

4-1-2007

# Impacts of the Greenbelt Plan on the Agricultural Industry, Case Study: Town of Erin, Wellington County

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**Impacts of the Greenbelt Plan on the Agricultural Industry,  
Case Study: Town of Erin, Wellington County**

MPA Research Report

Submitted to

The Municipal Government Program  
Department of Political Science  
The University of Western Ontario

April, 2007

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## **Executive Summary**

The future of agriculture in rapidly urbanizing regions is a significant public policy issue across the western world. The debate has been primarily dominated by concern over the “loss” of prime farmland to urban uses. With 4 million additional people expected to live in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area by the year 2031, the Ontario Liberal Government made an unprecedented and historical decision in 2005 by passing legislation allowing for the creation of Greenbelt areas. At this same time, the Greater Golden Horseshoe area was identified as a Greenbelt area and provincial policies are now in place to protect environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural lands by directing where growth should and should not occur. More specifically, the policies prohibit non-agricultural development in prime agricultural areas.

The Greenbelt policies have been, and continue to be, a controversial topic. Environmental groups would like the Greenbelt policies to be more restrictive and applied to a larger geographic area. Farming organizations on the other hand, argue that the Greenbelt Plan has gone too far and that without financial compensation to farmers, the Greenbelt policies are going to have a negative effect on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The purpose of this study is to determine what impacts, if any, the Greenbelt Plan is having on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The data needed to address this purpose were gathered from two sources: 1) 2001 Census of Agriculture statistics; and 2) a structured survey which was administered through personal interviews. This study suggests the Greenbelt Plan is not having a negative effect on the agricultural industry.

## **Acknowledgements**

This study would not have been possible without the assistance of many individuals. First, I would like to thank my wife, Melanie, and our families for their ongoing love, support and encouragement as I completed this journey. This study would not have been possible without the sacrifices that were made along the way. I would also like to thank my advisor, Dr. Andrew Sancton, for the time he spent ensuring I was on course. His support, encouragement and suggestions were greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to Lisa Haas and Town of Erin staff for assisting me with reaching Town of Erin residents. Thanks also to the County of Wellington for providing me with accurate and reliable maps. To the Town of Erin residents who made this study possible, I would like to thank you for your co-operation, time and assistance. Your hospitality was very warm and welcoming.

Thanks to the staff and faculty of the Political Science Department, Municipal Government Program, for this wonderful learning opportunity. Behind the scenes, I would also like to thank my friend, Sandra Lee, for her insightful and enlightening proofreading comments. To my friends and colleagues at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I would like to thank you for your support and assistance. In particular, I would like to thank Andrew Milne and Jon Kwong, Geographical Information Specialists, for their support and assistance in generating some of the maps for this report. Thanks also to Craig Cooper, Planner, for his technical words of advice and to Pearl Dougall, Municipal Advisor, for her undivided attention and determination in helping me resolve some formatting challenges. Thanks to anyone else who assisted in any way.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

The future of agriculture in rapidly urbanizing regions is a significant public policy issue across the western world. The debate has been primarily dominated by concern over the “loss” of prime farmland to urban uses. Those who advocate farmland preservation have successfully campaigned for policies to protect or preserve the agricultural lands<sup>1</sup>. The policies however, have been weak and with an estimated 4 million additional people expected to live in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area by the year 2031<sup>2</sup>, the Ontario Liberal Government made an unprecedented and historical decision in Ontario’s history to pass legislation allowing for the creation of Greenbelt areas. Similar legislation has been passed in other Canadian provinces (for example, British Columbia) and abroad (for example, Europe) however, the legislation passed by the Ontario Liberals is the first of its kind in the province of Ontario.

The Greenbelt Act received Royal Assent on February 24, 2005. The Greenbelt Act is a legislative land use planning tool aimed at helping manage growth in Ontario. The Greenbelt Act provides the authority for the provincial government to issue Greenbelt policy documents<sup>3</sup>. On February 28, 2005, the first Greenbelt policy document was released. Titled ‘the Greenbelt Plan’, this policy document contains special land use policies that apply to the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The purpose of the policies is to protect environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural lands by directing where growth should and should not occur. More specifically, the policies prohibit non-agricultural development in prime agricultural areas<sup>4</sup>. The lands subject to the Greenbelt Plan are illustrated in Appendix A.

### **Purpose and Hypothesis**

The Greenbelt Plan has been, and continues to be, a controversial topic. Environmental groups would like the Greenbelt policies to be more restrictive and applied to a larger geographic area. Farming organizations on the other hand, argue that the Greenbelt Plan has gone too far and

that without financial compensation, they feel the Greenbelt Plan is going to have a negative effect on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Since the Greenbelt Act and the Greenbelt Plan received Royal Assent very little data, if any, has been collected for the purposes of assessing the impact of the Greenbelt Plan policies on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. While it is recognized that the Greenbelt Act and the Greenbelt Plan have been in effect for just over 2 years, the collection and analysis of data will assist in determining the future of the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. It is important to note that this study does not evaluate whether or not the Greenbelt Plan is justified; the direct and/or indirect costs associated with the Greenbelt Act/Greenbelt Plan and/or whether or not the Greenbelt Plan is achieving its objectives. Instead, this study focuses on whether or not the Greenbelt Plan is having an impact(s) on the broader agricultural community and if so, is the impact negative.

In November, 2005, The Neptis Foundation released a study titled "Prospects for Agriculture in the Toronto Region: The Farmer Perspective". This study contains the results of sixty-four individual farmer interviews in the Toronto Region. The findings suggest the future of farming in the Toronto region is uncertain, and may in fact be endangered<sup>5</sup>. The study also states that in submissions to a provincially-appointed Greenbelt Task Force, farmers and their organizations made arguments that farmland preservation policies such as the Greenbelt Plan not only ignored their livelihoods but actually threatened their existence<sup>6</sup>. The Neptis Foundation report concludes "that support for a sustainable future for agriculture in the [Toronto] region needs to be based on a detailed knowledge of specific farming situations. In particular, the likely impacts of the Greenbelt Plan and the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement [on the agricultural industry] needs to be assessed"<sup>7</sup>.

The purpose of this study is to determine what impacts, if any, the Greenbelt Plan is having on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The hypothesis is that the Greenbelt Plan is not negatively impacting the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden



Horseshoe Area. In fact, it is felt that the Greenbelt Plan is strengthening the Greater Golden Horseshoe's agricultural industry. To appreciate and better understand how this public policy issue affects municipal governments, the role of municipal government will be discussed. More specifically, the province's Greenbelt legislation is being implemented through the land use planning system and therefore, a better understanding of Ontario's land use planning system will be beneficial.

### **Role of Municipal Government in Land Use Planning**

In Ontario, the provincial government is responsible for land use planning legislation and policy development. The province is also responsible for continuous improvement to the planning system. In order for this to occur, the province assesses the effect of the legislative and policy changes on the land use planning system. The province also maintains responsibility for approving upper-tier and single-tier Official Plans and necessary amendments<sup>8</sup>.

An Official Plan is a legal document that is adopted by municipalities. An Official Plan contains the objectives, policies and standards for the purposes of protecting and preserving a community's natural resources. The purpose of an Official Plan is to balance the interests of individual property owners with the interests of the broader community and guide municipalities in making decisions about how lands in the community should be used. An Official Plan also outlines how growth and change should occur. The proposed location of land uses are identified in Official Plans on land use schedules<sup>9</sup>.

Section 3 (5) of the Planning Act states that the decision of any planning authority exercising any authority over a planning matter (including, but not limited to, the council of a municipality and a minister of the Crown) needs to: 1) be consistent with policy statements issued under subsection (1) of the Planning Act; and 2) conform with provincial plans that are in effect on the date of the decision<sup>10</sup>. Section 7 of the Greenbelt Act, 2005, requires municipal and other decisions under the Planning Act to conform to the policies in the Greenbelt Plan<sup>11</sup>. If an individual, public agency or agency disagrees with a land use planning decision that has been

made under the Planning Act, they have the option to appeal the decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. The Ontario Municipal Board is an independent administrative tribunal responsible for hearing appeals and making appropriate land use planning decisions<sup>12</sup>.

With respect to this study and as stated above, municipalities are responsible for the implementation of the Greenbelt Plan. Implementation is achieved through Official Plan policies. For effective implementation of the Greenbelt Plan to occur, Section 9 of the Greenbelt Act requires municipalities to amend their official plan(s) to conform to the Greenbelt Plan. More importantly, Official Plan policies need to reflect the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and a map(s) needs to be included showing the area to which the policies apply<sup>13</sup>. Further, the Province has also established a Greenbelt Council and one of its mandates is to consider how the implementation of the Greenbelt Plan is proceeding and this includes the identification of issues arising from implementation<sup>14</sup>.

To appreciate the methodology that was developed for this study and to assist in comprehending the findings of this study, it is important to have a better understanding of public policy evaluation theory. Public policy evaluation theory involves the collection and analysis of information in order to make judgements about the performance and relevance of a policy, program and/or initiative. The next chapter of this report discusses public policy evaluation theory in more detail.

## **Chapter Two: Public Policy Evaluation Theory**

According to public policy literature, there are three integrative components to public policies. The first is the development of the policies; the second is implementation of the policies; and the third is evaluating the policies. Evaluating the policies involves the collection and analysis of information in order to make judgements about the performance and relevance of a policy, program and/or initiative. The judgements made can pertain to the success and/or the cost-effectiveness of a policy, program and/or initiative. Evaluating policies provides information which can be used to make future decisions about the design and/or implementation of a policy, program and/or initiative<sup>15</sup>. This study does not focus on land use planning decisions but instead, considers how the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe may change as a result of the Ontario Liberal government's decision to pass into legislation the Greenbelt Act and the corresponding Greenbelt Plan.

According to Dr. Evelyn Vingilis, any type of a policy evaluation falls into one of five categories: 1. program rationale evaluation; 2. process evaluation; 3. impact evaluation; 4. evaluating short-term outcomes; and 5. efficiency evaluation. Dr. Vingilis states that collectively, these types of evaluations comprise the five stages to public policy evaluation<sup>16</sup>. Ideally, it would be great to complete all five stages of public policy evaluation. However, given the timeframe within which this study needs to be completed, the scope of this study has been limited to 'impact evaluation'. According to Weiss, 'impact evaluation' looks at what affect a policy, program and/or initiative has had on individuals<sup>17</sup>. For the purposes of this study, we are interested in the long-term outcomes on the agricultural industry.

To protect environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural lands by directing where growth should and should not occur, the Greenbelt Plan contains land use policies which prohibit non-agricultural development in prime agricultural areas. The public response to this policy approach has been positive, although dissenting views have been expressed in publicly available

documents which suggest that without financial compensation, the Greenbelt Plan is going to have negative impacts on the agricultural industry within the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. A review of the Greenbelt Act, the Greenbelt Plan and as evidenced by the scanning of several newspaper articles, the provincial government appears to have no intention of providing financial compensation to the agricultural industry located within the Greenbelt area. This then brings two questions to mind. First, will the legislation as enacted, achieve its intended objectives? That is, would another approach have been more effective, or alternatively, what changes if any should be made to the legislation to achieve its objectives. Second, how have existing landowners, more specifically the farmers, responded to the legislation? Have the farmers responded to the Greenbelt Plan as intended or have the farmers responded in ways not anticipated by the legislation? In other words, have farmers changed their decisions because of the Greenbelt Plan or are farmers continuing on with their existing agricultural practices?

To better understand how public policy impact evaluation applies to this study, two public policy models have been chosen as the basis for this study. Through a comparison, it will become evident that one of the two models is more appropriate for the purposes of this study. Having said this, by providing an overview of both models, it will become clearer as to the role and purpose of public policy evaluation models. To appreciate public policy evaluation models, it is beneficial to start with a broad overview of public policy theory.

Political science literature is full of 'public policy' definitions. One definition suggests public policy is the relationship of a government unit to its environment. Another definition suggests public policy is "whatever governments choose to do or not to do."<sup>18</sup> James E. Anderson views "public policy" as "those policies developed by governmental bodies and officials".<sup>19</sup> Anderson views 'governmental bodies and officials' as those people who "engage in the daily affairs of a political system and are recognized by members of the [political] system as having responsibility for these matters."<sup>20</sup> In comparison, William Dunn views public policy as a complex pattern of interdependent collective choices, including decisions not to act, made by

governmental bodies and officials.<sup>21</sup> In his view, public policy is an applied social science that draws from a variety of disciplines and professions whose aims are descriptive, evaluative and prescriptive.<sup>22</sup> Both Anderson and Dunn agree the purpose of public policy is to resolve problems.

Anderson divides his policy model into five categories. The first category is problem formation. Problem formation involves defining the public problem; determining whether or not it is a public problem; and then assessing how the problem got on the government's agenda. The second category is policy formulation. Policy formulation involves developing alternatives to address the problem and determining who should be involved in developing the alternatives. The third category is policy adoption and this involves looking at how a policy alternative was adopted or enacted; what processes were used; and the content of the adopted policy. The fourth category is implementation and this looks at who is involved in the implementation of the policy; what is being done to carry a policy into effect; and what impact implementation will have on the policy content. The fifth and last category is evaluation. Evaluation involves measuring the effectiveness of a policy; assessing the consequences of the evaluation (i.e. does evaluating the policy result in change); determining who will evaluate the policy; and whether or not there is a need to change or repeal the policy.<sup>23</sup> By looking at each of these categories critically, Anderson suggests it is possible to assess how effective a policy will be at resolving the problem.<sup>24</sup>

Dunn's model is also divided into five categories. First, Dunn suggests it is elected and appointed government officials who determine and place problems on the public policy agenda. Second, with respect to problem formulation, Dunn suggests government officials (i.e. public servants) formulate the options to deal with the problem. Dunn suggests the government officials' options always tend to be in the form of legislative acts, executive orders and/or court decisions. Dunn's third category is policy adoption and this involves the government adopting the policy option which has the support of a legislative majority. The fourth category is policy implementation and this refers to mobilizing the financial and human resources to comply with

the adopted policy. The fifth and last category is policy assessment. In Dunn's view, assessing policy is necessary to ensure legislative acts and court decisions are in compliance with the statutory requirements of the policy.<sup>25</sup>

Focusing on policy evaluation, Anderson suggests three approaches to evaluate a policy. The first approach involves an arbitrary assessment by policy-makers and/or administrators as to the effect of a policy. The second approach involves an evaluation of the operation of a policy. In other words, what are the financial costs and/or who receives the benefits? The third approach is a systematic, objective evaluation that measures the societal impact of a policy and the extent to which a policy is achieving its objectives. Regardless of the approach applied, Anderson states that the impact of a policy needs to be evaluated in five ways. The first is to assess the problem for which the policy is developed. The second is to evaluate the impact of a policy on situations and/or group(s) of people to which the policy was not directed. The third involves assessing the impact of a policy on the future as well as the current situation. The fourth and fifth ways involve assesses the direct costs and indirect costs of a policy, respectively.<sup>26</sup>

Dunn's model views policy evaluation as the extent to which a policy outcome contributes to the achievement of a policy's goal(s) and/or objective(s). Dunn argues the main purpose of policy evaluation is to obtain reliable and valid information with regard to a policy's performance. He also argues policy evaluation clarifies and critiques the values that underlie the policy adopted as well as the information used to identify and define the problem. Dunn states that the criteria used for policy evaluation needs to be the same as the criteria used when the policy was adopted. The criteria used to evaluate a policy needs to include: the effectiveness; efficiency; adequacy; equity; responsiveness; and appropriateness. In Dunn's view, the only difference between policy evaluation and policy adoption is that policy evaluation involves applying the criteria retrospectively (ex post) whereas, policy adoption involves applying the same criteria prospectively (ex ante).<sup>27</sup> Like Anderson, Dunn outlines three approaches to

evaluate policy: 1) pseudo-evaluation; 2) formal evaluation; and 3) decision-theoretic evaluation.<sup>28</sup> Each of these will be discussed in a little more detail.

Pseudo evaluation uses descriptive methods to produce reliable and accurate information about a policy outcome. This approach is not intended to question the worth or value of the policy outcome(s) in relation to individuals, groups or society as a whole. The second approach Dunn suggests that can be used to evaluate policy is formal evaluation. This approach involves using descriptive methods to generate reliable and accurate information about the outcome(s) of a policy by evaluating the outcome(s) on the basis of the policy objectives that were formally announced and advocated by the decision-makers. Dunn refers to his third approach as 'decision-theoretic evaluation'. This approach involves applying descriptive methods to produce reliable and accurate information about a policy's outcome in relation to values that have been articulated by multiple stakeholders. The key difference between the decision-theoretic approach and the other two approaches is that the decision-theoretic approach reveals and make explicit the goals and objectives of all the stakeholders associated with a policy, opposed to merely recognizing the goals and objectives announced and advocated by the decision-makers. Like all other theories, policy evaluation has its challenges. It is important to be aware of these challenges as a means to assess the reliability and accuracy of the policy evaluation outcome.

Briefly, Anderson identifies six challenges with his public policy model. First, there can be uncertainty over the intended goal(s) of a policy. Second, it is challenging to establish that a cause-and-effect relationship exists. Third, it is difficult to assess how a policy has affected groups of people, other than those to whom a policy was directed. Fourth, it is sometimes challenging to acquire the data and/or information needed to evaluate the policy. Fifth, some organizations create obstacles so the evaluation can not be adequately completed. Sixth and last, the evaluation is ignored or attacked as inconclusive or unsound. Further to these six challenges, Anderson also offers nine reasons as to why a policy may not achieve its intended objective(s). They are as follows:

1. inadequate resources
2. improper administration of a policy
3. the public problem is caused by more than one facet
4. people do not respond to the policy as intended
5. incompatible goals within the policy
6. the costs to the solution are greater than the problem
7. the public problem can not be resolved by a policy
8. the nature of the problem changes but the policy remains the same
9. new problems arise taking away from a given problem.<sup>29</sup>

In summary, Dr. Vingilis states that any type of an evaluation falls into one of five types and collectively, the types comprise the five stages to evaluate a policy. Ideally, it would be great to complete all five stages of public policy evaluation however, given the timeframe within which this study needs to be completed, the scope of this study has been limited to 'impact evaluation'. According to Weiss, 'impact evaluation' looks at what affect a policy, program and/or initiative has had on individuals<sup>30</sup>. To better understand how public policy impact evaluation applies to this study, two public policy models were chosen as the basis for this study. Anderson's model seems to be the more appropriate model for this study because it focuses on assessing the policy in relation to the identified problem. In this situation, the problem is managing growth and this is achieved through implementation of the province's Greenbelt legislation. Implementation of the Greenbelt Plan occurs through the land use planning system and more specifically, through municipal official plans.

As a lead in to the next chapter, the Neptis Foundation study was designed on the basis that the farm enterprise is where most of the key decisions are made that directly affect the agricultural industry. The author of this research study strongly supports this 'grassroots' approach and as such, this study has been designed on the same premise. This study involves the collection of primary data from farm enterprises located both within and outside of the Greenbelt area. Primary data collected from farm enterprises includes gross farm receipts, area of land farmed, amount of capital farm investment, livestock inventories, succession planning, retirement planning and future plans. Through an analysis of this primary data, coupled with some



**secondary census of agriculture data, this study suggests that the Greenbelt Plan is not having a negative effect on the agricultural industry.**

## **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study is being implemented after the Greenbelt Plan Legislation has come into effect and as such, a pre-experimental, static group comparison research design has been chosen. This research design is cross-sectional and therefore, allows a comparison of those living within the Greenbelt area against those living outside of the Greenbelt area.

To determine what impact, if any, the Greenbelt Plan will have on the agricultural industry in the Greenbelt area, data has been collected from two sources. The first data source is Statistics Canada's 2001 Census of Agriculture. This data is released every 5 years and the most current data available was released in 2001. The second data source is the results of a survey that was administered to a randomly selected group of farmers living within a defined study area. The survey was administered through personal interviews in November, 2006 and January, 2007. The data collected from the study participants included: ranges in gross farm receipts; the total area farmed; type and number of livestock; the amount of capital farm investment; changes to succession plans; changes to retirement plans; and changes to future plans. The study participants are farmers who were randomly selected on the basis of a number of criteria. To keep the study manageable and given the time within which to complete the study, the sample size was limited to twenty participants. To help control for internal threats such as history, selection bias and mortality, a case study approach was chosen. The case study area was limited to the municipal boundaries of the Town of Erin, Wellington County. The case study area is illustrated in Appendix B.

As illustrated in Appendix C, Wellington County is located west of the Greater Toronto Area and east of the Kitchener-Waterloo area. According to the Census of Agriculture data, Wellington County has a population of approximately 80,000 living over an area of 2,657 square kilometers. The total number of farmer operators in Wellington County is 3,725 and the total

number of farms is 2,616. Total gross farm receipts exceed \$400 million and total farm capital is approximately \$2.2 billion. The top five crops grown in Wellington County are alfalfa, soybeans, corn for grain, corn for silage and barley. Beef, calves and pigs are the primary livestock raised.

As illustrated in Appendix D, the Town of Erin is a lower tier municipality within the County of Wellington and is located in the northeast section of the County, at the headwaters of the Credit and Grand Rivers. The Town of Erin is comprised of the former municipalities being the Township of Erin and the Village of Erin, bordered by the Town of Caledon to the east, the Town of Halton Hills to the south, the Township of Guelph/Eramosa to the west and the Township of East Garafraxa to the north. According to the Town of Erin website, the municipality has two urban centres, Erin and Hillsburgh, and six hamlets: Ballinafad, Brisbane, Cedar Valley, Crewson's Corners, Orton and Ospringe.<sup>31</sup> According to Statistics Canada, the Town of Erin's population in 2001 was 11,052, and this represented an increase of 395 people since 1996. The primary economic activities are manufacturing and construction; business finance and administration; and wholesale and retail trade.

With respect to agriculture, of the 190,764 hectares farmed in Wellington County, 15, 141 hectares are farmed within the Town of Erin which suggests that approximately 10% of Wellington County's farming occurs in the Town of Erin. There are 380 farm operators in the Town of Erin who generate 19 million in total gross farm receipts. The market value of total farm capital in 2001 was a little more than \$200 million.

In comparison to other southwestern Ontario municipalities such as Huron and Bruce Counties, Wellington County's agricultural productivity is comparable. Historical statistics do not suggest Wellington County's agricultural productivity is weakening. Having said this, Statistics Canada has just started releasing 2006 census data and it will be interesting to see how Wellington County compares. Given the changing agricultural trends, it is predicted that Wellington County's agricultural statistics will show a decrease in agricultural activity.

With respect to the Town of Erin's level of agricultural productivity, it is lower than expected. Of Erin's total land area of 29,700 hectares, only 50% is farmed. Further analysis of the Statistic Canada's Agricultural Census data reveals that the Town of Erin's agricultural industry is struggling. The struggle appears to be a combination of poor soil quality and environmental constraints. Also, based on field observations and personal interviews with Town of Erin residents, it became evident very quickly that there appears to be a significant advancement of non-farm uses in the Town of Erin over the last 5-10 years. Despite all efforts to randomly select and interview full-time farmers, the number of full-time farmers in the Town of Erin is actually very, very limited. A couple of the participants who completed the survey estimated the number of full-time farmers in the Town of Erin to be in the 8-12 range. This was disappointing to hear given the policy protection provided to the agricultural areas in the Town of Erin's Official Plan. The Town of Erin's Official Plan recognizes two agricultural designations: 1) prime agricultural areas; and 2) secondary agricultural areas. Section 4.2.3 of the Town of Erin Official Plan states that it is intended that agricultural uses will continue to be the dominant use in areas designated 'secondary agricultural'<sup>32</sup>. Again, based on personal interviews with Town of Erin residents, there appears to be a growing trend of non-farm land use activity. This was confirmed when one of the study participants stated, "To remain viable, one of my next steps is to sell and move to a 'farmer-friendly' area". Despite these weaknesses, the Town of Erin has the following strengths for the purposes of this study.

First, the Town of Erin is geographically bisected north to south by the west boundary of the Greenbelt Plan. The west boundary of the Greenbelt Plan is partially defined by the boundary of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority's watershed. Second, excluding the urban and hamlet areas, natural heritage features and three small pockets of recreational lands, the Town of Erin is comprised primarily of cleared agricultural lands. A third reason the Town of Erin was selected is because it provides a sufficient geographic area from which to randomly draw a sample. Fourth, at the time the methodology for this study was being developed, this area was

viewed as being geographically separated and not heavily influenced by such larger urban areas as the City of Guelph and/or the Town of Orangeville. In other words, the Town of Erin has the capacity to remain an agricultural area and not be consumed by urban-type development. Fifth, the Town of Erin is rural in nature and not economically driven by one major land use. Sixth, unlike other areas within the Greenbelt Plan such as Simcoe County area which is also subject to other provincial legislative initiatives, the Town of Erin will experience and witness first-hand, the impacts of the Greenbelt Plan. Seventh and last, given the purpose, the scope, and the timeline within which to complete this study, the Town of Erin is viewed as a case study area which is manageable while still allowing an evaluation of a provincial policy solution to a public problem.

With respect to drawbacks, the case study area is comprised of one lower tier municipality and therefore, this study does not have the benefit of assessing the impacts, if any, being experienced in other municipalities. Second, in order to be statistically accurate and reliable, a minimum of thirty participants should have been interviewed. Because of the limited geographic area and given the sample size, applying the conclusions of this study to a much larger population has significant challenges. Third, the Town of Erin is in fact experiencing the effects of being located in proximity to the larger urban centres to the south. This has significant implications for this study. The Town of Erin's ability to remain 'farmer-friendly' hinges on the policy directions established as part of the municipality's next 5 year official plan review. At the moment, it appears the future of agriculture in the Town of Erin hangs in the balance.

Of the twenty study participants, ten live within the Greenbelt area and the other ten participants live outside of the Greenbelt area. Of the ten living within the Greenbelt area, five live within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary and the other five participants live 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary. Similarly, of the ten participants living outside of the Greenbelt boundary, five live within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary and the other five live 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary. All of the participants live in the Town of Erin.

### Study Participant Selection

For the purposes of this study, five (5) farmers were randomly chosen for one of four subgroups. To minimize and reduce the potential influence of the existing urban areas located within the Town of Erin, a 1 kilometre buffer was applied around the former Village of Erin and the urban centre of Hillsburgh and a 0.5 kilometre buffer was applied around the hamlets of Ballinafad, Brisbane, Cedar Valley, Crewson's Corners, Orton and Ospringe. All remaining landowners within the Town of Erin were considered eligible study participants.

With the assistance of a geographic information system, all properties within 1 km of the Greenbelt Plan boundary were identified. These properties were two divided into two groups: 1. those within the Greenbelt Plan area; and 2. those outside of the Greenbelt area. From the respective lists of potential properties and with the assistance of aerial photography, those properties containing no houses and those properties with more than 50% of the parcel covered by natural environment features were removed from the potential participants list. From the remaining properties, eight parcels were randomly selected from each of the two groups. The lot and concessions of these parcels were then emailed to the Town of Erin. Town of Erin staff graciously and co-operatively provided the names and addresses of the potential participants, along with an indication as to whether or not the selected parcels were assessed as farms. Those properties not assessed as farms were removed from the short list. This same process was repeated and applied in randomly selecting properties within the Town of Erin which were located 3 km or more from the Greenbelt Plan boundary.

Because spring and fall tend to be busy times for farmers (planting and harvesting), the surveys via personal interviews were administered during the months of November, 2006 and January, 2007. It was felt the timing of the survey is characteristic of the area and accommodated the needs of the farming population. With respect to how the surveys were administered, all of the surveys were administered by the author of this research study in the comfort of the farmers' homes.

In summary, because this study was being undertaken after the Greenbelt legislation and policies had come into effect and force, a pre-experimental, static group comparison research design was chosen. This research design is cross-sectional and therefore, allows a comparison of those living within the Greenbelt area against those living outside of the Greenbelt area. With respect to data sources, primary data and secondary data was used. The primary data consists of the survey results from twenty farmers and the secondary data has been gathered from the Census of Agriculture, 2001. The primary data is divided into one of following four (4) subgroups: 1) participants living outside of the Greenbelt area but within 1 kilometre of the Greenbelt boundary; 2) participants living outside of the Greenbelt area and 3 kilometres or more from the Greenbelt boundary; 3) participants living within the Greenbelt area and within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary; and 4) participants living within the Greenbelt area and 3 kilometres or more from the Greenbelt boundary. Given the time frame and the intent and purpose of this research study, a case study approach was chosen. The Town of Erin, Wellington County, was selected as the case study area.

## **Chapter Four: Data Analysis**

As it will become evident, this case study suggests the Greenbelt Plan is not having an impact (positive or negative) on the agricultural industry within the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. Having said this, it is acknowledged that the Greenbelt legislation and policies have been in effect for just over 2 years and it is conceivable that the impacts of this provincial legislation on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area will become more evident in the years to come.

As stated in Chapters one and three, a survey for the collection of primary data was administered through personal interviews. A copy of the introductory letter, the survey and the corresponding consent form are contained in Appendix E. To determine whether or not the Greenbelt Plan is having an impact on the agricultural industry within the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, a number of variables and indicators were chosen to measure impact. Table 1 on the next page contains a summary of the variables and indicators that were chosen. The type of primary data collected was nominal. For the purposes of this study, the responses to survey questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 14 were analyzed. The responses to questions 3, 4, 5, and 6 consisted of 'increase' or 'decrease' answers. The responses to questions 11, 12 and 14 consisted of 'yes' or 'no' answers. A summary of the primary data collected is provided in Table 2.



**Table 1: Variables and Indicators**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Gross Farm Receipts	Gross farm receipts are same for 2006 as 2005 (yes) Gross farm receipts are not the same for 2006 as 2005 (no)
Area of Land Farmed	Farmer is planning to increase the number of acres he/she farms (yes) Farmer is not planning to increase the number of acres he/she farms (no)
Amount of Capital Farm Investment	Farmer is planning to increase capital investment (yes) Farmer is not planning to increase capital investment (no)
Livestock Inventories	Farmer is planning to increase livestock inventories (yes) Farmer is not planning to increase livestock inventories (no)
Succession	Farmer has a succession plan in place (yes) Farmer does not have a succession plan in place (no)
Retirement	Farmer's retirement plans have not changed (no) Farmer's retirement plans have changed (yes)
Future plans	Future plans for the agricultural operation have changed (changed) Future plans for the agricultural operation have not changed (unchanged)

**Table 2: Summary of Primary Data**

Case #	Area of Land Farmed- Increase Decrease No Change	Size of Livestock Operation- Increase Decrease No Change	Gross Farm Receipts- Increase Decrease No Change	Capital Farm Investment- Increase Decrease No Change	Succession Plans Unchanged? Yes or No	Retirement Plans Unchanged? Yes or No	Future Plans Unchanged? Yes or No
<b>Located Within the Greenbelt Plan and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt Boundary</b>							
1	Increase	No livestock	No change	Increase	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	No change	No change	Increase	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	No change	Increase	Decrease	No change	Yes	No plans	Yes
5	No change	Increase	Increase	No change	<u>Yes</u>	No plans	Yes
<b>Located Within the Greenbelt Plan and within 1 km of the Greenbelt Boundary</b>							
6	Increase	No livestock	No change	Increase	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	No change	No change	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	No change	No livestock	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	No change	No change	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	No change	No livestock	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Located Outside of the Greenbelt Plan but within 1 km of the Greenbelt Boundary</b>							
11	No change	No change	No change	No change	Yes	No plans	Yes
12	No change	No change	No change	No change	<u>Yes</u>	No plans	Yes
13	No change	No change	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	Decrease	No change	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	No change	No livestock	No change	No change	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Located Outside of the Greenbelt Plan and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt Boundary</b>							
16	Decrease	No change	No change	Increase	<u>Yes</u>	No plans	Yes
17	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
18	No change	No change	No change	No change	Yes	No plans	Yes
19	No change	No livestock	No change	Decrease	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Increase	No change	No change	Increase	<u>Yes</u>	Yes	Yes

For the purposes of this study, ‘decrease’ and ‘no’ answers indicate the farm enterprise has or will be negatively affected over the next 3 years. ‘Increase’, ‘yes’ and ‘no change’ answers indicate the farm enterprise either remains stable or will be affected positively over the next 3 years. If four (4) or more of the responses consist of ‘increase’, ‘yes’ or ‘no change,’ then the farm enterprise is considered not to be negatively affected. However, if four (4) or more of the responses consist of ‘decrease’ or ‘no’ answers, then the farm enterprise is considered to be negatively affected. In other words, the farmer is reducing their level of agricultural production.

Applying the rules which have been outlined above to the primary data outlined in Table 2: Summary of Data, it becomes evident that one farm enterprise located outside and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary scored as being negatively affected over the next 3 years. A summary of the outcome is contained in Table 3.

**Table 3: Contingency Table**

	Farmers Within the Greenbelt Area		Farmers Outside of the Greenbelt Area	
	3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary	Within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary	3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary	Within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary
Affected	0	0	0	1
Not Affected	5	5	5	4

To better understand the results of this study, a more in-depth analysis of the data will be undertaken which will demonstrate that the Greenbelt Plan does not appear to be affecting the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. Having said this, this study does provide recommendations which the provincial government, the Greenbelt Council and/or the Town of Erin may want to take into consideration when making future policy decisions. The author of this study also suggests the recommendations could be considered by many other municipalities located within the Greenbelt area.

The data analysis has been divided into two parts. The first part provides general information about the participants and compares those living within the Greenbelt area against those living outside of the Greenbelt area. The second part compares those living on either side of the Greenbelt boundary i.e. within 1 kilometre of the Greenbelt boundary against those living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary. As will be illustrated, the location of the participants had no impact on the outcome of this study.

### Part 1: The Study Participants

Of the twenty participants interviewed, fourteen are over the age of 50 and five classified themselves as retired. This suggests the Town of Erin has a typical, aging farm population. The fact that a majority of the participants interviewed are planning to live on their farms as long as possible and further, only five of the participants have succession plans in place suggests the agricultural industry in the Town of Erin is stagnant and/or beginning a period of decline.

With respect to farm income, according to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MAPC) website, farm classifications are based on sales, bona-fide farmer-to farmer sales, land title documents, building permits, on-site property inspections, communication with property owners, sales questionnaires mailed to all farm purchasers, and real estate boards. Further, although MPAC may assess a property as a farm, it is taxed at the residential rate unless the farm is placed in the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' Farmland Tax Incentive Program. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' website, farm businesses that declare gross farm income of \$7,000 or more (for income tax purposes) are required to register annually under the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act, 1993. The farm must also pay an annual fee to one of the following organizations: the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario or the National Farmers Union<sup>33</sup>.

To be taxed at 25% of the municipal residential rate, the following four criteria must be satisfied: 1. property must be assessed as farmland through the Municipal Property Assessment

Corporation; 2. property must be part of a farming business with gross farm income of \$7,000 or more; 3. the farm business operating on the property must have a valid Farm Business Registration number; and 4. a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada must own the property.

According to the Revenue Canada's website and for income tax purposes, farming income includes income that has been earned based on the following activities: soil tilling; livestock raising or showing; racehorse maintenance; poultry raising; dairy raising; fur farming; tree farming; fruit growing; beekeeping; cultivating crops in water or hydroponics; Christmas tree growing; operating a wild-game reserve; chicken hatchery and/or operating a feedlot.

Participants for this study were randomly selected on the basis of their farm classification. At the time the methodology for this study was developed, it was thought that a minimum amount of farm income was needed in order to receive a farm property classification. This is not the case and as a result, not all of the participants who were randomly selected and interviewed for this study are considered 'bona-fide' farmers. For the purposes of this study, 'bona-fide' farmers are defined as individuals who earn 50% or more of their income from farming activities.

Of the twenty participants, over half estimated their percentage of farm income to be less than 50%. Six of the participants reported no income from their farm enterprise and nine (including the six) reported gross farm earnings of less than \$5,000. Fifteen of the participants reported no expected farm income increases and/or decreases over the next 3 years. Two reported expected income decreases over the next 3 years while the three remaining participants reported expected farm income increases. The three participants who reported expected farm incomes increases live within 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary. The above noted figures reaffirm that the Town of Erin's agricultural industry appears to be stagnant and/or beginning a period of decline.

With respect to the ownership type and length of ownership, twelve of the respondents reported a partnership arrangement, six are owned by individuals and two respondents stated their farms are registered as corporations. The length of ownership among the participants ranged

evenly from a minimum of 3 years to over 50 years. It is important to note that there does not appear to be any correlation between the length of ownership and where a participant lives. Having said this, of six of the participants who reported farming elsewhere prior to purchasing farms in the Town of Erin, five live within the Greenbelt area. This is not surprising as the participants living within the Greenbelt area are located in closer proximity to such larger urban centres of Georgetown and Guelph. All five of the participants reported being displaced by urban growth pressures. The high percentage of participants who reported partnership and sole ownership types indicate that the Town of Erin primarily consists of 'family farms'. The length of ownership figures may suggest the Town of Erin's agricultural industry is in a period of transition.

Regarding the level of financial commitment to the Town of Erin's agricultural industry, half of the participants are cattle farmers, five are cash crop farmers only, two own horse farms, two rent out their lands and work elsewhere, and one participant is a poultry/cash crop farmer. Of the ten cattle farmers, the size of the herds range from 12 to 900 head. The size of the herds that are owned range from 12 to 200 head. The size of the herds boarded and fed as part of a larger farming operation range from 25 to 200 head. The amount of owned livestock investment ranges from \$10,000 to \$180,000. If you factor out the two farm corporations, the amount of owned livestock investment drops from a high of \$180,000 to a high of \$125,000.

With respect to farm machinery investment, eight of the participants reported having less than <\$50,000 invested in machinery and of the eight, six are located within the Greenbelt area. One participant living outside of the Greenbelt area declined to answer the survey questions with respect to the amount of farm investment. When asked about the number of acres owned versus the number of acres rented, almost half own between 50 and 100 acres. Five participants own less than 50 acres. Nine of the respondents reported renting additional land and the amount of land rented ranged from 10 acres to 650 acres. Four of the participants expressed an interest in increasing the number of acres they rent while three other participants want to decrease the

number of acres they rent and/or own. The three participants who want to decrease the number of acres all live outside of the Greenbelt area. Regarding the value of their lands and buildings, half of the participants estimated the value to be in the range of \$500,000-\$1,000,000. Often the participants cited other neighbouring farm lands as the basis for their estimation. Most of the citations involved 'urban dwellers' purchasing a farm parcel. It is worthy to note that during the collection of the primary data, several large, new homes were observed on the landscape. The lack of barns, livestock and farm machinery sheds suggests the parcels containing the new homes are not being farmed by the property's owner(s).

When you take into consideration that a standard farm tractor can cost an estimated average of \$50,000, the amount of farm machinery investment in the Town of Erin is low. When you factor out the two large corporations, the maximum amount of owned livestock investment is \$125,000. When you consider the total number of farm operators and total number of cattle reported in the 2001 Census of Agriculture for the County of Wellington and the Town of Erin, the amount of livestock investment in the Town of Erin seems high. However, when averaged out the number of cattle farms in relation to the number of cattle, the Town of Erin appears to be average.

When asked about future capital farm investments, two of the participants stated that they are planning to increase their investment in buildings; another two are planning to increase their livestock investment; and one is planning to increase their machinery investment. As illustrated, of the twenty participants, five are planning to increase their farm capital investment. Fourteen of the respondents are planning to maintain status quo while one participant is proposing to sell everything and move into retirement. This data suggests that over time the agricultural industry in the Town of Erin will enter into a period of decline.

When asked to rate their knowledge of the Greenbelt Plan on a scale of 0 to 10; 0 meaning they knew nothing and 10 meaning they were an expert, eleven of the participants rated themselves with less than four while six rated their knowledge in the four to six range. Three of

the participants gave themselves a rating of seven or eight. The most common identified source of their Greenbelt knowledge was municipal newspapers. Tied for second place were radio ads and conversations with other farmers. Discussions with municipal and provincial staff and written municipal staff reports were also cited by three of the participants as sources of Greenbelt knowledge. One participant stated that he attended a public consultation meeting during the development of the Greenbelt Plan legislation.

Based on their level of knowledge, thirteen of the participants stated that the Greenbelt is permanent. In doing so, the participants often referred to other existing legislated areas in the province like the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine. A couple of the participants also made reference to the growing number of 'tree huggers' and the government's desire to protect the natural environment. One participant stated that one of the reasons he believes the Greenbelt Plan is permanent is because 'it employs Ontario Public Services' employees. Three participants declined to answer this survey question stating that they did not feel they had enough knowledge to state either way. The remaining four participants feel that the Greenbelt Plan is temporary on the basis that it will collapse under pressure from developers. A common phrase expressed by the four was "money talks".

Interestingly, 85% of the participants stated that they have no succession plans for their farms. Reasons included, but were not limited to, family is too young, the children have pursued higher education and now have their own professional lives, no children, and too costly for the children to get into farming. Fourteen of the participants either have retirement plans or classified themselves as retired. Of the six participants who reported that they have no retirement plans, four live outside of the Greenbelt Plan area.

Nine of the participants reported that personal significant life event(s) has changed their outlook on the farm. The significant life events included, but are not limited to: medical condition, physical ailment, barn fires and death of a loved one. None of the participants reported that the Greenbelt Plan is affecting their decisions with respect to succession plans, retirement



plans and/or future plans. Most of the participants who identified significant life events also reported that these event(s) have impacted decisions related to their farm enterprises. It is also important to note that despite over half of the participants indicating they are a member of a farm organization, none of the participants identified the farm organization(s) as a source of their Greenbelt knowledge.

#### Part 2: Living Along the Edge versus Totally Within or Outside of the Greenbelt Area

Based on a review of the data regarding the age of the farmers; the length of farm ownership; whether or not the farmer has farmed elsewhere; and the type of farm ownership, there does not appear to be significant differences between those participants living within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary and those living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary. This suggests the participants living within 1 km of the Greenbelt and those living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary are uniform. In other words, the delineation of Greenbelt boundary has not resulted in one particular type of farming enterprise being located within the Greenbelt area.

More of the participants within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary are cash crop farmers and all of the participants within 1 km of the boundary reported no significant income changes. Three participants located within and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary are anticipating an increase in their 2007 farm income while two participants in this same area are anticipating an income decrease. The anticipated changes are the result of changes to the size of their livestock herds and commodity prices. The percentage of annual gross farm incomes between those living within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary and those living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary was generally the same. In other words, the percentages of farm income were comparable between the two groups.

With respect to the participants' financial commitment to the Town of Erin's agricultural industry, one participant living outside but within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary and five participants living 3km or more from the Greenbelt boundary reported plans to increase their capital farm investment in machinery, livestock and/or farm buildings. The participant living

outside but within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary has plans to increase their farm building investment. Two of the participants living within and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary are planning to decrease their livestock investment while one participant in this same area is proposing to sell everything and move into retirement. One participant living within the Greenbelt area and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary estimated the value of their lands and buildings to be in excess of \$2,000,000 while five of the other participants living within 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary estimated the value of their land and buildings to be in the range of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. Two participants estimated the value of their lands and buildings to be in the \$200,000 to \$500,000 range. None of the participants living within 1 km of the boundary estimated the value of their lands and buildings to be less than \$500,000. As illustrated, participants living within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary estimated the value of their lands and buildings to be generally higher than the participants living within and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary.

Based on an analysis of the primary data, it does not appear there is a concentration of residents within the case study area who consider themselves to be Greenbelt experts. Having said this, those living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt area identified slightly higher levels of knowledge. None of the respondents cited farm organization(s) as a source of their knowledge. Eight of the respondents living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary feel the Greenbelt boundary is permanent. Three participants living close to the boundary chose not to answer the question stating that they did not feel they had enough knowledge to offer an informed opinion. When asked about their succession and retirement plans, more participants living within 1 km of the boundary indicated that they either had retirement plans or classified themselves as retired. Three of the participants living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary reported having succession plans while one participant living within 1 km of the boundary reported the same. None of the respondents indicated that the Greenbelt Plan (permanent or temporary) had any impact on their succession plans and/or retirement plans.

Interestingly, twice as many of the participants living more than 3 km from the Greenbelt boundary than the number of participants living within 1 km of the boundary reported personal significant events in their lives. One participant living within the Greenbelt area and 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary reported their future plans have changed. Further analysis of this case reveals that this is the participant planning to sell everything and move into retirement. The Greenbelt Plan was not cited as the reason for the declines related to this farm enterprise.

In summary, twenty participants from the Town of Erin were selected to participate in this study and the participants were randomly selected from one of four subgroups. A number of variables and indicators were chosen to determine if the Greenbelt Plan is having an impact on the agricultural industry within the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

The primary data reveals that the Town of Erin is primarily comprised of 'family farms' and has a typical, aging farm population. Over half of the participants estimated their percentage of farm income to be less than 50% which indicates that farming is not their main source of income. Five of the participants are planning to increase their farm capital investment while fourteen of the respondents are planning to maintain status quo. One participant is planning to sell everything and move into retirement in the next 3 years. Further, the amount of existing livestock investment in the Town of Erin appears to be average however, the amount of machinery investment is low. The value of lands and buildings appears to be inflated given the migration of 'urban' dwellers to the area. Based on this data, the agricultural industry in the Town of Erin appears to be stagnant and perhaps entering a period of decline. This is confirmed by the fact that 85% of the participants have no succession plans for their farms.

Thirteen of the participants stated that the Greenbelt is permanent however, none of the participants reported that the Greenbelt Plan is affecting their decisions with respect to succession plans, retirement plans and/or future plans. Participants who identified significant life events also reported that these event(s) have impacted their decisions related to their farm enterprise. Despite over half of the participants indicating they are a member of a farm organization, none of the

participants identified the farm organization(s) as a source of their Greenbelt knowledge and therefore, the results of this study are assumed not to be affected by propaganda. There appears to be little differences between those participants living within 1 km of the Greenbelt boundary and those participants living 3 km or more from the Greenbelt boundary.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The future of agriculture in rapidly urbanizing regions is a significant public policy issue across the western world. The debate has been primarily dominated by concern over the “loss” of prime farmland to urban uses. There is an estimated 4 million more people expected to live in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area by the year 2031. Therefore the Ontario Liberal Government made an unprecedented and historical decision in Ontario’s history to pass legislation allowing for the creation of Greenbelt areas. On February 24, 2005, the Greenbelt Act received Royal Assent. Four days later, the first Greenbelt policy document was released. Titled ‘the Greenbelt Plan’, this policy document contains special land use policies that apply to the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

The purpose of the Greenbelt Plan policies is to protect environmentally sensitive lands and agricultural lands by directing where growth should and should not occur. The vision for the Greenbelt Plan is threefold: to protect against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and support agriculture as the predominant land use; to provide permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human health, and to provide the environmental framework around which major urbanization in south-central Ontario will be organized; and to provide for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses.<sup>34</sup>

The Greenbelt Plan has been, and continues to be, a controversial topic and yet, very little data, if any, has been collected to prove or disprove the effectiveness of the Greenbelt legislation. Public policy evaluation involves the collection and analysis of information in order to make judgments about the performance and relevance of a policy, program and/or initiative. According to Anderson, one approach to evaluate a policy is to assess the impact of a policy on the future as well as the current situation. To determine what impact, if any, the Greenbelt Plan is having on

the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, public policy theory has been applied to this case study.

The provincial government is responsible for Ontario's land use planning legislation and policy development. Implementation of the Greenbelt legislation and policies occurs through the land use planning system. The Province established a Greenbelt Council and one of its mandates is to consider how the implementation of the Greenbelt Plan is proceeding. This includes the identification of issues arising from implementation<sup>35</sup>. This study offers the following issues for the provincial government and/or the Greenbelt Council's consideration.

Six respondents cited monetary loss for farmers located south of the study area as a negative. This came as no surprise and when asked to clarify the comment, all six of the respondents stated that farmers located south of the study area, in closer proximity to larger urban centres, could no longer sell their farms to developers for significant returns. Further, four of the participants viewed the Greenbelt as a degradation of property rights and more government bureaucracy. Three participants stated that the Greenbelt has eroded land values making it more difficult to get lines of credit from lending institutions. Two participants had nothing good to say about the Greenbelt and instead questioned what more was to come. Two other participants viewed the Greenbelt as creating an island in the province and suggested that a separate society will emerge. One of these participants questioned whether the provincial government saved the land or merely transferred the problem. Another participant stated that too much authority has been given to too few people.

On the positive side, over half of the participants indicated that the Greenbelt preserves the natural environment and provides habitat for animals and wildlife. Others stated that it supports agriculture by virtue of the fact that a 'line has been drawn'. Another participant indicated that the Greenbelt makes 'urban dwellers' and 'developers' think more about the importance of farmland.

### Closing Remarks:

Municipal governments play a vital and significant role in the development of communities through the land use planning system. Municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area were making little efforts to curb urban sprawl and with an expected 4 million additional people by the year 2031, managing growth became a provincial government priority. One of the provincial government's solutions was Greenbelt legislation and policies.

The author of this research study suggests the principles of the Greenbelt constitute good land use planning and should be applied on a province-wide basis. It is believed this same result could have been achieved by amending and/or strengthening the existing policies contained in the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement. This would have avoided the need for additional land use planning legislation and policies. Further, the author of this research study agrees with this study's participants who stated that because of perception, land values in the Greenbelt area will initially decrease. However, over time people will come to recognize and appreciate the Greenbelt area and eventually people will be willing to pay for the benefit of being located in the Greenbelt area. One participant stated that this same cycle occurred when the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine areas were developed.

### Recommendations:

1. In order to provide more conclusive results, this study should be expanded to include more participants covering a broader geographic area. The selection of farm participants should also be revisited and more attention should be given to the agricultural objectives of the Greenbelt legislation and policies. A comparison of Ontario's Greenbelt, British Columbia's Greenbelt and London, England's Greenbelt would also be beneficial.
2. More educational programs are needed to enhance the public's understanding of the Greenbelt.
3. In 2010, the provincial government should commission several stakeholder studies which take into consideration all five stages of the evaluation process.

4. The provincial government may wish to consider incorporating the Greenbelt Plan policies into the Provincial Policy Statement thereby applying the concept of the Greenbelt province-wide.
5. Provincial policies are in place for the purposes of preserving and protecting agricultural and natural environment areas. The Town of Erin's agricultural industry appears to be in a period of decline. The Town of Erin needs to carefully consider what they want their community to be like in the next 5 year review of their Official Plan. For example, residents who work outside of the community tend to have their economic and social activities outside of the community. This diminishes the sense of community.

**Conclusion:**

The findings of this study suggest the Greenbelt legislation and policies are not having a negative impact on the agricultural industry in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. This study does not suggest that the Greenbelt legislation and policies are achieving all of its intended objectives. Anderson offers nine reasons as to why a policy may not achieve its intended objectives. To fully assess the effectiveness of the Greenbelt legislation and policies, a much more comprehensive study needs to be undertaken.



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- <sup>1</sup> Bunce and Maurer, p. 2.
  - <sup>2</sup> Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, February 28, 2005.
  - <sup>3</sup> Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, February 24, 2005.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, February 28, 2005.
  - <sup>5</sup> Neptis Foundation, November 25, 2005.
  - <sup>6</sup> Bunce and Maurer, p. 4.
  - <sup>7</sup> Bunce and Maurer, p. 43.
  - <sup>8</sup> Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website.
  - <sup>9</sup> Citizens Guide-Official Plans, p. 2.
  - <sup>10</sup> Ontario Planning Act, p. 3.
  - <sup>11</sup> Ontario, The Greenbelt Act, p. 5.
  - <sup>12</sup> Citizens Guide-Ontario Municipal Board, p. 2.
  - <sup>13</sup> Ontario, The Greenbelt Act, p. 6.
  - <sup>14</sup> Ontario, The Greenbelt Plan, p. 46.
  - <sup>15</sup> Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, page 1.
  - <sup>16</sup> Vingilis, p. 67-71.
  - <sup>17</sup> Weiss, p. 167.
  - <sup>18</sup> Anderson, p. 2.
  - <sup>19</sup> Anderson, pp. 2-3.
  - <sup>20</sup> Anderson, p. 3.
  - <sup>21</sup> Dunn, p. 64.
  - <sup>22</sup> Dunn, p. 62.
  - <sup>23</sup> Anderson, pp. 23-24.
  - <sup>24</sup> Anderson, p. 30.
  - <sup>25</sup> Dunn, p. 15.
  - <sup>26</sup> Anderson, pp. 151-166.
  - <sup>27</sup> Dunn, pp. 406-409.
  - <sup>28</sup> Dunn, p. 410.
  - <sup>29</sup> Anderson, pp. 166-177.
  - <sup>30</sup> Weiss, p. 167.
  - <sup>31</sup> Town of Erin Website.
  - <sup>32</sup> Town of Erin Official Plan, pp. 47-48.
  - <sup>33</sup> Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website.
  - <sup>34</sup> Ontario, The Greenbelt Plan, p. 4.
  - <sup>35</sup> Ontario, The Greenbelt Plan, p. 46.

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- Town of Erin website available at <http://www.town.erin.on.ca>.
- Town of Erin Official Plan available at <http://www.town.erin.on.ca>.

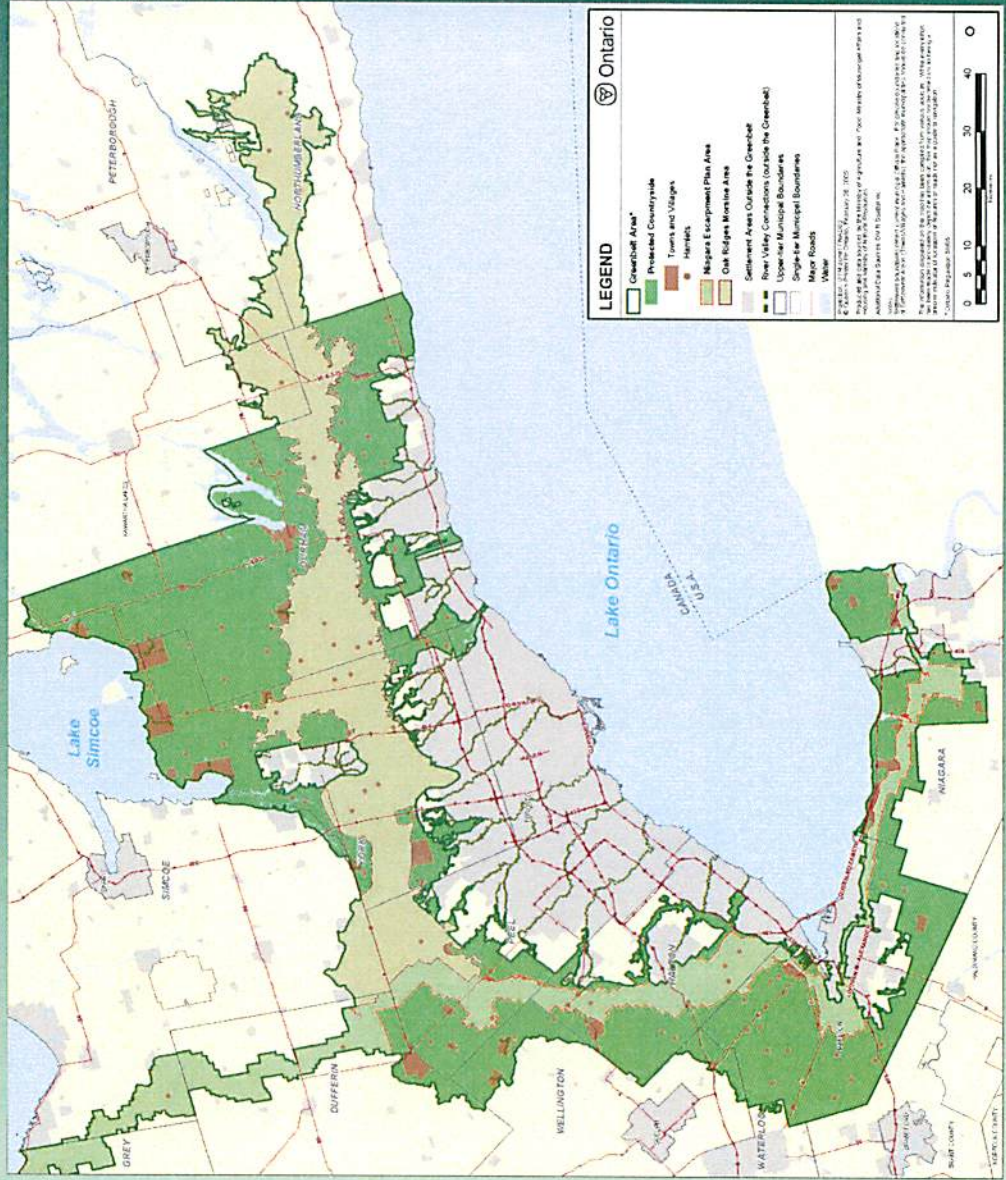
Vingilis, Evelyn. Professor: Methods and Issues in Program and Policy Evaluation. Selected Course Readings. Public Administration 915A (London: Western University Book Store).

Weiss. C. (1984). Increasing the likelihood of influencing decisions. In L. Rutman (Ed.), Evaluation Research Methods: A Basic Guide.

## **APPENDIX A: GREENBELT AREA**

# Greenbelt

## Schedule 1: Greenbelt Plan Area



**LEGEND**

- Greenbelt Area\*
- Proposed Countywide
- Towns and Villages
- Hamlets
- Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
- Oak Ridge Moraine Area
- Settlement Areas Outside the Greenbelt
- River Valley Connections (Outside the Greenbelt)
- Upper-tier Municipal Boundaries
- Single-tier Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roads
- Water

**Ontario**

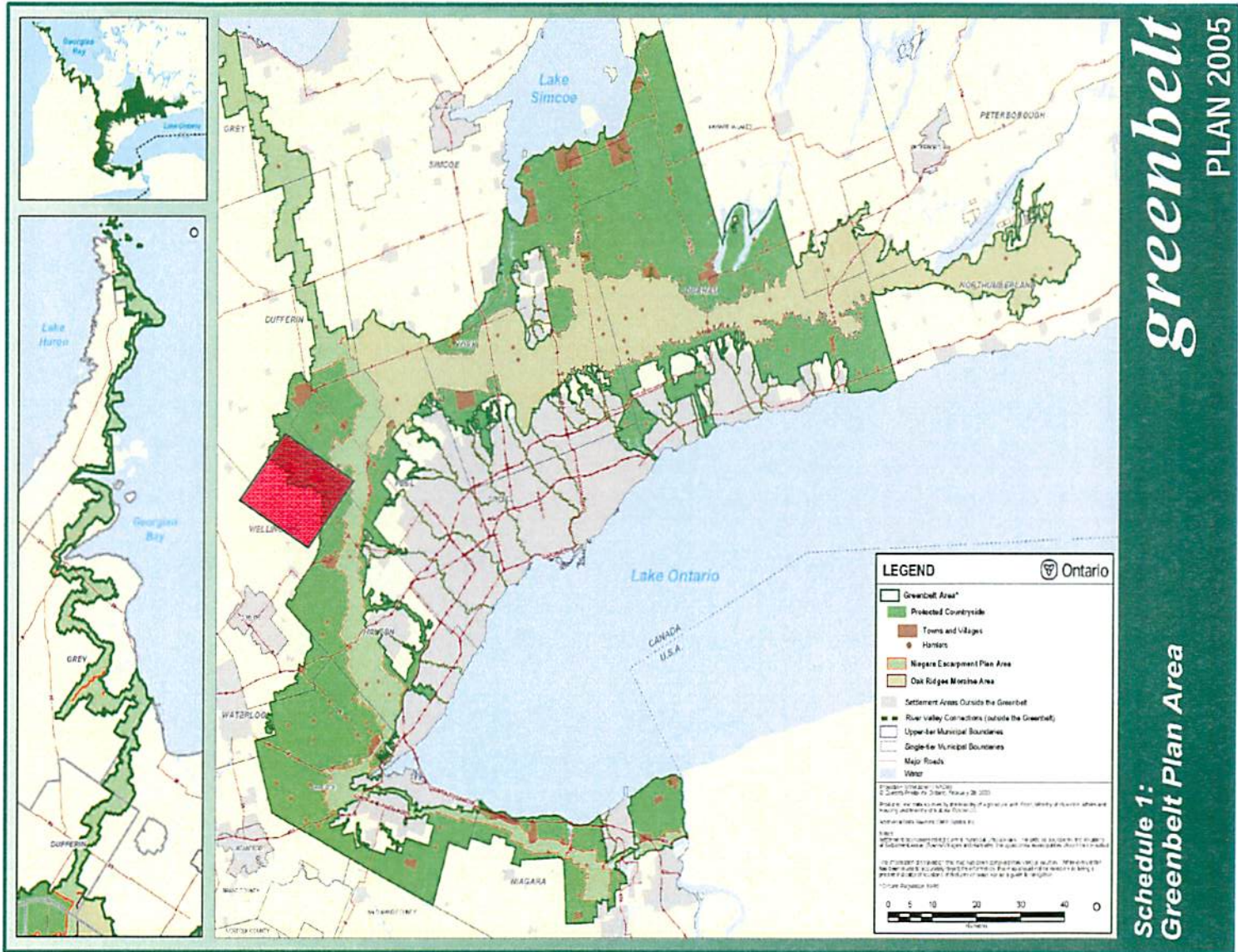
\* The Greenbelt Area is defined by the Greenbelt Plan. It is a strategic land-use plan that identifies areas of high natural and cultural value and provides for their protection and enhancement. The Greenbelt Area is a key component of the Greenbelt Plan and is subject to the same level of protection and management as the other areas of the Greenbelt Plan. The Greenbelt Area is a key component of the Greenbelt Plan and is subject to the same level of protection and management as the other areas of the Greenbelt Plan.


Scale: 1:50,000

0 5 10 20 30 40



## **APPENDIX B: SELECTED STUDY AREA**

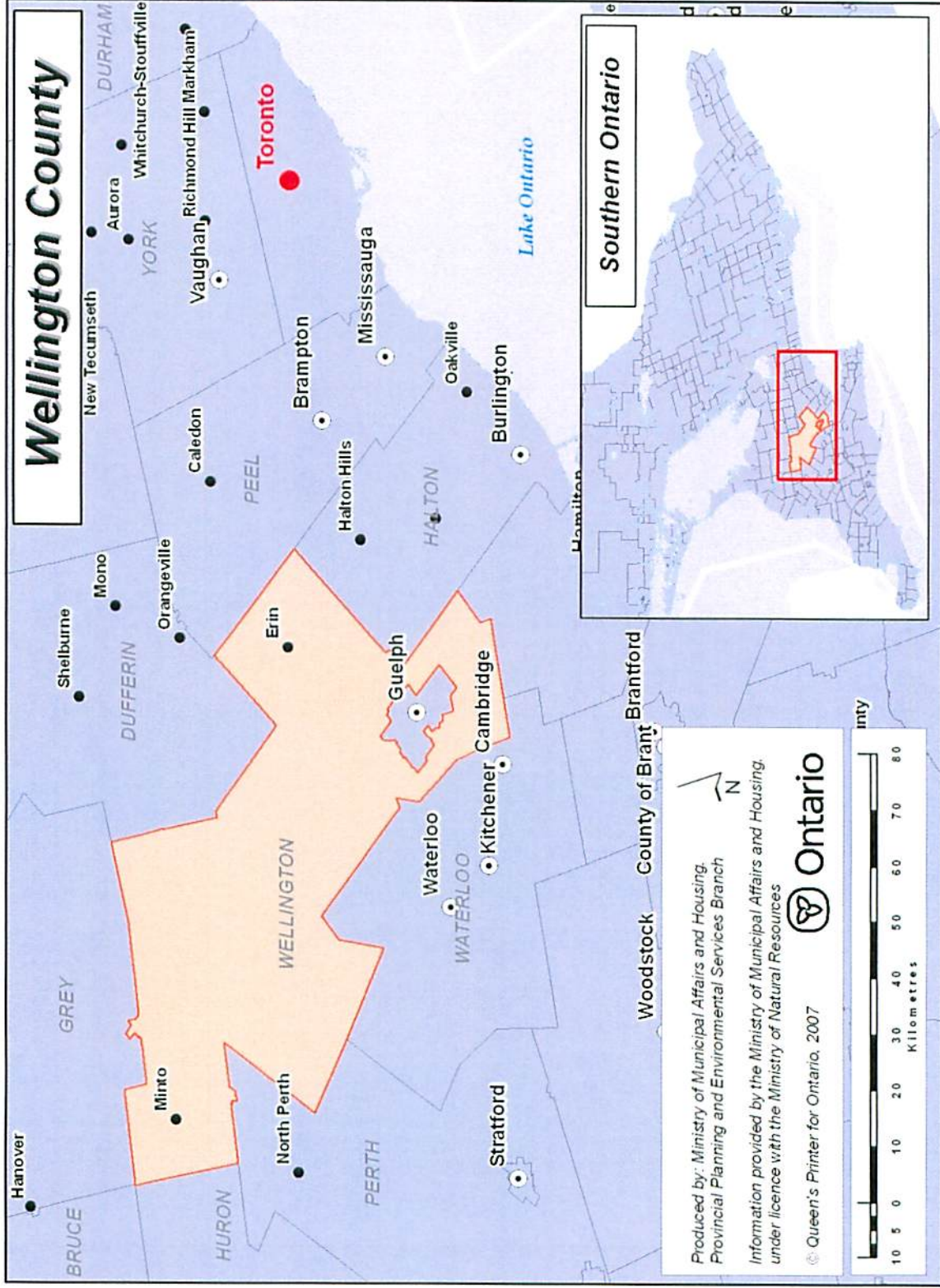


 Selected Study Area (Approximate)

## **APPENDIX C: WELLINGTON COUNTY**



# Wellington County



## Southern Ontario

Produced by: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing,  
Provincial Planning and Environmental Services Branch

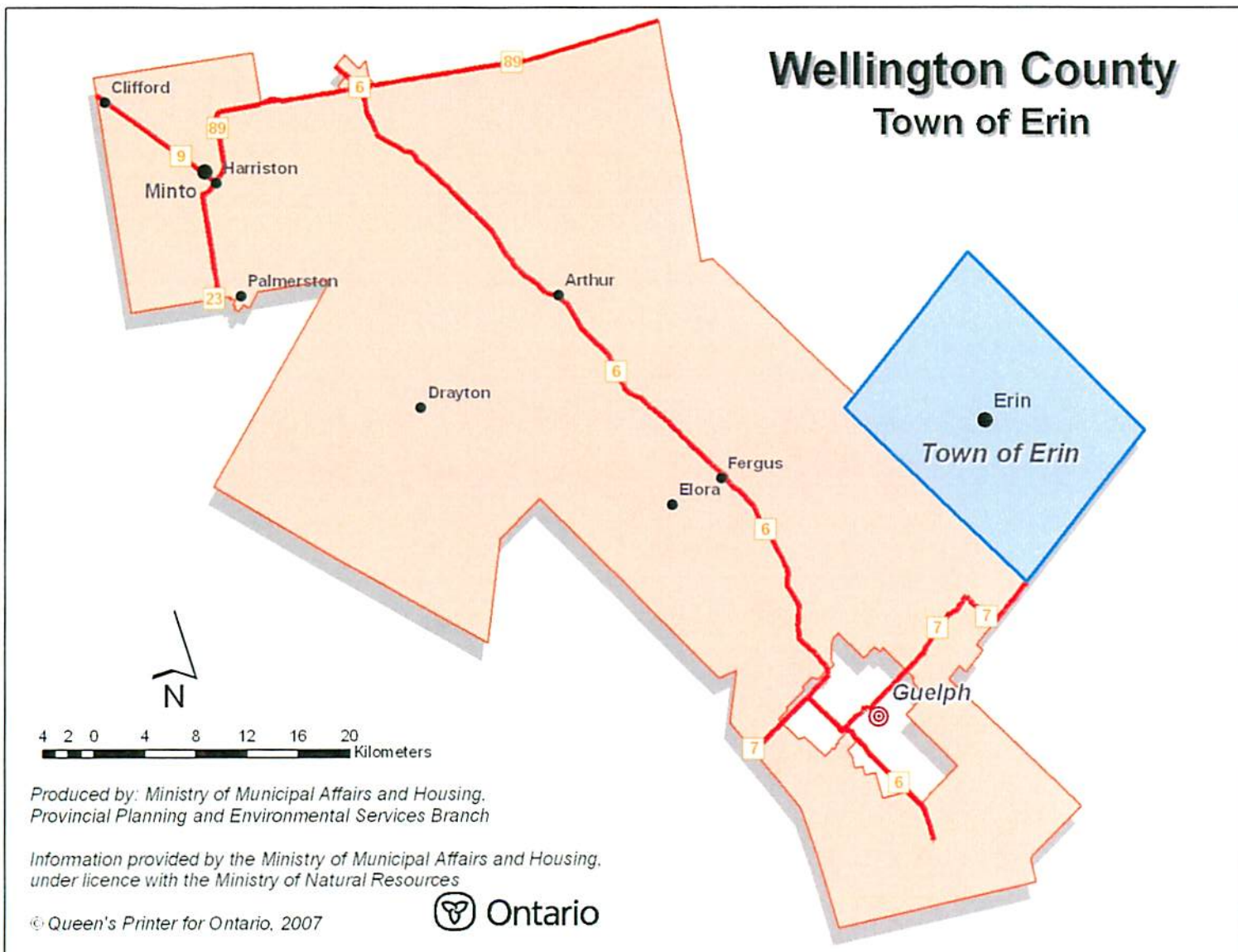
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## **APPENDIX D: TOWN OF ERIN**

# Wellington County Town of Erin



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**APPENDIX E: COVERING LETTER,  
CONSENT FORM, SURVEY**

## Introductory Letter to Study Participants

Date

Name

Address

Town

Postal Code

Dear Name,

My name is Dwayne Evans and I am enrolled as a part-time student in the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program at the University of Western Ontario, London. To graduate from the MPA program I am required to complete a research study. The purpose of my research study is to determine what impacts, if any, the Greenbelt Plan is having the agricultural industry. To assist me, I require approximately 30 minutes of your time.

You have been selected as a resident of the Town of Erin to participate in this research study. Your participation involves responding to 19 questions which seek your insights and perspectives on the Greenbelt Plan. The information you provide will be strictly confidential in that your responses to the questions will be used collectively with the other participant's responses. At the conclusion of the study, all responses will be shredded and disposed of in accordance with the University of Western Ontario requirements. Participation in the study also entitles you to a copy of the study, if requested.

Your co-operation, time and assistance would be greatly appreciated. I will contact you by telephone during the week of xxxxx to arrange a meeting time. To assist me in locating you, can you please have your 911 address by the phone when I call. The number I will be calling to reach you is (519) xxx-xxxx. If this telephone number is incorrect, I would appreciate it if you could call me during the evenings at (519) xxx-xxxx to arrange a meeting time.

If you require any additional information or wish to discuss this research study further, I can be reached during the evenings at the phone number noted above and/or my research advisor, Dr. Andrew Sancton, can be reached during the day at the University of Western Ontario at (519) 850-2985 extension 82985.

Yours truly,

Dwayne Evans

# THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

### Impacts of the Greenbelt Plan on the Agricultural Industry Case Study: Town of Erin, Wellington County

#### **Participant selection and purpose of study**

You have been invited to participate in a study of the Greenbelt Plan. The purpose of this study is to determine what impacts, if any, the Greenbelt Plan is having on the agricultural industry. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a resident of the Town of Erin, Wellington County.

#### **Description of study and risks**

If you agree to participate, I will ask you a series of 19 questions. It will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. There should be no harmful effects and the researcher cannot and does not guarantee, or promise there will any benefits to participating in this study. If requested, a copy of the research project will be provided to you.

#### **Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or except as required by law. If you give me your permission by signing this document, I plan to publish the results in a research study report for the purposes of satisfying the requirements of the Masters of Public Administration Program at the University of Western Ontario. Excerpts from this document may be published in other publications. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. At the conclusion of the study, all information will be disposed of in accordance with the University of Western Ontario requirements.

#### **Your consent**

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with The University of Western Ontario. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me and/or my research advisor. If you have any additional questions later, I will be happy to answer them. I can be reached during the evenings at (519) 473-0229.

You will be mailed a copy of this form to keep.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM  
(continued)**

**Impacts of the Greenbelt Plan on the Agricultural Industry  
Case Study: Town of Erin, Wellington County**

**You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read the information provided above, you have decided to participate.**

.....  
Signature of Research Participant

.....  
Signature of Witness

.....  
(Please PRINT name)

.....  
(Please PRINT name)

.....  
Date

.....  
Nature of Witness

**Research Participant #2, if applicable**

.....  
Signature of Research Participant

.....  
Signature of Witness

.....  
(Please PRINT name)

.....  
(Please PRINT name)

.....  
Date

.....  
Nature of Witness

# Survey

Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Date Questionnaire Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Property: Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Concession: \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate age of the farmer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## Basic Information (Structured part)

“First I would like to get some basic information about your farm enterprise”

1. How long have you owned this farm? \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. Did you farm somewhere else before farming here? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many individuals own this farm enterprise?  
Sole proprietorship \_\_\_\_\_ Partnership \_\_\_\_\_ Corporation \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many acres do you farm in total?  
Under 50 acres \_\_\_\_\_ 50 to 99 acres \_\_\_\_\_  
100 acres to 199 acres \_\_\_\_\_ 200 acres to 499 acres \_\_\_\_\_  
500 acres to 999 acres \_\_\_\_\_ 1000 acres to 2000 acres \_\_\_\_\_  
2000 acres to 5000 acres \_\_\_\_\_ Over 5000 acres \_\_\_\_\_

Rent (acres): \_\_\_\_\_

Own (acres): \_\_\_\_\_

### Location of rented parcels:

Parcel 1: Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Concession \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel 2: Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Concession \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel 3: Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Concession \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

### Location of owned parcels:

Parcel 1: Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Concession \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel 2: Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Concession \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel 3: Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Concession \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to increase or decrease the number of acres rented and/or owned within the next 3 years?

Increase \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_\_\_ No Change \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, by how many acres are you planning to increase or decrease by and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**5. What type and size of a farm do you operate?**

Dairy: \_\_\_\_\_ Cattle: \_\_\_\_\_ Hog: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poultry and Egg: \_\_\_\_\_ Sheep: \_\_\_\_\_ Goat: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sheep: \_\_\_\_\_ Cash crops: \_\_\_\_\_ Feed crops: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Pasture: \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetables: \_\_\_\_\_ Woodlot: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fruit: \_\_\_\_\_ Market gardening: \_\_\_\_\_ Vacant: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other and Size: \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you planning to increase or decrease the number of livestock within the next 3 years?**

Not applicable: \_\_\_\_\_ Increase: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Decrease: \_\_\_\_\_ No change: \_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, by how many and what type of livestock are you planning to increase or decrease by?**

Dairy: \_\_\_\_\_ Cattle: \_\_\_\_\_ Hog: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Poultry and Egg: \_\_\_\_\_ Sheep: \_\_\_\_\_ Goat: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sheep: \_\_\_\_\_ Other and Size: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Economics of the Farm Enterprise**

**6. What is the range of your gross farm income from the farming operation for the year 2005?**

Under \$2500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$2500 to \$4,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$5,000 to \$9,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 to \$24,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$25,000 to \$49,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 to \$99,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$100,000 to \$249,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250,000 to \$499,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$500,000 and over \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the range of your gross farm income from the farming operation for the year 2006?**

Under \$2500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$2500 to \$4,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$5,000 to \$9,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 to \$24,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$25,000 to \$49,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 to \$99,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$100,000 to \$249,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250,000 to \$499,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$500,000 and over \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you expect your gross farm income to increase or decrease in the year 2007?**

Increase \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_\_\_ No Change \_\_\_\_\_

**If an increase or a decrease in gross farm income is expected in the year 2007, why?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the percentage of your income derived from the farm enterprise?

100% \_\_\_\_\_

75-99% \_\_\_\_\_

50-74% \_\_\_\_\_

25-49% \_\_\_\_\_

<25% \_\_\_\_\_

Retired: \_\_\_\_\_

8. What would you estimate to be the range of the following capital investments?

**A. Machinery and Equipment**

<\$100,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$100,000-\$200,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$200,001-\$500,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$500,001-\$1,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,000,001-\$1,500,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,500,001-\$2,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$2,000,001-\$5,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$5,000,001-\$10,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

>\$10,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Livestock and Poultry**

<\$100,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$100,000-\$200,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$200,001-\$500,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$500,001-\$1,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,000,001-\$1,500,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,500,001-\$2,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$2,000,001-\$5,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$5,000,001-\$10,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

>\$10,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Land and Buildings**

<\$100,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$100,000-\$200,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$200,001-\$500,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$500,001-\$1,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,000,001-\$1,500,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$1,500,001-\$2,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$2,000,001-\$5,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

\$5,000,001-\$10,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

>\$10,000,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to increase or decrease your machinery and equipment investment within the next 3 years?

Increase \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_\_\_ No Change \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, by how much? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you planning to increase or decrease your livestock and/or poultry inventory within the next 3 years?

Increase \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_\_\_ No Change \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, by how much? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any plans to purchase more land and/or construct or expand existing building(s) within the next 3 years?

Increase \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease \_\_\_\_\_ No Change \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, by how much? \_\_\_\_\_

**Greenbelt Plan Legislation**

9. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 meaning you know nothing and 10 meaning you know everything, how would you rate your knowledge of the Greenbelt Plan?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How did you acquire your knowledge of the Greenbelt Plan? (e.g. reading the Greenbelt Plan, watching TV, listening to the radio, attending a meeting, talk to others)

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11. In your opinion, is the Greenbelt Plan permanent (>10 years) or temporary (<10 years)? Permanent\_\_\_\_\_ Temporary\_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Do you have a succession plan in place for your farm enterprise?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

**A. If Yes.....**

Who will be taking over your farm enterprise?

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Has your succession plan change since the announcement of the Greenbelt Plan Legislation? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

What change has been made and why?

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**B. If No.....**

Is there a reason(s) why you do have a succession plan in place?

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13. Do you have retirement plans? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

A. If Yes.....

What are your retirement plans?

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Have your retirement plans changed since the announcement of the Greenbelt Plan Legislation? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what change(s) have been made and why?

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B. If No.....

Is there a reason(s) why you have not made retirement plans?

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14. Has there been any significant events occur in your life over the last 5 years? (e.g. death of a family member, illness, marriage, birth) Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what was the event?\_\_\_\_\_

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Has this event changed your outlook of your farm enterprise? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how has the event changed your outlook?\_\_\_\_\_

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**15. Has the Greenbelt Plan Legislation impacted the future plans for your farm enterprise? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_**

If yes, in what way and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**16. Are severances permitted on agricultural lands within the Greenbelt area? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_**

**17. In your opinion, what are the positive aspects of the Greenbelt Plan?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**18. In your opinion, what are the negative aspects of the Greenbelt Plan?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**19. Do you belong to any farm organizations or farm co-operatives? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_**

If yes, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_