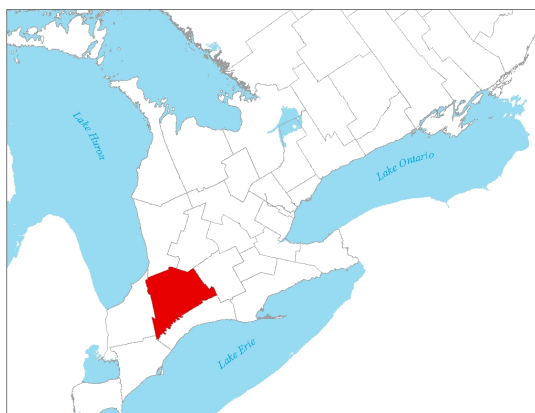


# MIDDLESEX



**Total Land Area (Census 2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 331,727 ha  
**Area of Census Farms (2001)<sup>2</sup>:** 251,035 ha  
**Area of Census Farms (2016)<sup>2</sup>:** 249,248 ha  
**Gross Farm Receipts (2016)<sup>4</sup>:** \$781,498,738  
**Gross Farm Receipts per Hectare of Census Farm:** \$3135.42  
**Population (2016)<sup>1</sup>:** 455,526  
**Growth Rate 2006-2011<sup>5</sup>:** 2.6%  
**Growth Rate 2011-2016<sup>1</sup>:** 3.7%

Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Development Designation (Including Urban, Residential, And Employment) 2000–2017	<b>78.3 ha</b>
Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Rural Designation 2000–2017	<b>0 ha</b>
Land Designated As A Prime Agricultural Area With A Site-Specific Amendment To Allow Additional Uses 2000–2017	<b>97.28 ha</b>
<b>Total Amount of Prime Agricultural Land Loss 2000–2017</b>	<b>175.58 ha</b>
<b>Total Prime Agricultural Land Loss as a Percentage (Per Census Farm Area 2001)</b>	<b>0.05%</b>

## 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 Middlesex. 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 County of Middlesex, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and/or the Ontario Municipal Board for the County of Middlesex during the years 2000–2017. In Middlesex, all lower-level municipalities are subject to and guided by the County's Official Plan, which was first adopted by the county in 1993 and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 1998. The lower tier municipalities that

comprise the County include the Township of Strathroy-Caradoc, the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, the Municipality of Thames Centre, the Municipality of North Middlesex, the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex, the Township of Lucan Biddulph, Township of Adelaide Metcalfe, and the Village of Newbury. During data collection, relevant OPAs were collected and documented by staff at Middlesex County's Planning and Development Department. Their assistance is 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. OPAs that redesignate land in order to permit an aggregate operation have similarly been recorded as a housekeeping amendment and not included as contributing to farmland loss.

### **Agricultural Land Use Designations in the Middlesex County**

In Middlesex's OP, prime agricultural lands are designated in the *Agriculture* land use designation. Agriculture is prioritized within the OP and the *Agricultural* areas comprises all lands not designated *Settlement*, or *Natural Environment*. Prime agricultural lands generally include specialty crop lands or Canada Land Inventory Classes (CLI) 1–3, the *Agriculture* designation in Middlesex is used to denote both land where prime agricultural soils dominate, and also includes the less productive CLI Class 4–7 soils and areas where there is a concentration of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas in Middlesex have been identified by OMAFRA or an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province.

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

**Development Designations:** Seven official plan amendments were captured which converted a total of 78.3 hectares of prime agricultural lands to a development designation. Three of these official plan amendments converted 43.7 hectares of agricultural land to the *Natural Environment* designation. Two redesignated small parcels of agricultural lands to the *Settlement* designation for residential use (2.3 hectares in total) and the remaining two converted the land for a commercial (24.5 hectares) and recreational use (7.8 hectares). These amendments are captured in category 1 of Table 1.

**Rural Designation:** Middlesex does not designate prime agricultural land under a rural designation, and therefore no relevant OPAs were captured. This is reflected in category 2 of Table 1.

**Site-Specific Amendments:** Eight site-specific amendments affecting agricultural lands were captured. Six of these amendments were small in size (10 hectares or less) and allowed for a range of industrial and commercial uses on the subject land including a golf course, self-storage facility, a special care home, and transportation services. The largest amendment permitted the development of an outdoor commercial paintball site on a 43-hectare parcel. These amendments are captured in category 3 of Table 1.

**Table 1. Prime Agricultural Area Converted Through OPAs In the County of Middlesex 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	2	41.3	0	0
2002	0	0	0	0
2003	1	1.2	0	0
2004	2	0	0	20
2005	2	2.4	0	3.05
2006	0	0	0	0
2007	1	0	0	4.2
2008	4	25.6	0	62
2009	1	7.8	0	0
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0
2013	1	0	0	4
2014	0	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0
2016	0	0	0	0
2017	1	0	0	4.03
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>97.28</b>

\*\*Totals may not add due to rounding.

**Provincial Land Use Plans:** Middlesex County does not fall into the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, nor the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Official Plan Amendments in Perth County are not subject to the policies of these provincial land use plans.

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1. Statistics Canada. 2017. Middlesex, 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. Middlesex, Ontario (Code 3531) and Canada (Code 01) (table). Census 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.