

Agrology and Soil Capability Study

Terms of Reference

1. Description

The intent of an Agrology and Soil Capability Study is, generally, to confirm or recommend alterations to the mapping of agricultural lands in the City. The basis for all evaluation will be the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) methodology as adopted by the City.

2. Authority to Request

The Provincial Policy Statement recognizes the importance of prime agricultural lands and seeks to protect them from development and conversion to non-agricultural uses. It requires that municipalities identify and protect these lands for agricultural uses.

The policies outlined in Section 9.1.1 of the Official plan are intended to conserve farmland for regional food security. To achieve this goal, the Official Plan designates certain lands as Agricultural Resource Areas, which are shown on Schedules B4 and B9.

3. When Required

As outlined in Section 9.1.1 of the Official Plan, the City shall only consider the removal of land from an Agricultural Resource Area designation for the expansion of a settlement area or identification of a new settlement area through a comprehensive review that addresses matters required by the Provincial Policy Statement.

If there is a need to consider Official Plan amendments, for the removal of land from an Agricultural Resource Area designation, outside of a comprehensive review that does not constitute urban or village expansion, it shall only be considered where it is demonstrated that the land does not meet the requirements for an Agricultural Resource Area through:

- A municipal-wide LEAR; or
- An area-specific assessment, where the area is equal to or greater than 250 hectares, or where an area less than 250 hectares is agreed to by the City. This assessment must demonstrate that:
 - Based on new information, related to one or more LEAR factors, the lands are not part of a prime agricultural area; and



- Any re-designation avoids the potential for adverse impacts to any adjacent agricultural land and operations, or if unavoidable, such adverse impacts are mitigated to the extent feasible.

4. Contents

The following headings outline the minimum requirements for study. The city reserves the right to update the terms of reference from time to time based on changes to applicable legislation or guidelines, specific site conditions, and to reflect improvements to professional practice over time.

Objectives

- The objective of the study is to evaluate both the Land Evaluation (LE) and Area Review (AR) components and to confirm or recommend amendments to the LEAR scoring; and
- The study will confirm soil capability and determine any mitigation

Background and Basis for Study

- A description of the study area, current and historical land use, including history of agricultural use;
- A description of the current Official Plan designation and Zoning as well as that of adjoining properties; and

Issues to be Explored and Analyzed Against Certain Criteria

- Confirmation / applicability of Canada Land Inventory mapping at a site specific and Local scale (Land Evaluation); and
- Confirmation/ applicability of AR score from the LEAR study Implementation Methodology to be Applied
- see below

Qualifications

- see below

Other

- Field data sheets and photographs
- Sampling of soils must be appropriate to site context and systematically distributed on the study area. Sampling data sheets must be included and include sampling site photographs



5. Evaluation Criteria

The basis for all evaluation will be the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) methodology as adopted by the City.

Evaluation will be completed and documented based on the requirements of the City of Ottawa LEAR methodology.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- Professional Agrologist or equivalent with specific experience in soils analysis and soil capability for agriculture;
- Member of the Ontario Institute of Agrologists; and
- Curriculum vitae required, the City reserves the right to determine whom is a qualified person if the above requirements are not met in consultation with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

8. Resources / Background

- City of Ottawa “[Land Evaluation and Area Review \(LEAR\) For Agriculture, Volume 1](#)”
- City of Ottawa “[Land Evaluation and Area Review \(LEAR\) For Agriculture, Volume 2](#)”
- City of Ottawa [LEAR Map](#)
- OMAFRA “[Land Evaluation and Area Review \(LEAR\) Methodology](#)”
- OMAFRA “[Soils Ontario](#)”
- OMAFRA “[Use of soil and Canada Land Inventory \(CLI\) information for agricultural land use planning in Ontario](#)”

