

CHATHAM-KENT



Total Land Area (Census 2016)¹: 247,052 ha
Area of Census Farms (2001)²: 223,549.2 ha
Area of Census Farms (2016)²: 238,905 ha
Gross Farm Receipts (2016)⁴: \$654,138,783
Gross Farm Receipts per Hectare of Census Farm: \$2,738
Population (2016)¹: 102,042
Growth Rate 2006-2011⁵: -4.2 %
Growth Rate 2011-2016¹: -2 %

Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Development Designation (Including Urban, Residential, And Employment) 2000–2017	73.5 ha
Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Rural Designation 2000–2017	0 ha
Land Designated As A Prime Agricultural Area With A Site-Specific Amendment To Allow Additional Uses 2000–2017	58 ha
Total Amount of Prime Agricultural Land Loss 2000-2017	131.44 ha
Total Prime Agricultural Land Loss as a Percentage (Per Census Farm Area 2001)	0.059%

Purpose of the Summary

This county 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 17-year study period from 2000–2017. This summary is meant to provide detail of the findings in the County of Chatham-Kent. 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 Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) approved by the municipality of Chatham-Kent, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and/or the Ontario Municipal Board for the municipality of Chatham-Kent during the years 2000–2017. Chatham-Kent has been a single-tier municipality since the 22 municipalities that comprised the City of Chatham and the County of Kent

were amalgamated in 1998. The first Official Plan for the municipality was adopted by council in 2005, and later approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2008.

Data was collected in Chatham-Kent using electronic copies of OPAs, which were provided by staff at the Municipality's Planning and Development Division. Relevant OPAs from 2000–2007 were identified by staff using archived Council Reports. Please note that this method potentially impacted the accuracy of the data, as the OPAs captured within this timeframe were not the final by-laws. The assistance of staff at Chatham-Kent's Planning Services Department are appreciated in making this research possible. Changes in farmland availability have been captured in three categories:

- 1) Prime agricultural areas redesignated to a development designation (including but not limited to urban, residential, commercial, industrial, and 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 Official Plan schedules are updated to align land use designations with more accurate parcel lines, or to reflect existing physical features.

Agricultural Land Use Designations in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Chatham-Kent's Official Plan states that over 91% of the land base is cultivated agriculturally and considered to be primarily prime agricultural lands. This definition of prime agricultural land is consistent with the Canadian Land Inventory system and includes Class 1–3 soils and specialty crop areas. Identified prime agricultural lands are included in the *Agriculture Area* designation land use designation. These lands are noted to surround all of the growth centres, including the Primary and Secondary Urban Centres and Hamlets.

Trends in Agricultural Land Conversion

Development Designations: Over the course of the study period, ten amendments were captured which converted 73.5 hectares of prime agricultural lands to a development designation. Three of these OPAs converted agricultural lands to a commercial use. Three of them redesignated agricultural lands for residential use, and the other four converted land to industrial, public facility and natural heritage use. These amendments are captured in category 1 of Table 1.

Rural Designation: There were no relevant rural designations in Chatham-Kent's Official Plan therefore no OPAs were captured in category 2 of Table 1.

Site-Specific Amendments: Seven site-specific amendments affecting agricultural lands were captured which added special policies to 58 hectares of agricultural lands. Two OPAs allowed for severances on subject lands, two added policies to permit institutional and public facilities, one permitted a parking lot on existing church, one permitted commercial use (a Go-Cart racing track), and the final one permitted a marijuana operation for medical purposes. In 2016, OPA 42 was used both to facilitate the protection of a Provincially Significant Wetland, and to permit an existing dwelling to be severed from those lands for continued residential use. This OPA demonstrates that though designated Agricultural, these special policies are not necessarily removing land that was in production. These amendments were captured in category 3 of Table 1.

Table 1. Prime Agricultural Area Converted Through OPAs In Chatham-Kent By Adoption Date (2000–2017)

Year of OPA Adoption or Approval by the OMB	Number of OPAs Related to the Conversion of Prime Agricultural 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	3	7	0	4.9
2004	2	17.8	0	0
2005	2	6	0	1.5
2006	0	0	0	0
2007	0	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0	0
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	2	5.6	0	23
2012	0	0	0	0
2013	1	0.9	0	0
2014	2	24	0	0.9
2015	1	0	0	6.5
2016	2	12.15**	0	21.2
2017	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	16	73.5	0	58

*Totals may not add due to rounding. **Note, this OPA did not take any land out of production but instead was used to reflect existing land use and could therefore be interpreted as a housekeeping amendment. Though this land is identified by OMAFRA as Class 2, the majority of the parcel contains a provincially significant wetland.

Provincial Land Use Plans: Chatham-Kent’s Official Plan is subject to the Provincial Policy Statement, however Chatham-Kent does not fall under the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, or the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

1. Statistics Canada. 2017. Chatham Kent, CTY [Census division], Ontario and Ontario [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released May 3, 2017.
2. OMAFRA (adopted). 2017. Area of Census Farms (Acres) by County, Ontario: 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016. With data from Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture.
3. MMAH. 2005. “Greenbelt Outer Boundary” and MMAH, 2012. “Municipal Boundary - Upper Tier and District” data projected in UTM 17N.
4. Statistics Canada. Table 004-0233 – Census of Agriculture, farms classified by total gross farm receipts in the year prior to the census, every 5 years (number of farms reporting unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database).
5. Statistics Canada. 2012. Chatham-Kent, Ontario (Code 3531) and Canada (Code 01) (table). Census 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.