
MEMORANDUM

APAC-C 2-2021

Subject: Niagara Region Official Plan Draft Agricultural System Policies

Date: February 26, 2021

To: Agricultural Policy and Action Committee

From: Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP, Manager Community Planning

The purpose of this memo is to share a **DRAFT** Agricultural System policy set (Appendix I) that is in development to support the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process.

As APAC members are aware, the Region is currently undertaking the development of a new Niagara Official Plan. Niagara Region staff have previously presented to APAC on the development of both the Natural Environment and Watershed Planning components of the Official Plan. While work on Natural Environment and Watershed Planning is ongoing, a draft Agricultural System policy set has been prepared for review and feedback.

Background work for the Agricultural System chapter has been underway since 2015, with a number of reports that have been prepared for Council. The policies recognize that Niagara Region is home to an active and vibrant farming sector which includes a wide range of farming types including grape and tender fruit, greenhouse/ nursery & floriculture operations, oilseeds and grain operations, livestock operations, and more.

Some highlights of the draft policy set include:

- Updates to language and definitions for Provincial conformity purposes. This includes the use of Provincial definitions, for example, the use of Prime Agricultural Area in place of Good General Agriculture, and Specialty Crop Area in place of Unique Agricultural Area;
- Streamlining of the Region's Farm Diversification policies;
- Introduction of requirements for Agricultural Impact Assessments to minimize and mitigate impacts from proposed non-agricultural uses on agricultural operations and the Agricultural System;

- Simplification of the entire policy set and removal of duplicated or repeated policies, such as matters related to servicing in rural areas;
- Removal of hamlet policies from the Agriculture and Rural section of the plan. Going forward, hamlet policies will be included with the balance of settlement area policies;

Staff would like to stress that the attached policies are draft, and for discussion and feedback purposes. A report to the Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee in April of 2021 aims to circulate these draft policies on a wider scale. However, APAC and other interested agricultural stakeholders can submit comments at any time through the [Region's Official Plan project page](#): or by emailing Katie Young, Planner (Katie.young@niagararegion.ca).

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Community Planning