

**Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) Study
Public Information Open House – April 3, 2014
Questions, Comments & Answers**

General	
<p>What does being in a Prime Agricultural Area mean?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Prime Agricultural Area is a land use designation in an Official Plan. • It permits the widest range of agriculture, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses. • A Prime Agricultural Area designation provides the highest degree of protection from incompatible non-farm uses. • Only the best lands with the highest potential for agriculture are identified as Prime Agricultural Area. • Recent amendments to the Provincial Policy Statement have expanded flexibility for on-farm diversified uses and value added uses to support economic opportunities.
Study Need	
<p>Why is the Town and Region doing a LEAR if it already has the Prime Agriculture Area identified?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current Official Plan Prime Agricultural Area boundaries were identified based on Canadian Land Inventory soil capability mapping. • The current Prime Agricultural Area designation was adopted by Regional Council in 1996. • In 1997, the Ontario Ministry of Agricultural, Food & Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) developed the LEAR methodology to identify Prime Agricultural Areas. • The Provincial LEAR methodology is now the provincial standard for use by municipalities to review and update their agricultural designations. • Direction to identify Prime Agricultural Areas is set out in the Provincial Policy Statement 2014. • The LEAR Study ensures that correct areas are identified. • The new LEAR data and Prime Agricultural Area mapping have many purposes (e.g., future evaluation of settlement expansions, evaluation of proposed non-farm uses).
LEAR Factors and Evaluation	
<p>Where can I obtain detailed information on the LEAR factors and evaluation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information presented at the April 2014 and March 2015 open houses, and a copy of the draft Peel- Caledon LEAR Study report, are posted to the Region of Peel’s webpage, with a link to information from the Town of Caledon’s webpage.

How am I affected if I own property and the designation changes to Prime Agricultural Area?

<p>How will the LEAR Study results be used?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study results will provide background information for mapping updates to the Region of Peel and Town of Caledon Official Plans.
<p>I have completed a Region and/or Town Official Plan amendment to change the designation of my property from Prime Agriculture. Will the LEAR change the designation back to a Prime Agricultural Area designation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties within the Study Area that have been previously evaluated and received site specific official plan amendments to permit non-farm uses (e.g. golf course use) will continue to retain their approved land use designation and will not be redesignated to a Prime Agricultural Area designation.
<p>I have completed a rezoning to change the zoning of my property to one that is not agriculture or rural. Will the amendments to implement the LEAR Study change my zoning back into an agricultural zone?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior approved site specific zoning approvals for non-farm uses that have been permitted within the existing Prime Agricultural Area designation will continue to be permitted within the Prime Agricultural Area designation and recognized through a site specific exemption (e.g. notwithstanding clause in the Town of Caledon Official Plan). The property will retain the existing zoning category to permit the use. • Properties within the Study Area that have received site specific zoning approval will continue to retain their approved zoning in the Town of Caledon Zoning By-law as land use is regulated at the local level. • Prior approved zoning for non-farm uses will be recognized and addressed through the Region of Peel and Town of Caledon Official Plan Amendment process to implement the LEAR Study recommendations.
<p>I have a property in the recommended Prime Agricultural Area and have received approval for an agricultural-related commercial, agricultural-related industrial or an on-farm diversified use (e.g. value-added farm use). How will my approval be affected?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior approvals for agricultural-related commercial, agriculture-related industrial and on-farm diversified uses (e.g. value-added farm uses) are not affected. • Agricultural-related commercial, agriculture-related industrial and on-farm diversified uses (e.g. value-added farm uses) are permitted within the Prime Agricultural Area designation.
<p>When will the change to the Prime Agriculture Area take place?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEAR is the technical background study that provides recommendations to amend Prime Agricultural Area mapping in the Region of Peel and Town of Caledon Official Plans. • Any proposed changes to the Prime Agricultural Area will be required to undergo formal amendment processes under the Planning Act to incorporate the refinement into the Region of Peel and Town of Caledon Official Plans.

Will the LEAR Prime Agricultural Area boundaries be refined?

Will the recommended Prime Agricultural Areas identified in the LEAR Study be refined (i.e. lands scoring above LEAR threshold)?

- A contiguous area analysis of the LEAR recommended Prime Agricultural Area has been completed to refine the recommended Prime Agricultural Area boundaries.
- The process to refine Prime Agricultural Area boundaries in the Official Plans will require confirming contiguous boundaries of at least 250 ha in size.
- Areas identified by the LEAR Study as recommended 'Prime Agricultural Area' may contain areas of natural heritage features that may pose constraints for farming or contain lands that have been redesignated to a non-farm use.
- Natural heritage designations and prior approved non-farm land uses may reduce the recommended Prime Agricultural Area identified in the LEAR Study if contiguous areas are less than 250 ha in size.

Why is the Peel-Caledon LEAR Study different than other LEAR Studies?

Have other municipalities completed LEAR studies?

- Halton, York, Hamilton and the City of Ottawa are some examples of municipalities that have completed a LEAR.

Why is this Peel-Caledon LEAR Study different than other Regions?

- A LEAR is specific to each municipality and its study area.
- A LEAR study is unique to each municipality or region as factors used in the evaluation and scoring may be different in each study area.
- The Provincial LEAR methodology requires each study to consider and identify factors relevant to the study area.

Growth Management

Will the LEAR affect current in-process settlement expansions?

- No, current settlement expansions are subject to existing policy and designations and must complete an Agricultural Impact Assessment as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) study requirements.
- The LEAR Study results will not be formally implemented until official plan amendments are adopted by the Region of Peel and Town of Caledon.

Why is growth being allowed to go into the Prime Agriculture Area if the LEAR is being done to protect agricultural land?

- The Region and Town must allocate population and employment to address growth in accordance with provincial policy (e.g. PPS and Growth Plan).
- Policies require protection of prime agricultural lands.
- Settlement expansions require justification if proposed within Prime Agricultural Areas including consideration of options that avoid Prime Agricultural Areas or options on lower

	<p>priority agricultural lands within Prime Agricultural Areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement expansions must demonstrate justification within full set of MCR requirements.
Will expanding the Prime Agricultural Area to the north part of Caledon restrict aggregate extraction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, aggregate extraction is permitted within Prime Agricultural Area designation in accordance with PPS, Greenbelt Plan, Region and Town Official Plan policies. • Aggregate extraction is permitted as an interim use subject to rehabilitation back to an <i>agricultural condition</i> (PPS 2014). • <i>Agricultural condition</i> in Prime Agricultural Areas is substantially the same area and same average soil capability for agriculture are restored (PPS 2014).
Provincial	
Will the LEAR be affected by the Provincial review of the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and Niagara Escarpment Plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, the LEAR will provide technical study recommendations to refine the Prime Agricultural Area within the three provincial plan areas.
Does the Greenbelt Plan identify or designate Prime Agricultural Areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, the Greenbelt Plan defers to municipal official plans to identify Prime Agriculture, General Agriculture and Rural Area lands within the Protected Countryside designation.
What is the effect of a new Prime Agricultural Area designation within the Greenbelt Protected Countryside?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEAR will assess agricultural lands within the existing Greenbelt to identify Prime Agricultural Areas. • The Greenbelt Plan does not permit Prime Agricultural Areas to be redesignated to non-agricultural uses except for minor refinements of the Prime Agricultural Area in accordance with a LEAR and for settlement expansions in accordance with settlement area policies of the Greenbelt Plan.
Is the Provincial Greenbelt LEAR Study different than the Peel-Caledon LEAR Study? If so, why are they different?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Provincial Greenbelt LEAR was prepared on a much larger scale and covered a much larger area than the Peel-Caledon LEAR Study and as such the Peel-Caledon Study is more refined and tailored to local conditions. • The Provincial Greenbelt LEAR used lots and concessions as the evaluation unit to assign scores whereas the Peel-Caledon LEAR Study uses individual property parcels.
Does the GTA West Corridor or the GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment (EA) affect the LEAR Study results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, the GTA West Corridor EA is an in-process environmental assessment study under the Environmental Assessment Act. The highway is being planned to accommodate growth to 2031 and will not be built until many years in the future. • The planning of the GTA West Corridor must consider impacts to agricultural areas. The portion of the Route Planning Study

	<p>Area in south Caledon is currently designated Prime Agricultural Area. This designation is not expected to change as a result of the LEAR Study.</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	
<p>How is the public being consulted?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference for the studies was presented in a staff report to Regional Council (May 24, 2012) and Town of Caledon Council (June 12, 2012). • The terms of reference requires public consultation to be undertaken. • An initial Public Information Open House was held in April 2014 to present results of the study and request public comments. • A second Public Information Open House is being held in March 2015 to present results of the refinement of the recommended Prime Agricultural Area. • Information on the study has been posted to the the Region of Peel webpage, with a link to information from the Town of Caledon’s webpage.
<p>Is there an advisory committee assisting with the study?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group (PAAWG) was formed as the LEAR Review Committee. • PAAWG is a working group of Regional Council. • The LEAR Review Committee also includes staff representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture & Food, Credit Valley Conservation and Toronto and Region Conservation.