

APPENDIX A

Farmland & Open Space Preservation Survey Results - Town of Parma Summary Report

Methodology

The Town of Parma Farmland & Open Space Preservation Survey was distributed in July 2007. Approximately 6,300 surveys were mailed to every property owner in the Town. The survey was also available on-line.

Respondents

A total of 1,686 people responded to the survey. This represents a response rate of 29.4%.

A total of 51.3% of the respondents were between the ages of 46 and 65; 23% were over age 65 and 18% were between 36 and 45. Only 5.5% were between 26 and 35 and less than one percent were under age 25.

A total of 1,155 respondents (68.5%) resided in the Town outside of the Village; 448 (26.6%) were Village residents. A total of 51 respondents (3%) resided along the lake shore and 118 (7.0%) resided south of Ridge Road.

Importance of Preserving Farmland and Open Space

A total of 94.4% of all survey respondents believe that “it is important to preserve farmland and open space in Parma.” Similarly, 94.0% stated that they “support the town in efforts to preserve farmland and open space.” There was no significant difference of opinion between Village residents and residents of the Town outside the Village.

Relative Preservation Priorities

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various agricultural and open space resources. All resources identified were considered important by the respondents. The average rating ranged from 7.5 for “Promote active and passive recreational areas” to 9.4 for “Preserving natural streams and watersheds.” Responses from Village residents and residents of the Town outside the Village were nearly the same.

“Preserving natural streams and watersheds” received the highest rating (9.42 out of 10) followed by “Preserving natural habitats of migratory birds, plants and animals” and “Preserving natural wetlands and woodlands”(both with 9.14 out of 10.) Many written comments mentioned wildlife sightings and expressed support for protecting water quality and wildlife habitats.

“Preserving farmland and encourage local farming” received a rating of 9.01 out of 10. Many written comments noted that Parma is an agricultural community and encouraged residents and the town to support local farming operations.

“Preserving local historic resources” received a rating of 8.58 out of 10. Few respondents commented specifically on historic resources, although many mentioned concerns about the appearance of “historic” Ridge Road and the proliferation of used car lots.

“Promote waterfront access along Lake Ontario and town creeks” received a rating of 7.95 out of 10. Many written comments referred to a past opportunity to purchase lakefront land that was not approved by voters. Others expressed dissatisfaction with large homes that block views of the lake.

“Promote public active and passive recreational areas” received a rating of 7.48 out of 10. Many written comments stated that the Town had sufficient parkland. Many commenters praised the existing Town Park. There were numerous statements in opposition to the proposed soccer complex for the Greece Cobras, although there were also a few statements in support of the complex. Some commenters indicated that new parkland would be suitable if it were nature-oriented and passive. Several noted that they did not understand what “passive recreation” means.

Perceptions of Open Space and Development

The survey asked residents to estimate the percentage of the Town that is actively farmed and that which is developed. A total of 41% of residents thought that between 21-40% of the Town is farmed, and 30% thought that 41-60% is farmed.

A total of 37% thought that the extent of development is 21-40%; 35% of respondents thought that the Town is 41-60% developed.

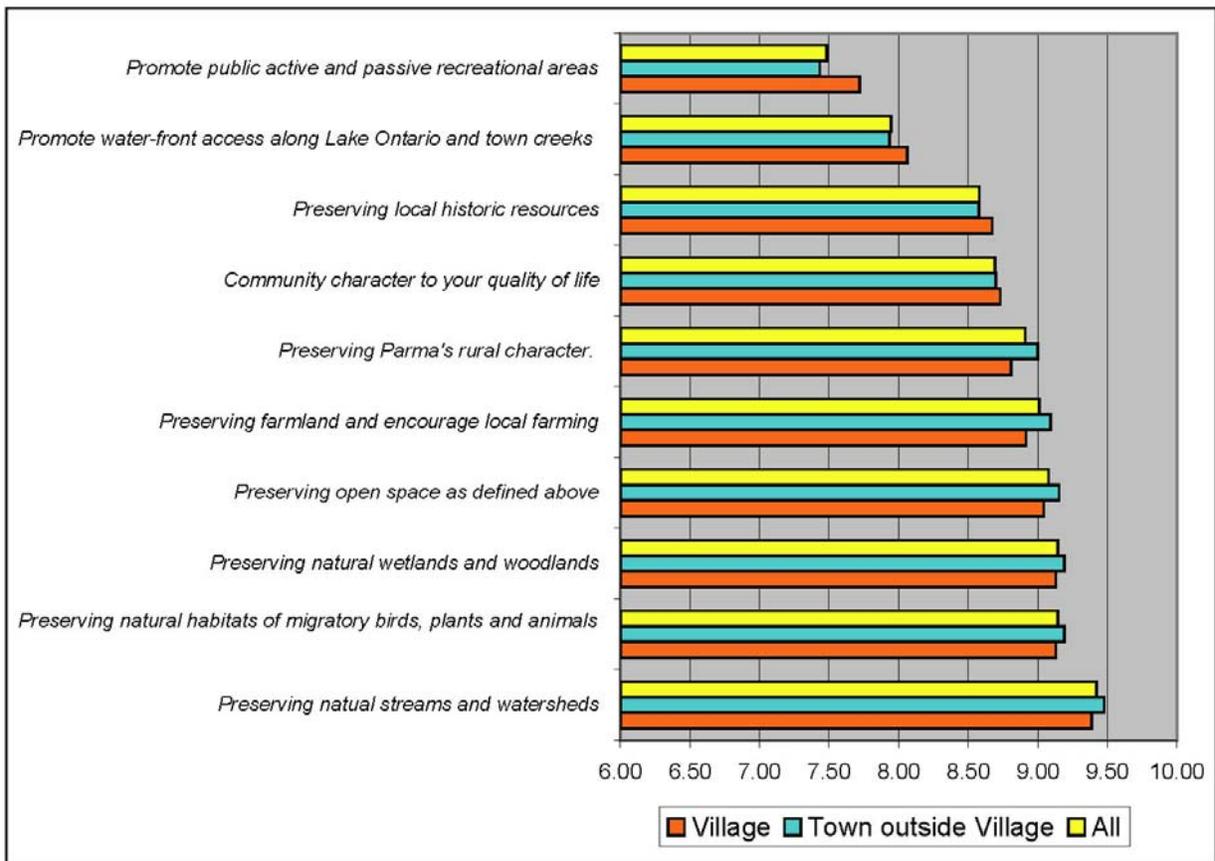
Written Comments

Based on the written comments from respondents to the Residents’ Survey, the following observations may be made regarding residents’ perceptions and opinions regarding agriculture and farmland preservation.

- **Fiscal impacts of development and land preservation.** While many residents acknowledged that land preservation is generally beneficial to a community’s tax base, because farms do not require many community services, compared to housing, others saw housing development as contributing to the tax base and potentially resulting in lower taxes.
- **Address link between farmland protection and development policies.** Many residents are critical of the pace of development in Parma, particularly of housing development. Others indicated that an appropriate balance of new development and conservation should be pursued. The goals of protecting farmland, open space, and wildlife habitat are linked to slowing the pace of development
- **Support economic viability of farming.** Many respondents acknowledge that farming is a business and needs to be profitable in order to continue. Several suggested providing additional tax breaks to farmers who continue to keep land in agricultural use. Several suggested that residents should purchase more local farm products
- **Respect landowner rights.** Several acknowledge that farmers may need to sell land to finance retirement and oppose programs that would limit landowners’ options.

Farmland Open Space Survey Results Town of Parma

<i>Please rate the following based upon how important each item is to you (1-10)</i>	All	Town outside Village	Village
Preserving natural streams and watersheds	9.42	9.48	9.39
Preserving natural habitats of migratory birds, plants and animals	9.14	9.19	9.13
Preserving natural wetlands and woodlands	9.14	9.19	9.13
Preserving open space as defined above	9.08	9.15	9.04
Preserving farmland and encourage local farming	9.01	9.09	8.92
Preserving Parma's rural character.	8.91	9.00	8.81
Community character to your quality of life	8.69	8.70	8.73
Preserving local historic resources	8.58	8.58	8.67
Promote water-front access along Lake Ontario and town creeks	7.95	7.94	8.06
Promote public active and passive recreational areas	7.48	7.43	7.72



Summary of Written Comments

- Appears to be overwhelming support for efforts to retain Parma's rural character, including farmland and wildlife habitats.
- Concern about continued housing development, traffic congestion.
- Don't want to become like Greece.
- Concern about imposing restrictions on landowners.
- Concern about high taxes.
- Suggestions to reduce taxes for landowners who keep their land open.
- Need to help farmers make farming economically viable.
- Opposition to soccer complex.
- Opposition to "McMansions" along the lakeshore.
- Sense that there are enough parks, especially for sports. Some support for passive, nature-oriented parkland. Concern about cost of maintaining parkland.
- Support for increased public access to Lake Ontario.
- Some opposition to using tax dollars to purchase development rights to farmland.
- Expressed need to reduce taxes
- Some support for more industrial/ commercial development to add to property tax base.
- Opposition to too many used car lots and other "eyesores" along Ridge Road.
- Some support fishing on Salmon Creek.
- Some support for well-designed development.
- Variety of opinions regarding lot sizes. Some say lots should be 1-2 acres or up to 5 acres. Others say 5-acre lots are a waste of space. Several commenters don't like "high density" subdivisions.
- Support for interconnected walkways/ bike paths.
- Concern about pesticide spraying.
- Support Kelly's, Zarpentines, DeMeyer's
- Praise for Town Park.
- Provide canoe/ kayak access to Salmon Creek.
- Some support for sewers along lakeshore to protect water quality.
- Some support for purchasing former railroad corridor.
- Concern about pesticide spraying.
- Support Village downtown business district and other small businesses.