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**A History of Non-Farm Rural Residential Development in
Oxford County, Ontario and its Impact on Farm Life**

By

Jaime Lynne Patricia Gillespie
(Bachelor of Arts, Brock University, 2003)

Thesis

Submitted to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
2006

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ABSTRACT

A History of Non-Farm Rural Residential Development in Oxford County, Ontario and its Impact on Farm Life

Jaime Lynne Gillespie
Wilfrid Laurier University, 2006

Advisor:
Dr. J. Bates

This paper traces the history of non-farm rural residential development in Oxford County, Ontario from the early 1970s through to 2004 and investigates the impact of these non-farm uses on farm activities. In contrast to planning departments in the Province of Ontario that have been slow to develop restrictions on non-farm development, Oxford County has a long history of safeguarding its agricultural heritage through its planning policies. This paper examines the effectiveness of Oxford County's legislation in preserving agricultural land and in preventing non-farm rural residential development. The literature review presents an overview of agriculture in southern Ontario, Ontario's agricultural planning policies (1970s to 2006), and the history of non-farm development. All severance applications from the County of Oxford for the 35-year period were examined to determine the approval rates for non-farm severances, as well as to identify the spatial pattern of severance applications. Members of farm families on nine farms in varying areas of land preservation were interviewed to illustrate some of the ways that non-farm development has altered daily farming activities. The findings of the study are summarized and suggestions for future research are made in the concluding chapter.

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I would also like to thank Dr. Clare Mitchell, my committee member for her astute comments and suggestions, and for helping to make my thesis a quality finished product. I am also grateful to Dr. Kevin Hanna and Dr. Bob Sharpe for their comments and suggestions as members of the defence committee.

I would like to thank Doug Rozell, the Records Coordinator at the County of Oxford for his encouragement and interest in both my undergraduate and graduate studies. My work in the records 'dungeon' with several planning series files helped me to identify early on the influx of severance activity in the County, and inspired me to document the findings in an academic study.

Many thanks goes to the planning staff of Oxford County for their perceptions, and expertise in centralized planning and for providing me access to the historical records, applications, as well as other municipal documents and datasets. I also thank you for allowing me to use some office space as a work area while conducting part of my research. This project would not have been possible without your cooperation.

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was taken from their busy work days to provide insight into agriculture and discussing the ways non-farm development has altered their farming activities and farm life. I am forever grateful to you all.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their encouragement throughout my university career. My mother and my late father, who always made me believe that any academic goal was possible. My brother, who has always been able to see the humour in any situation and helped by lending an ear during times of frustration and writers block. My extended family, my husband's family, and my friends, for always offering their constant support and enquiring on my progress and for being a good sport while they listened to me discuss at length the details of my findings. Last but not least my husband and best friend Adam, for enduring this long process with me, thank you for your loving support and patience during this challenging journey.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Significance of the Research

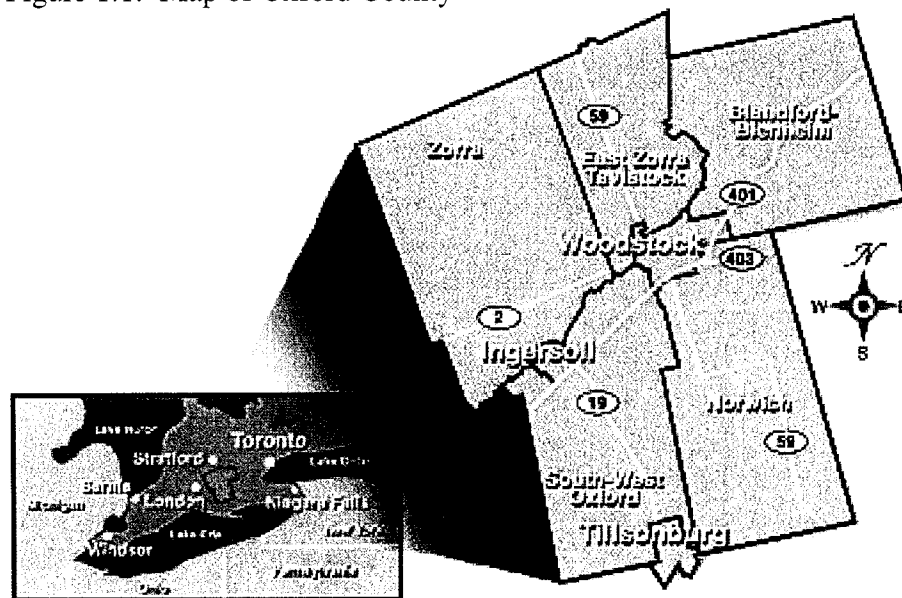
Over the past century the prevalence of agricultural activity in Ontario has dwindled with the rise in the importance of manufacturing and service-based occupations. Although much of the Province does not rely on agriculture to provide jobs and economic stability, there remain some rural municipalities in Ontario that continue to rely heavily on agriculture. Many factors have contributed to the decline in Ontario's agricultural industry. A major contributing factor is the amount of high quality farmland that is lost to expanding cities' sprawling suburbs and exurbia. The term 'urban sprawl' has negative connotations, but this type of semi-concentrated development is actually much more desirable, when compared to scattered exurban development throughout the countryside (Davis et al., 1994).

The reality of our situation in the Province is that high quality farmland in Ontario is available only in a finite quantity. It is the best land in the country, and provides a livelihood for thousands of workers in agriculture and associated industries while providing a source of food for many more. Aesthetically speaking, open spaces such as farmland often entice those who are looking to relocate to a more serene atmosphere. Quite often farmland is not seen only as workable, productive farmland, but also as open space to be enjoyed by the public. Because of this, a migration trend called 'counterurbanization' has seen a return to the land for quasi-urban purposes, and needs to be slowed down if not stopped in prime agricultural lands.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of policies designed to preserve agricultural land from non-farm development and to understand some of the

impacts non-farm uses have on surrounding farms. This study will focus on Oxford County and its farm operators, as Oxford County has historically been considered an agriculturally-dependent county. Farmers in Oxford County were the second most productive in Ontario in regards to total farm receipts in 2001 (Oxford County, 2005). In addition, Oxford County is one of only a few counties in the Province that has a history of attempting to preserve agriculture for future generations. Oxford County, as seen in Figure 1.1, is located in southern Ontario and is within commuting distance of many of Ontario's larger cities such as Kitchener-Waterloo and London. It is connected to several urban places by its location alongside the major arterial roads: Highways 401 and 403 and is less than two hours away from Toronto, and approximately three hours from Windsor, Sarnia and Fort Erie (all of southern Ontario's major border crossings). Oxford County's central location was a factor in the recent announcement by Toyota to build the country's newest automotive assembly plant on expropriated lands on the outskirts of Woodstock.

Figure 1.1: Map of Oxford County



Source: <http://new.county.oxford.on.ca>

Non-farm rural development is not a recent trend; in fact this sort of development has been significant throughout rural southern Ontario for the past thirty years. Historically, migration patterns have been largely from rural to urban areas, but from the 1970s the reverse occurred and people began migrating from urban to rural places. This occurred because urban dwellers were charmed by the open countryside and its proximity to nature and wanted to enjoy a rural lifestyle, often on relatively large country lots. This trend was first noticed in Britain in the late 1960s, in the United States in the 1970s and by the 1980s had become more prominent in certain parts of Canada (Dahms & McComb, 1999). The movement of people into rural spaces and the associated loss of agricultural land began to be studied by scholars in the 1970s. Shortly thereafter, Oxford County became one of the first counties in Canada to begin to develop regulations (in 1975) and to establish regulations (in 1979) to control this form of urban conquering of rural lands for residential purposes. Since then, planning policies have been adjusted on several occasions. Since the policies to preserve agricultural land were first enacted in the County some non-farm rural residential developments have been allowed because the application met with the criteria in place at the time. The purpose of this study is to address the effectiveness of the policies in place to protect agricultural land, as well as to examine the impacts that non-farm uses are having on local farmers and their agricultural practices.

Only very recently (March 2005) has the Government of Ontario adopted a revised Provincial Policy Statement which emphasizes the preservation of prime agricultural land and the refusal of non-farm related rural residences (MAH, 2005). Before this updated Provincial Policy Statement, few municipalities in southern Ontario

had gone beyond mentioning the Statement in their municipal planning strategies as part of a broader discussion on agriculture's importance to the local economy. For the most part, urban centres and related areas of development continue to be the main focus of most land-use by-laws and municipal planning strategies in Ontario while rural areas receive much less planning attention. Oxford County, which is situated in the heart of southern Ontario, is one of only a few municipalities in Ontario that, for the last twenty-five years, has implemented extensive agricultural land-use policies and zoning regulations to prohibit non-farm residential development. Since there is a history of agricultural land protection in Oxford County, the region will be the focus of this research to determine the effectiveness of these regulations in slowing the pace of non-farm residential development. In addition, the study will examine the impact of these regulations on farm operators in the County.

In accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2005), municipalities in Ontario now must enforce policies within their own Official Plans that help minimize and reduce the potential for rural conflict as well as help to regulate farming activities; these include policies such as Minimum Distance Separation, and Nutrient Management. Minimum Distance Separation is a formula that is used to determine the recommended separation distance between a livestock facility or permanent manure storage and other land uses such as housing (OMAF, 2006). Nutrient Management is the controlled application of raw manure and commercial fertilizers on fields (Government of Ontario, 2003). For this reason, it is important to know the level of awareness that rural residents (in this project, farmers) have of municipal planning policies, including the Oxford County Point system which is used to determine whether agricultural land can be

developed for non-farm purposes. It is essential that both planners and farmers understand the effect of these policies on the farmer's lifestyle, future expansion of farming operations, and the resulting impacts on other aspects of the farm and the surrounding community. The information gathered and presented in this project regarding non-farm development and the impacts of this development on farms may be useful to decision makers such as agricultural representatives, municipal politicians, and municipal planners who are promoting the preservation of agricultural lands.

Section one has introduced the reader to the purpose of this research and outlined its significance to the planning profession and the agricultural community. The research goal and objectives will now be outlined.

1.2 Research Goal and Objectives

Research Goal

The fundamental goal of this research is to determine the effectiveness of the regulations designed to preserve agricultural land in Oxford County. The second goal is to develop an understanding of the impacts of non-farm uses on surrounding farms in Oxford County, Ontario.

Research Objectives

- 1. To identify agricultural land-use planning policy that directly influences farm activities.*
- 2. To analyze and interpret municipal agricultural land-use planning policies in terms of their influence on the location of non-farm rural land-uses since the regulations were first introduced*
- 3. To identify the number of non-farm residential severances permitted during different phases of the Oxford County point system.*

4. *To identify the impacts of non-farm development on surrounding farms in Oxford County, Ontario.*
5. *To identify the ways farm operators have changed their practices following the arrival of non-farm development in their area.*
6. *To reflect upon the implications of this research for theory and practice in rural planning and development.*

Table 1 identifies research questions related to each of the research objectives and briefly describes the data collection methods and sources of data.

Table 1.1: Research Method Matrix.

Research Question	Data Collection Methods	Source of Data
<i>1. To identify agricultural land-use planning policy that directly influences farm activities.</i>		
What policies directly or indirectly influence farm activities in Oxford County?	Key-Informant Interviews Document Review	Planner, County of Oxford Oxford County Official Plan and Municipal By-laws
How does the County of Oxford encourage applicants to develop elsewhere?	Key-Informant Interviews Document Review	Planner, County of Oxford Oxford County Official Plan and Municipal By-laws
What alternatives exist for retiring farm operators who wish to stay on their land?	Key-Informant Interviews Document Review	Planner, County of Oxford Oxford County Official Plan and Municipal By-laws
<i>2. To analyze and interpret municipal agricultural land-use planning policies in terms of their influence on the location of non-farm rural land-uses since the regulations were first introduced</i>		
Has there been a distinct pattern of development before and after the point system?	Geographic Information Systems	Oxford County Severance Files
What level of awareness do farm operators have of municipal agricultural land-use policies?	In-Farm Interviews	Participating Oxford County farm operator

Table 1.1 Continued

Research Question	Data Collection Methods	Source of Data
<i>3. To identify the amount of non-farm residential severances permitted during different phases of the Oxford County point system.</i>		
How many non-farm rural residential severances were permitted and denied prior to the first Official Plan and the Point system?	Document Review	Oxford County Severance Files
How many non-farm rural residential severances were permitted and denied after the introduction of the point system.	Document Review	Oxford County Severance Files
<i>4. To identify the impacts of non-farm development on surrounding farms in Oxford County, Ontario.</i>		
What positive/negative impacts have you experienced due to non-farm development in your area?	In-farm interviews	Participating Oxford County farm operators
What if any problems have been created due to the incompatibilities of your farm and your neighbours' residential use of the land?	In-farm interviews	Participating Oxford County farm operators
<i>5. To identify the ways farm operators have changed their practices after the arrival of non-farm development in their area.</i>		
What changes have been made to your operation within the past 10 years, 20 years?	In-Farm Interviews	Participating Oxford County farm operators
Will your family continue farming on your land after you retire?	In-Farm Interviews	Participating Oxford County farm operators
How has the land-use changed in your area over the past thirty years?	In-Farm Interviews	Participating Oxford County farm operators
	Document Review	Census of Agriculture

1.3 Summary of Research Methodology

An extensive literature review was completed; this included an overview of relevant Provincial legislation relating to non-farm development during the study period (1971 to 2005). This review was complemented by an introduction to the agricultural industry in southern Ontario, as well as an examination of the literature relating to non-farm development, counterurbanization and exurban development. Agricultural statistics compiled by Statistics Canada were considered and interpreted to develop an understanding of the changes in agriculture that have occurred over the past ten years. In particular the number of farms, gross farm receipts, acreage farmed, acreage owned and acreage rented were examined to determine the state of agriculture within the County. If the number of farms has fallen but the farm receipts remain competitive with the rest of the Province, we can deduce that the farms within the County are expanding their operations and are more profitable than ten years ago.

Municipal planning policies in the County of Oxford were examined for the time period from 1971 to 2005 -- these dates coincide with the dates for the development data that are available at Oxford County, and encompass the start of the development of land preservation policies. Relevant Provincial Policy that guided these policies is also examined. A complete inventory of rural land severances submitted, granted, and denied was compiled to investigate the effectiveness of the point system as a tool for agricultural land preservation. Farm operator interviews were completed in the summer and fall of 2005 to determine the impact of the policy. Key informant interviews were also undertaken informally with employees in the County of Oxford Strategic Planning and Development Office. The information collected from these sources provided a comprehensive picture of agriculture and relevant municipal land-use policies in Oxford

County. The key informant responses were used to clarify information as well as to provide insight into some of the farmer's responses.

A case study of Oxford County, complete with farm and farm operator profiles, was developed. The participants gave first hand accounts of farming in the County, the impacts of non-farm development, and their opinions regarding planning policies for agricultural areas. The information gathered throughout this study was used to examine the impacts that non-farm uses such as rural residences were having on farmers in Oxford County, Ontario.

1.4 Organization of the Paper

Chapter 1 introduced the research problem and identified the research goal and objectives. Chapter 2 outlines the key literature pertaining to the agricultural industry in Oxford County, planning in rural municipalities, and non-farm development. Chapter 3 gives the reader a description of the case study methodology and discusses the research techniques used throughout this research. The context for the case study is set in Chapter 4 with a profile of Oxford County. Chapter 5 presents the results of an inventory of the non-farm severance activity in the County, and maps severance applications over the 33-year period from 1971 to 2004. This chapter also discusses the effectiveness of the planning policy in Oxford County. Chapter 6 presents the profiles of the study farms in Oxford County, as well as a discussion of the impact of non-farm rural residential development on farm activities as identified by the participants. Concluding remarks and suggestions for further study are outlined in Chapter 7.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter several documents which set the scene for our study of non-farm development in Oxford County are examined. This review begins with a brief introduction to the agricultural sector in Southern Ontario. Provincial agricultural planning policies that have influenced municipal policies are summarized as they have helped to define the status of the agricultural industry in rural municipalities. This is followed by a discussion of non-farm development, including: impacts of non-farm development, restrictions imposed by non-farm development, fragmentation of farmland base and loss of land, as well as changes in the demographic profile of rural residents.

2.1 Agriculture in Southern Ontario

Although agriculture and other primary industries employ fewer people in Canada than ever before, Canada retains its reliance on agriculture and other natural resources. In 1996 nearly half of the goods exported from Canada were from the primary sector, with products either in their original form or in value-added format (Barnes et al., 2000). Agriculture continues to be a major source of revenue for Ontario, with total gross farm receipts totalling just over \$9.1 billion in 2001 (Caldwell et al., 2003). Agriculture continues to play a very important role in rural southern Ontario where most of the best farmland in the country is located. In fact, southern Ontario contains 51 percent of Canada's Class A land, which is considered most fertile land (Caldwell et al., 2003). Historically, settlers chose the land that was the most productive, but over time as more immigrants were attracted to these areas these settlements emerged as our metropolises, cities, and towns. With more than 80 percent of its population living in urban areas

(Statistics Canada, 2001) Canada is one of the most highly urbanized countries in the world. But as the urban population has increased so too have our towns and cities to accommodate the increased population. This leads to the dilemma of needing to expand our cities, but having nowhere to expand except over the most valuable soils. Currently, 673 000 square kilometres are used for agriculture in Canada, representing only seven percent of Canada's total land mass (Caldwell et al., 2003). Most land in Canada is unsuited to agriculture because of a combination of soil quality and climate. Hence Canada's dependable land is very scarce. Figure 2.1 displays the Canadian Land Inventory (CLI) mapping of Southern Ontario, including the study area, Oxford County.

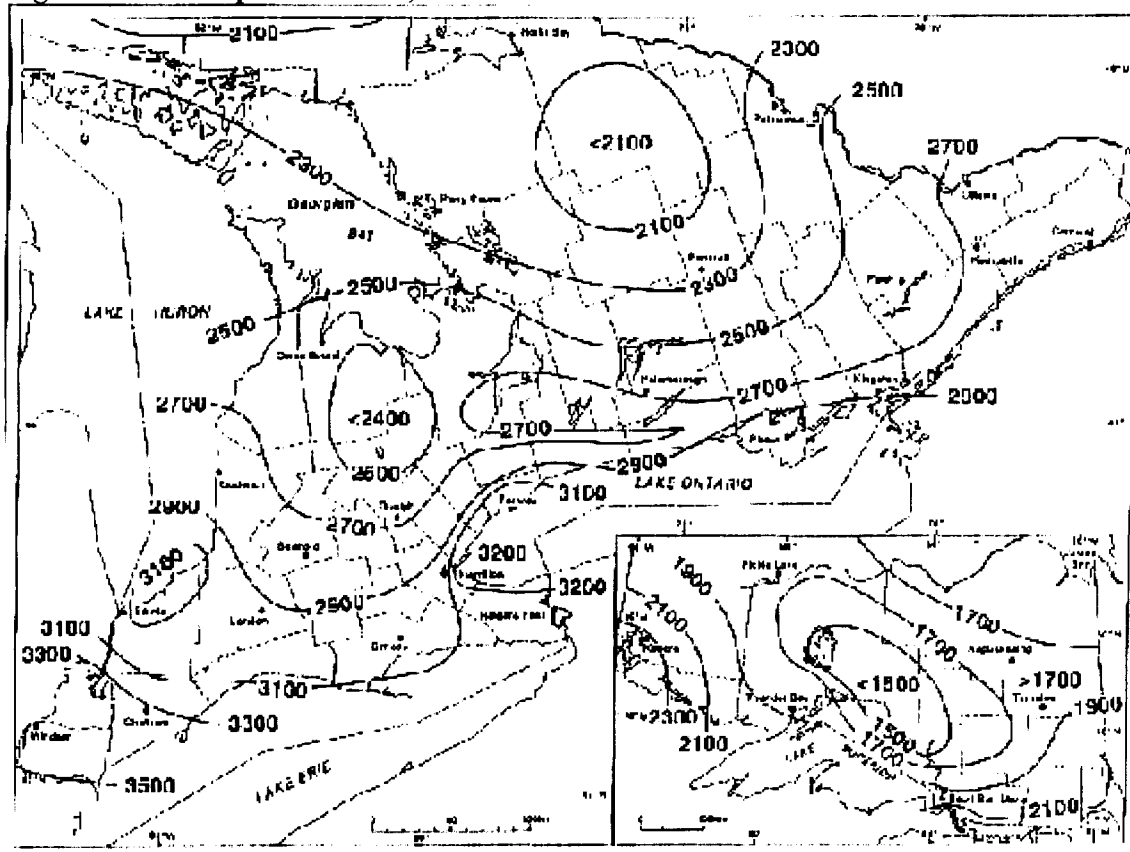
Figure 2.1 Canada Land Inventory, Soil Capability for Agriculture



Source: <http://geogratis.cgdi.gc.ca>

Figure 2.2 displays a climatic map of southern Ontario, showing ‘crop heat units’. Crop heat units are calculated based on air temperature, and the number of planting days available. Crop Heat Units have been used for over thirty years by farmers to help determine which varieties of crops to plant and when. The earliest planting date for the Woodstock area has been calculated as May 4th, and the end of the growing season has been calculated as October 2nd. Woodstock was found to have an average of 2890 accumulated Crop Heat Units (Omafra, 2006).

Figure 2.2 Crop Heat Units, Southern Ontario



Source: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/93-119.htm#f2>

The most dependable land is Class 1 soil and as Table 2.1 illustrates, its availability is extremely low, and accounts for less than half of a percentage point of Canada’s total land mass. The CLI ranks land according to its capability to produce crops. Class 1 soils are the most productive and have the fewest constraints. Classes 2 to

7 are lands with increasing constraints to farming, such as topography, slope, soil depth, drainage, stoniness, climate, fertility and permeability (Walton, 2003). Table 2.1 shows that the potential for producing dependable crops is directly related to the quality of the soil. Production potential is understandably the highest for Class 1 soil at 100 percent. As the class of soil decreases, so too does the potential for producing crops – Class 3 is capable only of producing 65 percent relative to Class 1 land. The cost of farming increases when the quality of the soil decreases as more inputs such as fertilizer are required and more intensive farming is needed to produce a profitable crop (Misek-Evans, 1992).

Table 2.1: National Agricultural Land Supply by Capability Rating

CLI Class	Description	% of Canada's Land Area	Relative Production Potential for Arable Agriculture	Relative Direct Costs of Production per kg. of Product Produced
1	Excellent to Very Good	0.45%	1.00	1.00
2	Good	1.80%	0.80	1.30
3	Fairly Good	2.80%	0.65	1.50
		Total: 5.05%		

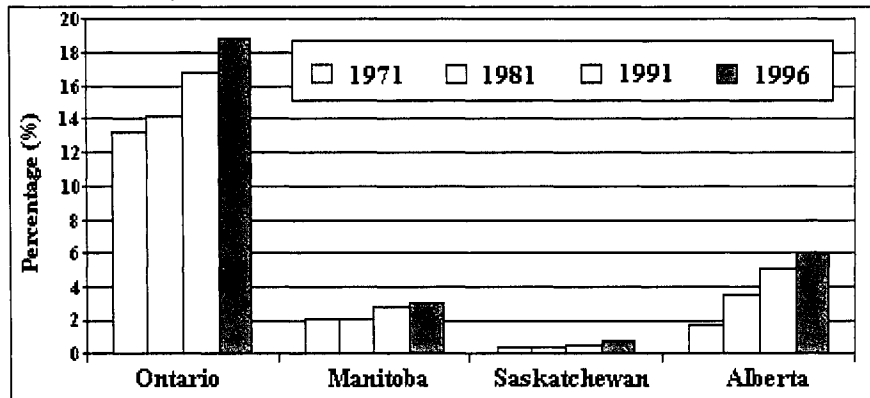
Source: Misek-Evans, 1992

The problem with preserving agricultural land anywhere in North America is that land that is being farmed is often perceived as being vacant land and not in production (Peters, 1990). Contrastingly, people think of developed land as being more productive than agricultural land (Nelson, 1992). These erroneous views may have developed as Ontarians do not understand the quality of the soil or the potential of the soil in the Province. Nelson (1992) reported that urban dwellers do not understand agricultural practices and find farming activities a nuisance. Their lack of understanding has led to regulations that restrict the use of regular farming practices such as the use of fertilizers and irrigation, manure disposal, and the use of slow moving vehicles on commuter roads.

These and other conflicts that occur between farm operators and ex-urbanites can lead to the sale of the farm as the operator chooses to move further away from urban areas, leaving the farm vulnerable to urban expansion. Farms may also be sold as a result of increased damage from air pollution to crops, theft of berries and vegetables, as well as the destruction of equipment or harassment of animals by residents of non-farm developments in rural areas (Nelson, 1992).

Agricultural land around cities is important as it is here that many specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, and tobacco are grown for consumption in cities. With an ever increasing health conscious society, the importance of tobacco and its production are decreasing. However, the tobacco industry continues to generate a large revenue and is still considered a specialty crop due to the specific soil composition that is required in order for it to flourish. Agricultural land also helps to define the boundary of urban areas, as well as aid in water filtration and absorption of heavy rains. Despite all of the positive contributions of agricultural land around cities, huge amounts of land continue to be lost for urban purposes. Figure 2.3 shows the incremental loss of Class 1 soils during a recent 35-year period. As the figure illustrates, although all provinces included in the presentation are increasingly losing agricultural land, Ontario, where most of the Class 1 land is located, has experienced the greatest loss of fertile land during this time period.

Figure 2.3: Loss of Soils to Urbanization
Percentage of Provincial Class 1 Soil Consumed for Urban Purposes



Source: Bolloman, (2000).

Despite its historical significance, the importance of farming in southern Ontario has largely been overlooked by residents wanting to expand into rural areas for quality of life reasons (Davies & Yeates, 1991; Richmond et al., 2000; Walker, 2000). As our population grows and cities continue to expand, the demand for non-farm related development in rural areas, such as exurban housing, continues to grow as people search for the rural idyll (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999).

2.2 Land-Use Planning in Rural Ontario

The role of Ontario's planners is to help manage our resources and land for future generations. Each community or planning area determines how their area will develop while keeping important social, economic, and environmental concerns in consideration (MAH, 2005a). It is critical for planners to find a balance between the interests of the property owner and the much wider interests of the entire community when considering planning applications. When a balance is met between the public interest and those of the property owner then the planner has exercised 'good planning', which leads to orderly growth (MAH, 2005a). Ontario's Planning Act sets the ground rules for land-use planning and determines how land-uses should be controlled.

Under the Planning Act the Province issues a Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) that promotes the overall interests of the Province. Protecting farmland is one of the interests outlined in the current PPS that was enacted in March of 2005. Area municipalities at the regional and county level then create their own Official Plans to develop zoning by-laws and guide future development. In the past, interests identified in the PPS were not enforced in some regional and county official plans as the PPS was seen as a guideline, rather than a prescriptive document for planning activity, since it uses phrases such as “may develop” rather than more forceful language. Further difficulties may exist since many counties deal with planning issues that cross municipal boundaries (MAH, 2005a). Oxford County, a Regional Municipality, is comprised of eight municipalities (three urban, and five rural) and is an example of this type of situation.

To create new lots in rural areas, property owners must apply to their municipality to obtain permission in the form of a ‘consent’ or ‘severance’. A consent or land severance is when land is lawfully authorized for separation and forms two new separate properties. Most counties and municipalities in the Province have specific policies and requirements for land severances in their Official Plan (MAH, 2005a). For example, local municipalities limit the number of severances allowed on the same property, and call for a plan of subdivision if this is more appropriate. This type of measure is designed to ensure that the community develops in an orderly manner, and prevents owners from selling off building lots whenever they wish thereby causing a planning nightmare (MAH, 2005a). Non-farm related rural residential severances have been the focus of numerous provincial policies in the past twenty five years; they are the basis for many municipal planning policies regarding non-farm development.

2.2.1 Ontario's Agriculture Planning Policies (1970s to present)

The creation of lots in the countryside is made possible only by obtaining permission to divide an existing property by means of a consent (or severance) or subdivision. Subdivisions rarely occur in rural areas, and so the main vehicle to create new lots is by way of consent or severance. Each municipality in the Province is required to have an official plan which details what development will be permitted and disallowed and in what manner within an area (MMA, 1994a). Each municipality's official plan must recognize provincial policies which have been put in place to ensure that there is Province-wide continuity in planning matters.

During the study period of this research there have been two official plans for the County of Oxford, which have been consistent with five sets of provincial policy. The first official plan of the County was developed in the mid 1970s, and was approved by the Ministry of Housing in 1979. It was utilized by the County until the second official plan was introduced in 1996. During the first official plan several different provincial policies were adhered to. These include The Foodland Guidelines, which were in place from 1978 to 1994, the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines, from 1992 to 1994, and finally the Comprehensive Provincial Policy Statement, which was in place from 1994 to 1996. Oxford County's second Official Plan was accepted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 1996. It also had to coincide with provincial policy, including the Provincial Policy Statement, which was introduced in 1996 and remained in effect until March of 2005. At the time this research was conducted, the County of Oxford was currently examining its Official Plan and updating it so that it would be consistent with the new Provincial Policy Statement. The following are summaries of

each provincial policy that has influenced the municipal agricultural planning policies in Oxford County.

2.2.2 Foodland Guidelines (1978)

The Foodland Guidelines were generated to assist all levels of planning for agriculture and were released as a provincial policy document in December of 1978. It was hoped that the implementation of these Guidelines would help to “ensure an adequate land base for agricultural needs in the future (OMAF, 1978, p.1). At the time the Government was concerned about retaining our options to meet future requirements for food lands and food. “An increasing population will require production from lands with potential for agriculture. Wherever possible, we must ensure that these lands remain available for the future” (OMAF, 1978, p.4). This policy was widely adopted by municipalities in Ontario, and through its inclusion in official plans across the Province had an impact on the non-farm severances that were permitted until 1994.

The Foodland Guidelines stressed the importance of identifying agricultural land at the municipal level, and requested that all municipalities create an inventory of their agricultural resources. The policy noted the high priority that agricultural lands are to be given in the Province. The Guidelines identified prime or high priority agricultural lands; these lands consisted of specialty crop lands (such as tender fruits, tobacco, and vegetables), and lands where soil classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 dominate according to the CLI (OMAF, 1978). The Guidelines stated that these valuable agricultural lands should be preserved for agriculture, agriculture-related uses, and compatible uses (MMA, 1993). The Guidelines provided additional details pertaining to the preservation of agriculture such as compatible uses, farm parcel size, and non-farm severances.

The Foodland Guidelines noted that large non-farm rural residential lots (NFRR) were wasteful of resources and that this sort of housing can lead to conflicts with farmers because, “expectations of rural life of urban oriented residents differs from those of the farm community” (OMAF, 1978, p.18). The Guidelines discuss the conflicts that may arise between these contrasting land-uses, such as noise and odour complaints, as well as problems with trespassing or damage to farmers’ crops and fences. It was also noted that the increased traffic in rural areas makes it more difficult to move farm machinery between fields and farms (OMAF, 1978). The presence of rural residential dwellers also increases demands on municipal services and their quality thereby increasing the cost of serving rural areas significantly. Because of their impacts on farms and on service provision, it was decided that demand for rural lands should be directed to existing settlements such as villages and hamlets. The Guidelines do allow for the development of NFRR in areas that are not suitable for agriculture.

Although non-farm rural residential properties were to be discouraged, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food did state that consents or severances in agricultural areas may be considered in a number of situations:

- splitting of farms into viable parcels
- technical or legal reasons, where no new lot is created
- surplus farm houses through farm consolidation
- retirement lot for a bona-fide farmer
- full time farm help

The Foodland Guidelines also stated that the re-designation of priority agricultural lands to non-farm uses must be justified, and there must be proof that the applicant gave consideration to alternate locations on lower capability agricultural land (MMA, 1993).

Oxford County's first official plan of 1979 was consistent with the 1978 Foodland Guidelines. The County identified an Agricultural Reserve Policy Area that was in place before it was mandated by provincial policy. In terms of residential development in agricultural areas, there were several differences between the first Official Plan and the Foodland Guidelines. Early in its planning history, Oxford County made no distinction between a severance for a farm-related use and a non-farm related use (County of Oxford, 1979). Both instances have the effect of creating a new lot within farmland. Instead of granting a severance for a specific reason (i.e. because a lot was needed for farm help or retirement), the County developed a point system whereby points are accumulated for each application for various factors, thus ensuring a standardized process of evaluation for each application. Each application was evaluated on a case by case basis, and not every application was automatically slotted into a granted or denied case scenario.

2.2.3 Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines (1992)

Following the recession of the early 1990s in Ontario, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs released the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines in April 1992. This was the last policy issued by the provincial government before planning reforms in 1994. This new set of guidelines was released to "speed up land-use planning decisions that would be environmentally sound and would support Ontario's economic recovery" (MMA, 1993, p.i). One of the purposes of this reform was to clarify policies so that

decisions could be made that would be more readily understandable to the public, and so that people knew up front what the rules were. These new guidelines were not meant to supersede the Foodland Guidelines, but rather they reaffirmed that new non-farm rural residential development should not be permitted in prime agricultural areas unless development is directly related to agriculture and is required in close proximity to an existing farm (MMA, 1992). Section 3.3 of these new guidelines went on to state that “scattered rural development (must) be discouraged in order to minimize overall impact on the environment and resources, allow for more efficient delivery of services, and protect the aesthetic character of the area” (MMA, 1992, p.6). These guidelines were in place only for a very short period of time, and were not as significant as the Foodland Guidelines, which were in place for much longer.

The County of Oxford Official Plan (1979) was developed in accordance with the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines by making planning more understandable to the public. In fact, the Agricultural Preserve Policy Area (section 5.2.10) stated that it was “the policy of the County of Oxford to develop a consistent, impartial and readily understandable system of assessing development applications for non-farm residential uses within the Agricultural Preserve Policy Area” (Oxford County, 1979, p.32).

2.2.4 Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements (1994)

In 1994 a decision was made to reform Ontario’s planning system. The provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs published a newsletter introducing Ontario’s New Planning System which stated that the planning process was to be reformed by empowering municipalities, protecting the environment, and streamlining the planning process (MMA, 1994b). The newsletter noted that one of the problems with the existing planning process

is that decisions regarding appropriate land-use in Ontario sometimes have been controversial, and that there is a need to develop a new political landscape where such decisions will be driven by policy, rather than as reactions to development proposals (MMA, 1994b). This reform shifted responsibility away from the Province and towards municipalities who were given more power in their planning processes. Planning reform ensured that each municipality would have an official plan, something that had not been required in the past. As well, all municipalities were given the power to approve more types of development without approval from the Provincial Government (subdivisions and condominiums for example) (MMA, 1994b). The new Provincial Policy Statements included one specifically for agricultural land (MMA, 1994a), which replaced the Foodland Guidelines as the policy guiding development in agricultural areas.

This new policy maintains that prime agricultural areas will be protected for agricultural use (either for growing crops or raising livestock, for secondary agricultural uses, or agriculture-related uses such as commercial or industrial businesses that require a location in close proximity to farmers). Additionally Non-Agricultural uses will not be permitted in prime agricultural areas and are encouraged to locate in existing settlements. Severances of agricultural land are once again discouraged but will be allowed for the following reasons:

- farm split into two viable operations
- residences surplus to farming operations as result of farm consolidation
- residential infilling
- existing agriculture related uses (businesses)
- one lot would be permitted for a farmer who is retiring and has owned and operated the farm for a substantial number of years
- infrastructure
- technical reason (MMA, 1994a)

Lots created as a result of these types of severances are intended to be kept to a minimum size and are to be located in an area away from the most productive portion of the farm. Any new development or an expanding livestock operation is to comply with the minimum distance separation formula in order to ensure environmental compatibility (MMA, 1994a).

The comprehensive set of policy statements reaffirms that prime agricultural areas should be preserved for farming for the benefit of existing and future generations. One of the biggest changes in policy was that now a municipality's official plan must 'be consistent with' the comprehensive set of policy statements. This helped to reduce discrepancies over what is appropriate land-use. In situations where the applicant disagreed with the municipality's opinion, the applicant had the right to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board where the decision was final (MMA, 1994b). The Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements was more protective of agricultural lands and restrictive of development than the Foodland Guidelines (1978) had been. It identified what development may occur and it eliminated the right to sever a parcel for full time farm help that previously had been allowed. The Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements remained in effect from 1994 to 1996. At that time, the Oxford County 1979 Official Plan was still more forceful in protecting agricultural lands for agriculture than provincial policy that was developed fifteen years later.

2.2.5 Provincial Policy Statement (1996)

In 1996, the policy of the previous NDP government was replaced by the Conservative Government's own Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). It is quite similar to the Foodland Guidelines in many respects. It begins by stating that "prime agricultural

areas will be protected for agriculture” (MMAH, 1996b, p.6). Agriculturally-related uses continue to be permitted and new rural residential properties are also permitted if they are

- i) a farm retirement lot,
- ii) a residence surplus to a farming operation,
- or iii) residential infilling (MMAH, 1996b).

In contrast to the previous set of comprehensive policy statements, the PPS does allow areas to be excluded from prime agricultural areas in certain circumstances. These include the expansion of an urban area or rural settlement area, extraction of mineral resources, or limited non-residential use. Again, all new land-uses must comply with the minimum distance separation formulae. Unlike the previous policy, it states that “agricultural uses and normal farm practices will be promoted and protected” (MMAH, 1996b, p.6). Perhaps the biggest impact of the Provincial Policy statement is that it moves from the wording “consistent with” to “shall have regard to”. This wording change allows for more flexible interpretation and application of what policies will be enforced within municipalities. When this is coupled with the provision allowing for prime agricultural land to be excluded from the policies in certain situations, it suggests that the new Conservative Government was not as committed as the previous NDP Government to preserving agricultural lands for agricultural uses.

The rural residential uses section of the second Oxford Official Plan continues to be more restrictive than the provincial policy. The County has maintained its use of the point system though some changes were made to reflect changing provincial regulations such as minimum distance separation since the first Official Plan was released in 1979.

All rural residential severance applications, farm and non-farm, are subject to the point system. In general, it has been observed through this research that NFRR severances, which would be considered infilling, are generally granted, as are surplus farm dwellings from farm consolidation, and when an adjacent farming operation is being enlarged but other types of applications are usually denied.

2.2.6 Provincial Policy Statement (2005)

In March of 2005 the new Provincial Policy Statement was released by Dalton McGuinty's Liberal Government. The new Government decided to once again revert back to "consistent with" rather than "shall have regard to" in its policy (MMAH, 2005). The agricultural policy section begins by stating that "prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture" (MMAH, 2005, p.21). Once again preference is given to specialty crop areas and soil in classes 1, 2 and 3. Secondary uses are still allowed but they are to be limited in scale and their criteria for permitting development will be found in individual municipal planning documents such as an Official Plan (MMAH, 2005). The new PPS further protects agriculture by stating that all types, sizes, and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices will be promoted and protected. Some of the strongest wording appears in section 2.3.4.1 of the new PPS, which states that lot creation in prime agricultural areas will be discouraged and may only be permitted for four reasons: 1. Farm splits are still allowable, if each portion of the severed and retained farm are still of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural uses common in the area; 2. Agriculturally-related uses are permitted but will be limited as previously discussed; 3. A surplus residence due to farm consolidation will be allowed with the condition that new residential development will not be permitted on any vacant

remnant parcel of farmland; 4. The policy allows for the creation of a new lot for infrastructure, where rights-of-way or easements could not be agreed upon (MMAH, 2005). Much like the PPS before it, the new PPS still permits land to be removed from prime agricultural areas for specific reasons.

The current Provincial Policy Statement (2005) represents minimum standards. Provincial policy does not prevent planning departments and decision makers from going beyond the minimum standards established in each portion of the policy. This is conditional, however, in that the act of going beyond the provincial policy must not conflict with any part of the PPS. In all but one instance of provincial agricultural policy, Oxford County has gone above and beyond the minimum provincial standards. At the time of this research, the County of Oxford was in the process of updating its Official Plan to reflect the new Provincial Policy Statement. For the first time in its planning history, the County of Oxford's planning policies are more lenient than the provincial policy. At the time of publication of the PPS, it was still possible to obtain a severance of a surplus dwelling built prior to 1979 in Oxford County. This is no longer permissible.

2.3 History of Non-Farm Rural Development

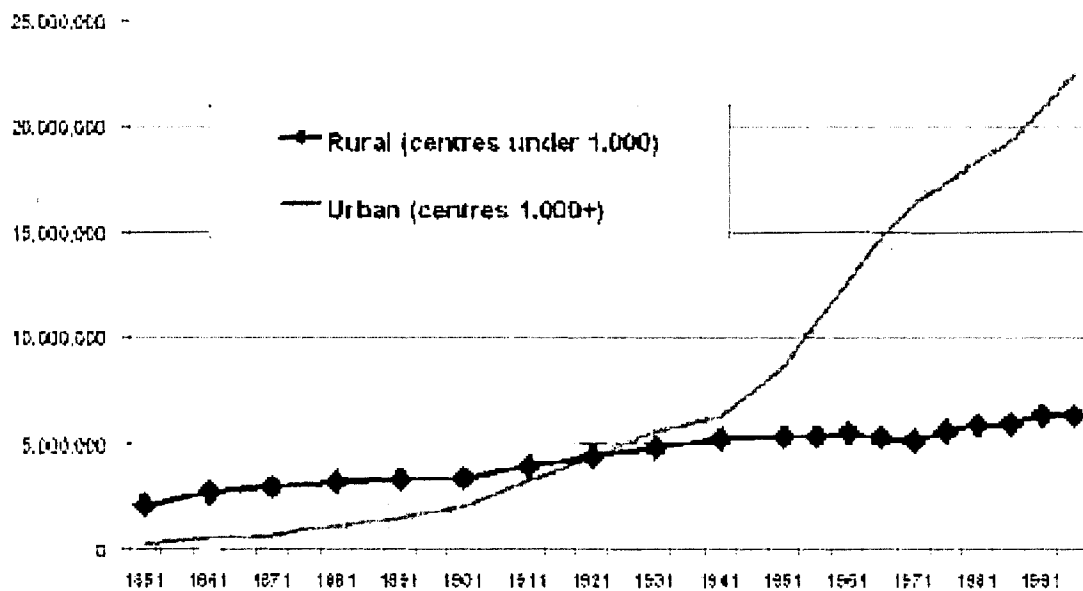
2.3.1 Development in the Fringe

Attempts have long been made to identify the transitional zone often known as the rural-urban fringe, the city's countryside, exurbia, or the peri-urban region (Ford, 1999). The boundaries of this region are hard to identify because its functions are ambiguous: it is neither solely urban nor rural. It has been found that development pressures in the urban fringe are much stronger than in more distant rural areas (Bryant, 1995). In fact, ten years ago the exurbs in the United States were home to sixty million Americans or

just under 25 percent of the national population. At that time exurbia was projected to encompass more people than urban, suburban, or truly rural areas in the United States by the early years of the twenty-first century (Davis, Nelson & Dueker, 1994). Daniels & Lapping (1996) warn that the rural-urban fringe regions of the United States are America's primary recipients of population growth and land-use change. The proportion of persons living in rural Canada is not as high as in America, but the numbers are still mounting, according to Statistics Canada. As can be seen in Figure 2.4, the urban population in Canada overtook the rural population in 1931 and while most of the population lives in growing urban areas, the number of persons living in rural areas has remained relatively constant since 1971.

Figure 2.4: Population Trends in Canada

Population trends: Rural minority in Canada in 1931



Source: Bolloman (2000).

Because exurbia can be so different from cities and rural areas, it has been hard for planners to address the particular needs of exurban residents since tools used for urban situations are often inappropriate for exurbia. While most exurbanites share many

of the same characteristics as suburbanites, they prefer a different lifestyle that includes larger lots and a longer commute to work (Green & Meyer, 1997). Davis and colleagues (1994) found that there were two groups of exurbanites: those who lived in small towns and those who lived further away in more remote rural areas. This research will focus on the latter group in an area where many ex-urbanites live in non-farm rural dwellings (lots being close to or over one acre in size), on small hobby farms (where farming is a hobby and the residents have full time jobs elsewhere and pursue some small scale farming activities for pleasure), or on large country estates (first allowed in the early 1970s with lot sizes up to 5 acres in size).

2.3.2 Counterurbanization

Rural non-farm living is not a new phenomenon. In fact, the Government of Canada began tracking the numbers of non-farm dwellers in the 1941 census. From the mid-1970s a noticeable migration trend emerged that is often referred to as 'counterurbanization' (Mitchell, 2004). This trend was an unexpected reversal of rural to urban migration patterns, whereby sparsely populated rural areas such as villages and hamlets are infused by urban migrants resulting in non-farm development. The 'rural renaissance' first began in the United Kingdom in the 1970s and later spread to North America (Dahms & McComb, 1999). International counterurbanization studies have also been completed in Australia (Walmsley, Epps, & Duncan., 1997), South Africa (Geyer, 1990), France (Cavailhes et al. 2004) and Spain (Prados, 2005). Broad academic interest surrounded counterurbanization when it was first discussed by Berry in 1976 who noted that metropolitan areas in the United States were growing at a slower rate than small rural areas. It was believed that this trend would continue, but in most instances a turnaround

occurred with metropolitan areas regaining a higher proportion of population growth (Clark, 1991). Since the start of the counterurbanization trend, a number of scholars have examined the phenomena of rural migration (e.g. Halfacree, 1994; Halliday & Coombes, 1995; Ryan, 2002; Walmsley, Epps, and Duncan, 1998).

In 2004 Mitchell unravelled how several studies that focus on counterurbanization define and use the term. She found that researchers were using the term in three ways. The first was to refer to the ex-urbanisation movement when people choose to replace the “disamenities of city living with the perceived benefits of living in a rural environment while maintaining a metropolitan-based workplace” (Mitchell, Bunting, & Picconi, 2004, p.154). Mitchell refers to the second type as ‘anti-urbanisation’ where people prefer to live in the country, and discontinue their employment in urban areas. Included in this second group are retirees who move out of the work force. The third type is coined ‘displaced urbanisation’ where people move to rural areas because of the lower cost of housing and for other economic reasons. These persons are not moving away from the city for anti-urban reasons, and would move back if it were economically feasible to do so (Mitchell, 2004). Mitchell identified many sources that focus on the United States, Canada, and England, though few studies have been completed in the last decade in Canada. One study investigating the trend of counterurbanization around the world found that most of the urban spill-over into rural areas in Canada occurred in the early 1980s, rather than in the 1970s as had occurred in the United States (Dahms & McComb, 1999). This may be a reflection of differences in adoption rates between Canada and the US.

2.3.4 Impacts of Non-Farm Development

Conflicts often arise between non-farm developments and agriculture due to the incompatibilities between the different land-uses (Van Osch, 1992). One of the biggest impacts that non-farm development has is the removal of quality farmland and the fragmentation of the land-base. Changing the use from agriculture to residential causes an irreversible outcome, and could potentially threaten domestic food production, which could lead to a reliance on imported goods that may not be of the same quality, and may not be of similar price or availability (Johnston & Smit, 1985). Another impact that residential uses have on agricultural properties is that they cause the value of farmland to rise. This can cause the viability of the farm to be questioned due to the increased value of farmland, and may be a barrier to the entry of new farmers because of the higher cost of farmland. Similarly, other farmers will not be able to buy additional land to increase their operation. The increased values could cause property tax assessments to rise to a point where farmers are unable to afford to farm the land (Johnston & Smit, 1985). The high cost of service provision to non-farm rural residential properties is another associated impact of non-farm development (Joseph & Smit, 1985).

Dahms and McComb (1999) noted that the movement of urbanites into rural areas results in the commodification of rural areas. Because people are enticed by rural landscapes, new attractions such as golf courses, marinas and other recreational areas have been developed so that developers might profit from others enjoying rural amenity areas and culture. Findlay and colleagues (2001) found that as the rural population continues to grow, so too do the number of trips to urban areas. This increase in traffic volume results in increased dangers for farmers moving large machinery between fields and farms. Van Osch (1992) stated that as the rural non-farm population increases and

the scale of farming operations becomes larger, the frequency of conflicts is likely to increase. For this reason it is essential that the number of non-farm rural residential lots is limited and discouraged in agricultural areas.

Johnston and Smit (1985) also found that conflicts arise due to differences in lifestyles as well as land-use differences. They found that the potential for conflict increases when one or more distinct group holds different aspirations and attempt to impose their will. These feelings often lead to labels of 'us' and 'them' referring to farm and non-farm, or old-timer and newcomer. These conflicts frequently involve non-farm persons complaining about odours and noises. In addition, farmers may experience increased trespassing, theft, or vandalism as a result of the growing population of non-farm residents in the area. If these two different land-uses and lifestyles are kept separate then they are less likely to clash and cause conflicts.

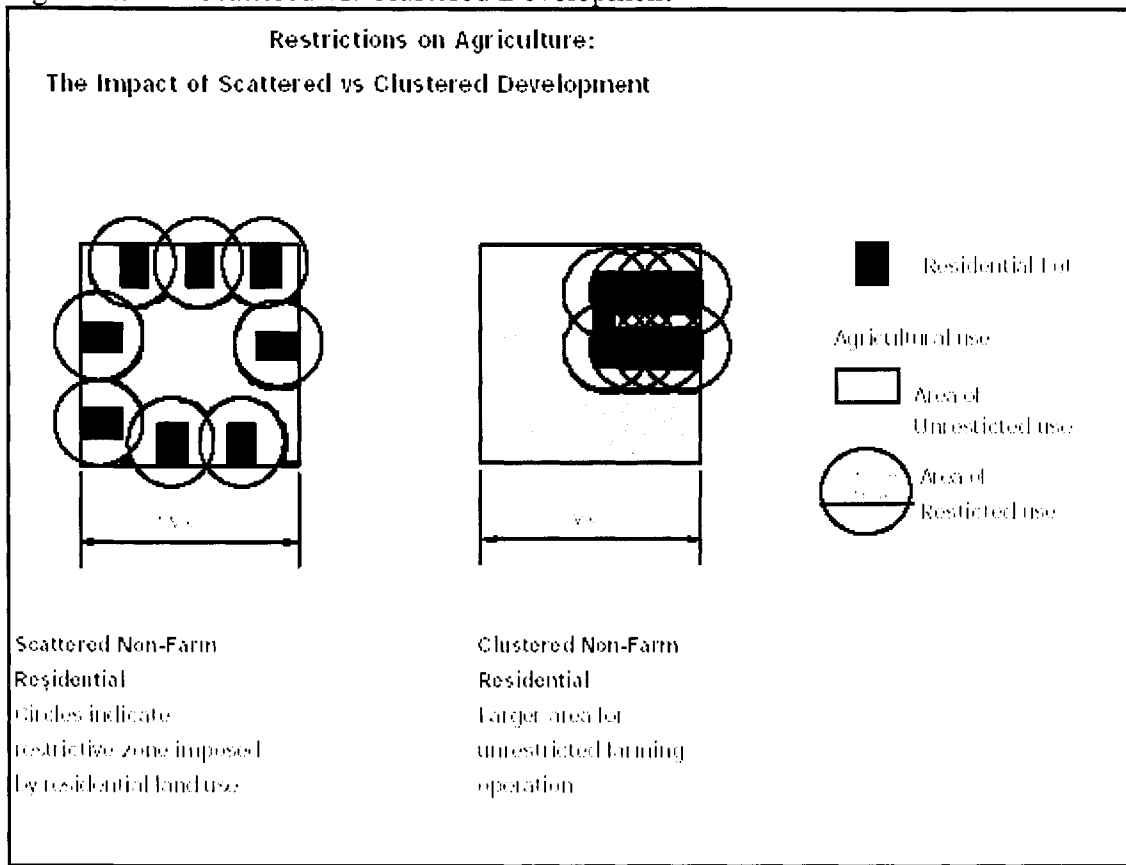
When discussing the removal of farmland on a larger scale, Bunce (1998) found that exurbanites often rally together when discussing the preservation of farmland. These non-farm residents object to losing neighbouring farmland because they see the land as an amenity to be protected. It appears that exurbanites who have moved to rural areas are not willing to share their environment with others of their ilk but at the same time, they do not want to see farms in their area intensify to remain competitive. Misesk-Evans (1992) captures this viewpoint in her report, "The irony is that farming helps to create the very atmosphere and surroundings that attract non-farm rural residents, but it is the business of farming that many find offensive" (p.9). Ryan and Walker (2004) noted that exurbanites see farmers' fields as their recreational and amenity areas, which should be protected for the public to use as recreational sites. Unfortunately for farmers, the views

of the non-farm residents often drown out the voice of the farmers (Bunce, 1998). While sources differ on the level of impact and the ways that farming is affected, all agree that these new non-farm rural developments affect agriculture in some way.

2.3.5 Restrictions Imposed by Non-Farm Development

When non-farm rural residential lots are established in farmland they create an area of restricted agricultural use, and increase the requirement for farmers to comply with additional restrictions on their farm practices. The expansion of all farm buildings, particularly barns and manure storage tanks, must comply with the Minimum Distance Separation from neighbouring uses. The distance calculated varies according to the number of animals that could be housed as well as the type of livestock that is kept in the barn. Two thousand chickens would have a smaller impact than two thousand cattle. According to the Minimum Distance formula the amount of manure produced by 2000 chickens would be the equivalent of 10 dairy cows, and thus barns housing 2000 chickens could be located closer to neighbours than barns housing more than 10 dairy cows. The authors of a study on Countryside Planning commented that scattered rural development has a larger sphere of influence than clustered development in a village or hamlet (Caldwell et al., 2003). As figure 2.5 illustrates, when non-farm residential housing is scattered throughout farmland, the area restricted to farming is greatly increased in comparison to the restrictions imposed by clustered non-farm uses in a hamlet.

Figure 2.5 Scattered vs. Clustered Development

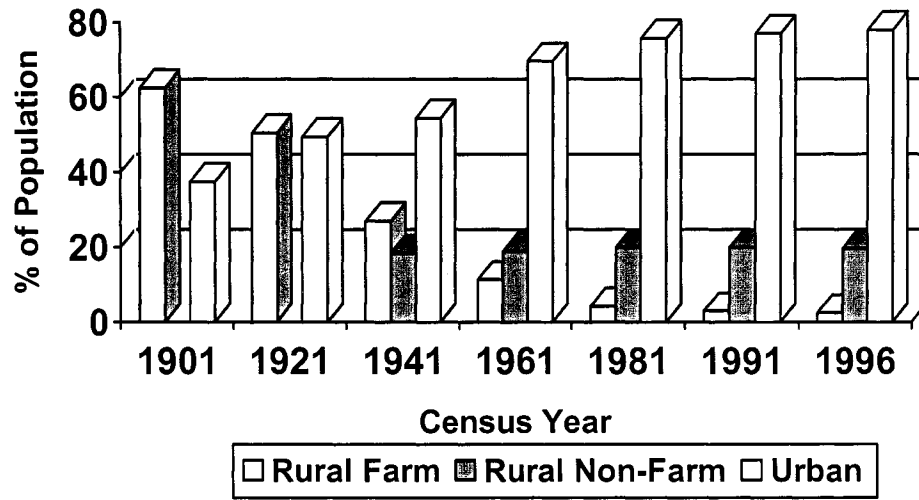


Source: (Maclaren, J. (1976). In Caldwell et al., 2003)

2.3.6 Change in the Rural Demographic

Just over a century ago, Canada was largely comprised of a rural population, with 65 percent of the inhabitants living in rural areas. In 1941 the government began differentiating between rural farm and rural-non farm dwellers. As seen in Figure 2.6, by 1941 the number of rural farm persons had decreased significantly to represent only 27 percent of the population. In the same year the number of rural non-farm dwellers accounted for 18 percent of the population. Since then, the number of non-farm rural residents has remained quite steady as a proportion of the total population. By 1996 rural non-farm dwellers accounted for 19.7 percent of the population; however the number of rural farm persons had decreased to its lowest levels in history at just 2.5 percent of the national population (Bourne, 2000).

Figure 2.6: Canadian Population Distribution, 1901 - 1996



Although the number of non-farm dwellers has remained relatively constant at 20 percent of the population, the face of the rural population has changed dramatically in recent decades. In 1941 there were approximately 1.5 rural farm persons for every non-farm person. Twenty years later the positions were reversed, with roughly 1.7 non-farm persons for every rural farm person. This ratio of non-farm to rural farm residents continued to increase to 4.7 in 1981, 6.8 in 1991, and finally to 7.9 in 1996 (Bourne, 2000). As Bourne’s findings indicate, there is now only one rural farm resident for every eight non-farm persons in rural Canada (Bourne, 2000). The presence of the large rural non-farm population is changing the culture of what were once almost exclusively farming communities (Walker, 2000) and is challenging the viability and continued existence of local farms.

2.3.7 Who is Fuelling Non-Farm Development?

The push for rural estate building lots has been coming from several different groups. Some sources have noted a large migration of retired persons who are looking

back with nostalgia to small towns and rural areas and are choosing to move back to these areas because of their amenity values (Dwyer & Childs, 2004; Paquette & Doman, 2001; Valentine, 1997). Another common finding is that people with small children move to the country in search of an ideal place to raise their families (Valentine, 1997). Other studies have found that more affluent families are the main proponents of the urban to rural migration, as there is an associated prestige that comes with living in the countryside on a large rural estate lot (Walker, 2000; Randall, 1997). Interestingly, there are also some poorer families who chose to build a house in exurbia because it may be more affordable than city living (Mitchell et al., 2004). Property taxes are lower in rural areas because of their reduced levels of services in comparison to urban areas. It is not only migrants, however, who are fuelling the rural population growth. Krizek (2003) found that some of the demand for non-farm rural housing comes from the local population who are more likely to move within their own community than to relocate further away, though Garasky (2002) argues that rural youth are more likely to move into urban areas to look for work than to stay at home on farms.

Rural people who move to non-farm related residences are more likely to be employed in small towns than in larger cities, or to work part time on a neighbouring farming operation (Caldwell et al., 2003). Persons wishing to retire from farming often attempt to sever a building lot from the farm property to stay nearer to their families as well as to the place where they have worked for most of their lives (Caldwell et al., 2003). Overall, people are attracted to rural areas because of their proximity to nature and to urban activities (Daniels & Lapping, 1996) while others have sentimental ties to the land. People are not trying to consume the best land to put an end to farming in

southern Ontario; they just often assume that we will never run out of agricultural land (Bunce, 1998).

The loss of rural land is likely to continue because agricultural lands have retained low per acre property values when the large size of property is considered. The associated cost of development in these areas is low too. Whether from commercial expansion or non-farm residential development, the conversion of agricultural land inevitably leads to land degradation because it decreases the productivity of the land (Levia, 1998). The demand for new non-farm related rural building lots will continue to increase as residents appear to be more and more displeased with their urban environments and search for the rural idyll (Kaplan & Austin, 2004; Valentine, 1997). Reasons for leaving the city often are associated with problems within the city limits, both real and perceived. Valentine (1997) presents data from parents who perceive that the rural environment is a safer place to raise children. Others will move to the countryside in search of a more peaceful living environment. These push and pull factors can be visualized with the aid of Table 2.2, summarizing Davies and Yeates' (1991) findings in Oxford County, Ontario. The study focussed on exurban residential development in the County between 1976 and 1986. The survey questioned 341 persons who were asked for their reasons for moving to a home in a rural area. Each person was able to list multiple reasons.

Table 2.2: Reasons for moving to rural areas

Reason	Proportion
<i>More privacy</i>	95%
<i>Better Quality of Life</i>	86%
<i>More Land</i>	81%
<i>Attractive Landscape</i>	79%
<i>Less Crime</i>	57%
<i>Nearness to Urban Area</i>	49%
<i>Lower House Prices</i>	44%
<i>Better Schools</i>	34%
<i>Lower Tax Rates</i>	33%
<i>Less Commuting</i>	26%
<i>Friends and Relatives</i>	25%
<i>Better Services</i>	15%

Source: Davies & Yeates, 1991

As the table illustrates, Davies & Yeates (1991) found that privacy, and improved quality of life, more space and an attractive landscape were the most important factors in the decision to live in a rural area. Other frequently noted responses were less crime, nearness to urban areas, lower house prices, better schools, and lower tax rates. A smaller number of respondents indicated that they would have less commuting, wanted to be closer to friends and relatives, and felt that the services were better in rural areas. Because of all these pull factors non-residential uses are found increasingly in rural areas.

Manufacturing plants and commercial businesses also may locate in rural areas because of lower land and development costs. The recent interest in rural areas that lie within commuting distance of large cities has intensified competition for the land, as it is assumed that it will be eventually converted to urban or quasi-urban uses. Thus, it is a zone of both growth and decline – farmers are forced to compete with non-farmers for rural areas (Troughton, 1995), and many are tempted to cash in on the value of their land and dispose of their property for urban uses.

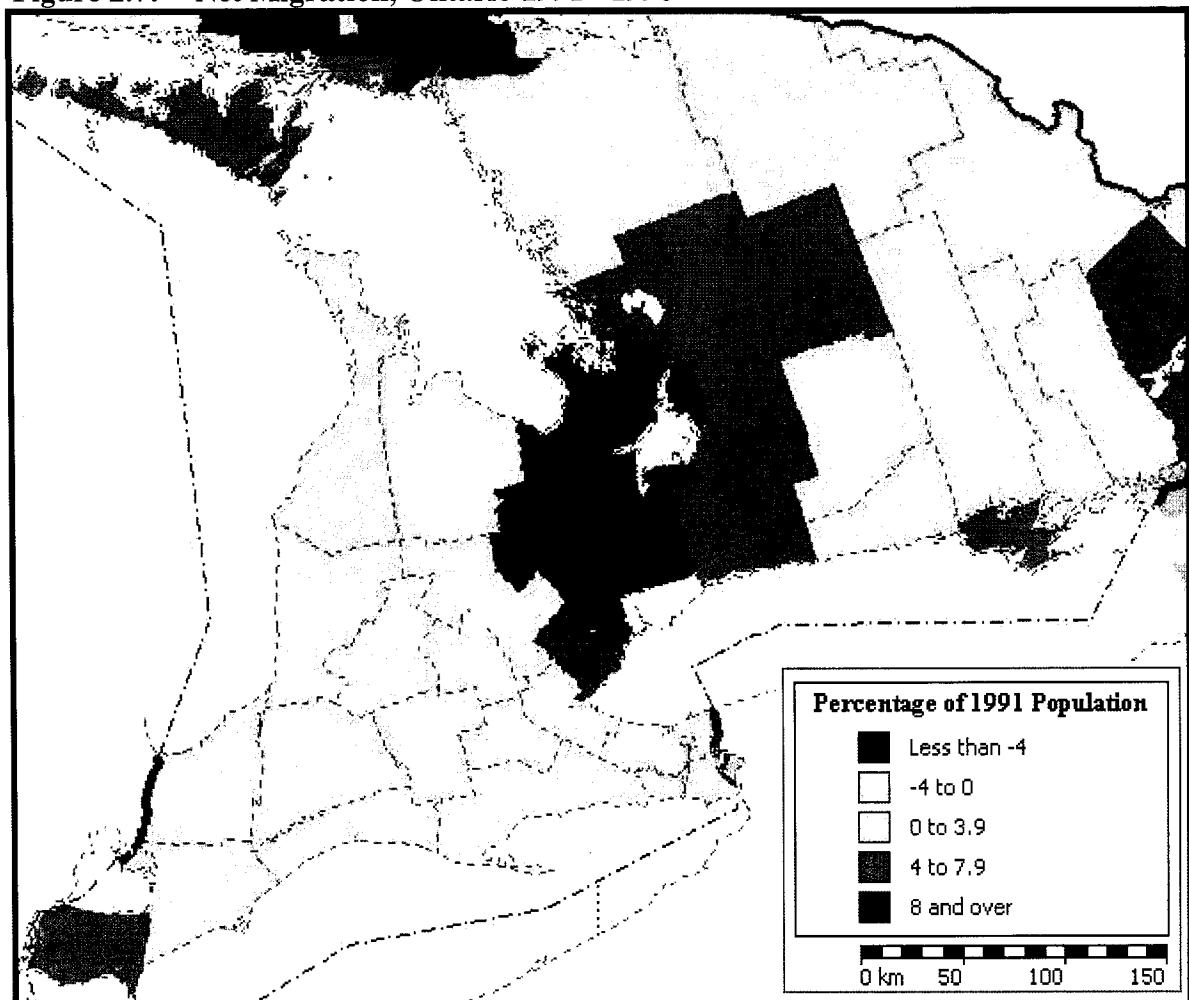
Increasing costs may also influence land uses in these areas. Farm operators living near urban areas may be forced to sell their farm when the taxes become too high. Similarly, the value of land surrounding cities may be too high for farmers to purchase as the land values are determined not only by agricultural factors, but also by the potential future residential rent and the expected date of conversion to urban land (Cavailles & Wavresky, 2003). The political party in power at any given time influences whether or not farmland conservation is at the forefront of the government agenda (Peters, 1990). The current Ontario Liberal Government introduced the Places to Grow Act in 2005 (Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, 2005) to control urban development in southern Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The plan restricts development in some areas while promoting it in others, to focus development on existing settlements so as to increase densities while protecting agricultural and other environmentally sensitive areas. Unfortunately, the area included in the plan does not include Oxford County or several other important agricultural areas of the Province.

2.3.8 Canadian Areas in Danger of Development

Research indicates that non-farm development can occur both adjacent to and in areas located a further distance from larger cities, especially given advances in modern technology that permit people to work out of their home instead of commuting to their place of work (Mitchell, 2004). Toronto's dominant position in southern Ontario means that most development will occur in the surrounding region. Figure 2.7 shows net migration in south central Ontario between 1991 and 1996. The map shows that most new immigrants settle in southern Ontario between Toronto and the Barrie area, from where large numbers of people now commute back and forth on a daily basis. In addition

to the Barrie area, nearly all other counties in southern Ontario have experienced noticeable in-migration. While most migration will impact the larger centres in these counties, there undoubtedly remains some pressure to develop agricultural land for non-farm purposes. Although planning regulations have been instituted throughout most of the Province, thousands of severances continue to be approved each year (Caldwell et al., 2003).

Figure 2.7: Net Migration, Ontario 1991 - 1996

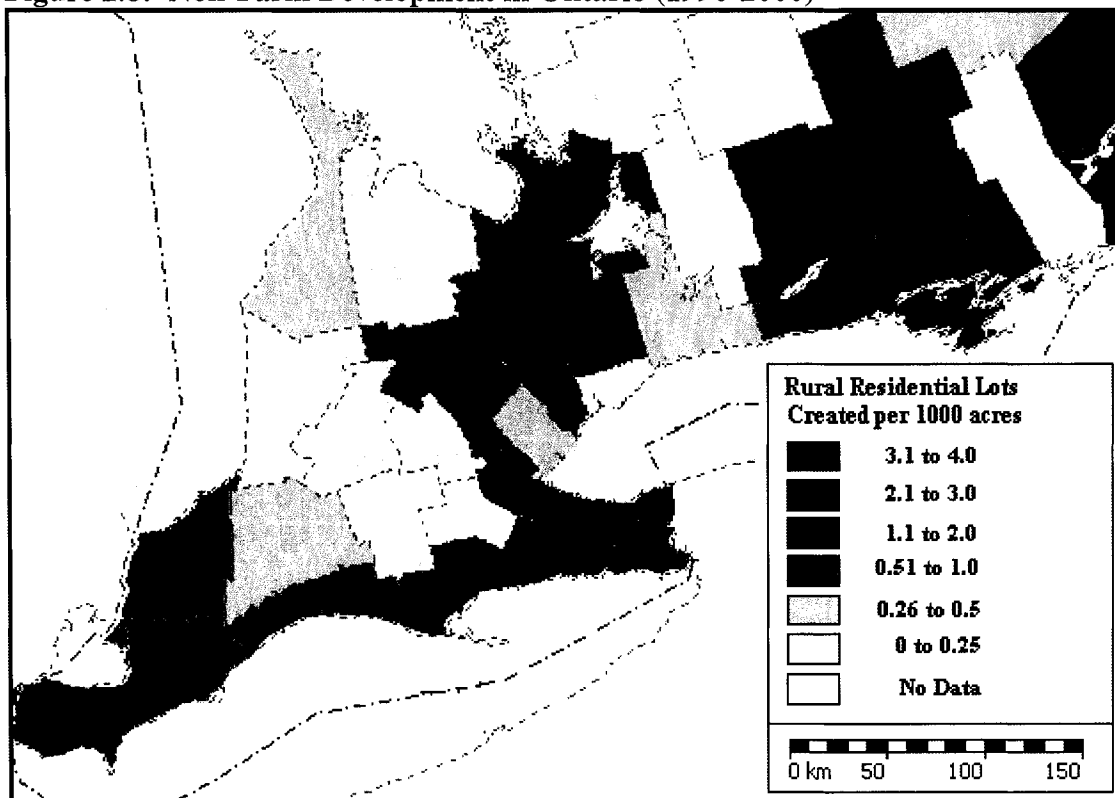


Source: Reproduced from Statistics Canada, 2000

Researchers at the University of Guelph (Caldwell et al., 2003) prepared a report for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food to determine the amount of non-farm

rural residential development that had occurred in agricultural counties during the 1990s. A calculation was used in the report to determine the number of rural residential lots that had been created per 1000 acres. Figure 2.8 has been reproduced from the results of that study to show levels of non-farm development throughout southern Ontario. The study found that there were five municipalities in southern Ontario that allowed only one lot per 4000 acres during the 1990s. These municipalities included Waterloo Region, as well as the counties of Grey, Huron, Perth, and Oxford. It is interesting to note that the unique microclimate that exists in the Niagara Region allowed over 3.5 lots per 1000 acres during the time period. One of the most important agricultural areas in the Province that should be protected from non-farm development is the Niagara microclimate. This unique environment is the only place on the planet where ice wine grapes can be produced.

Figure 2.8: Non-Farm Development in Ontario (1990-2000)



Source: Reproduced from Caldwell et al., 2003

2.3.9 Other Municipal Conservation Efforts

Since counterurbanization was first identified in the 1970s, there have been several attempts throughout North America to try and limit the number of non-farm rural residential dwellings in areas where agricultural activities dominate. There have been some success stories, most notably, Portland, Oregon where advocates concerned with the protection of farmland began their work in the 1960s (Davis et al., 1994; Leo, 1998; Nelson, 1992; 1999). An urban growth boundary was drawn in 1979 and enough room was provided for the city to expand for the next twenty years, but after that any further urban expansion would have to occur within the boundary (Nelson, 1999). Before enacting this growth boundary, some large estate lots with a minimum of five acres were established outside the boundary line. The large size of these lots was in part an attempt to try and ensure that the density of rural areas would remain very low. The plan has secured the continuation of a low density, but the existence of large residential lots does not help to preserve the agricultural areas for farming. Rather it removes farmland and destroys the rural idyll. The growth boundary has resulted in increased density in Portland (Leo, 1998) but, in addition, it has led to a sharp rise in the cost of housing in the city. Southern Ontario can learn from this example in that growth boundaries are not a panacea to all problems, and can have some negative repercussions.

Randall (1997) provides examples of planning regulations that were not successful. He notes that in Montana, 40 acre parcels called 'ranchettes' have been created but his study found that people would have 39 acres of weeds, and 1 acre of tended lawns surrounding their home. To many this may appear as a mere aesthetic problem, but the real heart of the issue lies in the fact that active and productive farmland has been removed from the land-base and is no longer part of the agricultural economy.

In other cases, would-be ranchers try to work the farm but are unaware of common agricultural practices such as crop rotation and thus the land gradually becomes less fertile. In Northern Michigan, Randall (1997) found orchards that are divided up into 5, 10 and 15 acre parcels for upscale buyers. He notes that the most common lot size is 10.1 acres, as parcels over 10 acres do not need approvals to permit construction. Again, the unintended consequence in many instances is one acre of tended lawns surrounding a house and the rest in weeds. What Ontario can learn from these two examples is that there is a need to retain low density controls, and building lots, where permitted, should not be larger than one acre. This would ensure that less land is removed from the land-base, thus keeping the loss of farmland to a minimum.

Exurban development is the result of people wanting to leave urban areas and live in areas that are more aesthetically pleasing while still lying within commuting distance to their workplace. People want to live in areas that are perceived as being cleaner and having fewer of the problems associated with big cities. The result is the development of suburban tracts on the edge of the city close to rural amenity areas. Our cities are growing in an unsustainable manner, expanding quickly into the periphery rather than redeveloping underused sections of the city that have been abandoned, or are in disrepair (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). Revitalizing these areas would provide benefits to local residents in the form of better transit systems and improved liveability. By making our cities more appealing we may negate some of the issues that have made people want to flee urban areas (counterurbanization) or move to suburban areas on the edge of cities. The state of Florida has developed a growth management policy designed to accomplish this by protecting the natural environment while simultaneously improving the urban

environment (Anthony, 2003). By making cities more liveable, more pedestrian-friendly and with improved transportation choices, fewer people may feel the need to flee to exurbia (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2005).

2.4 Conclusion

This review of studies on rural land use planning policies in Ontario, and issues regarding non-farm development and counterurbanization, has identified a gap in the literature. There is need for additional analyses of non-farm development in rural areas in a Canadian context, especially in a longitudinal format. The review also suggests that the studies that have been completed have tended to focus on a broad scale and have not fully examined the micro-scale. There is a need for research into how Ontario's farms are coping with a changing rural demographic. What local planning authorities are doing to help preserve agricultural areas, and what strategies have been successful? How are Canadian farmers adjusting their farming practices to accommodate their non-farm neighbours? This study will attempt to address these questions and to fill these gaps in our knowledge by focusing attention on individual farms and the practices of their farmers in a relatively small area of southern Ontario.

This chapter has identified provincial policy and relevant literary sources that form the background information on non-farm development. Chapter Three will introduce readers to the research methods used throughout this study. Chapter Four will provide readers with a profile of the study area, Oxford County Ontario. Chapters Five and Six will present the results of the study, including the inventory of severance activity in the County as well as the experiences of farmers in the municipality.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

The research undertaken for this project occurred in two different phases. During Phase I, information on severances was collected from the Oxford County records. The data indicate the type of severances, and the number of severance applications and their results for Oxford County between 1971 and 2005. Phase II of this research was concerned with the impact of the creation of non-farm lots on neighbouring farms. The following methodology will correspondingly be described in two phases.

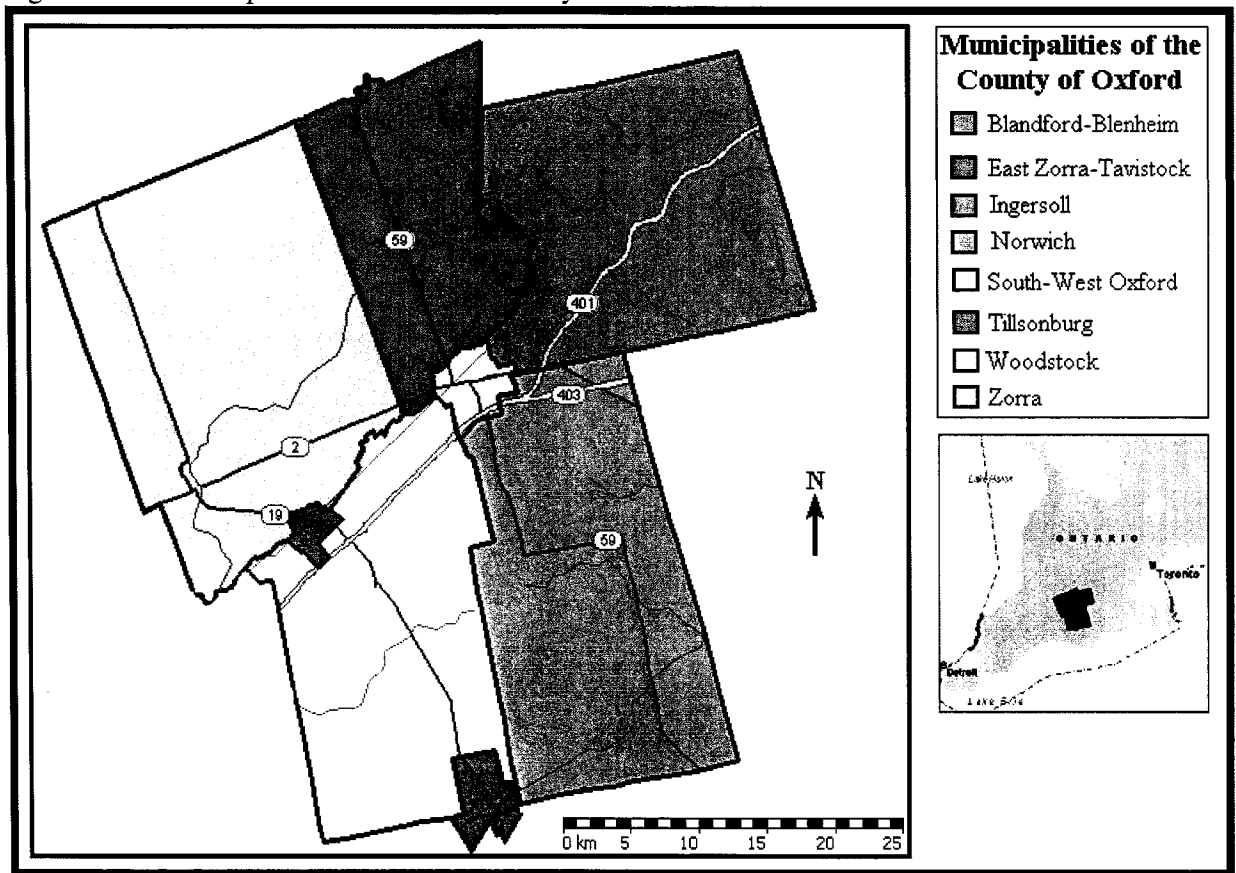
3.2 Phase I Methodology:

Archival Inventory: Non-Farm Severance Activity in Oxford County, 1971- 2005

3.2.1 Identification of Study Area

Due to the nature of this research, the study area was limited to municipalities in Oxford County where agricultural activities occur. Consequently, only the rural areas were included in the study area, namely the five rural municipalities of the County. The location of these rural municipalities, Blandford Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, South-West Oxford, Norwich, and Zorra are depicted in Figure 3.1. Though many hamlets and villages exist throughout each of the townships, severances occurring within village and hamlet boundaries were not included in this study because they are not deemed non-farm development by the County of Oxford.

Figure 3.1 Municipalities of Oxford County



3.2.2 Research Design

The first section of this research is primarily descriptive. An extensive literature review was completed along with an inventory of all non-farm rural residential lot activity in the County during the last 30 years. Access to the records necessary to undertake this research was made possible by the Oxford County Records Manager as well as the County of Oxford Community and Strategic Planning Office. One of the objectives of this research was to identify the number of non-farm rural residential lots that were applied for, granted or denied during the periods before and after the County introduced its farmland preservation strategy, or the point system. During this initial

stage of the research quantitative research techniques were used to create an inventory of all severance activity.

Prior to commencing the collection of non-farm development data, the study areas as well as the sample frame were identified. For this project, the population is identified as all applications that were submitted for the purpose of creating a non-farm rural residential lot in Oxford County within the time frame of 1971 to 2005. These data were gathered from all agriculturally-based townships in the County of Oxford.

3.2.3 Data Collection

A database was constructed to assist in the organization of the data. Some of the fields included for analysis were Application Number, Location of Severance, Type of Severance, Decision, OMB activity, as well as any other notes that might be interesting for each case. This information was then collected from each severance application and the contents of its folder. Supporting documentation, such as Land Division Committee minutes, were also used in cases where the information had been misplaced over the years. All severances on record that were applied for between 1971 and 2005 in non-farm areas as designated by the Official Plan were included and examined. This count can be considered an archival measure, and can be replicated by other researchers (Yin, 2003).

3.2.4 Data Analysis

The data provide an illustration of the trends in development during the study period of 1971 to 2005 in Oxford County. The findings of the severance activity during the various stages of the Oxford County Official Plan were then discussed with members

of the planning staff at the Oxford County Strategic Planning Office in Woodstock. One of the advantages of collecting this type of archival data is that in most cases the information exists in a reliable longitudinal format. This information has not been analyzed in the current fashion, and provides planners with new evidence to support their planning policies. The severance applications and the contents of their files are a reliable source that reflects the actual number of non-farm rural residential lots that were permitted and denied during each phase of the Oxford County planning history. The fact that these files and documents exist in the Oxford County Records Department also permits later verification of the data collected for this inventory.

Each severance application that was included in the inventory was then carefully mapped with the help of Microsoft Map Point, and later ArcExplorer. Each point was manually entered into the system, which took an immense amount of time but the results were worth the effort. Patterns emerged from the data showing where most of the severance activity was occurring, and illustrating what development took place during the various stages of planning in Oxford County. Finally, the data were analyzed to determine which areas of the County had been more or less developed for non-farm reasons. Attributes used in this analysis included proximity to existing settlements, major roads and soil productivity as determined by the Canada Land Inventory.

3.3 Phase II Methodology:

Case Studies: Impact of Non-Farm Development on Oxford County Farms

The second phase of this research involved a case-study of the impact of non-farm development on local farmers. The purpose of phase II was to determine how individual farmers had been forced to change their farming practices as a result of having non-farm

residents living nearby and to detail their experience with the agricultural planning policies. The case study approach allows the researcher to intensively investigate a case focusing on several factors. Case studies help researchers connect the micro level, or the actions of individual people, to the macro level (Neuman, 2003). While not expecting to generalize the opinions of all Oxford County farmers, this research illustrates the experiences of a small cross section of farmers in Oxford County during 2005, when the in-depth interviews with farmers were conducted.

3.3.1 Selection of Case Farms

The case study farms used in the second phase of the research were selected based on the data gathered and trends observed in the first phase of the research. Farmers who had applied for severances, or who had been involved with public meetings regarding non-farm development in their area were selected. The selection process was designed to include representatives from the various segments of the local agricultural industry, such as:

- Dairy Farmer
- Beef Farmer
- Pig Farmer
- Chicken Farmer
- Tobacco Farmer
- Cash Crop Farmer
- Mixed Operation Farmer

These cases were chosen to investigate the cumulative impact that planning policies intended to encourage farming have had on farmers. All of the participants are operating commercially viable operations in Oxford County, in the midst of varying levels of non-farm uses.

3.3.2 Research Design

Phase two of this research provides insight into how non-farm severances granted in the past have impacted farming at the micro level: the family farm. This portion of the study has been conducted through the use of case study methodology. According to Yin (1994), there are two types of case studies: single (embedded or holistic) or multiple (embedded or holistic). A single case study is used to confirm or challenge a theory or represent a unique or extreme case (Yin, 1994). Single case studies are ideal for instances where the researcher may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible. Multiple case studies follow a replication pattern where numerous cases are researched and each case is a 'whole study' (Yin, 1994). Embedded case design occurs when more than one unit of analysis is used on each case, while holistic design focuses on only one unit of analysis. Oxford County is the only municipality in Ontario that has a unique planning tool in place to regulate non-farm development. As a result, Oxford County represents a unique case. This research has used a single embedded case application, requiring the usage of other sources of evidence to confirm findings within a broader scope (Yin, 1994). In this research triangulation is achieved by using several sources of evidence including archival evidence, documentation, interviews, and participant observation.

Several limitations have been associated with case study research including time and resource constraints (Yin, 1994). Given the time available it would be challenging to conduct a large number of interviews so a representative sample has been used instead. A second issue is that farmers work long hours and are not readily available at all times of the day. They are also spread out across the County so telephone interviews were

considered as a lower cost alternative to on-farm interviews. Despite the costs, it was determined that on-farm interviews would be the best option, given the level of increased interaction with the respondents and the ability to read visual responses and body language.

3.3.3 Data Collection

The interview participants were selected through a strategic method. This research is exploratory in nature, and thus its purpose is not to obtain a large sample of people or situations but rather to explore a few cases in detail. The second phase of this research relies on highlighting farmers' experiences in rural Oxford County. The respondents varied in age and farming experience. Respondents targeted for this study were farmers who lived with non-farm development in their area, and whose names were noted in the Oxford County records during the first phase of this research. All respondents gave first hand accounts of the impacts that the policies have had on their lives and farming practices, as well as commenting on the agricultural economy on a larger scale.

Prior to the interview, participants were contacted via telephone and were invited to participate in the study. Not all persons initially contacted agreed to participate in the study. Operators on two farms declined to participate, and on three additional farms six farmers who had expressed an interest in participating were forced to withdraw due to their busy schedules. Interview dates were arranged to conduct the interview on their farms at a time that was most convenient for them. An information package was compiled detailing the point system as it currently exists in Oxford County and was given to the respondents prior to the interview. The package was discussed with the

respondents during the interview. Participant consent was obtained from all potential interviewees prior to the commencement of each interview. All interviews were conducted in person, and with the permission of those interviewed their responses were recorded via audiotape.

Several open ended questions were asked to allow respondents to assume the direction of the interview at certain times. The tone of the interview was informal, allowing for conversation and a relaxed environment. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. A number of questions were prepared and posed to those interviewed; the guide is attached as Appendix I. These questions permitted a comparison of farmers' responses. The questions were used as a general guide, but still allowed respondents to diverge from the questions and add any other information that they thought might have value to the research project.

To ensure that all interviews were undertaken in a uniform manner, the researcher was the only person collecting the data throughout this study. Each interview lasted between 40 and 80 minutes. The interviews were conducted in person on the respondent's farms. All of the interviews were recorded, with the permission of the interviewees. Based on the audiotapes of each conversation, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and a profile was developed for each farm.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

Once the tapes had been transcribed, the researcher went through each interview and coded responses using content analysis. The researcher used a form of emergent coding of the content of the interview responses (Nuendorf, 2002). Pre-set codes were not established; coding was devised after reading each person's response and then

rereading to ensure coding had been completed thoroughly. This type of analysis was applied so that each response to specific questions could be compared to other farmers in the area. The cross case analysis allows for patterns to emerge and themes to develop. These findings are then compared to the data from the literature review, to either re-confirm the findings of previous scholars, or to shed light on new findings.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the mixed research methods for the study. A combination of literary review, archival survey, interviews, and census data form the basis of this study to examine the effectiveness of agricultural planning policies in Oxford County, and their associated impact on area farmers. The following chapters present the findings of the research. Chapter Five presents the results of the archival survey of non-farm rural residential severance activity in Oxford County between 1971 and 2005. Chapter Six presents the results of the interviews in which farmers discussed the impact on their farms and farming practices of non-farm development in their area.

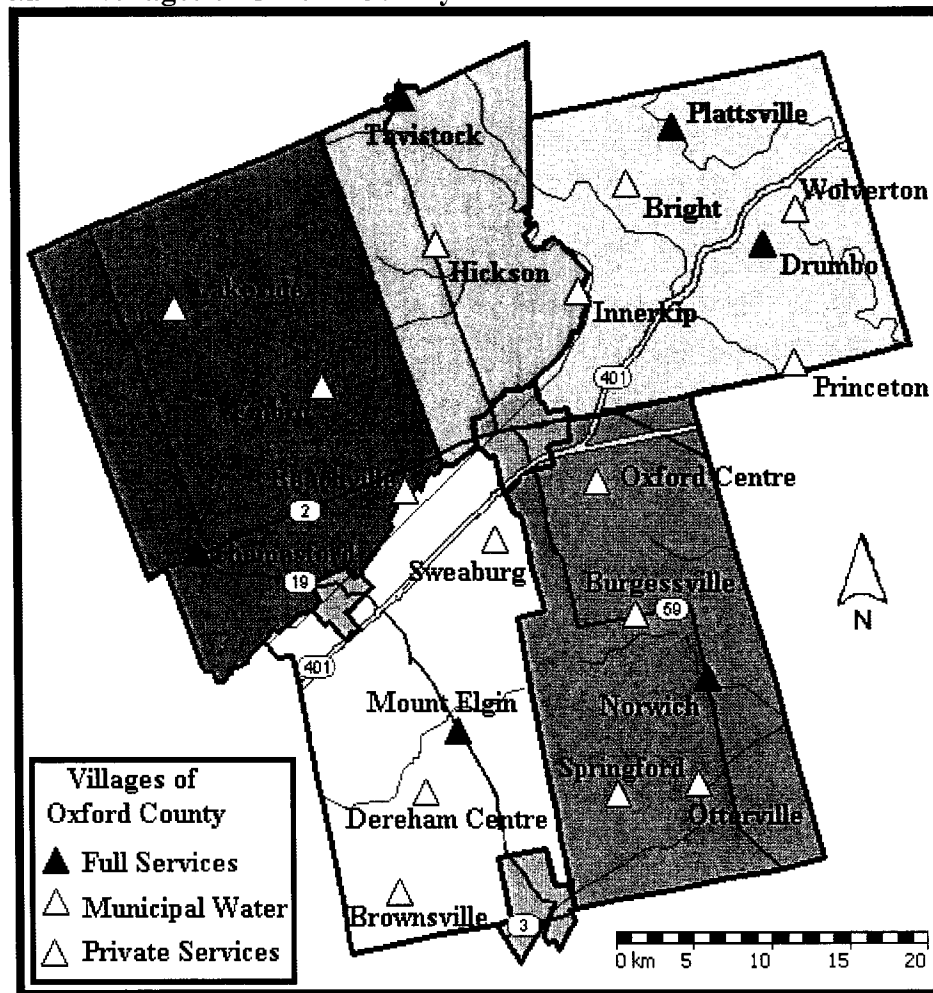
Chapter Four: Profile of Oxford County

The focus of the study now shifts to the case study area, Oxford County, Ontario. This chapter will provide the reader with a geographic, economic and social profile of the municipality.

4.1 Geographic Location

The County of Oxford is located in the heart of southern Ontario. The County is made up of three urban centres (Woodstock, Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg) and five rural townships (Blandford-Blenheim, East-Zorra Tavistock, Zorra, South-West Oxford, and Norwich). Each of the rural townships has at least one fully serviced village; their locations are depicted in Figure 4.1. Serviced villages are existing settlements that offer a range of services and activities and have been developed with full septic and water services or are proposed for these services in the near future (County of Oxford, 2006). Each rural township also has several hamlets and rural clusters. The County has an area of 2 039 000 square kilometres. According to Statistics Canada (2001), the population of Oxford County was 99 270 in 2001, an increase of 2.2 percent from the 1996 total of 97 142 persons.

Figure 4.1 Villages of Oxford County



4.2 Oxford Workforce

Oxford County is within commuting distance of several cities such as Kitchener-Waterloo, London, and Brantford. Highways 401 and 403 intersect in Oxford County, and provide the many industries that have established in Woodstock with excellent access to points in Ontario and the US. Toronto is less than two hours away and the international border crossings at Windsor, Sarnia, and Fort Erie are no more than three hours away. In comparison to the provincial average, Oxford County has a larger manufacturing (30.5 percent) and agricultural sector (10.2 percent) than the rest of the

Province, but a much smaller service sector, especially in business services. Table 4.1 illustrates the structure of the labour force in Oxford County.

Table 4.1 Labour Force by Industrial Sector

Industrial Sector	Oxford County % Employed	Ontario % Employed
Agriculture	10.2	3.2
Manufacturing	30.5	22.0
Wholesale and Retail	15.0	15.9
Finance	4.5	6.7
Health and Education	12.7	15.1
Business Services	13.0	19.1
Other	14.2	18.1

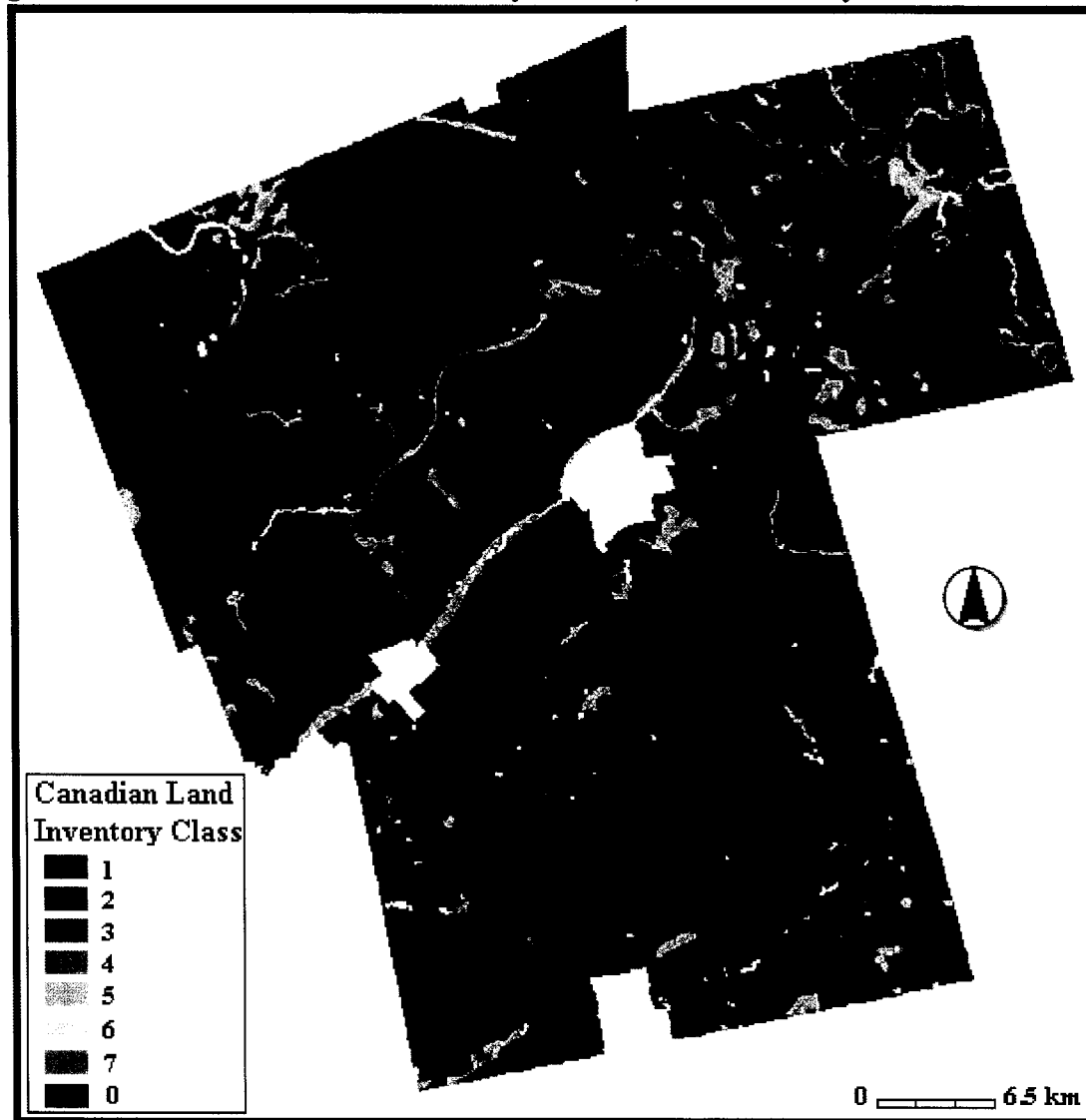
Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

4.3 Trends in Oxford Agriculture

Agriculture continues to be a very important part of Oxford County's economy.

The County boasts a large agricultural land base, which allows farmers to prosper in many agricultural commodities; in 2001 88.4 percent of the County's area was committed to agriculture. Not only is the agricultural land supply significant in the municipality, the quality of the soil also allows farms to thrive. According to the Canada Land Inventory 91.2 percent of the soil in the County is prime agricultural land (Classes 1, 2 or 3), with 57.7 percent of the soils being Class 1 (Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited, 1978). Figure 4.2 illustrates the distributions of the soil classes throughout the County as defined by the Canadian Land Inventory.

Figure 4.2 Canadian Land Inventory Classes, Oxford County

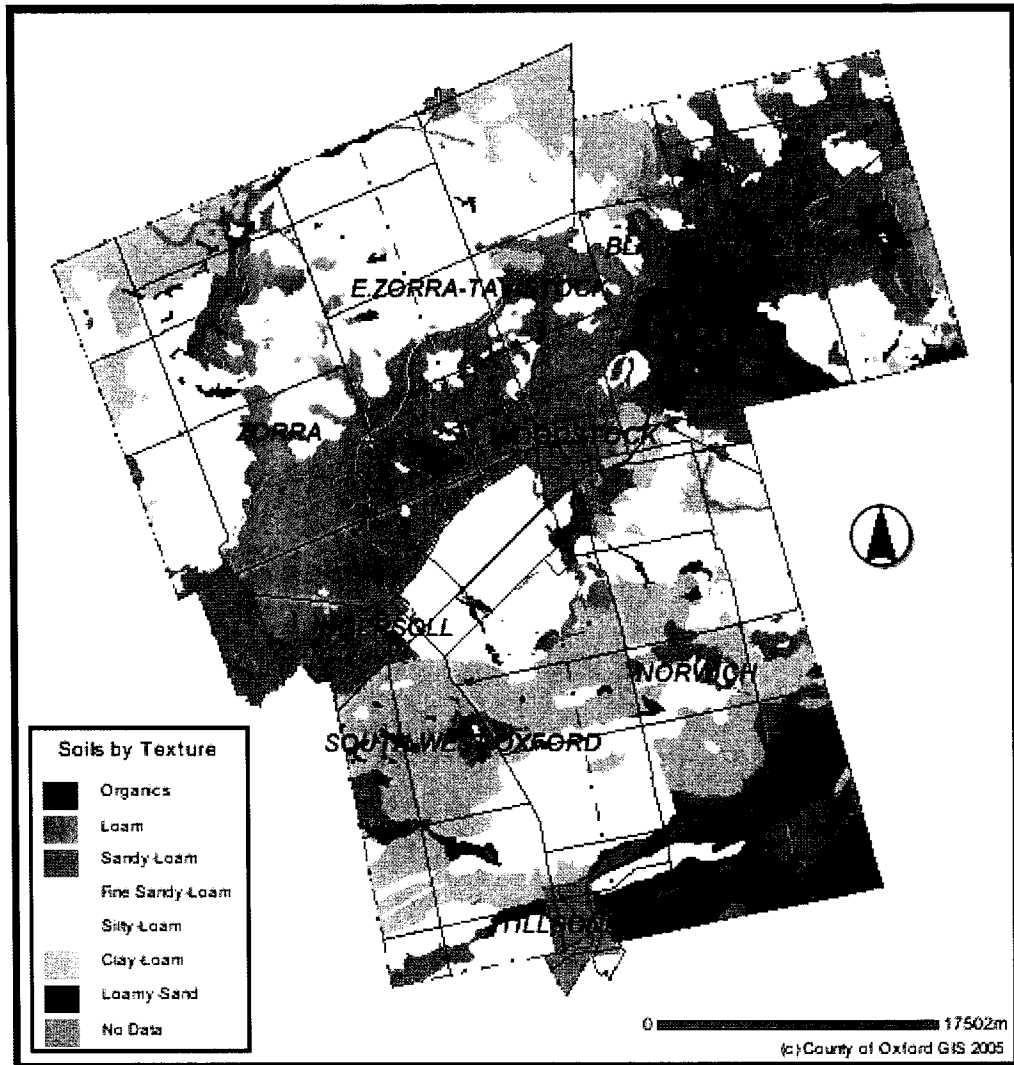


Source: County of Oxford GIS, 2006

The ease of growing crops can be attributed to both the climate and quality of the soil. The textures of the soil throughout the County are depicted in Figure 4.3. Much of the soil in Oxford County is loam based (loam, silty-loam, and clay-loam). Loam is a combination of silt, clay, and sand. When the combination of materials is relatively equal the result is optimal growing conditions and well drained fields where topography permits (Armson, 2005). The soil map indicates that most of the area within the County is capable of producing high quality produce, while other areas are limited. These limited

areas include portions of Norwich and Blandford-Blenheim Townships, where a concentration of loamy-sand is present; these regions have historically been the tobacco growing areas of the Municipality.

Figure 4.3 Soil Textures of Oxford County



Source: County of Oxford GIS, 2005

Just over 10 percent of the County's workforce is presently employed in agriculture, which is much higher than the provincial average of 3 percent (Statistics Canada, 2001). A total of 3,230 farm operators worked in Oxford County, with an average age of 49 in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2001). Corn (39 percent), soybeans (21 percent), and alfalfa (13 percent) are the most important crops grown in the County. In

common with the farming sector across Canada, the number of farms decreased to 2,104 in 2001, a decline of 11.7 percent from 1991 as illustrated in Table 4.2. During the same time period the acreage farmed increased by 6.1 percent to 445,458 acres. Although the numbers of farms and farmers in the County have diminished, gross farm receipts at more than \$556 million were at an all time high for farmers in Oxford County in 2001, representing a massive increase of 62.8 percent from 1991.

Table 4.2 Trends in Oxford Agriculture

	1991	1996	2001	Rate of Change (1991 to 2001)
# of Farms	2382	2342	2104	-11.7%
Acreage Farmed	419 979	440 913	445 458	6.1%
% Farmed	83.7%	87.8%	88.8%	6.1%
Acreage Owned	305 513	312 399	309 241	1.2%
Acreage Rented	114 466	128 514	136 217	19.0%
Gross Receipts \$	341 542 208	418 604 361	556 129 845	62.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

Another interesting trend revealed in Table 4.2 is the increase in the amount of land rented during the ten year period. While the number of acres owned by farmers remained relatively unchanged, the number of acres rented in 2001 shows an increase of 19 percent from 1991 levels. This substantial increase in rented land can be explained by the changing nature of the agricultural industry. In order for farmers to remain competitive, they often require extra land to produce cash crops to help supplement their farm income. Given the high cost of buying additional farmland in an extremely productive area such as Oxford County, an alternative way to expand farm holdings is to rent the land. Fewer farmers working in the County may mean that a number of farms will be sold or the acreage will be rented while the farmer retires to their farmhouse. As a result an increased number of acres are rented.

Chapter Five: Severance Activity in Oxford County

In the preceding literature review issues that were discussed included planning in rural areas, non-farm development, and the agricultural industry of southern Ontario. The literature demonstrates that there is a lack of research regarding non-farm development in Ontario's farmland, and that there is a need to fill this gap in our knowledge. Oxford County was chosen to be the case study area because, in comparison with other Ontario municipalities, it has a long history of implementing County-wide centralized rural planning, including some ground breaking agricultural land use policies. The existence of these municipal policies for over twenty-five years has helped to preserve agricultural land and shape the agricultural community and County into its current form.

5.1 Introduction

To understand the impacts and pressures that non-farm related uses have had on farms in Oxford County, it is important to first examine the physical landscape to determine the effectiveness of the planning regulations set in place to preserve agricultural land for farming. As detailed in the literature review, several sets of provincial policies have been in place throughout the planning history of the County of Oxford. These policies have informed Oxford County in the development and enforcement of two Official Plans, and the updating of the current version to coincide with provincial interests. Historically, the County's policies on non-farm development have been more restrictive than both provincial policy requirements and several neighbouring municipalities. This chapter examines severance activity in the County of Oxford by discussing the results of an inventory of the severance files of the County. It

presents maps and a spatial analysis derived from the results of archival research conducted in association with the Oxford County Records Department and Oxford County Strategic Planning Office.

Development in the form of non-farm residential properties occurs when an application is submitted to a municipality to sever a portion of a larger property to create a lot for a house not associated with agriculture. Each municipality has the governance to grant or deny severance applications. The data collected for the purpose of this research were compiled from municipal severance records. During various employment periods with the County of Oxford, this researcher compiled a catalogue of all of the severance files at the Oxford County Records Department, which were subsequently used in this research. Files of interest were identified from the catalogue and then each record was examined to determine whether or not the severance was indeed a non-farm rural residential case. Not all files in the archives were of the same quality; over the years decision sheets may have gone missing and planning reports for each application summary were not always found with the original application. In some cases entire files were missing. In most instances missing information was gathered from Land Division Committee minutes, which are also housed in the records department. This portion of the data collection took place during the period between September 2004 and December 2005. For a severance application to be included in this study it had to meet the following criteria:

1. the application must be to create a new lot, no lot additions were included;
2. the land must be located in one of the rural townships, not in hamlets or villages;

3. the severed or retained parcel changes the land use to a non-farm rural residential property.

The data collected and presented in this chapter focus on all documented severance activity within the County from 1971 to 2005. The time period has been divided up as follows: 1971 to 1974 occurs before County amalgamation, the period of 1975 to 1978 accounts for the period before the first County-wide Official Plan, the period from 1979 to 1995 accounts for severances during the first Official Plan, and the last period from 1996 to 2004 takes into account all severance activity under the second Official Plan until 2005. For each time period there is a discussion of the planning policy of the time, the amount of severance activity and the trends in development activity, as well as the type of severance, and the spatial distribution of the severances.

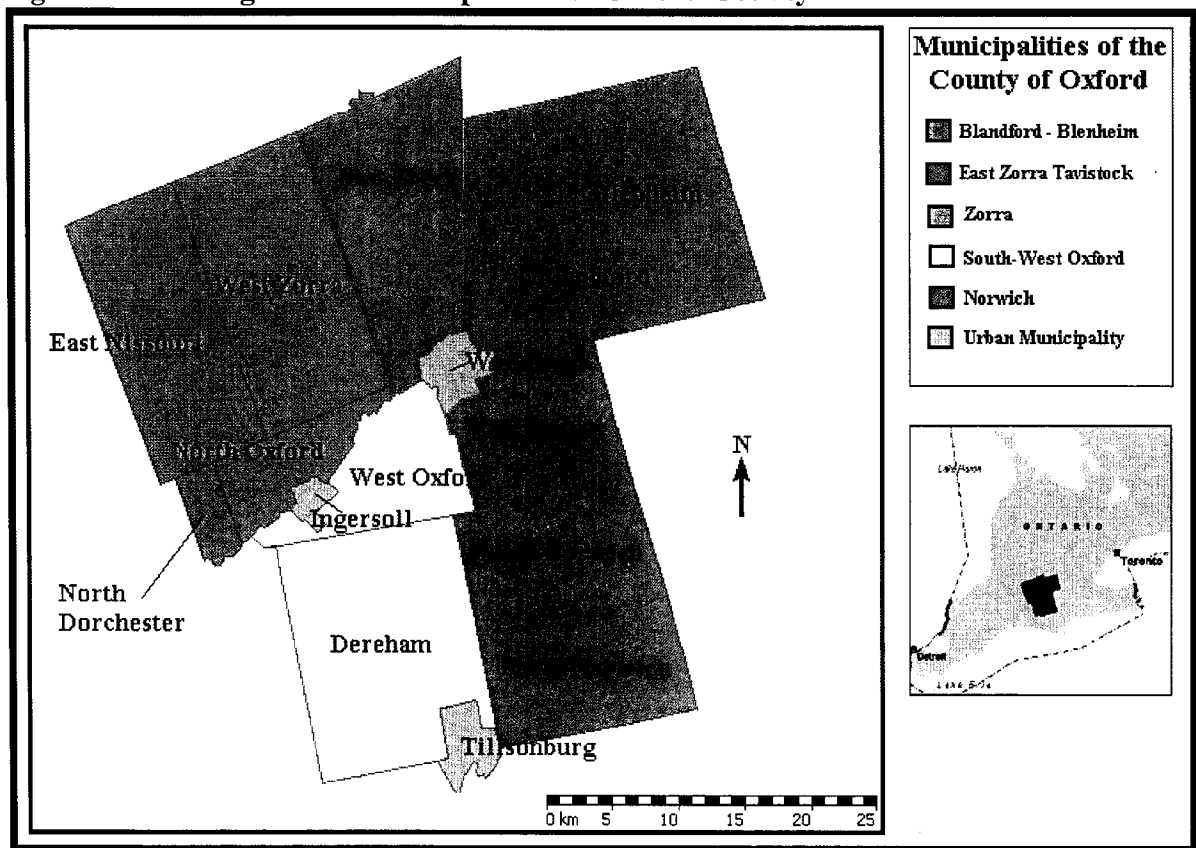
5.2 Non-Farm Development during the Pre Amalgamation Period

5.2.1 Municipal Planning Policy

Prior to 1975 the County of Oxford did not have central authority to grant or dismiss severance applications. At that time each township managed its own severance development and had the authority to grant or deny applications. This system meant that the County had eleven rural committees that made decisions regarding changes to land-use in agricultural areas. There was no Official Plan in place to determine what development would be permitted or encouraged in agricultural areas. After amalgamation, the eleven rural municipalities in Oxford County were consolidated to form five new rural townships. Blandford and Blenheim townships created Blandford-Blenheim Township, East Zorra and Tavistock created East Zorra-Tavistock Township, East Nissouri, North Oxford, West Zorra, and a small portion of North Dorchester created

Zorra Township, while South-West Oxford was comprised of Dereham, and West Oxford Townships. North Norwich, South Norwich, and East Oxford combined to make the new Norwich Township. The present form of the County can be seen in figure 5.1, outlining the location of the previous townships before amalgamation. After amalgamation, centralized planning resulted in the creation of the Land Division Committee to assess severance applications for the entire County.

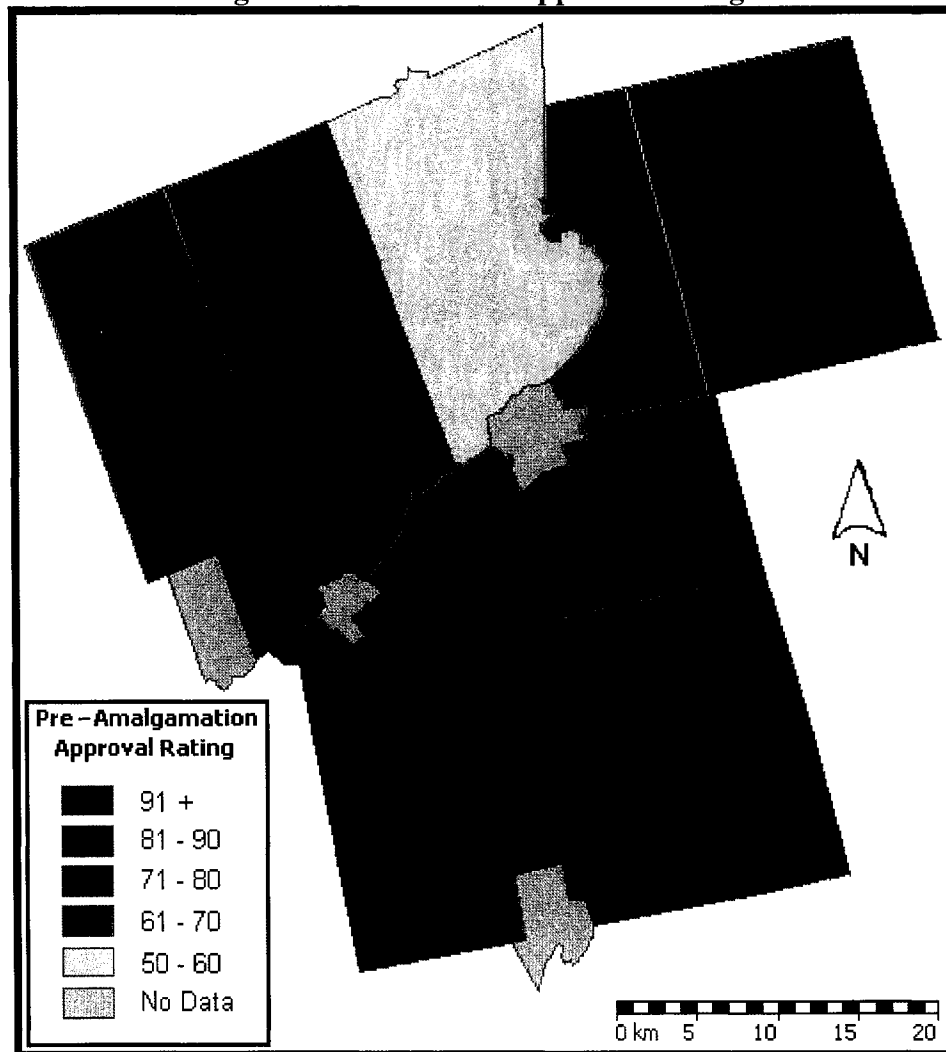
Figure 5.1: Amalgamated Municipalities of Oxford County



The pre-amalgamation era was a time of lax planning regulations in rural areas in the County. As a result, many townships had large numbers of applications submitted and approved for non-farm development. As seen in figure 5.2 the approval rating for non-farm rural residential severances varied greatly throughout the County during this timeframe. For example, those persons applying in East Zorra, East Nissouri, and West

Oxford were much less likely to be approved for a non-farm severance than those persons applying in North Oxford or South Norwich, although it is not clear why there were differences in approval ratings during this time.

Figure 5.2 Pre-Amalgamation Severance Approval Ratings



5.2.2 Severance Activity and Trends

Based on this research, there were 1,067 severance applications on file for the pre-amalgamation period for the entire County including urban areas. According to the Records Manager of the County, in some cases, former municipalities failed to forward their old files when the County records department was established and so these files are

missing or incomplete. However it is instructive to observe what development was occurring at different points in history. Of the severance applications on record, 468 or approximately 44 percent were for the purpose of creating a non-farm rural residential property. Table 5.1 below demonstrates that the number of severance applications submitted each year during the pre-amalgamation era rose to an all time high of 510 applications in 1974, of which 226 were non-farm rural residential applications. The lack of any planning policy during this time period meant that it was relatively easy to obtain a severance for a building lot in agricultural land in the County. This is demonstrated by the nearly 80 percent likelihood of a severance being granted. Not all decisions were favourable for the applicant, however, with approximately one out of every five applications being denied. At this time an average of 117 non-farm related rural residential applications were submitted each year.

Table 5.1 Pre-Amalgamation Severance Activity

Year	# Apps	# NFRR Apps	Granted		Denied		No Decision	
			n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
1971	55 +	18	14	(77.8)	3	(16.7)	1	(5.5)
1972	182	69	56	(81.2)	12	(17.4)	1	(1.4)
1973	320	155	130	(83.9)	22	(14.2)	3	(2.3)
1974	510	226	169	(74.8)	56	(24.8)	1	(0.4)
Total	1067	468 (43.9%)	369		93		6	
Average	267	117		78.8%		19.9%		1.3%

5.2.3 Severance Type

During the early 1970s the type of non-farm severances applied for were quite varied, as demonstrated in Table 5.2. The most frequent application was for a new building lot for a new house in the countryside. The second most popular application was

to remove an existing dwelling. The request for a retirement lot was the third most frequent application type. In other Official Plans, this type of application may be referred to as farm-related as the new house will be occupied by a former farmer. However, it has been found that inhabitants of these ‘farm-related’ dwellings often only live in them for a brief period of time before they are sold again (Misek-Evans, 1992). Fourth on the list of the most common severance types was for a family building lot, where a son or daughter or other familial relation obtained a building lot from farmland. The next most frequent type was to form a new agricultural lot, but retain the farmhouse. Other severance types noted during this time period are estate lot, surplus dwelling, lot for farm help, infilling, and addition to neighbouring agricultural land while retaining the farmhouse, but combined these types represent less than 12 percent of the total

Table 5.2 Pre-Amalgamation Severance Type

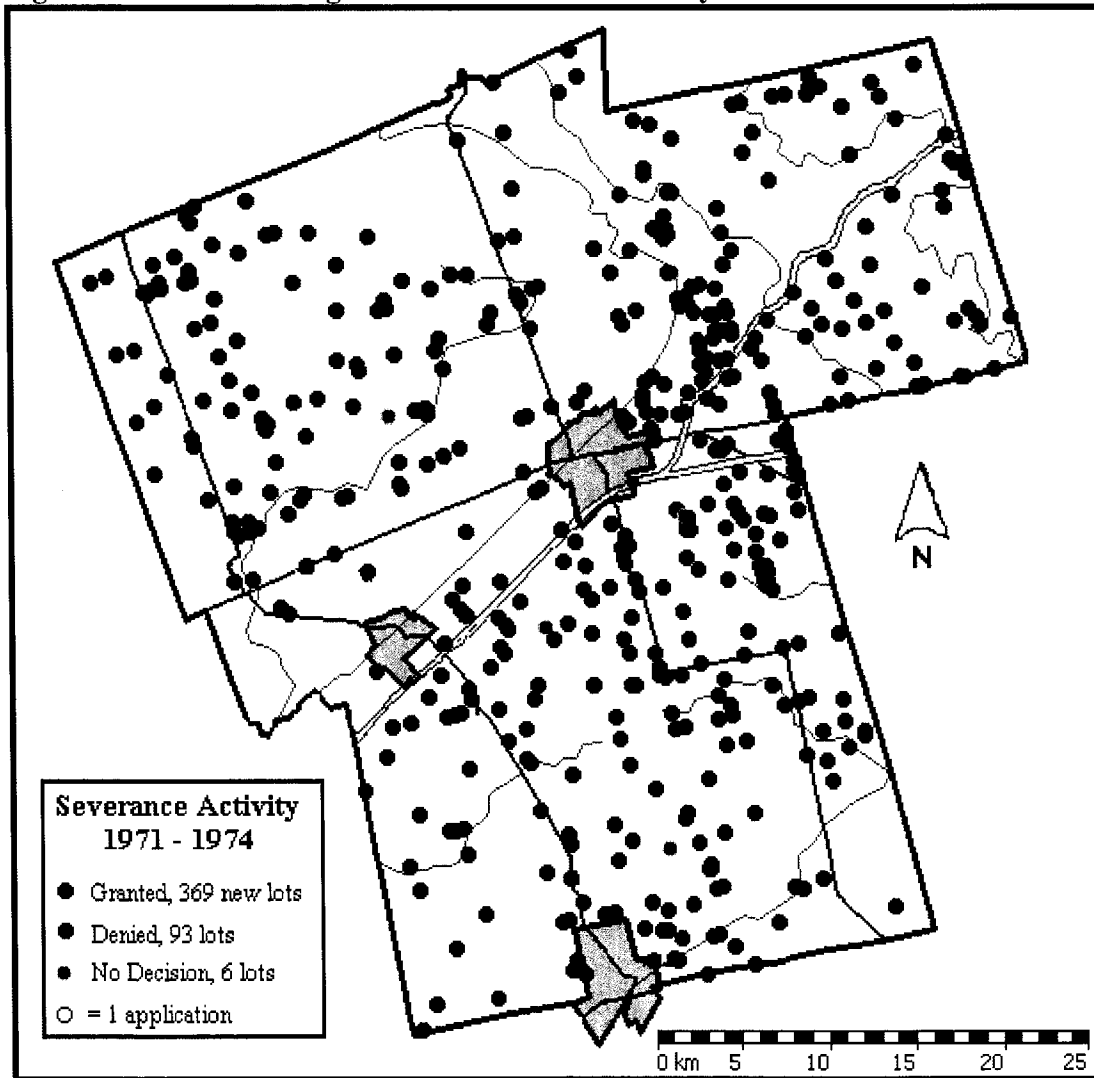
Type of Application	Percentage
New Building Lot	28.4%
Existing Dwelling	21.4%
Retirement Lot	16.7%
Family Building Lot	11.3%
New Agricultural Lot, retained Dwelling	10.0%
Estate Lot	5.6%
Surplus Dwelling	3.8%
Lot for Farm Help	0.8%
Infilling	0.8%
Addition to Neighbouring Agricultural Land, Retained Dwelling	0.6%

5.2.4 Spatial Distribution of Severances

The thematic map, Figure 5.3 shows the spatial distribution of the severance activity during the pre-amalgamation time period. Each dot represents one application. As the map illustrates there was an immense amount of rural non-farm development throughout Oxford County during this time period. As previously indicated by the choropleth mapping (Figure 5.2) there are areas of the County which experienced more

development pressure than others. Clusters of severance activity are most pronounced in areas that are within close proximity to Woodstock, particularly to the east of the city in close proximity to highway 401.

Figure 5.3 Pre-Amalgamation Severance Activity



5.3 Non-Farm Development in the Pre-Official Plan Period

5.3.1 Planning Policy Development

Following amalgamation, council decided that an Official Plan would be necessary to help the County develop in a consistent (or orderly) manner. Public information sessions were held throughout the County where residents could come and

voice their opinions regarding planning issues for the first Official Plan. Background papers were also released on various topics to determine the direction in which the County should proceed. One of the reports focused on agriculture (Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited, 1978). During this pre-Official Plan time period, the Land Division Committee began denying more applications because of the negative opinions on non-farm related property uses in agricultural areas generated by the research for the background reports.

5.3.2 Trends in Severance Activity

During this period (1975 to 1978) a total of 1,484 applications were submitted, 390 of which were classified as non-farm related residential lots. The move to a centralized planning system led to the creation of the Land Division Committee to determine the outcome of severance applications for the entire County. The new system greatly reduced the likelihood of receiving favourable decisions for a non-farm severance to thirty-two percent. As Table 5.3 illustrates, this era was the first time in the planning history of the County that the number of severances denied was two times greater than those granted. In the years leading up to the first Official Plan we can begin to see that the Land Division Committee remained steadfast, granting an average of only 35 percent of applications during this time period (136 applications were granted, 228 were denied, and no decision was rendered on 21 applications). Throughout this time period, the number of applications declined with an average of 98 non-farm applications being submitted annually during this era, 19 less than in the previous time period. In total, 16.4 percent of all non-farm residential properties can be attributed to decisions made during time period.

Table 5.3 Pre-Official Plan Severance Activity

Year	# Apps	# NFRR Apps	Granted	Denied	No Decision
			n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1975	429	159	51 (32.1)	104 (65.4)	4 (2.5)
1976	362	94	30 (31.9)	56 (59.6)	8 (8.5)
1977	356	72	32 (44.4)	36 (50)	4 (5.6)
1978	337	65	23 (35.4)	38 (58.5)	4 (6.1)
Total	1484	390	136	234	20
Average	371	98	34.9%	60%	5.1%

5.3.3 Type of Development

The mid 1970s witnessed a reduced amount of non-farm development than in the preceding years. The type of non-farm development applications mirrored the types applied for in the previous era. New building lots at 53.6 percent were the most common severance applications (as seen in Table 5.4), while a request to remove an existing dwelling comprised the second most frequently requested type. Unlike the previous era, the third most requested type of development was to remove a surplus dwelling from a farm property. Requests for a new agricultural lot retaining the farmhouse and for a retirement lot made up the fourth and fifth most frequently occurring applications. Other types of severances during this time were to create an estate lot, to retain a farmhouse while adding land to a neighbouring farm, to create a lot in an infilling situation, to create a family lot, and to create a lot for full time farm help, but these applications were relatively infrequent at only 10 percent of the total.

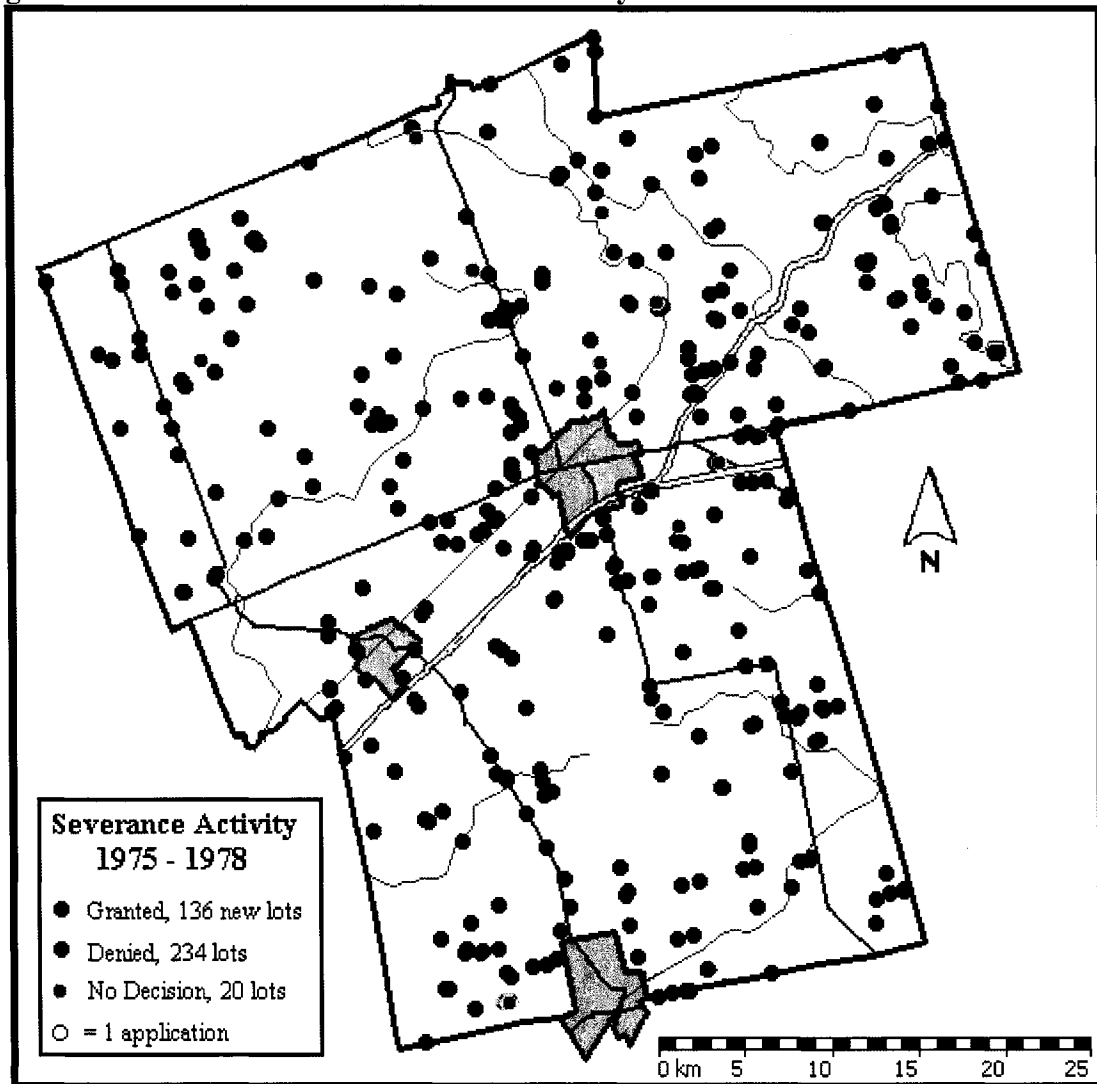
Table 5.4 Pre-Official Plan Severance Type

Type of Application	Percentage
New Building Lot	53.6
New Lot (Existing Dwelling)	16.2
Surplus Dwelling	7.4
New Agricultural Lot, Retained Dwelling	7.2
Retirement Lot	5.6
Estate Lot	5.4
Addition to Neighbouring Agricultural Land, Retained Dwelling	1.8
Infilling	1.5
Family	1.0
Lot for Hired Help	0.3

5.3.4 Spatial Distribution of Severances

Figure 5.4 displays the severance activity that occurred from 1975 to 1978. Each dot represents one application made during the time period. The spatial patterns derived from this set of data (Figure 5.4) are quite different than those observed during the first time frame (Figure 5.3). As the map shows, the number of red dots, representing failed applications, far exceeds the number of green dots, which each represent a successful application. Moreover, the spatial pattern of applications is much less clear than in the previous timeframe (Figure 5.3) when many of the applications were for severances close to Woodstock and along the 401 corridor.

Figure 5.4: Pre Official Plan Severance Activity



5.4 Non-Farm Development in the First Official Plan

5.4.1 Municipal Planning Policy

The first Official Plan of the entire Oxford County planning area was approved by the Minister of Housing in April of 1979 and remained in effect until 1996 when the second Official Plan was adopted. The implementation of the first Official Plan included a point system, a planning idea new to Canada that was adapted from a similar planning initiative in California where the planning department wished to preserve the agricultural land in the Napa Valley (County of Oxford, 2006).

The Point System

The point system was given legal status when the Ministry of Housing approved the first Official Plan in April, 1979. It was more restrictive than the Foodland Guidelines, the provincial policy of the time, (discussed earlier in the literary review). Peter Atcheson, the first Planning Commissioner of the Oxford County Planning Department, received frequent requests for information regarding the concept and application of the point system in the County. He appeared at many conferences and seminars to speak about the point system, and hoped that other municipalities might develop policy that would resemble the point system. In explaining the policy to the Christian Farming Federation of Ontario in 1980 he said:

The concept of the point system is simple, as the criteria used for evaluating land severances are given numerical scores as opposed to more subjective evaluations that are found in most other Ontario Official Plans. These scores are then applied against all applications in an objective fashion. Major advantages of this system or approach to reviewing land severances is that it provides a mechanism to review such applications which is:

1. Objective in its approach, and not subjective
2. the system is consistent, as impartial predetermined numerical scores are applied against specific criteria
3. The system is predictable, you need not be a lawyer or a municipal planner to determine whether you will be successful in a consent application
4. the system is legally defensible

(Atcheson, 1980)

The point system was one of the most significant contributions of the first Official Plan for the County of Oxford in 1979. It helped preserve farmland and deter non-farm rural residential development; it also served as a beacon for the planning community when it was first published. Oxford County wanted to ensure that a logical and consistent method of assessing consent applications within the agricultural preserve was produced (Oxford County, 1979). In the first years of the point system seven factors were used to

evaluate a parcel's suitability for non-farm rural residential severance: waste disposal, land capability, surrounding land use, woodlots, proximity to fire protection services, access to paved County road or Provincial highway, and enlargement of an adjacent farming operation.

Once all the factors have been applied, the points are totalled and a decision is made as to whether or not the severance will be granted. If the number of points is 12 or greater, the consent will not be granted. If the number is 8 or less, the consent may be granted. Situations where the number of points fall between 9 and 11 represent a grey area where no clear cut decision can be made. The Land Division Committee (those who are responsible for granting and rejecting applications) will then make their decision based on the circumstances of the parcel of land (Oxford County, 1979). Since its inception, the point system has helped to diminish dramatically the number of successful non-farm related rural residential severance applications.

Considered to be ground-breaking at the time, the point system proved of interest to several planning offices and was referred to in articles in the Toronto newspapers. Despite interest from several other municipalities in Ontario and elsewhere, the point system remains a tool unique to Oxford County and was never reproduced in southern Ontario, despite the widespread interest.

5.4.2 Trends in Severance Activity

In the seventeen years that the first Official Plan was in place, the Planning Department processed 3,230 severance applications. Table 5.5 shows that only 455 of the applications (or 14 percent of total submissions) were for non-farm rural residential lots. This averages only 27 applications per year for the entire time period, a decline of

about 70 percent from the preceding time period. In the first year of the implementation of the Official Plan, the Land Division Committee denied 72 percent of the non-farm rural residential applications. This denial rate is an increase from the average of 59 percent denied in the Pre-Official Plan period, and a substantial increase from the average of 20 percent denied in the Pre-Amalgamation Period. The highest level of non-farm rural residential denials occurred in 1981, when nearly 83 percent were unsuccessful. The lowest denial rate during this period was in 1993 when only 38 percent of those submitted were turned down. During this time period 284 non-farm rural residential lots were denied and 156 were granted under specific conditions. No decision was made on 15 applications. During this timeframe the number of non-farm applications submitted declined until 1984 when the number of applicants rose to forty four, and then levelled off to the high-teens.

Table 5.5 First Official Plan Severance Activity

Year	# Apps	# NFRR Apps	Granted n (%)	Denied n (%)	No Decision n (%)
1979	239	54	13 (24.1)	39 (72.2)	2 (3.7)
1980	232	33	11 (33)	20 (60.6)	2 (6.1)
1981	142	23	4 (17.4)	19 (82.6)	0
1982	107	16	5 (31.3)	11 (68.7)	0
1983	119	15	4 (26.7)	11 (73.3)	0
1984	149	26	12 (46.2)	14 (53.8)	0
1985	171	29	8 (27.6)	19 (65.5)	2 (6.9)
1986	208	23	13 (56.5)	10 (43.5)	0
1987	278	33	23 (69.7)	8 (24.2)	2 (6.1)
1988	294	40	18 (45)	21 (52.5)	1 (2.5)
1989	255	32	10 (31.2)	22 (68.8)	0
1990	249	44	13 (29.5)	31 (70.5)	0
1991	155	17	7 (41.2)	9 (52.9)	1 (5.9)
1992	140	19	4 (21.1)	15 (78.9)	0
1993	165	16	9 (56.3)	6 (37.5)	1 (6.2)
1994	187	18	7 (38.9)	8 (44.4)	3 (16.7)
1995	140	17	8 (47.1)	9 (52.9)	0
Total	3230	455 (14.1%)	169	272	14
Average	190	27	37.1%	59.8%	3.1%

5.4.3 Type of Severance

During the era of the first Official Plan (1979 to 1996) applications were for various types of non-farm severances, as displayed in Table 5.6. Unlike the first two time periods, applications to sever lots with existing dwellings increased to 40.1 percent of the total. The reason for the increase may be associated with the farm crisis which began during this period and which resulted in the sharp decline in the number of family farms

in Ontario. It appears that many farmers were attempting to leave the agricultural sector and to sell their land (without the farm house) to another farmer. The number of new non-farm rural residential building lots remained high at 34.7 percent, while 10 percent of the farmers wanted to add their lands to an abutting farm and retain the farmhouse. The next most popular type of severance was to create a new lot in an infilling situation. Other applications during this time period were to sever surplus farm dwellings, build new retirement lots, create a residential estate, and for the purpose of building a house for full time farm help but these applications made up only 7 percent of the total.

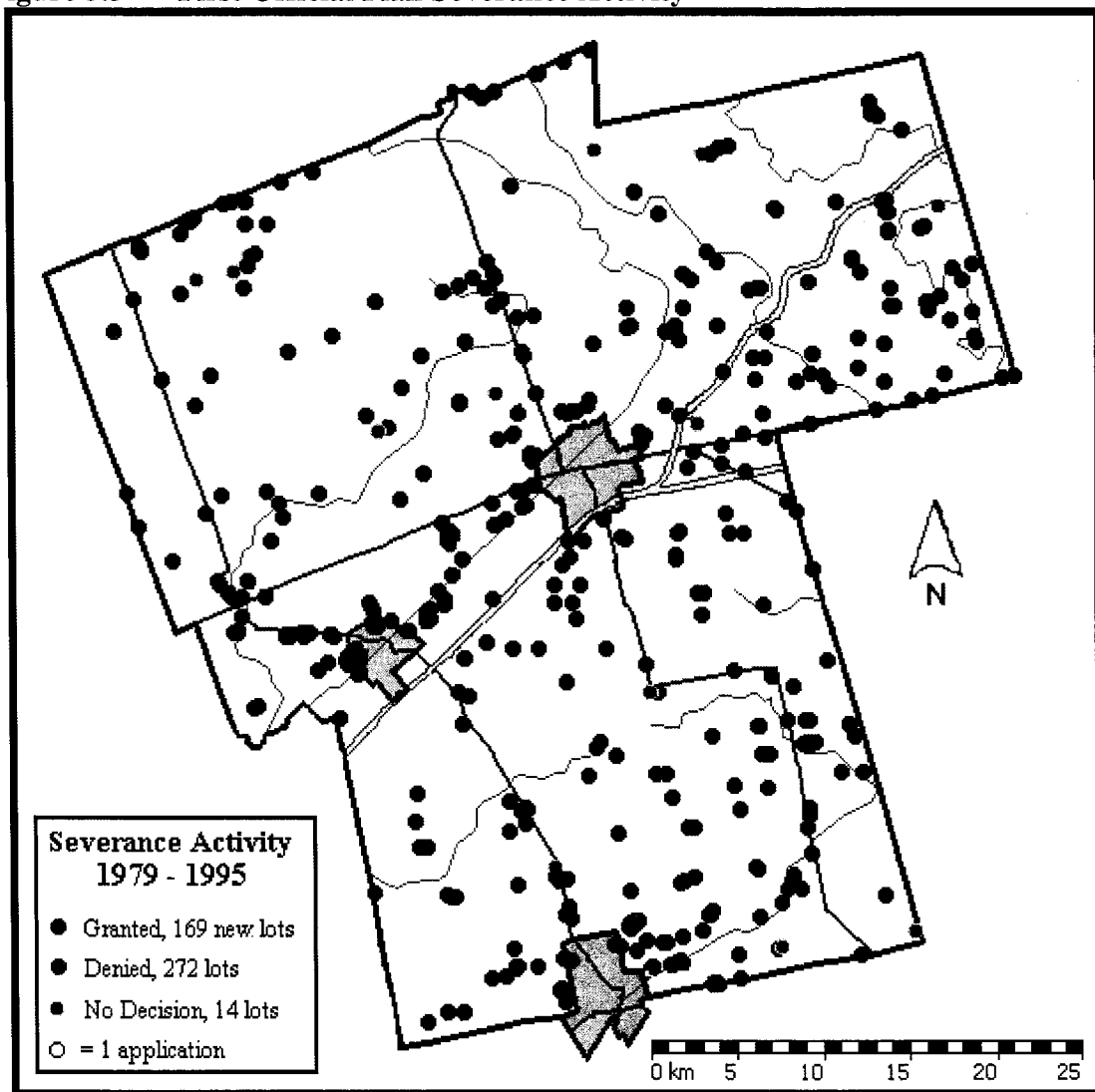
Table 5.6 First Official Plan Severance Type

Type of Application	Percentage
New Lot, Existing Dwelling	40.1%
New Building Lot	34.7%
Agricultural Lot Addition, Retained Dwelling	10.0%
Infilling Situation	5.0%
New Agricultural Lot, Retained Dwelling	3.0%
Surplus Dwelling	2.6%
Retirement Building Lot	2.4%
Family Building Lot	1.1%
Estate Residential Lot	0.4%
Unknown Reason	0.4%
Building Lot for Farm Help	0.2%

5.4.4 Geographic Distribution of Severances

During the first Official Plan many more non-farm severances were denied than granted, as is evident by the dot distribution map, figure 5.5 below. The map shows a concentration of applications close to some existing urban areas, particularly in an area to the east of Tillsonburg. This level of denial, as represented by the red dots, is contrasted by the apparent large number of granted applications (green dots) between Woodstock and Ingersoll. Other clusters are also identified in the rural municipalities surrounding small villages, and in scenic living spaces such as river basins.

Figure 5.5 First Official Plan Severance Activity



5.5 Non-Farm Development in the Second Official Plan

5.5.1 Municipal Planning Policy

In August of 1996 the second Official Plan for the County of Oxford was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Ministry stated that the new plan “protects the environment, agriculture and the local resource base while providing for growth opportunities” (MMAH, 1996a). This new Official Plan will be in effect for twenty years before the next Official Plan is submitted to the Ministry for

approval. This second Official Plan has already been updated since its original implementation in 1996.

The second Official Plan remains focussed on the viability of the agricultural sector in the Municipality. Once again an entire section of the plan (Section 3.0) is devoted to discussing agriculture, its importance to the local economy, as well as the need to preserve the land base for future generations. When the Official Plan was updated in 2005 new figures from the 2001 census were included in the agriculture section. The Official Plan states that over 2000 farms in the County reported total gross farm receipts of over \$556 million in 2001 and based on the total value of products sold, Oxford County farms were, on average, the second most productive in Ontario (The County of Oxford, 1996). The Plan notes that “Oxford will continue to be one of the most important agricultural areas in the Province” (p.3.1-1).

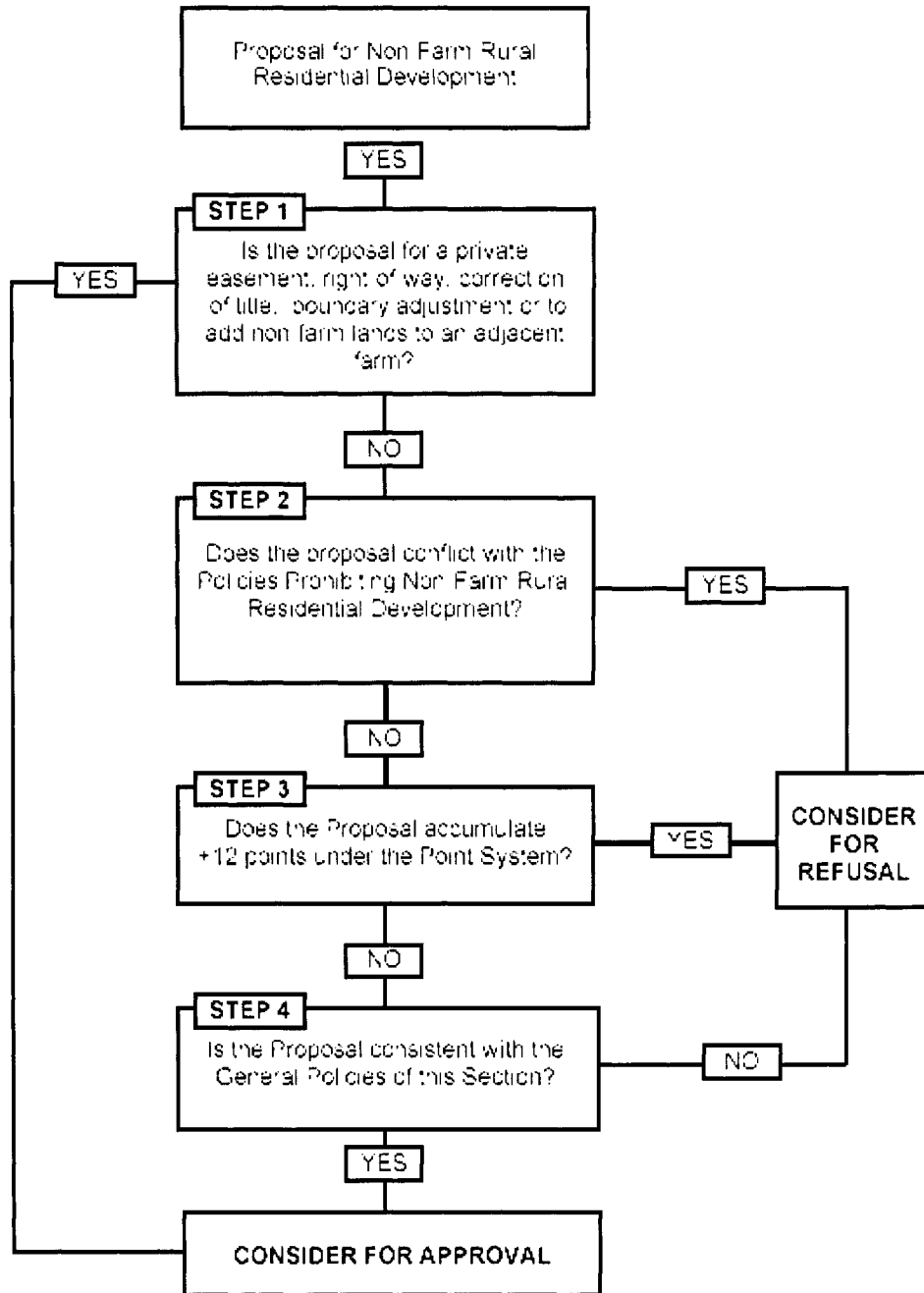
This new Official Plan also makes note of the new challenges that farm operators are facing, problems such as a declining farm population, increasing competition, decreasing commodity prices, and an increase in environmental requirements. These problems refer to what is usually called ‘the farming crisis’. The plan notes that the agricultural sector has responded to these challenges by increasing both farm size and intensity of land use (The County of Oxford, 1996). Farmers are also supported by the County in their efforts to diversify their farming operations and to have a secondary use on the farm such as a small business related to farming. The importance of retaining agriculture in the County is evident by the statement, “policies will support the agriculture industry by recognizing the value of the land base for current and future food

and fibre production and by providing clear guidance that prime farmland will be preserved” (The County of Oxford, 1996, p.3.1-1).

In terms of farm-related residences, the Official Plan still does not sanction the severance of land for retirement lots, new lots for farm hands, or for family members involved in the operation. If an additional residence is requested, planners evaluate the situation and determine if the operation is in need of additional dwellings. If permission for a second dwelling is granted, planners encourage farmers to consider the option of a mobile home as a second or third dwelling on the farm property. Garden Suites are also given as an alternative to a permanent residence in the second plan. If a permanent dwelling is requested, it may be allowable by way of a minor variance. The planning office will make a provision that requires the new dwelling to be situated in close proximity to the existing farm dwelling, utilizing the same driveway. Applicants enter into an agreement with the County stating that these new dwellings will never be separated from the farming operation (The County of Oxford, 2005).

Non-Farm Rural Residential severances continue to be discouraged in Oxford County as they have been for over twenty-five years. These types of land uses are considered to be incompatible with agriculture, and have the potential to cause conflict with neighbouring farm activities (The County of Oxford, 2005). The policy allows only for limited non-farm development in areas within the rural landscape where they will not conflict with the agricultural community. The Planning Department continues to assess non-farm rural residential applications under the point system, and has designed a framework (Figure 5.6) to assist the public in understanding how a decision is made in regards to non-farm development in agricultural areas (The County of Oxford, 2005).

Figure 5.6 Oxford County Decision Making Framework
 DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR NON-FARM RURAL
 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



Source: Oxford County Official Plan, Section 3.1.5.4

The point system continues to act as a tool for planners to numerically assess factors for each non-farm rural residential severance application. Some changes were made to the point system to coincide with regulations, such as minimum distance

separation. The factors that make up the point system now include: consent history, measurement of distance from existing livestock facilities, traffic safety, infilling, and surplus farm dwelling in existence prior to the first Official Plan, land capability for agriculture, surrounding agricultural land uses, surrounding extractive land-use, access to major roads, and traffic safety. A detailed listing of the points associated with each factor can be found in Appendix II.

5.5.2 Trends in Severance Activity

Between 1996 and 2005 a total of 1,166 applications were submitted, of which 207 were non-farm related residential development in nature. During this period the average number of applications per year dropped slightly to 23 per annum from 27 in the previous period. This time period saw a reversal of sorts when comparing the number of non-farm rural residential applications granted and denied, as seen in Table 5.7. The lowest number of approved applications was in 2002 when 55.6 percent of non-farm rural residential applications were granted, while the highest percentage of granted applications occurred in the following year when 95.5 percent of applicants were approved and none was denied. This represents the first time in Oxford County's planning history that absolutely no non-farm rural residential applications were denied.

Table 5.7 Second Official Plan Severance Activity

Year	# Apps	# NFRR Apps	Granted	Denied	No Decision
			n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
1996	165	31	22 (71.0)	9 (29.0)	0
1997	132	18	12 (66.7)	5 (27.8)	1 (5.5)
1998	111	16	14 (87.5)	1 (6.2)	1 (6.2)
1999	112	16	12 (75)	4 (25)	0
2000	128	32	30 (93.8)	2 (6.2)	0
2001	122	23	15 (65.2)	7 (30.4)	1 (4.3)
2002	143	27	15 (55.6)	12 (44.4)	0
2003	117	22	21 (95.5)	0	1 (4.5)
2004	136	22	14 (63.6)	5 (35.7)	3 (13.6)
Total	1166	207	155	45	7
Average	130	23	74.8%	21.7%	3.4%

This lack of application denial leads one to question how this is possible, given the historically proven strict planning nature of the Oxford County Planning staff in regards to non-farm development. The explanation from an Oxford County planner was that the amount of pre-consultation with applicants is much greater now than it has ever been and the result is a dramatic drop in the number of potentially unsuccessful applications. Prospective applicants seek telephone advice from planners regarding the likely outcome for their application. In 2003, the municipal log of daily activities in two townships indicated that the planner received 128 phone calls regarding severance activity; of which 34 were in regards to non-farm rural residential severances. In most instances the planner gave the opinion that the application would not be supported. In these cases the potential applicants heeded the advice and did not pursue their

application; only one person submitted an application after a telephone consultation where a neighbouring farm was enlarged and the farmhouse was retained. This rise in consultation with the public is likely due to the increased cost of a severance application, together with the public knowledge of the firmness of the planning policies in place to control non-farm residential development in rural areas.

5.5.3 Types of Severances

In the final planning period of this research it was found that there were significantly fewer types of severance applications being submitted for non-farm rural residential approval. As seen in table 5.8, about one third of applicants were seeking to create a new building lot. Requests for the removal of an existing dwelling comprised the second most frequent type. The much higher than normal rates of requests for an addition to agricultural land while retaining a dwelling and to sever a surplus dwelling from the farming operation probably indicates an intensification of the trend towards larger, but fewer farms in the region.

Table 5.8 Second Official Plan Severance Type

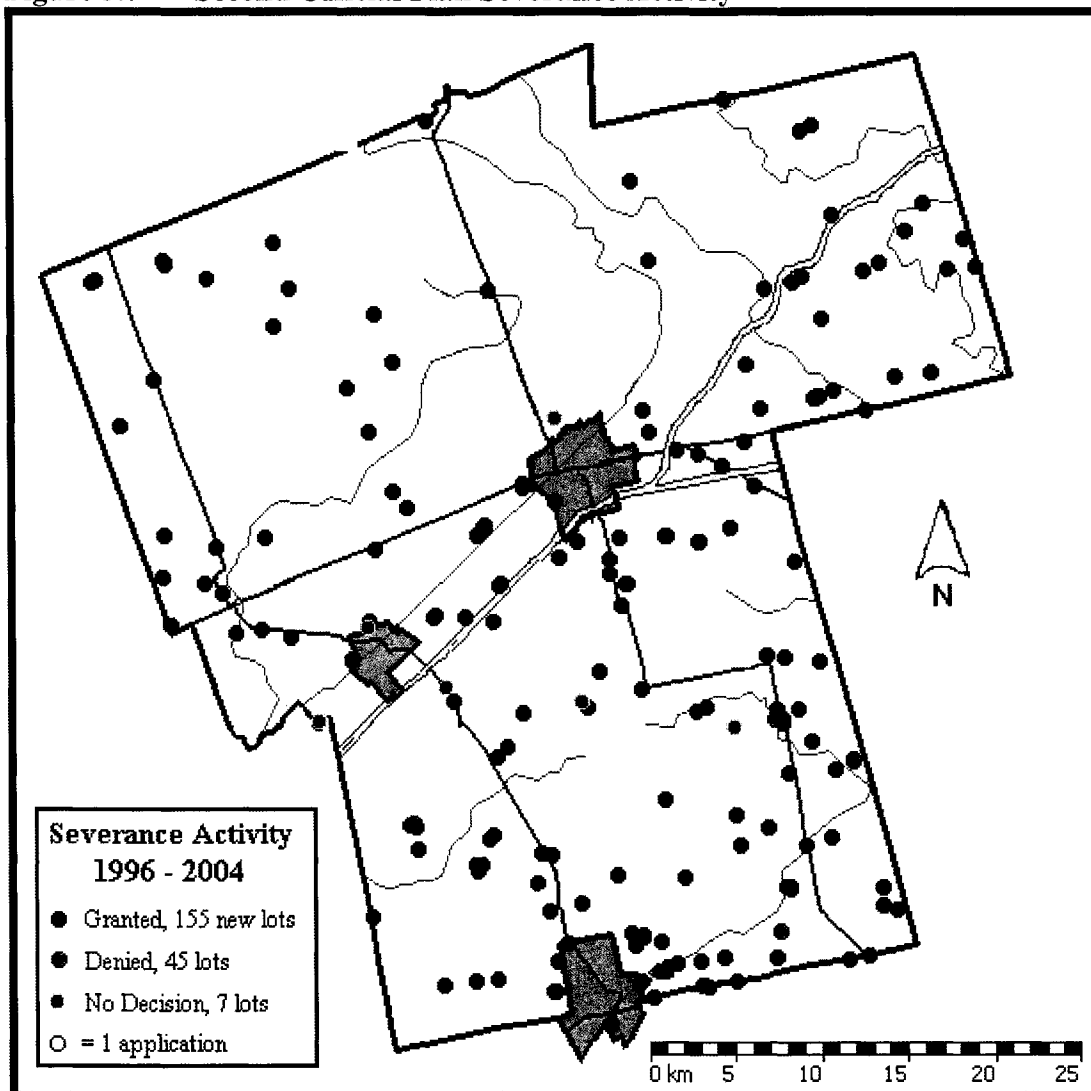
Type of Application	Percentage
New Building Lot	35.7
Existing Dwelling	23.7
Agricultural Lot Addition, Retained Dwelling	20.3
Surplus Dwelling	17.9
Infilling Situation	1.9
Building Lot for Farm Help	0.5

5.5.4 Geographic Distribution

As previously discussed, the difference in the number of granted applications in relation to those denied is illustrated by the dot density map for this time period (Figure 5.7). As the map indicates, most new non-farm rural residential development was

concentrated near Tillsonburg and throughout the southern half of the County. In fact, most of the activity occurred south of Hwy 401, with the northern township of East Zorra Tavistock having very little severance activity during this period. It is unknown why there was a lack of applications submitted in the northern townships during this period. Perhaps increasing public knowledge of the Point System and the high cost of submitting applications to the Planning Department deterred potential applicants. East Zorra Tavistock for example, historically had the highest rate of application denials even before the first official Plan, as previously illustrated in Figure 5.2.

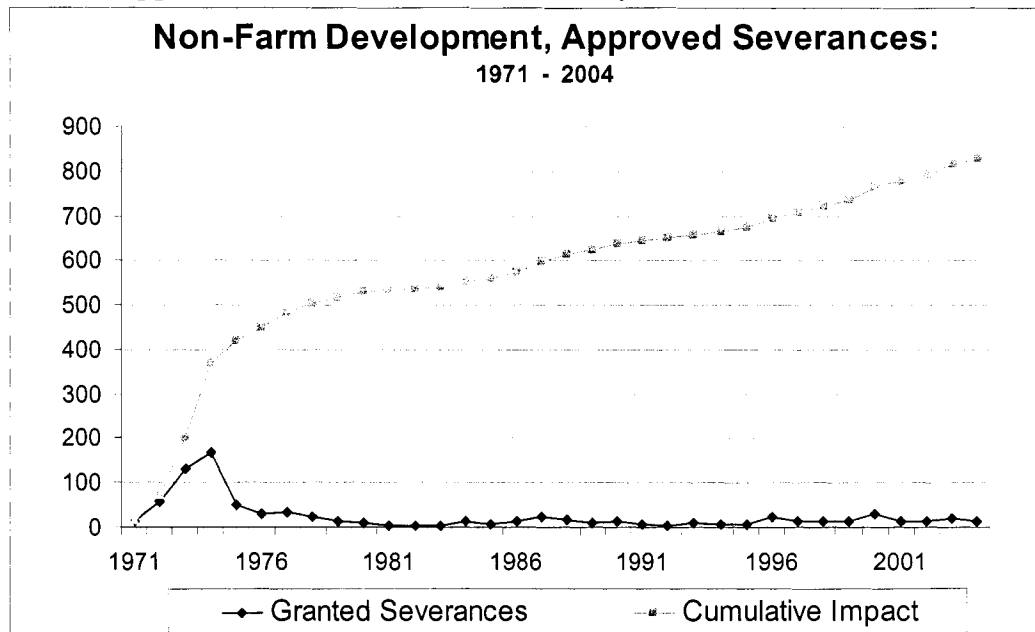
Figure 5.7 Second Official Plan Severance Activity



5.6 Cumulative Impact of Severances

During a period of nearly 35 years from 1971 to 2004, a total of 829 severances were granted in the County of Oxford. It should be noted that although these were granted, in some instances houses were never built and severed lots continue to be farmed. There are a few other applicants, who after spending time and money getting their severance approved, failed to meet all the requirements of the severance agreement within the time limitations and saw their consent lapse. The number of severances granted has diminished greatly over the 35 year period. In fact, 45 percent of all granted applications occurred before amalgamation in 1974. In the 30 years since then, non-farm development in Oxford County has been kept to a minimum as can be seen in Figure 5.8. Despite this, farmers still have to work around severances that were granted many years ago, and those dwellings continue to be used in calculations for Minimum Distance Separation. This limits the area that farmers are able to expand their operation as well as how intensely they might farm the land.

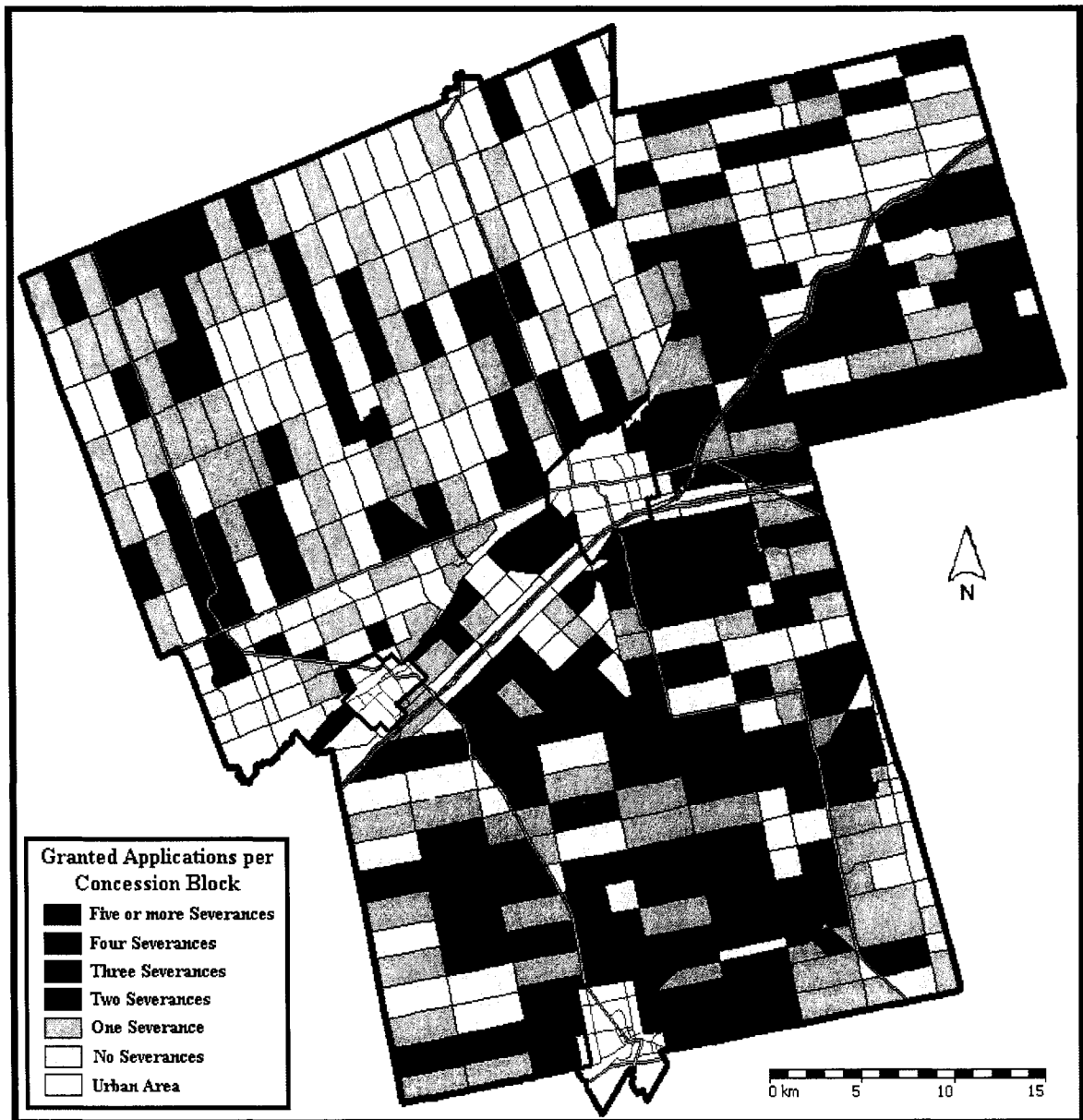
Figure 5.8 Approved Severances, Oxford County



5.7 Spatial Distribution of Severances over Time

To observe the patterns in rural non-farm development, a geographic representation of approved severances has been created and is presented as figure 5.9. The number of severances allowed per concession was counted over a thirty year period; the results have been grouped into classes to illustrate spatial patterns. The areas of highest impact (those with five or more severances granted per concession block) can be found in close proximity to Highways 401 and 403. As seen in Zorra Township the areas of high concentration can be found around the urban area of Ingersoll, and the existing villages of Thamesford, Embro and Beachville. An area of high concentration of non-farm development is also revealed around the Wildwood Conservation Area in the north of the township, an aesthetically pleasing area. The highest level of non-farm development in East Zorra Tavistock is found around the village of Tavistock, as well as on the northern boundary of Woodstock. In Blandford-Blenheim the highest concentration of non-farm development has been permitted along highway 401, as well as along highway 2 (the boundary of Oxford County with Brant County). In South-West Oxford the highest concentrations are again found nearest urban centres of Ingersoll and Tillsonburg. This pattern is also observed in Norwich Township where a considerable amount of non-farm development has been permitted near the urban areas of Woodstock and Tillsonburg. Higher concentrations are also found near the villages of Oxford Centre, Norwich, and Otterville in Norwich Township.

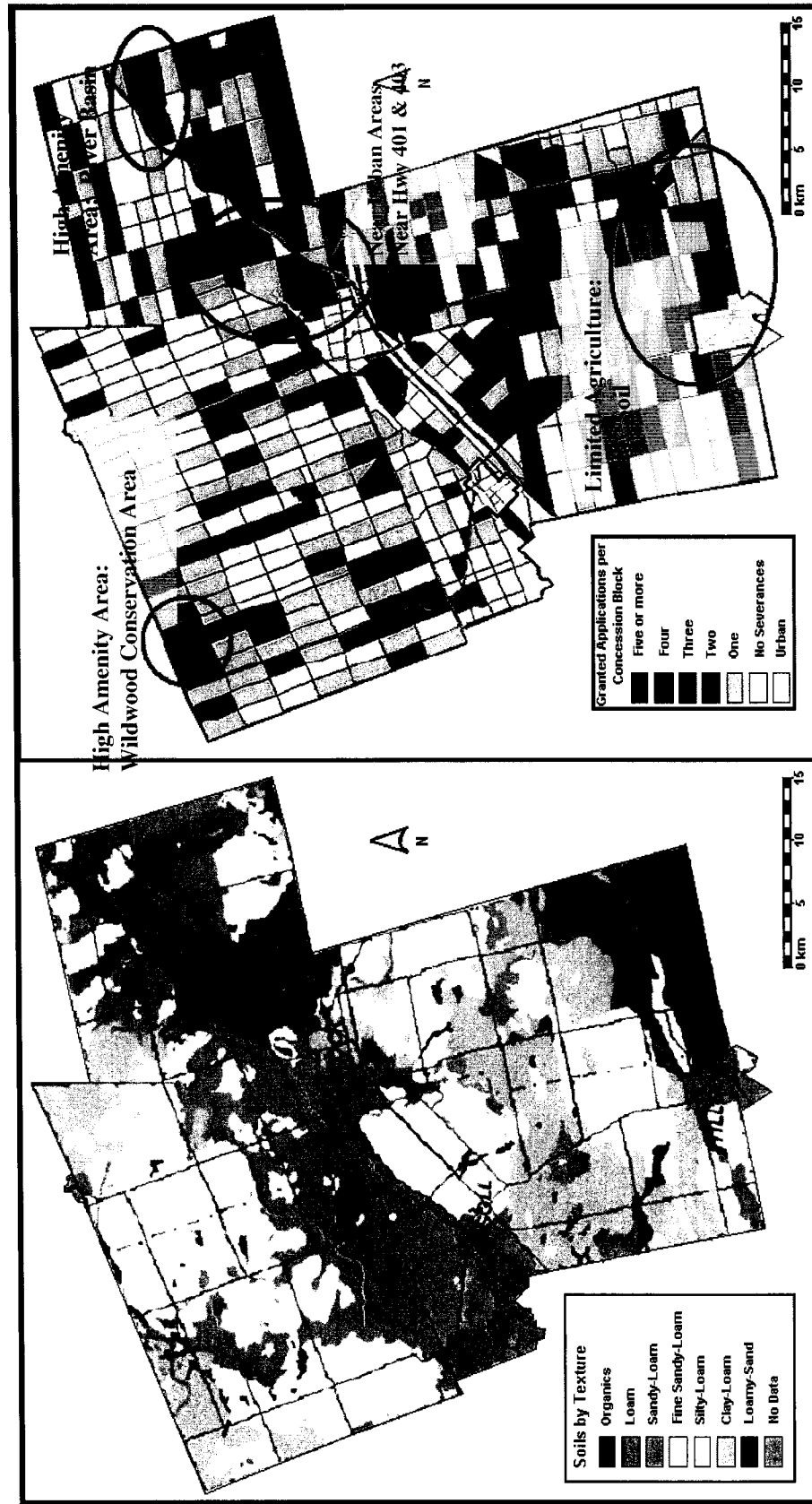
Figure 5.9 Cumulative Granted Applications



In all of the rural townships, most non-farm development has occurred in areas surrounding existing settlements and aesthetically pleasing areas such as conservation areas and river basins (see Figure 5.10). The largest concentrations of development are found to the east of Woodstock, in an area of mixed classes of soils according to the CLI. The textures of the soils in this area are highly variable, including differing types of loam

and loamy-sand. Another area of the County where loamy-sand can be found is to the east of Tillsonburg, and it is here that another high concentration of non-farm development can be found. Figure 5.10 illustrates a comparison of Figures 5.9 (cumulative granted applications) and 4.3 (soil texture). It is evident that there is a strong relationship between the soil composition of the County and the settlement pattern of non-farm residential lots. Although the County refers to the Canada Land Inventory in the process of assigning points for a non-farm rural residential lot, it appears as though the pattern of development is very closely associated with the soil textures of the County. A comparison of the maps in Figure 5.10 illustrates that development has been permitted in areas of lesser agricultural capability, while the County has preserved large tracts of soil that have favourable soil textures. Portions of Figure 5.10 have been labelled to illustrate the correlation between non-farm development and soil texture, as well as other areas of heightened development. Although there are some areas that have been affected greatly by non-farm development, large areas of better quality soil remain untouched. Much of Zorra Tavistock and Zorra townships have been preserved and have experienced little or no non-farm rural residential development since the early 1970s. The soil in these townships is of high quality, mostly class 1 and class 2. Furthermore, the textures of the soils in the preserved area, notably loam, silty loam and clay loam, are capable of producing quality crops.

Figure 5.10 Comparison of Rural Residential Development and Soil Texture



5.8 Conclusions

From the evidence presented in this case study it is clear that centralized planning, in combination with the point system, have been effective tools for combating non-farm development in rural farm areas. Despite the controversy that exists surrounding counterurbanization and whether or not it occurred in Canada, a trend is still discernable in Oxford County. There was strong pressure to develop rural areas in the early 1970s, but the number of applications granted per year steadily declined after centralized planning was introduced in 1975. During the 1980s, pressure to expand into rural areas was again strong as shown by the increase in the number of applications each year. This was a prosperous time in Ontario's economy, and people had more disposable income to spend on large rural properties in attractive surroundings. Another drop is observed in the early 1990s when Ontario faced an economic recession but this trend was reversed from about 1996 when prosperity returned and people may have been trying to get applications submitted and reviewed before the new, more restrictive, Official Plan came into effect.

Although the number of severances can be counted for each time period, the source of the applications is not always clear. Some applications appear to come from landowners, or from the previous owners of the land. In some instances farmers are asked to apply for severances by individuals who would like to live in rural areas. Given the current state of farming in Ontario, farmers often attempt to sever portions of their property that they feel are not contributing to their farm for a building lot (i.e. a wooded area or sloped land near river flats) to deposit much needed cash in the bank. In the past severances were permitted for retiring farmers, but quite often after the farmer dies the house is sold to non-rural households. Severances that were created during any time

period have the potential to generate problems for farmers; however the severity of the problems might lessen if the severed lots were occupied by rural persons with an agricultural background. The next chapter presents the opinions of several farmers in Oxford County who have non-farm rural residential development in their area.

Chapter Six: The Impact of Non-Farm Development

6.1 *Introduction*

In the preceding literature review, provincial planning policies that have contributed to the municipal policy deterring non-farm severances were identified and discussed. The history of non-farm development and counterurbanization were outlined. The impacts that non-farm development have on farming operations and the restrictions that they impose were both examined. A review of the current literature on non-farm severances shows that there is a lack of information from the farmers themselves regarding the impact of non-farm development on their farming operations. The nine farms that are portrayed in this study are quite diverse in their farming specifications and operate in neighbourhoods of varying levels of farmland preservation within the County of Oxford. Given the differences in farm activities, levels of preservation, and level of familiarity with municipal planning processes, there are a number of similarities and differences that can be exhibited when comparing responses. These differences and similarities will be discussed following the farm profiles, where the data gathered from the interviews are presented in detail.

6.2 *Farm Profiles*

The following profiles were compiled from a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with farmers in Oxford County. The number of participants varied: some interviews were conducted with one respondent, while others had two or three participants involved in the interview. All of those interviewed were involved full-time on the farm. Information on individual farming operations, the farmers' experience with

municipal planning policies, as well as the impact that non-farm development has had on farming operations were gathered from 16 farmers on 9 different farms

6.2.1 Farm A:

Type of Farm:	Beef & Cash Crop
Total Area of Farm:	147 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	1 full time, 1 part time
Level of Preservation:	3 NFRR granted
Other non-farm uses	Agri-Business, Commercial, Residential Subdivision

Farmer A1 was born in 1946. She graduated from high school but did not attend any post secondary institutions, and worked in a bank before becoming a full time farmer. Farmer A2 was born in 1983, and is the son of Farmer A1. He graduated with a diploma in agriculture and was furthering his education by taking a refrigeration program at another community college. They have taken over the farm responsibilities after Farmer A1's husband passed away in 1997. They run the farm as a partnership in crops, but they each have their own cattle. Farmer A1 worked full-time on the farm and Farmer A2 helped when he was at home from college on weekends, and full-time during the summer. Farmer A2 is an only child, and is considering taking over the farm in the future. For many years the farm was a dairy farm with some associated crops, but was converted to a cow / calf operation in 1993 with some cash-cropping. The total area of the farm is 147 acres, but they rent an additional 31 acres, which they also cash crop.

Farmer A1 defined a non-farm related property use as "residential, residential for subdivision -- bringing the urban city people to the country and also commercial uses". Based on their definition, Farmer A1 and A2 both agreed that there were these sorts of uses directly in the area of their farm. When questioned regarding the impacts of having

two differing land uses in close proximity Farmer A2 answered, “The city people complain about the farmers because of the odours. They’re not used to it in the city. ... I think the political people nowadays care about the city people more than the rural people and it’s showing.” A discussion occurred regarding urban and rural people, during which Farmer A1 commented,

Urban people, for some reason are different than people in the country. I guess they would be. Country people might be more open-minded.... The urban people are looking out more for themselves and not their neighbours, they don’t know their neighbours, when out in the rural areas, 90 percent of us know who their neighbours are. Urban people they don’t know, and they don’t really care because they’re looking after just themselves. Anything that is offensive to them, they will complain about and try to possibly shut down something that is offensive to them. Odour. Dust.” Farmer A2 added, “They’ll complain bad enough until they can get what they want. Whereas people in the country would see it as normal country air, it goes away in a couple of days, but they don’t know that.

Both Farmer A1 and Farmer A2 commented that they would be happier having someone move into a rural residence who was from the country rather than a ‘city person’. When asked about impacts they have had directly as a result of non-farm development in their area Farmer A1 stated:

We have people trespassing all the time on snowmobiles and ATVs, to the point that we are going to have to put up no trespassing signs, which we don’t want to do! We don’t feel we should have to do it. This is going to happen in the near future. People moving to the country feel they have the right to drive on anybody’s property, ride on anybody’s property, walk on our property... that everything is theirs. If they ask permission that’s a different story, but trespassing is our major impact.

Farmer A1 had never considered selling a portion of her property for a non-farm related building lot. She had contemplated separating the house and the farm buildings from the rest of the farm when she retires, but would not consider doing this in the near future. Both farmers A1 and A2 would not support applications for non-farm rural

residential building lots in their area. Farmer A1 then commented on severance activity in their immediate area in the past, “They said at that time that there would only be one severance. Then after the parcel was severed, they actually had another severance off that smaller parcel!” Farmer A1 and Farmer A2 both believed that if it were possible to sever building lots and sell them to temporarily infuse money into farming operations many farmers would do so, given the present crisis with Mad Cow disease and low commodity prices. Still, Farmer A1 and Farmer A2 have both decided to not sever their farm, saying that agricultural land needs to remain intact. She commented on the importance of agriculture saying,

I think we still need to produce some of our own products, like our milk and our beef -- we have good beef. Keep it separate from residential. Farming is a good way of life, it is a business, and there is a lot of spin-off business in the agricultural sector, more business than what people realize. Even though they say there are only so many people employed in agriculture, there is a lot more spin off than they realize.

When asked about the municipal government’s role in preserving agriculture Farmer A1 argued that municipalities are needed to set rules and guidelines for everyone. However, they went on to state that the planning policies need to be applied consistently in order for them to work properly. Farmers A1 and A2 speculated as to how their area of the County might look without planning policy such as the point system in place. Farmer A1 stated,

I think there would be houses popped up all over the place... The ground even now its being saturated with liquid manure, it would be even more saturated with liquid manure! ... I think our drinking water would probably be undrinkable... It would just be chaos if there were no planning regulations! Even though you don’t agree with all of the planning rules and whatever, without those in place it would be chaos, there would just be things all over the place.

6.2.2 Farm B:

Type of Farm:	Dairy Farm
Total Area of Farm:	100 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	1 full time, 1 part time
Level of Preservation:	1 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Commercial/ Industrial

Farmer B was born in 1967. He graduated with a diploma in agriculture from college. He is one of four children; his parents immigrated to Oxford County as children with their families after World War II. Farmer B's siblings are no longer involved in the family farming operation though his father still comes to help with the chores daily for a few hours. Farmer B has been involved with the farm all his life, and has owned the farm for the past five years. Farmer B is married and has one young son whom he hopes will also want to continue farming on the family farm. The farm has always been a dairy farm with associated crops. The farm is 100 acres; Farmer B has not needed to rent any additional land to remain competitive.

Farmer B defined a non-farm related property use as "manufacturing of something, but most of them around here are farm-related like welding shops or repair shops. They are all farm-related because farmers are most of their customers." It is interesting to note that Farmer B did not see residential development as non-farm related. Farmer B agreed that there were non-farm uses in his area, according to his definition. If non-farm residences were to be included in the definition, Farmer B would have many more non-farm uses in his area than he discussed. As he later noted, "There are a few properties where people just live on the property, and then there are others where people live there and rent out the land." Unlike many of the other farmers in the study, Farmer B

stated benefits from having an increased number of persons in the area, “a benefit would be if they wanted to help and earn a little extra money at haying time, or maybe driving tractor.” He also admitted that there would be some disadvantages as well, “if you had to work around their house on a weekend, they might not like that”. He found that these sorts of problems happen because, “people move from the city and think that country life should be quiet on weekends, and have no noise or smell or anything like that”. Some problems that Farmer B had on his farm with non-farm dwellers included trespassing on his river flats and theft of fence posts.

Farmer B told of an instance of how his father helped to thwart the creation of a lot on a neighbouring property,

One neighbour across the road, about 25 years ago, they wanted to build a house right at the end of our laneway. Dad knew they were going to fly over and take aerial pictures, so he went out and spread a load of manure right along the edge of our property at the road. So when the purchasers looked at the pictures they said, ‘Oh what is that?’ and they told them, ‘It looks like the farmer is spreading manure’ and then after that the people didn’t end up wanting to build there after all. It was in the wintertime so you could really see it. That was back when you could still spread manure in the winter.

Farmer B believed that many beef farmers were hit hard by Mad Cow Disease and were having a tough time, he also believed that if farmers were permitted to sever farmland they would consider doing so to generate a bit of extra income. He felt that it was important to keep farming and non-farming uses separate from each other, just to avoid complaints. “Probably the city people think that we shouldn’t be able to spread manure, or work the ground, or make noise or anything! They think everything should be their way, and not the way it has been for so many years.”

When discussing municipal policies, Farmer B admitted that Oxford County had done a good job of regulating non-farm development and protecting agriculture, stating

“they aren’t letting people just set up anywhere -- they seem to be keeping it under control”. Without the point system in place Farmer B felt that there would be several houses on corner lots and farmers would find it hard to work around them and keep everyone happy. The face of agriculture would be very different.

6.2.3 Farm C:

Type of Farm:	Cash Crop
Total Area of Farm:	350 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	1 full time
Level of Preservation:	8 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Recreational Campground, Commercial, Residential Subdivision, Church

Farmer C is 70 years old and will retire from farming shortly. He attended high school for one year, and then became a full time farmer on the family farm. He took over the farm completely in 1972. Farmer C is a widower; he and his wife had five children and many grandchildren. One of Farmer C’s sons was involved full-time on the farm until his death, as were his son’s wife and their children. Since the passing of his son Farmer C became the only farmer on the farm. The farm had recently been converted to a cash crop farm, but was previously a dairy farm with some cash crops. Farmer C did not believe that his son’s family would be able to start up milking cows again given minimum distance separation requirements, “it would be very difficult, being so close to the village, that and the fact that they are putting so many more residential in the area, it would be much tougher.” Farmer C would not be interested in farming anywhere else, especially at his age. He admitted that developers had approached him to sell his farm; the farm is located just outside an existing village that has expanded towards his property.

He noted that there were a few people, “dickering on the property” at the time of the interview. If his son were still alive he felt that the family would consider moving to a different area to farm if non-farm development continued in the area.

Farmer C defined a non-farm related property use as residential and factory uses. According to his definition, Farmer C believed that there were non-farm houses in the area, but no factories. He was sure that factories would soon be built given the recent interest in the County with the Toyota announcement. Farmer C felt that the biggest impact non-farm uses had on farmers was the new residents themselves, “Once they get there, they’re going to be the ones that are telling the farmers how he’s going to farm. We were here long before they came, but it seems as though they have more power than us.” He also discussed another way the increased rural population had affected farming,

Just in the past summer, you sat at the corner for two minutes and waited for the traffic to stop, where we never had that problem before. We had a baler running at the other farm, and there were wagons going. It just wouldn’t happen now. Toyota isn’t here yet, and when it comes its going to be that much worse.

Farmer C changed the way he farms to try and respect his non-farm neighbours. He had people ask him not to operate the tractor and other equipment after 10 pm at night because they could not sleep. Farmer C was sorry that his farming has affected his neighbours, but he contended that they were also affecting his farming. “My Dad taught me long ago that there is a time to plant, and there is a time to harvest. If you had a hard day and things have broken down maybe you will be working ‘til midnight. If it only happens a few times they should be able to live with it!” He believed that problems occur between farming and non-farming uses because people move to the country without understanding farming.

Farmer C did not believe that he had too many serious problems with his neighbours, although he had caught many people trespassing. In recent years it had become worse, and he felt that it could become a big concern if it continued. His biggest annoyance was teenage boys trespassing on his fields on dirt bikes and spinning in his fields causing the soil to compact. He spoke of a confrontation with the teenage trespassers. Farmer C was in disbelief when they declared they had the right to be on his property because they believed farmers received government grants. Farmer C informed them they were mistaken and instructed them to get off his property or he would seize their dirt bikes. Farmer C tried to explain to the boy by asking how they would feel if he brought one of his cows and let them plop on his front lawn. They answered by saying that he could not because it was their property. The boys left and he had not seen them since the confrontation. Farmer C finished his story by stating, "I'm really fed up with the fact that people think they can use my property to play around in, when I'm trying to make a living off of this land without asking for anything." He also stated that he had problems with hunters trespassing, even saying that he once had people on his property from Hamilton who were hunting pigeons without permission, they just walked right in and started shooting.

If someone were to apply for a non-farm severance in close proximity to his farm he would not oppose the severance. He stated that it might be a problem if non-farm people moved into the house after a retired farmer passed away, for example, and the severed house is sold. Farmers cannot be sure who may move next to them. "Are you going to have someone who is going to come and complain because they are making too

much noise on the other side of the fence?” Farmer C went on to say that it would be better if a person from the country would move into a situation like that.

If I was there, I would know that if they came to spread manure that they’re going to spread it and then plough it under, that’s the way it is. But when they come from town they think it’s not supposed to happen, they see it as pollution. They don’t realize that farming happens on weekends, and past five pm in the afternoon.

Farmer C believed that without the point system there would be a lot more houses around the countryside. “There are a lot of people looking for a lot, all kinds of people, they want a twenty-five acre farm or whatever, and it’s just to be out in the quiet. All kinds of people want to be here.” He also commented on the price of these existing lots, saying that the ones that have been created in the past or are created now are fewer and farther between, making them become very expensive.

6.2.4 Farm D:

Type of Farm:	Cow/Calf Operation
Total Area of Farm:	65 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	2 full time
Level of Preservation:	5 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Golf course, Conservation Area, Commercial

Farmer D1 and his wife, Farmer D2 are both retired school teachers in their 60s. He had been involved in the farm operation for his entire life, moving back to the farm with his wife in 1987 when they took over the operation completely. Farmer D1 and D2 had three children, none of whom decided to carry on with farming and are not involved on the farm. They do help out from time to time when extra help is needed, for example, when they are weighing calves. Farmer D1 and D2 had the smallest acreage of the people interviewed for this study (65 acres); however, they had found that they never had

to rent additional acreage to stay competitive. They felt that if they had to move to a different location due to expropriation by the city of Woodstock for example, they would not start again. They had considered buying a different farm and renting the land out to an area farmer. “We would like to live in the country, but not be part of farming anymore.” Farmers D1 and D2 usually keep about thirty cows on their farm, but at the time of the interview had more cows than ever. They had not been culling as many cows in recent times due to low market prices associated with Mad Cow disease.

Farmer D1 and D2 did not give their own definition of a non-farming use, but spoke of a few non-farm uses such as residences and a golf course in their immediate area. They found that with so many more people living in their area, traffic had become more of a hazard when they were pulling out of their fields with large equipment. They had had some complaints from people over the years, especially from the townspeople living nearby, but Farmer D1 argued that these sorts of problems were to be expected with urban encroachment and non-farm development. Farmer D1 and D2 had considered severing a portion of their property, but they knew it was “pretty impossible to get permission.” They described a portion of their property that was not good for agriculture that they felt would be a good spot for a building lot. “We understand why it would be difficult to sever a lot. It helps preserve good agricultural land.” They added that if a developer came along and offered to buy the whole farm they might try and save the farm house and some of the buildings. They would not support an application for a new building lot in their area, however if their neighbours wanted to sell their farmland and keep the house they would not mind that as much. They felt that if a person moved from the country it would be easier to farm with them as neighbours, as they would understand

normal farming practices. Farmer D2 commented on those moving from the city to the country saying, “The innocence of these people buying a house in the country thinking that they’re going to have all these amenities just astounds me. And they also don’t understand that farming doesn’t end at five o’clock and farmers don’t get weekends off.” Farmer D1 further commented stating, “...Our cattle do make noises; they don’t have a mute button that we can turn them off.” Because of all the problems that are associated with differing land uses they believed that farming and non-farming uses should be kept separate.

Farmer D1 and D2 hope that the County will remain agricultural and rural in nature, but conceded that Woodstock will most certainly grow in size with the new Toyota development. They believed that the County was doing a good job of regulating non-farm development, saying that even when things are brought to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) their rulings uphold what the County has said. They felt that the County does a good job of informing people but that it would be nice to have a handout for farmers summarizing planning for agricultural areas. Farmers D1 and D2 believed that the planning regulations in the County had not limited their operations, but had not really encouraged them either. If there were no planning regulations in place they felt that strip development would again be more prevalent and that the best agricultural land would be lost.

6.2.5 Farm E:

Type of Farm:	Tobacco
Total Area of Farm:	150 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	2 full time, 1 part time
Level of Preservation:	2 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Highway Commercial, Industrial

Farmer E1 and his wife Farmer E2 are both in their late 50s and had been farming since 1979 when they moved to the County from the United States. Farmer E3, Farmer E2's father was also present at the interview. He helps with the operation on a limited basis due to age; he had been farming for 67 years. Farmer E1 has a master's degree from the United States, while his wife Farmer E2 also attended university. Farmer E3 has a much lower level of education. The farm consists of two properties totalling 150 acres, which are run as one operation. Farmer E1 and E2 have three grown children, none of whom had decided to work in the farming industry. If they were offered a large sum of money for their property they would sell the farm and leave agriculture. Their farm is located quite close to the 401 and they anticipated that at some time there will be demand for their property in an industrial or commercial capacity. The land uses in the area of their farms have largely remained agricultural, although many other farmers had switched to different commodities. They also noted that there was an increase in residential uses in the area. They believed that agriculture in the County may be in trouble in the future due to the arrival of Toyota and other potential industrial developments.

They defined a non-farm related property use as "something that is not related to agriculture, such as housing or industry or commercial uses." Based on their own definition they believed that there were several of these uses in their immediate area.

They had never considered severing a lot from their farm, adding “we know that we probably wouldn’t be allowed to even if we wanted to.” They would support an application for a new non-farm building lot abutting their property, saying that people in their area had never really bothered them before. Farmer E1 added, “I guess we would want to know that city people understood that they were moving to an agricultural area.” Farmer E3 served on the township council many years ago and offered his opinions on non-farm development. He frequently witnessed farmers severing retirement lots from their farms in the early 1970s but added that once those people had died the city people would move in. Farmer E2 noted that her grandparents were able to create a retirement lot back in the 1950s, but there were no rules at that time regarding development and her grandparents “basically built where they wanted.”

When asked about impacts that non-farm severances can have on surrounding agricultural uses Farmer E1 responded by saying, “people from the city are not educated as to how farming works, so they don’t understand farming activities.” When asked how they had to alter their farming after the arrival of more residents in the area they felt that they had not really been affected. “We’ve been lucky because we have never really had any complaints.” Asked to speculate as to why that might be the case, Farmer E1 answered “well, we don’t use manure like some operations would, and we don’t work that late at night. All of our machinery isn’t that noisy, so it’s not a nuisance to those around us.” Even though they believed that they had not had many impacts from development there were times in the interview when they spoke of how they had been affected. One such instance was when Farmer E2 spoke of how she worried that runoff

from the pavement at the local Truck Stop might contaminate their irrigation pond. Because of the sandy soil required to grow tobacco, frequent irrigation is required.

Farmer E1 believed that the County should try to preserve agriculture, but perhaps the same set of rules should not apply to all portions of the County. They argued that farmers should be able to sever off portions of their farm that are unproductive farm land, thus improving the use of the land. Farmer E1 stated, “Why shouldn’t they be able to profit from their own land? We understand the need to keep agricultural land for agricultural purposes, but it shouldn’t matter if the land isn’t productive.” They felt as though the County was doing a good job preserving the agricultural industry. In their area where many tobacco farms had switched to other types of farming, they were still productive in agriculture. When asked how their area might look without planning policies such as the point system Farmer E3 answered, “There would be houses everywhere! More and more farmers would decide to chop off portions of their farms each year, and then there would need to be more services out here.” He commented on how much it would cost to bus children to the schools. Farmer E1 added if people were able to build where they wanted then there would not be as many people living in villages and towns. He surmised that the population of those settlements would decrease with everyone out in the country and that everything would be a mess.

6.2.6 Farm F:

Type of Farm:	Pigs & Chickens
Total Area of Farm:	300 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	2 full time
Level of Preservation:	1 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Church

Farmer F1 and his wife (F2) are both full time farmers on their mixed farming operations. They are both in their 30s. Farmer F1, like some of the other farmers in the study graduated with a diploma in agriculture. Farmer F1 had been involved on the family farm since birth and had taken over the operation with his wife when they were married nine years ago. Of all the farmers interviewed, these two farmers run the most diversified farm. The farm consists of a two thousand head pig nursery, in addition to twenty five thousand broiler chickens. They also have 300 acres which they use for cash cropping and to spread their manure. Farmer F1 has two other siblings who grew up on the farm, but they decided not to continue with farming. Farmer F1 and F2 have three young children, who will become involved with the farm as they grow up.

Farmer F1 and F2 defined a non-farm related property use as when “a person from Woodstock buys 100 acres and then moves out here and rents out 50 acres but fences off 30 acres and puts a couple of horses and a cow. And they aren’t farmers, but inside they think they are.” He added that many people who were raised on a farm like to come back and buy a small tractor to have on a hobby farm while still working in a different profession. He felt that there had been a slowing of residential lots appearing in the countryside, but commented that “before it was going crazy”. Farmer F1 felt that if an increased number of non-farm persons were in the area the new non-farm persons would get more and more say. “They start sitting on council and township boards. The manure laws will change, the right to farm will change dramatically. I think it’s that way now, these people sit on the boards where things are decided.” He felt that one negative impact of having more residential properties in the area would be that it could increase the values of neighbouring properties and then also drive up taxes. Problems that they

have had on their farm include changing their farming practices to please a neighbouring church and the church congregation, as well as frequent trespassing.

Despite all the problems that are associated with non-farm dwellings they had considered severing off a portion of their property for a building lot. They approached the Planning Department and township but had not heard anything back about the severance. They described the portion of their property as a natural severance, and a beautiful spot for a house and noted that several people had approach them about building a house there. They described the area as, “a natural severance from a tributary of the Thames where we can’t farm it, it slopes down to the water.” They added that the only thing they might be able to do there was pasture animals, or maybe grow Christmas trees, “but then people from the city steal those if you aren’t close enough to watch them.” Even though Farmer F1 and F2 had considered severing a portion of their farm, they would be against a neighbour severing a building lot adjacent to their farms. This may be due to the fact of their past experience with non-farm dwellers in the area. “There is one around here, they said it was for their son who worked on the farm, but they’re renting it out. They never were farmers; they weren’t good people; they got caught stealing machinery.”

When discussing planning policies Farmer F1 and F2 argued that all farmers should ask for advice from the Planning Department prior to submitting an application to sever their farm. Otherwise farmers would find, “it could be a big waste of time and money.” When asked how the countryside might be changed if there were no restrictive planning policies such as the point system Farmer F1 answered,

There would be a house on every farm, maybe lots of them. If you want a new tractor... sell a few more lots! Who wouldn't do that? Build yourself a lot away from all those houses, or rent out the farm. If we moved up to the other farm and just rented out this land it wouldn't matter to us that where were ten houses here! My neighbours would freak though. And I would do the same thing if I was still here and they did that. If my neighbour could do it, I know he would put one house right here on the corner right this very instant. And I would be pissed off, to be nice about it. If you had a 100 acre farm that you rented out and could sell it in 1 acre lots at twenty grand a piece, who wouldn't do that?

6.2.7 Farm G:

Type of Farm:	Dairy Farm
Total Area of Farm:	360 workable acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	2 full time
Level of Preservation:	3 NFRR in area
	No other non-farm uses

Farmer G was born in 1944. He attended high school for two years, but had to leave to help on the farm during grade 10. He was beginning to ease into semi-retirement, but still worked full time on the farm. He and his wife had four children, one of whom is employed full time on the farm. Farm G is a dairy farm and also has some cash crops. They milk forty-five cows and have approximately one 140 acres left for cash crops after using the remainder of the crops for their own herd. The farm has been in the family for five generations and 150 years. Farmer G and his son felt very connected to the land given its historical importance to the family and felt that this place was where they belonged. His son will take over the farm operation when Farmer G retires from farming. Farmer G would like to stay on the farm as he retires, and adds that if it were possible he would like to have a retirement lot severed from his farm. He added that his father and other members of his family had had retirement lots in the past.

When asked about the land use in his area Farmer G explained that the rules for development had been pretty stiff for quite some time and as a result most land had

stayed in agriculture. He felt that some developers “see small parcels of land to take off of farms and add more people to the area, and that shouldn’t happen.” He went on to describe a situation in his immediate area,

The adjoining land that we have down here, about a half a mile down the road was maybe three acres of bush that was sold off as a residential lot. That person put a house on it, and severed 2 more (from the severed lot). Now there are three houses where there probably should have only been one. And they’ve got virtually all those trees down now.

Farmer G defined a non-farm related property as, “Where you have 3.5 acres of trees, where it was a farm and now it’s residential.” He added that it appeared as though the County was not letting people ‘get away’ with building on just 20 acres anymore, implying that non-farm persons not only live on small one acre parcels but also on under-sized agricultural lots. He believed that based on his definition these uses were present in his area. If there were more people living on non-farm lots in his area Farmer G assumed that there would be “more complaints, more neighbours to deal with, and more people who would want a right to say what happens with your farm”. He did not see any positive impacts that could result from having more people in his area, and added that it would increase his taxes. He felt that problems occur when people move to severed lots because of the person’s character. “Some people are naturally nice, some people are greedy and selfish, and others are understanding... it depends on the personalities.” In his personal experience he had experienced problems with just one neighbour, but added that everyone had been pestered by those people so he did not let it bother him. Farmer G felt that if he were to expand his farming business there would be opposition from his non-farm neighbours. He added that on another portion of his property he had thought about setting up a broiler chicken operation but added that because of the severances

discussed previously he would not be able to given the Minimum Distance Separation. When the lots were created he went to the Ontario Municipal Board as a witness to reveal how the non-farm lots would affect his operation, but he felt that it did not matter anyway. Now that the houses have been built, “it’s an obstacle now that is there that wasn’t before.”

In the past Farmer G had received offers from people wanting to buy portions of his property for non-farm development but rejected their proposals. He had considered severing a portion of the farm and when his son weds he would like to build another house and sever it from the farm but knows “of course I can’t”. Farmer G would support a farmer adding another residence to complement their operation; however, if a non-farming person wanted to live in the country on a quiet road then he would definitely be against anymore of this sort of development. Farmer G felt that if farmers were allowed to sever portions of their farm as building lots to generate short term income they would.

It would be abused, for sure. It was in the past. They see it as a short term money fix. This generation, quite often the farm is sold and the house is sold to someone else, and they want another severance. It will get more and more like that every coming year.

Despite the amount of development that was occurring around the County, Farmer G contended that agriculture will continue to have a strong presence in the County. He felt as though the County had made good efforts to try and preserve agricultural land for agriculture and feels that his farm is protected by the Official Plan. He did wish that he could do more with his land because he had owned it such a long time, “we’ve paid our taxes and we want to have another generation here but we can’t build a house”. He went on to say that years ago the Planning Department would allow one severance from a property, but that was abused. Farmer G told of an additional small vacant parcel in the

area that he and his wife had purchased in the hopes of getting around the severance policies and building a retirement home there. They would have to apply for a minor variance to allow a house to be built on an undersized agricultural parcel. He commented that, “you shouldn’t have to try and think around the Department” when discussing ways he had attempted to receive approval for a retirement home for himself and his wife. He felt that it was wise for someone to consult with the Planning Department before applying for a severance because “there isn’t any use in applying if you can’t even get to first base.” He admitted that the point system in place was very strong, and that every once in a while it was defeated by the OMB, but not very often. If there were no planning policies such as the point system Farmer G believed the countryside “would be absolute chaos.” He felt that planners should make it easier for people to settle in villages, noting that in some villages there were no lots with services available so there would be no room for any more development.

6.2.8 Farm H:

Type of Farm:	Dairy Farm / Cash Crops
Total Area of Farm:	200 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	3 full time
Level of Preservation:	4 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Commercial

Farmer H1, his wife (H2) and his son (H3) all live and work on the family farm. Farmer H1 is 59 years old; he attended high school for two years before becoming a full time farmer. Farmer F2 is a few years younger than her husband. Farmer H3 was born in 1972, he studied Business Management in Agriculture at a community college and has worked full time on the farm since graduating. They are the farm’s full time employees,

although some seasonal help is also required to aid during planting and harvest periods. The farm is 200 acres in size and they rent an additional 400 acres to stay competitive. They use the rented land for cash crops and also for spreading manure. The main operation of the farm is a dairy farm; at the time of the interview they were milking 70 cows. They had approximately 200 head of cattle on the farm; some of their cows were not for milking but sold to market to help supplement the farm income. The day that the farmers were interviewed was not a good day for the family. Just before the interview began they had received a cheque in the mail for some beef cattle that had been taken to market. "We sold twelve and I got \$5300. Before we would have got seventeen or eighteen thousand bucks!" Farmer H1 was referring to the period before Mad Cow disease hit the beef industry. Farmer H1 took over the farm completely after his father died, while Farmer H2 started helping out on the farm after she married Farmer H1 and began working full time after her father-in-law passed away. Farmer H3 is one of four children, he is the only one involved on the farm and plans to take over the farm in the future.

Farmers H1, H2 and H3 felt that the land uses in their area had remained agricultural in nature, but had changed from small family farms, to being rented by larger farms. They felt that there were a few more residential properties in their area than previously, but they believed that the Planning Department had become a lot stricter than it used to be in regards to non-farm development. When asked to define a non-farm related property use the farmers preferred to give examples of what they felt were non-farm related property uses. Farmer H2 commented that there was a private airstrip in the area that was not related to agriculture. They also included people in the definition;

Farmer H1 felt that it included anyone living in the country who did not farm the land. Farmer H3 also gave examples of non-farm dwellers by stating “a bunch of doctors and lawyers moving out to big properties.” They felt that according to their own definition there were some commercial and a few residential non-farm uses in their area. They felt that if there were more houses in the area and more people living in their area then there would be more problems for farmers. Farmer H1 added, if “you get enough houses then eventually there won’t be anymore farm land to feed the people, it will all be in houses.” His son added “everyone who wants to live in the country should build up north in the stone, not in good farm land.”

They believe problems occur between farmers and non-farmers because non-farm persons just do not understand farming and how it works. They had non-farm people complain to them about their farming operation and about getting some manure on the roads. They found that their biggest issue was with people trespassing; Farmer H3 remarked “we do get a lot of four wheelers down at the river and then marijuana plants in the corn field.” They had considered selling off part of their land for a building lot but knew that they would not be able to sever it. They had people offer to buy portions of their property near the river flats and felt that it would be a perfect spot for a house. The farmers would not be in support of a farmland severance in their area to create a new house, stating “they’ve got to stop doing this; it causes more and more problems.” They knew of other farmers who have applied for a non-farm severance in the past but “dropped it because it wouldn’t go through”. Farmer H1’s father had a lot severed from the farm in the early 1970s, as well as one for his brother on the other half of the farm.

Farmer H will retire eventually to the house built on the lot severed by his father. He was happy that the severances were permitted before the point system came into action.

Given the state of farmland affairs and the farm crisis the family believed that more people would attempt to sever building lots as a supplement to their income if they were allowed. Farmer H1 warned of cases in Michigan where land has been divided into ten acre lots, “you get lots of little pieces of land, and that quite often doesn’t work because you end up getting a lot of weeds, and then it’s not productive anymore.” He felt it was important to preserve agricultural land because “there is just no more good land being made! Once they use it for housing there isn’t any going back. They aren’t making anymore land and that’s why it’s getting dear.” They feared what bringing Toyota and the spin-off industrial plants that were announced to supply Toyota would do to the County and how their presence would change agriculture.

Farmers H1, H2, and H3 felt that the County must be doing a good job because much of the agricultural land was still in agricultural production. They were not sure how different things might be if there were no planning policies in place such as the point system. They felt that farms would be lost amongst houses, and that many more farms would be gone entirely. Farmer H1 concluded his interview by saying, “If you could do what you wanted I think there’d be less farms, and you would get more people from the city coming out too”

6.2.9 Farm I

Type of Farm:	Pig Farm / Cash Crop
Total Area of Farm:	300 acres
Level of Farm:	Commercial
Farm Operators:	2 full time
Level of Preservation:	2 NFRR in area
Other non-farm uses:	Agri-business

Farmer I was born in 1951, he has been working full time on the farm since he graduated from high school. He and his wife have two children but both have decided not to continue farming. The farm is operated as a partnership between Farmer I and his brother. This will be the last generation on the family farm, which is currently a pork operation where they raise feeder pigs as well as cultivate corn for cash crops. Farmer I and his brother often do custom work for other farmers during planting and harvesting season. At the time of the interview they were working 600 acres, 300 belonged to the family farms and the remainder were rented from other farmers.

According to Farmer I a non-farm related property use is “anything that isn’t farming....Whether it be a house or a business, if it’s not farming, then it’s not farming.” He elaborated stating that, “After it’s severed and changes it becomes an issue with the farmer, he has to deal with it. Whether it’s a good neighbour or a bad neighbour it doesn’t matter you have to deal with it.” According to his own definition Farmer I did not believe he had any non-farm uses in his direct area. However, he then went on to discuss a business lot that had been severed from one of their farms prior to their purchase of the property. He also stated that there were a couple of houses in the area that had been severed, but noted that they had a good neighbour policy and the non-farm neighbours have not caused problems. Farmer I stated that he and his brother were constantly worried about the next people that may move into the severed houses and what sort of relationship they would have. He explained, “You always have to work around your neighbours” when discussing how their farming practices had been affected.

Due to the presence of non-farm dwellings, Farmer I and his brother were not allowed to spread manure on all portions of their fields, but since the residents did not

mind they ignored the regulation and spread manure on all of their properties. They were concerned about new residents and complaints they may have about the smell and normal farming activities. One instance of how he and his brother had had to adapt their farming was when a new dryer was installed in one of their pig barns. Since there were non-farm dwellings in the vicinity they had to build a noise break so that their neighbours could sleep well. Farmer I stated he believed rural people were better suited to live into severed houses because rural people had been around farming for years and would be less likely to complain. He added that there was nothing that farmers could do to determine who their neighbours were, and that a good neighbour policy was better than having problems with non-farm neighbours. Farmer I had not had many problems with his neighbours, although they have had people trespass in a bushed area of one farm.

Hunters tend to think that since they carry a gun that they can go wherever they want. Some people ask, and some people don't. You know what I mean? And as far as damages go it hasn't been much, it just annoys you more than anything. We feel we should be asked.

He discussed another farm that he and his brother had purchased that had a lot severed previously. The non-farm dwelling became an issue when the brothers needed to build a new barn. Farmer I explained that they had to check with all of the neighbours first before getting a minor variance. He and his brother had no problems with the neighbouring houses but he noted that that was not always how those situations work out, indicating that not every person living in the country supports agriculture.

Farmer I and his brother had never considered severing off a portion of their farms for a building lot. They had, however had offers to buy portions of the farms to build a house. They would not support anyone in their area creating a new building lot, and had voiced their opinion against it in the past. Farmer I felt that farmers would

attempt to sever lots to supplement their income without knowing how it would affect their farming. “I’ve been to meetings where people have said, ‘you know, if I severed three or four lots off the front of my farm I could have a viable farm’.” Farmer I argued that type of development only provides for a short term fix, and in the long run does not mean the farm will be any more viable.

Farmer I believed that the County’s biggest problem related to agriculture and dealing with land severances that had already been granted but lay idle, waiting to be developed in the future for non-farm reasons. He stated that if the severed house from one of their farms were to be offered for sale he and his brother would buy the house and add it to the farm holdings so that they would not be faced with these issues in the future. Farmer I felt that many farmers would buy back severed parcels if they came up for sale, “A lot of these big farms are dealing with larger amounts of money. So they can go to the bank and say I want to buy this house, it’s going to be a pain in the ass for me and they understand.”

6.3 Comparison of Farming Experiences

In this study sixteen farmers on nine farms were interviewed regarding the impact of severances on their farm operations. Although it is not possible to generalize the opinions of all farmers in Ontario or Oxford County, the interviews provided sufficient information to show similarities and differences in opinions on a number of important issues.

6.3.1 Farm Type and Family Involvement

The farm profile portion of the study included various types of farming operations. The farm types were specialty crop farm (tobacco), dairy, beef, cash crop,

pork, and mixed operations. All of the farms had cash crops as well, in most cases the farmers used what they could for their own animals with the surplus being sold to others. In general these types of farms can be found throughout rural Canada, with the exception of the tobacco farm which requires a specific type of soil composition to thrive.

A review of current statistics suggests that the average age of the Canadian farmer is much older than generations ago. At the same time, the number of farms is decreasing while the size of the remaining farms is increasing. These statistics suggest that the next generation of potential farmers are not interested in becoming farmers and taking over the family business and that farming as a profession and farmers are beginning to vanish from the Ontario countryside. The increased size of the average farming operation indicates that farms are being consolidated and enlarged. An alternative way to increase cropped acreage is for farmers to rent additional land from their neighbours; five out of nine farms included in the study have rented land in the past, with two operations consistently renting large acreages of land each year (over three hundred acres). In this study it was found that indeed there are some last generation farmers because their children have decided not to continue with farming. The average age of farmers working the land in this study was 53, the youngest person being 22 and the eldest 81. Of the nine farms included in this study four will cease to be operated by the same family upon the retirement of these last generation farmers. Three farms will continue to be run as a family farm when the current farmers' sons assume full ownership. Another two farmers felt that one day their young children would take over the operation, but given their young ages (under 10 years) they may choose a different career entirely when they become adults.

6.3.2 Retirement from the Industry

Farmers interviewed indicated that they were all at least the second generation on the property, thus all of the farms in the study should be considered '*family farms*'. One farm that had been home to five generations of farmers working the same land had provided that family with a strong sense of belonging. Prior to the first Official Plan in 1979 it was still possible for farmers to remain on the land and retire to a severed parcel on their own farm in some parts of Oxford County. In the early 1970s it was also possible to sever lots for family members. Five of the study farms had severances from the farm parcel. Four retirement lots were removed for farmers to remain on the land, and two family lots were created on one farm for two brothers. If possible all but four of the farmers interviewed would like to retire to their own land, whether by renting the land out to a neighbouring farmer or by obtaining a retirement lot. All farmers interviewed felt a connection to their land because of their family history there. In fact, if a developer were to offer money to buy the farm, eleven of the farmers interviewed admitted that they would not want to farm anywhere else and that they would retire from farming entirely. When asked about the fate of their land, most farmers felt that their land would remain agricultural in nature. One farmer, however, indicated that the farm would most likely be developed for commercial or industrial purposes given its close proximity to highway 401. Two other farms will most likely be completely developed for residential purposes in the next twenty years given their location close to existing settlements.

6.3.3 Defining a Non-Farm Property Use

When asked to define a "non-farm property use" each respondent gave his or her own definition of the term. From their perspective a non-farm property use can be described as a residential property that has nothing to do with farming and is not

associated with a farm in any way. The farmers felt that the city people who live in these country houses frequently cause problems when they complain about normal farming practices. The respondents also felt that many commercial and industrial uses could be considered non-farm uses but only to a limited extent, as some of those establishments are used by farmers. All of those interviewed indicated that there were non-farm uses in close proximity to their farms.

6.3.4 Impacts of Non-Farm Uses

When asked what impacts non-farm uses had on their farming operations, the farmers provided several different examples. The most frequent impact noted was trespassing, followed by demographic changes, increased demand on services, and restrictions to farmland. These impacts will all be discussed in the following subsections.

6.3.4.1 Trespassing

Most farmers agreed that since the arrival of new non-farm residents in their neighbourhood trespassing had increased in their fields, woodlots, and river flats. Several felt that their property rights had been infringed upon by their non-farm neighbours who seemed to believe that the farmers' property belonged to everyone. Crimes in rural areas such as theft of livestock, farm machinery, tools, or produce, in addition to damage to farm property and trespassing have been largely neglected by researchers. However, an Australian study found that trespassing on farms was a common occurrence (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004). Although trespassing occurs frequently, the study found that the act of trespassing was not viewed as a serious problem by farmers. This sentiment was reiterated by some of the respondents in this study who did not view trespassing as a grave concern. When asked specifically about

trespassing some farmers responded that people were constantly trespassing (Farmer F1, F2) but they did not seem as concerned as others (Farmer A1, A2, C). The Australian Government (2004) warned in their study,

Trespassing should not be taken lightly because people rarely enter properties without reason. If there are people on your property without permission, it could be because they are looking for opportunities to steal or damage livestock and equipment. By discovering them you may have frustrated their purpose and your neighbours could be their next targets. (p.22)

Given the rural nature of farm properties, quite often farmers are faced with trespassers who would like to use the farmer's land for leisure purposes. Farmers in this study frequently reported that people had trespassed to access river flats to hike or fish, ride dirt bikes/ATVs, or to hunt in their woodlots and open fields. It may be difficult for farmers to confront trespassers, and can be dangerous if the trespasser is a hunter and is armed. The Australian Government (2004) stated that when dealing with trespassers farmers should notify the individual that they are on private property, and in the case of armed individuals the police should be notified for their own protection. Farmers in this study noted that trespassing had resulted in theft of farming supplies and produce, as well as damage to farm equipment, crops and the compaction of soil.

The study found that farmers who lived in areas where the largest number of severances was granted generally had more intense feelings regarding trespassers, those being the farmers on Farms C, H, and A. The farmers on Farm D had the second highest number of severances allowed in their area, as seen in Table 6.1; however they did not find they had a problem with trespassers. This may be attributed to the fact that a conservation area is located in close proximity to their farm and persons wanting to enjoy the rural environment are able to do so there. In general, those farms with the greater

number of severances granted in their area also had other non-farm uses in their proximity such as commercial and industrial uses, or residential subdivisions. Farmers who lived in areas with fewer severances and where there was evidence of greater agricultural preservation did not voice as much concern regarding trespassing.

Table 6.1 Relative Farmland Preservation

	Number Granted	Other Uses
Farm C	8	4
Farm D	5	3
Farm H	4	1
Farm A	3	3
Farm G	3	0
Farm E	2	2
Farm I	2	1
Farm B & Farm F	1	1

6.3.4.2 Non-Farm People in Farming Spaces

The farmers in the study often differentiated between rural people living in country houses and those who had relocated from urban areas. A common perception by respondents was that rural people would be better neighbours because they understood farming and would not cause as many problems. These findings exhibit a case of ‘otherness’ where farmers differentiated and made reference to “us and them” when they were referring to the differences between rural and urban dwellers. Respondents were quite often resentful that non-farm rural dwellers were given more say in political matters. They were worried that as more ‘outsiders’ sat on township councils farmers would lose power over matters that are critical to the farming population. Although farmers remained the majority land holders in the rural townships, the rural farm population is continuing to decrease (Misek-Evans, 1992). The increasing presence of more non-farm residents made the farmers feel that they were being forced to work around the schedules of their neighbours. For example they were not able to spread

manure when needed, or to run farm machinery when required in the evening hours. Farmers felt that their non-farm neighbours had a general lack of knowledge about agriculture and normal farming practices in rural areas. Respondents frequently made reference to complaints that were voiced by newcomers regarding the smells, sights, and sounds of normal farming practices. All but three of the farmers in this study were worried about the implications that increased complaints could have on their operations. Those persons who did not express a concern about complaints were the tobacco farmers. They had few problems with their neighbours due to the nature of their farm -- manure was not used as a fertiliser, their equipment was relatively quiet, and field work was often finished before the evening hours. This finding indicates that conflicts are more likely to arise between non-farm residents and farm operations involving livestock whereas non-livestock oriented farms may be less impacted by neighbouring non-farm residents.

6.3.4.3 Costs of Living in Rural Areas

An increased number of residents in the periphery indicate that the level of services required will also increase. Some of the services that farmers felt were affected were garbage pickup, school bussing, and mail delivery. They also indicated that there would be added strain on rural roads, schools, and libraries. Traditionally the level of services in urban areas has been much higher than in rural areas. The farmers in this study felt that when new people move from urban areas to rural non-farm lots they expect that the level of service provision will follow them and they should have the same services as in urban areas. Currently taxes in rural areas are lower than in urban areas because of the lower level of service provision, but as non-farm residents demand more and better services taxes for all rural residents, including farmers, will increase.

Similarly, the inflated cost of large country homes relative to agricultural land causes property taxes to increase due to the unrealistic inflation of the price of land in the area. Farmers' property assessments rise, and as a result taxes increase as well. The higher land prices that result from non-farm development make it more difficult and more costly for farmers to expand their farms. Another cost that had increased due to the proliferation of non-farm development over the years is the cost of renting farmland. Ten of the farmers indicated that competition for rentable land had increased significantly due to a limited supply, while other farmers acknowledged there was competition but did not indicate that it had increased significantly.

6.3.4.4 Restrictions to Farming

Another impact that farmers discussed was that in some cases the existence of non-farm dwellings made it impossible for farmers to expand their operation because of regulations concerning minimum distance separation to nearby residential uses. One farm that had been a dairy farm for years and was converted to a cash crop farm would likely not be able to start up again due to the proximity to non-farm uses. Another farmer had thought of diversifying the farm by adding a second commodity, but because of the existence of a non-farm rural residential dwelling it would no longer be allowed. Other farmers had to apply for minor variances to allow for structures to be built on their farms due to the proximity of non-farm uses. For all of these reasons, farmers are limited in how they are able to adapt to changes in agriculture. The recent trend of farm intensification has seen farmers doubling or tripling their herds as well as cultivating additional acreages. Farmers with a limited amount of space will not be able to compete with these larger operations because of their inability to expand. In some cases farmers

can be granted a minor variance and are allowed to build new barns or add on to existing structures; however, the presence of a dwelling becomes an obstacle that farmers have to work around.

6.3.4.5 Additional Impacts

Other impacts that were identified less frequently but are still very important were the loss of farmland to other purposes, as well as the possibility of water contamination. Several farmers were concerned that some of the best farmland had been wasted for residential uses. As discussed in the literary review of this report, much of Canada's prime agricultural lands are found in southern Ontario. By developing the land for residential purposes the land is lost to agriculture forever. Not only is the land lost to the industry, but the community loses an area that could be used to feed several people. Misek-Evans (1992) warned "society cannot afford to consume the farmland base for other uses in the hope that technology will be able to provide the productivity required to feed growing domestic and global populations or in the hope that food importation will be an adequate and affordable alternative to domestic food supplies." (p. 9)

Each farmer was asked to indicate positive or negative impacts that were associated with non-farm rural development. Although many of the impacts discussed in the interviews were negative, there were some positive impacts that were also noted by a few respondents. One positive impact was the improvement of bad lands. Farmers felt that the land was better used as a location for a house than as scrub land that was not productive. Another impact noted by one farmer was that non-farm rural residents occasionally will help on the farm during harvest time. The other positive responses concerned commercial properties. Some of the farmers felt that commercial uses could

provide assistance to lost travellers in rural areas. Instead of stopping in at farms and asking for directions, to borrow gas, or use the washroom people now had a place to go. The farmers also felt that they would be able to obtain supplies locally from these new establishments.

6.3.5 Developing the Farm for Non Farm Residential Purposes

When discussing farm severances for non-farm development it was determined that all but one farm had received offers from prospective buyers for building lots. Six of the farmers in the study indicated that they had never considered severing a portion of their property for non-farm development but six others indicated that they had considered severing a lot for retirement, but realized that they would probably be turned down. The remaining four farmers had considered severing unproductive portions of their land for building lots. Although 62 percent of the farmers declared that they would want a new building lot, only four farmers would support a neighbour severing a building lot in close proximity to their property! In almost all cases the farmers indicated that one of the main reasons new development would not be supported was because they feared “city people” moving in. Several mentioned that they would want their new city neighbours to know that farming was a business and not meant to be an annoyance to them. All of the farmers interviewed indicated that severing lots would be a quick money fix for farmers who are being negatively impacted by the current farming crisis. They each believed that if it were possible to sever building lots in Oxford County the option would be abused given the ever present farm crisis in Canada.

6.3.6 Municipal Planning Policies

While discussing municipal planning policies in place to help protect agricultural lands in the County all of the farmers admitted that they were learning about the policies “as they go” when things happen in their immediate areas. Some respondents had more interaction with the Planning Department than others; all but one of those interviewed had attended a public meeting regarding non-farm development. Eleven of those interviewed had submitted applications to the planning department for various reasons (minor variances, nutrient management plans, and severances). When asked to assess the effectiveness of the policies in place farmers had both positive and negative assessments. One farmer did not wish to assess the policies. Ten farmers gave the policies a positive assessment stating things such as: “they are keeping things under control”; “they do a good job”; “they have protected land”; and “they very strongly support agriculture”. Nine other negative opinions were also registered, these included the feeling that the policies were too tough and did not provide sufficient flexibility for the land owner, and some felt that they did not go far enough in protecting land from subdivisions and industrial uses. Those interviewed were split evenly on their opinions regarding the level of information that they receive from the planning department; half were satisfied with the amount of information received while the other half did not feel that enough information was available to farmers.

6.3.7 Agriculture in Oxford County

During the interviews farmers expressed their feelings on the status of agriculture in the County and how they felt agriculture would proceed in the future. Most felt that agriculture would remain strong in the County given the quality of soil in the region. Three farmers felt that agriculture may remain strong but were unsure of the

consequences that Toyota and the resulting spin-off industries would have on the industry. One farmer was pessimistic and felt that agriculture would not have a vital role in Oxford County's future and would cease to be an important part of the County's economy.

When discussing how planning policies have affected land uses the majority of farmers felt that land use in their area had changed; ten stated that there were now more houses, while six felt that there was less agricultural land. Contrastingly, seven people felt that their area had been relatively unchanged and that agricultural land had been preserved. When they considered how differently the countryside might be if there were no planning policies in place like the point system, farmers were unanimous in their viewpoint that there would be houses everywhere in rural Oxford County. Some even stated that it would be "complete chaos". Others alluded to the contamination of drinking water and the increased need for services for the larger rural population. When contemplating the differences that they would have to face if this type of development had been permitted all farmers were grateful that the County has made the effort to preserve agricultural lands for agriculture.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

This study has explored non-farm rural residential development in Oxford County, as well as the impacts of this development on area farms. By identifying the number of non-farm rural residential severances applications that have been granted and denied, we are able to construct a visualization of the agricultural landscape of the County. Prior to this research, there had been no longitudinal study into the effectiveness of municipal planning policy in protecting agricultural resources. In addition to uncovering this important information, this study also includes a discussion of nine farm families living in the study area that focuses on the perceived impacts of non-farm rural residential uses on agriculture. The findings of the interviews were summarized and analyzed to identify commonalities. The purpose of this final chapter is to bring together the major components of the study and summarize findings. This chapter will also discuss challenges and limitations of this study, as well as provide suggestions for future work.

7.1 Review of Methodology Used

Because of the complex nature of this study a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to ensure that the results obtained revealed a more accurate depiction. Patterns emerged from the large amount of historical data that was generated in the quantitative portion of the study and the results were presented cartographically and in several tables. Interviews with farmers complemented the analysis of the quantitative data and provided an in-depth understanding of the issues involved with the presence of non-farm residential development. The responses from the interviews were compared with other farmers in the study to allow commonalities to surface. The mixture

of methods used in this analysis has allowed for a clearer picture to emerge and a better understanding of the complexity of the issues involved than if either quantitative or qualitative methods had been used exclusively.

7.2 Non-Farm Rural Residential Severance Activity

The literature has shown that during the 1970s rural non-farm residential development began occurring at an increased pace throughout many western nations, including Canada. The findings suggest that people choose to move to rural areas for more privacy, a better quality of life, more land, and an attractive landscape (Davies & Yeates, 1991). People do not move to agricultural areas with the intention of hindering the agricultural industry around them. After all it was the working landscape that first attracted the population to rural areas (Misek-Evans, 1992). Nevertheless, the impacts that non-farm uses have on agriculture can be extensive, including limiting the viability of farms. In response to the movement of ex-urbanites into rural areas, or exurbia, a number of municipalities have imposed restrictions and planning policies to control where and how development will be permitted. Oxford County is one such region.

Prior to the findings of this research, the agricultural planning policies of Oxford County were thought to control the push for non-farm development in a largely agricultural area. This research found that in all instances, the planning policies of Oxford County (Official Plans and municipal by-laws) were more committed to agriculture and were more restrictive of non-farm uses until the release of the current PPS in 2005. However, a complete count and analysis of the non-farm severance application activity within the County had not been completed to fully assess the merits of the policy and confirm this belief. The severance applications on file have been catalogued for staff

and future researchers but have not been grouped into categories of application type. By creating a count of the non-farm rural residential severances that were approved and denied for non-farm development, the point system can be evaluated.

This research found that during the study period (1971 to 2004) 6947 severance applications were submitted for all areas of the County. Of those, 1520, or approximately 22 percent, were for non-farm rural residential purposes. Among these 829 severances representing 54 percent of the total were granted, 644 or 42 percent were denied, and 47 had no decision because the applications were withdrawn. The number of severances permitted after the centralization of the planning department and the development period for the first Official Plan dropped dramatically. Of the 829 granted applications 369, or 44.5 percent of the total, were granted in the first four years prior to centralized planning and the introduction of the point system. In the 30 years that followed only 460 have been granted.

7.3 Land Preservation

Given that so much of Canada's prime farm land is located in southern Ontario, within the urban shadow of the nation's largest city, it is imperative that municipalities in the area try to preserve prime farmland that is so vital to the country's agricultural industry. Since most non-farm severances are approximately one acre in size (Misek-Evans, 1992) the introduction of centralized planning in Oxford County Planning Department has saved approximately 592 acres from development. Although this accounts for less than one percent of the agricultural land base, additional land has also been preserved from minimum distance separation requirements that accompany the construction of new farm buildings. If a 2000 head feeder pig operation were

constructed, 537 metres would be required as a setback from the nearest residential use, thus restricting a large portion of the farm from construction. While calculations differ for each application of Minimum Distance Separation, if an average distance of 300 metres is considered, an area of 40 850 acres have remained unrestricted, approximately nine percent of the agricultural land base. This is a relatively conservative number, as frequently the setback can be much higher than 300 metres.

The recent increase in the number of consultations with planning staff prior to submitting severance applications has also reduced the number of potentially unsuccessful applications, thereby increasing the number of acres that have been preserved for agriculture, as well as the number of acres that are not restricted. Oxford County's agricultural policy incorporating a point system for determining severance applications has been proven to be a very effective tool for preventing excessive non-farm development in the rural agricultural areas of the County and preserving the land base for future generations.

7.4 Farming Experiences

In the second portion of this study sixteen farmers on nine farms were interviewed to discuss their farming operations and their farming experiences in light of the existence of non-farm developments in their immediate area. All farms were family farms and had been in the family for at least two generations. Farmers felt that the biggest impact from the rise in non-farm development was the increased level of trespassing on their farms. They have also witnessed an increase in nuisance complaints regarding normal farming practices, including noise, dust, and smells of farming. The farmers were resentful of the fact that decision-making powers in agricultural areas are shifting towards non-farm

residents who have assumed positions on council boards and other decision making institutions. These were all lifestyle conflicts; there were other forms of conflict identified also. Farmers have been compelled to accommodate non-farm residents through regulations concerning the placement of a barn, minimum distance separation requirements, and the need to create buffers to lessen the noise of farming equipment. Farmers have also had to cease work at specific times because of their proximity to housing or a church. They also feel that their taxes and assessments have increased due to the influx of non-farm people to rural areas. Despite all of these negative impacts that are caused by non-farm residential lots, many of the farmers in the study (10 out of 16) had considered severing a portion of their property, either to retire or to sell for a building lot. All respondents were aware of the strict policies in place in the County and knew that it would be very hard to obtain a severance, so most had decided not to continue with an application. All farmers in the study felt grateful to the County for preserving the agricultural land base when they considered how different the rural landscape would have looked if policies such as the point system were not in place.

7.5 Challenges and Limitations

This study has confronted many challenges and limitations since its inception. One of the first challenges was dealing with old records that had seemingly been forgotten. In some instances entire files would be missing, or if they were existed some critical information was missing or photocopies from the early 1970s had faded so much that they were no longer discernable. These challenges were overcome by locating the minutes of the meetings where discussions on the applications had been raised and deciphering the material needed from there. Other obstacles in the County Records

Department were that access to the data was available only during business hours, which slowed the data retrieval process. Another challenge encountered during this research was identifying potential participants from planning records. Quite frequently those persons contacted for the study would turn out not to be farmers but landowners. This problem was addressed by contacting the names of persons who attended meetings because of non-farm developments in their area. Once contact had been established with potential participants, it was sometimes hard to find a time that was suitable for the interview. Frequently farmers had to reschedule meetings due to unforeseen circumstances or due to busy work schedules. In some cases farmers were not included in the study because they were not available for many months, so replacements were sought instead.

7.6 Contributions of this Research

Several years ago municipalities were required to circulate planning applications that involved possible changes to agricultural lands to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The Ministry is no longer involved in tracking municipal land severance applications and has not been required to comment on the applications since the late 1980s (Caldwell et al., 2003). As a result, there has been little monitoring of non-farm development across the Province since that time. Because of this lack of public knowledge, there has been little research into non-farm development and the impact of its occurrence in the Province of Ontario in recent years.

Much of the literature in this field was written in the 1970s and the early 1980s. This research updates and reconfirms much of the body of literature that was published many years ago regarding the impact of non-farm development. This research also presents a Canadian example, when most of the existing literature originated from the

United States. Until this point, no study had focussed on a longitudinal time period and discussed municipal agricultural planning policy in terms of non-farm development at the micro-scale. The study period of this analysis encompasses more than 30 years of planning history in the County of Oxford, and can be considered a longitudinal study.

An unexpected finding of this research was the affect that the introduction of centralized planning and the Land Division Committee has had on the number of non-farm rural residential severances granted. Several townships or lower tier municipalities continue to handle their own planning matters; this study speaks to the merits of a centralized environment for planning. When one Planning Department is determining the appropriateness of all applications the result is consistency throughout the entire municipality.

The results of this research are of interest to several groups. At a municipal level, this research can inform the Community and Strategic Planning Office of Oxford County of the long term success of the point system, and may provide guidance during reviews of Official Plans. Other municipalities may refer to this study to compare the effectiveness of their own policies with what has been accomplished in Oxford County. Agricultural societies will find the results of this study informative since it shows at a glance how the Planning Department has protected agricultural lands for future generations for more than 30 years. This study allows other researchers to examine the history of non-farm rural residential development in Oxford County and to use the information in studies comparing the experiences of Oxford County with other municipalities. The narrative portions of this study will be of interest to historical researchers of the future, who may be interested in exploring farm life in Oxford County.

Finally, this research has given the rural farming population a voice. Farmers who participated in the study frequently indicated that they felt that the rural farm population is outnumbered and their concerns are unheard or ignored. The number of non-farm residents in the countryside continues to rise at the same time as the farm population declines. Each census year fewer farmers are farming the land. This research has identified the impacts that non-farm development has on local farms, and has shown that such developments have the potential to reduce the ability of farmers to adapt to new changes that may be required to remain competitive in the agricultural industry.

7.7 Recommendations for Further Study

This research has focussed on a case study of a municipality that has a history of agricultural planning policies in place to protect the land base for future generations. The historical severance activity is not known for other agricultural municipalities in southern Ontario beyond the study that was completed for the 1990s (Caldwell et al., 2003) (see Figure 2.8). Another potential area of study would be to examine how the municipalities that enquired about the workings of the point system fared in their own quests to protect agricultural land, given that the point system was not used in any other municipality in southern Ontario. It would also be interesting to compare the results of this research with similar research undertaken in other municipalities to see if the same impacts and farming experiences are found in another location. How much non-farm residential and commercial development occurred in other areas of the Province during the height of counterurbanization in the 1970s and 1980s? Given the immense amount of time that building a historical index such as this can take, it is likely that counts at other municipalities do not exist for extended study periods, but it would be interesting to study

the pattern of development in other municipalities that have also had more restrictive regulations than provincial policy. How do these counties or regions compare to municipalities whose planning policy was less restrictive in their compliance with provincial planning recommendations?

A number of farmers who participated in this study indicated that they would like more information on planning policies and regulations that pertain to them. The County of Oxford should consider producing a guide to rural land use planning for farmers to address this gap in their knowledge. It is also recommended that study continue into the impacts of non-farm related residential lots on agriculture in the future, as the amount of viable farmland in Ontario is an important resource to protect for future generations.

7.8 Conclusion

Prior to this research there was little information about the severance history of the County of Oxford. A complete inventory of those severances granted or denied had not been completed, and the physical distribution of these properties was not known until the completion of this study. The cumulative impacts of non-farm development on farmers in Oxford had never been documented in the form of a research study. Because of this lack of knowledge, it was hard for policy makers to accurately assess the effectiveness of certain planning policies, such as the point system.

To help fill this gap in knowledge, the following research goals were established to identify provincial and municipal planning policies that regulate non-farm development in agricultural areas; to identify the amount of non-farm residential severances permitted during different phases of the Oxford County point system; and to identify the impacts of non-farm development on surrounding farms in Oxford County,

Ontario. Each of these goals has been met in this study, and are documented throughout this thesis paper.

Unfortunately, the un-planned impacts of non-farm rural residential dwellings that were created before provincial legislation and subsequent municipal policy are a reality for most southern Ontario farmers. We can only hope that future policy makers will continue to see the necessity for agricultural lands in our society, and will vow to protect them and keep them for agricultural uses. In doing this we not only preserve Canada's best naturally occurring soil, but we also protect a rural culture as well as a source of quality products.

Appendix I

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

As I mentioned in my telephone conversation with you, the purpose of this study is to identify the impacts that non-farm uses are having on local farms, and to assess the effectiveness of the policies that the County has put in place to protect the agricultural land base. I will be asking you to share information regarding the history of this farming operation, the impacts that non-farm uses have had on your farm, and your interaction with the municipal planning office and your level of awareness of planning policies regarding farm land protection.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate it if you could answer the following questions to the best of your abilities.

Questions relating to the farm

1. Could you please describe the farm activities that occur on your farm?
 - What do you produce on the farm?
 - Is there livestock kept on the farm?
 - What is the acreage of your farm?
 - Do you rent any additional land?
 - How long have you been involved in the operation of this farm? In what capacity?
2. Is your family involved in the farm business?
If yes: Could you please provide me with information relating to your family:
Number of children?
Ages?
What is their level of involvement in the farm business?
3. Can you describe for me the connection you feel to your land?
4. What are the plans for your land after you retire from farming?
5. Until fairly recently, it was quite common for farmers to obtain retirement lots and retire on their land, as well as family building lots for their children. Did your family members historically sever their land for any of these purposes?
6. Have there been any changes to your farming operation in the last 10 or 20 years?
 - farm diversification, renting more acreage, new construction
7. How has farming changed in Ontario over the past thirty years?
 - growth in efficiencies, competition, loss of family farms, specialization
8. Statistically speaking there has been an increase of non-farm rural dwellers in rural Ontario, at the same time there has also been a decrease in the number of farmers in the Province. Do you find that you need to rent extra farm land to stay competitive?

Is there competition between farmers to rent land in the area?

9. In general, how has the land use changed in your area over the past thirty years?

-Is there the same or less agricultural uses

-More residential properties?

-More intensive farming operations?

10. How would you define a non-farm related property use?

11. Based on your own definition of non-farm uses, do you consider there to be any of these uses in your immediate area?

12. In your opinion, what are some of the positive and negative impacts that could result from having a non-farm use in close proximity to a farming operation?

13. In your opinion, why do these problems occur?

14. What if any problems have been created due to the incompatibilities of your farm and your neighbours' residential use of the land?

- trespassing?

-odor, noise, or dust complaints

-expanding farming operations?

15. Have you ever considered severing a portion of your property for a building lot?

16. Have you ever considered severing an existing dwelling from the farming operation?

17. Would you support an application for a new non-farm building lot abutting your property? Why or why not?

18. Do you know of other farmers who have applied for a severance from the farm? What happened in those cases?

19. Given the present farm crisis that has been accumulating over the past few years, do you think more farmers would consider severing portions of their land to help supplement their income?

20. Why is it important to keep farming and non-farming uses apart from each other?

21. Are you aware of the policies that the County has developed to protect the agricultural land base and deter new non-farm severances?

Questions relating to municipal policy

1. What role (if any) do you think the municipal government should play in regulating non-farm development and protecting agricultural land?

2. How would you describe your level of awareness of Oxford County's municipal land use planning policies?
3. Did you participate in the planning process when the County's Official Plan and By-laws were developed and/or reviewed? In what capacity? Why not?
4. Would you like to receive more or less information regarding policies in your area from the Planning department?
5. What is your opinion of the County's municipal land use planning policies?
6. What are some of the restrictions and policies that are in place to help reduce conflict between property owners?
 - Point system
 - Minimum Distance Separation?
 - Manure Storage
7. When you were considering severing a parcel off of the farm, did you approach the planning department regarding the likelihood of the severance?
8. What impact did your knowledge about municipal land use planning policies have on your decision to apply for a severance?
9. In your opinion, how has the protective nature of Oxford County's agricultural planning policies limited or encouraged your farming operation?
10. How different do you think the area you live in would be if there were no planning policies such as the Point System protecting agricultural land?

Could you provide me with some demographic information for my study:

In what year were you born?

What level of education do you possess?

Wrap up

1. Do you have any questions or additional comments about your farm, non-farm development, or the municipal land use planning policies in Oxford County?
2. Would you like to receive a summary of the research results and conclusions upon completion of the entire project?

Thank you for taking time out of your day to discuss these issues with me. If you have any additional comments, questions or concerns about this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Appendix II

FACTOR	POINTS														
<p>A) <u>Land Capability for Agriculture</u> A proposal shall be assigned the following points related to land use capability for agriculture as defined by the Canada Land Inventory.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Class 1</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+ 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+ 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">6</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+ 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> <td style="text-align: right;">+ 5</td> </tr> </table>	Class 1	+10	2	+10	3	+10	4	+ 6	5	+ 4	6	+ 2	0	+ 5	
Class 1	+10														
2	+10														
3	+10														
4	+ 6														
5	+ 4														
6	+ 2														
0	+ 5														
<p>B) <u>Consent History</u> A proposal on a parcel of land that has had at least one severance for non-farm rural residential <i>development</i> approved by the Land Division Committee since April 17, 1979.</p> <p>This factor shall be applied to any proposal to sever a non-farm rural residential lot that was created as the result of a farm consolidation and/or to both the severed and retained lands resulting from the severance of an existing non-farm rural residential lot.</p>	+ 2														
<p>C) <u>Surrounding Agricultural Land Use</u> A proposal which is within 300 metres (984 feet) of an agricultural use.</p> <p>In <u>addition</u>, a proposal for severance of a surplus farm dwelling which does not satisfy the requirements of MDS I from a livestock and/or manure storage facility located on the retained lands resulting from the severance.</p>	+ 10 + 5														
<p>D) <u>Surrounding Extractive Resource Land Use</u> A proposal which is within 300 metres (984 feet) of one or more of the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a designated Quarry Area • an identified Limestone Resource • an identified licensed sand and gravel pit • an identified Sand and Gravel Resource Area <p>or within 76 metres (250 feet) of an active Oil or Gas production well or compressor facility</p>	+ 5														
<p>E) <u>Access to Major Roads</u> Proposals on land with vehicle access to any County road or Provincial highway.</p>	+ 2														
<p>F) <u>Traffic Safety</u> The intent of this factor is to prevent traffic hazards by discouraging access onto roads where there is limited visibility.</p>	+2														
<p>G) <u>Infilling</u> For the purpose of this factor, infilling can occur outside of designated <i>settlements</i> and Rural Clusters. Infilling may occur within strips of residential uses along one side of a road, including <i>development</i> around a corner. As a guide, infilling shall mean a proposed lot bounded on both sides by existing non-farm rural residential <i>development</i> that is within 100 metres (328 feet) of each other. Existing non-farm rural residential <i>development</i> may include residential uses that are accessory to other non-residential uses excluding farms. For proposals considered as infilling situations which have been assigned +10 points due to proximity to an agricultural use:</p> <p>For proposals considered as infilling situations which have been assigned greater than +10 points due to proximity to an agricultural use:</p>	-9 0														
<p>H) <u>Surplus Farm Dwelling</u> The proposal involves the severance of a surplus second or additional dwelling contained on the same lot as the main farm dwelling, provided that a building permit was issued for both dwellings prior to April 17, 1979.</p> <p>Where abutting farms are proposed to be consolidated into one holding, a proposal to retain a dwelling existing at the date of adoption of this Official Plan:</p>	-2 -2														
<p>I) <u>Heritage</u> The proposal involves the severance of a surplus second or additional dwelling that is designated pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act.</p>	-2														

*Figure reproduced from Oxford County Official Plan, Section 3.1 Agricultural Land Resource, page 42

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