculture. Therefore, some parcels may contain an acre or less of agricultural zoning or designation while others may contain mostly agricultural designation/zoning. There are a variety of avenues to build on this data and provide more information regarding the potential of small acreage farms. These avenues mainly consist of verifying some of the assumptions the data provide. This would involve researching current uses to provide insight to how many of the parcels identified in this report could potentially host agricultural production. Subsequently, some mechanism would need to be developed to make these parcels more readily available. For example, if many of the identified parcels with agricultural designation are not in agricultural production by the current owner, the Huron residents may benefit from a program, which allows owners to offer up a decided portion of their land for production in which they are compensated with a share of the harvest. Ultimately, after more research is conducted and the parcel situation is more clearly understood, the mechanism to create more agricultural production on smaller parcels must be developed with the local area in mind. The success of the initiative depends on processes and outcomes that align with the local context, meaning that it is deliberately planned specifically to suit Huron County's unique diversity of people and cultures.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 YOUNG FARMERS FINDINGS

The young farmers we interviewed see the high cost of farmland as a major constraint for other young farmers or new entrants into farming. While it is clear that some young farmers have support (e.g. land, credit, etc.) from their families who are already well established in the industry, it would be unrealistic to assume that all young farmers or new entrants can benefit from this circumstance. The difference in opinion about farm size between young farmers underscores an ongoing shift in the way that agriculture and food are valued by society. One young farmer farms profitably on a small-scale and doesn't need hundreds of acres of farmland. On the other hand, from the perspective of the two remaining young farmers that we

interviewed, fewer than 50 or even 200 acres is not seen as viable. The feedback we received on alternative and innovative options suggests that there are distinct advantages and disadvantages of entering into cooperative agreements with other farmers; long-term lease agreements for productive farmland with landowners; and partnerships with retiring farmers. Importantly, the feedback didn't suggest that these options *wouldn't* work, but rather, that these options pale by comparison to owning one's own farm.

6.2 ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY FINDINGS

Our findings suggest that the options we presented to the Anabaptist community to permit agricultural activities to be undertaken on small acreage farm parcels or to give young people an opportunity to get involved in farming and to eventually own their own farms- options that fit within the provincial planning framework- are generally not appropriate because of the social, economic, and cultural needs of the community. The typical family-size within the community means that business agreements would become overly complex and possibly ineffective. With so many individuals involved, it might be difficult to find consensus between partners. Business agreements might also stand in conflict with the community's social and cultural order. Likewise, lease agreements would be difficult to execute. It is an important cultural consideration for families within the community to live and work on the same farm. Building a home on leased land, if this were an option, would add a level of risk that is viewed by the community as unreasonable. Further, the community's primary mode of transportation, the horse-drawn vehicle, means that it would be impractical to travel to leased properties away from home. In the odd case, leasing a neighbor's land might be an option, but the land would need to be available. Partnering with a retiring farmer, in return for a lower up-front purchase price on a farm, would be impractical given the economies of scale involved. The labor that could be delivered would hardly be enough to lower the price of the farm to the point where it would become affordable. To some extent, this is common practice within the community itself. It would be unreasonable for community members to partner with non-Anabaptist farmers due to the division that exists between Anabaptist and modern farming practices.

Our findings suggest that the Anabaptist community, which relies on horse-drawn vehicles as their primary mode of transportation, practice a style of agriculture that is different from modern farming. A great deal of the feedback we received from the community reflects a division or contrast between two agricultural systems in Huron County. The community perceives small-scale mixed farming and large-scale industrial farming as being opposed or entirely different. In terms of the community's small-scale strategy, the most noticeable difference that stands in stark contrast to mechanized farming is the tradition of using horses for traction. The result is that farms must be *small enough* to be worked with horses. This stands in sharp contrast to the status quo where on the whole, large-scale and specialized farms are increasing their operations through consolidation.

Researchers and practitioners of sustainable agriculture have been looking to the Old Order Mennonite and Amish farming system for insight for decades (Stinner et al., 1989). In Iowa, Jarchow et al. (2012) modeled scenarios for agriculture based on different economic objectives and energy availability. For scenarios focused on high energy and resource use, the results of the study published in the peer-reviewed International *Journal of* Agricultural *Sustainability* suggest that environmental loss and social tension will increase. For scenarios focused on human and environmental health, environmental loss will be reversed and societal tension will decrease. These scenarios have important implications for more sustainable futures in agricultural districts like Iowa and even Huron County (Jarchow et al., 2012). At the same time, the social, economic and cultural virtues of the Old Order Mennonite and Amish farming system have important implications for sustainable agriculture (Stinner et al., 1989).

With fewer, but larger farms, the community expressed a concern that government policy, which in this context would include provincial land use policy, prioritizes large-scale industrial farming to the detriment of small-scale farms and the Anabaptist way of life. Ed Bennett (2003), a Professor Emeritus at Wilfrid Laurier University with many years experience working with Ontario's Old Order Amish on land use planning challenges, articulates this perspective in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, a peer-reviewed publication of

the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA):

> "Land-use and agricultural regulations designed for an industrial style of agriculture, are experienced as a threat to the survival of the Old Order Amish agricultural social economy and community…The dominant social paradigm in agriculture, which values a 'bigger-is-better' style of agriculture and corporate Darwinism, views the traditional small-scale family and community-centered farms of the Old Order Amish community as an inferior relic of the past. There is little provision in that paradigm for the cultural values and agricultural diversity of the Old Order Amish community, even though they are positive exemplars of a sustainable community" (pg. 157).

There are policies in the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* that appear to prioritize a large-scale industrial style of agriculture. The most obvious example is Policy 2.3.4.1(c), which speaks to lot creation for residences that have become surplus to farming operations through farm consolidation. In Huron County, these severances are kept to the minimum size required for the use (i.e. a residence) and related water and sewage systems. This is consistent with the tests described by the Policy. In the case of an intact farm unit the unfortunate result of the Policy is this: the farm unit is reduced to its component parts. Although the remnant parcel remains in production, there is no longer an element of agricultural cohesion following the sale of the severed parcel (potentially to a non-farmer). In effect, a connection is lost between the original farm parcel (typically 100 acres in size) and the house and barn(s) that go with the parcel. Uncertainties about various anticipated climate change scenarios and rising energy costs raise the potential for a very different set of circumstances moving forward. For example, a changing climate may necessitate the need for more farms and a renewed focus on meeting Ontario's own domestic consumption needs. This puts a different spin on a Policy that arguably reflects a lack of foresight for future *flexibility*.

Policy 2.3.4.1(c) arguably creates a degree of tension Huron County's agricultural landscape between those who desire small acreage farms and large-scale farmers who need to consolidate to remain competitive in their agri-sector. Our understanding is that new parcels created through Policy 2.3.4.1(c) in Huron County are zoned *AG4: Agricultural Small Holding*, which in our view, is good planning given the circumstances, as it provides for, at the very least,

a level of agricultural intent. The provisions of the Township of ACW's ZBL (2013) for this zone permit, on a maximum of 4 ha (10 acres) of land, a residential dwelling and a suite of accessory uses including a home industry, a home occupation, limited agricultural use, small-scale livestock, and a farm produce sales outlet among other uses (Township of ACW, 2013). Our findings suggest that the community is engaged in a variety of sideline business activities (e.g. blacksmithing) that could benefit from more parcels with this zoning. Increased municipal support for these businesses would make good fiscal sense and would help to energize the local rural economy.

Parcels created through Policy 2.3.4.1(c) are kept to the minimum size required to accommodate the use- a residence. This is good planning from a farmland conservation perspective. At the same time, it limits flexibility for these parcels to be utilized for innovative styles of agriculture. Within this context, our findings suggest that members of the community generally require more than 4 ha of land to create a viable agricultural operation. For example, our findings suggest that the community would require an additional 5 acres (i.e. 15 acres) for a highly intensive and viable produce gardening operation. Within this context, some feed for horses and a milk cow would need to be purchased from a farm supply or neighboring farmer, as there would not be enough land to produce the required inputs for these animals. A select few community members indicated that fewer acres would be required for a viable operation. Within this context, the County is unable to permit increases in lot area beyond 4 ha; this would be inconsistent with provincial policy.

Thinking outside the box, there might be opportunities for community members to purchase surplus farm residences created through farm consolidation, with the caveat that several acres of the seller's adjoining farmland can be leased for agricultural use over the long term (Figure 3). By long-term, we mean an agreement under 21 years (less a day). Agreements longer than 21 years (less a day) would otherwise require municipal approval. Such agreements might, in certain circumstances, create a level of 'purchasing power' for the Anabaptist Community. At the same time, we heard from the community that lease agreements are not a preferable way to solve the small acreage problem. Tenant status can be perceived as a loss of

control. The high cost of rent might also weaken this approach. In 2013, the going rate to rent an acre of good farmland in Ontario was between $250-$300 an acre (Pigg, 2013). Moreover, the seller could otherwise make as much, if not more, by putting the leased land into commodity crop production. We also recognize that opportunities would be limited by the number of severance approvals for residences surplus to a farming operation at any given time. Nonetheless, we feel that it is important to emphasize that the option exists and that it might be worth exploring further.

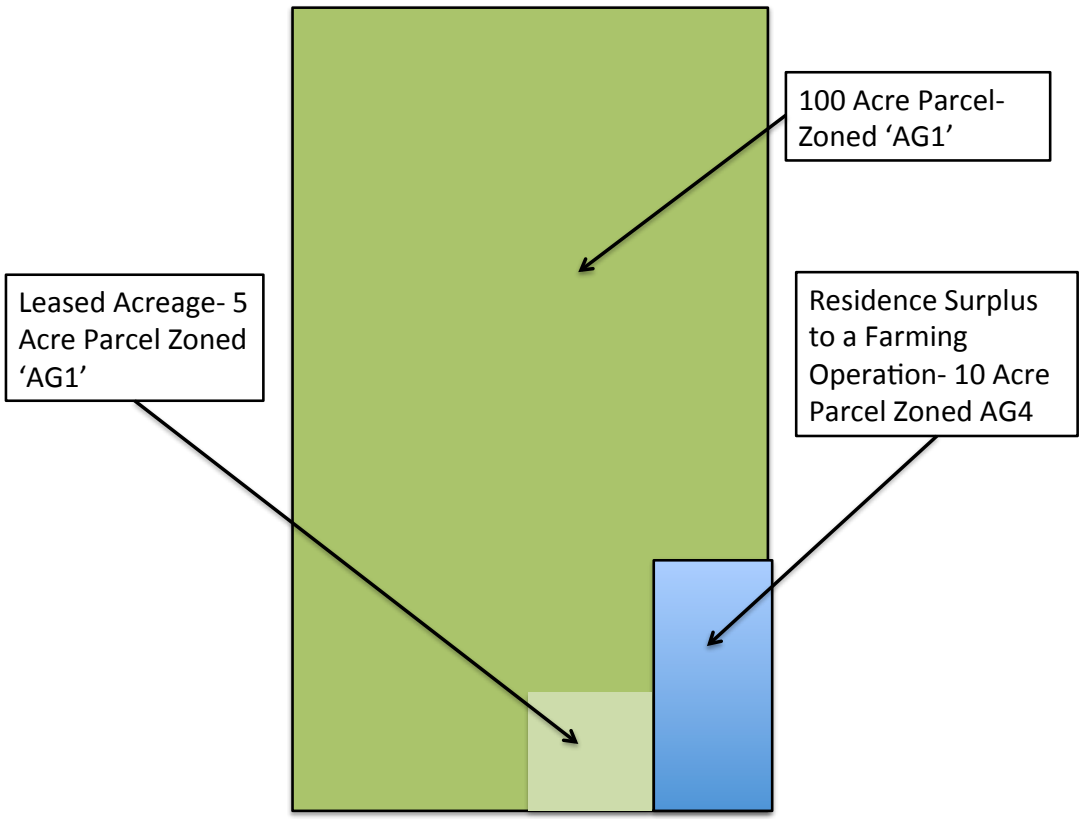

Figure 3 Potential Lease Arrangement Stemming from a Severance for a Residence Surplus to a Farm Operation

The 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* maintains that farms can become bigger but not smaller. Within this context, Policy 2.3.4.1(a) requires new lots for agricultural use to be "...sufficiently large to maintain *flexibility* for future changes in the type or size of agricultural

operations" (Government of Ontario, 2014, pg. 25, emphasis added). To be consistent with this direction, municipalities have set minimum lot size standards relatively high. Bennett (2003) calls attention to this policy and describes a past situation in Southern Ontario where a municipality defined flexibility as: "a farmers capacity to shift from one commodity to another if necessary" (pg. 166). Bennett (2003) argues that "This way of thinking assumes the dominant social paradigm in agriculture: a reliance on global markets and large-scale farm strategies" (pg. 166). The findings from our work with the Anabaptist community suggest that farm operations on less than 30 hectares (75 acres) utilizing small-scale strategies, local markets, and labor-intensive crops can be viable. Our findings also suggest that young people in the community can no longer afford the 100-acre farms that are considered ideal. Even if they could, there is no desire for more acreage because of workload constraints introduced by the community's reliance on horse traction and a cultural desire to take time to be good partners, parents, and neighbors.

Setting minimum lot size standards is not an exact science. The extent of development pressure in Ontario means that it is difficult to ensure that small lots (e.g. lots under 10 ha in size) in prime agricultural areas are not converted for non-agricultural use (Dickinson et al., 2010). Importantly, farmland is a finite resource that is sensitive to imposed change. Without *extreme* caution, setting more lenient minimum lot size standards could have effects that are: high in magnitude; long-term and frequent; and irreversible. There is a possibility that newly created small acreage farm parcels could be farmed and later sold to non-farmers for non-agricultural use. The extent of this change would occur over a wide geographic area, thus compounding any number of the issues that might arise (e.g. farm/non-farm conflict). From a planning perspective, this is both a reasonable and significant concern.

When setting minimum lot size standards, it is difficult to strike a balance between the needs of small-scale farmers, the needs of large-scale farmers, and farmland conservation objectives (Dickinson et al., 2010). Our findings suggest that the Anabaptist community understands and shares these concerns. The Old Order Mennonite and Amish cultural affinity for farming as a socially acceptable means through which to make a living means that they have

a profound respect for the soil and a strong land ethic (Stinner et al., 1989). Our findings suggest that the centrality of agriculture to the Anabaptist way of life means that the community is arguably more likely to stay in farming. It also means that any given member of the community that is engaged in farming is generally more likely to remain with a farm parcel over the long-term. The County and its eight municipalities could apply slightly more flexible, yet still prescriptive OP policies for agricultural lot creation, similar to those policies currently being applied in the Region of Waterloo and Perth County (see Tables 5 & 6). Within this context, the County would still retain the authority to approve or refuse an application for a severance smaller than the minimum lot size standards currently in place. In terms of demonstrating long-term agricultural viability, the burden of proof would be on the applicant. The danger is that this does not eliminate the possibility that approved parcels won't be subject to a transfer of ownership in the future (e.g. to a non-farmer). At this time, we cannot recommend such a change in policy due to the risk factors involved. More research is needed to sort out the legal tools (e.g. conservation easements) for land protection that can be applied to small farm parcels to ensure they can be kept in agriculture over the long-term.

Lot creation policy is an example of a "wicked problem", a term coined in 1973 by H.W.J. Rittel and M.M. Webber, two urban planners at the University California, Berkeley. This is reflected in Briggs (2007) review of the various characteristics of wicked problems. First, wicked problems are difficult to define (Briggs, 2007). In the case of new lot creation policy, and more specifically, the setting of minimum lot size standards, our findings suggests that the Anabaptist community is likely to define the problem differently than say, a farmer who farms many hundreds of acres on a large-scale. Both parties are concerned about their future in farming, but approach the policy problem from different perspectives. Within this context, there is clearly an element of truth behind each perspective- no one version of the policy problem is clearly right or wrong (Briggs, 2007). Second, wicked problems often involve conflicting goals and objectives that add to the difficulty of problem definition (Briggs, 2007). Conflicting goals and objectives are reflected in the County's OP, which states that: "Local Official Plans will support all types, sizes and intensities of agriculture" (County of Huron, 2013, pg.7). At the same time, local OPs place restrictions on the size of new farm parcels through

minimum lot size standards. Third, wicked problems can often lead to unintended consequences (Briggs, 2007). Interventions to make minimum lot size standards more lenient could lead to unintended consequences within the County. Finally, wicked problems rarely fall under the sole responsibility of any particular organization. In the case of policy for new lot creation, municipalities and other planning authorities are required under law to be consistent with the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement*. Changing lot creation policy to be more amenable to small-scale farm strategies requires action at the local, regional, and provincial levels of government- as well as action by the local community at large (Briggs, 2007).

There may be opportunities to work within existing policies where low agricultural capability soil exists. Our findings suggest that the community's farms in the Township of ACW are characterized by a geography that is different from the surrounding landscape matrix. Based on our findings, it is less clear if the same is true for the community's farms in the Township of Howick. However, it is known that the former Township of Turnberry (Belmore) and the former Township of West Wawanosh (St. Helens), along with three adjacent wards, contain one of Ontario's largest concentrations of Class 6 agricultural capability soils south of the Canadian Shield; this area represents a regional anomaly in Southern Ontario (Caldwell, 1982). This unique geography, combined with the size and type of agriculture adopted by the community, suggests that there may be opportunities to work within existing policies to create small farm parcels where low agricultural capability soils exist. Our findings also suggest that the options available to the community for housing and employment are unique by comparison to the broader rural community. This is due in part to the community's reliance on horse-drawn vehicles for travel.

Within this context, it might be possible to create a mixed-use/agricultural cluster in the County. This would require the creation of OP policy at both the upper and lower-tier level, along with appropriate ZBL provisions, similar to what the Region of Waterloo (2009) and the Township of Wellesley (n.d.) has done with their 'Rural Mixed-Use/Agricultural Cluster Policy'. Provided the County worked closely with the community, an area designated for cluster

development could preserve and support the unique social, cultural and economic needs of the community. Our findings suggest that there are several constraints that would need to be resolved to ensure success. First, the homes in the cluster would need to be separated by an appropriate distance. The County would need to work with both the community, and the broader rural community as a whole, to determine an appropriate separation distance between homes in the cluster. Second, each home would need enough acreage to sustain a viable farming operation and a supportive home industry. We have visited the cluster in the Region of Waterloo and agree with the Ontario Municipal Board's decision regarding the matter, which deemed the cluster to be "good planning" (Township of Wellesley, 2012, pg. 6). The purpose and intent of the policy would be to support the unique needs of the community, which relies on horse-drawn vehicles for travel. The ZBL provisions for the cluster would be written to meet this intent and purpose. Tenancy of land or property within the cluster by an individual who does *not* rely on horse-drawn vehicles as a primary mode of transportation would put that individual in violation of the ZBL. This would effectively prevent land or property within the cluster from being sold outside the community, and thus, lowers the risk that the cluster would no longer be used for farming, but instead, for rural estate purposes.

'Natural' severances might allow smaller farm parcels to be created in the County. In certain prescribed circumstances, a stream or body of water can naturally sever a parcel of land into two separate parcels; it is our understanding that woodlot does not create a natural severance. The stream or body of water must be navigable pursuant to the *Beds of Navigable Waters Act* R.S.O 1990, c. B.4. Additionally, the bed of the subject lands must be vested in Her Majesty the Queen in Right of the Province of Ontario. In this manner, the two 'parcels' are not abutting lands for the purposes of Section 50 of the *Planning Act*. Such a severance would require no involvement on the part of the County; there is a legal requirement to have the matter settled before a judge. However, the County would become involved if a building permit was required for the construction of a new residence or if a change of zoning is required for the proposed use. From a planning perspective, natural severances need to be considered with extreme caution. The natural severance of a property for the creation of a small acreage farm

would likely involve the construction of a residential dwelling in most cases. Given the circumstances, these dwellings would be located nearby the natural feature creating the severance. Riparian areas are generally more sensitive to development pressures than the surrounding landscape matrix. On a single parcel, the impacts might not be significant. However, the residual effects of many dwellings on many parcels created through natural severances could add up to a significant cumulative impact (Figure 4). Of course, there is an added risk that these dwellings and parcels could be sold to non-farmers in the future, thus fragmenting the agricultural land base.

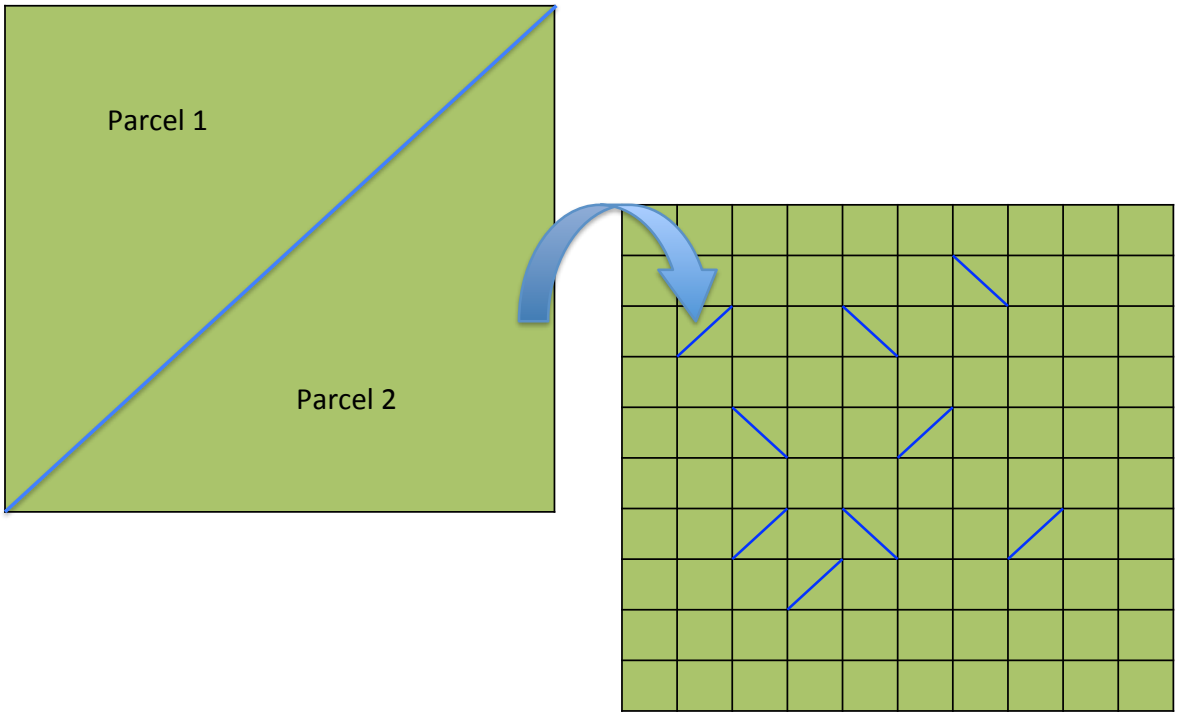

Figure 4 A Number of Natural Severances could have an Adverse Cumulative Effect

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, an 'agrominium' concept emerged in Ontario as an alternative land holding arrangement (Ottawa Journal, 1979; Canadian Condominium Institute, 2012). In 1979, a developer proposed to buy a 606-acre parcel of prime agricultural land in the

Township of North Gwillimbury, north of Toronto. On a 50-acre section comprising the parcel's poorest agricultural capability soils, the developer proposed to construct 150 townhouses that would be operated as a condominium. The remaining farmland was slated to become common property that would be governed by a farm management committee of residents (Ottawa Journal, 1979). The application to develop the 606 acre parcel as an 'agrominium' was denied by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), a decision that was later appealed. The appeal of the OMB's decision was later rejected by the Provincial Cabinet (Ottawa Journal, 1979; Mathews Glenn, 1983). In this case, it appears that the developer was looking for a convenient way to get a 150 townhomes into the countryside- a plan motivated by self-interest (Ottawa Journal, 1979).

The outcome of the North Gwillimbury 'agrominium' might have been different if a legitimate applicant with valid reasoning had made the application. At the same time, it is unclear what bearing the decision by Cabinet would have on a future application. More recently in Ontario, the 'agrominium' concept has emerged once more, but in a far more legitimate way. In 2007, the Ontario Farmland Trust recommended that 'agrominiums' be investigated as a means to support land access to new farmers at an affordable cost. Within Huron County, there is the possibility that an 'agrominium' concept could work on farmland that has been designated for residential development, but is still being cropped. In this manner, "urban farmland" within the County could be recovered (Ontario Farmland Trust, 2008). Since the land has already been designated for development, the risk of farmland loss is resolved. In any given municipality, these areas, where they exist, are generally adjacent to existing built-up settlement areas. Based on our findings, living in such close proximity to an urban area would not be acceptable for the community.

There is more risk when the 'agrominium' concept is applied to land designated and zoned for agricultural use (Ontario Farmland Trust, 2008). Within this context, there would be no guarantee that the 'agrominium' corporation would stand the test of time. With that being said, if the housing element is removed from the equation, the concept becomes one centered on vacant farmland. In this case, a parcel of farmland could be jointly owned and farmed by an

'agrominium' (condominium) corporation created under the auspices of the *Condominium Act* S.O. 1998, c.19. There would be no new parcels created, and therefore, there would be no municipal severance approvals required. However, our research suggests that this would be largely unacceptable from the community's perspective. As there would be no housing element, members of the corporation would have to secure housing elsewhere. As well, this concept would require extensive agreements and cooperative ownership, which might not work for the community. Nonetheless, it remains as a 'fringe' concept that, to our knowledge, has not been legitimately applied in Ontario to date.

6.3 BEST PRACTICES

Best practices for small farm lots have been identified through an examination of other jurisdictions. The findings indicate that OPs are a common tool to identify smaller lots and to direct development activities on these lots. The concept of a smaller lot is defined in the OPs of the jurisdictions we examined as a lot that is a size below the minimum lot size standard set out within the plans. Based on our examination, best practices can be summarized into three strategies. The first strategy is to set strict policies for creating small lots in agricultural designations. The second strategy is to protect existing smaller farm lots. The third strategy is to create cluster developments that are centered on the unique social, economic, and cultural needs of the Anabaptist community. Concerning the first strategy, some jurisdictions have strong intentions to maintain the farm size at a certain level and the enlargement of existing lots is encouraged. The creation of smaller lots might also be approved provided that the proposed farm is an appropriate operation. Different jurisdictions have different policies to define and appraise what is appropriate. Concerning the second strategy, protecting existing small lots, some counties value existing small lots. Development on these lots is permitted, but necessitates a stringent application process that prevents the lots from being used for non-agricultural purposes. Again, the condition of approval is that these lots will remain viable units, which is justified through the submission and review of a range of documents. The third strategy has not been applied in Ontario outside the Region of Waterloo, but has been deemed to be good planning under the circumstances in which it was applied (Township of Wellesley,

2012).

The above-noted best practices could serve as a base for Huron County. For example, the cluster development in Waterloo Region has, in our view, some potential for the Anabaptist community. Within this context, the clustered use of fragmented and low capability agricultural land in the Region of Waterloo responded to the unique needs of the Anabaptist community there. Implementing policy provisions to ensure that existing undersized farms are protected for agriculture might also be feasible; this could be a potential policy direction for Huron County.

6.4 GIS PARCEL DATA

The Geographical Information System (GIS) component of this project was intended to produce an inventory of current small acreage lots within Huron County. Before discussing the GIS findings (see Subsection 5.5, above) it is important to highlight some of the limitations of the data outputs. While the data provided is a good approximation of available parcels, there are some known confounds that may lead to slight inaccuracies. For example, within the parcel data there exist a number of hydro corridors and rail lines. While every effort was taken to remove these parcels from the final datasets, it is not unlikely that some may remain. Furthermore, the data provided may not represent current day zoning, land use, or parcels. Therefore, due to the uncertainties that exist this data should be interpreted as approximations, rather than completely accurate representations, of current small acreages within Huron County.

The data was generated first by isolating individual parcels throughout the County of Huron based on acreage. Parcels were further isolated using a land designation and zoning overlay. Due to the large area of land designated agricultural in Huron County any area left blank in the land designation data was considered agricultural. A selection feature was used that filtered out parcels completely contained by the land designation overlay. The parcels left over, therefore, contained at least some area that was designated agriculture. Additionally, parcels *within* and *completely contained* by the zoning overlay were selected as parcels that

contain some agricultural zoning area and parcels that were completely zoned agricultural, respectively. Data within the filtered parcels contain structure codes, year built, address, Area Roll Number, and parcel size. The availability of this additional data attached to the parcels indicates further information could be disseminated from the raw data. For example, one could determine from the structure codes how many of these parcels contain single detached residential houses or duplexes. Further uses for some of the GIS obtained data will be discussed in the recommendations section. All raw data has been made available to the Huron County Planning Department. Moreover, a detailed step-by-step process of how parcel data was obtained can be found under Appendix A. Additionally, a map is contained in the Appendices (Appendix G) that provides a visual perspective on zoning and designation, low capability soils, and available parcels; larger, more detailed PDF versions have been provided to the County.

The data indicates there are a large number of parcels between one and twenty acres with agricultural zoning or designation. Despite the large numbers of parcels, there is still missing information that is necessary to conclude if there are sufficient parcels to support small acreage farms. For example, it is not possible to infer with the data provided how much area is zoned or designated agriculture of the parcels that are shown to "contain at least some agricultural zoning/designation". Therefore, some parcels may contain an acre or less of agricultural zoning or designation. Furthermore, it is unknown from the data provided if the properties with agricultural zoning and designation are available. For example, which properties are up for sale, which properties are currently owned by individuals who would want to support agriculture on their property, or are there any surrounding land uses that could be of a contamination concern? In sum, the information provided is a satisfactory initial examination of available lots within Huron County, but further analysis of this data is required to be of substantial use to the County.

7 RECCOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings throughout this report, a number of recommendations have been generated (Table 11, below). We have separated these recommendations into categories ranging from local government actions (policy actions), actions that can be undertaken by the

broad rural community (community actions), and actions that can be undertaken by academia (research actions).

Table 1 Recommendations

Policy Actions
Develop local policies and appropriate ZBL provisions to highlight the special importance of existing undersized agricultural parcels in the County.
Work with the Anabaptist community to collaboratively explore policy options for a rural mixed-use/agricultural cluster in the County.
Enable and support small-scale agriculture in near-urban areas.
Create a working group to develop consensus on which actions have the greatest merit moving forward.
Present this research to the Province to increase awareness of barriers to new entrants and the risks that this presents for the future viability of the County's agricultural industry.
Community Actions
So long as severance approvals for residences surplus to farming operations continue, priority for the purchase of these parcels should be given to young farmers that want to farm on a small-scale. Long-term contracts (21 years less a day) to convey farmland on the remnant farm parcel to young farmers would be supportive of small-scale agriculture.
Work with the Ontario Farmland Trust to explore legal tools (e.g. conservation easements) that could be applied to new small acreage farm parcels as a means to permanently protect these parcels for agriculture. This might lower the risk of setting more lenient minimum lot size standards.
Work with property owners to explore opportunities to create small acreage farm parcels on farmland that has been designated and zoned for future development in near-urban areas.
Capitalize on opportunities to create new farm parcels through natural severances where these opportunities exist, recognizing that local regulations and standards can introduce certain constraints.
Develop an online bidirectional tool where existing landowners can communicate with young farmers. This tool would enable both parties to enter into formal or non-formal lease agreements to bring under-utilized farmland back into agricultural production.
Form participatory working groups to develop consensus on which actions have the greatest merit moving forward. These groups should come together with the County working group, in a collaborative setting, to discuss strategic actions for the future.
Explore alternative and innovative options to support land access for young farmers, such as: • Cooperative partnerships; • Lease agreements; and • 'Agrominiums'.
Research Actions
Further research is required to understand how agricultural land use planning can harmonize conflicting public priorities between large-scale and small-scale styles of agriculture.
With the raw parcel data that has been generated, further work could be undertaken to extract data with a higher degree of specificity.

8 CONCLUSION

This report provides an initial first step in understanding the issues that small acreage farms pose in Huron County specifically, and Ontario generally. Huron County has a keen interest in preserving agriculture, as the majority of the County is prime agricultural land with high capability soils. This stresses the importance of provincial policies in preserving agricultural land and preventing fragmentation, which mitigates the potential of agricultural land being taken out of production. In fact, provincial policies have, over decades, made significant progress in conserving farmland. However, it is critical to examine the specific local contexts of all regions to ensure provincial policies are in the public interest and contribute to the vitality of the local economy. Huron County, like other regions in Ontario, is home to unique communities who engage in different practices than the majority. In Huron County, the Anabaptist communities continue to live very traditional lifestyles that differ greatly from the conventional farmer. As the policy review indicates, part of the issue is that provincial policy appears to be written with conventional, large-scale, industrial farm models in mind, which tends to neglect the needs of groups who fall outside of the mainstream (Bennett, 2003). This is an indication that provincial policy is generally right in most cases, but specifically wrong in some local contexts. While each of the eight municipalities support all types, sizes, and intensities of agriculture in their OPs, new lot creation for agriculture is limited by minimum lot size standards.

Our findings indicate that the Anabaptist communities are not specifically in favor of small acreage farms, instead, they would prefer to have larger farms but cannot afford the high cost of large parcels. Therefore, the entirety of the issue boils down to cost. Aspects of today's agricultural business create severe disadvantages for youth and unique communities, such as the Anabaptists. Ikred (1993) commented that farmers get about 25 cents of every dollar spent on food and half of that goes towards paying for inputs. Within the current agricultural system the only means to improve that figure is to increase production utilizing the principles of economies of scale (D'Sousa and Ikred, 1996). Now, consider that Ikred made those comments

two decades ago. Since then farm consolidation, that is the increase in size of farms but decrease in number of farms, has seen a dramatic increase. This trend has contributed to an increase in profit margins, but also an increase in initial costs, which ultimately undermines any increase in profits. Additionally, the cost of prime agricultural land has risen substantially because of commodity prices, which in turn reinforces the need to increase production and achieve economies of scale (Pigg, 2013). Considering the increasing cost of prime agricultural land and the trend towards farm consolidation, it is extremely expensive to purchase farmland that meets the provincially mandated size, or take over an existing operation because of the sheer scale of today's farms. Not only do these issues leave new farmers in a difficult situation whereby large debt is almost a guarantee, but it creates a question of what the fate of agriculture will be when current farmers begin to retire and attempt to sell their operations.

While the aforementioned issues should be of a real concern for the viability and sustainability of agriculture into the future, one should remain optimistic about the opportunities available. Other regions in Ontario have experienced similar issues of provincial policies being insufficient for specific local contexts. Small-scale agriculture has been promoted in other regions such as Oxford County and Waterloo Region with successful outcomes. This provides an existing framework through which the County of Huron and other stakeholders can examine the benefits and drawbacks of previously implemented policies or programs and determine how well they would work or what might need to be fine-tuned if they were to be implemented in Huron County.

It is worth noting the positive changes that can come from small-scale agriculture. The benefits to promoting small acreage farms are not just for the individuals who aspire to farm on a small scale, but benefits would be recognized far beyond the farm itself. Numerous articles discuss the social, cultural, and environmental benefits that small-scale agriculture can bring (Ikred, 1993; D'Sousa and Ikerd, 1996; Schaller, 1993). While conventional farming may be more economically efficient, Roseland (2000) discusses the dangers of emphasizing the market economy while ignoring ecological and social factors, as the three spheres of sustainability are

intricately related. Small-scale farming is a means of diversification that might lead to a more resilient local economy that can better withstand environmental and economic changes. This is something our conventional agricultural system is lacking, as was illustrated by the “Hub and Wheel” graphic created and shared with us by one of our respondents and discussed under the findings section.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: YOUNG FARMERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Alternatives and Innovation on Small Acreage In Huron County
Young Farmers Interview Guide

Thanks for volunteering to speak with us this [morning/afternoon]. Our research seeks to understand the need and demand for small farm lots (20-50 acres or less) in Huron County; and the existing availability of these lots in the County. It is also about exploring alternative (and innovative) options for creating small farm lots that don't necessarily require changes to the existing provincial policy framework. We believe that young farmers are key stakeholders in this research and have an important voice to be heard. Thanks again for volunteering to speak with us.

1. Please tell us about the type of farming that you do?

2. Can you help us understand the situation by describing the need and demand for small acreage among young farmers in Huron County?

3. From your perspective, how do young people in Huron County get involved in farming and eventually own their own farms?

[Related questions; ask as required and check all that apply]:

- [Do they inherit land from their parents?]

Yes	No

- [Do they buy their own farms?]

Yes	No

- [What are the challenges associated with the different approaches?]

Yes	No

4. We are aware of a number of alternative options that might permit agricultural activities to be undertaken on small farm lots. We are also aware of a number of innovative options that might give young people an opportunity to get involved in farming and eventually own their own farms. Because these options won't necessarily change existing lot boundaries in the County, it might be possible to pursue them without changing the provincial policy

framework. We're curious if these options would be appropriate for young farmers. We'll briefly describe each option and we kindly ask that you provide us with your feedback.

A. Young farmers could enter into business agreements with each other. For example, they could divide the total cost of buying farmland and cooperatively manage it.

- Are you aware of this alternative?

Yes	No

- [If Yes]: what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

- [If No]: would you like to learn more?

Yes	No

B. Young farmers could enter into long-term lease agreements with landowners, including a municipality or the County. By long-term, we mean an agreement over 21 years (less a day). Agreements longer than 21 years (less a day) would otherwise require municipal approval. Long-term leases provide farmers with flexibility to produce farm products on land near their homes and/or nearer the markets to which they sell without the responsibilities of land ownership. Long-term leases also encourage farmers to make investments in soil health and farm infrastructure on land that they do not own.

- Are you aware of this alternative?

Yes	No

- [If Yes]: what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative?

_____

_____

- [If No]; would you like to learn more?

Yes	No

C. Young farmers could enter into partnerships with retiring farmers by exchanging their labor in return for a lower up-front purchase price.

- Are you aware of this alternative?

Yes	No

- [If Yes]; What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative?

- [If No]; would you like to learn more?

Yes	No

D. Do you have any additional ideas or thoughts about possible options that we haven't covered?

Yes	No

5. Can you provide us with an estimate of the minimum number of acres that a young farmer in Huron County would require to earn a living?

0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50

Other: ____

6. Some farmers have businesses on their farms that help them to earn a living alongside their farm income. For example, a farmer might sell firewood or produce maple syrup to supplement their main income from market gardening or livestock farming.

   A. Are there business activities alongside farming that you are currently engaged in or would like to engage in *[e.g. food processing, wholesale produce, livestock, etc.]*?

   B. From your perspective, how much acreage would be required to support these business activities?

0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50

Other: ____

7. We mentioned that long-term leases can provide farmers with flexibility to produce farm products on land near their homes and/or nearer the markets to which they sell. This option would require travel. From your perspective, is it important to live on the acreage that you are farming or could you travel to farm away from your home?

8. Is there anything that we haven't covered that you would like to discuss?

APPENDIX B: ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Alternatives and Innovation on Small Acreage In Huron County
Anabaptist Community Questionnaire

Thanks for volunteering to speak with us this [afternoon or evening]. Our research seeks to understand the need and demand for small farm lots (20-50 acres or less) in Huron County; and the existing availability of these lots in the County. It is also about exploring alternative (and innovative) options for creating small farm lots that don't necessarily require changes to the existing provincial policy framework. We believe the members of your community are key stakeholders in this research and have an important voice to be heard. Thanks again for volunteering to speak with us.

1. Please tell us about the type of farming that you do?

2. Can you help us understand the situation by describing the need and demand for small acreage within your community?

3. Please describe how young people in your community get involved in farming and eventually own their own farms?

[Related questions; ask as required and check all that apply]:

- [Do they inherit land from their parents?]

Yes	No

- [Do they buy their own farms?]

Yes	No

- [What are the challenges associated with the different approaches?]

Yes	No

4. We are aware that some municipalities have allowed more than one house on a farm by permitting multiple dwellings to be attached together or several houses in a cluster development. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach from your perspective?

5. We are aware of a number of alternative options that might permit agricultural activities to be undertaken on small farm lots. We are also aware of a number of innovative options that might give young people an opportunity to get involved in farming and eventually own their own farms. Because these options won't necessarily change existing lot boundaries in the County, it might be possible to pursue them without changing the provincial policy framework. We're curious if these options would be appropriate for your community. We'll briefly describe each option and we kindly ask that you provide us with your feedback.

   A. Farmers could enter into business agreements with each other. For example, farmers could divide the total cost of buying farmland and cooperatively manage it.

   - Are you aware of this alternative?

Yes	No

   - [If Yes]: what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative?

   - [If No]: would you like to learn more?

Yes	No

   B. Farmers could enter into long-term lease agreements with landowners, including a municipality or the County. By long-term, we mean an agreement over 21 years (less a day). Agreements longer than 21 years (less a day) would otherwise require municipal approval. Long-term leases provide farmers with flexibility to produce farm products on land near their homes and/or nearer the markets to which they sell without the responsibilities of land ownership. Long-term leases also encourage farmers to make investments in soil health and farm infrastructure on land that they do not own.

- Are you aware of this alternative?

Yes	No

- [If Yes]: what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative?

- [If No]; would you like to learn more?

Yes	No

C. Young farmers could enter into partnerships with retiring farmers by exchanging their labor in return for a lower up-front purchase price.

- Are you aware of this alternative?

Yes	No

- [If Yes]; What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of this alternative?

- [If No]; would you like to learn more?

Yes	No

D. Do you have any additional ideas or thoughts about possible options that we haven't covered?

Yes	No

6. Can you provide us with an estimate of the minimum number of acres that a family within your community would require to earn a living?

0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50

Other: ____

7. Some farmers have businesses on their farms that help them to earn a living alongside their farm income. For example, a farmer might sell firewood or produce maple syrup to supplement their main income from market gardening or livestock farming.

C. What types of business activities alongside farming are you and your community currently engaged in or would like to engage in *[e.g. sawmills, furniture manufacturing, abattoirs, etc.]*?

D. How much acreage would be required to support these business activities?

0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50

Other: ____

8. We mentioned that long-term leases can provide farmers with flexibility to produce farm products on land near their homes and/or nearer the markets to which they sell. This option would require travel. Is it important for families within your community to live on the acreage that they are farming or could they travel to farms away from their homes and settlements?

9. Is there anything that we haven't covered that you would like to discuss?

APPENDIX C: HISTORY OF LAND USE GUIDELINES AND POLICY INFLUENCING LOT CREATION IN HURON COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

HURON COUNTY'S FIRST OFFICIAL PLAN (1973)

The County of Huron can be considered a pioneer in planning for agriculture (Caldwell, 1995). In 1971, the County laid the groundwork for a countywide OP that acknowledged agriculture as the primary land use within its geographic boundaries. This early work on land use policy development in Huron County helped establish that it is in the best interest of Ontario's rural communities to create land use policies that support agriculture (Caldwell, 1995). When the County's first OP was released in 1973, it became the first provincially approved countywide OP in Ontario.

The overriding policy for rural development in the 1973 OP acknowledged the importance of maintaining the agricultural character of the County and reads, "Rural development will occur in such a way as to maintain the Rural nature and characteristics of the agricultural area" (County of Huron, 1973, pg. 45). The OP included policies to direct consents for the severance of land in areas designated 'Rural'. These policies supported severances in situations where, for example, a severed parcel was to be used for agricultural purposes (County of Huron, 1973). Additional policies speak to the primacy of agriculture in the County by identifying, for example, the need to prevent, "scattered isolated residential development [as] a primary goal" and the need to have "regard for the potential conflict between rural residential and residential uses" (County of Huron, 1973, pg. 47-48). These policies reflect an early concern about the vulnerability of farmland (and the farm community at large) to non-farm development.

COUNTRYSIDE PLANNING (1976)

In 1976, the Government of Ontario and the County of Huron jointly commissioned a study entitled *Countryside Planning* that developed a forward-thinking methodology for land use planning centered on five "planning perspectives", with each encompassing its own "resource system" (MacLaren, 1976, p. 14). MacLaren (1976) elaborates:

> "A planning 'perspective' expresses the dominant purpose of land use development and physical and economic activity within an area. It provides the viewpoint that is intended to underlie every planning decision for the area. The 'perspective' reflects the resources of the area and expresses the preferred purpose or function against which all uses of land will be evaluated and designated" (p. 14).

MacLaren (1976) asserted that such a perspective was required for the County's agricultural landscape. *Countryside Planning* addressed the importance of flexibility for farming operations and recognized that, within an agricultural area, the existence of a high number farms of varied sizes is part of maintaining flexibility:

> " There must be an opportunity for each farm operation to acquire or dispose of land, change crops or operation techniques. A large area devoted to farming and containing a large number of varied size farms is a suitable environment for a flexible farm operation. Large agricultural areas and a high number of farms are essential to the [agriculture] perspective" (p. 70).

Countryside Planning also reflected a broad concern about farmland loss and highlighted a refined set of issues caused by non-farm development in the County. In this regard, MacLaren (1976) states:

> "It has been clearly established, in the research phase of this study, that long-term farming is essentially incompatible with residential land uses which have no supportive role in the agricultural system. Over the long run, non-farm related residences within a farming area will increasingly hinder farming activities and in most areas, would eventually destroy the competitive position of farming" (pg. 38, emphasis added).

In this manner, *Countryside Planning* conveyed quite succinctly, the implications of unsystematic lot creation in the countryside. The phrases 'long-term', 'agricultural system', 'long run' and 'competitive position' would become transparent in later policies on lot creation in Ontario's agricultural landscape. *Countryside Planning* pushed the boundaries of land use policy and provoked a government response to concerns about farmland loss in the form of the *Foodland Guidelines* (Troughton, 1981; Misek-Evans, 1992; Caldwell, 1995).

FOODLAND GUIDELINES (1978-1994)

In 1978, the Government of Ontario endorsed the *Foodland Guidelines* as a policy statement on planning for agriculture (Government of Ontario, 1978, Caldwell, 1995; Caldwell et al., 2007). The policies generally aimed to:

- Designate and protect lands with agricultural potential (with emphasis placed on Specialty Crop Lands and Canada Land Inventory [CLI] class 1-4 soils);
- Restrict non-farm uses (e.g. residential developments) from establishing outside of urban boundaries except when they could be justified;
- Protect extensive and unbroken agricultural areas including areas with large farm parcels;
- Separate new uses from livestock operations with pre-defined setbacks; and
- Discourage severances including those for retiring farmers (Government of Ontario, 1978; Caldwell, 1995).

The *Foodland Guidelines* gave considerable attention to the subject of lot creation for agricultural uses, that is- the division of an existing farm parcel into two or more new and independent farm parcels. This is a type of severance that would later be dubbed a "farm split" (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Within this context, the *Foodland Guidelines* established that: "consideration must be given to maintaining parcel sizes that will be useful for agricultural purposes in the long run" (Government of Ontario, 1978; pg. 17). To achieve this objective, the *Foodland Guidelines* established four criteria by which farm splits were to be assessed:

1) In areas of high agricultural capability, the *Foodland Guidelines* established that, "any severance proposals should be agriculturally related and should not reduce the future usefulness of the parcel in question for agricultural purposes" (Government of Ontario, 1978, pg. 17). In this manner, the *Foodland Guidelines* reflected a desire to maintain contiguous tracts of high quality farmland in Ontario.

2) The *Foodland Guidelines* established that "Farm parcels must stay sufficiently large to permit making changes which may have different land requirement to be economically

sound" (Government of Ontario, 1978, pg. 17). In this manner, the *Foodland Guidelines* reflected a desire to maintain farmers' flexibility. The objective was to remain competitive in a changing economic environment (Government of Ontario, 1978). It is important place this within the context of the changes that were occurring in Canada's agri-food sector at the time. Nine years prior to the Government of Ontario's endorsement of the *Foodland Guidelines,* the seeds of a shift in agricultural policy were planted in the 1969 Report of the Federal Task Force on Agriculture entitled *Canadian Agriculture in the Seventies*, which promoted moving away from a socialized concept of agriculture to a focus on free enterprise and competitiveness (Roppel et al., 2006). Such a shift in policy has led to many changes to Canadian agriculture. Farm size is an example. In 1986, the average farm size in Ontario was 78 hectares (193 acres). By 2006, this had increased by 20 percent to 94 hectares (232 acres). Over the same period, the number of individual farms in Huron County has decreased by 20 percent (Cummings, 2005).

3) To ensure that farm parcels have the qualities that are appropriate for agriculture, the *Foodland Guidelines* established that any proposed farm parcel must be of a size that is suitable for the type of agriculture undertaken in an area and suitable for the type of agriculture proposed:

"While some kinds of specialized farming such as fruit or vegetable production can be viable on a much smaller parcel size than livestock or traditional field crop operations, these smaller farms are generally concentrated in areas where necessary related facilities such as cold storage or processing are available, or in areas very close to markets. It is generally inappropriate to create smaller land parcels for such activities in farming areas that are not geared to such activities. The related facilities may not be available and, should the venture not succeed, the parcel created for the purpose does not have the flexibility to revert to some other form for future agricultural purposes" (Government of Ontario, 1978, pg. 17).

In this manner, the *Foodland Guidelines* made a linkage between the areal extent of farm parcels in a particular geographical area and the type of agriculture that is undertaken in

that area.

4) To ensure that farm units are capable of operating successfully, the *Foodland Guidelines* established that "any new farm parcels created, as well as the parcel being retained, should be viable farm units" (Government of Ontario, 1978, pg. 17).

In a historical context, these criteria are of particular relevance to this research, as they have influenced current policies for lot creation on lands designated for agriculture in Ontario.

GROWTH AND SETTLEMENT POLICY GUIDELINES (1992-1994)

In 1992, the Government of Ontario released the *Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines*. The goal was to " foster land use planning practices and policies which result in efficient, economically viable, sustainable and environmentally sound growth and settlement patterns" (Government of Ontario 1992, p. 3). In this regard, the overriding intent was to direct growth into existing settlement areas and away from significant or sensitive areas, including prime agricultural lands. The *Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines* are mentioned here because they need to be applied in union with the *Foodland Guidelines* (Government of Ontario, 1992).

COMPREHENSIVE SET OF POLICY STATEMENTS (1994-1996)

In 1991, the Government of Ontario established the Sewell Commission to examine the requirement for planning reform in Ontario. The Commission's work resulted in a distinct shift in the way the Government of Ontario perceived its role in land use planning. Prior to the process of planning reform, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs was responsible for the review and approval of OPs, OP amendments, subdivision applications and in some cases, consents (Anderson, 1995).

As a result of planning reform, the role of the Government of Ontario shifted from what Anderson (1995) describes as a "reactive regulatory development control function, to a more proactive policy-oriented function" in which many approval functions were transferred to the

upper-tier (i.e. the County or Regional) level of municipal government (p. 39). As one outcome of this restructuring, the Government of Ontario substituted the *Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines* for a package of *Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements* that was comprised of six provincial policy statements, including a statement specific to agriculture that replaced the *Foodland Guidelines* (Government of Ontario, 1995; Caldwell, 1995; Caldwell et al., 2012). From a farmland conservation perspective, it has been argued that the *Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements* represented a weakening of the earlier policy direction established by the *Foodland Guidelines* (Caldwell, 1995). For example, the agricultural land policies permitted lot creation for residential infilling. However, the policies were in many ways more restrictive. For example, the policies eliminated new severances for farm help and provided better overall direction to planning authorities for development approvals (Caldwell et al., 2012).

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (1996-2005)

In 1996, a Conservative Government led by Mike Harris replaced the New Democratic Party (NDP) government that introduced the *Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements*. In 1997, the Harris Government replaced the six statements with a *Provincial Policy Statement* that reflected the *Foodland Guidelines* and the previous statement on agriculture established by the *Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements* (Caldwell et al., 2012). The 1996 *Provincial Policy Statement* (as amended, 1997) permitted severances that created new residential lots, including farm retirement lots and lots for residential infilling (Government of Ontario, 1997). Overall, the 1996 *Provincial Policy Statement* provided weak policy direction on lot creation in Ontario's agricultural landscape. The fact that it afforded new opportunities to exclude land from agricultural areas for urban expansion led Caldwell et al. (2012) to suggest that it was not as committed to protecting agricultural land for agricultural uses by comparison to the *Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements.*

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (2005-2014)

In 2005, a new *Provincial Policy Statement* came into effect. It provided stronger policy direction on lot creation in Ontario's agricultural landscape than the previous iteration (Government of Ontario, 2005a). Unlike the 1996 *Provincial Policy* Statement, but in-line with

the *Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements*, the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement* reverted back to the previous implementation standard of "shall be consistent with" (Government of Ontario, 2005b, pg. 1). When viewed in comparison to the 1996 implementation standard of "shall have regard to" (Government of Ontario, 1996), this new standard forced planning authorities to be consistent with the provincial direction afforded to them through the new statement (Government of Ontario, 2005c). Although different provincial governments have swayed back-and-forth between these implementation standards, "shall be consistent with" is generally considered to place stronger emphasis on provincial interests (Caldwell et al., 2007).

With one exception (i.e. severances for surplus farm residences), the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement* no longer permitted severances for new residential lots in lands designated for agriculture. This included the removal of lot creation policies for farm retirement lots and residential infilling. The effort to remove these policies was driven, in part, by an investigation by researchers at the University of Guelph. Between 1990 and 2005, there were over 15,500 new lots created in Ontario's agricultural landscape. Nearly 80 percent of these severances were for farm-related and non-farm related purposes (Caldwell and Weir, 2002). Although the focus of this research is centered on opportunities for small acreage for agricultural and agricultural-related uses, it is important to recognize that once a lot has been created in lands designated for agriculture, there is a very real risk of that lot becoming excluded from agriculture in the future (e.g. through transfer of ownership to a non-farmer).

APPENDIX D: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING PARCEL DATA FIGURES

Data Used:

- Parcel Fabric (HC_Assessment.shp)
- Lower Tier boundaries (HC_Lower_Teirs.shp)
- Zoning fabric (ACW_Zones.shp, Blu_Zones.shp, CHu_Zones.shp, God_Zones.shp, How_Zones.shp, HuE_Zones.shp, MTu_Zones.shp, NHu_Zones.shp, SHu_Zones.shp)
- Designation fabric (ACW_Landuse.shp, Blu_Landuse.shp, CHu_Landuse.shp, God_Landuse.shp, How_Landuse.shp, HuE_Landuse.shp, MTu_Landuse.shp, NHu_Landuse.shp, SHu_Landuse.shp)
- Urban points (HC_Urban_Point.shp)
-Roads (Roads.shp)
- Structure Codes (HC_StructureCodes.shp)
- CLI Information (a040p.shp, a040p_cmp.dbf)

Conversion of measurements (m3 to acres):

1. Open the Attributes of the parcel fabric
2. Right click on the “Shape_Area”
3. Click Calculate Geometry and click “yes”
4. Under “property:” ensure “Area” is selected and under “units:” choose desired output (Acres was used in this report)
5. From here it is possible to isolate and generate other layers from selected attributes. For this report, separate parcel layers were created from 1-4.99, 5-9.99, 10-14.99, 20-49.99, and 50-100 acres.

Creating Separate Parcel Layers:

1. Selecting the desired polygons in the attributes table
2. Right clicking the layer under the table of contents
3. Under “selection” click “create layer from selected features”

Joining Parcel and Structure Code Data:

1. Right click on the parcel fabric and select “Join”
2. Under “what do you want to join to this layer” select “Join attributes from a table”
3. Select “ARN” as the field that the join will be based on
4. Select “HC_StructureCodes” as the table to join to the parcel fabric layer

5. Select “ARN” as the field in “HC_StructureCodes” to base the join on
6. Click Okay

Isolating Agricultural Designation and Zoning Layer:

It is necessary to isolate agricultural zoning and designation because all the different designation and zoning types are contained within a single shapefile. Therefore, much like the process of creating separate parcel layers, it is necessary to create separate agricultural zoning and designation layers. Separate agricultural zoning layers were generated for AG1 to AG5 by selecting the desired features and clicking “create layer from selected features”. However, designation was a little more challenging. Due to the sheer area of agricultural designation in Huron County not all counties have a layer dedicated to agricultural designation. Therefore, any blank area within these counties indicates agricultural designation. Therefore, a layer was created that included all designations except agricultural.

Isolating Class 4-7 Soils:

CLI Shapefiles were collected from the OMAF website.

1. Insert both a040p.shp and a040_cmp.dbf into ArcGIS
2. Right click on the shapefile layer and select join
3. Under “choose the field in this layer that the join will be based on” select “CLI”
4. Under “Choose the table to join to this layer” select a040p_cmp
5. Once the two files have been joined bring up the attributes of the newly created layer.
6. The column labeled “CLASS” denotes the type of soil present
7. Highlight all 4-7 class polygons and right click on a040p. Under “selection” select “create layer from selected features”

Parcel Isolation in Agricultural Designation and Zoning:

To isolate parcels that were completely/somewhat zoned/designated agricultural the selection feature was used and sorted through a variety of filters. The list below details the procedure used to obtain the data presented in this report.

Selecting 100% Agricultural Designated Parcels:

1. Click selection in the menu bar and select “Select By Location…”
2. Under selection method choose “Select Features From”

3. Choose appropriate target layers (ie. Parcels 1-4.99 acres, Parcel 5-9.99 acres, etc)
4. The source layer that should be selected is the layer that was created which contains no agricultural land designation
5. Under "Spatial Selection Method For Target Features" select "Intersect the Source Layer Feature"
6. After it has run its selection open up the target layer's attributes
7. Click the button labeled "Switch Selection"
8. The highlighted features are those which are completely designated agriculture

Selecting Partially Agriculture Designated Parcels:

1. Click selection in the menu bar and select "Select By Location…"
2. Under selection method choose "Select Features From"
3. Choose appropriate target layers (ie. Parcels 1-4.99 acres, Parcel 5-9.99 acres, etc)
4. The source layer that should be selected is the layer that was created which contains no agricultural land designation
5. Under "Spatial Selection Method For Target Features" select "Completely within Source Layer"
6. After it has run its selection open up the target layer's attributes
7. Click the button labeled "Switch Selection"
8. The attributes previously highlighted for 100% agricultural designation are also highlighted in this instance. Therefore, it is necessary to subtract the total number obtained in the previous section to remove the 100% agriculturally designated parcels.

Selecting 100% Agricultural Zoned Parcels:

1. Click selection in the menu bar and select "Select By Location…"
2. Under selection method choose "Select Features From"
3. Choose appropriate target layers (ie. Parcels 1-4.99 acres, Parcel 5-9.99 acres, etc)
4. The source layer that should be selected is the layer created that contains all the agriculturally zoned area.
5. Under "Spatial Selection Method For Target Features" select "Completely within Source Layer"
6. Under the parcel attributes table, all the highlighted features will be those zoned entirely agricultural

Selecting Partially Agricultural Zoned Parcels:

1. Click selection in the menu bar and select "Select By Location…"
2. Under selection method choose "Select Features From"
3. Choose appropriate target layers (ie. Parcels 1-4.99 acres, Parcel 5-9.99 acres, etc)
4. The source layer that should be selected is the layer created that contains all the agriculturally zoned area.
5. Under "Spatial Selection Method For Target Features" select "Intersects the Source Layer"
6. Run a second selection filter with the same criteria Except:
    A. Under "Selection Method" select "Add to the currently selected features in"
    B. Under "Spatial Selection Method For Target Layer Features" select "Are within the source Layer Feature"
7. The attributes previously highlighted for 100% agricultural zoning are also highlighted in this instance. Therefore, it is necessary to subtract the total number obtained in the previous section to remove the 100% agriculturally zoned parcels.

Selecting Parcels With Soils Class 4-7:

1. Under the Selection Tab choose "Select By Location"
2. The selection method should be "Select Features From"
3. Select Parcels 1-4.99, 5-9.99, etc that you wish to isolate
4. Under source layer ensure the layer that was created which contains soil classes 4-7 is selected
5. The Spatial selection method used should be "are within source layer feature"
6. The selected parcels within the attribute table denote parcels that contain class 4-7 soils.

Selecting Parcels Zoned and Designated Agricultural and Have Soils Classed 4-7:

1. Under the Selection Tab choose "Select By Location"
2. The selection method should be "Select Features From"
3. Select Parcels 1-4.99, 5-9.99, etc that you wish to isolate
4. Under source layer ensure select the layer that was created that contained all agricultural zoning
5. Apply the selection criteria
6. Run another "selection by location"
7. Under selection method select "Remove from currently selected features"
8. Target layers should remain the same
9. Source Layer will be the layer created that contains all non-agricultural land designation

10. Spatial selection method should be" are completely within the source layer feature
11. Apply the criteria
12. Run another "selection by location"
13. Under selection method choose "select from currently selected features"
14. Target layers should remain the same
15. Source layer will be the layer created that contains class soils 4-7
16. Spatial selection method should be "Are within source layer feature"
17 Apply the criteria
18. The remaining selected parcels are those that are zoned and designated agricultural and have soils classed 4-7.

Selecting Parcels with Some Agricultural Designation and Soils Classed 4-7:

1. Under the Selection Tab choose "Select By Location"
2. The selection method should be "Select Features From"
3. Select Parcels 1-4.99, 5-9.99, etc that you wish to isolate
4. Under selection method choose "select features from"
4. Under source layer select the layer created that contains all non-agricultural designation
5. The spatial selection method should be "Are completely within Source layer feature"
6. Apply the criteria
7. Open the attribute tables of all Target layers and reverse select all currently selected attributes
8. Run another "selection by location"
9. The selection method should be "Select from currently selected features"
10. Target layers remain the same
11. Source layer should be the layer created with soils classed 4-7
12. Spatial selection method should be "are within source layer feature"
13. Apply the criteria
14. Selected parcels in the attributes are parcels with some agricultural designation and have soils classed 4-7.

APPENDIX E: CURRENT PROVINCIAL LAND USE POLICY DIRECTION ON LOT CREATION IN HURON COUNTY'S AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE, ACCOMPANYING POLICY TABLES

Table 1 OP Lot Creation Policy, County of Huron (2013), Ontario

Minimum Lot Size (ha)	Relevant OP Policy	Relevant OP Section
N/A	*"Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and will only be permitted for: agricultural uses; agriculture-related uses that are small scale and directly related to the farm operation and required in close proximity to the farm operation (the reference to "small scale" is not intended to permit the separation of uses from an individual farm that are normally incidental to, and able to be accommodated on that individual farm); a residence surplus to a farming operation; minor lot adjustments; and infrastructure or public service utilities which cannot be accommodated through easements or rights-of-ways; subject to the policies of local Plans (Minister's Modification 7).* The creation of any lot for agricultural purposes must be a size appropriate for the type of agricultural uses common in the area and sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations. Lot sizes in agricultural areas will be set out in local Plans".	2.3.7

Table 2 OP Minimum Lot Size Policy, Municipality of Central Huron (2014), Huron County, Ontario

Minimum Lot Size (ha)	Relevant OP Policy	Relevant OP Section
30	"Lot sizes shall be based on the long-term needs of agriculture and shall ensure lands remain flexible for all forms of agriculture promoted by this Plan. Lands must be used for the production of food, fibre or breeding stock. All severances will respect the farmer's ability to farm. A minimum lot size of 30 hectares shall apply to all new lots being created and is based on the long-term needs of agriculture. Notwithstanding the 30 ha minimum lot size, there may be instances where a smaller lot size may be permitted".	3.1.3.4

Table 3 OP Minimum Lot Size Policy, South Huron (2013), Huron County, Ontario

Minimum Lot Size (ha)	Relevant OP Policy	Relevant OP Section
38	"Lot sizes shall be based on the long-term needs of agriculture and shall ensure lands remain flexible for all forms of agriculture promoted by this Plan. Lands must be used for the production of food, fibre, biomass or livestock. A minimum lot size of 38 hectares shall apply to all new lots being created and is based on the long-term needs of agriculture. Notwithstanding the 38 hectare minimum, there may be instances where a lot of a smaller size may be permitted (refer to SECTION 12.0 LAND DIVISION POLICY)".	4.4.2

Table 4 OP Severance Policy for Agricultural Uses, Township of West Lincoln (1998), Niagara Region, Ontario.

Minimum Lot Size	Relevant OP Policy	Relevant OP Section
32	"The size of farm parcels shall be maintained in units which are large enough to maintain flexibility to adapt to economic conditions in agriculture in the future. A minimum lot size of 32 hectares will generally be maintained in the Agricultural area; although smaller agricultural lots may be permitted for such uses as greenhouses, market gardening and intensive livestock operations. No farm parcel shall be reduced to a size that is not a viable economic unit".	4.4(b)(ii)

Table 5 OP Severance Policy for Agricultural Uses, Township of Wellesley (n.d.), Region of Waterloo, Ontario

Minimum Lot Size	Relevant OP Policy	Relevant OP Section
40	"Where a new farm is proposed to be created, or where part of an adjoining farm is to be severed and merged in title with an existing farm, the development application will comply with the following: a) Each resultant farm that is created must have a minimum area of 40 hectares; or b) Resultant farms having less than a minimum of 40 acres will: i. Be of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) proposed. Such development applications will be evaluated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, or other professional(s) knowledgeable in farm economics and management to determine if the proposed farm is of sufficient size and nature to be reasonably expected to sustain a commercially viable operation as an independent farm unit and for flexible re-use for agricultural purposes in the event of business failure; and ii. Be permitted by a site specific zoning by-law amendment".	3.2.1

Table 6 OP Severance Policy for Agricultural Uses, Perth County (2008), Ontario

Minimum Lot Size	Relevant OP Policy	Relevant OP Section
Varies by Local Municipality	"Applications for consent to create new farm lots may be granted provided that all lots involved (e.g. severed and retained lot) satisfy the following criteria: a) Farming must be the existing and/or intended use. The size of each lot involved should be appropriate for the type of farming use proposed and the type of farming used proposed must be suitable given the agricultural characteristics of the general area within which the subject land is situated and the availability of such related facilities as may be necessary to support the proposed farming use; b) The size of each lot involved be large enough to provide the current/future farm operators with the flexibility of expanding, diversifying, or intensifying the farm operation, or of changing the type of commodities produced in order to meet changing economic conditions and trends in agriculture. When assessing farm size, consideration shall be given to matters such as the type of farm use proposed; the amount of productive land; topography; drainage characteristics; amount of woodlot; extent of bottom lands, organic soils, wetlands, and other unimproved lands; the size and configuration of proposed lots for tillage for livestock purposes; the presence of or necessity for farm buildings or structures to support the farming use; and the location of neighboring uses, buildings, and structures. c) As a general rule the splitting of original farm units (i.e. 40.5 hectare/100 acre) into smaller	5.6.2.1

	farm parcels is to be discouraged. The minimum area lot frontage requirement for farm use as set out in the local municipality's implementing Zoning By-law must be met; d) Each lot involved in the application must meet the minimum distance separation provisions of MDS I and MDS II; e) It may be necessary for the consent granting authority to impose appropriate conditions to ensure the appropropriateness of the agricultural component of an application. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following: i. Where new farming use is proposed and the construction of buildings or structures are necessary to carry out the use, approval may be subject to substantial completion of such buildings or structures prior to the deed stamping stage of consent approval. In addition, it may be a requirement that required farm buildings or structures be completed or substantially completed prior to construction of any farm residence; ii. Approval may be conditional upon the prohibition/restriction of residential buildings on the subject lands through a site specific Zoning By-law Amendment and an agreement registered on title; and iii. Where livestock and/or poultry operations are involved, approval may be conditional upon a suitable nutrient management plan.	

	When addressing the issues of farming use suitability, flexibility, and viability, the local municipal Council, County Council, and/or the consent granting authority may consult with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. In assessing and applying the above-noted criteria, the fact that an application meets the minimum lot size and lot frontage requirements for a farm use in the applicable Zoning By-law does not mean that the suitability of the farming use type, and the flexibility criteria have been met. Each of the criteria above must be satisfied independent of the others".	

APPENDIX F: GIS ANALYSIS AND LOT INVENTORY FINDINGS, ACCOMPANYING TABLES

Table 7 Farm Parcels by Size, Designation and Zoning, Huron County, Ontario

Parcel Acreage	Total # of Parcels	Total Parcels Designated 100% Agriculture	Total Parcels with Some Agricultural Designation	Total Parcels Zoned 100% Agriculture	Total Parcels with Some Agricultural Zoning
1 - 4.99	3349	1037	1395	9	1671
5 - 9.99	828	260	440	1	529
10 - 14.99	376	79	246	0	276
15 - 19.99	270	55	190	1	208
20 - 49.99	1454	332	1074	10	1347
50 - 100	3467	537	2901	5	3411

Table 8 Farm Parcels by Zoning, Huron County, Ontario

Zoning	Parcels 1 - 4.99 Acres	Parcels 5 - 9.99 Acres	Parcels 10 - 14.99 Acres	Parcels 15 - 20 Acres	Total
AG 5	2	1	0	0	3
AG 4	988	261	75	45	1369
AG 3	97	33	15	12	157
AG 2	72	19	1	6	98
AG 1	1567	506	262	203	2538

Table 9 Farm Parcels near Settlement Areas, Huron County, Ontario

Parcel Sizes (Acres)	# Of Parcels With Some agricultural Zoning and Within 3 Km of an Urban Center.
1 - 4.99	504
5 - 9.99	166
10 - 14.99	45
15 - 20	35

Table 10 Farm Parcels with Low Agricultural Capability Soil, Huron County, Ontario

	Parcels with Any Designation/Zoning in Class 4-7 Soils	Parcels with some agricultural zoning and designation and have class soils 4-7	Parcels with Some Agricultural Designation and Soils Class 4-7
Parcels 1-4.99	59	6	39
Parcels 5-9.99	16	6	10
Parcels 10-14.99	15	3	14
Parcels 15-19.99	8	2	8
Parcels 20-49.99	30	4	30
Parcels 50-100	48	9	45

APPENDIX G: MAP OF HURON COUNTY SHOWING AGRICULTURAL ZONING, NON-AGRICULTURAL DESIGNATION, AND LOW CAPABILITY SOILS.