

# York Region's Approach to Implementing the Agricultural System

Planning Advisory Committee — March 20, 2019

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# Did you know that in York Region ...

3,578 jobs in  
primary  
agricultural  
production

57,000 jobs in the  
full agri-food  
section

Agriculture GDP is  
\$2.7 billion

27 agri-food  
sectors industries =  
11% of total  
employment

Gross Farm sales  
total \$301 million  
in 2016

712 working farms  
in 2016

2017 York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy

# Overview

- What is an Agricultural System?
- Municipal Comprehensive Review Work Plan
- Implementation of Agricultural System in York Region
- Policy Conformity
- New Policy Approach



# Provincial Agricultural System

- Protection of farmland and promote the agri-food network
- Specialty crop, prime agriculture and candidate areas identified and mapped



# Agri-Food Network

- Consists of farm buildings, agricultural services, farm markets, wineries, primary processing and the infrastructure that connects them
- Agricultural System Portal will help support economic development initiatives associated with agri-food sector
- Agricultural Impact Assessment introduced





# Municipal Comprehensive Review



The Regional Municipality of York  
**Official Plan**  
2016 Office Consolidation

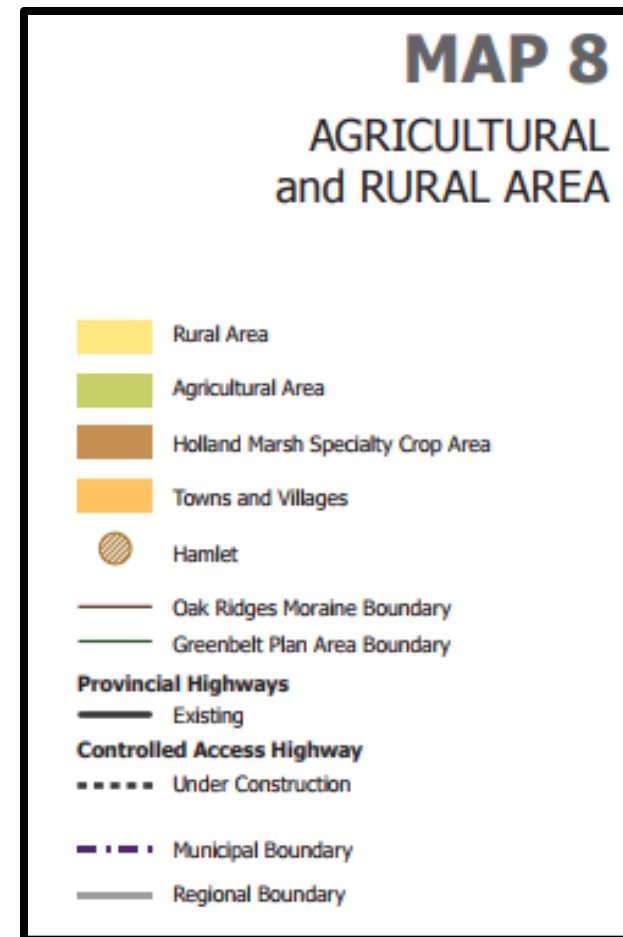
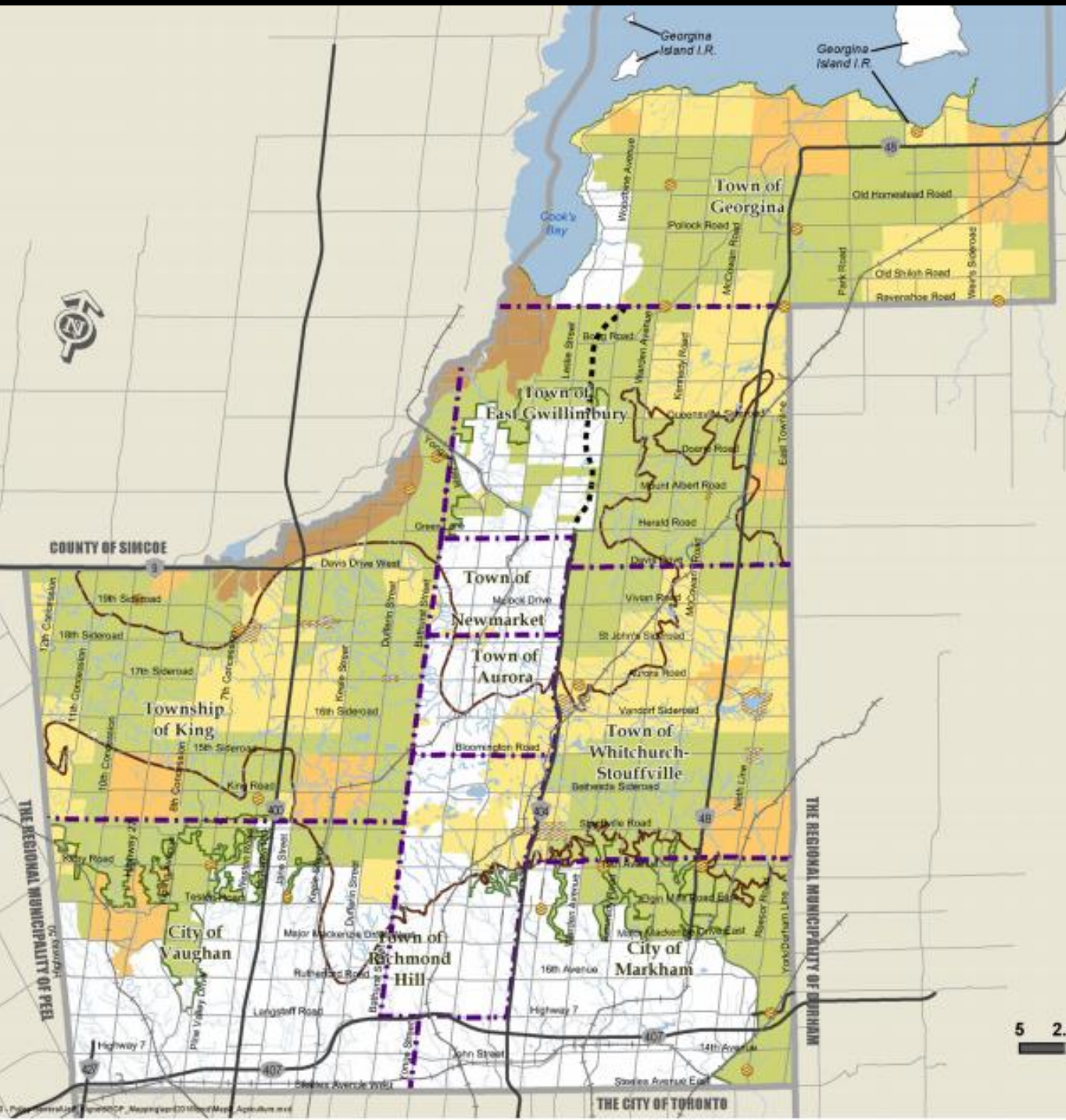


  
**York Region**

April 2016

- What's a MCR?
- Component includes review of the agricultural system
- Proposed Timing
  - MCR commenced
  - Draft Official Plan mid 2020
  - Adopted Official Plan fall 2020
- Consultation
- June staff report
- Result will be updated policies and mapping in the Regional Official Plan

# York Regional Official Plan





## Legend

 Holland Marsh

## LEAR Score

### LEAR10

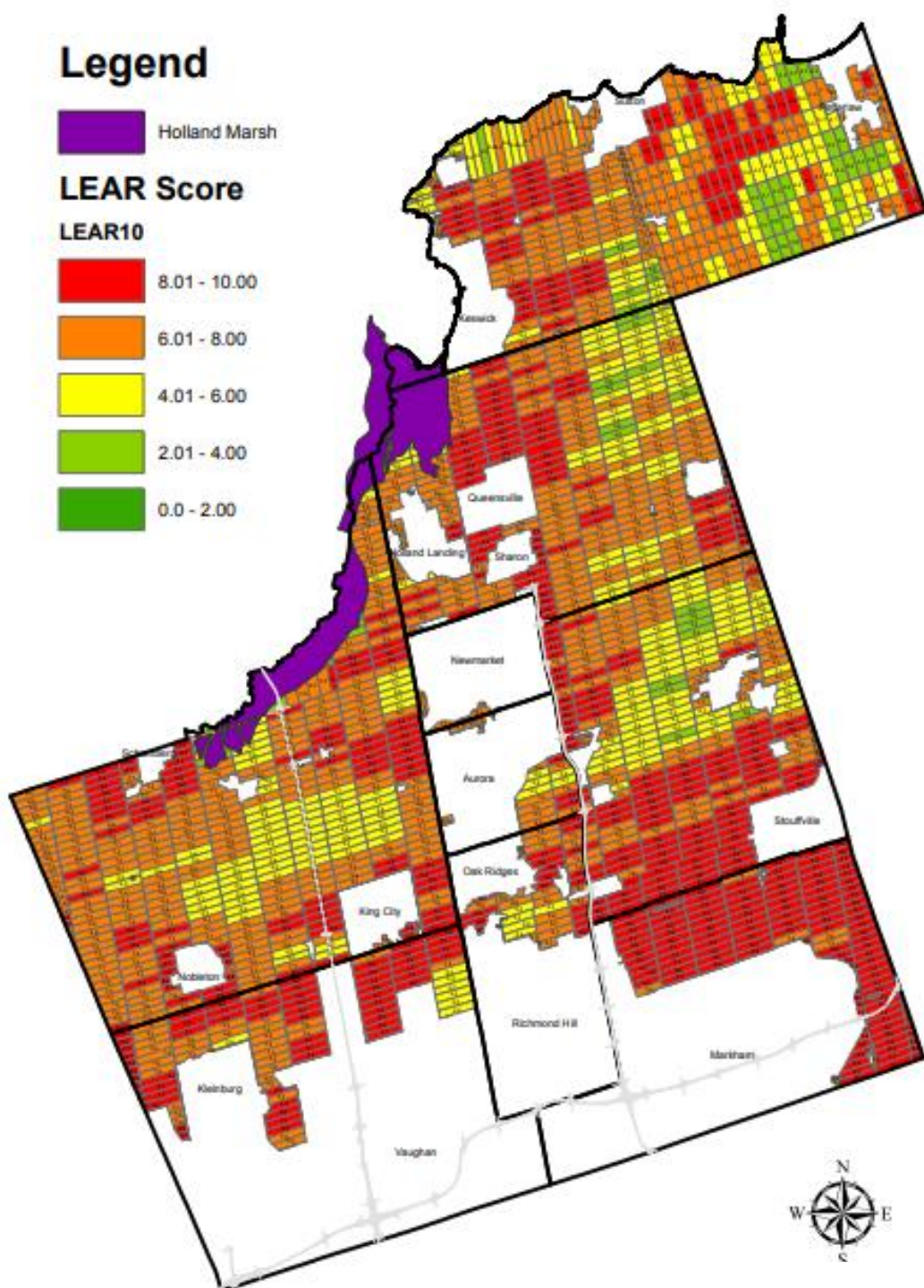
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# York Region LEAR

The Province used 3 criteria:

- Soil Capability
- Fragmentation
- Lands in Production

York Region used 1 additional criteria:

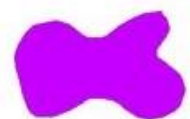
- Conflicting Land Uses

2009 LEAR (Land Evaluation & Area Review) assisted in the establishment of the Agricultural and Rural Designations in the Official Plan

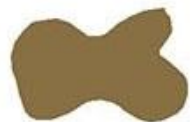


# Provincial Agricultural Land Base

## Agricultural Land Base



Specialty Crop Area



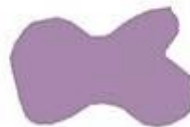
Prime Agricultural Area



Candidate Area (could be added to  
*prime agricultural areas or rural lands*)



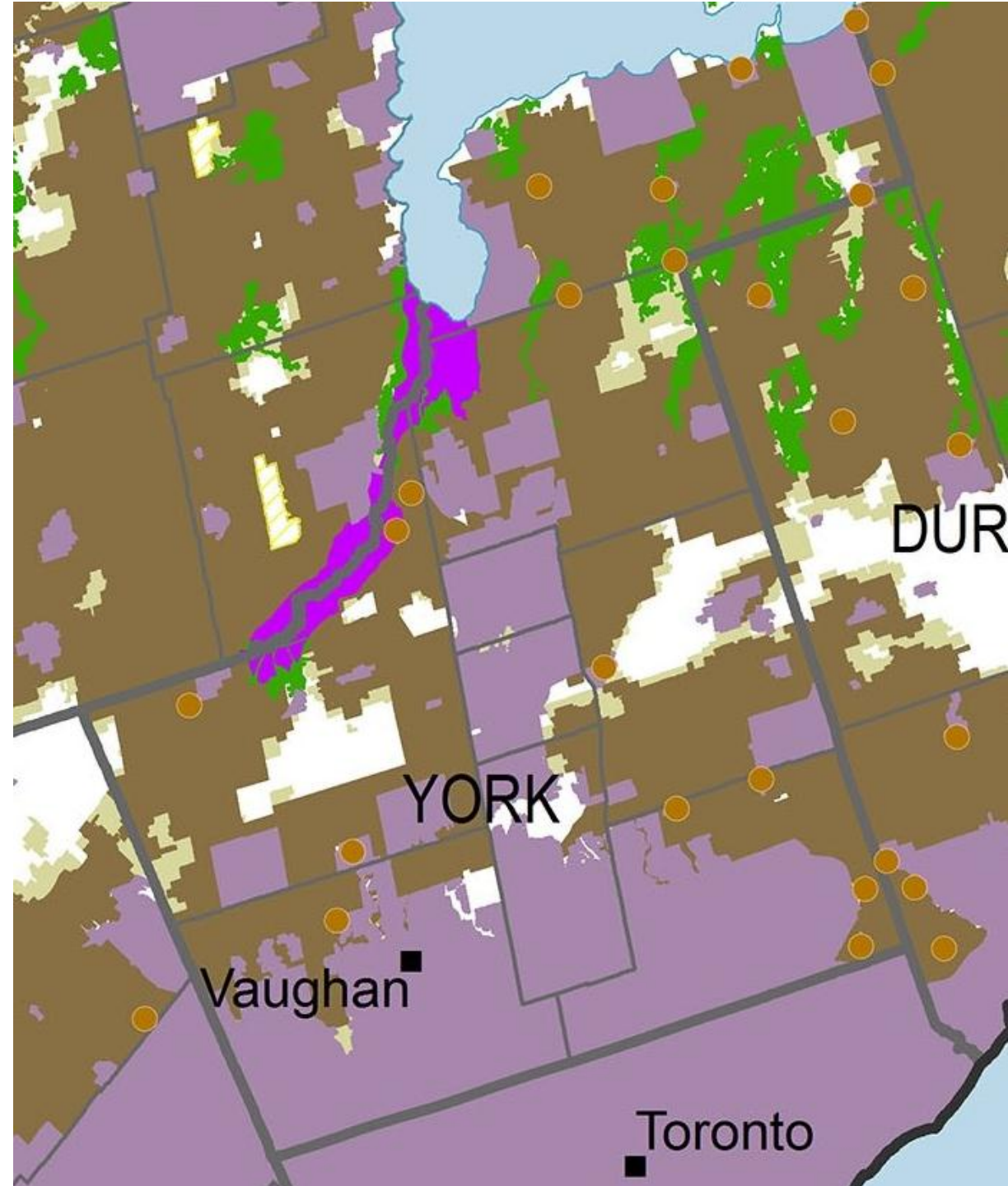
Natural Area (NEP  
Escarpment Natural  
Designation, and PSWs)



Settlement Area



Hamlet



# York Region Approach to the Mapping



# Consultant's Approach


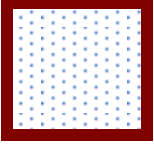

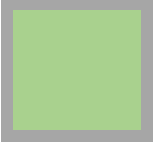

- 41 study areas identified
- Comparison review with LEAR's
- Groundtruthing
- Input from YRAALG (York Region Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group), farming community and municipal staff

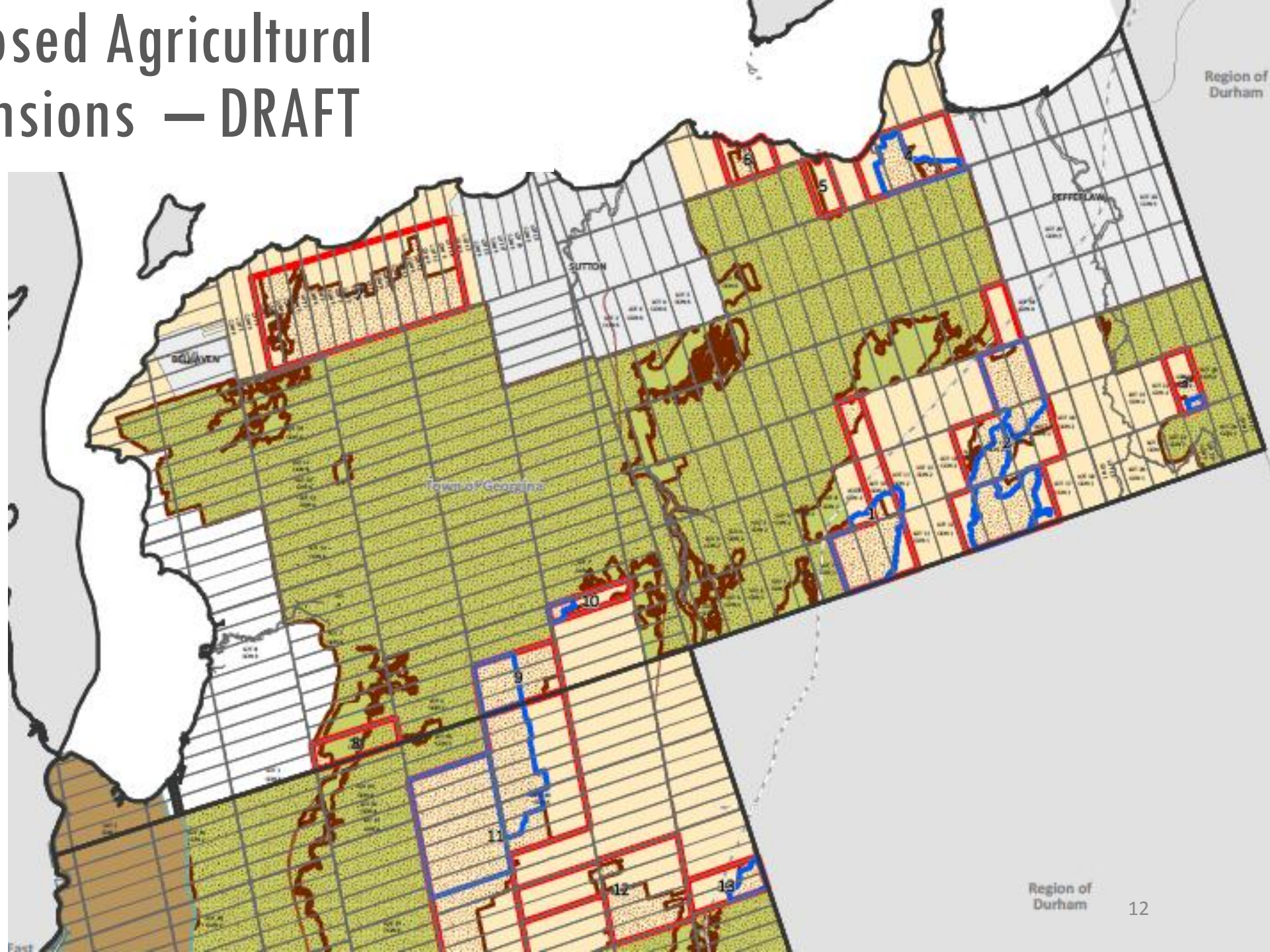


Objective to have advice and the rationale of which lands should be considered for re-designation



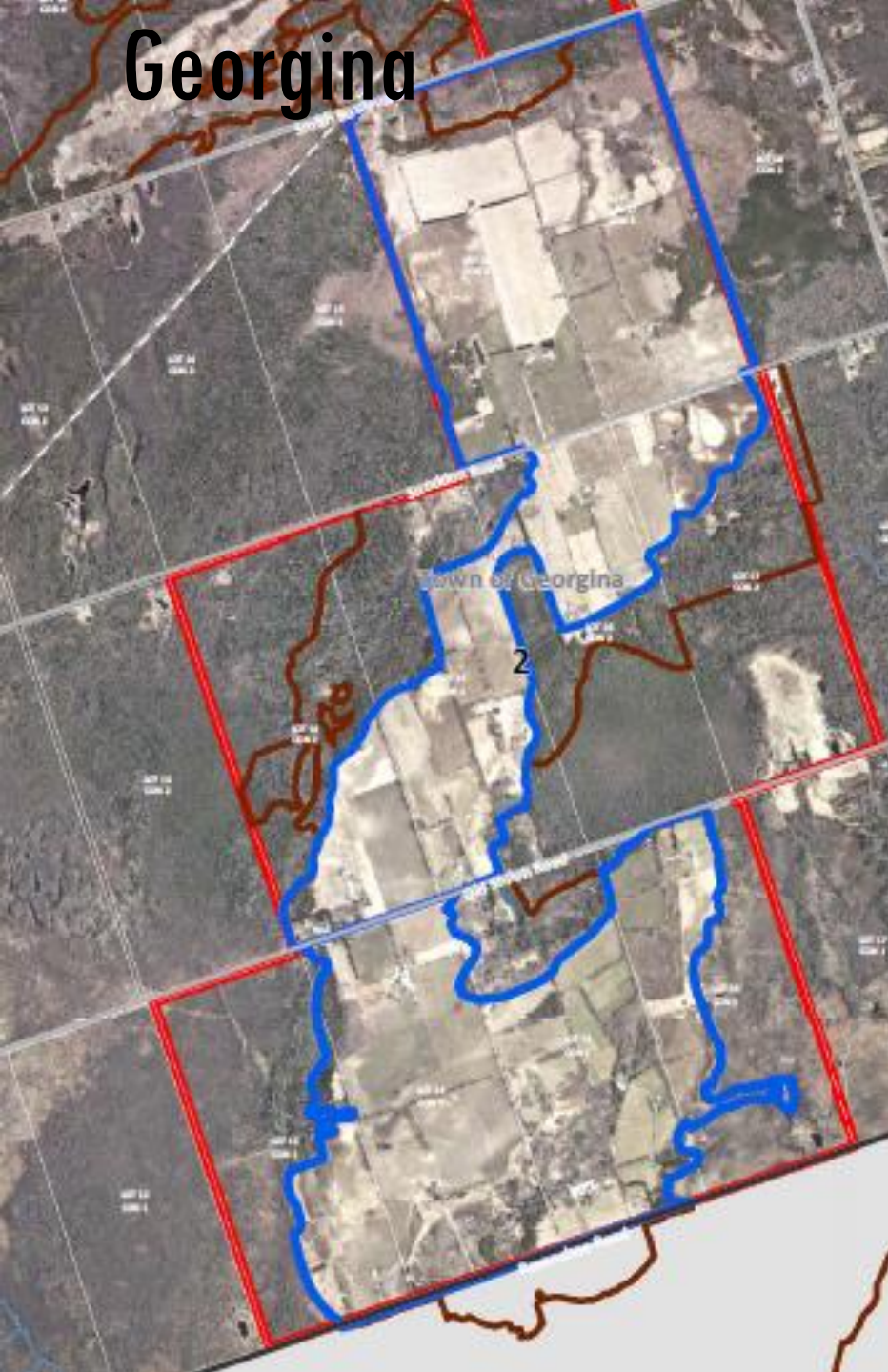
# Example of Proposed Agricultural Designation Extensions — DRAFT

-  Study Area
-  Prov LEAR
-  Proposed Change
-  Agricultural Designation
-  Rural Designation





# Georgina



# East Gwillimbury



## Detailed Assessment

- 2 LEAR scores
- Natural Heritage System overlay
- Active farming
- Fragmentation
- Conflict
- Input
- Connection



# Draft Mapping Results

- Of the 41 study areas 17 portions of the study areas were identified to be designated Agriculture
- Impacted municipalities:
  - Georgina
  - East Gwillimbury
  - King
  - Whitchurch-Stouffville
  - Richmond Hill





# Example Vaughan: Greenbelt Natural Heritage “Green Fingers”



# Policy Conformity & Approaches



# Policy Conformity

- Conformity to Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Support for agricultural economy
- Edge planning
- Promotion of agri-food network
- Street network design

The Good News: York Region already has a strong foundation of agricultural and rural policies





# Non-agricultural Uses in Agricultural Designation



- Non-agricultural uses, more typically rural or highway commercial uses
- Currently not permitted in Greenbelt Plan in Agricultural designation
- Looking at a way to allow for these legal non-conforming uses to expand and/or change use to be in closer conformity

# THANK YOU

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