

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA  
AGRICULTURAL POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**APAC 01-2018  
Friday, January 26, 2018  
Committee Room 4  
Niagara Region Headquarters  
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold ON**

Committee: Councillors Baty, Easton, Hodgson (Committee Chair), Joyner; G. Janes, J. Kikkert, B. Schenck (Committee Vice Chair), J. Schonberger, L. Troup, A. Vaughn, A. White

Absent/Regrets: Caslin (Regional Chair), Councillors Darte, Jeffs; R. Bator, K. Wiens

Staff: E. Acs, Senior Planner, K. Lotimer, Administrative Assistant, K. Provost, Economic Development Officer

Others Present: N. Gill (Ontario Federation of Agriculture), C. Hamilton (Niagara South Federation of Agriculture), H. Swierenga (OFA Member Service Representative), M. Wiley, A. Witteveen (West Niagara Agricultural Society)

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Hodgson called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

**3.1 Irrigation Strategy Update**

James Farrar, President, Jayeff Partners, provided an update on the Niagara Region Irrigation Strategy Plan. Topics of the presentation included:

- Chair's Message - Niagara's Strengths
- Water's natural ups and downs
- Zones below the escarpment
- Getting policy and practice alignment
- Strategic Vision, Principles and Actions
- Next Steps

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Moved by B. Schenk  
Seconded by A. Vaughn

That the Irrigation Strategy Update presentation **BE RECEIVED**; and

That the Agricultural Policy Action Committee **ENDORSE** the Niagara Irrigation Strategic Action Plan.

**Carried**

3.2 Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System & Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Erik Acs, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Services, provided an overview of the Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System & Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Topics of the presentation included:

- Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Growth Plan - Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System
- Niagara Region's Comments
- Draft Agricultural Land Base
- Niagara Region: OMAFRA Agricultural System Data Review
- Niagara Region's Comments

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Moved by B. Schenk  
Seconded by A. White

That the Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System & Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe presentation **BE RECEIVED**.

**Carried**

4. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

5.1 **APAC-C 01-2018**  
2018 Meeting Schedule

Moved by Councillor Baty  
Seconded by Councillor Easton

That APAC-C 01-2018, being the 2018 Meeting Schedule, **BE AMENDED** to remove the February 16, 2018 meeting date.

**Carried**

6. **CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

6.1 **APAC 3-2017**  
Moved by Councillor Baty  
Seconded by Councillor Easton

That Report APAC 3-2017, being the minutes of the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee meeting held on September 22, 2017, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

**Carried**

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of other business.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday April 20, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. in Committee Room 4.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

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Councillor Hodgson  
Committee Chair

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Kelly Lotimer  
Administrative Assistant

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Frank Fabiano  
Acting Regional Clerk



# Niagara Region Irrigation Strategy Action Plan

PRESENTATION TO AGRICULTURE POLICY & ACTION COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2018

# Acknowledgments

The funding for this strategy has been provided by:

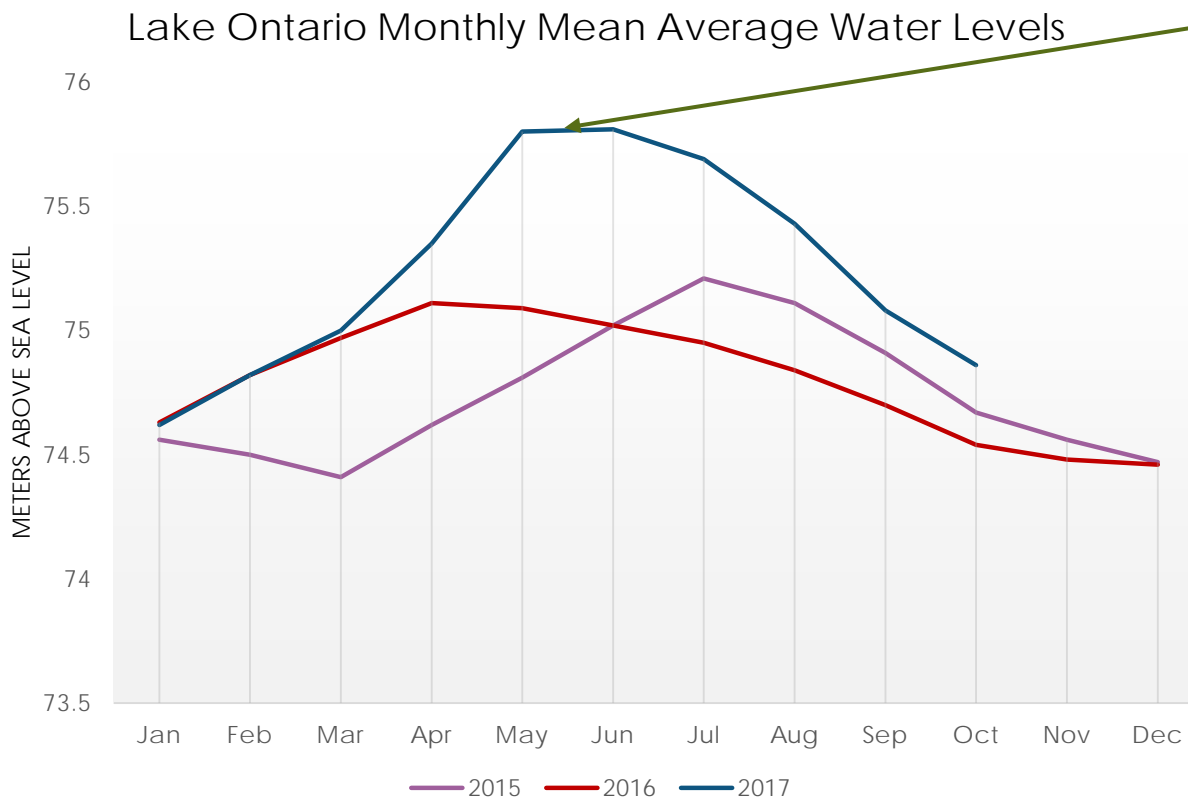
- Growing Forward 2 delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council
  - Niagara Peninsula Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association
  - Ontario Tender Fruit Growers
  - Grape Growers of Ontario
  - Region of Niagara
- ▶ Growers, OMAFRA staff, municipal government staff and other water users have been willing and helpful in meeting with the consultants [James Farrar, Charles Lalonde, Erik Lockhart and Tiffany Svensson] and providing their insights and experiences

# Chair's message – Niagara's strengths

- ▶ Abundance of good quality surface water
- ▶ Proven public-private partnership for irrigation water management (Niagara-on-the-Lake municipality-grower model)
- ▶ Recognition by governments that mitigating climate change is a high priority

**“Together we can implement this strategy and make a positive difference to the future of agriculture in Niagara” – Bill Schenck**

# Water's natural ups and downs



Lake Ontario reached its highest level in 2017 in one hundred years

**“It is a case of getting the water to the farms where it is needed for irrigation reliably and cost effectively.”**



# Zones below the escarpment

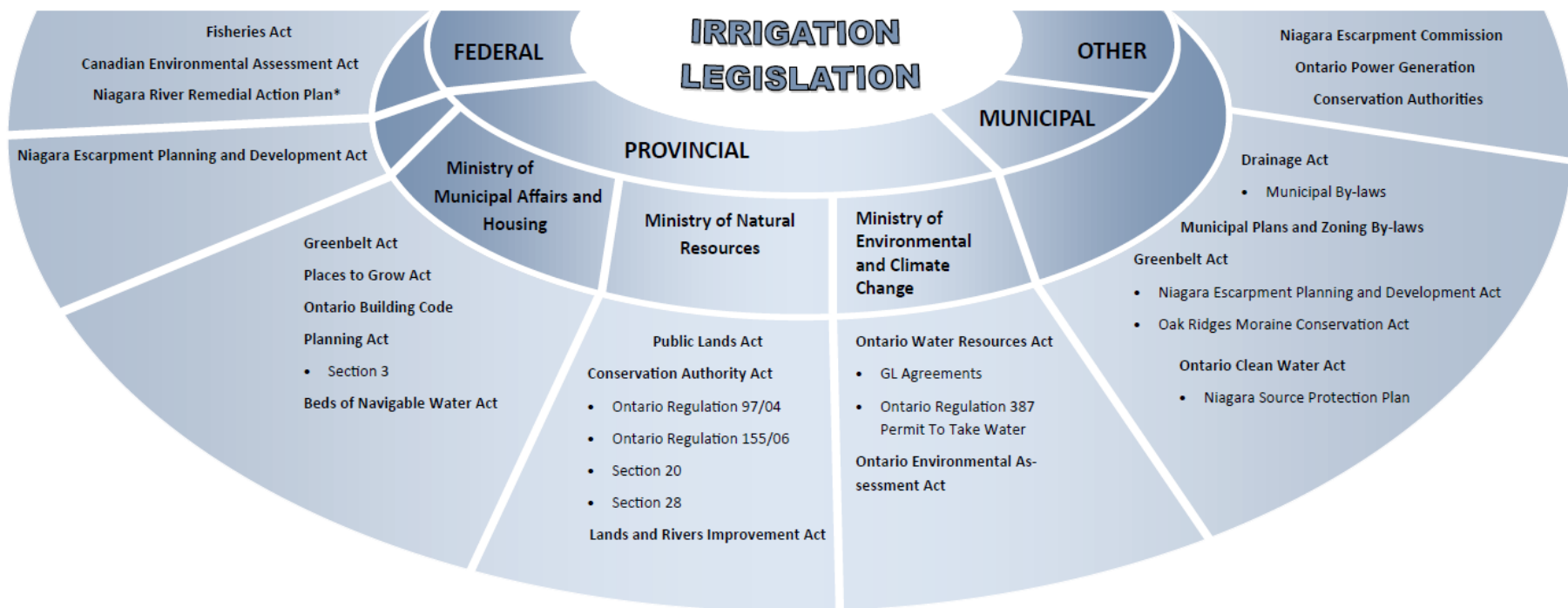


Lincoln

St. Catharines

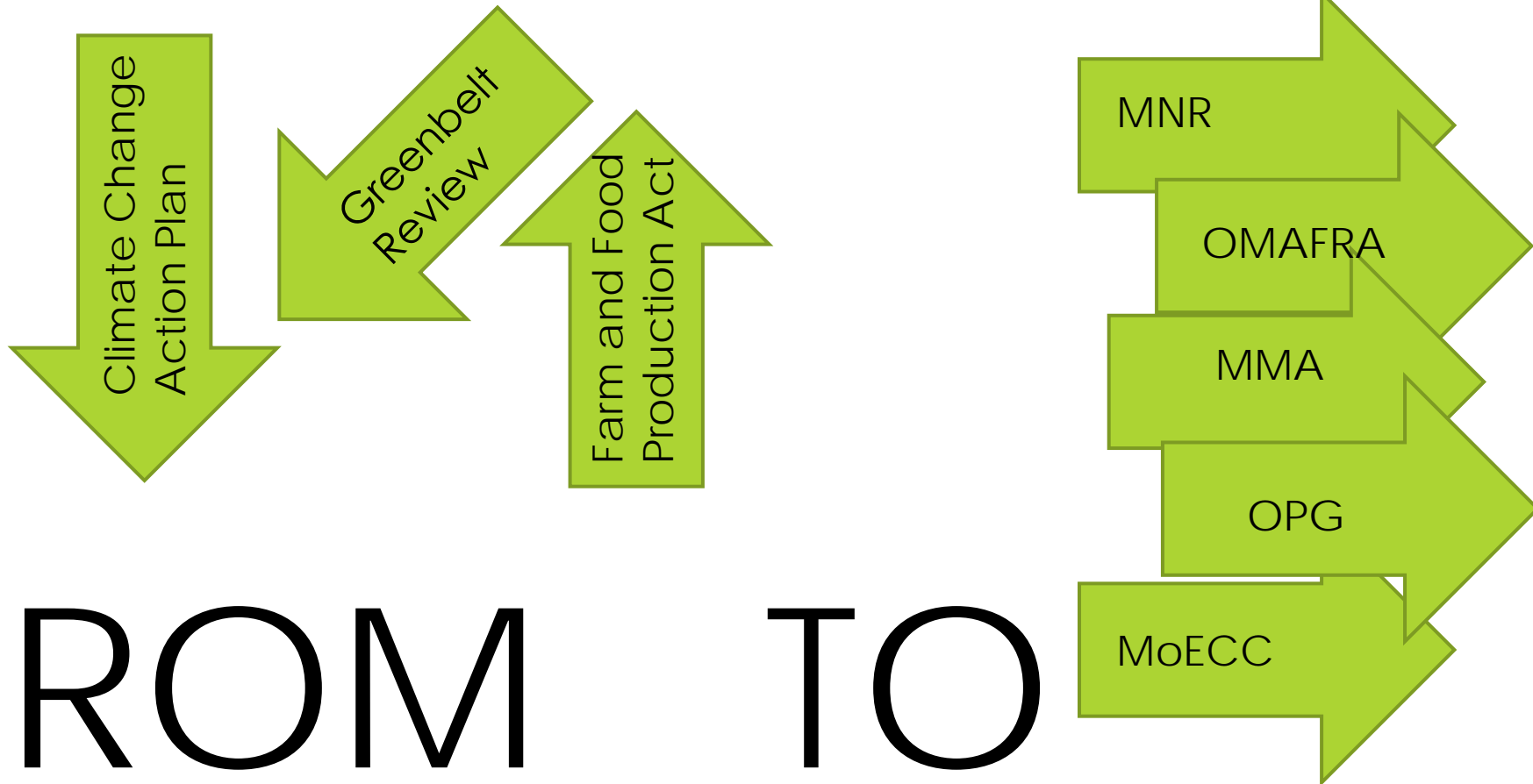
Niagara-on-the-Lake

# Many regulatory bodies have influence on water for irrigation



\*Niagara River Remedial Action Plan is both Provincial and Federal

# Getting policy and practice alignment



# Reducing conflict and achieving congruent goals

“The objective of the permitting agency may be the enhancement of the *natural* environment or ecology which the regulator may perceive to be at cross purposes with *human* farming activity.”

Nearly half of those who participated in the grower session on October 30 reported that they had been denied water for irrigation at a critical time.

# Strategic Vision

Farms in Niagara have reliable access to irrigation water used efficiently and safely to sustain their productivity



# Strategic Principles

1. Growers have a responsibility to bear a share of the costs for irrigation delivery systems
2. It is a public responsibility to contribute materially towards the capital cost of major irrigation infrastructure in Niagara Region
3. There is a compelling need to raise the positive profile of irrigation in the public space and obtain recognition as a high priority
4. Irrigation water sources that rely on gravity for distribution are preferable over ones that rely on externally supplied energy
5. Irrigation needs to be integrated into all public works and private infrastructure planning in Niagara

# Strategic Actions

1. Formation of a Niagara Irrigation Locus For Coordination and Action
2. Increase Public Awareness of the Need For and Value of Niagara Irrigation
3. Request Climate Change Funding For
  - Public Irrigation InfrastructureRequest C.A.P. Funding
  - Individual Grower Projects On Farm

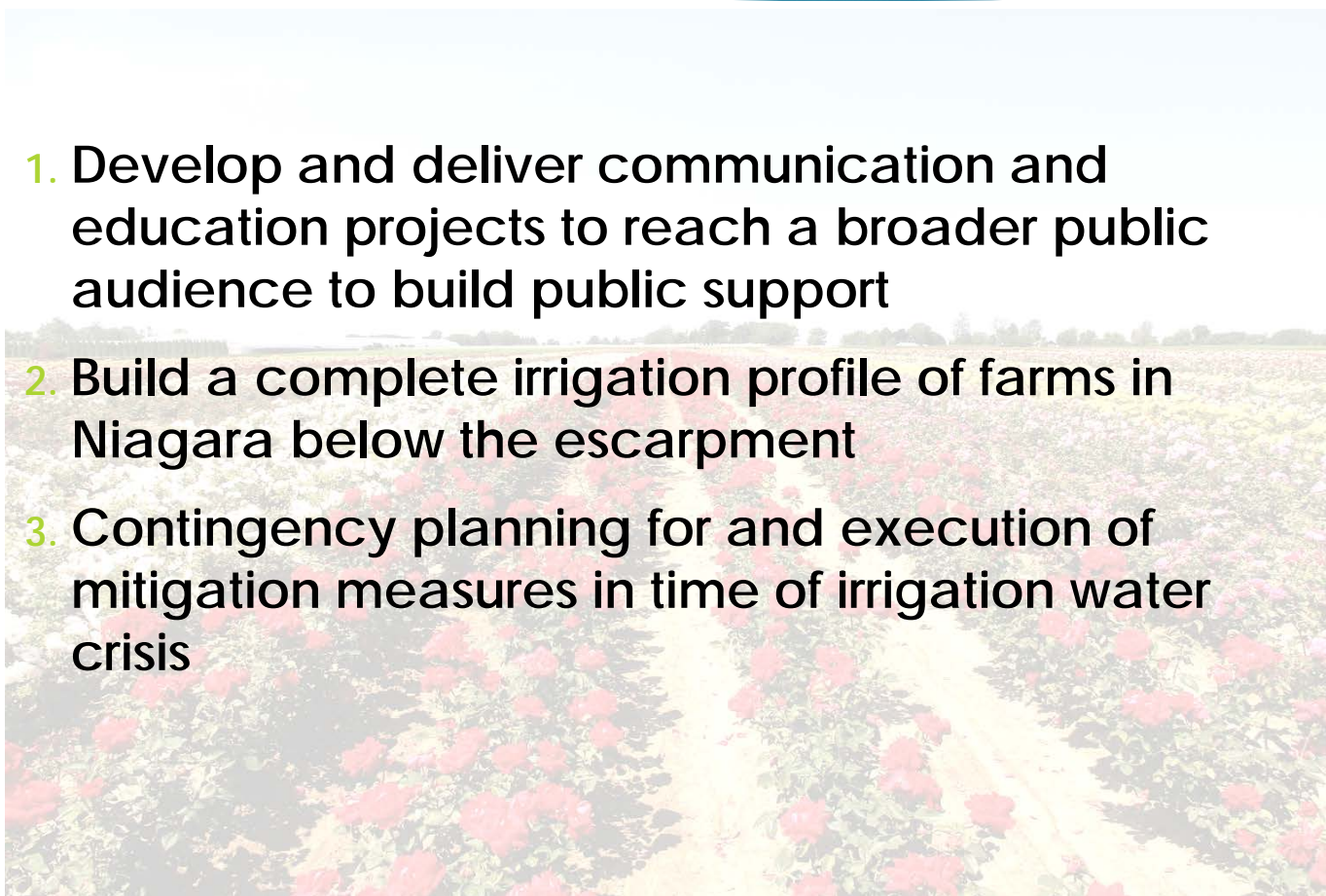
# #1 Year 1 - A Locus for Coordination and Action

- ▶ **A full time position is recommended for a three year trial period to be the irrigation point person for Niagara irrigation**
  - ▶ Assess the feasibility of providing water to the St. Catharines farmland zone in consultation with the growers, municipality and OPG
  - ▶ Work with NOTL Municipal staff to improve the capacity, reliability and coverage area of the open ditch drainage system
  - ▶ Work with Lincoln Municipality and growers to assess the option for a common intake from the Lake
  - ▶ Be the irrigation “ambassador” for Niagara with (a) representative bodies to work tirelessly for irrigation water policy alignment and (b) municipal staff to ensure that irrigation is considered in all public works and planning decisions



# # 1 Year 2 “Watering Niagara from Root To Fruit”

1. Develop and deliver communication and education projects to reach a broader public audience to build public support
2. Build a complete irrigation profile of farms in Niagara below the escarpment
3. Contingency planning for and execution of mitigation measures in time of irrigation water crisis



## # 2 - Increase Public Awareness of the Need For and Value of Irrigation

This recommendation is based on positive results gained when this approach was followed in the Holland Marsh, Innisfil Creek watershed, and Waterloo Region

- ▶ Survey public thinking to establish a baseline for “moving the needle”
- ▶ Test key messages to change public thinking in a positive way
- ▶ Finalize appropriate messages and ways for delivering them
  - ▶ Organize information tours and open houses
  - ▶ Make wise use of social media connectivity

## #3 Make the Case for Public Funding To Address Irrigation Needs

1. For major public infrastructure spending, position the need for capital in the context of funds earmarked by government(s) for global climate change action plan measures
2. For private infrastructure needs on-farm, it is recommended to position the Canadian Agricultural Partnership joint federal-Ontario program delivered by Ontario (OSCIA) as one priority program for individual projects, either drip or overhead, that are consistent with OMAFRA's BMPs

# Next Steps

- Finalize and release the strategy report (December)
- Generate debate and discussion on implementation (early 2018) to move forward with recruiting for the recommended position



Thank you for participating this morning

# Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System & Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Agricultural Policy and Action Committee:  
January 26, 2018

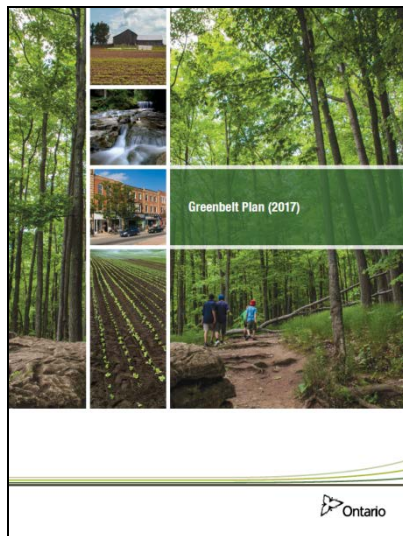


#### 4.2.2 Natural Heritage System

1. The Province will map a *Natural Heritage System* for the GGH to support a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to planning for the protection of the region's natural heritage and biodiversity. The *Natural Heritage System* mapping will exclude lands within *settlement area* boundaries that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017.

#### 4.2.6 Agricultural System

1. The Province will identify an *Agricultural System* for the GGH.



#### Agricultural System

Means the system mapped and issued by the Province, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:

- a) an agricultural land base comprised of *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands* that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture; and
- b) an *agri-food network*, which includes *infrastructure*, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.



Development of the Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Summary of Criteria and Methods  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Natural Resources Conservation Policy Branch  
June 20, 2017

#### Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
07/06/2017

This document, the agricultural land base map, and the Agricultural System Portal are drafts for consultation. Input is welcome on how best to strengthen our agri-food sector by approaching agriculture as a functional system involving land use planning and economic development.

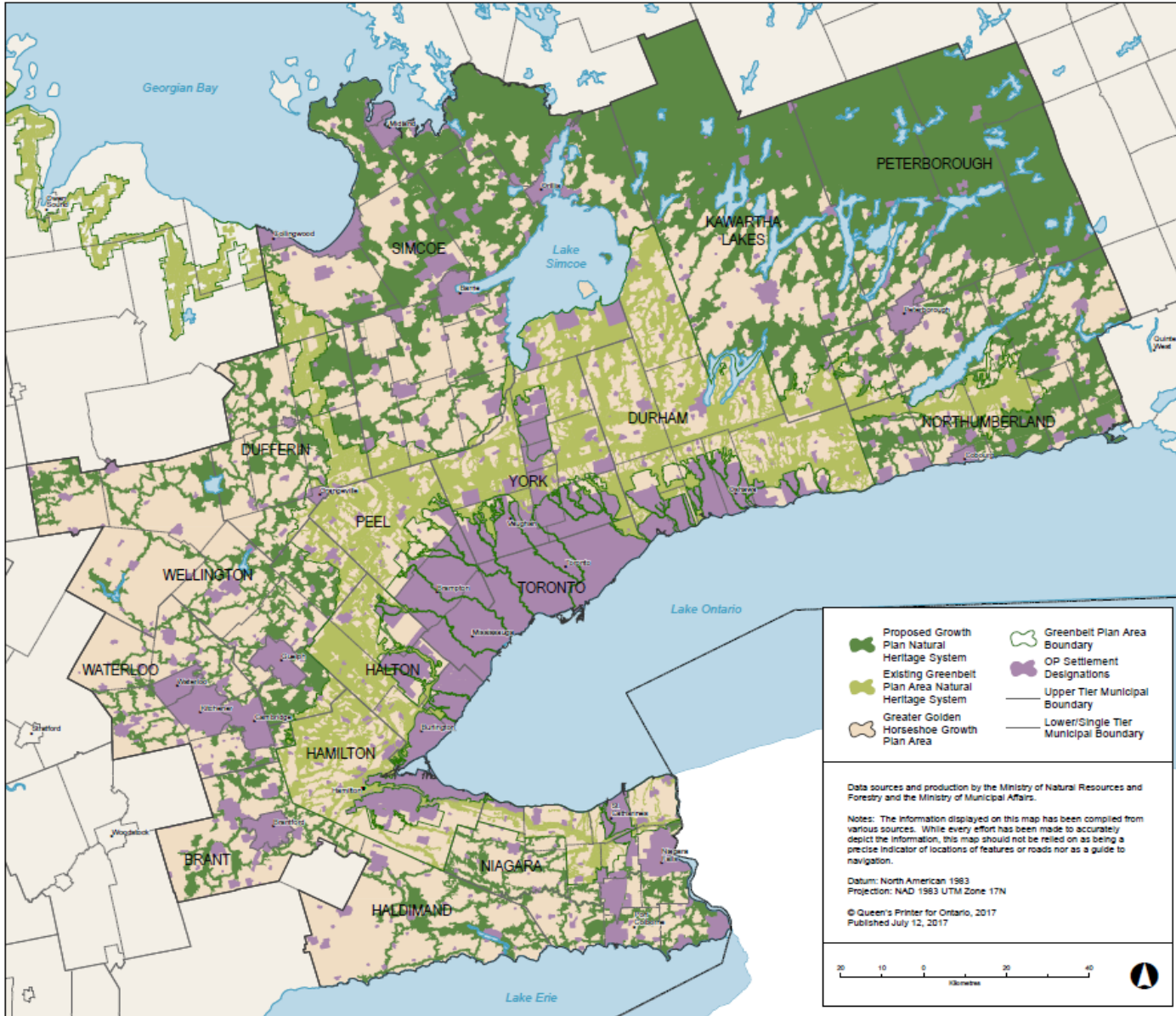
**Natural heritage system:** means a system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. The Province has a recommended approach for identifying natural heritage systems, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.



**PLACES TO GROW**

GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE, 2017

**Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System**



	Proposed Growth Plan Natural Heritage System		Greenbelt Plan Area Boundary
	Existing Greenbelt Plan Area Natural Heritage System		OP Settlement Designations
	Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area		Upper Tier Municipal Boundary
			Lower/Single Tier Municipal Boundary

Data sources and production by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Notes: The information displayed on this map has been compiled from various sources. While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, this map should not be relied on as being a precise indicator of locations of features or roads nor as a guide to navigation.

Datum: North American 1983  
 Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2017  
 Published July 12, 2017



Note: The information displayed on this map is not to scale, does not accurately reflect approved land-use and planning boundaries, and may be out of date. For more information on precise boundaries, the appropriate municipality should be consulted. For more information on Greenbelt Area boundaries, the Greenbelt Plan should be consulted. The Province of Ontario assumes no responsibility or liability for any consequences of any use made of this map.



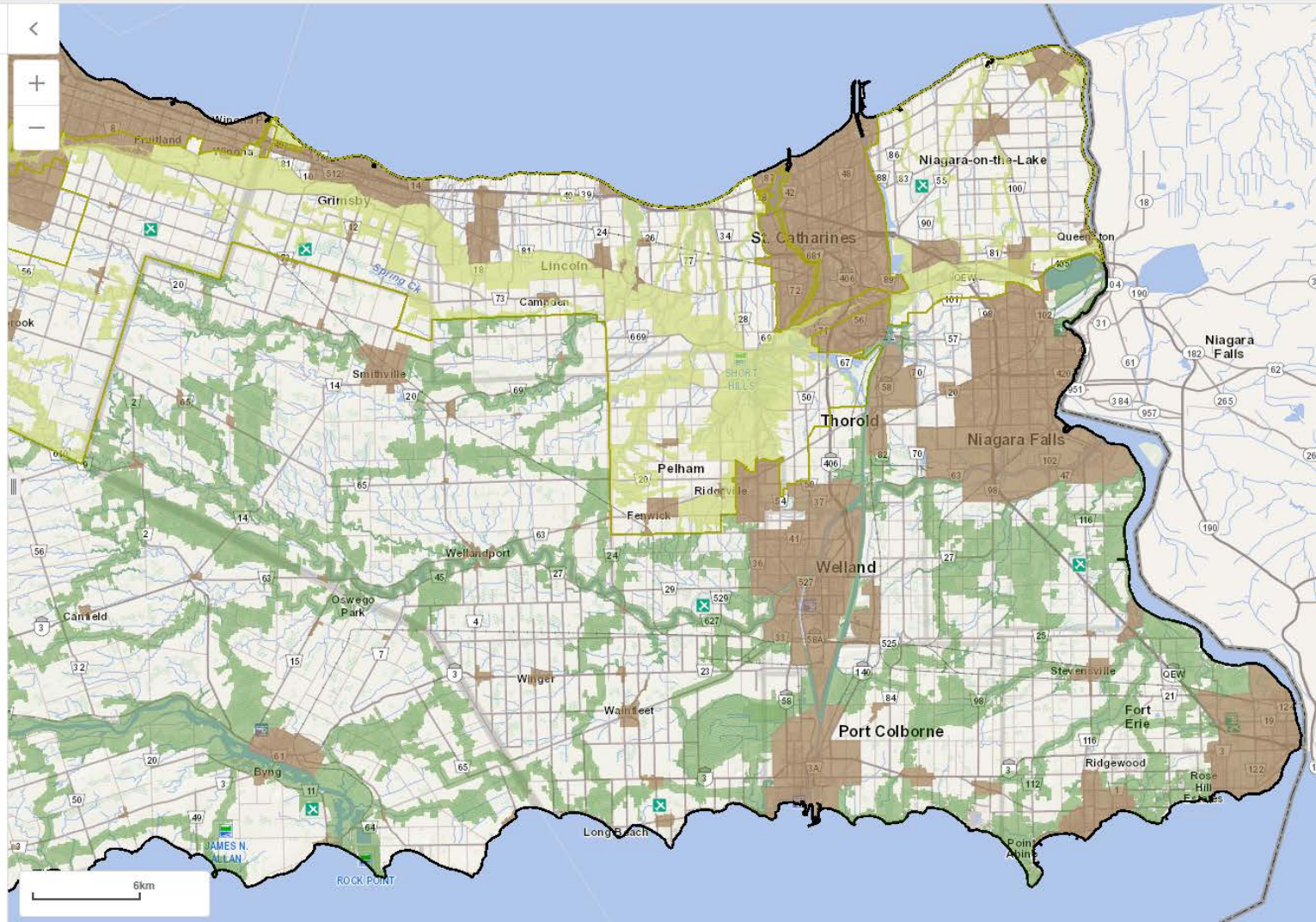
About

Growth Plan - Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System

This map viewer displays the Proposed Regional Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in association with Environmental Registry posting [EBR# 013-1014](#) (comment period: July 06, 2017 to October 04, 2017). In addition, the existing natural heritage system for the Greenbelt Plan area and settlement areas (as designated in official plans) can be displayed. The Greenbelt Plan area natural heritage system is not part of the proposal currently posted on the Environmental Registry. The viewer also displays topographic base information such as roads, rivers, woodlands, wetlands and municipal boundaries. You can zoom in and out, and turn information on and off.

The information provided in this application is illustrative only. Users should not rely on its content as a precise indicator of travel routes, ownership, location of features, or as a guide for navigation. Some of this content is only available at certain scales. This application and its content are temporary. It will only be accessible online until October 04, 2017. For technical assistance, please send us an email at [naturalheritage@ontario.ca](mailto:naturalheritage@ontario.ca)

**Note:** The technology to convert the maps on this page to an accessible format is not currently available. These maps may not be compatible with screen reader software. If you are unable to access these maps please contact [naturalheritage@ontario.ca](mailto:naturalheritage@ontario.ca)

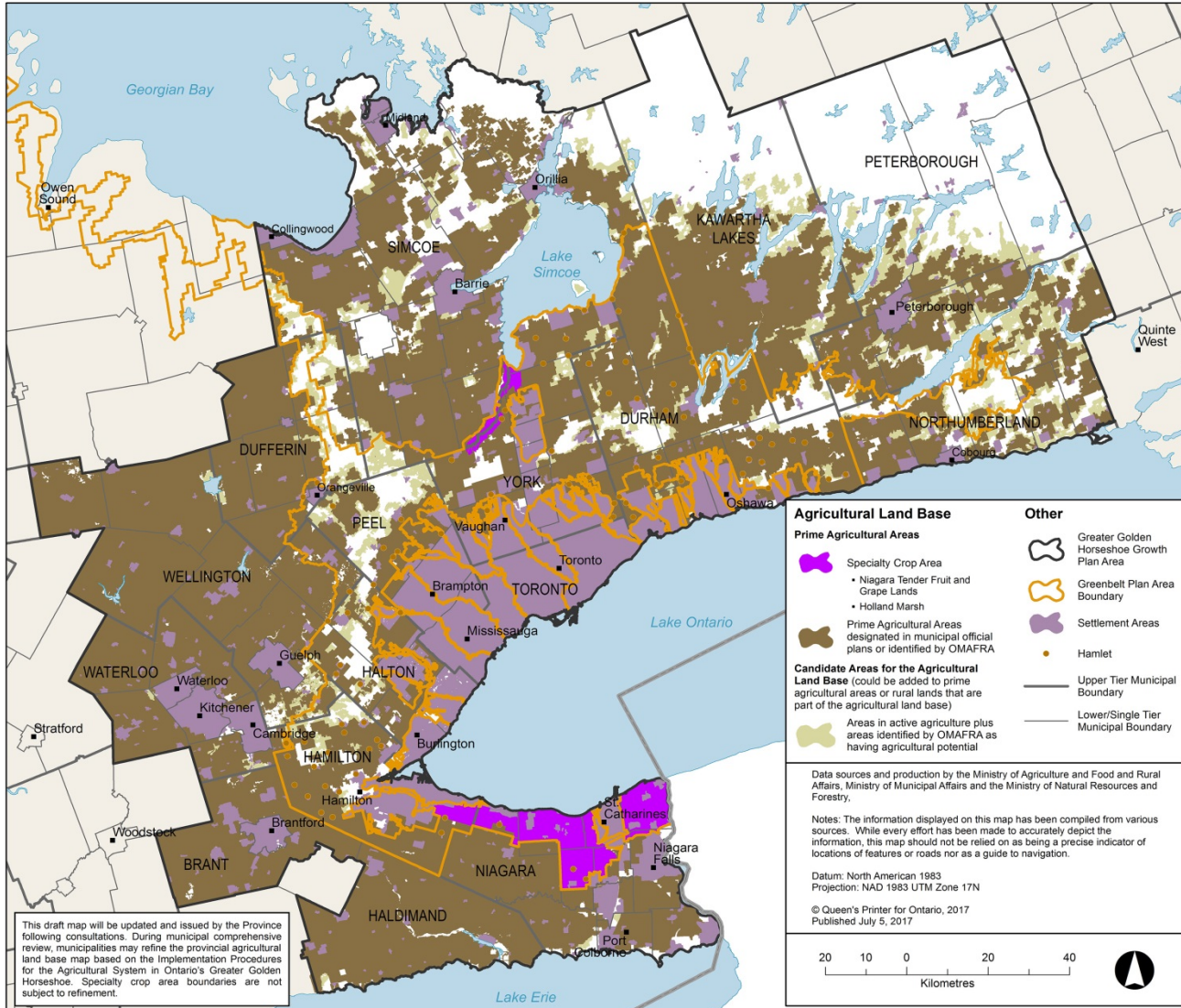


# Niagara Region's Comments

- Gateway Economic Zone
- Core Area Composition (50% Veg. Cover)
- Provincial Lands
- Core Area Size (100ha vs. 500/1000ha)
- Core Area Holes (250ha)
- Linkage Methodology
- Data Sources (Ag Canada Mapping)
- Refinements
- Settlement Area Expansions (Do policies still apply)

**Agricultural system:** The system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:

1. An agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture;
2. An agri-food network which includes infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector. (Greenbelt Plan)



This draft map will be updated and issued by the Province following consultations. During municipal comprehensive review, municipalities may refine the provincial agricultural land base map based on the Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe. Specialty crop area boundaries are not subject to refinement.

**Agricultural Land Base**

**Prime Agricultural Areas**

- Specialty Crop Area
  - Niagara Tender Fruit and Grape Lands
  - Holland Marsh
- Prime Agricultural Areas designated in municipal official plans or identified by OMAFRA

**Candidate Areas for the Agricultural Land Base** (could be added to prime agricultural areas or rural lands that are part of the agricultural land base)

- Areas in active agriculture plus areas identified by OMAFRA as having agricultural potential

**Other**

- Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area
- Greenbelt Plan Area Boundary
- Settlement Areas
- Hamlet
- Upper Tier Municipal Boundary
- Lower/Single Tier Municipal Boundary

Data sources and production by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Notes: The information displayed on this map has been compiled from various sources. While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, this map should not be relied on as being a precise indicator of locations of features or roads nor as a guide to navigation.

Datum: North American 1983  
 Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
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 Published July 5, 2017

20 10 0 20 40  
 Kilometres



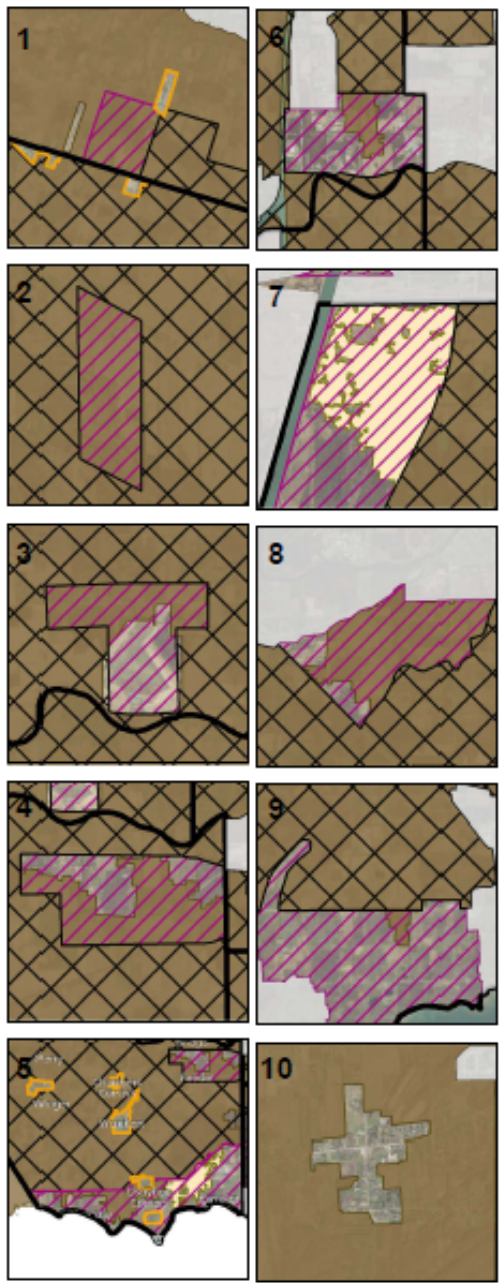
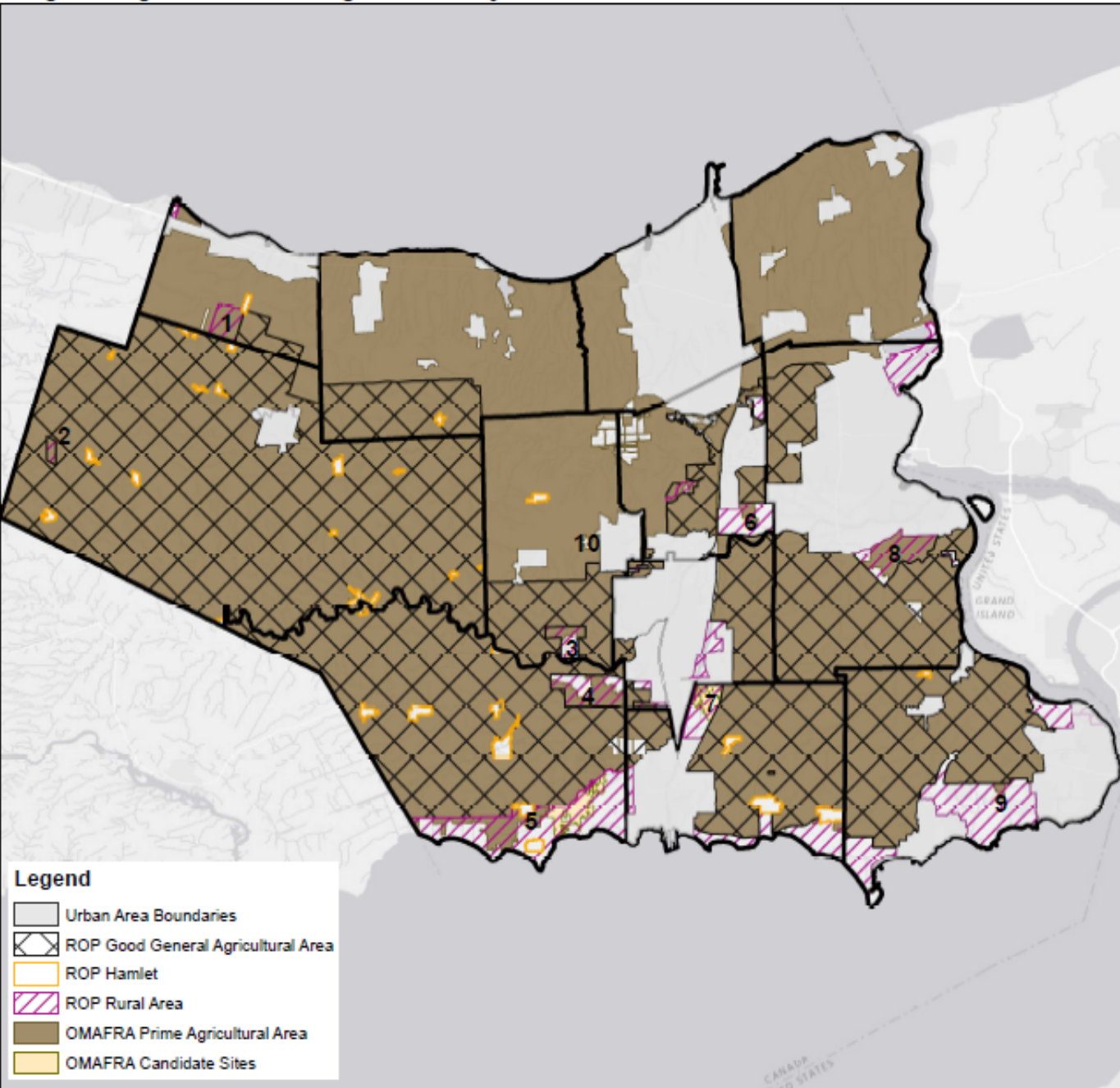
PLACES TO GROW

GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE, 2017

Draft Agricultural Land Base

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Niagara Region: OMAFRA Agricultural System Data Review



- Legend**
- Urban Area Boundaries
  - ROP Good General Agricultural Area
  - ROP Hamlet
  - ROP Rural Area
  - OMAFRA Prime Agricultural Area
  - OMAFRA Candidate Sites

# Niagara Region's Comments

OMAFRA approach is different than NHS...

- OMAFRA LEAR is not aligned with Regional mapping
- Several minor settlement area discrepancies
- Site specific policies are not reflected
- Assets identified are inaccurate