2.3 AGRICULTURE

2.3.1 Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

Prime agricultural areas are areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Classes 1, 2 and 3 soils, in this order of priority.

2.3.2 Planning authorities shall designate specialty crop areas in accordance with evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time.

2.3.3 Permitted Uses

2.3.3.1 In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities are: agricultural uses, secondary uses and agriculture-related uses.

Proposed new secondary uses and agriculture-related uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. These uses shall be limited in scale, and criteria for these uses shall be included in municipal planning documents as recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective.

2.3.3.2 In prime agricultural areas, all types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.

2.3.3.3 New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

2.3.4 Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments

2.3.4.1 Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for:

a) agricultural uses, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;

b) agriculture-related uses, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;

c) a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided that the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective; and

d) infrastructure, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights-of-way.
Quality and quantity of water: is measured by indicators such as minimum base flow, depth to water table, aquifer pressure, oxygen levels, suspended solids, temperature, bacteria, nutrients and hazardous contaminants, and hydrologic regime.

Recreation: means leisure time activity undertaken in built or natural settings for purposes of physical activity, health benefits, sport participation and skill development, personal enjoyment, positive social interaction and the achievement of human potential.

Redevelopment: means the creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing communities, including brownfield sites.

Regional market area: refers to an area, generally broader than a lower-tier municipality, that has a high degree of social and economic interaction. In southern Ontario, the upper or single-tier municipality will normally serve as the regional market area. Where a regional market area extends significantly beyond upper or single-tier boundaries, it may include a combination of upper, single and/or lower-tier municipalities.

Renewable energy systems: means the production of electrical power from an energy source that is renewed by natural processes including, but not limited to, wind, water, a biomass resource or product, or solar and geothermal energy.

Reserve sewage system capacity: means design or planned capacity in a centralized waste water treatment facility which is not yet committed to existing or approved development. For the purposes of policy 1.6.4.1(e), reserve capacity for private communal sewage services and individual on-site sewage services is considered sufficient if the hauled sewage from the development can be treated or disposed of at sites approved under the Environmental Protection Act or the Ontario Water Resources Act, but not by land-applying untreated, hauled sewage.

Reserve water system capacity: means design or planned capacity in a centralized water treatment facility which is not yet committed to existing or approved development.

Residence surplus to a farming operation: means an existing farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation).

Residential intensification: means intensification of a property, site or area which results in a net increase in residential units or accommodation and includes:

a) redevelopment, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites;

b) the development of vacant or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;

c) infill development;

d) the conversion or expansion of existing industrial, commercial and institutional buildings for residential use; and

e) the conversion or expansion of existing residential buildings to create new residential units or accommodation, including accessory apartments, secondary suites and rooming houses.

River, stream and small inland lake systems: means all watercourses, rivers, streams, and small inland lakes or waterbodies that have a measurable or predictable response to a single runoff event.

Rural areas: means lands in the rural area which are located outside settlement areas and which are outside prime agricultural areas.

Secondary uses: means uses secondary to the principal use of the property, including but not limited to, home occupations, home industries, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products from the farm operation on the property.

Sensitive: in regard to surface water features and ground water features, means areas that are particularly susceptible to impacts from activities or events including, but not limited to, water withdrawals, and additions of pollutants.

Sensitive land uses: means buildings, amenity areas, or outdoor spaces where routine or normal activities occurring at reasonably expected times would experience one or more adverse effects from contaminant discharges generated by a nearby major facility. Sensitive land uses may be a part of the natural or built environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to: residences, day care centres, and educational and health facilities.

Settlement areas: means urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are:

a) built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and

b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development over the long term planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2. In