



Sent via email to Clerks/CAOs; L. Wolfe, K. Snell, R. Clothier, T. Campbell, J. Brick, B. Kittmer, J. Thomson and T. Dafoe for distribution.

July 30, 2021

To the Warden and Councillors of Perth County, all Mayors & Councillors of North Perth, Perth South, Perth East, West Perth, the town of St. Marys and the city of Stratford:

Dear Warden, Mayors and Councillors.

The Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) represents the unique farming interests of Perth County farmers. After 75 years, we are proud to represent over 1,800 farming families in Perth County.

PCFA believes the protection of prime agricultural land for agricultural use is of paramount importance. As of 2016, Census data indicates that the county of Perth contains 518,023 Acres of farmland, over 4% of the farmland in Ontario.

With boundaries adjacent to the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Perth County agriculture is being exposed to development 'leapfrogging' over the Green Belt. This is also true of boundaries inside Perth County.

PCFA must express its strong opposition to the use of Municipal Zoning Orders (MZOs) by municipalities with robust planning systems, Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. With an Official Plan the County of Perth has been in the process of updating, we have a structure that should be used. The use of MZO's undermines Ontario's long-established system of land use planning under the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws.

Ontario has a well-established system for amending municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to accommodate population and employment growth, *including a system for appeals*. The issuance of MZOs, short circuits these long-established planning principles and policies. It deprives citizens impacted by these MZOs the ability to be consulted on proposed amendments to municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws.

As an example, PCFA has calculated that 1540 acres of farmland have been lost to just the city of Stratford in the last 20 years.

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Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs) are referenced in A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), the Greenbelt Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement, as studies *“that evaluate the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on agricultural operations and the Agricultural System and recommends ways to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse effects”*.

We remind our municipalities that without fulsome and aggressive planning designed to preserve farmland above all; we will fail in this important task for the future. This County will have to do much better to save our Class 1 farmland from further assault.

The Official Plan, crafted by the combined citizen input of Perth County, must be taken seriously. We are concerned if our Municipalities discount the issues expressed to them by PCFA and the application of their own Official Plan. Without these partners at the table where does this leave the preservation of farmland in Perth County? Perth County, its lower tier members, and the cities of Stratford and St. Marys must prioritize the saving of agricultural land during planning.

The use of MZO's to change land from agriculture to non-agriculture is against the policy of PCFA. The protection of agricultural lands is important to all the citizens of Perth County.

Sincerely,

Sara Wood, President
Perth County Federation of Agriculture

cc: Peggy Brekveld, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Randy Pettapiece - MPP Perth Wellington