

# Peel Region

**Total Land Area (Census 2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 124,695 ha  
**Area of Census Farms (2016)<sup>2</sup>:** 33,726 ha  
**Area of Region in the Greenbelt<sup>3</sup>:** 56,052 Ha  
**Percentage of Region in the Greenbelt<sup>3</sup>:** 45%  
**Gross Farm Receipts (2016)<sup>4</sup>:** \$94.1 million  
**Value of Cash Receipts per Ha of Census Farm:** \$2,791  
**Population (2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 1,381,739



**Growth Rate 2006-2011<sup>1</sup>:** 11.8%  
Growth Rate 2011-2016: 6.5%

<b>Prime agricultural area redesignated to a development designation (including urban, residential, and employment)</b>	<b>3,274 ha</b>
<b>Prime agricultural area redesignated to a rural designation</b>	<b>0 ha</b>
<b>Land designated as a prime agricultural area with a site-specific amendment to allow additional uses</b>	<b>127 ha</b>

## **Purpose of the Summary**

This region summary is part of a wider study on farmland availability in Ontario. The study quantifies the conversion of prime agricultural areas based on Official Plan Amendments in upper and single-tier municipalities across the Province over a 14-year study period from 2000-2014. This summary is meant to provide detail of the findings for the Region of Peel. In conjunction with similar case studies from other counties/regions in Ontario, these findings will form the basis of the University of Guelph's *Measuring Farmland Conversion* research project.

## **Methods in Brief**

The study involved the examination of the Region of Peel's Regional Official Plan and Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPAs). In Peel Region, the files which document ROPAs approved by the Region and/or the Ontario Municipal Board during the years 2000 to 2014 were accessed through the Region's online list of amendments. The assistance of staff at the Region of Peel's Integrated Planning Division is appreciated in the identification of pertinent files. Farmland conversion has been captured in three categories:

- 1) Prime agricultural areas redesignated to a development designation (including but not limited to urban, residential, commercial, industrial, recreational designations);
- 2) Prime agricultural areas redesignated to a rural designation;
- 3) Land designated as a prime agricultural area with a site-specific amendment to allow additional uses.

Housekeeping type amendments have not been tallied as contributing to farmland conversion. Housekeeping type amendments arise as OP schedules are updated to align land use designations with more accurate parcel lines, or to reflect existing physical features that have been excluded from previous OP schedules.

### **Agricultural Land Use Designations in Peel Region**

In the Region of Peel, the *Rural System* covers all lands outside the urban boundary. Within the *Rural System* lies *Rural Service Centres* and the *Prime Agricultural Area*. The *Prime Agricultural Area* is identified in a single contiguous area located in the southern part of the Town of Caledon, below the brow of the Niagara Escarpment. The northern parts of the *Prime Agricultural Area* overlap parts of the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation (ORMC) Plans. The *Prime Agricultural Area* in the Region of Peel is defined as generally comprising Canada Land Inventory (CLI) soil capability for agriculture rating of Class 1, 2 and 3<sup>6</sup>. The Region of Peel’s Regional Official Plan also indicates that there are CLI Class 1 lands in the east and west parts of the City of Brampton; however, these lands fall within the urban boundary and are identified as part of the *Urban System*. *Rural Areas* are designated in the lower-tier official plans, not in the Regional Official Plan. Lower-tier municipalities in the Region of Peel are the planning authority for permitting non-farm uses in the Region’s *Prime Agricultural Area*, subject to the provisions of the Provincial Policy Statement and a local official plan amendment.

### **Trends in Agricultural Land Conversion**

**Development designations:** Over the course of the study period, three ROPAs pertained to the conversion of *Prime Agricultural Area* to a development designation. Two were for the expansion of a “rural serviced area”, while the other was for the expansion of the “urban serviced area”. The urban boundary expansion added 2,428 hectares to the City of Brampton’s urban area, while the two expansions of the rural serviced area will provide 645 hectares for residential and employment uses in the Town of Caledon. These lands fall outside the urban boundary, but will have full municipal water and wastewater services. Altogether, the three ROPAs redesignated 3,073 hectares of *Prime Agricultural Area* to a development designation. This type of farmland conversion, organized by ROPA adoption date, is captured in category 1 of **Table 1**.

**Rural Agriculture:** Peel Region does not use a rural land use designation to define areas outside the *Prime Agricultural Area* but where agriculture remains the primary use. Zero OPAs were captured under category 2 of **Table 1** for Peel Region.

**Site-Specific Amendments:** Over the course of this study, site-specific permission was granted one time to allow a golf course in the *Prime Agricultural Area*. This amendment is captured under category 3 of **Table 1**. Additional site specific amendments may have been made by lower-tier municipalities in Peel Region to permit additional uses in the *Prime Agricultural Area*; however, they were not captured in this study.

**TABLE 1 PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREA CONVERTED THROUGH ROPAS IN REGION OF PEEL BY ADOPTION DATE (2000-2014)**

Year of Regional OPA adoption or approval by the OMB	Number of OPAs related to the conversion of the prime agriculture area	CATEGORY 1 Prime agricultural area redesignated to a development designation (ha)	CATEGORY 2 Prime agricultural area redesignated to a rural designation (ha)	CATEGORY 3 Land designated as a prime agricultural area with additional site-specific permitted uses (ha)

2000	0	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	0
2002	0	0	0	0
2003	0	0	0	0
2004	1	0	0	127
2005	1	437	0	0
2006	1	2,428	0	0
2007	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0	0
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0
2014	1	208	0	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3073</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>127</b>

\*Totals may not add up due to rounding

**Provincial Land Use Plans:** The Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) cover 45% of the Region’s land base. In the *Protected Countryside* of the Greenbelt Plan, the expansion of settlement areas and the redesignation of any *Prime Agricultural Areas* is prohibited (except in the prescribed limited circumstances). The policies of the Greenbelt Plan apply to ROPAs initiated after December 16, 2004. Policies in the ORMCP *Countryside Area* are less restrictive, however, long-term protection of *Prime Agricultural Areas* within the plan is required where such lands are identified in an official plan. The policies of the ORMCP apply to ROPAs initiated after November 17, 2001.

The site-specific policy to permit a golf course on 127 hectares pertained to lands that fell partially within the Greenbelt Plan and partially within the ORMCP plan. The other three amendments considered in this study pertained to lands outside the Greenbelt Plan. Prime agricultural land conversion in Peel Region is organized by application date and location relative to the borders of the Greenbelt in **Table 3**.

**TABLE 2 PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREA CONVERTED THROUGH ROPAS IN PEEL REGION BY APPLICATION DATE AND LOCATION RELATIVE TO THE GREENBELT PLAN**

	Outside the Greenbelt		Within the Greenbelt		Total
	Application Date		Application Date		
	Pre 2005	2005-2014	Pre 2005	2005-2014	

<b>Prime agriculture area redesignated to a development or rural designation (ha)</b>	2,865	208	0	0	<b>3,073</b>
<b>Prime agricultural area with site-specific policies allowing additional uses (ha)</b>	0	0	127	0	<b>127</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,865</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,200</b>

\*Table 1 includes files based on their approval date within the 2000-2014 study time frame. Table 2 is organized based on application date so that we can determine what policy regime the approved amendments was evaluated under, and may include files that were initiated prior to the 2000-2014 study time frame.

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- <sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2012. Peel, Ontario (Code 3521). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> OMAFRA (adopted). 2012. Area of Census Farms (Acres) by County, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011. With data from Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture.
- <sup>3</sup> MMAH. 2005. “Greenbelt Outer Boundary” and MMAH, 2012. “Municipal Boundary - Upper Tier and District” data projected in UTM 17N.
- <sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. 2014. Table 004-0233 - Census of Agriculture, farms classified by total gross farm receipts in the year prior to the census, CANSIM.
- <sup>6</sup> Regional of Peel. 2014. Official Plan; Office Consolidation 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan/pdfs/rop-consolidation-oct2014.pdf>