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**Stovel and Associates Inc.**  
*Planners, Agrologists and Environmental Consultants*

July 27, 2018

Mr. Ed Fothergill  
Fothergill Planning & Development Inc.  
62 Daffodil Cres.  
Ancaster, ON  
L9K 1E1

Email: [edf@nas.net](mailto:edf@nas.net)

Dear Ed:

**RE:   Agricultural Study  
      Addition of Two Lots to an Existing Farm Parcel  
      2907 Upper James Street  
      Greenhorizons Group of Farms Inc.  
      AND  
      The Creation of Two Residential Lots  
      English Church Road  
      City of Hamilton**

Stovel and Associates Inc. was retained by your firm, on behalf of Mr. Steve Schiedel of Greenhorizons Group of Farms Ltd. to prepare an Agricultural Study in relation to the proposal to amalgamate two existing rural residential lots to an active farm parcel and to sever two (2) rural residential lots. Map 1 illustrates the lands in question.

The proponent owns two vacant rural residential lots on Upper James Street in Hamilton which are now vacant but could each accommodate a single-family residence (i.e. Parts 1 and 2). As part of the proposal, the proponent is proposing to add these two vacant lots to the abutting agricultural property (Part 3). The result would be to create a larger agricultural property. The two proposed rural residential lots (identified as Part 5 and Part 6 on Map 1) will be severed from an existing, active Golf Course (i.e. Part 4).

**BACKGROUND**

Greenhorizons Group of Farms Ltd. ("Greenhorizons") is an integrated farming business based in the City of Hamilton and operating in other parts of the Province including the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the County of Wellington. The principals of the company are the Schiedel Family. Sod production is the primary agricultural product grown by the farm, but other common field crops (such as corn, soy beans and small grains) are rotated to ensure proper field management of the company's farms. In total, Greenhorizons farms over 2400 ha in Southern Ontario.

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The main business center for Greenhorizons is located in the City of Hamilton. The company employs over 60 full-time and 160 part-time employees on a seasonal basis. Currently, the company is in need of additional farmland in the City of Hamilton. Lands that were formerly rented by Greenhorizons have been acquired by non-local owners with the primary purpose of land speculation.

The addition of 4.6 ha of additional farmland will assist the company.

In 2000, the Schiedel family developed the Willow Valley Golf Course (see Map 1; Parcel 4). The Golf Course was located on poor farm land. The soils were stripped and then reapplied to conform to the current contours of the fairways, greens, tee blocks and pathways. Subsequently, these lands have been removed from the agricultural system and Parcels 4, 5 and 6 have no agricultural potential and are not considered agricultural lands. These lands are designated Open Space and zoned similarly. Agricultural use of these lands is not permitted. These lands are well-separated from active livestock operations.

Given that Parcels 4, 5 and 6 are not considered agricultural lands and there is no conflict potential with adjacent farm operations, the following assessment has focused on the consideration of impacts related to the addition of Parcels 1 and 2 to Parcel 3.

### **AGRICULTURAL STUDY**

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the potential agricultural impacts of adding Parcels 1 and 2 to the existing farm, i.e. Parcel 3. This assessment is based on the consideration of four key components: capability, suitability, flexibility and conflict potential.

#### **Capability**

The Capability assessment refers to Canada Land Inventory (CLI) - Soil Capability for Agriculture. Map 2 illustrates the CLI ratings for the local area surrounding Parcel 3 – Greenhorizons farm property. The two rural residential parcels (Parcels 1 and 2) are mapped as Class 1 land and are considered to be prime agricultural land.

Therefore, the proposed application will result in the addition of over 4.6 ha of Class 1 land to an existing farm parcel.

#### **Suitability**

The Suitability assessment refers to the lands being considered suitable for Specialty Crops. A review of background mapping indicates that the Province has not mapped the subject properties as being suitable for Specialty Crop production.

Therefore, the proposed application will have no effect with respect to land suitability.

#### **Flexibility**

The Flexibility criterion refers to factors that will affect the long-term options with respect to the types of farming practices that could occur on a farm parcel. Key to flexibility are the following factors:

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- Farm size,
  - Onsite Soil Characteristics, and
  - Surrounding Land Uses.

These factors are examined in the following paragraphs.

The subject farm is estimated to be approximately 30.1 ha in size. The subject farm is owner-operated. The addition of 4.6 ha of good farmland will provide benefits related to:

- A larger land base for the home farm makes farming more efficient. Efficiency is improved by improving crop yields, reducing operating times for machinery and reducing fuel costs for transporting machinery on busy urban roads;
- A larger land base for the home farm reduces the need to operate on rental or leased lands. Over the long term, this will improve soil health as decisions for cropping practices, fertilization rates and pesticide applications are made for the benefit of future generations; and
- A larger land base for the farm allows for Best Management Practices and proper Nutrient Management practices should future generations of farmers on Parcel 3 wish to change operations and livestock farm.

The soil characteristics of the lands to be added to the subject farm parcel have no inherent limitations. The soils associated with Parcels 1 and 2 are amongst the best in the former County of Wentworth. This means that, subject to normal farming practices, a variety of crops can be rotated on the subject lands over the long term.

### **Conflict Potential**

Through the approval of the proposed application, two non-farm residential lots will be removed. The removal of two potential non-farm residences on Parcels 1 and 2 will reduce the potential for nuisance complaints from nearby residences. This means that normal farming practices will be able to occur on a long-term basis.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Stovel and Associates Inc. was retained to complete an Agricultural Study of a severance application in the City of Hamilton. The development proposal is twofold: first, two existing non-farm residential lots will be added to an existing farm parcel; and second, two non-farm residential lots are proposed to be created from an existing golf course.

The addition of two non-farm residential lots to an existing farm parcel will result in an overall net benefit in terms of agriculture. Parcels 1 and 2 are comprised of good farmland, i.e. Class 1 soils. Agricultural uses are permitted on these lands, by virtue of the Permitted Uses set out in the zoning by-law. The addition of 4.6 ha of good farmland to an existing farm parcel will improve the flexibility of the lands in question from an agricultural perspective and will reduce the potential for land use conflicts associated with operating a farm.

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The creation of two non-farm residential lots will have no impact on agriculture. The lands in question are designated and zoned for Open Space uses. Agricultural uses are not permitted on the lands in question. No farmland will be lost. There will be no conflict potential with the existing livestock operations.

In conclusion, it is my opinion that the proposed development application will be of benefit to agriculture.

I trust that this assessment is of sufficient detail. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any concerns or questions.

Yours truly,

Robert P. Stovel, M.Sc., M.C.I.P., R.P.P., P.Ag.