

# Land Use Planning for Agricultural Prosperity

## (Why You Should Care)

**Wayne Caldwell**

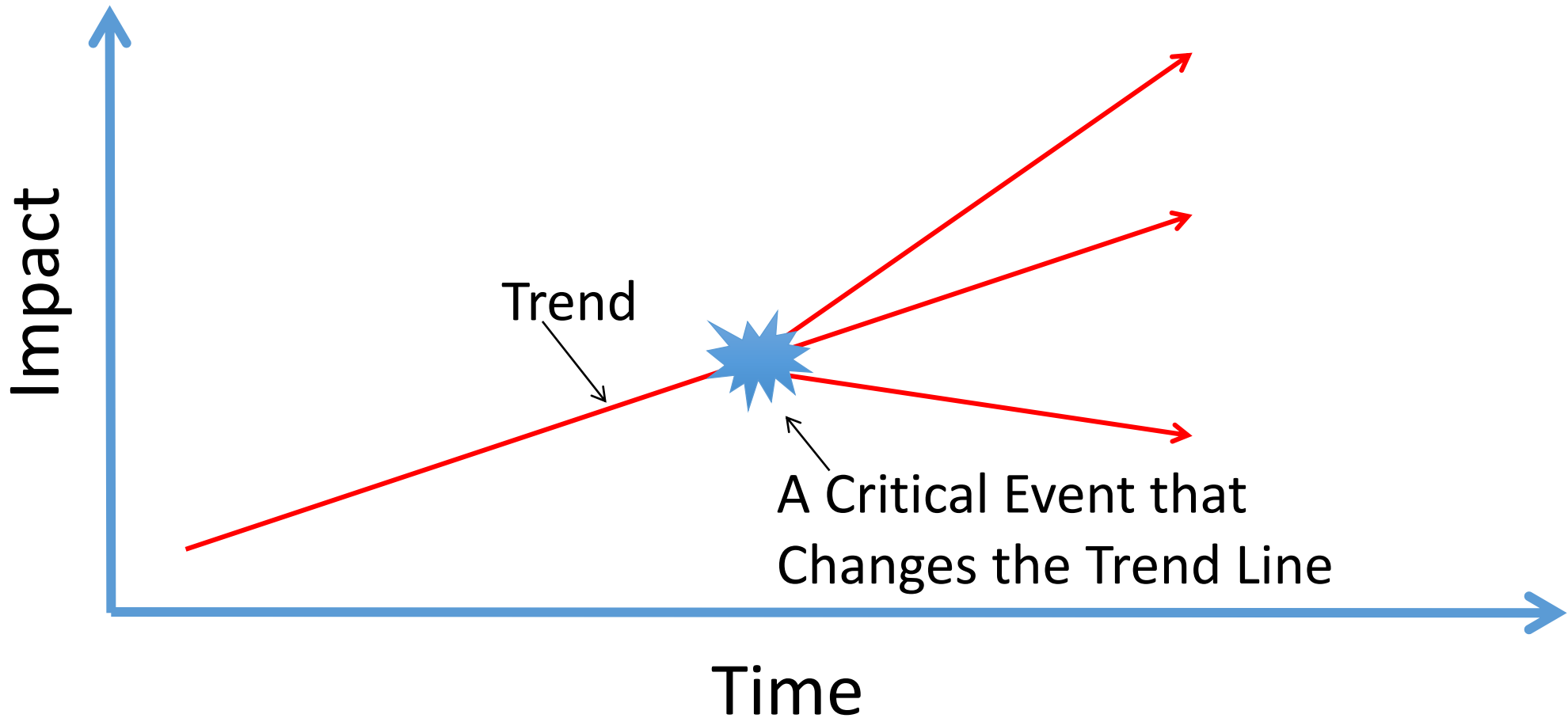
Rural Planning and Development  
University of Guelph

October 29, 2025



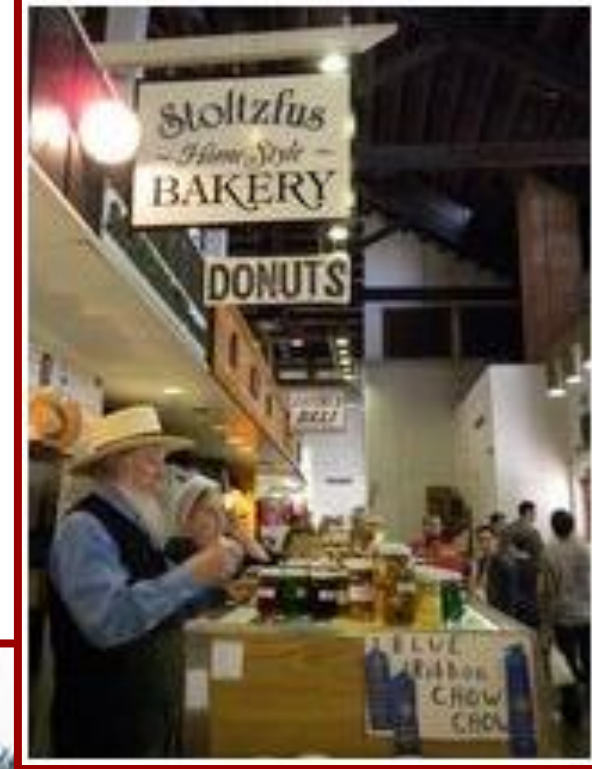
# Planning for the Future: Why is this Important?

## Trends, Critical Events and Scenarios



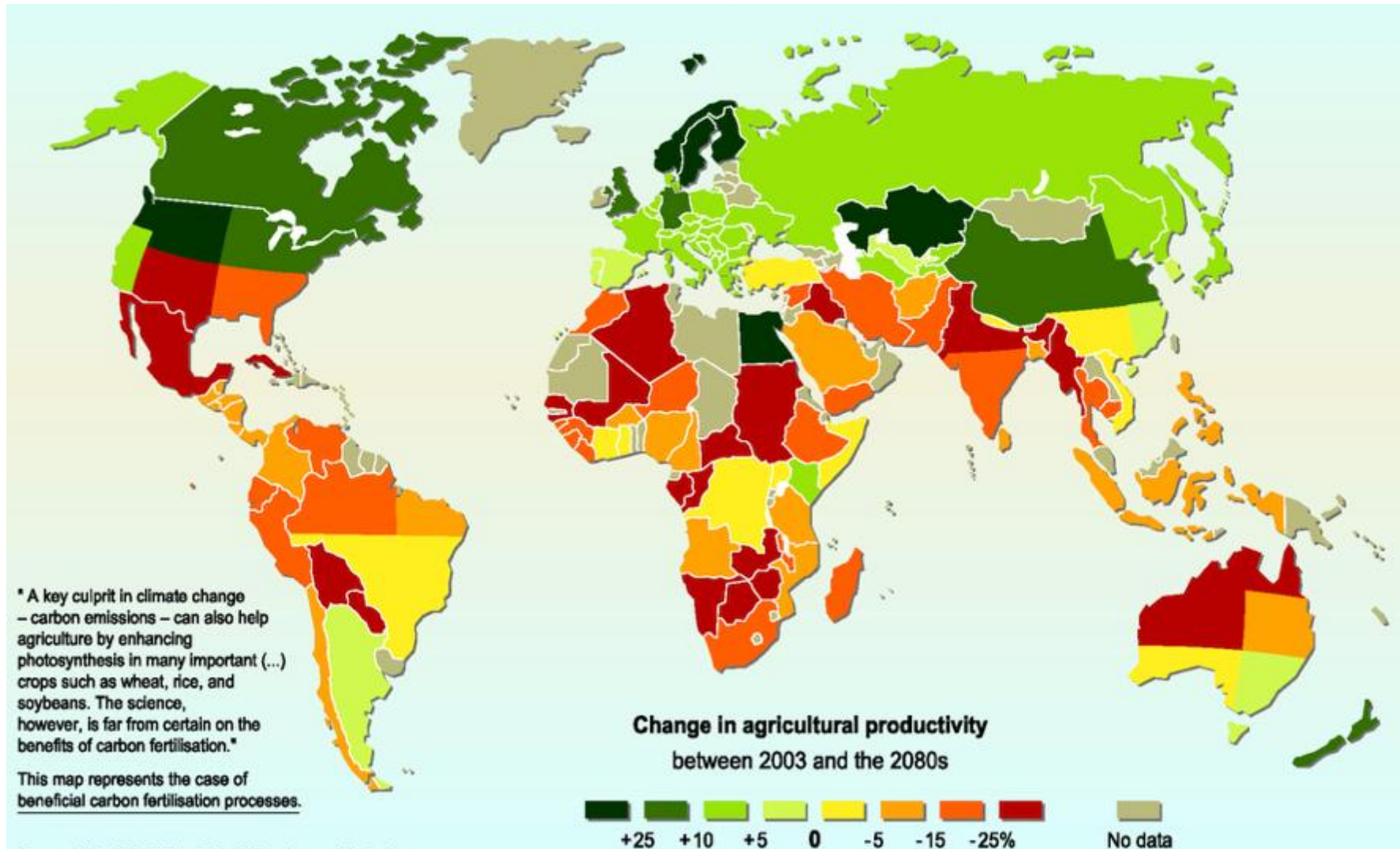


At the scale of the individual farmer:  
Why this is important: Imagine ....





# At a Global Scale: Projected changes in agricultural productivity: 2080

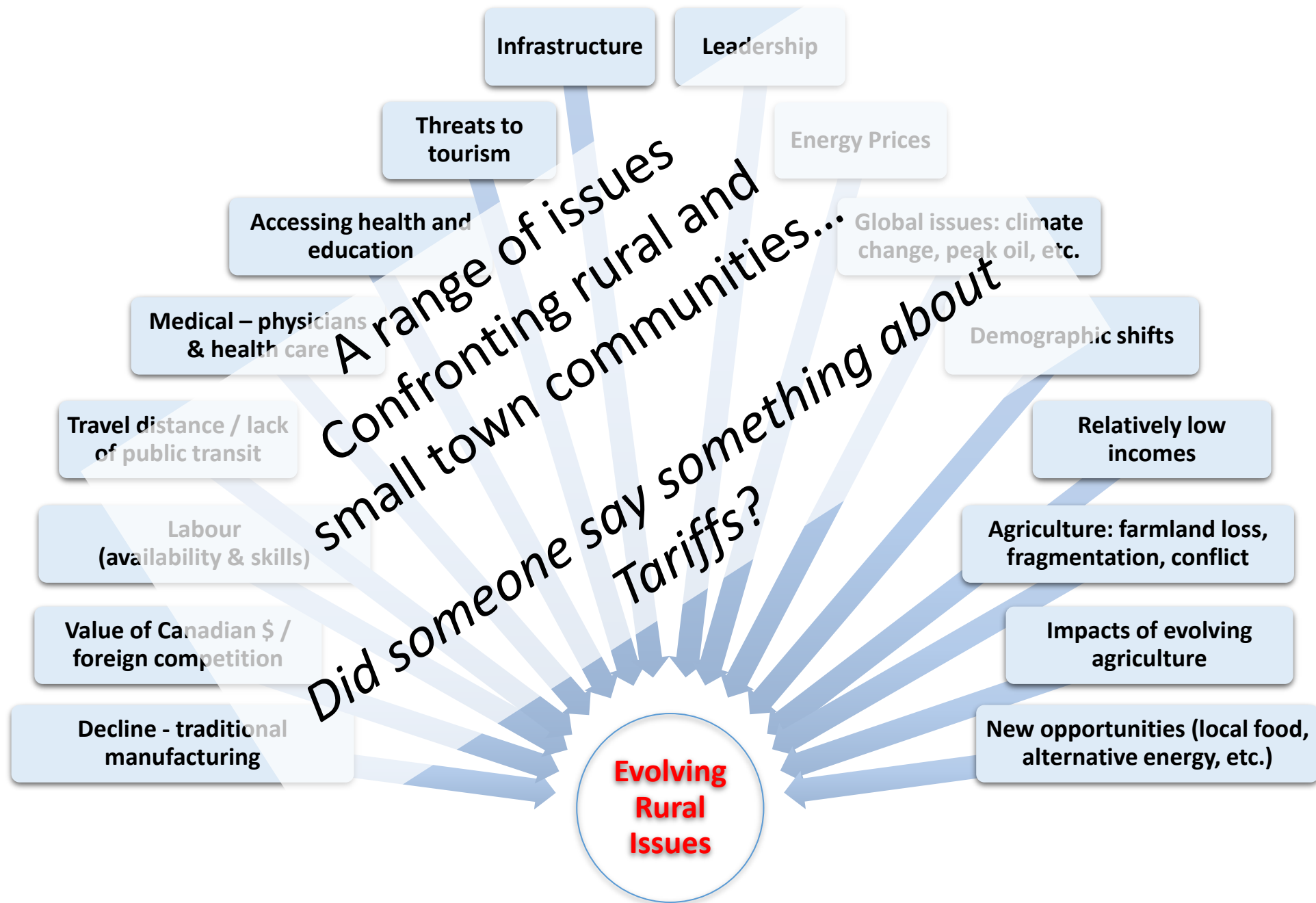


Source: World Bank (2013), *Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts, and the Case for Resilience*, based on Cline, *Global Warming and Agriculture: Impact Estimates by Country*, Peterson Institute for International Economics.





**What do you think are the key issues impacting Dufferin County?**

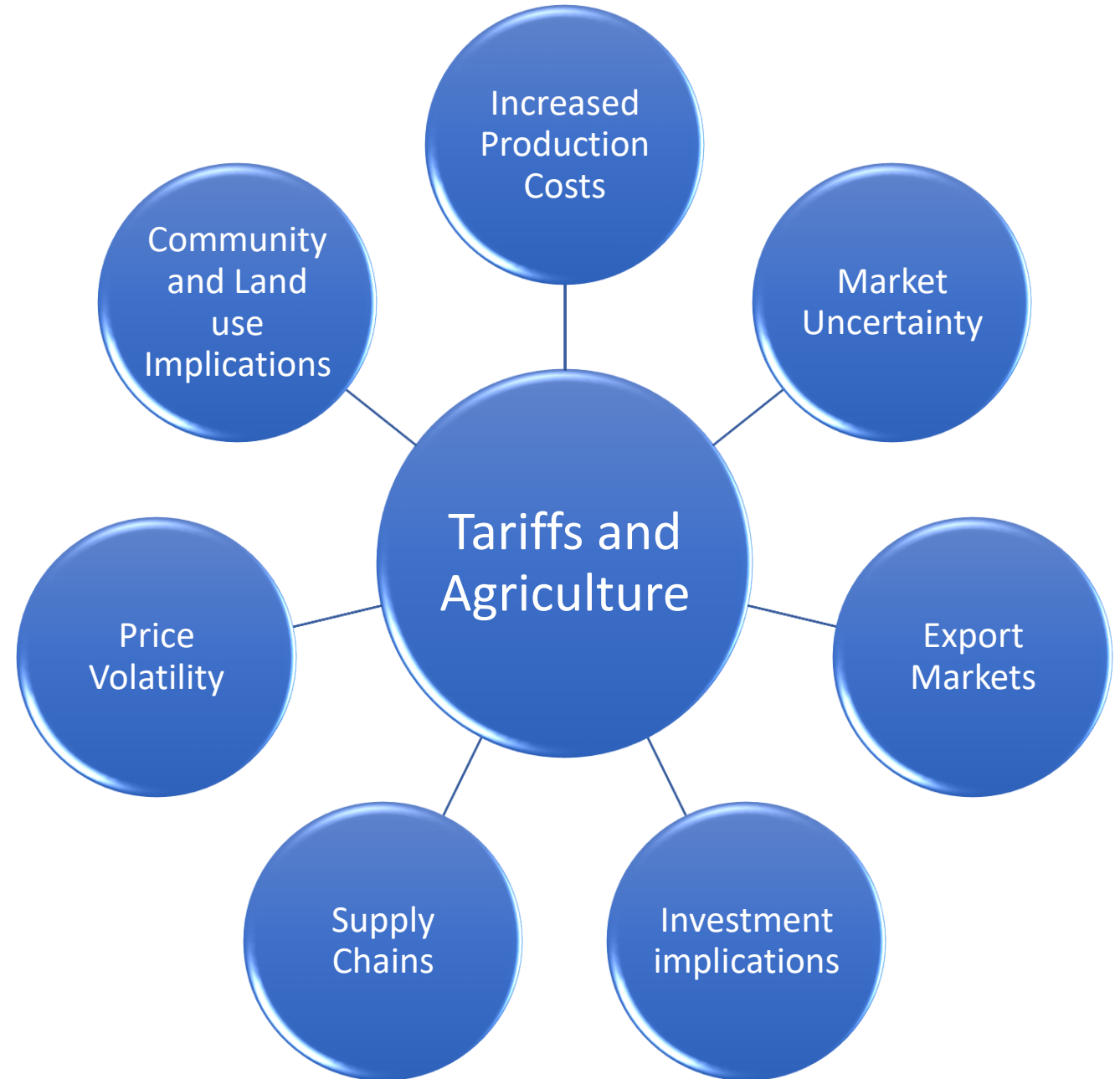




What do you think are the key tariff related impacts on Agriculture?



# Key Tariff-Related Issues Affecting Agriculture in Dufferin County







## Agriculture at a Glance

AS OF 2024

### Local Snapshot

Dufferin County  
CENSUS DIVISION



**695**  
farms



**157,389**  
acres of farmland



**226 acres**  
is the average sized farm



### Local Farm Sales



**19%**  
sell farm  
products directly  
to the  
consumer:



**4**  
farms operate a CSA  
(Community Supported Agriculture)



**18** farms sell  
at farmers' markets



**86** farms sell directly from their  
farm, at stands, or pick-your-own

### Economic Contributions in 2023

#### Local Impact



The local agri-food sector  
employed **3,350** people  
through **954** local agri-food  
business establishments

#### Farm Cash Receipts



**\$200 million**  
in Farm Cash  
Receipts



**TOP 3**  
Grains & Oilseeds  
Cattle  
Poultry & Eggs

#### Across the Province

Farm cash receipts  
generated by local farms  
supported **\$387 million**  
in GDP and **6,278**  
employees in the agri-food  
sector from farm to fork  
across Ontario

### Farm Facts



**19.9%**  
generate renewable  
energy, including  
solar, bioenergy and  
wind power



**34.7%**  
of farm  
operators  
are female



**69.4%**  
are small farms  
(less than \$100,000  
in revenue)



Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (2024) County Profiles.

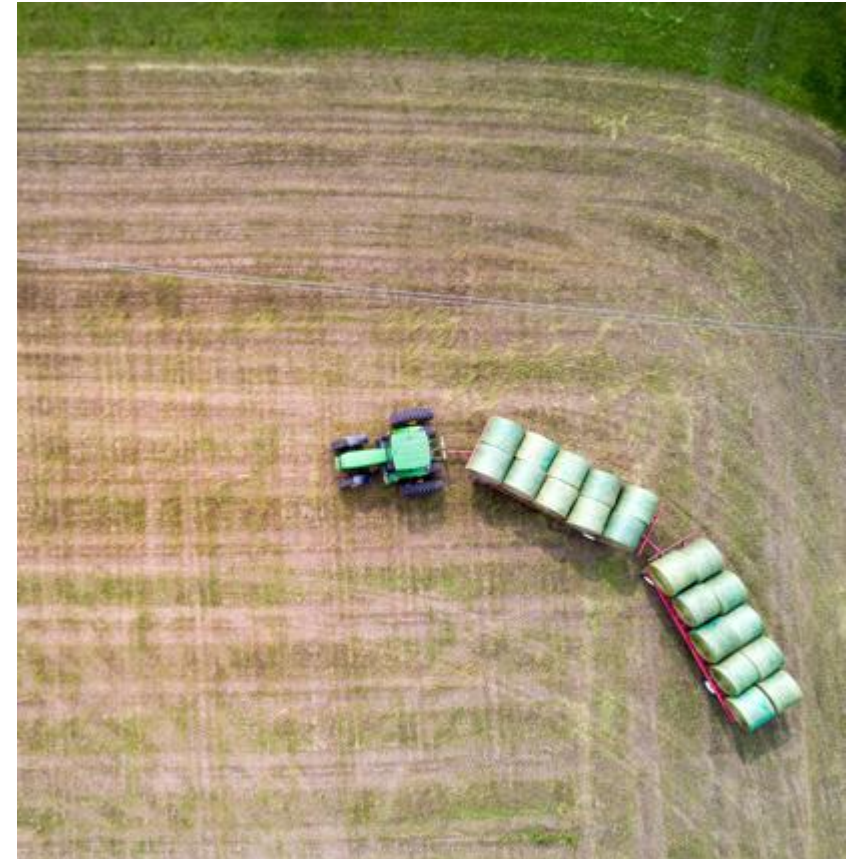
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# *Review of the Adopted Dufferin County Official Plan and Associated Agricultural Related Planning Issues*

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*The County is hitting a threshold moment in its history when climate change, housing affordability, aging populations, food security, the need for walkable communities and the importance of financially and environmentally sustainable development are all combining ..... The goal should not be replication of the scale and character of urban areas as they exist today, but rather movement toward development of communities that meet these challenges.*

*(Kevin Eby (July 2024), Report provided to Dufferin Federation of Agriculture)*





Tariffs and trade uncertainty remind us that agriculture's success isn't just about global markets — it's about the flexibility and resilience of our local land use policies.

By supporting on-farm diversification, housing, local markets, and adaptive infrastructure, it helps farmers weather volatility while strengthening agricultural prosperity in Dufferin County.





Why do you think Land Use Planning matters to agriculture in Dufferin County?





# Why planning matters to agriculture in Ontario- Dufferin County:

1. The future of Agriculture and the relationship to land use planning
2. Plans to keep agricultural areas agricultural
3. Provincial and local policy: agriculture and rural development (all sizes and forms)
4. Policy supported by farmers
5. Severance policy supporting agriculture
6. Decisions based on merit (not treating different farms the same)
7. Planning providing certainty and flexibility
8. Working with a healthy environment
9. A Framework for Local Discussion through an Agricultural Lens
10. Opportunities to expand the agricultural sector

**Let's look at these 10 points in more detail**

Why planning matters:

1) The Future of  
Agriculture in Ontario  
(and Dufferin County) is  
fundamentally  
connected to supportive  
planning policies and  
actions (Rural and  
Urban)



FARMING IN 2050  
THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE





Why planning matters:

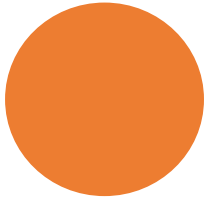
## 2. Keep agricultural areas in agriculture:

Recognizing diverse land use pressures from urban expansion and development in rural areas



# Why Protect Farmland?

- Without farmland there is no agriculture
- Farmer livelihoods
- Food production
- Food security (domestic and global)
- Economic contributions of agriculture
- A resource for future generations





Why planning matters:

### 3) Provincial and local policy: agriculture as a priority (all sizes and forms)





## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in Huron is of national significance. Huron leads all counties and regions in Ontario in total value of production; and it also exceeds the production totals of several provinces. Huron has the advantage of an informed and progressive farm community, a supportive service sector, high capability soils, a diversified agricultural industry, a favourable climate, and limited non-farm intrusion. Agriculture has a significant positive economic impact in the County that goes beyond the farm gate and rural areas into Huron's towns and villages. The continued health of agriculture is important not only from an agricultural perspective, but also from a broader community and economic perspective.







All Sizes and Forms:  
Recognizing diverse  
production systems across  
the province (and county)



## 4. Policy supported by farmers

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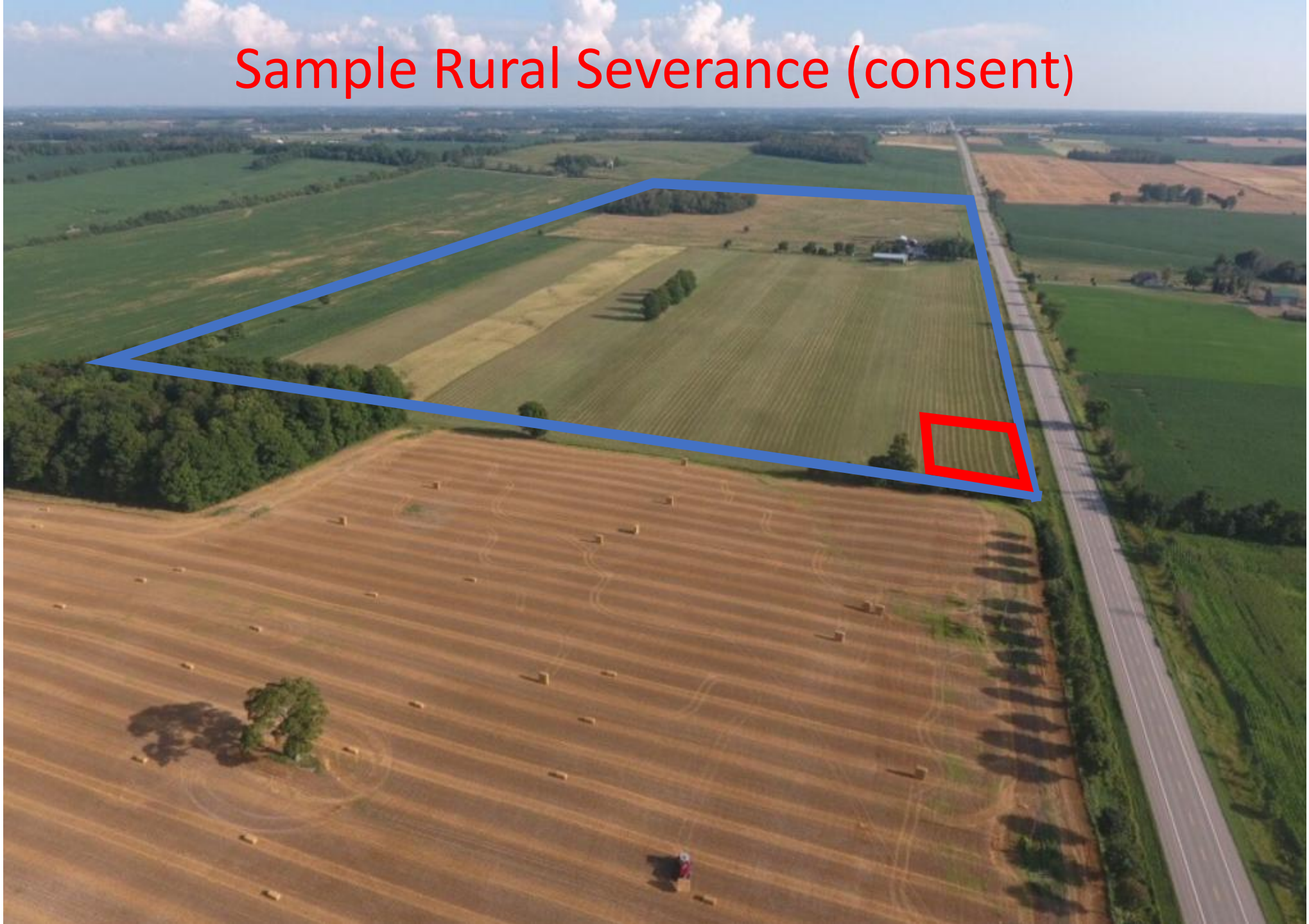
Why planning matters:

# 5. Severance policy supporting agriculture

(Urban Development in Rural Areas)



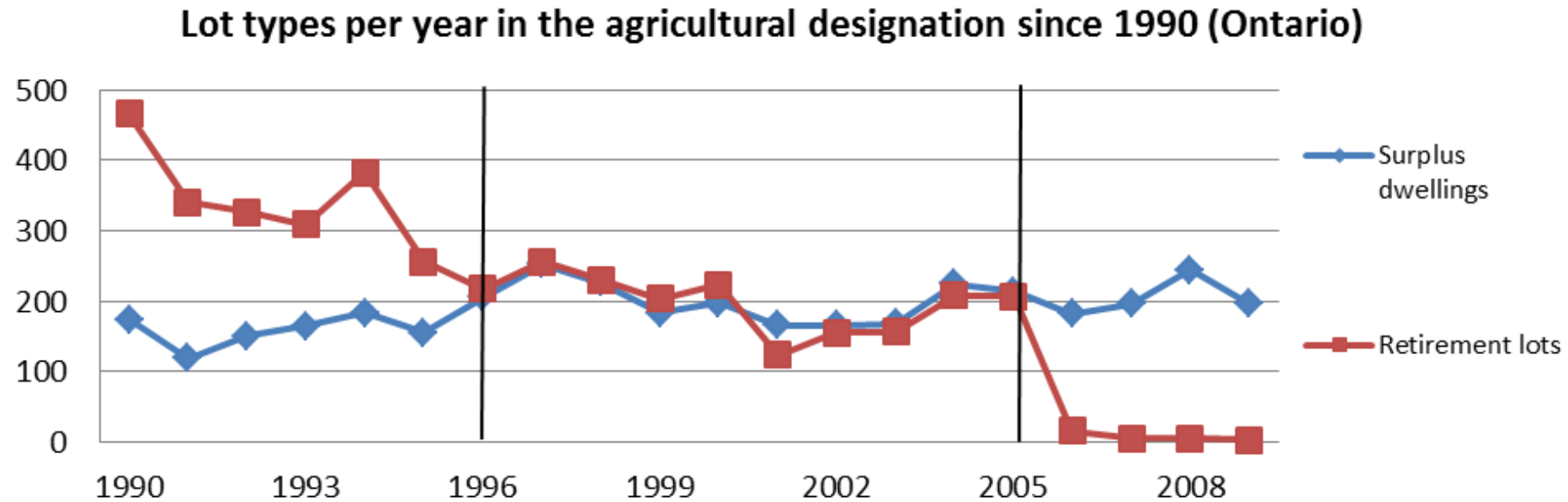
# Sample Rural Severance (consent)





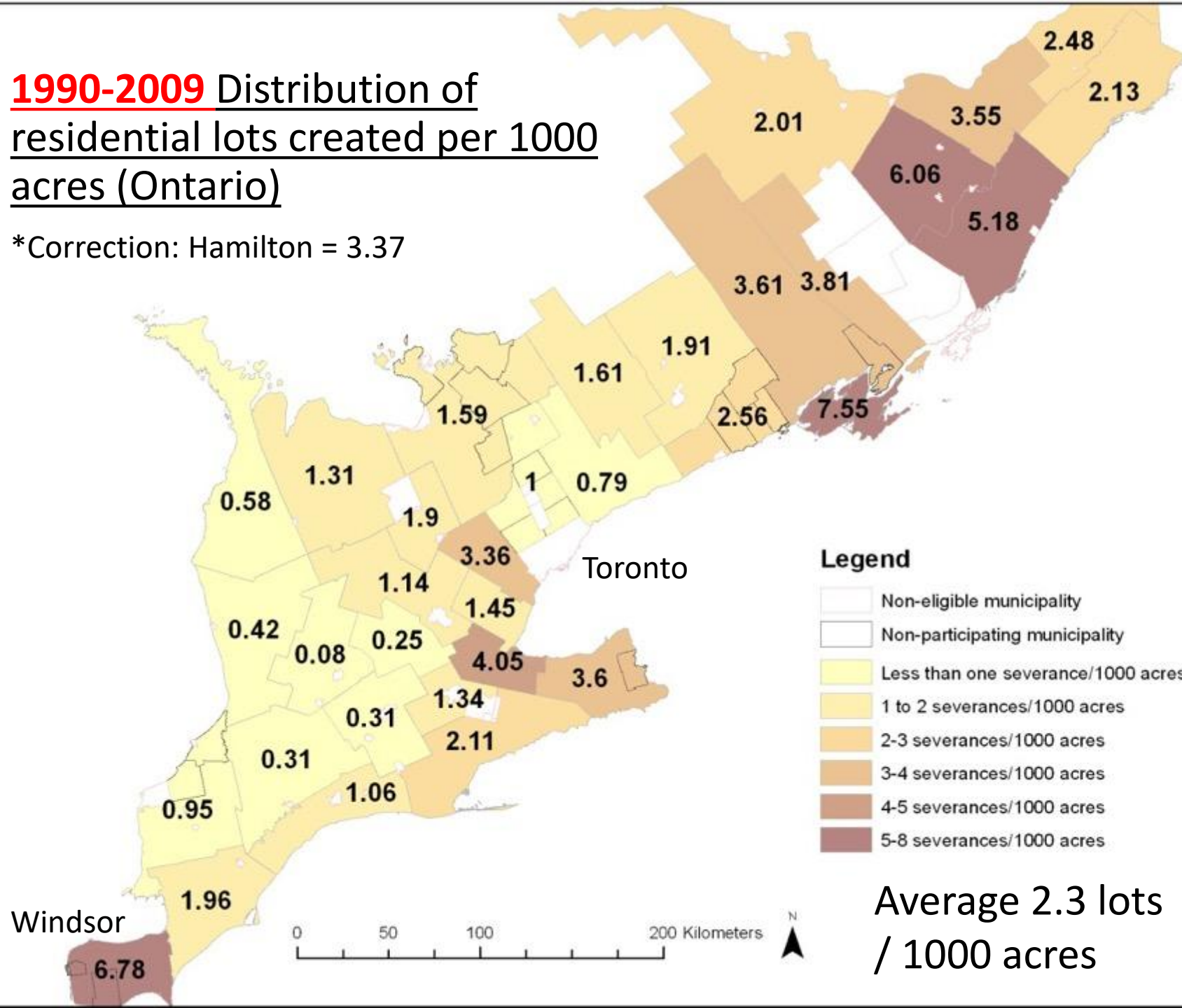
# Ontario: Lot Creation Trends 1990-2009

## Surplus and Retirement Lot Trends



**1990-2009** Distribution of  
residential lots created per 1000  
acres (Ontario)

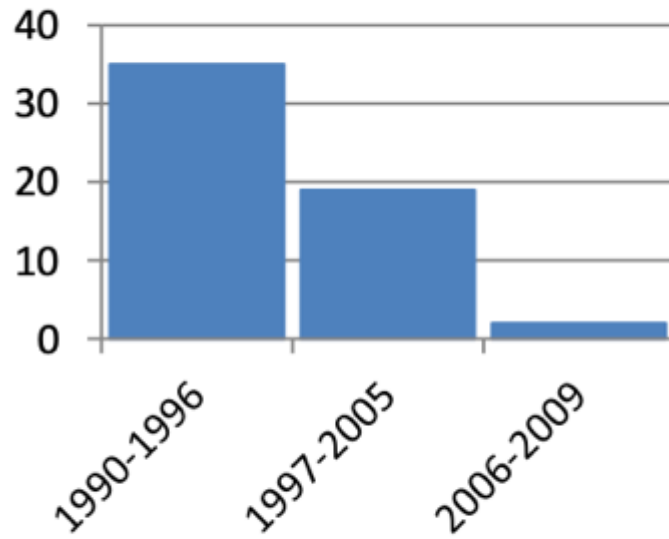
\*Correction: Hamilton = 3.37



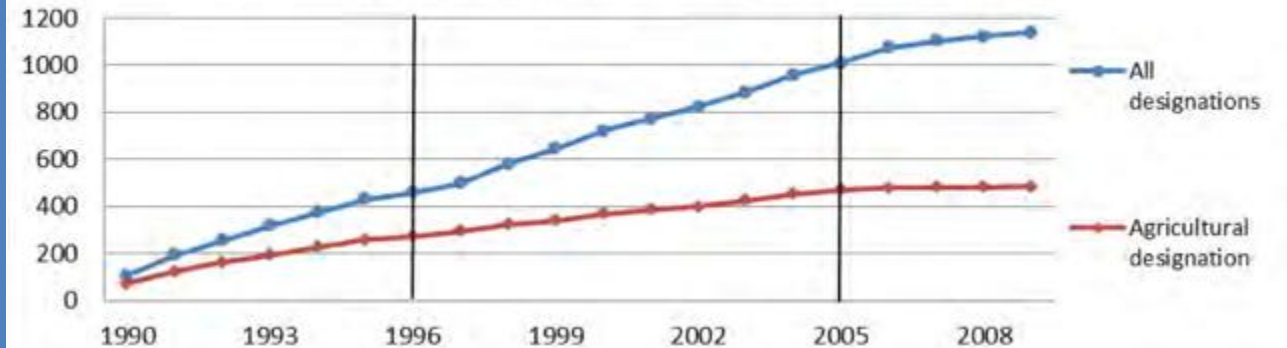


# Severance Activity Dufferin County (on agricultural lands) 1990-2009

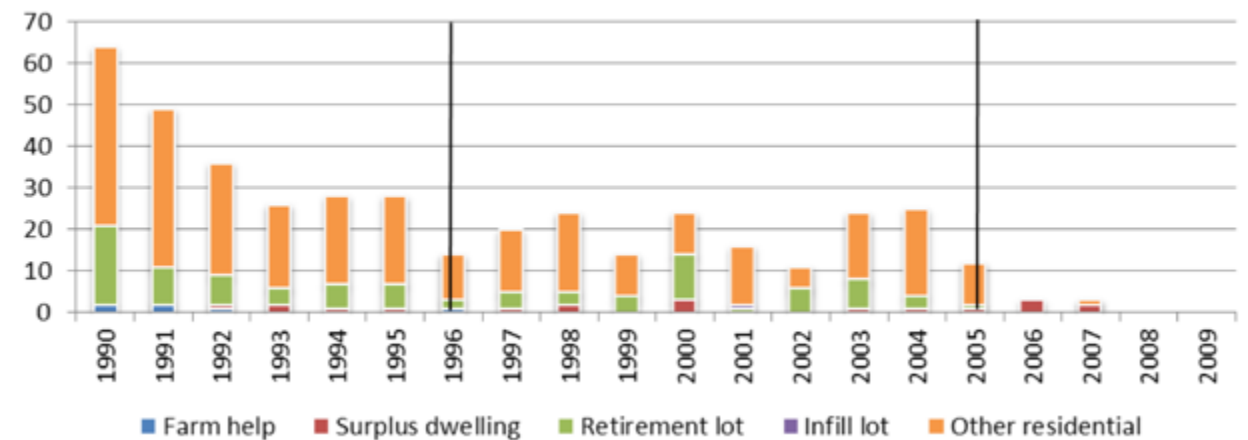
**Residential lots (avg/yr)**



**Cumulative new lots in the agricultural designation since 1990**



**New residential lots per year in the agricultural designation 1990-2009**



# Impacts of Non-farm Land uses on Agricultural Land

- Potential restrictions on farming
- Fragment land base and consume farmland
- Potential conflict with agriculture
- Can lead to changes in the rural community
- Environmental and servicing impacts





Why planning matters:

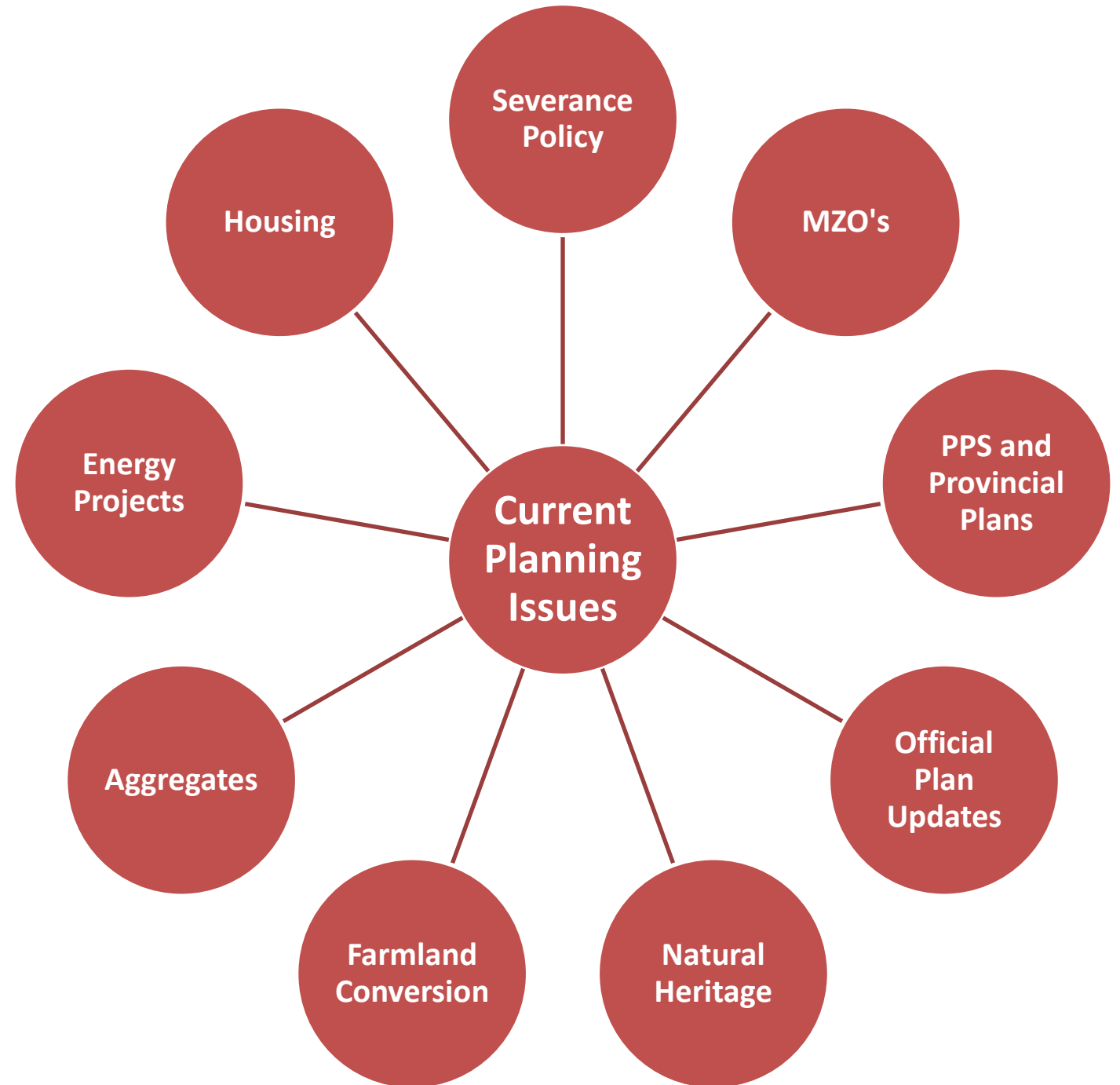
6. Policy-Led  
Decisions (i.e.  
treating  
different farms  
the same)

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# Current Rural Planning Issues (an agricultural focus)

(These issues vary by geography.)





# Planning for agriculture...

- In parts of the province limited understanding of agriculture and agri-food systems
- MDS (Minimum Distance Separation)
- Minimum lot sizes
- Lot creation
- On-farm diversified uses
- Balancing competing interests
- The role of the province



## **Here's a True Story from Utah...**

**A city councilman, Mark Easton, lives in this neighbourhood. He had a beautiful view of the East Mountains, until a new neighbour purchased the lot below his house and built.**

**Apparently, the new home was 18 inches higher than the by-laws would allow, so Mark, mad about his lost view, went to the city to make sure they enforced the proper height. Mark and his new neighbour had some great arguments about this as you can imagine – not great feelings. The new neighbour had to drop the roof line - no doubt at great expense.**

**Recently, Mark Easton called the city and informed them that his new neighbour had installed some vents on the side of his home. Mark didn't like the look of these vents and asked the city to investigate. When they went to Mark's home to see the vent view, this is what they found...**





7. Planning aims to provide stability and flexibility

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*Provincial Policy Matters:*

The PPS includes the provincial interest in protecting farmland and regulating non-farm development. Local planning statements must be consistent with the PPS.

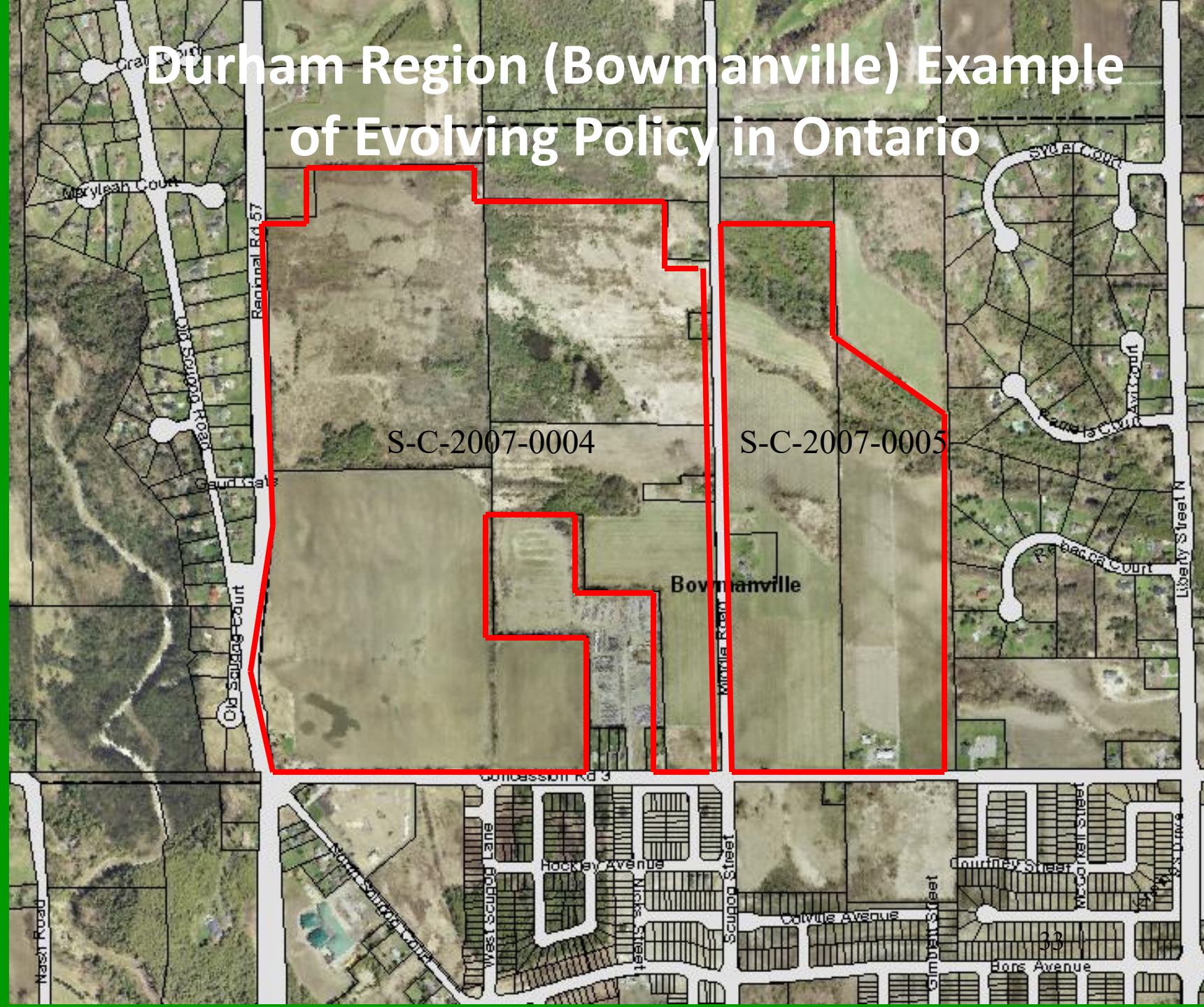




# Impact of Provincial Policy

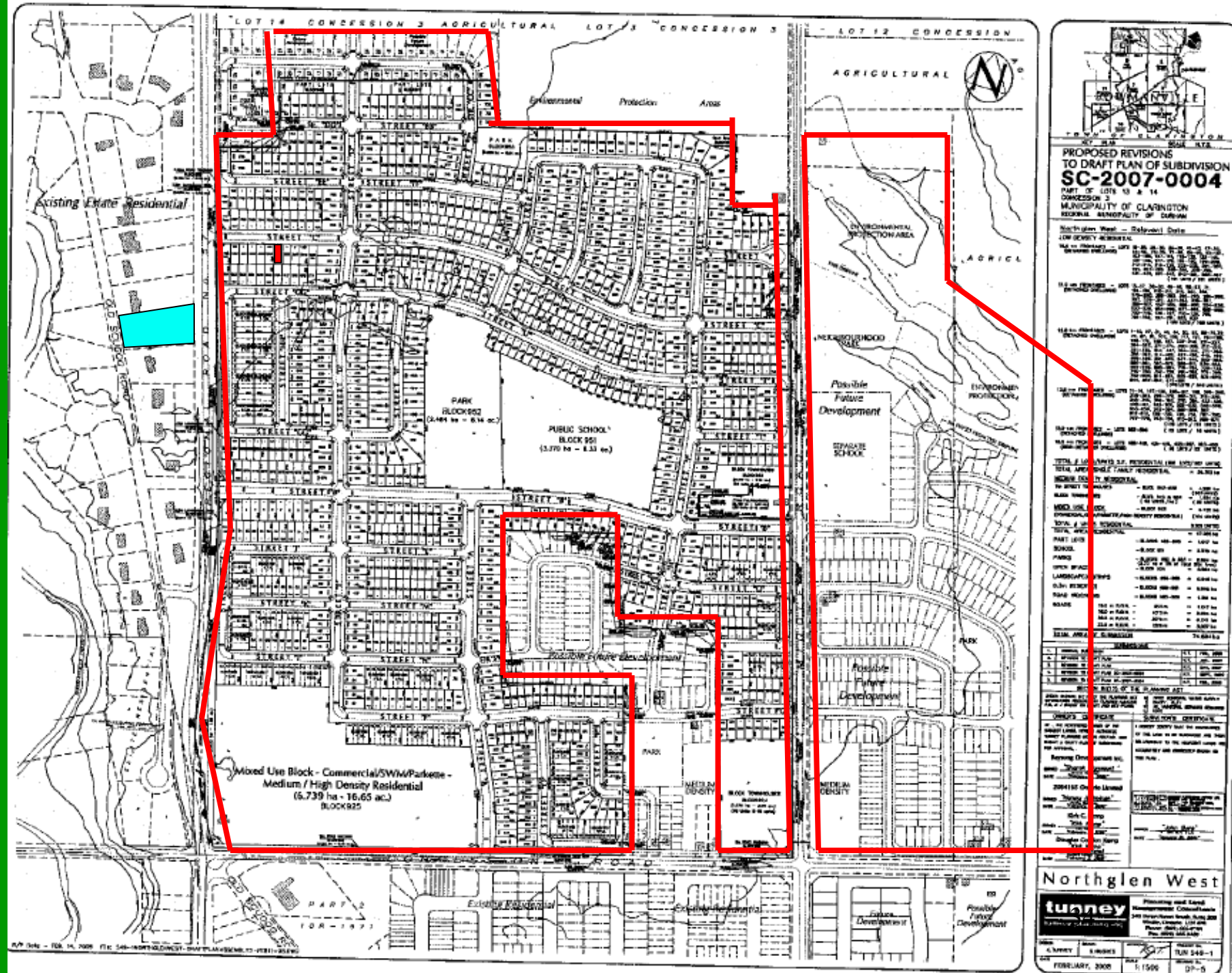
## Durham Region (Bowmanville) Example of Evolving Policy in Ontario

Pre-2005 Policy  
Intervention

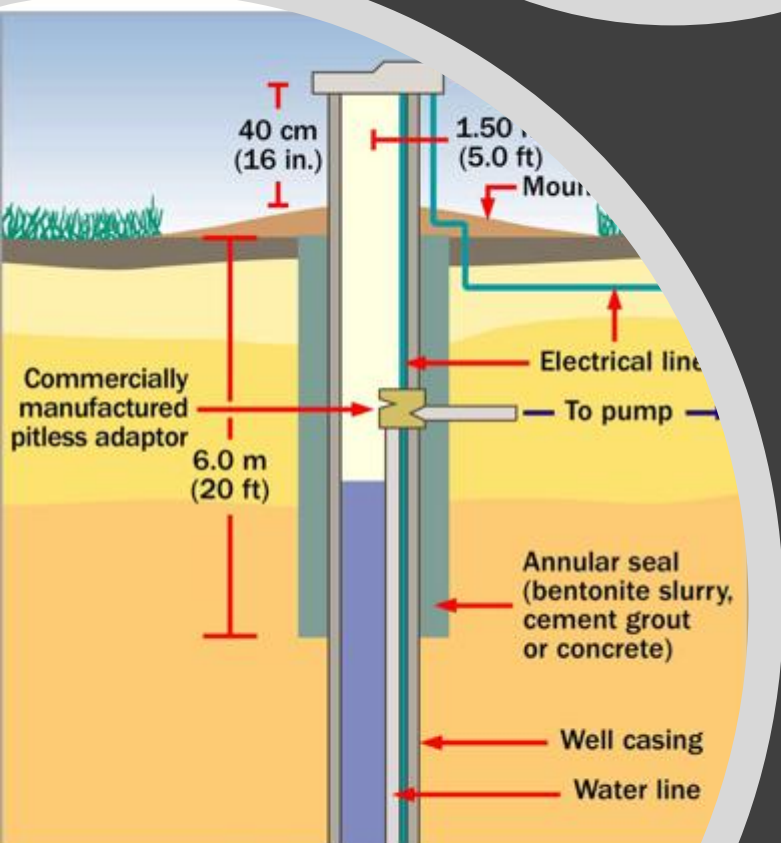




# Post -2005 Policy Intervention







Why planning matters:

## 8. Working for a healthy environment



**Figure 2.** Best management practices for a properly constructed, drilled overburden well.



## 9. A Framework for Local Discussion through an Agricultural Lens

1) The Official Plan

2) Implementation of Official Plans

- Zoning By-laws and Minor Variances

- Land Division

- etc.

3) Other regulatory & non-regulatory approaches





## Loss of Farmland via Official Plan Amendments (2000- 2017)

### Measuring Farmland Loss Research Project

## DUFFERIN COUNTY



Total Land Area (Census 2016)<sup>1</sup>: 148,644 ha  
 Area of Census Farm (2001)<sup>2</sup>: 78,169.9 ha  
 Area of Census Farms (2016)<sup>2</sup>: 63,370.94 ha  
 Area of Region in the Greenbelt<sup>3</sup>: 27,523 ha  
 Percent of Region in the Greenbelt: 18.52%  
 Gross Farm Receipts (2016)<sup>4</sup>: \$157.50 million  
 Gross Farm Receipts per Hectare of Census Farm: \$2,485.30  
 Population (2016)<sup>1</sup>: 61,735  
 Growth Rate 2006-2011<sup>5</sup>: 4.5%  
 Growth Rate 2011-2016<sup>1</sup>: 8.5%

Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Development Designation (Including Urban, Residential, And Employment)	59 ha
Prime Agricultural Area Redesignated To A Rural Designation	0 ha
Land Designated As A Prime Agricultural Area With A Site-Specific Amendment To Allow Additional Uses	187.8 ha
<b>Total Amount of Prime Agricultural Land Loss 2000–2017</b>	<b>246.8</b>
<b>Total Prime Agricultural Land Loss as a Percentage (Per Census Farm Area 2001)</b>	<b>0.32%</b>

**Table 2. Prime Agricultural Area Converted Through OPAs In Dufferin County By Application Date & Location Relative To The Greenbelt Plan**

	Outside the Greenbelt		Within the Greenbelt		Total
	Application date		Application Date		
	Pre 2005	2005-2017	Pre 2005	2005- 2017	
<b>Prime agriculture area redesignated to a development or rural designation (ha)</b>	35.9	19	4.1	0	<b>59</b>
<b>Prime agricultural area with site-specific policies allowing additional uses (ha)</b>	0	169.8	0	18	<b>187.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>188.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>246.8</b>



Why planning matters:

## 10. Opportunities to expand the agricultural sector



# The Relationship Between the Future of Agriculture and Planning



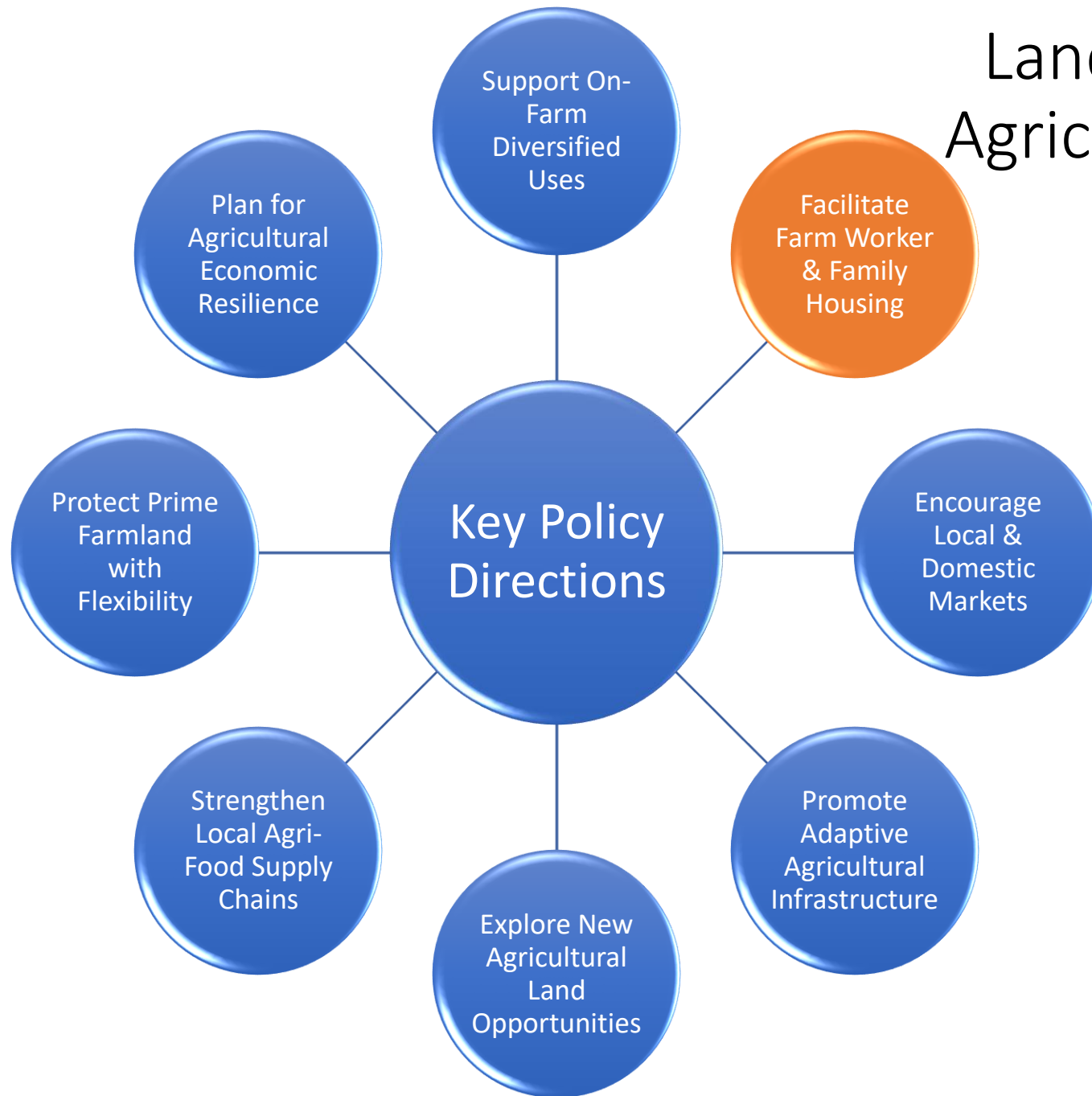
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Given that planning is essential to the future of agriculture in Dufferin and Ontario — how do we put that into practice, especially when facing uncertainty and pressures like tariffs?





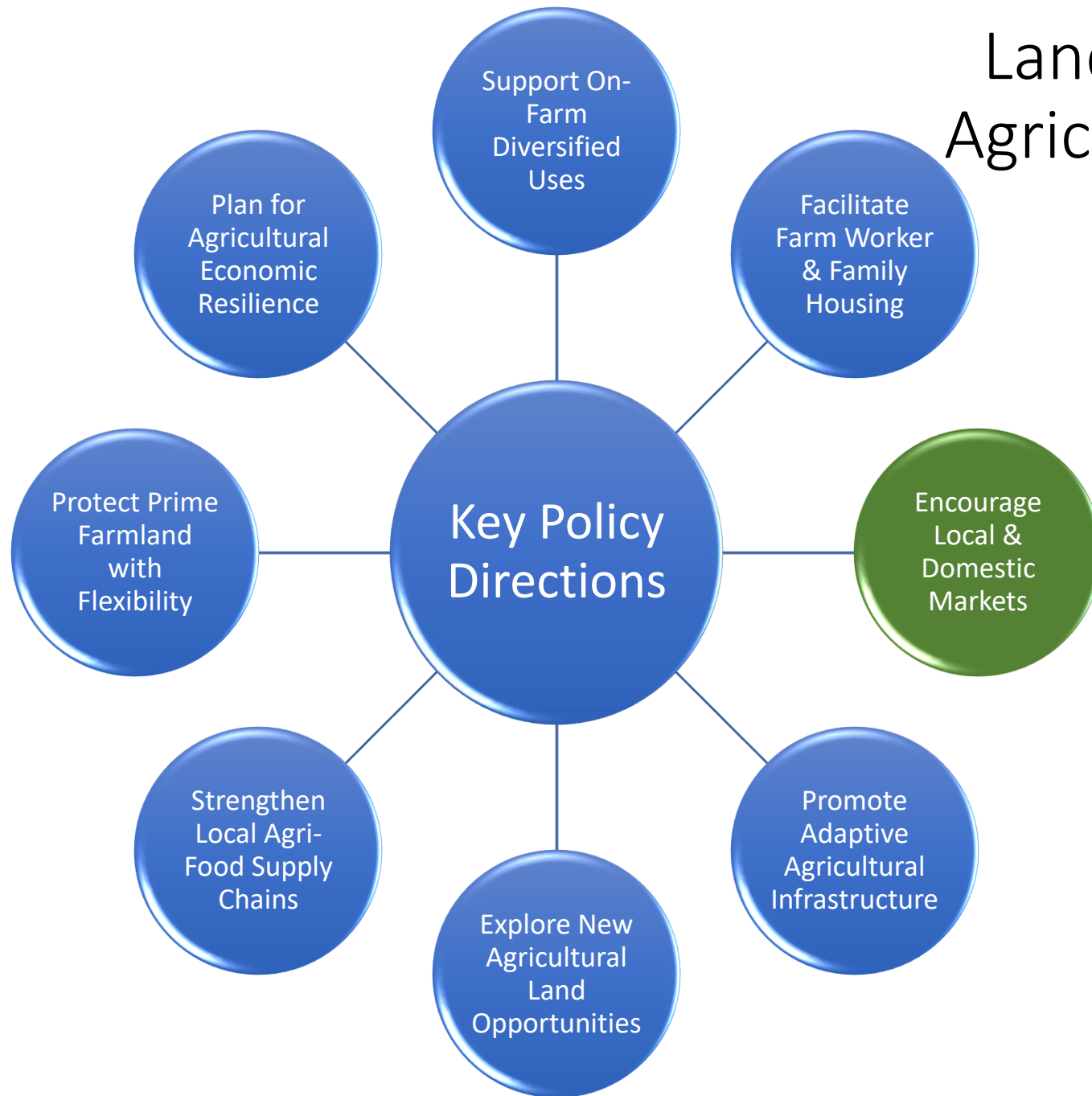
# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs



## Farm Worker & Family Housing



# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs

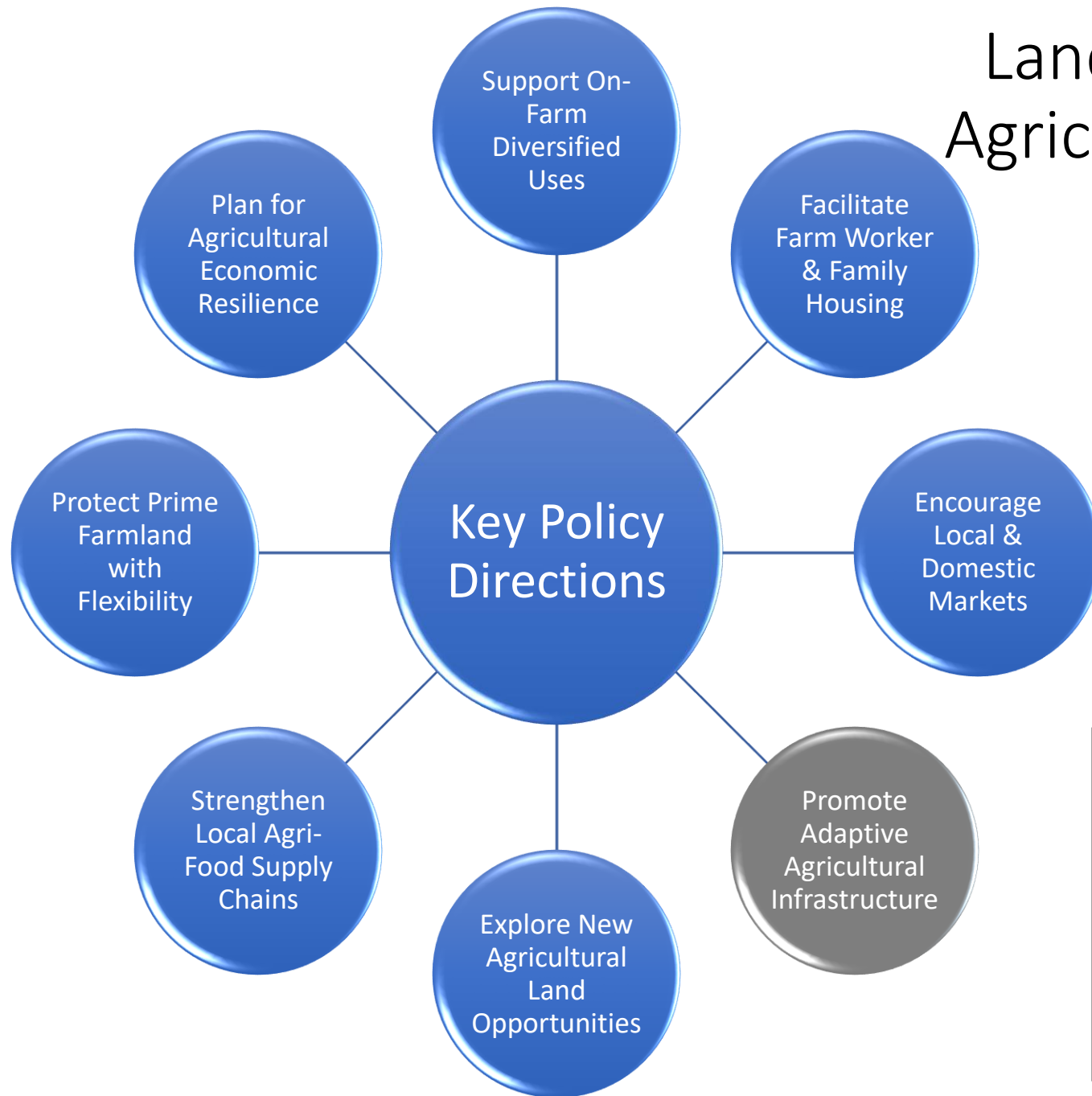


## Local and Domestic Markets





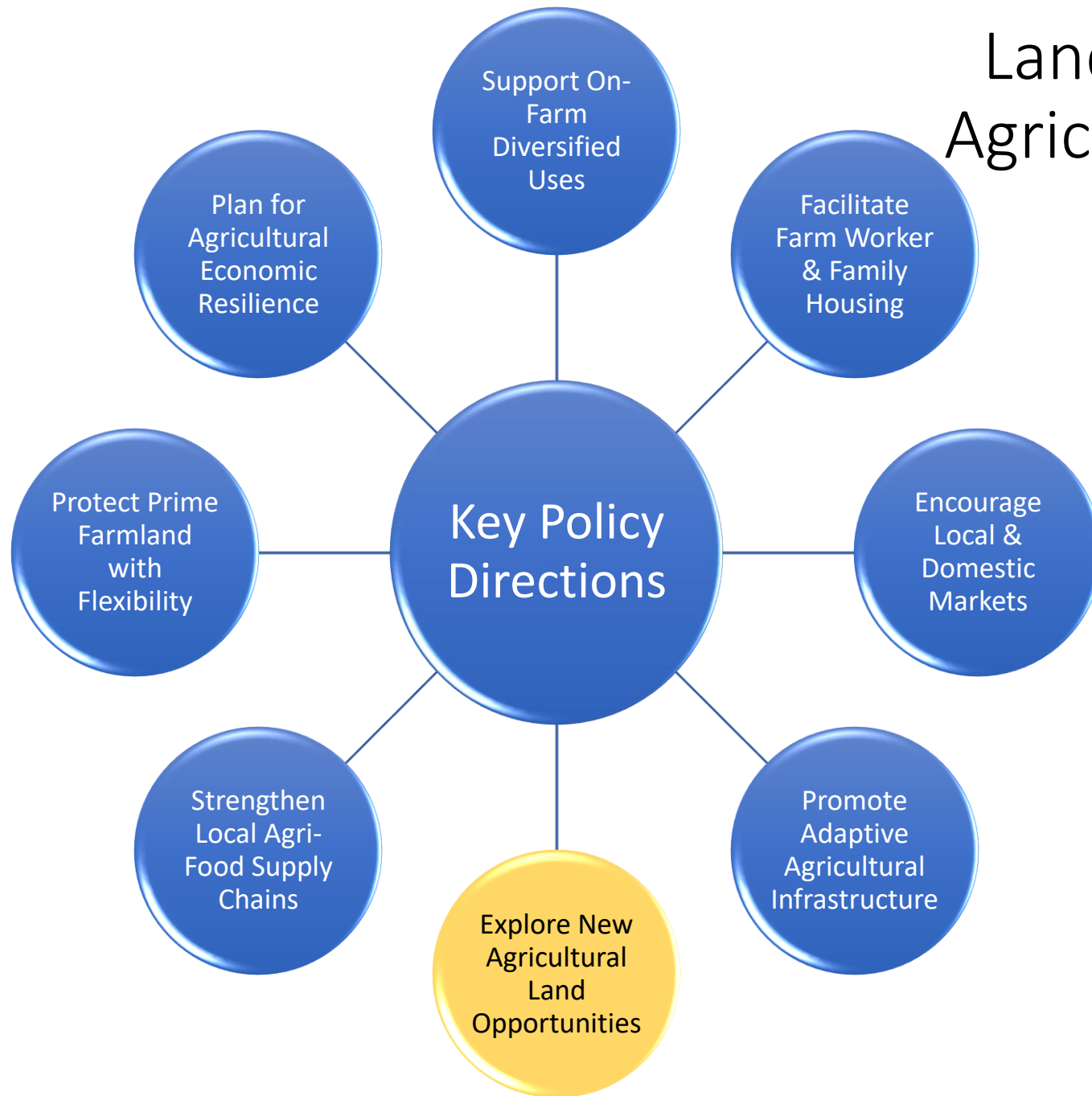
# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs



## Agricultural Infrastructure



# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs



## New Agricultural Opportunities



### Maelström Winery – Huron County's First Winery

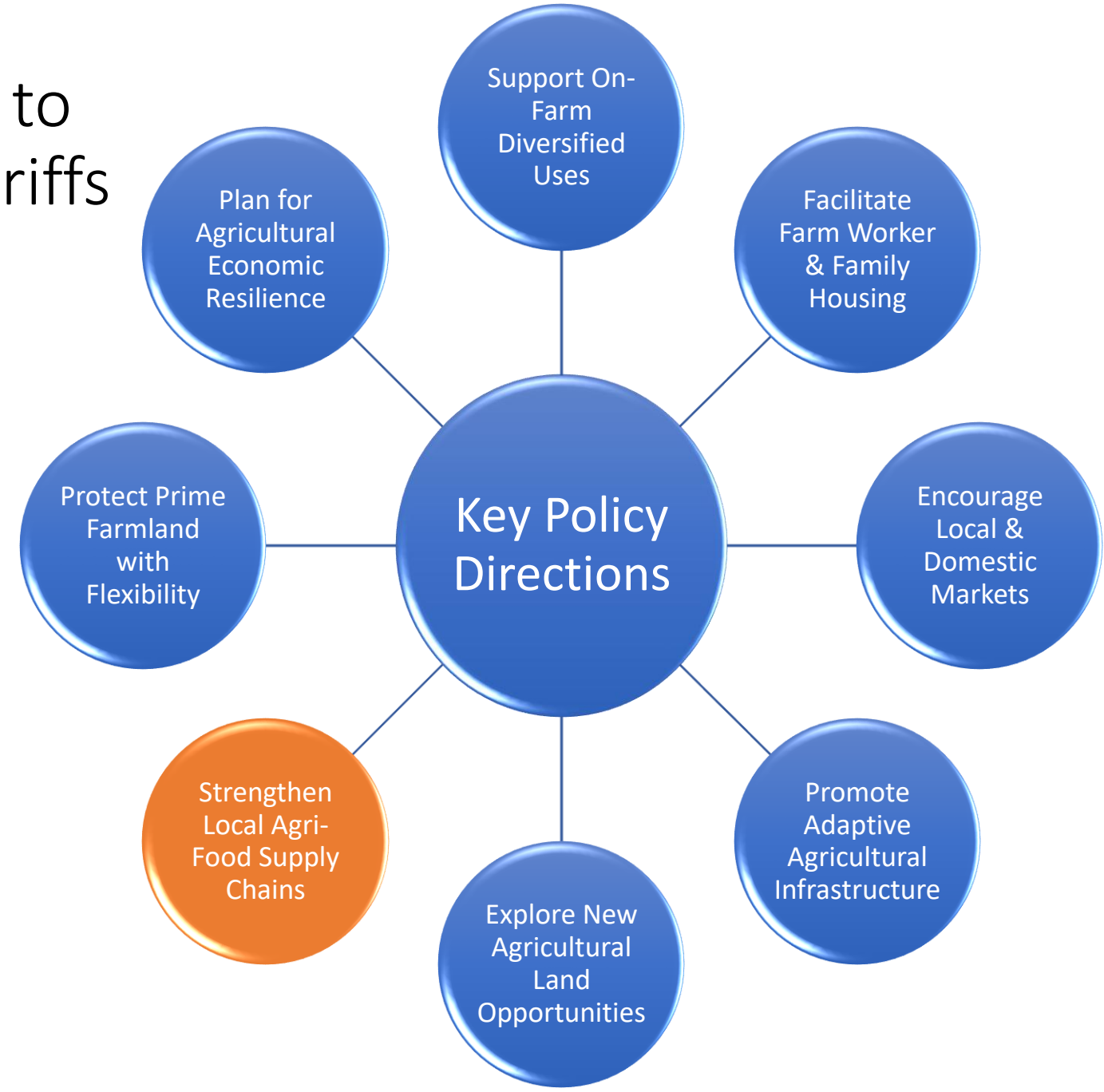
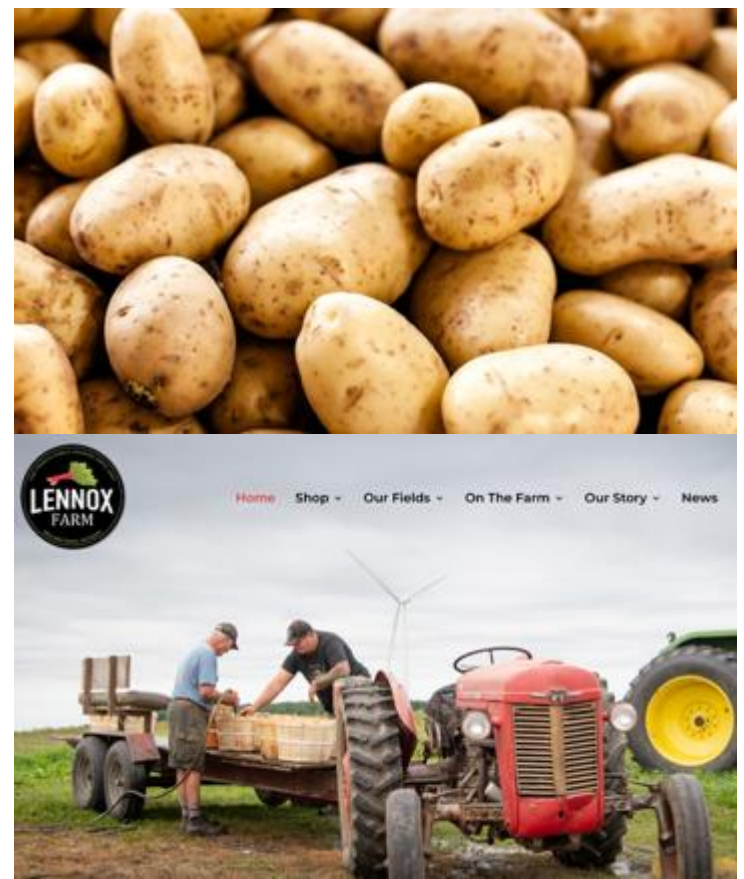
Maelström may be the first winery to discover the diverse ecosystem of Huron County, but we won't be the last. Ensure you're among the first to experience it!





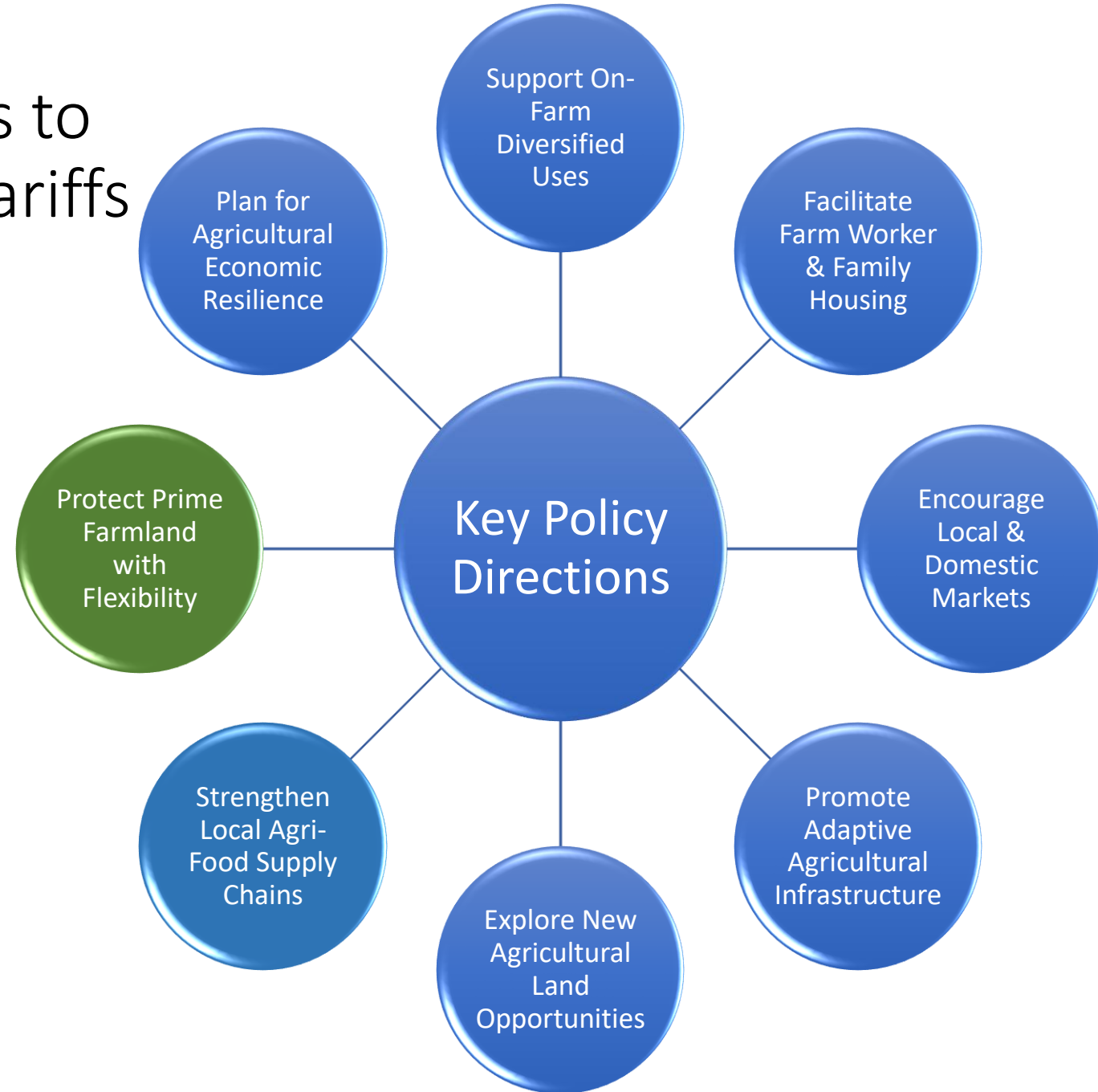
# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs

## Local Agri-food Supply Chains



# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs

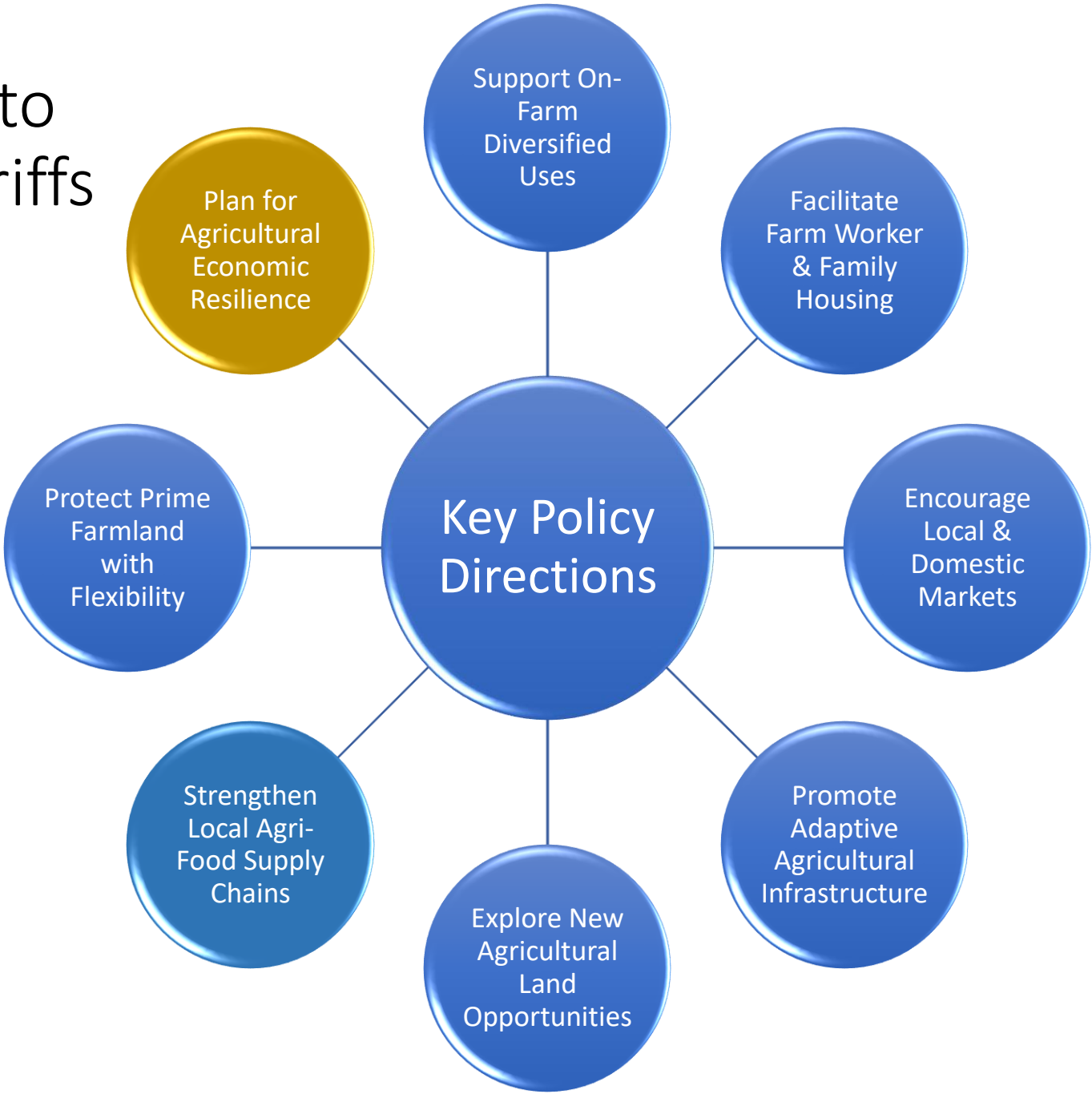
## Protect Prime Farmland with Flexibility





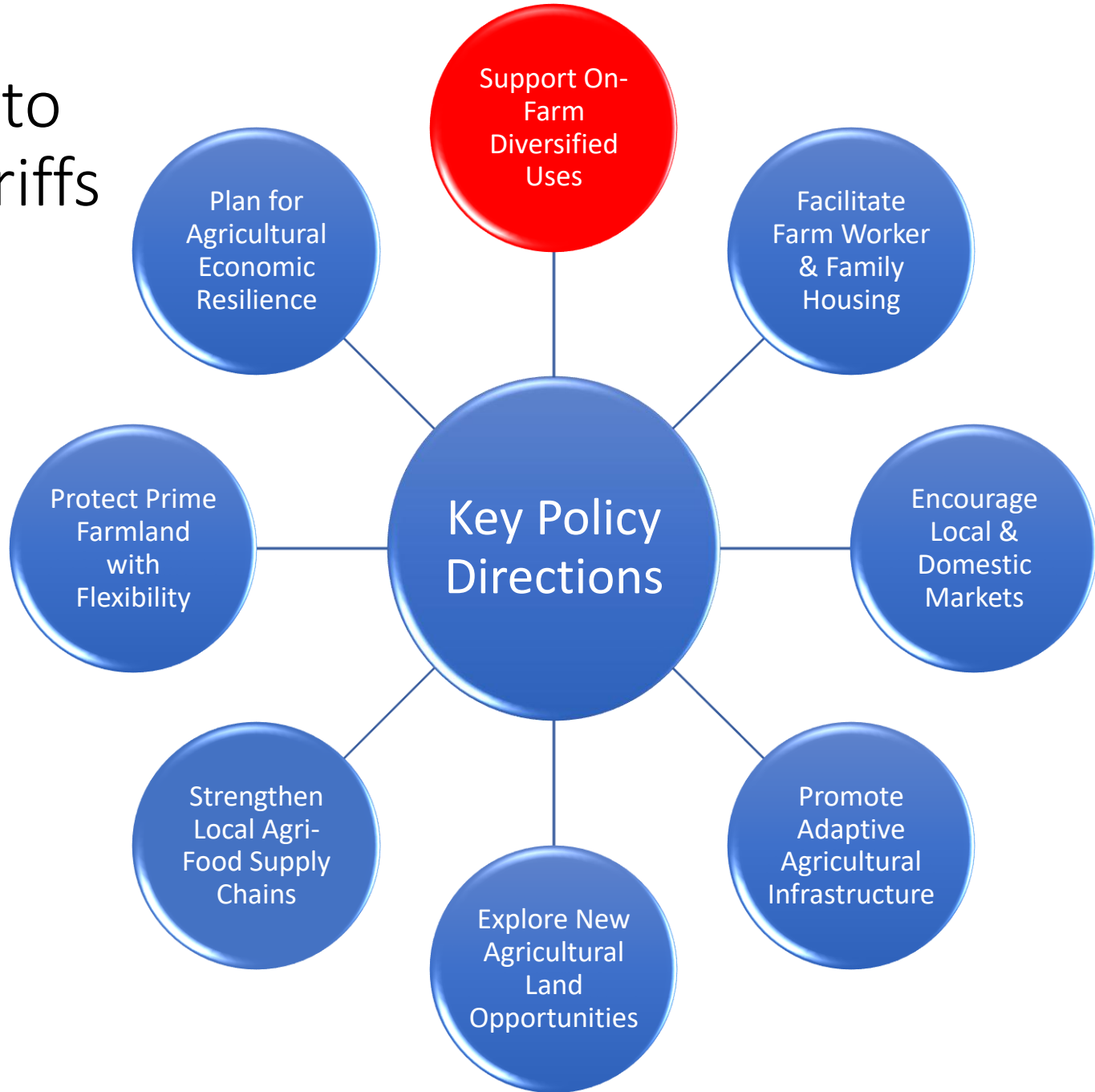
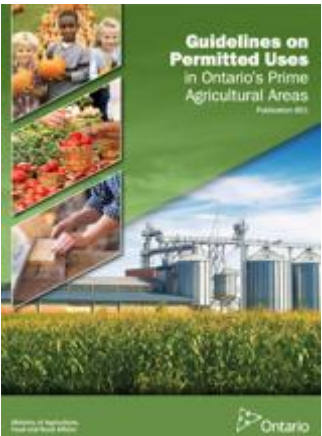
# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs

## Agricultural Economic Resilience



# Land Use Planning Responses to Agricultural Uncertainty and Tariffs

## On-Farm Diversified Uses





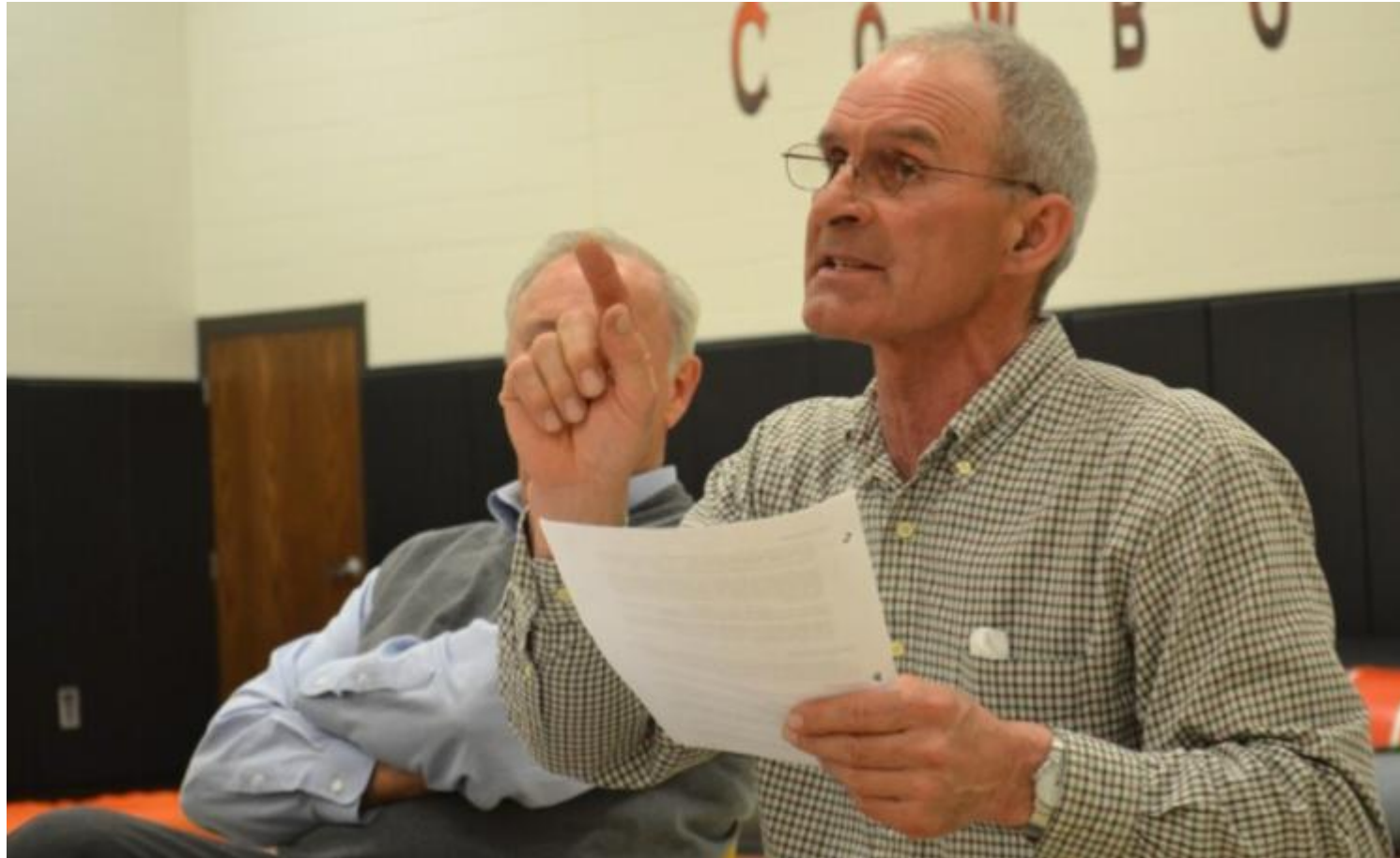
# Planning for Agriculture: How do you make this happen?

10 Lessons for:

- Municipalities,
- The Province and
- Farmers



# 1) The importance of listening...



(Image: Dickinson Press)



## 2) A commitment to agriculture

Recognize agriculture as an integral part of the community with a clear strategy supported by land use plans, economic development and infrastructure.





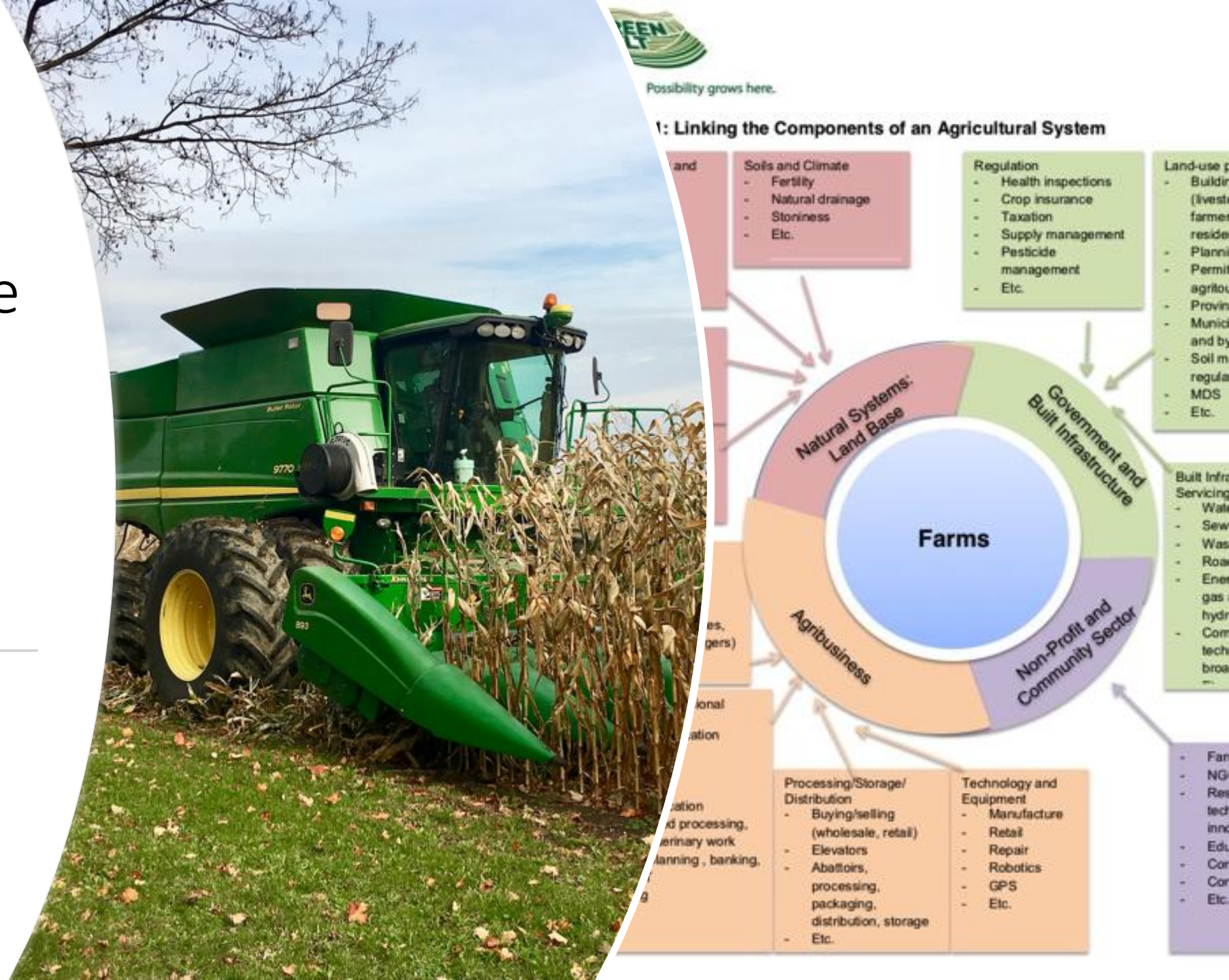
3) Land use policy:  
have an agricultural  
perspective and  
consider innovative  
approaches

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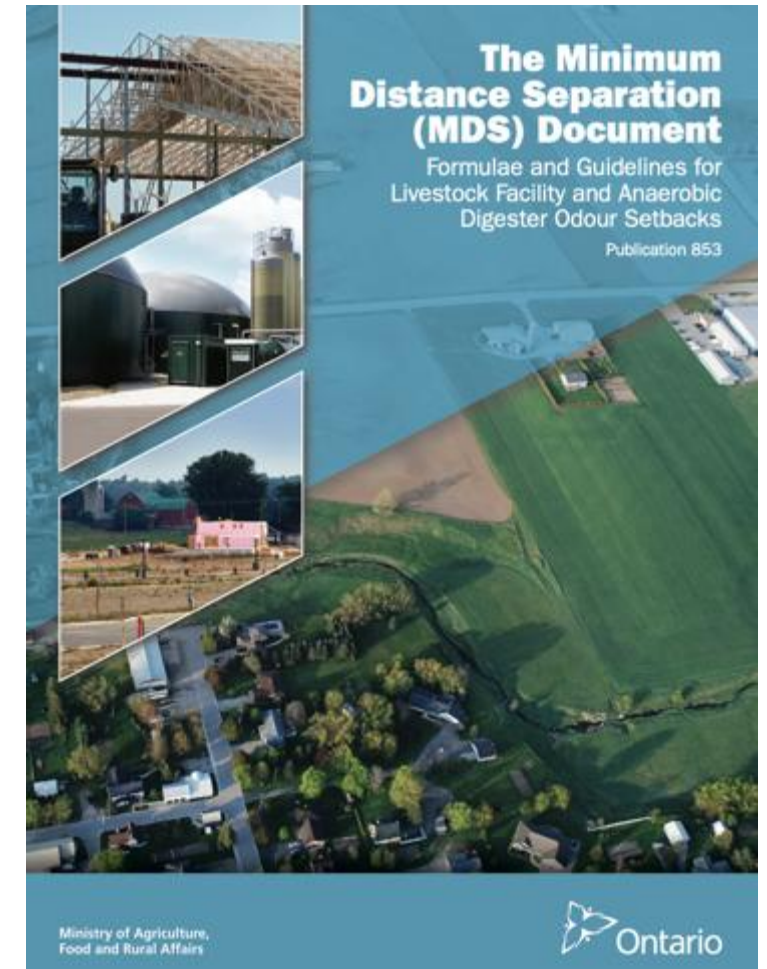
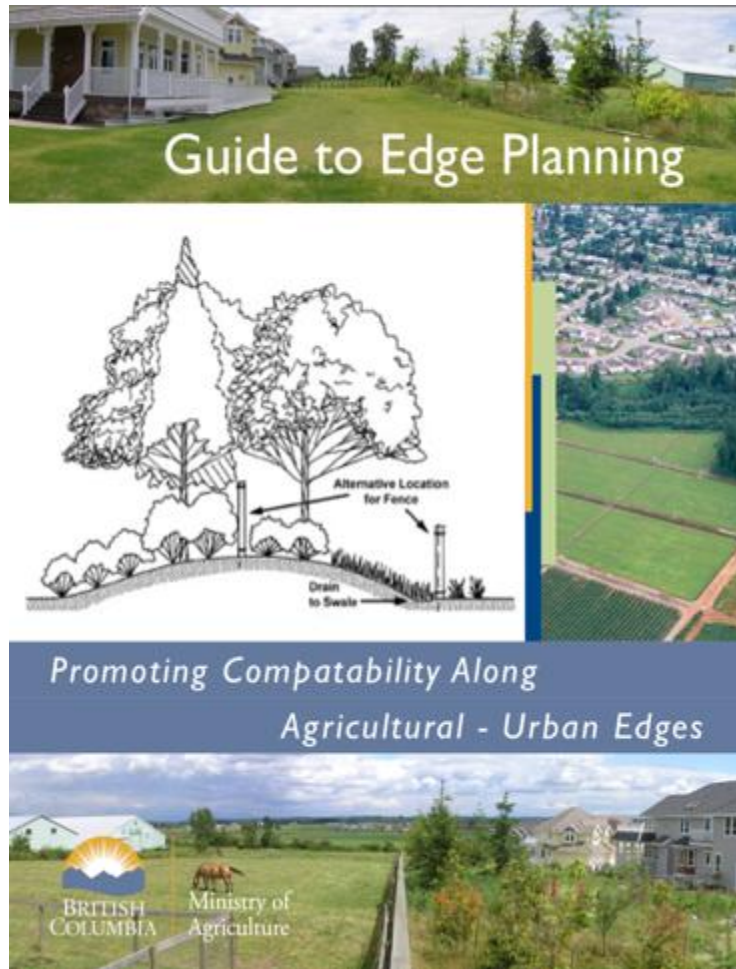


## 4) Link Agriculture System Components in local and provincial policy





## 5) Manage Conflict



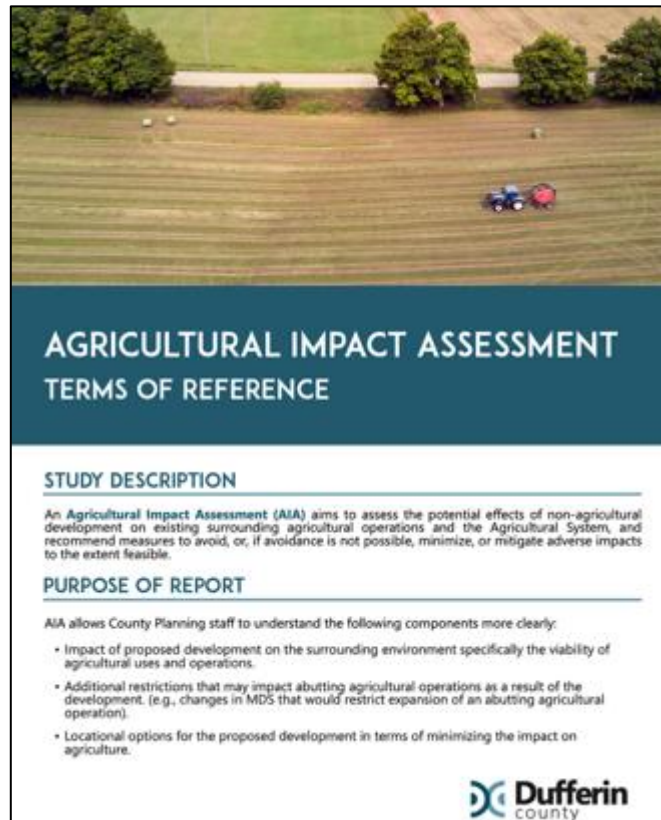




6) Minimize Land Fragmentation



# 7) Development: Evaluate the impacts on Agriculture (agricultural impact assessment)





## 8) Economic development strategies (provincial and local):

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- Have an agricultural component and recognize connection to sound planning policy





9) Create  
(support)  
Infrastructure in  
support of  
agriculture

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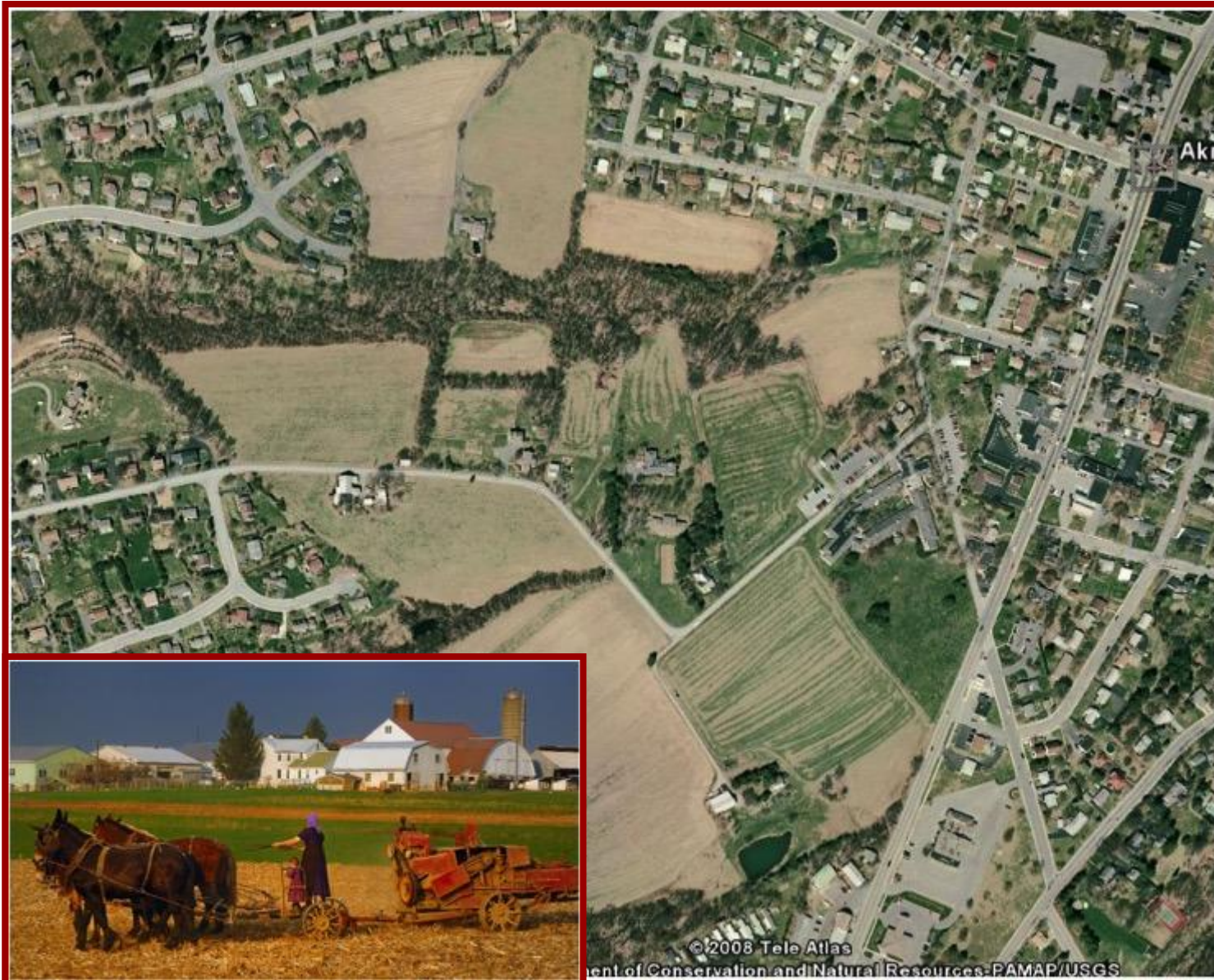
10) Enhance our towns and villages to create more housing opportunities (from downtown revitalization to intensification to infrastructure strategies)

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# Planning: Protecting Farmers, Farmland and Food....





## Questions and Discussion:

Do you have some examples to share of municipal policy or action that has contributed to agricultural opportunities?







**Thanks!**  
[www.waynecaldwell.ca](http://www.waynecaldwell.ca)





# Promotional paragraph used by Dufferin

- This presentation will explore how thoughtful land use planning can support agricultural prosperity in Dufferin County. It will address the pressures of urban encroachment and farmland loss, the current strengths and challenges of the agricultural sector, and the importance of looking beyond tariffs to consider broader agricultural issues. Emphasis will be placed on educating the wider community about agriculture, fostering stronger urban–rural connections, and highlighting how housing and workforce needs intersect with agricultural viability. The discussion will also consider municipal capacity to plan for and manage rural and agricultural issues effectively. Grounded in the fundamentals of planning, the presentation will outline strategies to ensure that agriculture continues to thrive as a cornerstone of community well-being and economic vitality.