

presence of the Manchester and Geneva interchanges has not stimulated significant development pressure. This could change over time if the pattern of growth from southeastern Monroe County continues.

Eastern Ontario County

Towns of Hopewell, Gorham, Seneca and Geneva

Table 7. Profile of Agricultural Land in Eastern Ontario County Towns.

Town	Total Acreage	Total Acreage in Ag Parcels - '92	Total Agricultural Acreage - '99	% Loss '92-'99	% Town Acreage in Ag Parcels - '92	% Town Acreage in Ag Parcels - '99
Geneva	12,361	7,492	7,076	6%	61%	57%
Gorham	33,815	22,453	21,464	4%	66%	63%
Hopewell	22,849	17,464	17,069	2%	76%	75%
Seneca	32,140	28,872	27,708	4%	90%	86%
Region Totals	101,165	76,281	73,317	4%	75%	72%

Source: N.Y. Real Property Tax Data

Overview

Due to geology and glaciation, the towns of eastern Ontario County contain **the largest concentration of prime soils and consequently have some of the most productive land in the county and the state.** Compared to other parts of the county, the landscape is relatively level to gently rolling.

Though Rt. 5&20 linking the cities of Canandaigua and Geneva transects this area, significant development pressure has not been felt, in large part to its relative distance to the Rochester metropolitan area and the quality of the soil resource itself which gives farmers a diversity of agricultural opportunities. **Many critical businesses that support agriculture are located in this area** including equipment dealers, bean mills, a livestock auction house, and farm suppliers. These business not only serve farmers in Ontario County but the entire Finger Lakes region and are critical for maintaining viable agricultural operations.

Development pressure has been felt in the vicinity of Seneca and Canandaigua Lakes, which are becoming desirable locations for year-round residential development. The impact that the improvements to the Rt.332 corridor on development is an unknown. Ontario County is considering extending a sewer line from the landfill in Seneca to Canandaigua and Geneva. The scope and scale and the

feasibility of this project is currently being defined. If constructed, the presence of such infrastructure could present opportunities for development and potential pressure for conversion of farmland.

Town of Hopewell (1990 Town Pop.3,016; 2000 est. Pop. 3,318 +10%)

Hopewell is located in the east central part of the County and covers 22,849 acres. In 1999, 17,068 acres were classified as agriculture accounting for 75% of the town's land. Between 1992 and 1999 there was only a 1% decrease in agricultural land. Like northern Canandaigua, and Seneca and Phelps to its west, the landscape is relatively level or gently rolling. Approximately 83% of Hopewell is located an agricultural district. Field crops and dairy operations account for most of the agricultural land use.

Agriculture clearly dominates the Hopewell landscape. Transportation infrastructure presents the opportunity for farmland conversion. **Because of its proximity to the Rt. 332 corridor, the western part of the town could begin to feel more intense development pressure.** Rt. 21 in the northwest connecting Manchester (and the Thruway) with Canandaigua, along with Rt. 5 & 20 in the south also present similar avenues of development opportunity, especially when associated with other infrastructure. There is anecdotal evidence that some areas are beginning to experience an increase in land values in excess of agricultural value.

Town of Gorham (1990 Town Pop.3,296; 2000 est. Pop. 3,395 +3%)

Located in the south central part of the county, Gorham covers 33,815 acres with 21,464 acres classified as agricultural or 63% of town land. There was a 4% loss of land classified as agricultural between 1992 and 1999. Approximately 77% of the Town is within an agricultural district.

Prime farm soils are found throughout the Town's gently rolling landscape. Field crops are the predominant land use with some vegetable and dairy and livestock operations. **Contrary to a general trend of farm consolidation and larger farm operations, small farms (50-100 acres) are being sustained by an influx of Mennonite farmers** from Pennsylvania. The Town estimates that Mennonite farmland ownership accounts for almost 50% of all agricultural land providing a stabilizing influence over potential conversions to non-farm use.

The Canandaigua lakeshore is seeing some conversion of seasonal cottages to year round residences as well as some interest in new construction. There has been no substantive development pressure in the upland areas in recent years in large part due to the increasing ownership of land by Mennonites. Extreme northwest Gorham with its proximity to Canandaigua would be the area most likely to feel development pressure.

Town of Seneca (1990 Town Pop. 2,747; 2000 est. Pop. 2,774 +0%)

In a county so richly endowed with prime agricultural farmland, Seneca can be considered to have some of the best farmland in the County. **Of the town's 32,140 acres, 86% or 28,872 acres were classified as agricultural in 1999** with a 4% loss from 1992. This is the highest percentage of agricultural land use for any town in Ontario County. Approximately 90% of the Town is in an agricultural district. The landscape is relatively level to gently rolling with areas of muckland and wetlands.

Seneca supports a diversity of agricultural operations. Approximately 43% of agricultural acreage is devoted to vegetables, 41% to field crops, and smaller percentages to fruit and other crops and nursery operations. Some of the largest dairy operations in the County are located in Seneca. Unlike Gorham, **both dairy and other farm operations are growing in size and experiencing consolidations.**

Seneca has not experienced development pressure because it is not located within an easy commuting distance of the Rochester metropolitan area and does not have any Finger Lakes shoreline. The presence of the Seneca Landfill has also made parts of the town less desirable for development. **Extension of a sewer line to the landfill along Rt.5&20 coupled with the current availability of public water supply may increase the potential for development.**

Town of Geneva (1990 Town Pop.2,967; 2000 est. Pop. 2,997 +1%)

Geneva, the smallest town in Ontario County, covers 12,361 acres with 7,076 acres or 57% being classified as agriculture in 1999 -- a 6% loss in agricultural acreage from 1992. About 52% of the town is in an agricultural district. **The majority of the town has prime farm soils.**

Geneva's gently rolling countryside slopes to the east where it meets the Seneca Lake shoreline. Field crops comprise 81% of agricultural land with some fruit production and nursery/greenhouse operations.

Though primarily agricultural, Geneva has experienced suburb-style growth patterns as development from the City of Geneva moved to the west along the Rt. 5&20 corridor and CR6. A major retail complex is located along the Rt. 5&20 corridor. Residential development has also occurred to the west and north of the City. Typical lakeshore development is found along SR14. The economic vitality of the City of Geneva will be the greatest predictor of future pressure for conversion of farmland.