Ontario Federation of Agriculture

LT2 RFP Requirements for Project Located in a Prime Agricultural Area

PAC August 2025

AIA Guidelines for IESO Procurements

AIA Process

- AIA Component One Requirement
  - Contiguous and non-contiguous project examples
  - Agriculturally-integrated project example
- AIA Components Two and Three Requirement
- Examples of how process may apply to different project types
- Resources
- Appendices

PAA need to be protected and designated for long term use for agriculture

Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIA)

Avoid

1. Impacts are prevented

Minimize

2. Impacts are not fully prevented, but kept to a minimum

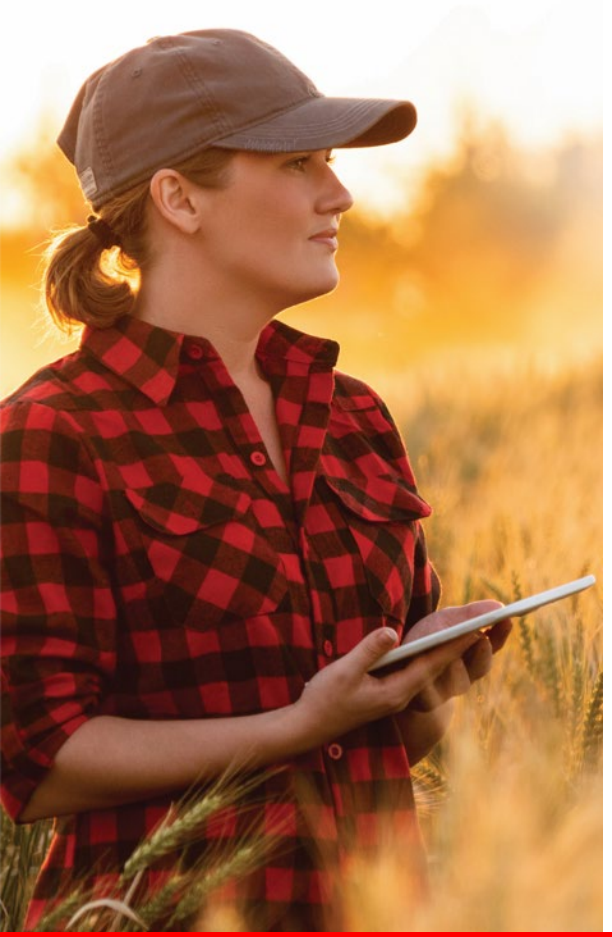
Mitigate

3. Impacts are further reduced after undertaking 1 and 2

IESO Long-Term 2 RFP Engagement resources to help complete and review AIA including LT2 AIA Q&A , OMAFA Guidelines for the AIA Component 1 Requirement

OMAFA Guidelines for AIA Components 2 and 3 (yet to be published).

IESO procurement projects under the LT2 RfP



- **NO** Specialty Crop Area sites
- **NO** Ground-mounted solar in PAA, as designated by a municipal* official plan.
- Projects **in** PAAs complete **Agricultural Impact Assessment** (AIA) to **satisfaction of local municipality**.

* And northern planning board. Other PAA terms: agricultural area, agricultural rural area, agricultural protection area

AIA process for IESO Long-Term 2 RfP

AIAs are proponent-driven and ideally completed as early as possible.

The 3 Components are completed at 2 stages for facilities in PAAs:

- ✓ AIA Component 1: Respect of agriculture to "**avoid**" impacts to agriculture where possible.
- ✓ AIA Components 2 & 3: Impact assessment and measures to "**minimize**" and "**mitigate**" impacts.

- Projects proposed for PAAs need to prove they evaluated alternative locations in their proposal submission, to the *satisfaction of the local municipality*; and,
- if selected, prior to construction, projects need to provide the full AIA to satisfaction of local municipality.

AIA Component 1 Requirement

As part of a proposal submission, a proponent must complete AIA Component 1 to demonstrate agriculture was considered during the site selection process.

Component 1 is a two-step process that considers:

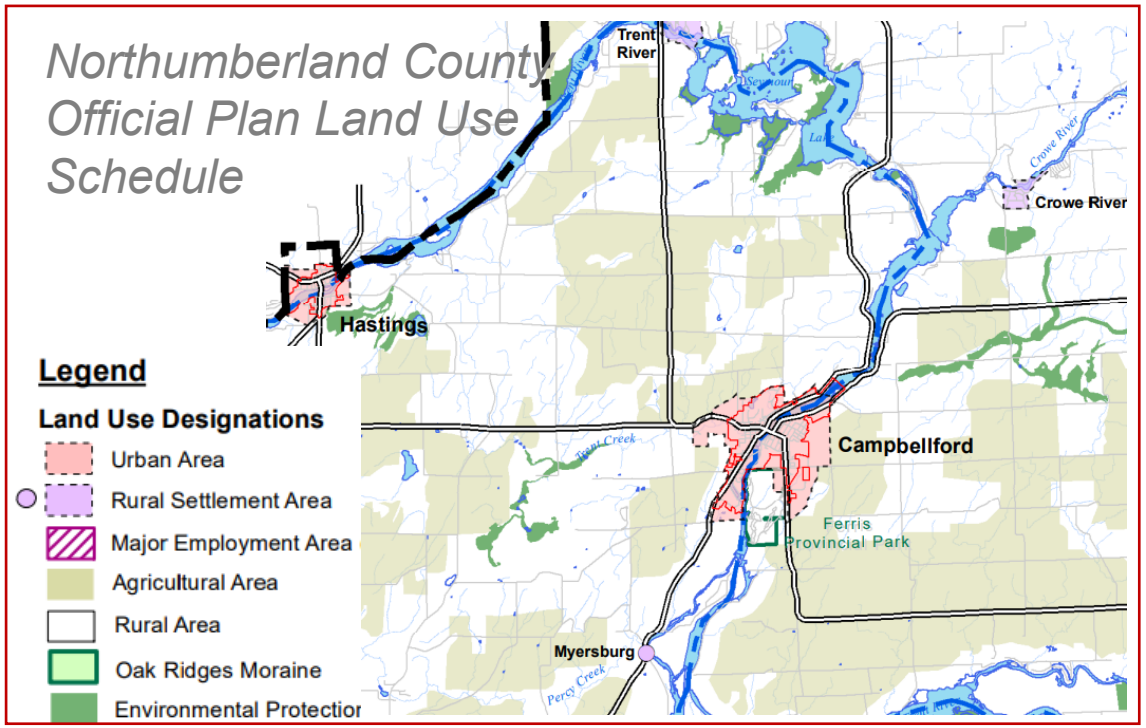
1. Avoiding Prime Agricultural Area siting, if possible;
2. Siting that avoids the **best agricultural land**, such as areas with **lower priority soils**, based on Canada Land Inventory (CLI) soil mapping.

Municipal Support Confirmation: they accept the AIA Component 1 report.

AIA Component 1 examples

AIA Component One: Part A

- Evaluate alternative locations; rural lands, settlement areas that avoid Prime Agricultural Areas.
- If no suitable alternatives exist, document how alternatives were explored and why they were not suitable[1] (such as conditions that influenced choice).
- Process recognizes site driven by many factors, such as good fuel availability, transmission deliverability, or other constraints.



- Maps to show key elements in addition to agriculture (e.g., other constraints, existing transmission corridors to be used for target connection point).
- Information provided to municipality documents evaluation process to provide rationale for chosen site.

1. OMAFA Story Map for evaluating alternate locations for non-agricultural uses https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a1493591ae7a45d5974f3cc89882eb3d

AIA Component 1: Part B

- Avoidance evaluates alternate locations in PAAs with lower priority agricultural lands, based on CLI soil mapping
- Soil-related websites

  Use of Soil and Canada Land Inventory information for agricultural land planning in Ontario

  Soil capability for agriculture in Ontario

  Guidelines for detailed soil surveys in Ontario

- **Contained** projects (e.g., battery storages) versus **dispersed** projects (e.g., wind) may differ on how the information is presented or documented.

  Projects without defined boundaries have broader or more conceptual study areas when precise location of each structure or access roads are not yet determined.

- The next 4 slides are examples of Part A and Part B for contained or distributed projects.

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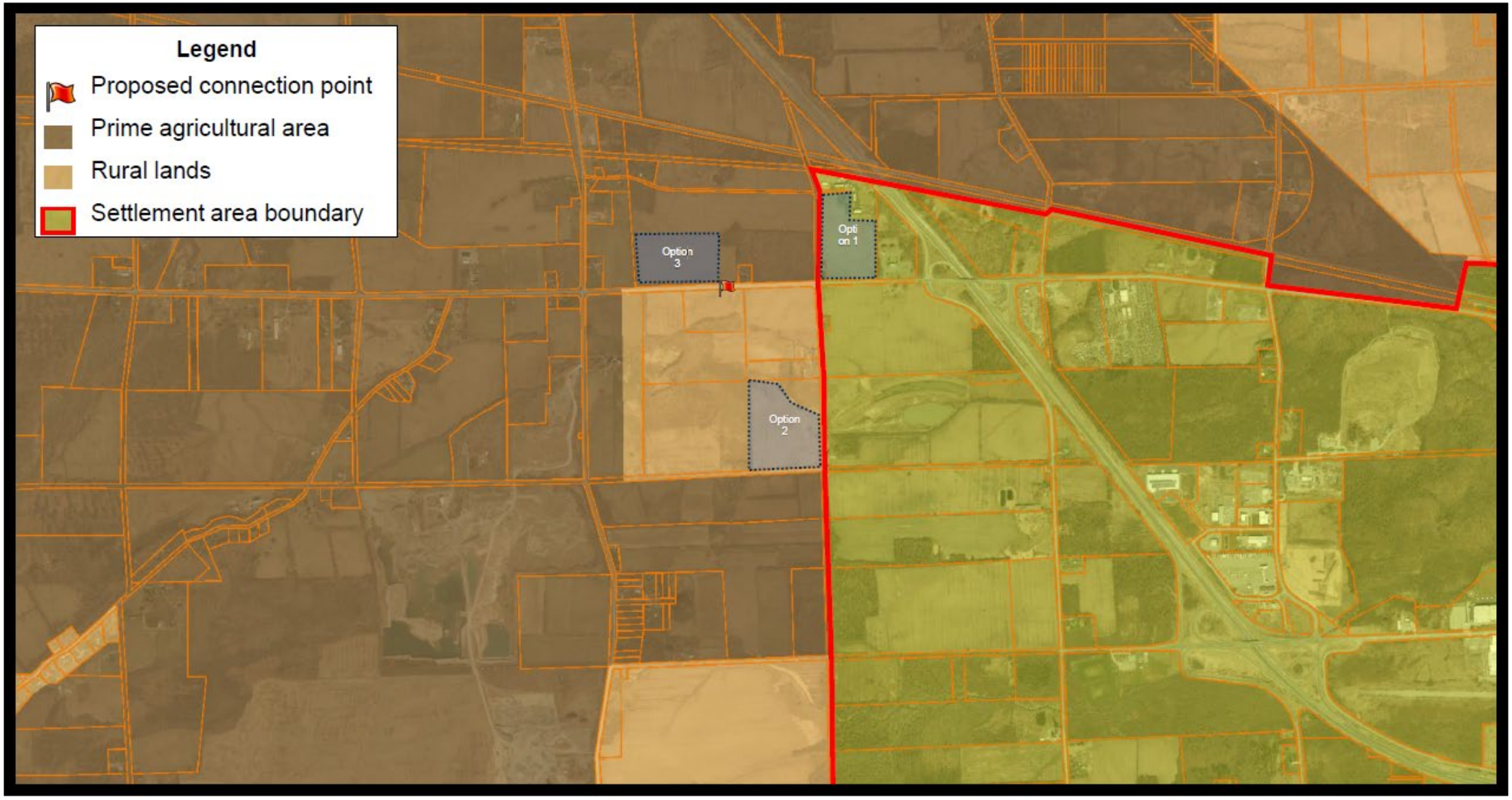
Part A: Contained/contiguous project - evaluating alternative locations that avoid prime agricultural areas



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Part B: Contained/contiguous project - evaluating alternative locations on lower-priority agricultural land

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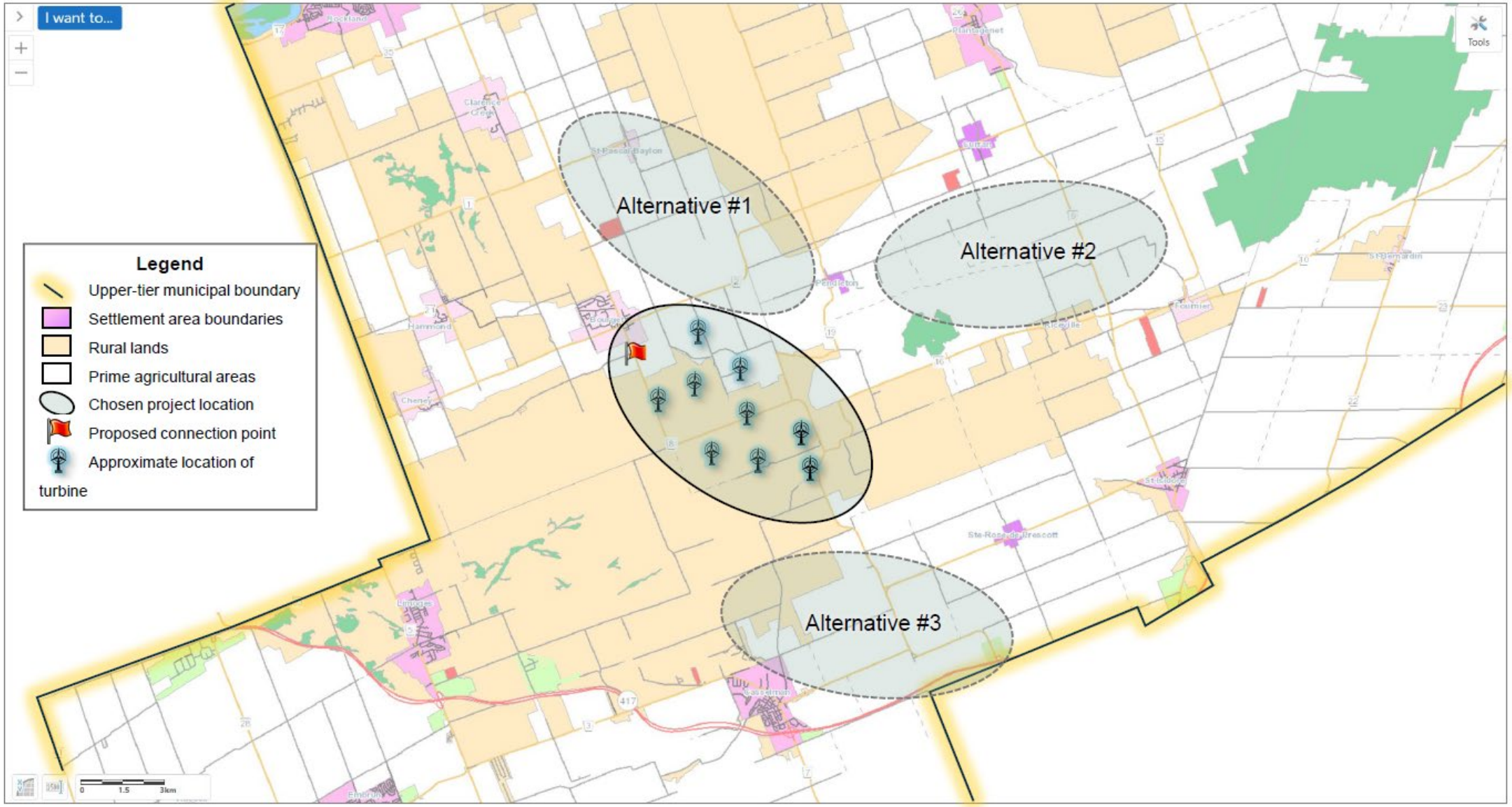
Part A: Distributed project - evaluating alternative locations that avoid prime agricultural areas



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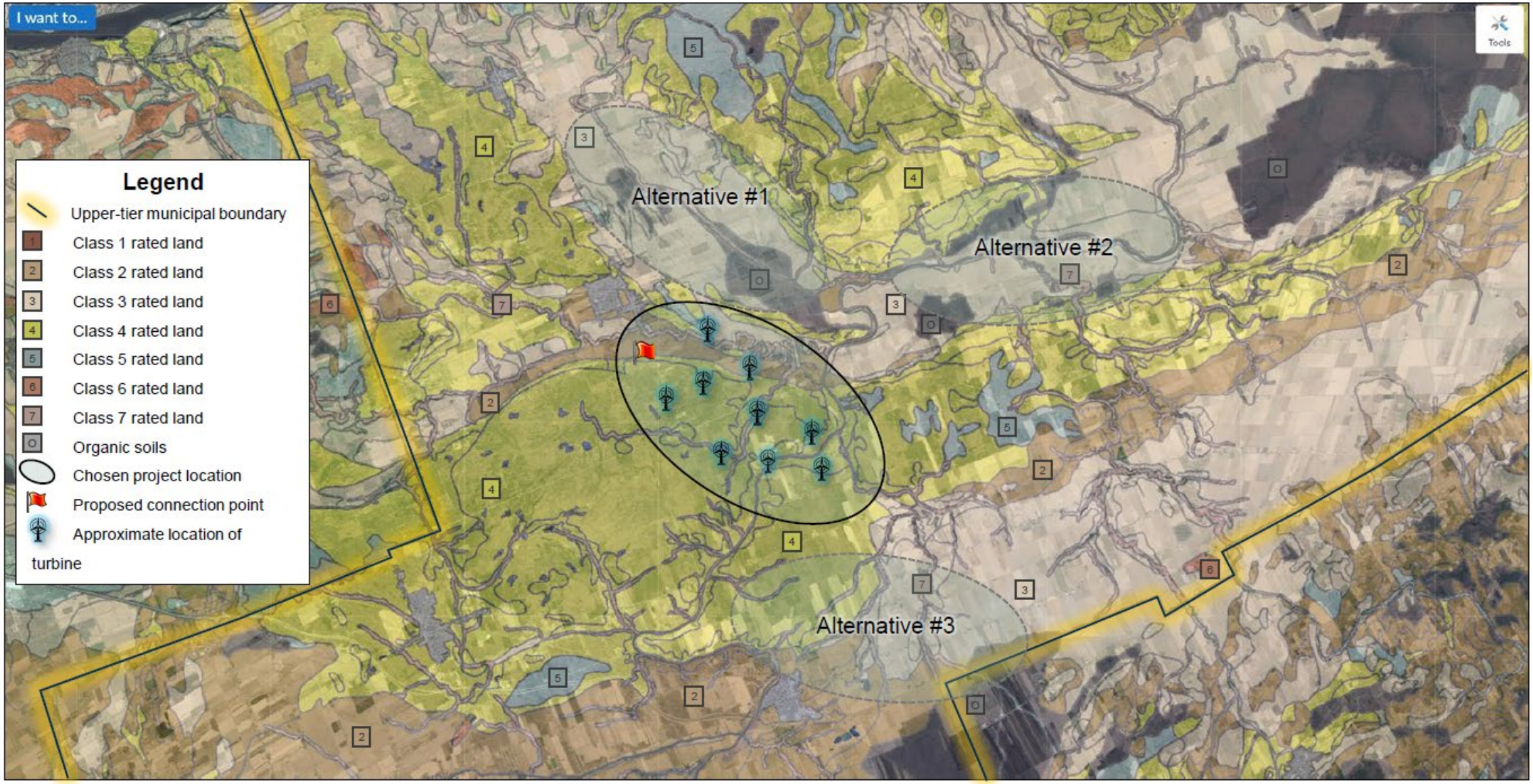
Part B: Distributed project - evaluating alternative locations on lower-priority agricultural land



Considerations for agriculturally-integrated projects and AIA Component 1:

Biogas example

Agriculturally-integrated projects:

- are compatible with, and do not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations;
- support continued agricultural production by minimizing the amount of land taken out of agricultural production; and,
- rely on a defined interdependency with agriculture.

Agriculturally-integrated projects are either:

- on the same parcel as an active farm operation and are secondary to the principal agricultural use of that property (e.g., based on a limited amount of lot coverage area); or,
- not on the same parcel as an active farm operation, but are necessarily integrated into agricultural operations in the area by, for example a biogas project that:
  - manages agricultural source materials (e.g., manure); or,
  - utilizes agricultural feedstocks, such as crop residue.

Source: https://dlsbiogas.com/reference-project/bolton-manor
Credit: DLS Biogas Inc.

Source: Google Earth

AIA Elements for agriculturally-integrated (A-I) projects

- A municipality may set the elements of agriculturally-integrated projects related to project type, complexity and scale, and anticipated magnitude of impacts.
  - avoiding PAA may not be feasible for projects which are inextricably linked to agriculture and therefore the process for evaluating alternative locations could be streamlined.
- If an integrated project is locally exempt from evaluation of alternative locations, it must still demonstrate the need to co-locate with a farm operation and/or locate in a PAA.
- Need is linked to an operational relationship between energy project and agricultural use.
  - agriculturally-integrated projects (i.e., biogas, biomass, or combined heat and power facilities), may be mutually-beneficial or integrated relationship with agriculture by:
    - utilizing agricultural source material(e.g., input/feedstock dependent);and/or,
    - generating byproducts such as soil amendments, heat or CO^2 that are primarily utilized by surrounding farm operations(e.g., out put dependent).

AIA Components 2 and 3 Requirement

AIA Components 2 and 3

If a project is selected:

Proponent is responsible for completing AIA Components 2 and 3 Requirement.

- These provide site-specific assessment of potential agricultural impacts in the study areas, and outline strategies that in the project design to minimize and mitigate identified impacts.
- Assessment completed to the satisfaction of the local municipality within 18 months of contract offer.
- Proponent confirms with the IESO by submitting the AIA Confirmation Certificate (Exhibit T), as required in the LT2 contract.

AIA Components 2 and 3 cont.

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Example of an Impact Assessment Summary Table

Type of Impact	Description of Potential Impacts	Possible Measures to Avoid	Possible Measures to Minimize	Possible Measures to Mitigate	Mechanisms to Implement Measure(s)
• Disruption or loss of private or municipal drainage systems	• The use of heavy equipment for construction and maintenance activities has potential to damage or crush surface and subsurface elements of private and municipal agricultural tile drainage system.	• The review of tile drainage maps, in consultation with landowners and in-field assessments, will be utilized to mitigate damages during the planning and construction phases; • Individual landowners will be consulted to determine existing field tile locations in support of avoidance/protection measures; • Tile drains will be avoided and/or protected (e.g., culverts, temporary construction access), to the extent feasible;	• Work will be limited to the planned permanent or temporary accesses, staging and work areas. If any later expansions to these areas is required, it will be discussed with the landowner in advance; • Where temporary accesses or construction laydown area are built in tiled agricultural areas, mats, or geotextile and crushed rock, or equivalent means, will be utilized to protect tile drains; • Where practical, equipment with low bearing capacity will be used to minimize potential damage to tile drains; • Where practical, some construction and maintenance activities will be scheduled to avoid sensitive times of the year (e.g., extreme wet periods), although it is recognized that this may not be feasible in all circumstances.	• If damage to tile drains occurs due to construction or maintenance activities, the tile will be repaired by a licensed tile drainage contractor, in consultation with the affected landowner; • Compensation for crop losses due to drainage damage will be available through a pre-determined formula.	• detailed design phase of the project; • landowner consultation; • remedy terms codified in any long-term lease agreements; • *Drainage Act* will apply to all municipal drain impacts.
Project team to add additional rows for other potential impacts identified.	*Project team to add additional rows for other potential impacts identified.*	*Project team to add additional rows for other potential impacts identified.*	*Project team to add additional rows for other potential impacts identified.*	*Project team to add additional rows for other potential impacts identified.*	*Project team to add additional rows for other potential impacts identified.*
PLACEHOLDER	*PLACEHOLDER*	*PLACEHOLDER*	*PLACEHOLDER*	*PLACEHOLDER*	*PLACEHOLDER*

AIA Components 2 and 3 cont.

Steps to minimize and mitigate any impacts are done at the detailed design stage such as:

- site plan layout and design elements to increase compatibility, reduce land taken out of production;
- construction and operational plan elements to address temporary practices, on-going maintenance and monitoring to address impacts identified for agricultural sector;
- decommissioning plan includes details to support rehabilitation, including record of pre-disturbance agricultural conditions, as necessary.

The Ontario Energy Board and infrastructure project proponents publish assessment documents guiding the construction of other projects. For example, these resources contain agricultural impact information:

The Ontario Energy Board's - March 2023 Environmental Guidelines for the Location, Construction and Operation of Hydrocarbon Projects and Facilities in Ontario, 8th Edition

Hydro One's - February 2024 Class Environmental Assessment for Transmission Facilities approved by the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks

Resources

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Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- Official plan chapter of the Citizen's Guide to Land Use Planning
- Land use planning chapter of the Ontario Municipal Councillor's Guide
- Provincial Planning Statement (PPS)
- List of Ontario municipalities

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness

- Prime agricultural areas
- Specialty crop areas
- 2018 draft Guidance Document for Agricultural Impact Assessments
- OMAFA Story Map for evaluating alternative locations for non-agricultural uses
- Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas
- Agricultural information atlas (AgMaps)
- Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-4241300 or ag.info.omafa@ontario.ca

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