

**The Making of the Meadowlands:  
How Ancaster's Fields Became Hamilton's Suburbs**

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## ABSTRACT

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In an age of increasing urbanization, rural communities and agricultural lifestyles are quickly disappearing. Many local, pastoral histories have been buried under the new narratives of modern suburban development. Do such places, located along the rural-urban fringe, contain accounts worth memorializing? This thesis is a case study of the Ancaster Meadowlands—a growing neighbourhood within the City of Hamilton, Ontario. It explores the process of suburban growth and uncovers the local history of a landscape. As a narrative, the study traces land-use change over time, displaying the area's evolution from a site of Neolithic settlement, to an important Loyalist village, and finally to a large suburban neighbourhood with commercial and residential components. Three principal methods are employed: resident interviewing, key informant interviewing, and archival research. Themes elicited in this study include land-use conflict, NIMBYism, real-estate volatility, and the interconnectedness of politicians and developers. Given that there are few case studies of contemporary suburban development, this study provides a rare illustration of the multi-faceted process of expansion around a Canadian city while also supplying a historical account of local importance.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I will leave you with my thesis motto—a quote which has spurred me on to remain focused amidst life's many demands: “when you're up to your neck in alligators, it's easy to forget that the initial objective was to drain the swamp.” I originally discovered this line in Michael Katz' book *The People of Hamilton, Canada West*.

*Deo gratias!*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Acronyms</b>	v
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	6
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	11
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	32
<b>Chapter 4: Cultural Heritage Background</b>	47
<b>Chapter 5: Land Development in the Meadowlands (1946-1980)</b>	67
<b>Chapter 6: Land Development in the Meadowlands (1981-1998)</b>	93
<b>Chapter 7: Current Contours of Development</b>	122
<b>Chapter 8: Resident Survey Results</b>	139
<b>Chapter 9: Conclusion</b>	152
 <b>Bibliography</b>	
Appendix A: Research Poster	
Appendix B: Key Information Interview Schedule Sample	
Appendix C: Key Informant Interview Directory	
Appendix D: Key Informant Letter of Information/Consent	
Appendix E: Key Informant E-mail Recruitment Script Sample	
Appendix F: Resident Interview Schedule	
Appendix G: Resident Letter of Information/Consent	
Appendix H: Resident Draw Prize Entry Page	

## ACRONYMS

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403 – The King’s (Ontario) Highway 403

ARA – Area Ratepayers’ Association

ASI – Archaeological Services Incorporated

CHA – Canadian Homebuilders’ Association

ESA – Environmentally Significant Area

ESAIEG – Environmentally Significant Areas Impact Evaluation Group

HCA – Hamilton Conservation Authority

HHA – Hamilton Homebuilders’ Association

HWPAB – Hamilton-Wentworth Planning Area Board

Linc – The Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway

LRMC – Lloyd Reeds Map Collection

MOA – Meadowlands of Ancaster (developer)

NIMBY – Not In My Backyard

OMB – Ontario Municipal Board

OP – Official Plan

OWRC – Ontario Water Resources Commission

PSW – Provincially Significant Wetland

SWM – Storm Water Management

UEL – United Empire Loyalists

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

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*I now have a new crop of vinyl where the corn used to grow.*

– Tim Cassidy in Witold Rybczynski's *Last Harvest*

We live in an increasingly globalized world where physical and social distances are no longer as pronounced as they once were. Advances in communication, technology, and transportation have all facilitated a loosening of the connection between *geography* (the distinctive local characteristics of a place) and *community* (cohesive social relationships). The built environment can be seen as a representative expression of these structural and societal changes. Decentralized urbanization has been a growing trend worldwide, including within Canada. It is now known that more Canadians live in suburban residential settings than any other.<sup>1</sup> These changes have been coupled with the associated decline of agriculture and rural communities across the country. Census data reveals, for example, that between 2006 and 2011, the number of Ontario farms dropped 9.2%, a decline which remains consistent.<sup>2</sup> In view of such trends, it is important to ask how the distinctive histories of these rural communities will be remembered.

The task of this study is to uncover and disseminate the historical past of a residential suburb and commercial edge node within the metropolitan region of Hamilton, Ontario. The Ancaster Meadowlands is a suburban neighbourhood within the former Town of Ancaster and the current City of Hamilton, Ontario.<sup>3</sup> The community is located within Ward 12 in the southwestern corner of the city. Although its boundaries are not universally delineated, for this study I will be using the following landmarks as borders: the intersection of the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway & Highway 403 (north),

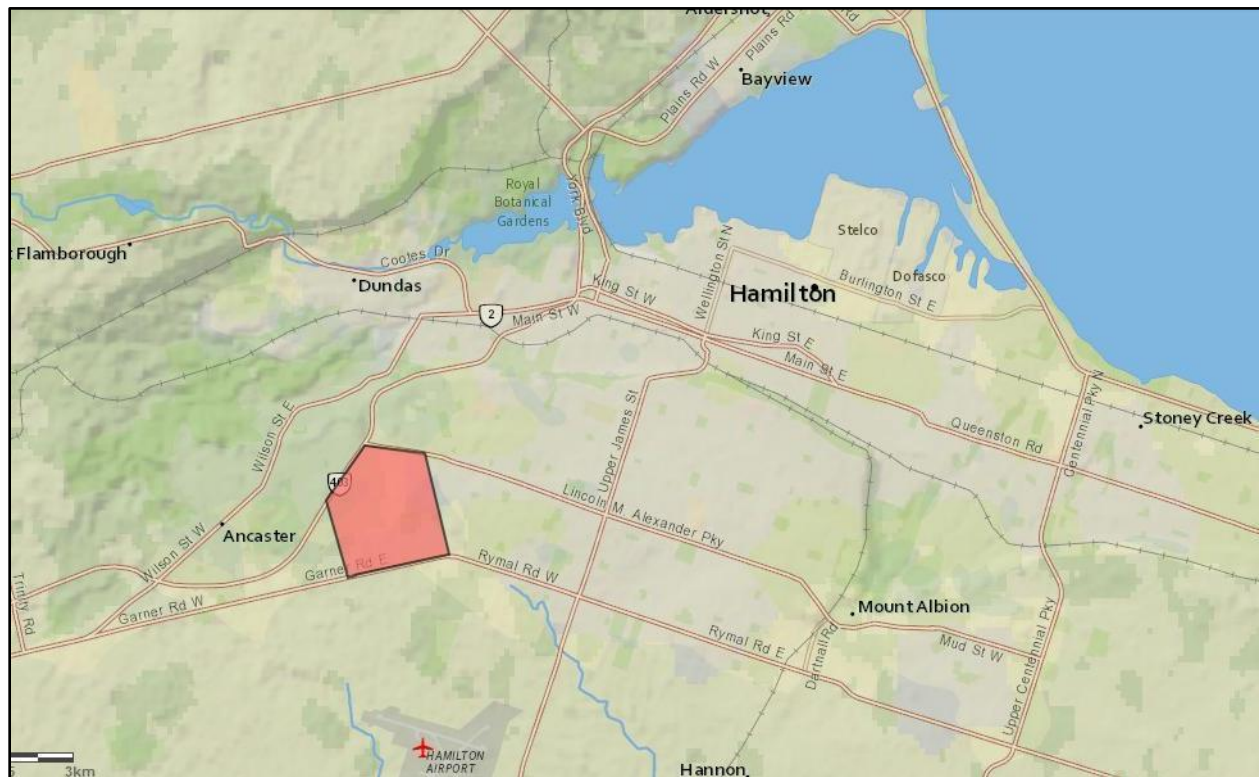
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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, David Gordon, "Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas, Core/Suburbs/Exurban Proportions 1996 and 2006 Census," *Canada is a Suburban Nation*, the Council for Canadian Urbanism, <https://qshare.queensu.ca/Users01/gordond/Suburbs/files/repartitionv5.pdf>, last modified July 30, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Data from Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2006 and 2011.

<sup>3</sup> In this study, the name "the Meadowlands" will be considered as a singular noun and not treated as a plural entity.

Garner Road (south), Stone Church Road (east), and Southcote Road (west). A close-up map of my study area can be found in Chapter 3 where I outline my rationale behind choosing the neighbourhood.



**Figure 1** – An outline of the Ancaster Meadowlands within the context of the metropolitan Hamilton region (Source: Scholars GeoPortal, National Geographic basemap, 2015).

The approximately 5.5km<sup>2</sup> site is dominated by residential land uses along with a regionally significant commercial corridor of franchise “big-box” retail. Along the southern border of the Meadowlands is a mixture of residential, agricultural, and institutional uses. There are five major “neighbourhoods” (Meadowlands I-V) which were identified by government staff and development planners as a useful system of controlling and phasing in sequential growth. Today, there are a total of ten phases of development, many of which consist of small infill projects. Although still witnessing infill, the majority of the Meadowlands was constructed between 1988 and 2015 through the efforts of several land developers.



As we will discover in Chapter 4, the neighbourhood and wider community of Ancaster has a long and fascinating past. The lands are significant in terms of their natural, cultural, and archaeological heritage. The area also has a rich and sustained agricultural history that has only recently begun to recede. Chapter 5 shows how early development plans for the neighbourhood were controversial and divisive. Major themes touched upon include land-use conflict, residential protest, and political conspiracy. Chapter 6 illustrates how numerous development companies vying for the land came and went, with financial losses. It also shows how one local firm acquired the land and, after winning the approval of local residents, began construction on the approximately 1,200 acres it owned in 1983. In this endeavour I make explicit use of digitized aerial photography and local planning maps in order to demonstrate changes in land-use over time.



**Figure 2** – The Ancaster Meadowlands, looking north. This photograph showcases a portion of all five “neighbourhoods” of the Meadowlands. Kitty Murray Lane is seen on the left of the picture with Stonehenge Drive cutting across the middle. Redeemer University College is located in the bottom right-hand quadrant (Source: Eric Vanderveen, 2014).

Along with the construction of new housing and retail, a network of major highways has also contributed to the transformation of the area. The Meadowlands is well connected to major urban centres in all directions via the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway and the King's Highway 403. Once a quiet rural landscape, the Meadowlands is now the second fastest growing community within the City of Hamilton.<sup>4</sup> Between 2001 and 2006 the Canadian Census numbers report an 85% increase in population in the area.<sup>5</sup> Residents are wealthy, educated and exhibit some ethnic and lingual diversity, despite the pervasive stereotype of the culturally homogenous suburb. In Chapter 8, I report the results of interviews with a number of residents in order to ascertain local perceptions of the Meadowlands and to determine whether the current neighbourhood has lived up to plans and expectations. Increasingly, the Meadowlands is witnessing densification with more and more housing surveys as well as a mixture of housing types: single-family homes, semi-detached homes, townhouses, and some apartment complexes. Only recently are all phases of development nearing completion. This allows me a unique opportunity to look back at the history of the Meadowlands and deal with large matters of process, power and place as they relate to the development.

In this study my approach is to answer the three basic overarching questions: *what*, *how*, and *why*? These questions were first expressed, in a geographic context, by Charles F. Gritzner through his definition of the discipline: "what is where? Why there? Why should I care?"<sup>6</sup> My application of these questions takes the form: How did it the Meadowlands come into existence? What have local residents, beyond and within the community, made of it? And, why is this a significant story? My research will also highlight political conflicts over land and land uses which occurred throughout the narrative of development. This case study provides an interesting account of passionate public resistance (NIMBYism), close connections between developers and politicians, and financial instability on the part of large-scale development corporations. In Chapter 7 I will discuss the contours of the community

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<sup>4</sup> Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, "Ancaster," *SPRC Community Profiles*, November 2008, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Charles F. Gritzner, "What is Where, Why There, and Why Care?" *Journal of Geography* 101:1 (2002), 38-40.

today and how significant natural land has slowly diminished. Methodological approaches as well as neighbourhood selection will be discussed in Chapter 3. It is hoped that the information gleaned from this thesis will produce two constructive outcomes: (i) a better understanding of suburban growth within the Canadian context and (ii) a greater appreciation for the local history of Ancaster and Hamilton, Ontario.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review: Historical Suburban Case Studies

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*Modernity brought the radical notion that a son of a blacksmith from Bath could grow up to be a lawyer in London. Post-modernity presents us with the possibility of making up an online identity that needs no correspondence with our actual geographical or demographic particularities. We have yet to discover the implications of this radical dismissal of place.*

– Eric O. Jacobsen, *The Space Between*

Although numerous studies comment on the causes and effects of low density settlement patterns, few provide detailed case-studies of suburban development. My research looks at these phenomena through the example of a burgeoning upscale suburb on the southwest edge of the City of Hamilton: the Ancaster Meadowlands. In this chapter I will expand upon relevant literature in relation to my research questions: how was my study area developed and how was the change that it brought about experienced by residents? My third study question, related to the significance of this narrative, will not be treated in this chapter. I will utilize a series of resources which provide commentary on wider trends and discussions related suburban development, land modification, urban design, and place.

In many ways the Meadowlands is similar to other new suburbs. Yet, it has its own unique story. Postmodernism has informed us of the importance of the particular—how universal trends and themes can only be explored through one’s individual experience in a specific place and at a specific time. My approach is to provide a narrative for an altered landscape which has not yet been expressed.

### Contextualizing Suburban Development

There is a very large literature on the concepts of suburbanization and urban sprawl. For years, academics and professionals in a diversity of fields—from architecture to sociology—have denounced the pattern low-density post-war peripheral development. Sprawl has been denigrated for its effects on human health, the environment, the economy, community, spirituality, socialization, and aesthetics.

Within Hamilton, for example, the Meadowlands has been recurrently seen by its detractors as the local expression of this nebulous concept.<sup>7</sup> It has equally been termed a Hamilton “suburb” and also been stamped with the label of “suburbia.”<sup>8</sup>

Before we begin to turn towards suburban commentaries and critiques (broad and local), we must delineate relevant terms and outline a conceptual framework. What is a suburb? And what is meant by the more generic and culturally pervasive terms suburbia, suburbs, and sprawl? As Kenneth T. Jackson points out, these terms have always been difficult to delineate, “hard to define in 1985 [when he wrote his famous book *Crabgrass Frontier*]...and even harder to define twenty years later [when he contributed to *The Suburb Reader*].”<sup>9</sup> There are now a myriad of contending definitions and, as Becky Nicolaides and Andrew Weise write, “consensus seems unlikely to emerge any time soon.”<sup>10</sup> Yet, despite this ambiguity and the lack of consensus among academics<sup>11</sup>, there remain persistent and discernible characteristics and patterns even amongst the most contemporary of suburban build-outs.

In his 2004 book *Creeping Conformity*, Richard Harris outlines six traits present in most suburbs:

1. low density development, typically of detached, or semi-detached dwellings
2. location at, or close to, the urban fringe
3. high level of owner-occupation
4. politically distinct
5. middle, or upper-middle class in character
6. exclusively residential, meaning that residents must commute beyond the suburb to work<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See for example: Neil Croft, “Barren Landscapes are what highways create,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 27, 1999; Carmela Fragomei, “Urban sprawl sparks anger,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 18, 2002; Mark Severn, “Keeping city at a distance,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 10, 2003; Trey Shaughnessy, “Big Box Development, Meadowlands of Ancaster,” *Raise the Hammer*, April 14, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> See for example: “Ancaster’s ‘unique’ community under attack: councillor,” on SkyscraperPage Forum, March, 2008, [forum.skyscraperpage.com/showthread.php?t=147227](http://forum.skyscraperpage.com/showthread.php?t=147227).

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Suburb Reader*, (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), xxi (foreword).

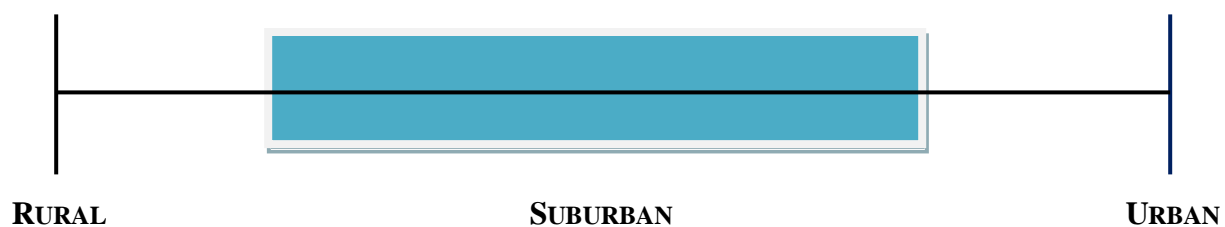
<sup>10</sup> Becky Nicolaides and Andrew Weise, *The Suburb Reader*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Nicolaides and Weise point to two distinct cohorts of (sub)urban scholars: traditionalists and revisionists. Those who believe there is truth in suburban stereotypes and those who want to destroy the “myths” (*The Suburb Reader*, 8).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 18-19.

Although it could be argued that, today, each of these points would be asterisked with exceptions (save perhaps point two), many of these characteristics are still applicable to twenty-first century suburban milieus. In Canada, and in Hamilton in particular, the suburbs are still characterized by what Robert Fishman diagnosed as, “a distinctive low density environment defined by the primacy of the single family house.”<sup>13</sup> According to sociologist Bennett Berger, “‘suburbs’ is an ecological term, distinguishing these settlements from cities, rural villages, and other kinds of communities.”<sup>14</sup> Harris further identifies the suburbs as being intermediaries. They can be seen as the middle of two extremes; the offspring of city and country.<sup>15</sup> Some claim they offer the best of both nature and urbanity while others claim they only display the “disadvantages of both.”<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the most important point worth noting in any discussion of suburban terms is that the suburbs are only known in relation to the urban core. They are found at a significant geographical distance from the traditional urban neighbourhoods of the older, inner city. In order to illustrate this spectrum I have created a simple diagram (Figure 4) which shows the continuum of urban dispersion and have applied it to the urban-periurban-rural territory of the City of Hamilton (Figure 5). “Urban dispersion” is a term consistently used by Canadian planning scholar Pierre Filion.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 4** – Urban Dispersion Spectrum (Source: author).

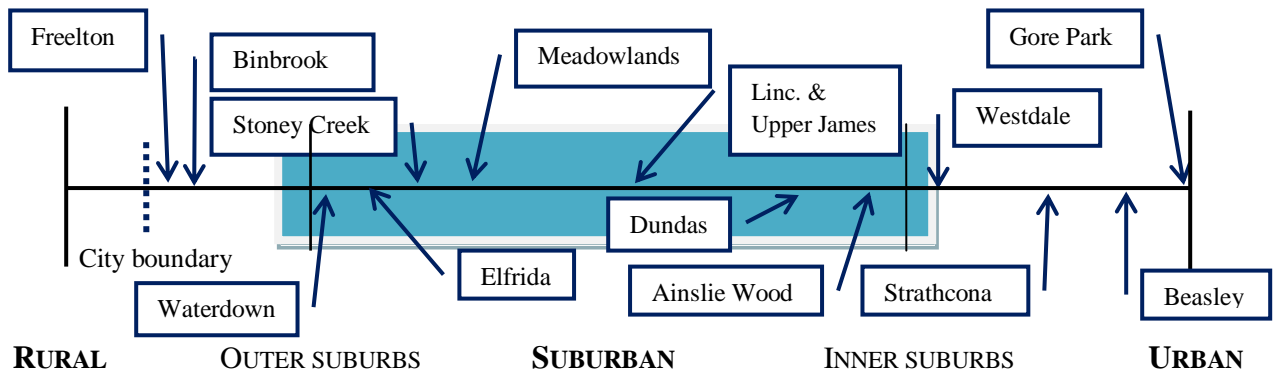
<sup>13</sup> Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*, (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 5.

<sup>14</sup> Bennett Berger, “The Myth of Suburbia,” *Journal of Social Issues* 17 (1961), 38

<sup>15</sup> Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban 1900-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 46.

<sup>16</sup> F.M.L. Thompson, *The Architect & Building News* (London: Cambridge, 1876) quoted in Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity*, 48.

<sup>17</sup> For example, see Pierre Filion, Trudi Bunting, and Keith Warriner, “The Entrenchment of Urban Dispersion: Residential Preferences and Location Patterns in the Dispersed City,” *Urban Studies* 36:8 (1999).



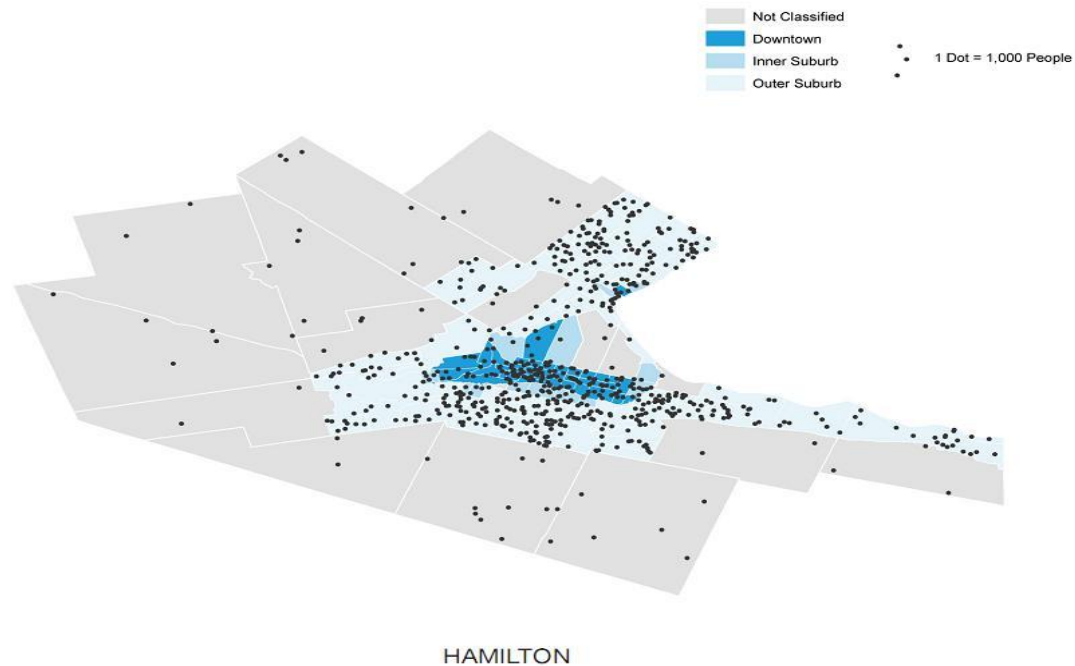
**Figure 5** – Urban Dispersion Spectrum application for the Greater City of Hamilton (Source: author).

It should be noted that the continuum expressed on the two spectra above very much displayed a continuous urban fabric, notably in the case of the City of Hamilton. Discontinuous development largely appears on the periphery of the City, with former towns such as Binbrook, Waterdown, and Frelton. The application of settlement locations within Hamilton is approximate. The spectra point to the concentric nature of the city growth outward, a phenomenon with a longstanding tradition in urban theory. First put forward by sociologist Ernest Burgess, the concentric zone model describes the city as a set of expanding bands with, historically, different land uses and settlement traits.<sup>18</sup> According to my application, the Meadowlands is located within Hamilton's suburban zone. These zones are surrounding a major central business district that anchors the city around it. Within Hamilton, as with most metropolitan cities which have annexed nearby towns and suburbs, the theme of expanding variation in densities is complicated due to this jurisdictional enlargement. There are numerous urban-suburban nodes scattered throughout the 113,800 hectare city including the former towns of Ancaster, Dundas, and Stoney Creek. Using Census data from 2006, researchers from the Martin Prosperity Institute mapped the population density of the city and classified the Meadowlands neighbourhood as

<sup>18</sup> Ernest Burgess, Robert Park, and Roderick MacKenzie, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 47-63.



being located within Hamilton’s suburban area. They termed it an “outer suburb.”<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 6** – Density Map of Hamilton showing metropolitan areas classified as downtown, inner and outer suburbs. Population is indicated with black dots. The largely rural land on the outskirts of the city is “not classified,” and the city limits roughly equate the coloured extent of the map (Source: “Boomtown in the Backyard,” Martin Prosperity Institute, 2012).

We can therefore say that a suburb is a type of urban development, most often typified by a limited mixture of land uses and a lack of high densities, located away from the core of a city. The suburbs are a broader application of this term across a landscape. This landscape is the spatial expression of urban decentralization and the expansion of low-density land-use patterns away from the city centre or central business district. The Meadowlands falls within these categories. Suburbia is a more pejorative term which points to this suburban spatial expression as well as to a social stereotype of a certain lifestyle. According to Berger, suburbia points to more than the built environment,

<sup>19</sup> Gracen Johnson and Richard Florida, “Boomtown in the Backyard: Suburban Growth in Ontario,” *Martin Prosperity Insights* by the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management, May 30, 2013, accessed June 27, 2013, [http://martinprosperity.org/media/Suburbia%20Insight%2001\\_v03.pdf](http://martinprosperity.org/media/Suburbia%20Insight%2001_v03.pdf).



“suburbia is a cultural term intended to connote a way of life.”<sup>20</sup>

## Sprawl

At its most extreme, a discontinuous stretch of urban scatteration may be appropriately termed as “sprawl.”<sup>21</sup> According to architectural historian Dolores Hayden, “sprawl in the built environment means excessive growth expressed as careless, awkward, unsustainable use of land.”<sup>22</sup> Often used as a synonym for “suburbia”, sprawl is a term commonly given to vast automobile-oriented geography “characterized by wide highways, endless strips, large areas of single-use development (such as shopping malls or vast residential subdivisions), and little public space.”<sup>23</sup> It has long been condemned as a spreading blight that sanitizes, homogenizes and standardizes landscapes. As Robert Bruegmann points out, sprawl has been censured with four overarching objections: poor aesthetics, inefficiency, inequality, and environmental degradation.<sup>24</sup> One of the most prominent and penetrating voices in what Bruegmann calls the “anti-sprawl coalition” have been the proponents of New Urbanism.<sup>25</sup> Advocating a return to what they call ‘traditional urbanism’—roughly, the form that existed in the first three decades of the twentieth century—New Urbanists seek to achieve environmental, aesthetic, and social/community improvement through good design and public policy.<sup>26</sup> Andres Duany, the movement’s assumed leader, proposed the term “traditional neighbourhood development” or TND to denote builds which closely match the characteristics of New Urbanism. A central component of the

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<sup>20</sup> Berger, “The Myth of Suburbia,” 38

<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that many of these are used interchangeably (sprawl, suburbia, suburban, suburbs) to denote similar patterns surfacing in the built-environment as well as to point to social characteristics.

<sup>22</sup> Dolores Hayden, “What is Sprawl?” in *The Suburb Reader*, eds. Becky Nicolaides and Andrew Weise, 476.

<sup>23</sup> Hayden, 476.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Bruegmann, “The Paradoxes of Anti-Sprawl Reform,” in *Urban Planning in a Changing World*, ed. Robert Freestone (New York: Routledge Publishers, 2000), 158-172.

<sup>25</sup> There are a number of developments constructed in Ontario on the basis of New Urbanism, including, among others: River Oaks, Oakville; Cornell, Markham; and Mount Pleasant Village, Brampton.

<sup>26</sup> Emily Talen, ed., *Charter of the New Urbanism, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2013).

school is a stark opposition to suburban sprawl.<sup>27</sup> According to Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, sprawl is the antithesis of the traditional neighbourhood.<sup>28</sup> It consists of five ingredients that, because of zoning, are generally highly separate: “housing subdivisions, shopping centres, office parks, civic institutions, and roadways.”<sup>29</sup> For New Urbanists, this style of development is not functional, attractive, equitable or environmentally prudent. “Since each piece of suburbia serves only one type of activity and since daily life involves a wide variety of activities, the residents of suburbia spend an unprecedented amount of time and money moving from one place to the next.”<sup>30</sup> The point of Duany and his colleagues is that, along with ignoring historic precedent and human experience, sprawl is the wrong arrangement of land uses.<sup>31</sup> “The result doesn’t look like a place, it doesn’t act like a place, and, perhaps most significant, it doesn’t feel like a place. Rather, it feels like what it is: an uncoordinated agglomeration of standardized single-use zones with little pedestrian life and even less civic identification, connected only by an overtaxed network of roadways.”<sup>32</sup>

But is the Meadowlands, in fact, sprawl? In order to answer that question we must turn to scholars who have attempted to quantify the nebulous concept. In their 2001 paper “Wrestling Sprawl to the Ground,” George Galster and other scholars helpfully articulate an understanding of the contours of the notion. The authors put forward eight dimensions, or criteria, of sprawl which include: density, continuity, concentration, clustering, centrality, nuclearity, mixed uses, and proximity.<sup>33</sup> Any “pattern of land use in the urban area that exhibits low levels of some combination of the eight distinct

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<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, one of the Meadowlands developers, Mattamy Homes, has reportedly recently espoused and adopted the principles of New Urbanism in its development practices (Tracey Hanes, “Mattamy embraces the concepts of New Urbanism,” *The Toronto Star*, April 20, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Duany et al., 5-7.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Duany et al., give an analogy of this separation of uses: “the new American city has been likened to an unmade omelet: eggs, cheese, vegetables, a pinch of salt, but each consumed in turn, raw.” (10-11).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>33</sup> George Galster et al., “Wrestling Sprawl to the Ground: Defining and Measuring an Elusive Concept,” *Housing Policy Debate* 12:4 (2001), 687-704.

dimensions,”<sup>34</sup> is, to the study authors, sprawl. The lowest scores on their composite index correlated to the highest degree of sprawl while the highest scores were associated with the least amount of sprawl. Not surprisingly, the least sprawling regions measured in the U.S. were the older urban centres of the Northeast and Midwest (New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia).<sup>35</sup> And, conversely, the most sprawling areas were found (largely) in newer American cities with a great deal of low-density postwar development (Atlanta, Houston, Miami, Dallas).<sup>36</sup> According to the indices put forward by Galster et al., the Meadowlands would be classified as an urban area exhibiting a medium degree of sprawl. Although predominately residential and low-density, it has been highly planned and includes some variation in residential types, densities, lot sizes, and land uses. It is also part of a continuous stretch of urban development from the city’s centre. It would not be classified as so-called ‘leapfrog’ development, which has been experienced in Simcoe County, for example.<sup>37</sup>

Though, if we look back to Duany et al., there are other intangible elements which may count as sprawl. Income segregation is one. “The segregation of housing by ‘market segment’,” the authors argue, “is a phenomenon that was invented by developers who, lacking a meaningful way to distinguish their mass-produced merchandise, began selling the concept of exclusivity. The real estate business caters to this elitism.”<sup>38</sup> The Meadowlands is significantly segregated by income, particularly in comparison to other neighbourhoods throughout Hamilton. In a recent research paper tracking indicators of change within Hamilton, Harris, Dunn, and Wakefield show that the residents of the Meadowlands receive very little income from the government. They also show, that as of 2010, the neighbourhood averages incomes 20-40% higher than the norm in Hamilton-Burlington. Perhaps most

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<sup>34</sup> Galster et al., “Wrestling Sprawl to the Ground,” 685

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 705-707.

<sup>36</sup> Two exceptions to this pattern were Los Angeles and Detroit. Although L.A. has long been perceived as the epitome of sprawl, it was cited as scoring fifth-lowest on the sprawl index. Detroit, of course, is an older city with a pre-20<sup>th</sup> century urban core and yet—given a variety of social, political, economic, and land-use factors over the past 60 years—it ranked very high for indices of sprawl.

<sup>37</sup> Ray Tomalty and Bartek Komoroski, “Inside Out: Sustaining Ontario’s Greenbelt,” *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation Occasional Papers* (June 2011), 25.

<sup>38</sup> Duany et al., *Suburban Nation*, 43.

interesting is that between 1980 and 2010, the Meadowlands experienced some of the greatest increases in income across the city.<sup>39</sup> Within the Meadowlands, there are few variations on this demographic theme.<sup>40</sup> These and other demographic details will be elaborated upon in Chapter 8.

Other components of sprawl towards which New Urbanists point are architectural style, variation and so-called ‘patina’. Although the developers of the Meadowlands have applied superficial variation among many homes—different styles of windows, gables, facades, shapes—most are very much the same in terms of design and materials. Lastly, the lack of pedestrianization and public place are important to New Urbanists in distinguishing sprawl. The Meadowlands features very little street life and very few public places, with the exception of a small number of public parks which double as storm water management features. There are no community centres nor are there any place-markers, monuments, or civic buildings to share meaning and connect citizens with their neighbourhood’s past.

## Places & Spaces

Within this context, another notable voice from the New Urbanist camp is the urban-social commentator James Howard Kunstler. Sometimes crude and sometimes eloquent, Kunstler has made a name for himself as a provocative assailant of “the gruesome tragic suburban boulevards of commerce... [and] the stupefying ugliness of everything in sight.”<sup>41</sup> He deals pessimistically with notions of economy, energy-crisis, and the built environment. “Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built in the last fifty years,” he laments, “and most of it is depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading...”<sup>42</sup>

As much as his writing has been disdained for its hyperbole, his best known book *The Geography*

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<sup>39</sup> Richard Harris, Jim Dunn, and Sarah Wakefield, “A City on the Cusp: Neighbourhood Change in Hamilton Since 1970,” *University of Toronto’s Cities Centre: Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership*, Research Paper 236, June 2015.

<sup>40</sup> One exception is that the Meadowlands does host a small number of renters, largely students from Redeemer University College. These students are found throughout the neighbourhood but most concentrated along Kitty Murray Lane, Meadowlands Boulevard, and Stonehenge Drive.

<sup>41</sup> James Howard Kunstler, “A Crisis in Landscape and Townscape,” in *Moving to Corn Fields: A Reader in Urban Sprawl and the Regional Future of Northeast Ohio*, ed. David Beach (Cleveland: EcoCity Cleveland, 1996)

<sup>42</sup> James H. Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Free Press Publishing, 1993), 10.

of *Nowhere* does point to an important theme in urban theory: the study of place. This idea of replicable or unidentifiable spaces, which Kunstler calls “nowhere”, is contrasted with traditional places and community-oriented developments. For Kunstler, the solution to the “scary places”<sup>43</sup> created by modernism is a return to traditional, organically-grown places and neighbourhoods modeled after these earlier examples.<sup>44</sup> As much as Kunstler and other New Urbanists have been criticized (sometimes justifiably) for being hypocritical<sup>45</sup> and creating “better looking sprawl,”<sup>46</sup> the movement’s focus on applying theories of place is impressive in an age when macro forces have diminished its importance.

Place is a milieu-specific, meaning-rich word. It is the answer to the earlier-noted series of questions posed by geographer Charles Gritzner in his definition of geography, which serves as the *modus operandi* for my study: “what is where, why there, and why [should one] care?”<sup>47</sup> Place is spatially, chronologically, and meaningfully-precise. Place also points to notions of rootedness and authenticity. As Wilfred McCay and Ted McAllister point out, “Whether we like it or not, we are corporeal beings, grounded in the particular, in the finite conditions of our embodiment, our creatureliness.”<sup>48</sup> Heidegger conceptualized this idea of rootedness in the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through his notions of ‘dwelling’ and *dasein* (meaning ‘presence’ or ‘being there’).<sup>49</sup> Canadian geographer Edward Relph expands upon this work in his 1976 seminal book *Place and Placelessness*. Relph writes that, “to be inside a place is to belong to it and identify with it, and the more profoundly

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<sup>43</sup> “Indulging in a fetish of commercialized individualism, we did away with the public realm, and with nothing left but our private life in our private homes and private cars, we wonder what happened to the spirit of community. We created a landscape of scary places and became a nation of scary people” (Kunstler, 273).

<sup>44</sup> Such as traditional neighbourhood developments (TND’s).

<sup>45</sup> Witold Rybczynski, “This Old House,” *The New Republic*, May 8, 1995.

<sup>46</sup> David Harvey questions whether New Urbanism does in fact instill community or simply creates the image of community. Harvey brings up the idea that it can be guilty of utopianism and romanticizing built-environments of the past. Still, Harvey extols New Urbanists for underlining the importance of place and how places tend to evolve organically and holistically. David Harvey, “The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap,” *Harvard Design Magazine*, Spring 1997, 68.

<sup>47</sup> Charles F. Gritzner, “What is Where, Why There, and Why Care?,” *Journal of Geography* 101:1 (2002): 38-40.

<sup>48</sup> Wilfred McCay and Ted McAllister eds., *Why Place Matters: Geography, Identity, and Civic Life in Modern America* (New York: Encounter Books, 2014), Preface IX.

<sup>49</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” from *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971).

inside you are the stronger is the identity with place.”<sup>50</sup> Such an identification with a place is what some geographers call sense of place or *genius loci*, the spirit of place. Many individuals feel subjectively attached and proud to be living in certain places while others do not. What differentiates these approaches? Relph also points out that meaning can be increased and decreased, based upon time spent within a place. His historically-oriented survey *The Modern Urban Landscape* illustrates how remnants of Victorian landscapes once abhorred by urban working classes are now cherished and celebrated within downtowns across North America.<sup>51</sup>

According to many scholars, places identified as being memorable possess their own unique character as well as a strong sense of identity that both visitors and residents are able to perceive. Throughout the literature place has often been contrasted with the ethereal concept of space. In his landmark book *Place: A Short Introduction*, geographer Timothy Cresswell defines place in opposition to space:

“Space is a more abstract concept than place. When we speak of space we tend to think of outer space or the spaces of geometry. Spaces have volumes and areas. Places have space between them...Space, then, has been seen in distinction to place as a realm without meaning...When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place.”<sup>52</sup>

A corresponding concept to this discussion, which bridges the gap between the two terms, is the notion of placelessness. Relph first raised this issue to the forefront of geography in examining the effect of contemporary culture upon place. He describes this concept as “a weakening of the identity of places to a point where they not only look alike and feel alike but offer the same bland possibilities for

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<sup>50</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (Evanston, Illinois: Pion Publishing, 1976), 49.

<sup>51</sup> Edward Relph, *The Modern Urban Landscape* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Cornwall, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2004), 8-10.

experience.”<sup>53</sup> Our disconnection to the situatedness of localities has led to what J. Nicholas Entriken calls the “betweenness of place.”<sup>54</sup> Many critics of the postwar built environment in North America have echoed this sentiment, including James Howard Kunstler. The critique is that the standardization and corporatization of economies has led industries such as home building and development to produce non-descript places of imitation and duplication. It is often asserted that more and more of the built environment is characterized by commonality; making it difficult to tell where one happens to be located.

Anthropologist Marc Augé has argued in a similar fashion that our postmodern world is replacing places of the past with “empirical non-places,” which include spaces of circulation (highways, airports), consumption (supermarkets, big box stores), and communication (telephone and internet servicing).<sup>55</sup> This position is supported by the growing trends of globalization, cultural homogenization, immigration, rapid transportation, and electronic communication. This meta-narrative of placelessness stands in opposition to the manner in which one’s identity was once locationally shaped in ancient and premodern times. “[If place is seen] as relational, historical and concerned with identity,” Augé writes. “Then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. The premise advanced here is that modernism has produced non-places.”<sup>56</sup>

How do these geographic dichotomies of space vs. place, displacement vs. emplacement, hypermobility vs. embeddedness, and digital disembodiment vs. locational awareness interact with and inform the narrative of the Meadowlands? Is the Meadowlands a place? A space? And has it always been so? Applying Cresswell’s understanding of place, we might say that the perceived aspects of place experienced in the Meadowlands are evolving; likely increasing over time as the neighbourhood

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<sup>53</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 82.

<sup>54</sup> J.N. Entriken, *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991), .

<sup>55</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (New York: Verso Books, 2009), 110.

<sup>56</sup> Augé, *Non-Places*, 78.

becomes more established and residents become attached to the place itself and places therein.

Questions of this nature will be treated in Chapter 8. The suburb is still witnessing construction, particularly in its eastern regions. We might also say that the area also contains a sizeable quantity of urban land which meets Augé's criteria for "non-places": high-speed regional automobile infrastructure, tract housing, and commercial box stores. The Meadowlands Power Centre is routinely experienced by consumers across the region as a space to briefly visit and pass through. This connects with Augé's notion of non-places as sites of transience; marked as the space of travellers.<sup>57</sup> But it is difficult to label the entire landscape as a non-place, particularly since the experience of place is both subjective and individual.

Geographer David Harvey asserted that this trend of placelessness and global urban standardization must be challenged by what he called "geographical situatedness...a process [that] can never take place outside of space and time, outside of place making, and without the engagement with the dialectics of socio-natural relations."<sup>58</sup> Increasing our connection to place is achieved through the improvement of the built environment, the strengthening of social connections, and the dissemination of a shared narrative.

Walter Brueggemann asserts that place is both inherently locational and storied.<sup>59</sup> "The city without its own story to tell has nothing distinctive to promote," write researchers Lon Dubinsky and William Garrett-Petts.<sup>60</sup> As such, telling the stories of particular places enlivens the collective civic memory and improves the relationship that individuals have with places. Without a strong connection to our places and their past, note McCay and McAllister, "we risk losing the reality of our embodiment, risk losing the basis for healthy and resilient individual identity, and risk forfeiting the needed

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<sup>57</sup> Augé, 34.

<sup>58</sup> David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 260.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Land* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

<sup>60</sup> W.F. Garrett-Petts and Lon Dubinsky, "Working Well, Together: An Introduction to the Cultural Future of Small Cities," *The Small Cities Book* (New York: Routledge, 2005).



preconditions for the cultivation of public virtues.”<sup>61</sup> They continue, “We stand powerfully in need of such stable and coherent places in our lives—to ground us and orient us, and mark off a finite arena, rich with memory...”<sup>62</sup>

### **Local History and Modern Land Development**

Many towns, cities, and (former) townships in Ontario have well-documented accounts of their local histories, of variable quality. Often replete with photographs and family stories, these informal historical accounts are typically compiled by citizens or heritage committees and tend to conclude before the modern era. Many end with very short concluding chapters such as “Oxford County After WWII,” “Looking Towards the Future,” or “Copetown Today.” Few sustain a focus on modern development and link the narrative of growth to the locality’s past. In Ancaster, for example, one of the central narrations of the town’s history ends with the conclusion of the War in 1945.<sup>63</sup> Part of my interest in completing this research is to fill the gap of missing modern local history as well as to tell the specific story of the Meadowlands itself; a history which has yet to be written. In fact, in the foreword of *Ancaster: A Pictorial History*, the authors have urged future researchers to continue their endeavor: “By calling this Volume 1, we are encouraging our successors to follow with another volume or volumes dealing with the *post-war expansion* of Ancaster [emphasis mine].”<sup>64</sup>

There are a number of case studies which, to varying degrees, do in fact follow this method of detailing a wide span of localized history while also tracing modern land-use changes, such as: Sewell’s study of how sprawl changed Toronto; Contosta’s account of the evolution of a Philadelphia suburb; Whitzman’s history of change in the Parkdale neighbourhood; French’s informal tale of Forest Hill, Toronto; Rybczynski’s nuanced narrative of a New Urbanist build-out in Pennsylvania; Hoggett and

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<sup>61</sup> Wilfre McCay and Ted McAllister eds., *Why Place Matters: Geography, Identity, and Civic Life in Modern America* (New York: Encounter Books, 2014), Preface X.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>63</sup> Arthur Bowes, ed., *Ancaster: A Pictorial History Vol. 1* (Ancaster: Ancaster Township Historical Society, 2001).

<sup>64</sup> Bowes, ed., *Ancaster*, iii.

Williamson's expose of the suburban history of Norwich, England; and Kelly Masci's thesis on the planning and development of central Mississauga.<sup>65</sup> Whizman's approach to the case study involves tracing the transition of Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood over 125 years. She ends by showing the modern, urban evolution of the once independent suburb; how it became one of Toronto's most impoverished districts. She also considers the significance and applicability of localized research, asking "why does Parkdale matter?"<sup>66</sup> In *Last Harvest*, Witold Rybczynski weaves an account of the series of events that followed the sale of a parcel of agricultural land in rural Pennsylvania. Utilizing similar methodology, Rybczynski interviews a series of developers, planners, politicians, residents, etc. in order to narrate the creation of the community of New Daleville. The case allows him to analyze and comment on the mechanics of the process and bureaucratic system which—as was the case in Ancaster—moves the development process along very slowly. Another chronological account which is comprehensive in terms its historical breadth is Bruce Elliott's history of Nepean, Ontario.<sup>67</sup> While maintaining a political focus, Elliot traces the evolution of the Ottawa suburb from early European settlement to annexation and subsequent urbanization.

One of the largest complicating factors in the creation and maintenance of human-oriented, storied places is the modern process of land development. "Real estate companies regard spaces as surfaces for enhancing capital gains,"<sup>68</sup> writes geographer Igal Charney, and most writers agree. In "Three Dimensions of Capital Switching within the Real Estate Sector," Charney uses a Canadian case

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<sup>65</sup> John Sewell, *The Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2009); David R. Contosta, *Suburb in the City: Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, 1850-1990* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992), 83-90; Carolyn Whitzman, *Suburb, Slum, Urban Village: Transformations in Toronto's Parkdale Neighbourhood, 1875-2002* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); William French, *A Most Unlikely Village: An Informal History of the Village of Forest Hill* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1964); Witold Rybczynski, *The Last Harvest: From Cornfield to New Town* (New York: Scribner Publishing, 2007); Rick Hoggett and Tom Williamson, "Forgotten Heritage: The Landscape History of the Norwich Suburbs," Unpublished report for Norwich HEART, School of History, University of East Anglia, 2006; Kelly Masci, "The Planning and Development of the Mississauga City Centre" (MA thesis, McMaster University, 1993).

<sup>66</sup> Whitzman, *Suburb, Slum, Urban Village*, 191-202.

<sup>67</sup> Bruce Elliott, *The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital 1792-1990* (Nepean: Corporation of the City of Nepean, 1991).

<sup>68</sup> Igal Charney, "Three Dimensions of Capital Switching within the Real Estate Sector: A Canadian Case Study," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25:4 (2001), 740.

study to examine how major land developers operate within the economy. “Capital is...elusive and nomadic; it can be virtually placeless,” notes Charney. “The ‘globalization hypothesis’ regarding the real estate sector relies on this quality. The development and ownership of real estate properties have become increasingly ‘de-localized’ and may be determined by forces beyond the city’s boundaries.”<sup>69</sup> As we will examine in subsequent chapters, in the case of the Meadowlands, there were several non-local developers who owned the land prior to 1983 but the developers who were able to carry through their plans were based in Hamilton.

The process of land development is premised on the concept of equity. Corporate equity is the value of a company when assets and loans are both considered. Most large development firms are highly dependent on credit and thus operate in an equity-poor environment. According to Sherman Maisel, “the great majority of firms in the industry are compelled to stretch their capital to the utmost. Typically, the leverage in the industry is large. [For a developer], the higher his borrowing, the more work he can perform and the greater his potential profits.”<sup>70</sup> In this process land is either purchased for its suitability as developable land or for its appreciating value. Speculation is not always a lucrative practice since market trends and real estate values fluctuate regularly. As a rule, developers acquire land from speculators, private owners, municipalities or banks. In greenfield and suburban locations, these purchases are often for sizeable parcels of land. The funds for these acquisitions are leveraged by lending institutions (banks) who generate income through interest. Developers typically borrow from banks to pay the hard costs of development and pay back the loans as lots are sold.<sup>71</sup>

Some developers are completely “vertically integrated,” meaning that there is a linear supply chain for each step of the process of development. Prior to the Second World War, land development involved numerous agencies. In the post-war era, the process has been dominated by large real estate conglomerates. Increasingly, there are fewer and fewer development firms active in the industry and

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<sup>69</sup> Charney, 740.

<sup>70</sup> Sherman Maisel, *Financial Real Estate* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 315-316.

<sup>71</sup> Rybczynski, *Last Harvest*, 56.

those that remain hold significant shares in the market. Some development firms handle all steps of the process (including acquisition, planning, marketing, and selling) while others are only involved in the initial stages.

For many large, multi-national corporations real estate manifests itself as a lucrative opportunity to diversify investment portfolios.<sup>72</sup> Charney terms this concept “capital switching” and claims there are three components of the practice: the mode of operation, the type of property, and the location.<sup>73</sup> For Carma Developers Ltd., a total corporate overhaul (which included re-allocating capital) occurred after the acquisition of the massive Edmonton-based land developer Allarco Developments Ltd. This large-scale corporate approach to development points to the fact that land is a “market commodity”<sup>74</sup>. Along with being an “areal expression of the interests of some land-based elite,”<sup>75</sup> Harvey Molotch also argues that growth is an imperative for cities: “the city is, for those who count, a growth machine.”<sup>76</sup> Molotch also claims that, because the city is a growth machine, “it draws a special sort of person into its politics.”<sup>77</sup> Most politicians, according to Molotch, are economically-motivated businessmen and consequently their interests are often highly intertwined with those of the development industry. The model of exponential accumulation and consumption is the economic and political force which spurred the creation of the Meadowlands and other, more far flung local land development projects. Most cities seek to cover their economic costs and build their municipal tax base through new construction projects. Diversified land uses are always desired but as is often the case, most new greenfield developments tends to be residential or sparse single-use office buildings.

David Harvey, who takes a Marxian political-economy approach to the contemporary process of land development, argues that it is not consumer demand which fuels the real estate sector but rather

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<sup>72</sup> Marion Clawson, *Suburban Land Conversion in the United States* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971), 98.

<sup>73</sup> Charney, 743-745.

<sup>74</sup> Harvey Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine: Towards a Political Economy of Place,” *American Journal of Sociology* 82:2 (1993): 309.

<sup>75</sup> Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine,” 309.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

the supply of capital from corporate investment.<sup>78</sup> In other words, to Harvey, ‘top-down’ investment is more of a motivating impulse than ‘bottom-up’ demand in contemporary land development.<sup>79</sup> This view is, to varying degrees, supported by other geographers, real estate economists, and political scientists.<sup>80</sup> Scottish-born geographer Neil Smith summarizes the view in his book *Uneven Development*, “the necessity of capital accumulation leads to a frantic geographical expansion, [l]ed by productive capital. This requires a continuous investment of capital in the creation of a built environment for production.”<sup>81</sup> This contrast of the fluid nature of capital with the material reality of the local environment is what Smith terms uneven development.

More than a decade after *Creeping Conformity* and *Suburban Nation*, we can see how evolving land use patterns have changed the suburbs and, correspondingly, our perceptions. Today, the suburbs are the spatial arrangement that represents home to most Canadians. Increasingly, they also represent the pattern in which most of the world will follow. Contemporary suburban environments host a variety of densities, a mixture of land uses, and a diversity of demographics. Though most post-war suburbs maintain their character, they are no longer exclusively residential, politically distinct, racially homogenous, or uniquely middle or upper class. According to Larry S. Bourne, our cultural understanding of the suburbs only goes as far as the “externally-imposed images, entrenched social meanings and inherited cultural baggage”<sup>82</sup> that accompany the terms. Kenneth T. Jackson, author of *Crabgrass Frontier*, puts it this way: “For those on the right, it [the suburban stereotype] affirms that there is a ‘[North] American way of life’ to which all citizens can aspire. To the left, the myth of suburbia has been a convenient way of attacking a wide variety of national problems, from excessive

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<sup>78</sup> David Harvey, “The urban process under capitalism: a framework for analysis,” *The International Journal for Urban and Regional Research* 2:1-4 (1978), 101-131.

<sup>79</sup> David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985).

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, R.A. Beauregard, “Capital switching and the built environment: United States 1970-89,” *Environment and Planning A* 26 (1994), 715-732.

<sup>81</sup> Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 119.

<sup>82</sup> Larry S. Bourne, “Reinventing the Suburbs,” *Old Myths and New Realities*, *Progress in Planning* 46:3 (1996), 163.

conformity to ecological destruction.”<sup>83</sup> For many revisionists like Bourne, the “myth of suburbia” is far too archaic to recite. “The simplistic city-suburban dichotomy [is] outdated and increasingly unsuited to the complex realities of contemporary metropolitan life and urban redevelopment.”<sup>84</sup> Other suburban scholars like Harris see the suburbs not only as having outgrown the dichotomy, but also as being the very physical manifestation of the process of urbanization; the transitional state between city and country: “We must make an effort: to see the city block as one-time urban fringe; to see the rash of homes on a rural sideroad as future urbanity. Suburban land does not just lie between the city and the country, but in the long view each parcel and tract itself undergoes that transition, begging us to view it historically.”<sup>85</sup>

Given the current influence of many design professionals (both public and private) advocating for more “complete” streets and “complete” neighbourhoods as well as the growing public desire urban walkability, it is no wonder that the suburbs are witnessing a re-configuration. And yet, many of the early post-war and contemporary suburban landscapes still continue to be places of separation, standardization, and homogeneity. Although populations may be more diverse, this does not necessarily correspond to the built environment. Despite being built around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and despite containing some density and mixed-use development, the Meadowlands still exemplifies these long-standing suburban themes. Thus, as excessive and persistent as familiar suburban stereotypes may be, they are continually regurgitated by urbanists and academics precisely because they continue to touch on recurring and evident tangible truth displayed throughout the built environment.

It is also important to note that spatial arrangement is not the sole determiner of human behaviour or quality of life. Herbert Gans was critical of what he called physical or architectural determinism, claiming that urban design and architectural intentionality only go so far to improve the human

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<sup>83</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>84</sup> Larry S. Bourne, “Reinventing the Suburbs,” 163.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Harris, “How Land Markets Make and Change Suburbs,” in *Suburban Constellations*, ed. Roger Keil (Berlin: Jovis, 2013), 33-38.

experience.<sup>86</sup> For Gans, the way in which humans use spaces is more dependent upon our social and cultural traits than the built environment itself. In his critique of the thoughts of Jane Jacobs (and other urban revivalists) Gans aligned their efforts, however erroneously, with the Corbusian planners they loathed. Given his experiences with slum-clearance interventionists in Boston's West End and his training as a sociologist, it is no wonder that Gans would be critical of planning and architecture as vehicles for change.<sup>87</sup> But, even though his historical sight seems to be limited by the modernist planning experiment, Gans still offers helpful admonition on the limits of "landscape surgery" and other technical fixes.<sup>88</sup> As Shanks shows us, many suburban residents are aware of the shortcomings of their built environments and yet they enjoy living in them. Others have mixed opinions about whether or not they actually live in a suburb at all.<sup>89</sup>

The suburbs have long been criticized for their generic negative effects on a myriad of markers from human health to the character of the built environment. Sprawl is often considered as the most damaging expression of the low-density suburban landscape. The Meadowlands itself has been perceived as sprawl by some and a suburb by others. As we have seen from the linear spectrum of spatial patterning and from the density map put forward by the Martin Prosperity Institute, the Meadowlands does in fact exhibit the locational and descriptive qualities of a suburb. According to the indicators measured by Galster et al., the Meadowlands also displays some degree of sprawl.

The suburbs are typically created by large-scale development companies that function under high rates of borrowing. The majority of firms, today, are detached from the land in which they acquire. Most develop large parcels of land and sell lots or parcels to builders for construction. Some developers handle all steps of the process (acquisition, planning, marketing, and selling) while others are only

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<sup>86</sup> Herbert Gans, "Urban Vitality and the Fallacy of Physical Determinism," in *People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 25-33.

<sup>87</sup> Herbert Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (New York: The Free Press, 1962).

<sup>88</sup> Cresswell, *Place*, Introduction.

<sup>89</sup> Amy Shanks, "Residents' Perceptions and Understandings of Suburbs in Hamilton, Ontario" (MA thesis, McMaster University, 2013),

involved in the initial stages. The aim of the developer is to acquire and ready land for sale in order to turn a profit. As Harvey Molotch had suggested, the economic aims of many political figures today often match those of the development industry. In Chapters 5 and 6, we will explore how these themes play out in the development history of the Meadowlands.



## Chapter 3 – Methodology

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*At best, a neighbourhood case study allows a 'deep understanding of one place which is transferable, with modifications, to others.'*

– Richard Harris quoted in Carol Whitzman's  
*Suburb, Slum, Urban Village*

This chapter describes the methodological approaches used to document the history of development as well as its results. The following sections describe the application of the case study approach, key informant interviewing, resident surveying, and historical-archival research.

### The Case Study

My research is both broad and narrow; broad in terms of the topics it covers and narrow in its geographical focus. I am chronicling an extended history of a large mass of land that eventually became a suburban community and commercial centre, with a focus on modern development (1946-2015). This research is associated with a wide variety of subjects from planning, to economics, to political practice. The growth explored is, to a varying degree, a repeated suburban phenomenon found throughout Canada. Broader trends are analyzed through the local context—a singular example which points to wider processes.

My approach utilizes a conventional case study model, highlighting the experience and importance of a single community (idiographic approach). As Bryman et al., note in *Social Research Methods*, “What distinguishes a true case study is the goal of finding and revealing the features of the case. Collecting in-depth, qualitative [and quantitative] data that may be unique to time and place is characteristic of this sort of research. Case studies seek to provide a rich description of subject

matter.”<sup>90</sup> In my research, the narrative process is achieved through the sequential acquisition of new information, primarily through oral accounts and archival research. Contributing to local knowledge is not the only objective of a case study. It is also used understand broader themes and trends through intensive contextual research.<sup>91</sup> Another view on this methodology comes from anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who terms such an approach a “thick description.”<sup>92</sup> Geertz is recognized as having deepened ethnography by promoting imbedded researcher positionality (as opposed to a removed objective approach). As a research student with contacts within my study area, this theory raises questions of the role of subject/object of study and multi-faceted relationship between researcher and participant in contemporary work.<sup>93</sup>

### **Neighbourhood selection**

The Ancaster Meadowlands is a suburban community located on the urban fringe of the City of Hamilton, Ontario. It is appropriate as a case study of modern suburban development because of its peripheral location and because of its characteristic growth pattern. Although the development experienced in Ancaster involved a remarkable portion of land, it displayed a fairly typical narrative in terms the process of growth. The farmland was acquired by a series of large-scale corporate development firms, there was significant community pushback, but the development eventually received approval, and construction permanently altered the landscape.

My study area is located on the southwest edge of metropolitan Hamilton. It is bordered by the Lincoln Alexander Parkway–Highway 403 interchange to the north, Garner Road to the south, Stone Church Road to the east, and Southcote Road to the west. These boundaries can be seen in figure M.1.

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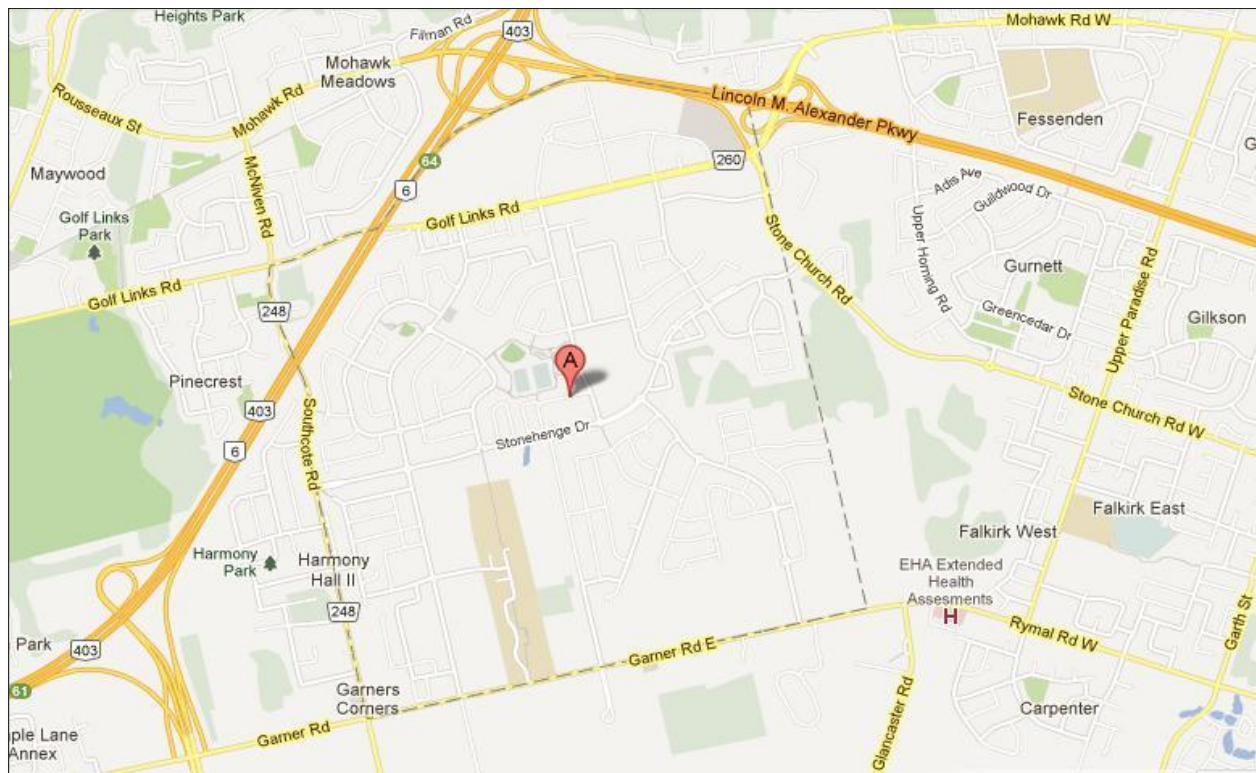
<sup>90</sup> Alan Bryman, James J. Teevan, and Edward Bell, *Social Research Methods, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Ed.*, (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2009), 38.

<sup>91</sup> John Gerring, “What is a case study and what is it good for?” *American Political Science Review* 1(2): 2004, 341-354.

<sup>92</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30.

<sup>93</sup> Jamie Baxter, “Case Studies in Qualitative Research,” in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press Canada, 2010), 390.

The Meadowlands is located within the community of Ancaster, a formerly independent community which was for the greater part of two centuries known as the Township of Ancaster. In 1973, Bill 155 was introduced by William “Bill” Davis’ Progressive Conservative government to restructure municipalities and administration. This resulted in the creation of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. Thereafter the Township of Ancaster (which included the village of Ancaster) became known as the Town of Ancaster. Finally, in 2001 the long-anticipated and highly contentious amalgamatory process absorbed the Town of Ancaster (and neighbouring communities) into the newly formed mega municipality of Hamilton. The new City of Hamilton included both the old city of Hamilton and the former towns which made up Hamilton-Wentworth.<sup>94</sup>



**Figure 7** – Neighbourhood study area (Source: Google Maps).

<sup>94</sup>“Historical Ancaster,” *Hamilton Public Library*, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.hpl.ca/articles/historical-ancaster>.

The Meadowlands is municipally located within Ward 12, a district which includes a large portion of the land that comprised the former Town of Ancaster. The City of Hamilton has divided the Meadowlands into four jurisdictional neighbourhoods (Figure 8). Each of these neighbourhoods (Oakes, Horning, Marritt, and Lampman) are named after former area landowners, some settling their families as early as the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Social and demographic details on the area will be discussed in subsequent chapters.



**Figure 8** – City of Hamilton neighbourhoods within the Meadowlands  
(Source: GIS Services, City of Hamilton, 2010)

The Meadowlands was chosen as a case because of (i) its proximity to McMaster University, (ii) my familiarity with the community, and (iii) its shared commonalities with other growing suburban regions across Canada. Due to my limited mobility as a student and my interest in local history I wanted to study within the Hamilton area. I was also interested in selecting a location that would deepen my understanding of the suburbs. There has not been any local academic literature completed

on the community, so adding this historical account will likely prove useful to future researchers and citizens interested in contemporary development experienced in the region. As a former undergraduate student at Redeemer University College, I witnessed the area rapidly expand (particularly the southern portion of the neighbourhood) between 2007 and 2012. I also caught glimpses of Ancaster's changing character and its reluctance to embrace the new suburban space as one of its own. Consequently, I developed an interest in this particular neighbourhood and a curiosity to learn more about how the land was acquired and developed, and how the planning process is typically carried out.

For this project, the application of a case study design was achieved through the use of multiple research methods. In my account of the growth of the Meadowlands I employed the triangulation of qualitative informant interviews, resident questionnaires, and archival sourcing. Before resident and informant interviews began, I received ethics approval for the study from the McMaster Research Ethics Board (2015).

### **Archival Research**

The first method applied to the study was the use of archival research. I accessed documents from a wide variety of sources. Attempts were made to ascertain primary sources wherever possible. I consulted local historical books, planning documents (neighbourhood plans and secondary plans), legal decisions, reports, newspaper articles, maps, aerial photographs, and developer literature. Access to these documents was made difficult by the lack of a central location for the information. When the Town of Ancaster amalgamated with the City of Hamilton (1999-2001), numerous files on the Meadowlands were transferred to Hamilton. A number of planners at the City informed me that through this changeover, many of the files were permanently stored away or "lost." Some documents on the Meadowlands I consulted were, surprisingly, maintained by development companies and consultants such as *Environment Assessment Master Plan for the Meadowlands neighbourhoods III, IV, and V* which I accessed through A.J. Clarke & Associates Ltd. The City of Hamilton was helpful in

accessing some planning documents. The Hamilton Public Library was helpful in finding related *Hamilton Spectator* articles from within their Local History & Archives Department. Newspaper articles were a vital source of information for my research. The Lloyd Reeds Map Collection at McMaster University was also helpful in located relevant maps and aerial photographs of the Meadowlands. Finally, individual informants were also helpful in my archival research. One example was Alex Georgieff, former Ancaster planner and current staff at the Region of Durham. Following an interview, Alex gave me a copy of an OMB report made in 1995 on the future of Price Club Canada/Costco in Ancaster.

## **Key Informant Interviews**

### **I. Recruitment**

Interviews with professionals (identified as key informants) were a critical part of my research because they provided information unavailable from any other source. I was interested in deciphering the story of development within Meadowlands and these individuals provided fascinating first-hand accounts. Each of the individuals selected had been involved, at some point, with the land. They ranged from local historians to development executives.

Recruitment of key informants occurred through a variety of means. Most notably, I was fortunate enough to receive informant names and contact information through prior interviews. This method of “snowball recruitment” or referral sampling proved particularly useful in my research. As an example, one of my earliest interviews was with local politician Lloyd Ferguson. Given that Ferguson was well-connected to the development industry in Hamilton, he was able to suggest a number of developers to contact in order to further the information shared. Ferguson even went as far as personally contacting one informant to mediate an introduction. Another manner by which I recruited informants was through my own direct, un-referred contact (*purposive sampling*). I leveraged my own networks within Hamilton in order to facilitate research related contact. Being involved in local civic

and urban planning circles allowed for some familiarity amongst contacts. One example was meeting City of Hamilton planners Christine Newbold and John Ames through a social event hosted by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), an organisation with which I maintain student membership.<sup>95</sup> This body also maintains a directory of members which I accessed in order to attain the e-mails of some planning informants. I consulted with other organizations such as the Hamilton Halton Home Builders' Association in order to locate the names of development informants. Lastly, I utilized social media sites such as LinkedIn to keep a searchable, online presence of myself and to network with key informants. Many of these professionals had updated LinkedIn profiles with easily accessible contact information.

An important component of my communication with key informants involved preserving *rapport* between expert and researcher. Initial contact with informants was done via e-mail or telephone and a professional demeanour was maintained throughout all interactions. An example of a recruitment script used for key informants is found on Appendix E. In some cases, repeated attempts at contact were needed to secure interviews and, occasionally, I was screened and mediated through a 'gatekeeper' (secretary, personal assistant, etc.). The following is a list of key informants that provided commentary in my project. For a complete list of the positions my informants held as well as the dates of each interview, please see Appendix C.

- Developers:
  - Alec Kelly: retired developer, The Meadowlands of Ancaster & Alec Kelly Ltd.
  - Steve Spicer, current Development Manager, Multi-Area Developments
  - Michael Corrado: current developer, Coletara Development
- Planners
  - Alain Pinard: current Director of Planning, City of Kitchener★
  - Alex Georgieff: current Commissioner of Planner, Region of Durham★
  - Charlie McConnell: current Planning Manager, Town of Oakville★

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<sup>95</sup> The event was the OPPI Western Lake District Film Night held at the Staircase Theatre on November 27, 2013.

- Don May: current planning consultant ★
- Peter Tollefsen: current Planning Director, Town of the Blue Mountains ✧
- John Ames: retired planner, City of Hamilton
- Engineers
  - Adi Irani, current CEO and Chief Engineer, A.J. Clarke and Associates Ltd.
- Politicians
  - Lloyd Ferguson: current Ward 12 councillor, City of Hamilton
  - Bob Wade: retired municipal mayor, Town of Ancaster & City of Hamilton
- Historians/archaeologists
  - Jim Green: historian, Ancaster
  - Ronald Williamson: current Managing Partner, Archaeological Services Inc. ✧
- Other City of Hamilton staff
  - Bill Janssen: current Director of “Open for Business” Initiatives, City of Hamilton
  - Ed VanderWindt: current Chief Building Official, City of Hamilton
- Other informants
  - Paul Smithson: current Senior Policy Planner, City of Cambridge ★

★ Denotes a telephone interview

✧ Denotes an e-mail interview

## II. Design

The interviews were unstructured and synchronous. I would bring a set of general questions (interview guide) to each interview (as an example, see Appendix B). These questions included the following: “What was your role/title and relationship to the development of the Meadowlands?”, “How long were you engaged in that role?”, or “What overarching memories do you have of the development?” Although this interview guide was utilized, in every interview I conducted, different questions were posed based on the unique knowledge of each informant. In other words, each interview had a distinctive set of questions tailored towards the information I was hoping to acquire from the particular experiences and expertise of each new informant.

The majority of my informant interviews were in effect extended conversations that included unplanned follow-up questions. Some involved very little researcher input while others emerged as a



more progressive series of questions and answers. I employed a ‘pyramid structure’ where the interviews began with simple, easy to answer questions and built gradually to more abstract and overarching questions at the end. Beginning each interview with primary questions (such as “how long did you work for the Town of Ancaster?”) allowed for the conversation to ease into the desired depth of information. As mentioned, I would employ secondary questions, or prompts, to probe deeper or expand upon an issue previously discussed. Some interviews did not yield the quality of information I anticipated and so I would move on to other informants in order to find the information for which I was looking. One example was with the City’s Chief Building Official. Although he provided some useful information, I would eventually discover more from other informants on Dufferin Construction and their role in servicing the Meadowlands.

### **III. Process**

The majority of my key informant interviews took place in person, at a venue of their choosing: either a public place or at the informant’s workplace. The manner of each interview varied based on the desires of the informant and other practical considerations. Some informants were very busy while others lived outside of Hamilton. In these cases, I would conduct telephone or email interviews. These followed the same unstructured format as in-person interviews. They often tended to be slightly shorter in length. Consent was verbal or typed, based on the parameters of the study, as outlined in the Key Informant Letter of Information/Consent (Appendix D).

Interviews often began with an informal conversation during which I explained my background and research interests. I would then go over Key Informant Letter of Information/Consent (Appendix D) and have informants sign their name or give verbal consent to participate. In the case of in-person interviews, the informants were asked to consent to having their responses recorded over an audio recording device. In all cases, informants shared information that would be included in my research

with their names and (former) professional positions. This study did not give the informants the option of having their names replaced by pseudonyms.

Along with sharing and sourcing information, interviews were also used to corroborate facts and narratives. Since there were a large number of individuals interviewed, there were many versions of similar events shared. Not surprisingly, though, many of the same historical details were repeated by a number of key informants. One example was the anecdote of the Alberta firm Allarco Developments Ltd. having to go to Provincial Cabinet in order to get approval to develop the Ancaster lands. Although there were various versions of this story, it was generally repeated by informants and thus became corroborated and solidified. At the end of each interview, the information shared was manually transcribed (in the case of in-person interviews) using a computer. Coding was not used because latent or manifest themes would have little bearing on the aim of my project and because the responses were not standardized.

Another helpful occurrence in my interviews was the sharing of documents by informants. Numerous individuals were accommodating, supportive, and were excited about my project. One case involved a retired developer who, because of his significant role in the project, was eager to see this story disseminated. He shared with me field notes he made about his dealings as the head of the Meadowlands of Ancaster conglomerate. Another document which was shared was an engineering and environmental report by the Chief Engineer of A.J. Clarke & Associates. Finally, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson was kind enough to point me to mounted portraits of all of Ancaster's municipal representatives since 1974. These photographs were found in a locked room within the former town's municipal building and were useful in tracking the succession of Ancaster's political representatives.

## Resident Questionnaires

### I. Recruitment

In addition to interviewing informants on the development process, I also sought out current residents in order to acquire a first-hand perspective on the completed community.<sup>96</sup> I was interested in knowing more about how residents experienced the changes in the Meadowlands associated with development and how they viewed their new neighbourhood. In order to recruit residents to participate in my study I undertook a variety of approaches. I began by sharing news of my survey to contacts I had within the Meadowlands (through word of mouth and e-mail) and requested that they share this with other residents (*opportunistic sampling*). I also designed a recruitment poster (Appendix A) and began posting it throughout the neighbourhood. The locations chosen included bus shelters, telephone poles, coffee shops, and notice boards. Some companies within the Meadowlands commercial zone allowed me to post my advertisement on their community boards while others did not. Three examples of businesses which allowed me to pin my poster were Scotiabank, Starbucks, and Second Cup. There were numerous companies which either did not have space for community notices or did not permit the posting of advertisements. Three examples included Canada Post, Costco, and Tim Hortons. I also recruited for my study throughout the community by paying to have an advertisement posted in the local *Coffee News* newsletter.

The central method I used for recruiting residents was door-to-door “cold knocking” (*purposive sampling*). I had my supervisor print 100 recruitment posters and I delivered them to randomly selected residences within the Meadowlands. Every effort was made to adequately vary my dwelling selection based on location, housing type, density, and phase of construction. No statistical or geographic system was employed to aid in the selection of these dwellings. My approach, on most residential streets within the Meadowlands, was to deliver a recruitment poster to every fourth residence. I would begin

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<sup>96</sup> In my study, both “questionnaire” and “survey” will be used interchangeably.

by knocking, briefly telling them about myself and my survey, as asking if they would like to participate. I did not have a pre-written script or structure while door-knocking. If a resident indicated interest, we would set up a meeting time, arrange to set up a meeting time, or I would end by leaving them with the poster in order to complete the survey online or contact me at their leisure. If the resident indicated that they were not interested, I did not leave a poster. In many cases, the resident was not at home. In those cases I would leave a recruitment poster in a mailbox or door margin. Visiting residents in person seemed to yield the highest response rate, with direct contact being the most effective technique. Door-to-door recruitment also produced a number of ancillary benefits, including: notifying the neighbourhood of my study, building rapport with residents, and allowing for researcher observation and identification of neighbourhood features.

In addition to speaking directly with residents, I also reached out to a variety of community organizations in order to recruit participants. I contacted the following groups, either by telephone or social media:

- Ancaster Business Improvement Area
- Ancaster Film Fest
- Ancaster Village Church
- Bennett's Apples and Cider
- Heritage Ancaster
- Marshall Memorial United Church
- Meadowlands Christian Reformed Church
- "Only in Ancaster" Facebook page
- Redeemer University College Alumni Association
- "The Ancaster Factor" Facebook page
- The Ancaster Fair
- The Ancaster Farmers Market
- The Ancaster Lions Club
- The Ancaster Rotary Club
- The Kinsmen Club of Ancaster

My previous connections with faculty and staff at Redeemer University College also allowed for a set of contacts that were tremendously helpful in recommending my study to residents within their spheres of influence. For example, one former professor at the institution shared the survey link with his entire faith community, located within the Meadowlands. Finally, I was able to recruit a handful of participants through a presentation I made on my project at the Lewis & Ruth Sherman Centre for Digital Scholarship in April of 2015.

## **I. Design**

I developed a questionnaire that I made available both online and in person, giving residents the choice of their method of participation. The online survey tool I utilized was through SurveyMonkey, a popular cloud-based survey development company.<sup>97</sup> My pre-recruitment estimated sample size based on the anticipation of direct contact with 100 residents was  $n=25$ . After all recruitment measures, my saturation point was reached at  $n=28$ . Selection criteria was quite minimal; the only requirements being that participants must be living in Ancaster, in the vicinity of the Meadowlands (within Ward 12) and must be over the age of 18. I received twenty-six participants who lived within the Meadowlands and six participants who lived outside of the Meadowlands (within Ancaster). Four were discarded due to being incomplete. The respondents who lived within the Meadowlands were broadly representative of population of the neighbourhood, as was shown using the latest Census data (Chapter 8). They mirrored the wider population in terms of income, ethnicity, employment, and education.

The questionnaire employed was semi-structured with both quantitative and qualitative components. There were a total of 30 standardized questions, ranging from basic demographics to more in-depth queries designed to extract opinions. An example of a closed, quantitative question is “What is your sex?” An example of an open, quantitative question is “How has the area changed, physically and socially, since you moved in? How does this compare with your initial perceptions and expectations of

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<sup>97</sup> In order to view my online survey, please visit: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Ancaster](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Ancaster).

the neighbourhood? Please elaborate.” For a full list of the questions employed, see my resident interview schedule (Appendix F). I tried to standardize the questionnaire experience between online and in person versions. When conducting in person surveys, I would not utilize prompts or deviate from the stated wording of the question on the page in order to maintain credibility and congruence in my data sets. Although online questionnaires proved more popular amongst my sample, I found that in person interviews facilitated more content depth and response length. I conducted a total of two interviews in person.

## **II. Process**

Prior to employing resident questionnaires, I received clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board in March of 2015. Data was then collected between May and July of 2015. The bulk of residents responded online, due to ease of access, efficiency, and convenience. The online survey began with a brief overview statement by the researcher:

Thank you for participating in this survey! My name is Jeremy Parsons and I am graduate student at McMaster University. I am doing research on the development of the Meadowlands area in Ancaster, gathering relevant information which will be used as part of a Master's thesis. I will be asking you 30 basic questions about your experiences and perceptions as a resident of the Meadowlands. Please do your best to answer all the questions. I hope to use this information to better understand the experiences of local residents and to find out whether the area has turned out as planners and developers had anticipated. This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey you will be given the opportunity to place your name into a draw for a \$25 gift card for either Tim Hortons or Starbucks. Thank you!

The survey then led to the Letter of Information/Consent for Resident Interviews (Appendix G). By clicking the “next” on the questionnaire, participants consented to having read and agreed with the document. The website then led the participant through a series of questions, terminating with a

question on receiving study results once the project has been completed. Online surveys included the challenge of skipped questions and incomplete answers, a methodological issue not present in human-directed questionnaires.

Unlike the online version, in person surveys required verbal explanation of the Letter of Information/Consent for Resident Interviews and a manual signing of consent. This version also included the audio recording of responses (with consent). In person interviews took place in either the participant's home or at a public venue (such as a coffee shop). Following the completion of in person interviews, data was transcribed and manually inputted into the online SurveyMonkey website in order to maintain one central database of responses. No information was altered. Resident responses are to be incorporated anonymously into my completed thesis document through the use of pseudonyms, as required by the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Overall, I believe that this combination of methods and sources has yielded a reliable account of the development of the Ancaster Meadowlands. Utilizing numerous archival materials, most notably local newspaper articles, has given me a sound historical perspective on the area. Having a variety of informants from different fields and a fairly representative cross-section of residents (with a range of years of residency) also adds a layer of dependability to my study. Interviewing residents also allowed me to better understand the current experience of living within the Meadowlands today.

## Chapter 4: Cultural Heritage Background

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*These lands have a distinctive historic and geographic character of their own. Their heritage involves a trajectory that generally is not well considered in the expansion of [the] global growth engine.*

– Gordon Nelson, *Beyond the Global City*

The region surrounding the Ancaster Meadowlands contains stratified clay, till moraine and sandy loam soil. Lying at the “northwest edge of the Haldimand Clay plain on the Niagara Escarpment,” its topography includes many undulating hills.<sup>98</sup> My study area is situated on the northern border of the Carolinian forest; a vibrant and fragile ecozone with more plant and animal diversity than anywhere else in Canada.<sup>99</sup> The landscape also proves to be widely significant in terms of archaeology, ecology, and early European history. This chapter will explore the cultural heritage background of the Meadowlands, pointing to a number of noteworthy details within this account. The historical narrative will end just before the Second World War and is continued on in Chapter 5.

### Unexpected Density: The Archaeology of the Meadowlands

Long before there were any corporate interests vested in the land, early humans settled in this area for its natural resources. Archaeological digs carried out between 1975 and 1997 revealed that the lands to become the Meadowlands were once home to a dense network of Indigenous peoples. Extensive excavation by Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI)—one of Ontario’s preeminent archaeological and cultural heritage consulting firms—revealed over 100 separate settled sites, showing

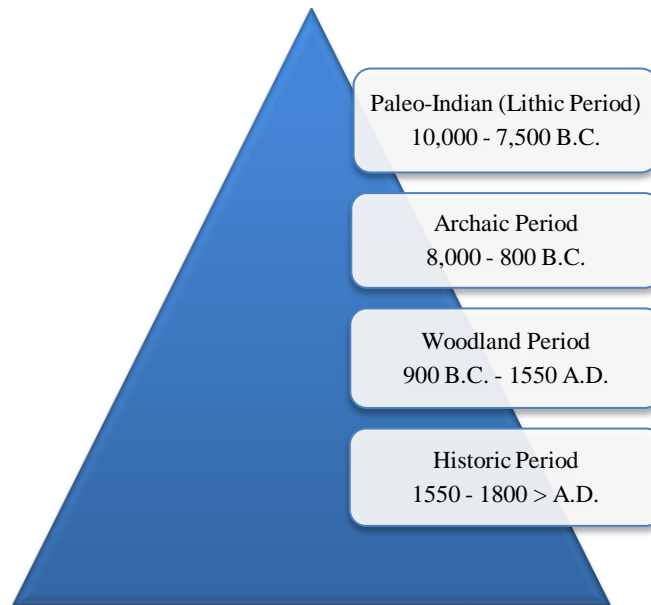
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<sup>98</sup> Deborah Steiss et al., “Archaic Ancaster: The Archaeology of the Meadowlands,” in *Preceramic Southern Ontario*, ed. Phil Woodley and Peter Ramsden (St. John’s NL: Copetown Press: Occasional Papers in Northeastern Archaeology No.9), 98.

<sup>99</sup> Parks Canada, “Species at Risk: Point Pelee National Park of Canada and the Carolinian Life Zone, last modified April 15, 2009, <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/nature/eep-sar/itm4/eep-sar4d.aspx>.



evidence of human occupation dating from the early Lithic period to the present day.<sup>100</sup> See Figure 9 below for a timeline of epochs of human habitation.



**Figure 9** – Historical-cultural timeline of settlement periods in Ontario (Museum of Ontario Archaeology, “Southwestern Ontario: The First 12,000 Years,” accessed March 12, 2015, <http://diggingontario.uwo.ca/Timeline.html>, diagram created by author).

As part of the development process, in 1987, ASI was hired by two development partners: the Meadowlands of Ancaster (MOA) and Alterra Developments Limited. Since the majority of the future Meadowlands was owned by a small number of landowners, the project was approached as a large assessment, instead of excavating sites on a piecemeal basis. As the main archaeological consultant, ASI was tasked with assessing over 1,000 acres of land at the headwaters of Tiffany Creek. Prior to ASI’s work, local archaeologists Art Howey and Stuart Leslie “discovered numerous sites distributed on both sides of Golf Links Road between Upper Horning and Southcote Roads” between the years 1975 and 1987.<sup>101</sup> Building on the efforts of Mr. Howey and others, the ASI team uncovered over

<sup>100</sup> “From Prehistory to Big Box: The Meadowlands Excavation” (archaeological presentation at Fieldcote Memorial Park & Museum, Ancaster, Ontario, June 3, 2001), accessed April 3, 2013.

<sup>101</sup> Deborah Steiss et al., “Archaic Ancaster...” 99.

34,000 human artefacts between 1987 and 1997, making it one of the richest archaeological areas in Southern Ontario (Figure 10).

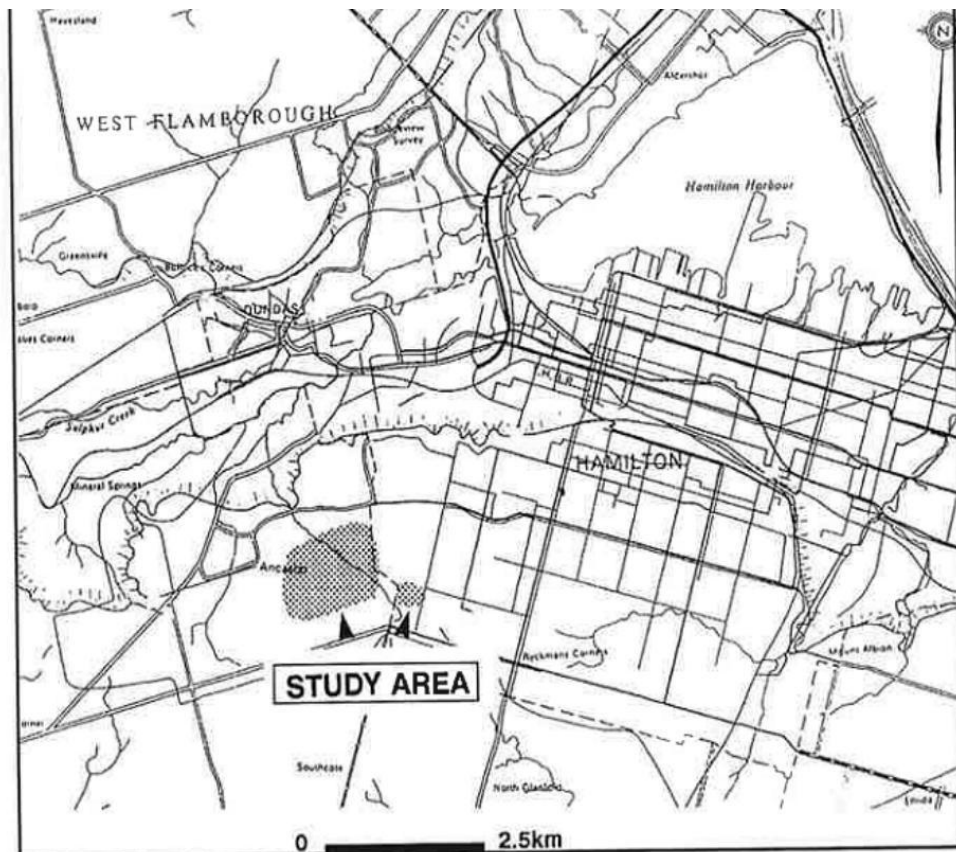


Figure 1. Location of the study area

PRECERAMIC SOUTHERN ONTARIO STEISS, WILLIAMSON, RAMSDEN & WELSH

**Figure 10** – Outline of ASI’s 420 hectare study area which included both the Meadowlands and the Bayview Glen Estates, along Upper Paradise Road (Deborah Steiss et al., “Archaic Ancaster,” in *Preceramic Southern Ontario*).

According to ASI’s founder and project assessment lead Dr. Ron Williamson, “we have always considered the Meadowlands as one of the richest properties we have investigated. Some of those sites yielded information that was not previously known.”<sup>102</sup> Human remnants from a stratum of periods reveal over 100 different Aboriginal camps and villages within a 700 acre vicinity around the headwaters of Tiffany Creek.<sup>103</sup> These included flutes and spear points from Paleo-Indian tribes, the

<sup>102</sup> Ron Williamson interview, conducted April 27, 2015.

<sup>103</sup> “From Prehistory to Big Box...”

earliest known human inhabitants in North America.<sup>104</sup> Many of the artefacts discovered from the Archaic period were from the Attawandaron people—a neutral nation that played middleman to the warring Iroquois and Huron tribes. Later relics indicate that the Mississauga started moving into area around 1700 A.D. and many bands of Iroquoian peoples settled in Ancaster in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, having been relocated from the United States following the American Revolutionary War. Of the many artefacts found in the area, there were scores of arrows, spears, knives, bows, hammer stones, atlatls, flints, and fire-making tools. One of the central reasons for such dense deposits and good preservation is topographical. The area is a low-lying plateau on the escarpment. It is also the site of a confluence of neighbouring tributaries. Williamson states, “There were extensive wetlands on the property and this would have been like a permanent supermarket, even in the winter when tubers would have been available. Those wetlands are always considered draws to hunter-gatherers.”<sup>105</sup>



**Figure 11** – Map showing the remarkable density of sites in the Meadowlands. Much of the uncircled land did not permit excavation because of existing buildings, such as Redeemer University College (Source: City of Hamilton Archaeological Management Plan).

<sup>104</sup> Deborah Steiss et al., “Archaic Ancaster...” 98.

<sup>105</sup> Ron Williamson interview, conducted April 27, 2015.

Within this large area, three sites were expressly noted for their significance and concentration: Corrado, Wade, and Pickard (AhGx 94, 163, 24). “Those three sites in particular are large, rich settlements and relatively rare. We considered them to be of high heritage value and worthy of complete detailed investigation,” commented Williamson.<sup>106</sup> The Wade site alone yielded 14,000 artefacts from a variety of eras. In Chapter 6 I will discuss how these archaeological discoveries figured into the development narrative of the Meadowlands.

### **Environmental Heritage of the Meadowlands**

The neighbourhood contains numerous parcels of natural land including a provincially designated Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) and Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW). Both of these sites are located in the southeast corner of the Meadowlands and are bordered by Stone Church Road (north), Garner Road (south), and Upper Paradise Road (east).

Throughout the development of the Meadowlands, numerous environmental assessments and reports were produced as legally required in order to ascertain the impact on ecosystems in the region. One such study was conducted in 1990 by Ecoplans Ltd (a consulting firm from Kitchener, Ontario) on behalf of the MOA. Over 160 plant species were documented including several regionally-significant species such as Brush Clover, Baltic Rush, and a previously undocumented variety of hawthorn. The area was also found to support large populations of reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. A number of rare animals were noted including the provincially significant Cooper’s Hawk, Eastern Milk snake, and Jefferson Salamander (Figure 12). The area contained a variety of vegetation types including mixed upland and lowland hardwoods, shrublands, wetlands, and stream valleys/meadowlands.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<b>Vegetation</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>
American Ginseng	Acadian Flycatcher
Butternut	Hooded Warbler
Broad Beech Fern	Sedge Wren
Baltic Rush	Cerulean Warbler
American Chestnut	Louisiana Waterthrush
Brush Clover	Monarch Butterfly
Whorled Loosestrife	Eastern Milk snake
Virginia Mountain-mint	Northern Ribbon Snake
Purplestem Angelica	Cooper's Hawk
Giant Sunflower	Northern Harrier
Water Starwort	Pickerel Frog
Grove Hawthorn	Sharp-shinned Hawk
	Brown Thrasher
	Red-tailed Hawk
	Eastern Towhee
	Alder Flycatcher
	Jefferson Salamander

**Figure 12** – A compiled list of plant and animal species discovered in the Meadowlands which were identified as at-risk plant, endangered or regionally significant (Source: *Municipal Class Environmental Assessment*, 1990 and *Background Report: Meadowlands Neighbourhoods 3, 4, and 5 Class Environmental Assessment Master Plan*, 1999, compiled by author).

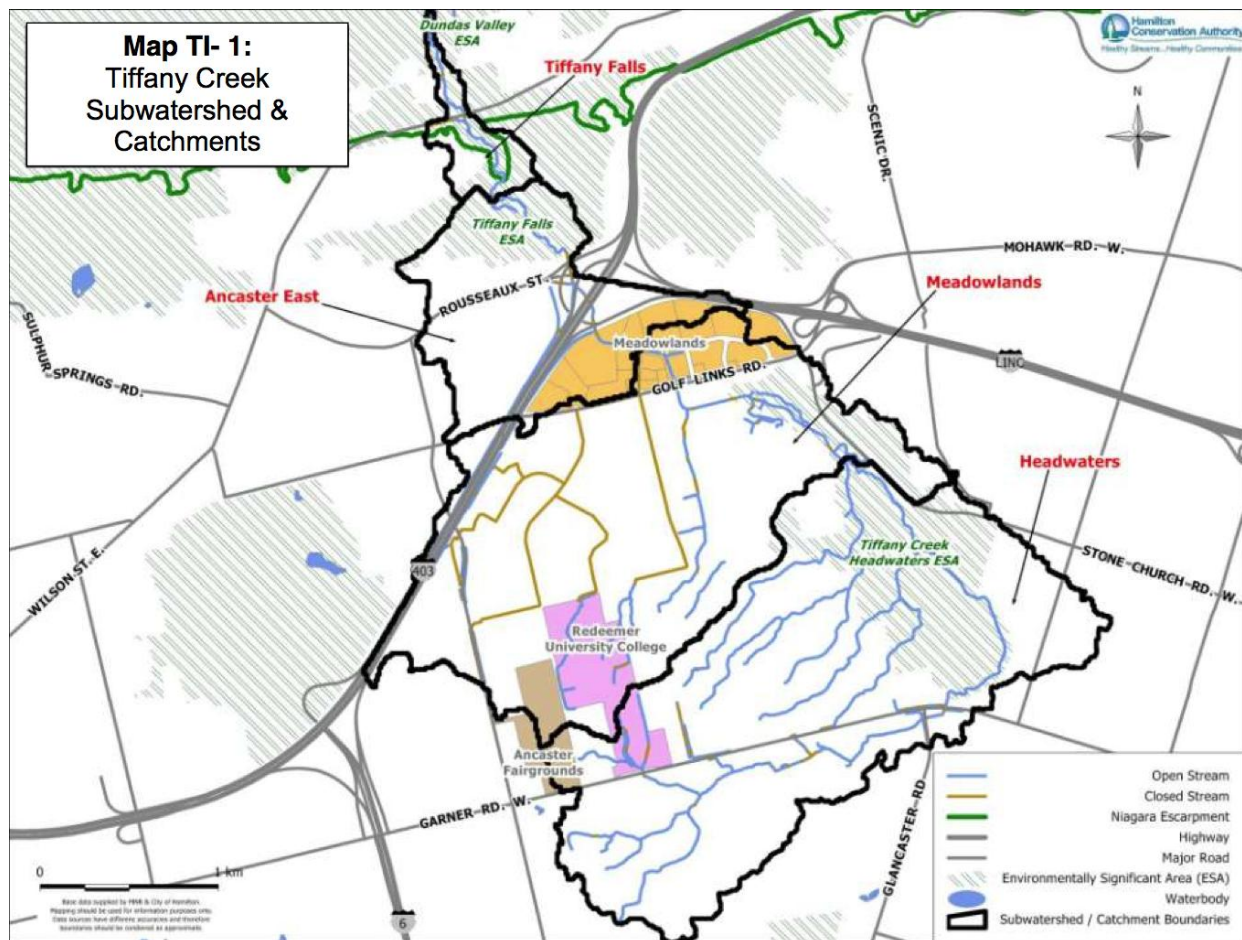
With branches of Tiffany Creek draining from the area, one of the most important ecological features of the Meadowlands were its low-lying plateau wetlands. The Tiffany Creek subwatershed that is found within the Meadowlands is located between the Ancaster Creek subwatershed and the Chedoke Creek subwatershed—geographically mirroring my study area (see Figure 13). According to the Hamilton Conservation Authority, “Tiffany Creek is the only cool water system of the three subwatersheds...[t]he headwaters are located on the tablelands southeast of Ancaster village, and south of Garner Road; they flow east, until they bend north again crossing Garner Road.”<sup>107</sup> The Tiffany Creek Headwaters was designated as an ESA by the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth in 1992.<sup>108</sup> According to the Ontario Planning Act and Provincial Policy Statement,

<sup>107</sup> *Tiffany Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan*, Hamilton Conservation Authority, endorsed by the Board of Directors, April 3 2008, TI-1.

<sup>108</sup> *Background Report: Meadowlands Neighbourhoods 3, 4, and 5, Class Environmental Assessment Master Plan*, prepared by Planning and Engineering Initiatives Ltd., A.J. Clarke and Associates Ltd., McKibbin Wakefield Inc., Lotowater Ltd., and Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited, October 1999, 2.31.



municipalities are mandated to protect these natural heritage landscapes through local policy.<sup>109</sup> The City of Hamilton has established an Environmentally Significant Areas Impact Evaluation Group (ESAIEG) to advise planners and politicians on development within these areas of concern. Development has occurred within and adjacent to these sensitive natural lands. The nature of this development and the extent to which the natural landscape has been altered will be discussed in Chapter 7.



**Figure 13** – Map showing catchments within the Tiffany Creek Subwatershed (Source: Hamilton Conservation Authority, *Tiffany Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan*, Map TI-1).

<sup>109</sup> Ontario Planning and Development Act, RSO 1990, c O.35, <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>, accessed August 13, 2015.

## **The Opening of the Land: European Settlement and Agricultural Use in Ancaster (1784-1945)**

Upon purchasing land around the “Head of the Lake” from the Mississauga Nation in 1784, the British government began to direct American loyalists to the area following the Revolutionary War in the United States.<sup>110</sup> These Crown-supporters, known as United Empire Loyalists (UEL), left their homes behind and settled Upper Canada en masse. The area was attractive due to its proximity to Lake Ontario, its creeks, fertile soils, potential waterwheel sites, and its pre-existing network of First Nations roads. The area’s two key existing roads were the “Mohawk Trail” (now, essentially Mohawk Road) running east-west and the “Iroquois Trail” (now, essentially Wilson Street).<sup>111</sup> The intersection of these two roads was undoubtedly a determining factor in James Wilson choosing the site as his settlement.

In 1793 Lieutenant John Graves Simcoe commissioned surveys of the area following passage of the *Constitutional Act of 1791* by the British Parliament. The Act was intended to accommodate the approximately 10,000 newly arrived Loyalists; as well as to prevent newcomers from taking land illegally and to create serviceable military roads. The planning and implementation of the Augustus Jones surveys (1789-1799) were an example of some of the first comprehensive regional planning efforts in Canada (then British North America). Jones’ 1795 survey of Ancaster Township had lots laid out in the “single front system,” each 200 acres apiece (400 yards wide by 1.25 miles deep).

One of the original 22 men who submitted petitions for land ownership in Ancaster Township was John Shaver (also spelled as “Shaffer”). In 1789 he was given Lot 50 in Concession 2, where the Meadowlands Power Centre now stands. Shaver eventually sold the lot to Dr. Oliver Tiffany who gave his name to the nearby Ancaster creek, waterfall, and watershed (as previously noted).<sup>112</sup> Many of these

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<sup>110</sup> D.B. Smith, “The Dispossession of the Mississauga Indians” in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada: New Perspectives* (Ottawa: ON: Carleton UP, 1989), 23-49.

<sup>111</sup> The Iroquois Trail was once a link between Brantford and Lewiston, N.Y., running through Ancaster and following the water through Hamilton. The Mohawk Trail once ran parallel from Queenston, ON. and intersected with the Iroquois Trail at the escarpment in Ancaster.

<sup>112</sup> *Ancaster’s Heritage: A History of Ancaster Township Vol 2*, (Ancaster, ON: Ancaster Township Historical Society, 1973).

early settlers built wooden structures, laid basic infrastructure, and worked to clear the land for agricultural purposes. Similar to other historic UEL settlements across Ontario, Ancaster possesses very few architectural remnants from this early Georgian period.

Due to its economic and energy potential with nearby waterfalls, Ancaster was one of the first heavily settled regions in Upper Canada. The community was first known as “Wilson’s Mills” after James Wilson who, with Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, had built two mills at the corner of the Mohawk and Iroquois Trails between 1791 and 1792. Along with the financial backing of land speculator Richard Beasley, Wilson quickly laid the beginnings of a village: a general store, blacksmithing shop, tavern, and distillery. His mills and their generation of power were a key attraction to the displaced Loyalists, leading to the establishment and renaming of Wilson’s Mills as the village of “Ancaster” in 1793.<sup>113</sup> The name Ancaster was given to the area by Governor Simcoe after a parish village in Lincolnshire, England. It is derived from the Latin *ad castra*, meaning ‘towards the camp.’

From Augustus Jones’ 1795 Survey of Ancaster Township it is apparent that the land that would become the Meadowlands was settled by nine men and their families. These lands included part of Lots 49-52 in Concession 2 and Lots 48-54 in Concession 3. Many of these family names are still present in the region today, including Bowman, Lampman, Horning, Shaver, and Filman. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ancaster was established as a burgeoning centre for industry and culture in Upper Canada. Local historian Cecil Walker explains:

Ancaster Village grew steadily from its humble beginnings, so much so, that by the time Jean Baptiste Rousseau, a trader at the mouth of the Humber River, came to Ancaster about 1796 or 1797, and took over ownership of the mill and land surrounding it, a definite presence of settlement had been established. So much was this growth a fact of

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<sup>113</sup> Arthur Bowes, ed., *Ancaster: A Pictorial History* (Ancaster, ON: Ancaster Township Historical Society, 1999), vii.



life that Ancaster was recognized as the third most important settlement in Upper Canada after Cataraqui (Kingston) and Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake).<sup>114</sup>

The community also played a vital role in the War of 1812 and was the site of the famous Bloody Assize trial, a treason hanging which occurred on Burlington Heights in 1814. The position of the village continued to grow throughout the early years of Upper Canada before declining in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1817 Ancaster's population reached the watershed mark of 1,000 inhabitants. In 1818, English military writer Francis Hall penned the following about the mountain community: "Ancaster merits to be the metropolis of Upper Canada. That community has a smiling aspect, new shops and houses superior in size and architecture."<sup>115</sup>

The availability of arable, cleared farmland and the proximity of milling sites encouraged settlement not only near the village centre but across the wider township. One settler who established himself in Ancaster during this period was Israel Dawdy (1769-1851). Dawdy was a veteran of the War of 1812 and is memorialized by the family home he built on his property (Lot 47, Concession 3) within the Township of Ancaster. The Gothic Revival building, known as "Harmony Hall," is now located within a residential subdivision, immediately adjacent to the Meadowlands. The house was designated in 2002, in what appeared to be a frantic effort to preserve it amidst the area's rapid growth.<sup>116</sup>

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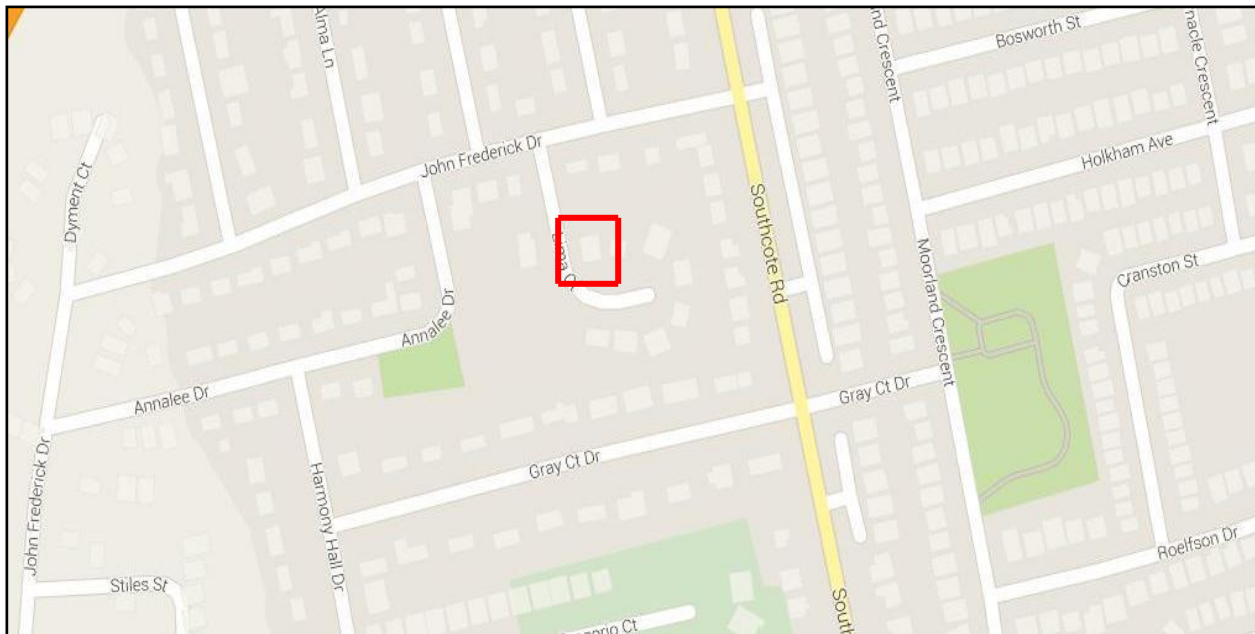
<sup>114</sup> Dr. C.E. Walker, "Village Area," in *Ancaster: A Pictorial History*, ed. Arthur Bowes, 1.

<sup>115</sup> Lt. Francis Hall, *Travels in Canada and the United States in 1816 and 1817* (London: Paternoster-Row, 1818), 543.

<sup>116</sup> City of Hamilton: Planning and Development, Stephanie Barber and Lee Ann Coveyduck, *Recommendation to Designate 335 Lima Court (Harmony Hall) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, in the former Town of Ancaster*, December 13, 2002, <http://www2.hamilton.ca/Hamilton.Portal/Inc/PortalPDFs/ClerkPDFs/committee-of-the-whole/2003/Jan07/PD03015.pdf>.



**Figure 14** – Harmony Hall, built in 1816, is located at 335 Lima Court (Source: Panoramio, <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/47962828>).



**Figure 15** – The historic house outlined in its current suburban context. Because this survey was one of the earlier builds in the neighbourhood, the lot sizes and setbacks are large. This allows the former rural homestead to blend in reasonably well with its wider surroundings (Source: Google Maps).



Another Ancaster settler whose architectural legacy remains is Joseph House (1768-1831). House's family home was built in 1875 and still stands at 680 Golf Links Road, despite the tremendous transformation of its original setting (Figure 16). The City of Hamilton currently has twenty-two properties listed as 'designated heritage properties' and four inventoried on its Municipal Register within Ancaster.<sup>117</sup> Aside from Harmony Hall, there are no municipally-designated properties within the Meadowlands proper. There are, of course, a small number of historically significant buildings which have endured modern development. These include 1021 Garner Road East (1854), 243 Garner Road East (1858), 1051 Old Mohawk Road (1871), and 232 Golf Links Road (1929), among others.



**Figure 16** – The Neo-Classical Victorian Joseph House homestead now stands as a pastoral island amidst a modern suburban context. The construction of Highway 403 and surrounding development has isolated the farmhouse from its original context. The extent of the property has been considerably reduced and there remain few associated out-buildings (Source: Google Maps, 2014).

<sup>117</sup> Under the *Ontario Heritage Act* (R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18) designation provides some protection of the heritage property from demolition. It also allows for study and public acknowledgment of the property's value.



**Figure 17** – A closer view of 680 Golf Links Road. According to area developers, property owners refused development proposals during the 1990s. The farm house has been owned by numerous generations of the Wade family and still is today (Source: Historical Hamilton, [www.historicalhamilton.com](http://www.historicalhamilton.com)).

In 1832, Ancaster possessed 21,662 acres of uncleared, wild land and 12,747 acres of cleared, arable land.<sup>118</sup> There were numerous small villages and hamlets strewn across the 42,000 acre township. Along with the larger village of Ancaster, the township included: Jerseyville, Lynden, Renforth, Mineral Springs, Carluke, Copetown, Summit Hill, and others. Within the vicinity of what would become the Meadowlands, there were also a few small communities which included churches and sites of nascent industry. At Garner's Corners (located at the intersection of Garner and Southcote Roads) William B. Garner operated a blacksmith shop and built a church known as Zion Chapel. Today, there is a municipal cemetery found at the intersection, known as Garners Corners Cemetery. Garner Road (previously known as Highway No. 53) was also the site of significant religious settlement. Along with the building of meeting places by a handful of sects along this path, there were also numerous Methodist churches which were established giving Garner Road the nickname

<sup>118</sup> *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wentworth, Ont.* (Toronto: H.R. Page & Smith, 1875), viii.

“Methodist Row.” In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Peter Bowman and neighbour Henry Hagle each donated part of their lands to the building of a Methodist Chapel for residents of the community. Given that Bowman was a Loyalist of Wesleyan-Methodist faith and Hagle was an American sympathizer of Ryanite faith, there arose tensions between the two settlers. These conflicts grew so great that in 1830 Peter Bowman and his followers decided to lift and move the church over Hagle’s lot line to his property. According to historians from Fieldcote Memorial Park and Museum, “All remained quiet until one night Bowman awoke to find the chapel had been moved back over to the Hagle property.”<sup>119</sup> This peculiar conduct continued over subsequent decades and eventually the chapel became known locally as the “Sliding Church.”

Despite the fact that in 1875 Ancaster was considered “the most thriving town in Western Canada,”<sup>120</sup> by the middle of the century the zenith of Ancaster’s cultural and industrial reputation had indeed passed. As new centres attracted capital interests, Ancaster began to fade under the shadow of nearby growth. “Dundas and Hamilton gradually superseded it,” wrote Page & Smith in 1875. “Ancaster had not the advantages of canals and railways, and therefore had to give way to her more fortunate rivals.”<sup>121</sup> The construction of MacNab’s railway corridor through Barton Township and the proximity of Hamilton to Lake Ontario, allowed it to attract new resources and settlement. Gord Nelson and Michael Troughton explain: “The Great Western Railway was built from Buffalo through Hamilton and westward to London and points west. It bypassed competing towns such as Dundas and Ancaster and established Hamilton as a threshold to and transport focus for London and the southwest.”<sup>122</sup> W.J. Gage and Company’s 1886 map of Wentworth County in *Gage’s County Atlas* displays this fact, illustrating Ancaster in small font, away from major rail lines.

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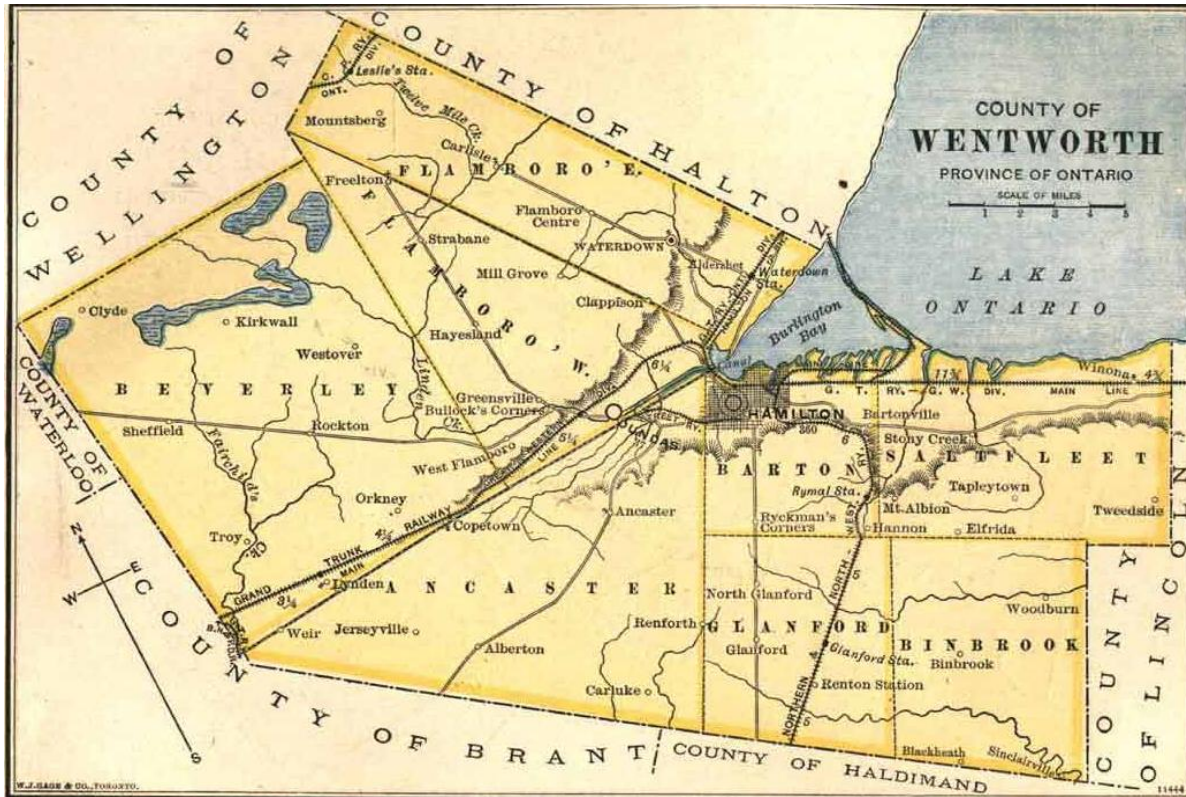
<sup>119</sup> Jim Green “Bowman United Church Cemetery,” in *A Grave Matter: Cemeteries of Ancaster* (Ancaster: Fieldcote Memorial Park and Museum, 2006), 17.

<sup>120</sup> *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wentworth, Ont.*, viii.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>122</sup> Gordon Nelson and Michael Troughton, “The Industrial Age,” in *Beyond the Global City* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 45.





**Figure 18** - Wentworth County in 1886 (Source: W.J. Gage and Co.'s *Gage's County Atlas*)

This pattern of decline was studied by geographer Walter Christaller during the 1930s.<sup>123</sup>

According to Christaller, only a small number of settlements are able to exponentially expand within a given region. Considering the unequal distribution of physical resources, economic advantages, and service demand, many communities are often unable to follow the same trajectory of urbanization and economic growth taken by others. This was notably the case for many townships and counties in Upper Canada and can help us to understand the evolution of Ancaster in the historic hierarchy of urban centres during the 19th century. As historian W.J. McCulloch remarks, “Ancaster’s metropolitan eminence was doomed with the opening of the canal at Burlington Beach in 1826 and the coming of the railways in the mid 1850’s. This also dealt a death blow to Peter Desjardins’ dream of Dundas’ canal as a major port....and with the population decline in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a

<sup>123</sup> Walter Christaller, “How I discovered the Theory of Central Places: A Report about the Origin of Central Places,” in *Man, Space, and Environment*, P.W. English and R.C. Mayfield, eds. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1972, 601-610.

gravitation of a number of prominent families to the city.”<sup>124</sup> Between 1830 and 1880 the population of Ancaster grew by approximately 1,000 individuals while the population of Hamilton grew by an astonishing 34,000. In addition, the township suffered a number of significant fires throughout the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which crippled capital ventures in the community.<sup>125</sup> The lack of adequate transportation infrastructure connecting Ancaster to metropolitan hubs in the region led some voices to decry the community as being an isolated backwater. In 1896, one Hamilton editorialist wrote “We cannot reach the village by train or boat, for it is situated far over the Hamilton Mountain...Ancaster has seen better days.”<sup>126</sup>

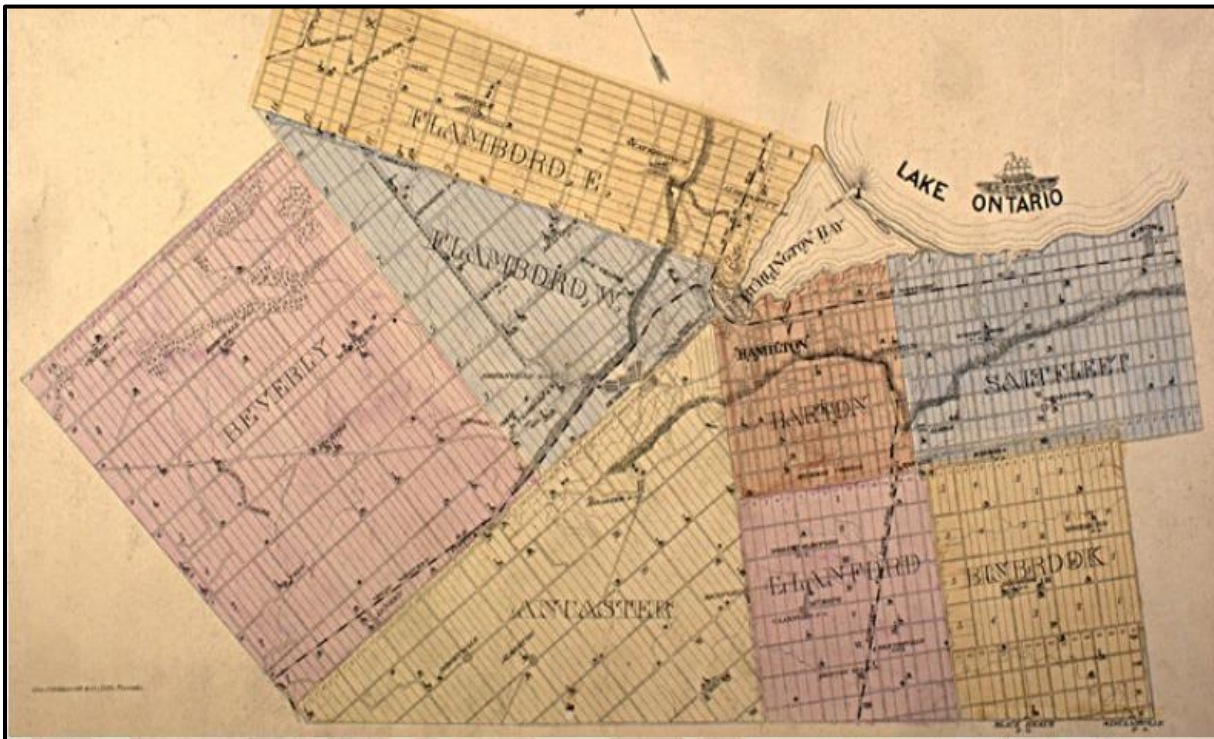
The Meadowlands itself remained largely agricultural and forested until the Second World War with small pockets of settlement established (such as Garner’s Corners). Thomas Keefer’s 1856 *Upside Down Map for the City of Hamilton* and Robert Surtees’ 1859 *Map of the County of Wentworth, Canada West* both show no development in these Ancaster lands. The *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wentworth* is helpful in depicting the reality of settlement during this period. Below is the atlas map of the Township of Ancaster in 1875 (Figure 19) as well as a closer view of the individual lots, owners, and houses (Figure 20).

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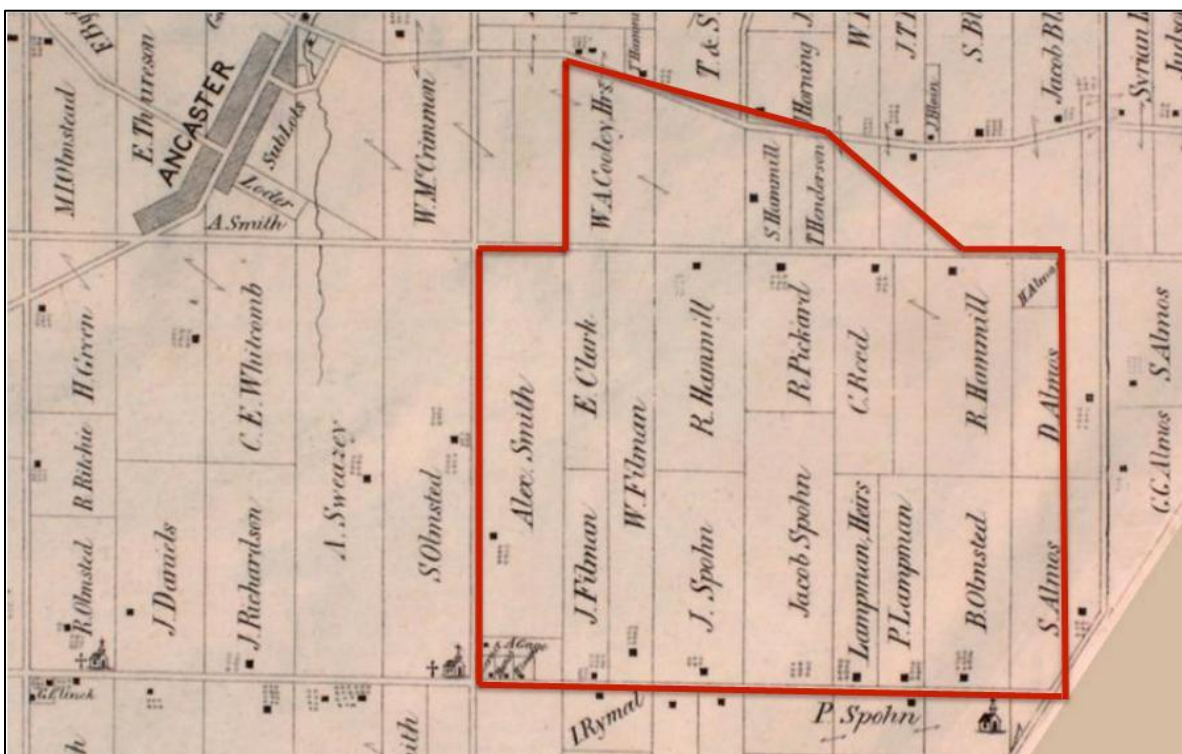
<sup>124</sup> “Historian Notes Ancaster a Community of Firsts,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, October 27, 1966.

<sup>125</sup> These include the burning of John Ryckman’s general store (1841), St. John’s Anglican Church (1868), the Ancaster Knitting Company (1875), the Lowrey Hotel (1881), Alonzo Egleston’s foundry (1883), Eyre Thuresson’s foundry (1884), and the Ancaster Carriage Factory (1885).

<sup>126</sup> E. Yates, “The Glories of Ancaster: A Mixture of Artistic Beauty, Deterioration, a Peep at Hamilton’s Predecessor,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 15, 1896.



**Figure 19** – The Township of Ancaster as seen in 1875 within the County of Wentworth (Source: *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wentworth*, McGill Digital Library).



**Figure 20** – Close-up of some of Ancaster's agricultural lands with an outline of the future Meadowlands delineated (Source: *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wentworth*, McGill Digital Library).



During this period, the village of Ancaster maintained a rather compact urban built form and a stock of architectural heritage (despite increasing pressures for development that would follow).<sup>127</sup> Ancaster was designated a “police village” in 1851 and maintained that designation until its incorporation as a town in 1973.<sup>128</sup> Southeast of the village, slowly and organically, low-density ribbon development began to spring up along the rural predecessors of Garner Road, Southcote Road, and Kitty Murray Lane. Although these were rural dwellings and not formal surveys, this development is still significant in displaying Ancaster’s gradual progression towards a suburban character. By 1900, Ancaster had a population of approximately 4,000 and the area to become the Meadowlands began to display some small growth. J.W. Tyrell’s 1903 *Imperial Atlas of Wentworth County* shows additional dwellings along the predecessors of Golf Links and Garner Roads<sup>129</sup> as well as severances to the large, original lots (meaning more landowners). Two decades later, the community grew by another 1,000 inhabitants and *Cummins Rural Directory Map* (1924) shows additional lot division within the Meadowlands. Many of the early settler families remained on the land (Oakes, Filman, Olmstead, Pickard) while new farmers also bought into the land (Rolston, Epps, Lyons, Hancock, Hunt, Harpwood, English, Webb, Woods, Brown, Pinn, Hender, Coursell, and Ellis).

Along with historical maps, the uses of these lands are also displayed through the evidence of aerial photography. Local aerial prints—which are available at the Lloyd Reeds Map Collection at McMaster University—were first taken by Canadian military aviation personnel prior to the industry’s

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<sup>127</sup> *The Hamilton Spectator* showcases the fact that historic Wilson Street has long been treasured and safeguarded by Ancasterians. See “Lovely Ancaster Keeps Its Character,” *Spectator*, February 3, 1951; “Ancaster May Incorporate as a Village,” *Spectator*, Sept. 27, 1952; “Historic Riches Survive Progress: Ancaster Has Wealth of Architecture,” *Spectator*, April 19, 1960; “Keep Ancaster’s Historic Buildings,” *Spectator*, Dec. 19, 1961; and “Charm to be Maintained,” *Spectator*, Jan. 26, 1968.

<sup>128</sup> Police villages were historically created by local decisions and bylaws and not incorporated by provincial governments. In the case of Ancaster, its boundaries as a police village were determined between the village and The Municipal Council of the United Counties of Wentworth and Halton (the predecessor of Wentworth County). In 1965, the Ontario Municipal Act changed local community structures to no longer utilize the status of “police village.”

<sup>129</sup> These roads were first known as the Golf Club Road and Highway 53. The Golf Club Road was named after the Hamilton Golf and Country Club which was incorporated in 1906 and was established in Ancaster in 1914 (“Our History,” Hamilton Golf and Country Club, last modified in 2015).

privatization in 1956.<sup>130</sup> Early photographs show a checkerboard of farms, vineyards, and forests on the Ancaster lands. Below is a glimpse of the southeastern portion of the Meadowlands in 1934 (Figure 21) and a view of what would become the Meadowlands Power Centre in 1943 (Figure 22).



**Figure 21** – Aerial photograph of the southeastern portion of the Meadowlands in 1934. Garner Road runs horizontally at the base of the print and Stone Church Road curves upwards in the top right-hand corner [Source: Lloyd Reeds Map Collection (LRMC), flightline A4815, shot 08].

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<sup>130</sup> See “Aerial Photography in Canada: A Brief History,” *Natural Resources Canada*, last modified December 31, 2013, <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/earth-sciences/geomatics/satellite-imagery-air-photos/air-photos/about-aerial-photography/9683>.



**Figure 22** – The northern section of the Meadowlands in 1943. Note the configuration Mohawk Road prior to the construction of Highway 403 and the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway. Golf Links Road runs horizontally across the bottom half of the map. Most of the landscape is dominated by agricultural uses (Source: LRMC, flightline 748, shot 12).

The tradition of farming evidenced in these aerial photographs would continue in Ancaster until the advent of World War II. Slowly and gradually, the community would modestly grow during the prewar era. Ultimately, it would take another 15 years for Hamilton's southern neighbour to reach a population of 7,000. As we will see in Chapter 5, the postwar reality in Ancaster, and the future Meadowlands more specifically, would prove to be very different.

## Chapter 5 – Contentious Growth: Land Development in the Meadowlands (1946-1980)

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*The days of protecting your town came and went with the Meadowlands.*

– Jason Leach, Letter to the Editor, *Hamilton Spectator*, September 9, 2005

In 1946 the *Hamilton Spectator* ran a story entitled “Ancaster Was Leading Centre Early in 19th Century, Now Suburban Phase Encroaches on Quiet Countryside,” indicating that the rural community’s history has long been coloured by looming development. Since the end of the Second World War, Ancaster has incessantly struggled with the juggling of two competing identities: the country and the city; agriculturalism and suburbanity. This chapter will explore the tension of these two personas through Ancaster’s clumsy and contentious postwar years. The ensuing expansion served to rally the community together and, conversely, to create a point of conformity between political and economic interests in the region. Significant development figures are also introduced in this chapter. The second chapter on land development in the Meadowlands deals with subsequent stages of planning and construction.

### **Small Surveys: Development in Ancaster during the 1950s**

Although Ancaster’s earlier detractors claimed the community was too far-removed from the ambitions of the city, the postwar years commenced a new era for the community. An influx of new residents and new capital trickled into the area over the 1950s and 1960s. New surveys began to spring up along Mohawk Road, Highway 53, and Fiddler’s Green in order to accommodate settling “baby-boomers”. Two kilometres west of the village centre was built the Spring Valley survey, a Veteran’s Land Act project.

In 1953, Ancastrians toyed with the idea of incorporation as a village. Ancaster was still designated a “police village” and incorporation would give the community additional powers including

representation on regional boards. In view of the naissance of Hamilton's growth spreading southwards and the rising number of surveys around the community, locals believed "incorporation would give Ancaster an opportunity to control its urban development and its destiny in planning and zoning."<sup>131</sup> Although this was never adopted, in 1953, Ancaster Township did create a new Zoning By-Law to plan for the approaching growth.<sup>132</sup> By 1954, with the completion of the Pinecrest subdivision—located just west of Hwy 403 and adjacent to the present day Meadowlands—Ancaster facilities began to experience the load of increased servicing demand. Drainage, sewage disposal, and water servicing all became critical development issues. The township was entirely serviced by well water and the village itself was running on only three small municipal wells. In 1955, the Ancaster Official Plan (OP) was completed to prepare for the community's growth and servicing needs. One *Hamilton Spectator* reporter present at an OP meeting wrote, "All future development seems premised on improvements of the water supply."<sup>133</sup>

The need for more water was not the only development issue the township faced at the time: sanitary sewage systems were also in question as population numbers were expected to double in the next ten years. Given that Ancastrians relied solely on septic tanks and weeping beds, additional higher density residential development would require more advanced sanitary systems—a proposal which was initially welcomed by locals. "Although there is no sewage system in the municipality, none was proposed in the plan." writes the *Spectator*. "It would become necessary when a 15,000 population is reached as water to the north would shed into the Grand River."<sup>134</sup> Also of note on this plan was a 224 acre light industrial section which was set aside to the south of the village, near the current site of the Power Centre.

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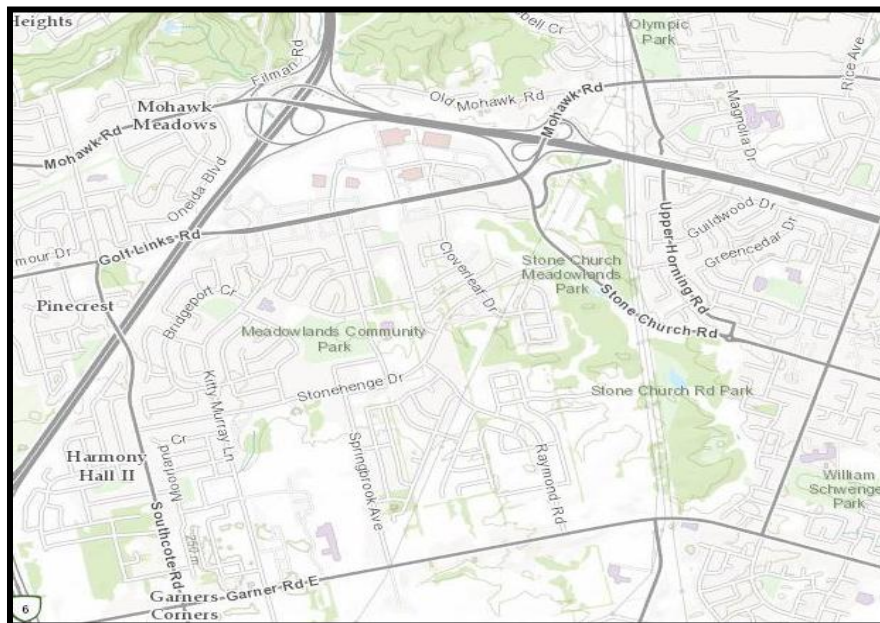
<sup>131</sup> "Ancaster Residents Hear Facts on Incorporation," *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 5, 1952.

<sup>132</sup> The Ancaster Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Committee, at this time, included the head of McMaster's Geography Department Lloyd Reeds, a purported "expert on local topography" ("Ancaster Residents Hear Facts...", *Spectator*, March 5, 1952).

<sup>133</sup> "Ancaster Township Sees 15,000 Population," *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 23, 1955.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

Between 1955 and 1959 there were 2,800 building permits issued in the township.<sup>135</sup> With the rise of the price of agricultural land, many farmers were eager to cash in on their properties. The area that became the Meadowlands hosted only a small percentage of this initial development during the 1950s. Early postwar surveys were denser and covered less space than subsequent surveys. There were no exterior retail outlets being built and no surveys were being drawn for the interior of this area at this time. Writing on the OP, one reporter noted, “under the present proposals, building of subdivisions in the large agricultural area of the township will be discouraged or forbidden. Land that is precipitous, low-lying, marshy, or subject to flooding is reserved for conservation.”<sup>136</sup> As was previously noted, the lands that would become the Meadowlands cogently met all of those descriptors. Nevertheless, development intentions proceeded. Both Golf Links and Mohawk Roads began to see more homes built along their lengths during the 1950s. Kitty Murray Lane was also extended from Garner to Golf Links and Springbrook Avenue was created as an interior rural road lined with low density bungalows and farmhouses (see Figure 23 for street names and their locations).



**Figure 23** – A modern map of the Meadowlands community showing street names and some of the surveys referenced above (Source: Scholars GeoPortal, ESRI topographic basemap).

<sup>135</sup> “Population Prognosticators Miss,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, October 10, 1959.

<sup>136</sup> “Official Plan Prepared for Ancaster Township,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 25, 1955.



As can be viewed on the 1954 aerial photograph below, there was also a power corridor built on the eastern edge of the Meadowlands connecting Hamilton to lands to the south. One of the most noticeable changes during this decade, especially from an aerial perspective, was the relocation of the Ancaster Fairgrounds from Wilson Street to the corner of Garner and Southcote Roads (1950-2009).



**Figure 24** – The entirety of the lands to become the Meadowlands in 1954. Note the Pinecrest survey under construction and the Ancaster Fairgrounds racetrack in the southwest corner (Source: LRMC, Flightline 4310, Shot 189)

New subdivisions were built across the township, including: Ancaster Heights, Dancaster Court, Joanne Court, Maple Lane, Mohawk Meadows, and Perth Park. Mohawk Meadows was one of the first housing developments in the vicinity of the Meadowlands and was built by George Sinclair's Construction Company. It is located just northwest (now over 403) of the current Meadowlands boundaries. Below are two early photographs of the survey, which was built in 1959.



**Figure 25** – The Mohawk Meadows survey in the early 1960’s (Source: “Ancaster Housing: Mohawk Meadows,” Hamilton Public Library Local History & Archives, Prints, 1959).

### The 1960’s: Infrastructure, Land Acquisition, and Use-Based Zoning

Perhaps the most significant growth accelerator in Ancaster came from the construction of Highway 403, which threaded its way through the centre of the township<sup>137</sup>. The road was created in segments beginning in 1955.<sup>138</sup> The Ancaster portion which travels from Aberdeen Avenue to Wilson Street West, “the most complicated section of the highway”<sup>139</sup>, was constructed between 1966 and 1969. The project’s Ancaster leg, which came at a total cost of \$2.25 million, was described as “the process of building a huge curving highway through 3.3 miles of back ’40 land.”<sup>140</sup> This regional superhighway was to be the main infrastructural and transportation corridor for the western portion of the city, facilitating connections to regions both east (Toronto) and west (Brantford) and setting the context for the development of the Meadowlands.

<sup>137</sup> It was built to deviate around historic Wilson Street, roughly following the path of the Chedoke Creek.

<sup>138</sup> Although construction did not start until the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, conceptual planning for the highway had actually begun in the 1930’s (Cameron Bevers, “History of King’s Highway 403,” *The King’s Highway*, last modified in 2013, <http://www.thekingshighway.ca/Highway403.htm>).

<sup>139</sup> Bevers, <http://www.thekingshighway.ca/Highway403.htm>).

<sup>140</sup> “Blazing the 403,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 10, 1968.



During the 1960s, Ancastrians were well aware that their community was on the cusp of considerable change. The township had quickly become the coveted backyard of Hamilton development interests.<sup>141</sup> Not only was there room to sprawl, but there were also very few regulatory policies or restrictions on growth. The impetus for development of the area on the eastern edge of Ancaster first came from regional and provincial efforts to obtain urban greenfield lands in the mid 1960s. The first attempts to acquire extensive parcels of land from farmers in the area came through the efforts of the Government of Ontario by means of its development arm, the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC). The Ontario Realty Corporation is “a crown corporation of the Government of Ontario and, as one of Canada’s largest real estate management companies, is a major customer of Ontario’s design and construction sector.”<sup>142</sup> The ORC was involved in the purchasing and exchanging of land in Hamilton throughout the decade and largely acted on the proposals of development syndicates. As Don May, an early planning consultant in Ancaster, stated, during the 1960s the County of Wentworth played host to the formation of two major land assemblies:

“One was on the east side of the City of Hamilton near Stoney Creek [the Heritage Green development] and was purchased by the Ontario Realty Corporation.<sup>143</sup> These developers were limited in how large and fast they could develop the land because of

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<sup>141</sup> Interestingly, according to former Ancaster politician Bob Wade (councillor: 1978-1984, mayor: 1985-2000), the Meadowlands in particular have always been the subject of Hamilton development desires. Wade shared that conversations with former Hamilton mayor Jack MacDonald (1977-1980) would often turn to the growing suburban community. “Bob, what will I have to do to take the Meadowlands off your hands and get them in Hamilton?” questioned McDonald (Bob Wade interview conducted July 29, 2015).

<sup>142</sup> The corporation officially merged with Infrastructure Ontario in 2011 to form ‘Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation.’ (“Strategic Opportunities Committee,” *Infrastructure Ontario*, accessed June 23, 2015, <http://www.infrastructureontario.ca/Templates/News.aspx?id=2147488158&terms=ontario%20realty%20corporation&langtype=1033>).

<sup>143</sup> The ORC was persuaded to purchase the land lease option of a group of developers headed by well-known Toronto businessman Sam Sniderman.

the presence of the Red Hill Creek.<sup>144</sup> But the other land assembly was on the west side and it was created in much the same way.”<sup>145</sup>

This western portion of greenfield land—which included the Meadowlands and other sections of rural Ancaster—was originally acquired through a land lease option by a development group led by investor Sam Sniderman of Toronto. The syndicate also optioned the Heritage Green development near Stoney Creek. According to Meadowlands development baron Alec Kelly, of Alec Kelly Limited, “they did, I believe, option eighteen parcels of farm land at very nominal prices of between \$1,500 to \$3,000 per acre. The total of their acreage was approximately 1,200 acres.”<sup>146</sup> Once again, the Sniderman group pursued the ORC to finance the land lease but this time they were declined by provincial regulators. Kelly states, “they were informed by the Province that the east end acquisitions of approximately 1,000 acres were more than enough for the Hamilton Metropolitan area.”<sup>147</sup>

In view of these development interests, the Ancaster Planning Committee and the Hamilton-Wentworth Planning Area Board (HWPAB) came up with a new Zoning By-Law in 1963 to tighten the community’s planning policy.<sup>148</sup> This new framework retained Wilson Street’s historic ambience and virtually closed the whole of Ancaster to large industrial ventures. Although most of the area to become the Meadowlands was still designated as agricultural land at this time, these plans mark the first time that sections of this area were re-zoned for other uses (see Figures 26 and 27 below). Modern zoning practices prevailed during this period in Ancaster’s history and planning decisions made to separate land uses here had marked effects on the shape the Meadowlands would take in the future. In 1963, the *Spectator* reported on the policies,

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<sup>144</sup> This was prior to the construction of the Red Hill Creek Expressway, the main transportation corridor built on the eastern edge of the City of Hamilton. This highway effectively linked the East Mountain to the broader City of Hamilton. It also made transportation connections to Toronto and Niagara more efficient through the connection to the Queen Elizabeth Way.

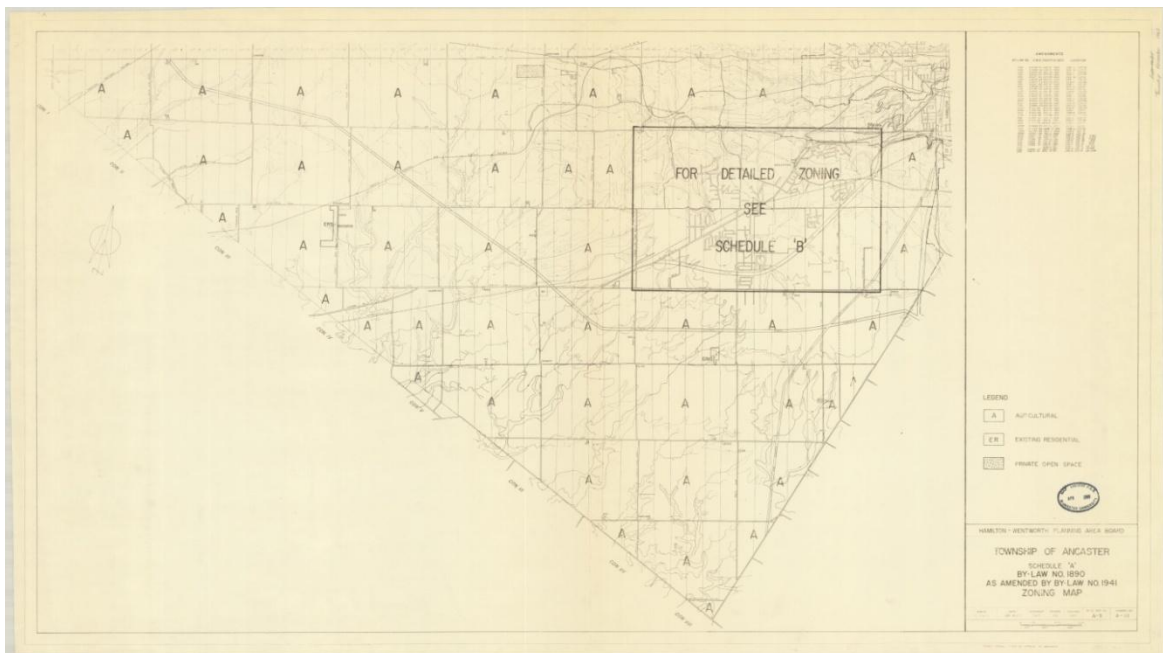
<sup>145</sup> Don May interview, June 16, 2015.

<sup>146</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

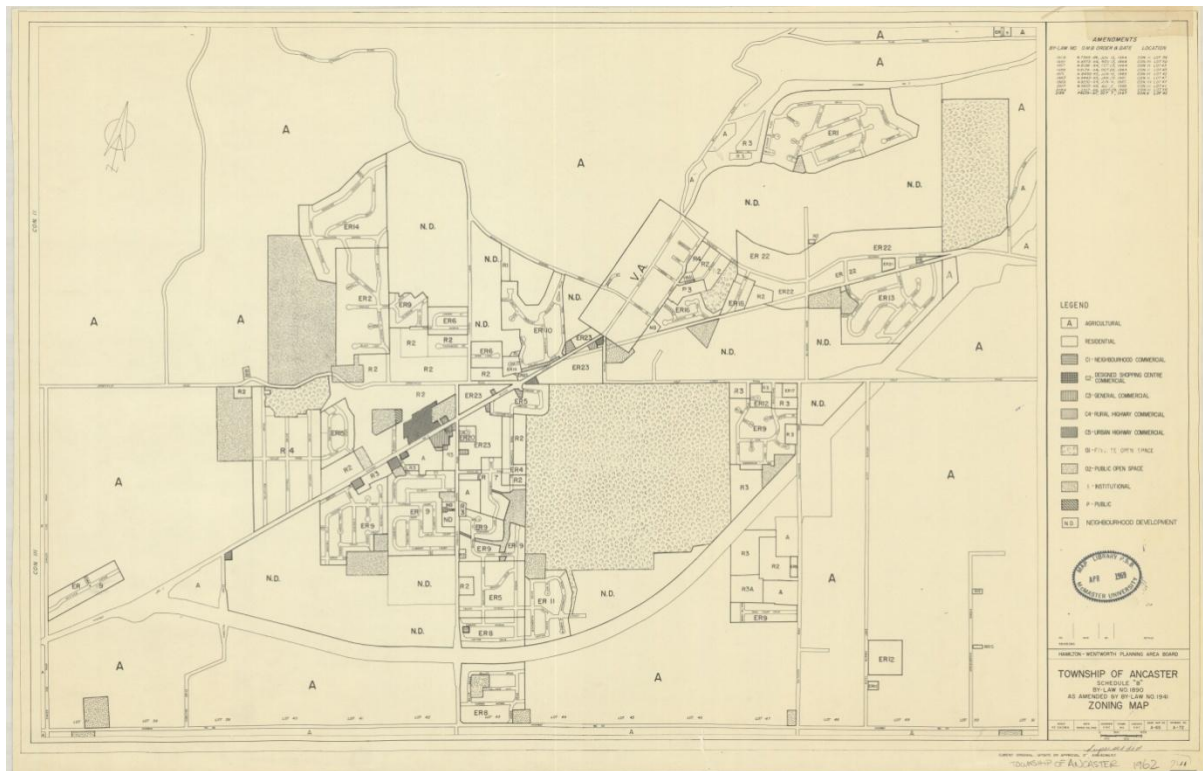
<sup>148</sup> The Hamilton-Wentworth Planning Area Board handled regional planning and planning-related decisions for the County of Wentworth and the City of Hamilton (pre-amalgamation),

“A new by-law that will keep Ancaster mainly residential has been approved by the township council and the Ontario Municipal Board. The by-law makes no provision for heavy industry in the township. And it ensures that future development of the land will place no heavy financial burden on ratepayers...these development pressures and changes were altering the basic rural way of life...”<sup>149</sup>



**Figure 26** – A view of Ancaster land uses in 1963. The majority of the township is farmland with most of the growth outward from Wilson Street (Source: Township of Ancaster Zoning By-Law Map Schedule A, Hamilton-Wentworth Planning Area Board, 1963, LRMC).

<sup>149</sup> “Ancaster Stays Residential,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, November 4, 1963.



**Figure 27** – A closer, more detailed zoning map of Ancaster’s urban footprint in 1963. Note the existing residential uses along Kitty Murray Lane, Springbrook Avenue, as well as the existence of the Pinecrest neighbourhood. The lands to the east of the 403, including the future Power Centre, are still zoned agricultural (Source: Township of Ancaster Zoning By-Law Map Schedule B, Hamilton-Wentworth Planning Area Board, 1963, LRMC).

By Canada’s centennial year, 1967, Ancaster had already passed earlier population projections and grown to more than 15,500 inhabitants through numerous small surveys. That year, a 16-inch water main was constructed along Golf Links Road, between Lover’s Lane and Holstein Drive. Ancaster had also welcomed its geographical fate as a residential suburb of Hamilton. “Planners predict Ancaster will never re-enter the manufacturing race,” writes the *Spectator*. “The township appears destined to continue the residential trend already in motion, providing house and playground space for the Hamilton urban complex.”<sup>150</sup> In 1968, nearing the completion of the Ancaster leg of the 403, a

<sup>150</sup> “Ancaster: Mellowed by Age,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 27, 1967.

cloverleaf interchange was built at the intersection of Golf Links and Mohawk Roads.<sup>151</sup> A new, auto-oriented shopping plaza was also erected along the southwestern portion of Wilson Street (see Figure 28). The 1968 *Map of the County of Wentworth* (Ontario Dept. of Highways) showcases some of these changes, including the two large surveys which were completed adjacent to the Meadowlands: Pinecrest and Mohawk Meadows.

That same year, the Sniderman syndicate was able to locate a buyer for the Ancaster lands in the publicly-traded firm, Revenue Properties Company Limited. This Toronto-based developer took a 50% stake in the land assets while the other 50% was shared between Crangmore Developments and Green Downs Limited. This parcel of approximately 1,200 acres would play a central role in Ancaster's growing development prospects. It would also prove important in an ensuing annexation war with the City of Hamilton.

During the spring of 1968, a group of 40 rural residents requested to leave Ancaster due to a lack of services from the fledgling township.<sup>152</sup> They put forward a petition in order to be annexed by the City of Hamilton. Most of the residents were annoyed at the lack of modern sewers and wanted infrastructural improvements. The initial proposal covered a total of 80 acres and was fully supported by Ancaster councillors. In view of these requests, the City of Hamilton seized on the opportunity and decided to produce a larger, more ambitious bid to annex an enormous parcel of land: 3,371 acres or 8% of Ancaster Township. The proposal was made, in part, because a large portion of the coveted acreage was owned by Revenue Properties Co. Ltd., and the City desired the lucrative development income. Interestingly, not only were the residents calling for annexation at this time but Revenue Properties also supported the City's bid. The company saw that rural Ancaster did not have the appetite for anything other than large lots and that it likely would not be in a position to handle the tax impact of such a large development. There was also evidence that the township did not have adequate water and

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<sup>151</sup> Nearly 30 years before the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway would be added as an east-west expressway connecting to this infrastructural matrix.

<sup>152</sup> "40 Request Annexation by Hamilton," *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 4, 1968.



sewage servicing if the lands were to be fully developed, even though the village now had its own water tower.



**Figure 28** – Ancaster during the 1960’s. This photograph is of the southwestern extremity of developed land along Wilson Street. It nicely represents Ancaster’s awkward mixture of rural and suburban identities. Shown here are the village’s new shopping plaza (now the Ancaster Town Plaza and the County Fair Plaza), the Spring Valley survey, the Greenside Acres survey, and open agricultural land (Source: Jim Green, Fieldcote Memorial Park & Museum).

In order to rally behind Hamilton’s proposal, Revenue Properties hastily put together a rough plan for a 400 acre multi-use development in this area called “Mohawk Trail Village”.<sup>153</sup> The \$250 million idea was said to include, “apartments, town houses, and shopping plazas, and could boost the township population by 10,000.”<sup>154</sup> But clearly, as Murray Pound, from the HWPAB commented, the

<sup>153</sup> It was also known as “Bruce Trail Village.” Part of this development site encompassed the northern section of what is now the Meadowlands, including the Power Centre.

<sup>154</sup> “Officials Fight Annexation,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 3, 1968.

developer wanted the freedom to build tight swathes of tract housing. “A plan of subdivision submitted to Hamilton would contain more single-family dwellings,” he is quoted saying in the *Spectator*, “because Hamilton will find it much easier to absorb such development, which would put a heavy burden on Ancaster Township if they had to carry the project alone.”<sup>155</sup> Clearly, the township fought the city’s large-scale takeover and, eventually, a decision was made by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to deny Hamilton annexation rights.

### **The Allarco Years: the Battle over Ancaster’s Farmland**

In July of 1969, burdened with the financial difficulties of their American operations, Revenue Properties made the decision to sell its shares in the Ancaster lands. The company was known for its detached approach to municipalities and Ancaster was no different. Most of the council in Ancaster learned of the sale indirectly through the newspaper or other secondary sources.<sup>156</sup> The new owner of the 1,200 acre parcel of land was an Alberta-based company, Allarco Developments Limited.<sup>157</sup> Allarco was established by the prodigious Edmonton investor, developer, and medical surgeon Dr. Charles Allard. In *The Developers*, he is mentioned as, “Edmonton’s most diversified developer-entrepreneur.”<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> “Developer promises action on Mohawk Trail Village,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 16, 1969.

<sup>156</sup> “Major shareholders sold out,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 22, 1969.

<sup>157</sup> Allarco was a publicly-traded corporation that that included International Jet Air, Northwest Trust, Seaboard Life Insurance, and Crosstown Motor City.

<sup>158</sup> James Lorimer, *The Developers* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1978), 25.



**Figure 29** – Dr. Charles Allard was a massive business baron in Western Canada, founding the Edmonton Oilers, the Bank of Alberta (which became the Canadian Western Bank), Allarcom TV, Allarco Developments Ltd., and the Allard Foundation (Source: Allard Foundation).

At the time of the publication of Lorimer’s book in 1978, Allarco, “had 8,800 acres of development land on the outskirts of Edmonton plus land for development in Mexico, Las Vegas, and southern Ontario.”<sup>159</sup> Hamilton’s connection to Allarco is thanks in part to the legacy of football in the city. Former Canadian Football League player and Hamiltonian, Vincent A. (Jimmy) Quondamatteo, made contact with team owner Charles Allard while playing for the Edmonton Eskimos between 1950-1955.<sup>160</sup> Quondamatteo was involved in real estate outside of football, and persuaded Allard to buy the Revenue Properties lands in Ancaster. Upon his retirement and return to Hamilton, Quondamatteo went on to become the President of the Hamilton Real Estate Board.

<sup>159</sup> Lorimer, *The Developers*, 25.

<sup>160</sup> For more information on Quontamatteo, see “Vincent A. Quondamatteo,” *National Post obituary*, published Nov. 18, 2006, and “Jim Quondamatteo,” CFLapedia, accessed June 23, 2015, [www.cflapedia.com/Players/q/quondamatteo\\_jim.htm](http://www.cflapedia.com/Players/q/quondamatteo_jim.htm).



The Allarco years in Ancaster were marked with contention virtually from their beginning. Similar to earlier developers, Allarco desired to develop the land under the City's jurisdiction. Hamilton was prepared to service the area and had a 36-inch water main jutting out to the city limits. In the summer of 1969, the City of Hamilton proposed an exchange with the township: it would expropriate 3,000+ acres of developable land and Ancaster would receive water supply and sewage treatment in return. Most of the Ancaster Council originally opposed the deal. Yet, one "maverick councillor," Chris Lewis, fought steadily to prevent Ancaster from rejecting proposals from Hamilton. Lewis argued that, "Ancaster may not have the facilities, the staff, or the economic resources to service the \$250 million [development] proposal."<sup>161</sup> The promise for servicing was, at least purportedly, for land "well beyond the boundaries of Mohawk Trail Village."<sup>162</sup>

These political complications along with the need for an OP amendment and zoning changes all combined to stall Allarco's development plans. The lands in question roughly corresponded to the boundaries of the Meadowlands today. As the *Spectator* reported, "The triangle of land [is] bordered by Highway 403, Horning Road, the city limits, Highway 53, and Southcote Road."<sup>163</sup> Estimates at this time were that if Allarco's plans were approved, the developments would lead to an additional 22,000–30,000 people. There is a long history of public disapproval for the development of these lands from Ancaster's citizenry. "The village never wanted a new town," says Don May, planning consultant with May, Pirie & Associates.<sup>164</sup> As a development company removed from the local context, Allarco quickly became a force opposed by local voices. Former councillor in the Town of Ancaster, and current Ward 12 (Ancaster) councillor in the City of Hamilton, Lloyd Ferguson, shares his recollection:

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<sup>161</sup> "Trail Village Annexation War," *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 13, 1969.

<sup>162</sup> "Hamilton Offers Aid," *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 9, 1969.

<sup>163</sup> "Ancaster Resists Annexation of Triangle," *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 16, 1970.

<sup>164</sup> Don May interview, June 16, 2015.

“There was huge pushback from the community. The original proposal was just far too big. Allarco came in and tried to get all this land re-zoned to residential and the [Ancaster] Council turned them down. They said they didn’t want this kind of development.”<sup>165</sup>

Part of the discord between Allarco and Ancaster staff and residents was not only on the premise of the urbanization of farmland; it was also on the details of design and density. Ancaster wanted large lots for single family detached housing which were, as Ferguson put it, “in line with the character of the community.”<sup>166</sup> On the other hand Allarco was proposing higher densities for the area with smaller subdivided lots and less spacing between homes.

Another issue which proved divisive on the so-called “Allarco lands” was the servicing of sanitary infrastructure. “An important part of this story,” argues May, “is the sewer forced on Ancaster. Prior to any real development approvals, the area needed to be serviced with high volume sewer capacity.”<sup>167</sup> According to Witold Rybczynski, “to a developer, sewage disposal is one of the most complicated—and expensive—steps in ‘improving raw land.’”<sup>168</sup> 1970 marked the beginning of a bitter battle between residents, developers, and politicians over the fate of Ancaster...largely dependent upon a sewage pipe. That year, the Township of Ancaster approached the Ontario Water Resources Commission (OWRC) in Toronto for consultation on the community’s servicing needs. It was clear that the township did not have enough water to supply the needs of the massive influx of new residents expected. It was also clear that there had been sewage issues in Ancaster before—with some earlier

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<sup>165</sup> Lloyd Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Don May interview, June 16, 2015.

<sup>168</sup> Rybczynski, *Last Harvest*, 103.

neighbourhood developments having to deal with raw effluent overflowing onto their backyards.<sup>169</sup> The OWRC offered to pay for half of the approximately \$10 million, 42-mile project in exchange for servicing revenue control. But, in order to reach that deal, Ancaster would have to become dependent upon Hamilton for all its sewer and water needs. As reported in the *Spectator*, “When Hamilton’s sewer system was designed, the pipes in the southwestern section were oversized to accommodate the sewage from that entire area. That essentially was all Hamilton wanted to service.”<sup>170</sup> This explains some of the ensuing development controversy.

Ancaster’s sewer issue quickly became a rallying cry for anti-development protestors who did not want to see the township’s farmland become suburban sprawl. The Township Council had already informally agreed to a servicing plan with both the City and the OWRC months before residents became aware of the magnitude of the development and the corresponding infrastructure. By 1972, the development question became a focal point for public emotion. Residents staged protests, formed citizen groups and distributed pamphlets across the township. One read: “Should Ancaster remain a quiet, semi-rural community or become a bustling boom town?”<sup>171</sup> Residents, many of whom were farmers, were worried that drastic population increases and higher densities would negatively affect the longstanding character of the community. If used to full capacity, the future Meadowlands was reportedly capable of serving a population of approximately 41,000 additional residents.<sup>172</sup> Most Ancastrians did not want anything other than low density single-family homes built in the township and they clearly did not want any infringement on the “charm and sophistication of Ancaster.”<sup>173</sup>

One local protest group, known as the Area Ratepayers’ Association (ARA), sought advice from Norman Pearson, a well-known planning consultant at the time. Pearson encouraged residents to

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<sup>169</sup> In 1964, consulting engineer H.B. Ashenhurst was paid by the township to study the sewage issues in Ancaster and found that its sewers were nearly at capacity. Many areas could not handle the volume required for new surveys.

<sup>170</sup> “City OK’s Ancaster’s sewage

<sup>171</sup> “Ancaster: Quiet Town or Boom?” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 3, 1972.

<sup>172</sup> “Ancaster Township not keen on 41,000 population idea,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 22, 1972.

<sup>173</sup> “Ancaster urged to strive for low density concept,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 25, 1972.

“tell their elected representatives and planners what kind of environment they want to live in,” and that “with proper planning and attention to the landscape, the great bulk of Ancaster can be made into a residential beauty spot with spacious lots.”<sup>174</sup> Of course, planners and policy-makers today embrace the idea of compact urban form, even in greenfield locations. But at this time, Ancastrians saw dense development as most damaging. “The township [could have] a great future as a low density residential area,” Pearson commented to a *Spectator* reporter, “but only if citizens urged their council and planners to throw away the cookie-cutter concept of planning.”<sup>175</sup>

In the spring of 1972, hundreds of protesters gathered at the Ancaster Old Town Hall, spilling outside of the building onto the lawn and the street. Some residents quipped that the sewer was being built “to let this community develop into another Scarborough or Etobicoke.”<sup>176</sup> Others claimed that the development would displace some of the residents on fixed and low incomes, pointing to gentrification. David Mount, a consulting engineer who had been hired by residents, exclaimed that “the only reason we need sewers is to promote development.”<sup>177</sup> This meeting was one of many held by residents and served to highlight the two overarching perspectives surfacing on this issue. The OWRC, Ancaster Township Council, and the HWPAB all said that the main reason the sewers were needed was to solve the town’s pollution problem. It would upgrade the community’s servicing efficiency and help to keep Ancaster safe and clean. It had little to do with development, because those decisions were to be made later. The other account, that of residents and their allies, was that the proposed sewer upgrades were simply a front for the real end-game of decision-makers: to push through a colossal development and reap the revenues.

By the summer of 1972, the protest had snowballed into a movement. Residents welcomed the visible support of the Hamilton (Region) Conservation Authority (HCA), the Federation of Ontario

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> “The Public Protests: Ancaster residents rally to fight plan for sewer complex,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 6, 1972.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

Naturalists, and many field experts, such as Toronto architect Colin Vaughan, who acted as a leader of the famous “Stop Spadina” movement. One of the chief voices critiquing the sewer project was that of Ancaster conservationist Thomas Beckett. Beckett was the township’s representative on the HCA and quickly found himself in an awkward position as a dissenting citizen.<sup>178</sup> Since Beckett was sitting on the township’s conservation authority, the council had the power to fire him for his criticism of their plans.<sup>179</sup> On June 1, 1972 Ancaster Council voted 5-1 to relieve him of his role on the HCA, citing publically maligning remarks made by Beckett.<sup>180</sup> “My right to speak as a private citizen,” Beckett told a reporter, “had never been brought into question until I touched raw flesh—the sewer issue and the real story behind it.”<sup>181</sup> In response to the dismissal, the ARA quickly drew up citizen support for Mr. Beckett and produced a petition of more than 1,000 names. The action did not result in re-instatement. This incident gives credence to the possibility of political collusion in Ancaster. Although there was overwhelming public disapproval for the project, the Township Council tenaciously persisted in defending the plan and, by extent, the interests of developers, lenders, and planning bodies. While it is not clear as to the intentions of these political representatives, inferences can be made to suggest that they may have been receiving remuneration for their stances.<sup>182</sup>

In response to mounting resident anger, the OWRC ran ads in the local media in order to oppose NIMBYism and drum up citizen support for the project. One recurring argument put forward by pro-development voices was that the protestors were acting on unfounded emotion. “Democracy is not mob

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<sup>178</sup> Beckett was a lawyer by trade. He acted as the first Chairman of the HCA (which later became the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority). He was instrumental in beginning the land acquisition program in the Dundas Valley (“Tom Beckett Trail: Overview,” Ontario Trails, accessed August 31, 2015, <http://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/trails/view/dundas-valley---tom-beckett-trail>.)

<sup>179</sup> Norman Patrick, former spokesperson from the Ministry of the Environment, stated that there has only been one similar incident in the province since he took office (“Ontario won’t interfere in dismissal of Beckett,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 29, 1972).

<sup>180</sup> Phil Gibson, “Council stung by sewer criticisms, ousts Beckett,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 2, 1972.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Another example of the contempt for public opinion by Ancaster politicians was in the creation of the 1972 Official Plan (OP). A majority of Ancaster Council decided to leave out any public input into the document. For more information, see “Citizens ruled out in plan designing,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 8, 1972.

rule,” said Ancaster Reeve Art Bowes. “It’s based on evidence and facts as we know them.”<sup>183</sup>

Ironically, at the same time that many residents were censured for not knowing all of the facts on the project, Ancaster Council withheld 140 of the 750 documents in the township sewer file. There was also a controversial fee set for members of the public to acquire and copy the municipal files.<sup>184</sup> Protest leader Thomas Beckett:

“To say the information is available and then make people pay...that much is arrogance at its utmost. Council members should be ashamed of themselves. This increases my conviction that they are attempting to conceal and deceive the citizens. I challenge them—I demand—that they make freely available all relevant information.”<sup>185</sup>

During the melee, Reeve Art Bowes found himself at the centre of public antagonism. Like all of the township’s councillors at the time, Bowes was fully committed to the project. But, unlike his colleagues, Bowes was tireless in trying to convince the public of its merits. Nearly every Ancaster development news article published between 1971 and 1973 featured Bowes speaking up to counter voices of protest. “A certain small segment of the population believes that we’ve been keeping things from them,” charged Bowes. “I resent both public and private statements that we’ve been hiding facts.”<sup>186</sup> Local politicians felt that their hands were tied. They had agreed upon the project years prior and wanted to see it through to completion. At the same time, there appears to be an acknowledgement of constituent animosity and the jeopardization of subsequent votes. The Township also suffered from the limbo of development and servicing acquisition. They could not approve development plans without first having adequate servicing in place and they could not plan for the servicing without the guarantee of development on the land. Both prospects made them unpopular with residents and with

<sup>183</sup> “‘Inflammatory’ sewer criticism dismays reeve of Ancaster,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 7, 1972.

<sup>184</sup> “Charging to see sewer data plan arrogance: Beckett,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 9, 1972.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> “‘Inflammatory’ sewer criticism dismays reeve of Ancaster,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 7, 1972.

developers. Allarco itself was equally aggravated by the situation. Ancaster had created a significant delay and allowed the company's development plans to come to a standstill. The company had hired its own lawyers and public representatives to act as the face of the firm at contentious public meetings.<sup>187</sup>

The protestors received a boost that summer with the results of a township-wide, student-led survey.<sup>188</sup> Led by McMaster geography graduate student Paul Smithson, the Ancaster Development Research Project polled 1,200 Ancaster residents on their views.<sup>189</sup> The results were that nearly two thirds of all residents wanted the development curtailed, half would be willing to pay higher property taxes to ensure the township's rural character, and four fifths were completely opposed to the sewer pipe construction.<sup>190</sup> Ancastrians were clearly opposed to the trajectory proposed by their representatives.

Commissioned by the County of Wentworth and in preparation for the regional restructuring ahead, the Township of Ancaster, in partnership with the HWPAB worked to create a new Official Plan. By 1973, the township was incorporated as the Town of Ancaster in the new Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. The new plan was intended to forecast the future of the community and to deliver a concrete document to residents still fuming over the discussions of development. The plan proposed a 500% increase in population by the year 2000, a total of more than 55,000 new residents to the area. Not surprisingly, the public was not pleased. "Why?" asks one resident at an OP information session, "Why must Ancaster grow so big? Why can't it stay the same way it is?"<sup>191</sup> According to Henk Gaasenbeek, the township's planning director at the time, "Ancaster is ideally situated to residential development."<sup>192</sup> The criticisms of the plan were broad: some claimed it was too "Hamilton-focused" while others, like Ancaster schoolteacher Roy Dunford, went as far as

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<sup>187</sup> "The Public Protests: Ancaster residents rally to fight plan for sewer complex," *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 6, 1972.

<sup>188</sup> Paul Smithson interview, August 6, 2015.

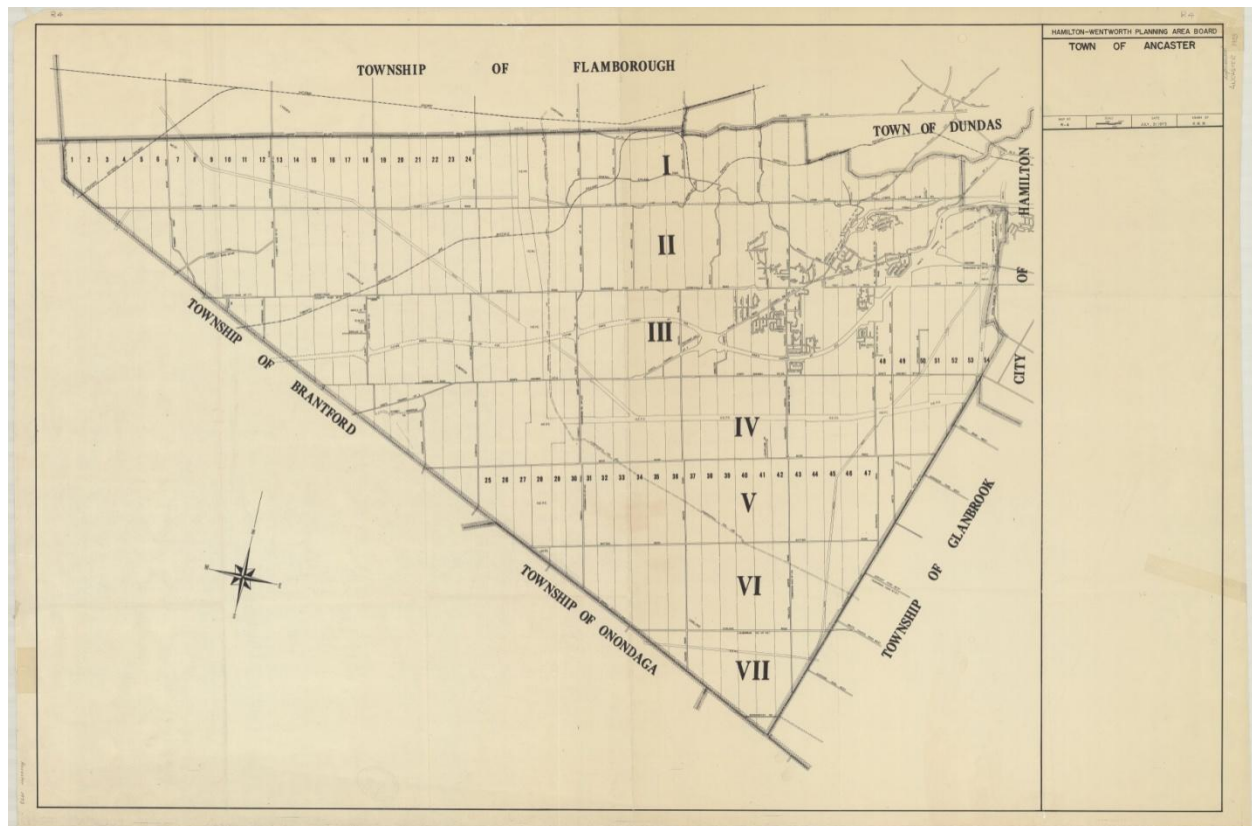
<sup>189</sup> The project was funded by the Opportunities for Youth program, funded by a \$7,740 federal government grant.

<sup>190</sup> "Students Survey Ancaster Views," *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 8, 1972.

<sup>191</sup> "Plan called blueprint for rape," *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 6, 1973.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

calling it “a blueprint for rape by developers.”<sup>193</sup> Former HCA representative and protest leader, Thomas Beckett, made news by demanding the resignation of the entire Town Council. In response to these views, Gaasenbeek claimed, “The role of the planner is to speak, to some extent, for the people who don’t live in the community yet...there is no spokesperson here for those people who need housing.”<sup>194</sup> Gaasenbeek went on to assert that Ancaster has a “moral obligation to provide housing” in the region’s future.<sup>195</sup> Below (Figure 30) is an overview map of the Town of Ancaster in 1973 as evidenced within the OP.



**Figure 30** – The Town of Ancaster in 1973. The Allarco lands are not yet developed and the Meadowlands maintain a similar footprint as on previous maps (Source: Township of Ancaster Map, Hamilton-Wentworth Planning Area Board, 1973, LRMC).

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ian Haysom, “Ancaster must do its share, report says,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, November 15, 1973.



That same year, in view of the controversy surrounding the Ancaster development, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) was tasked with making a decision on the town's future. The appeal was made by the ARA and its various allies. Protestors testified that the sewer proposal had been falsely presented as an answer to sanitation concerns. They argued that it was truly intended as a gateway to open thousands of acres of farmland to urban development.<sup>196</sup> Allarco's lawyers, as well as officials from the Town of Ancaster and the Ministry of the Environment, spoke in favour of the necessity of the sewer.<sup>197</sup> On April 5, 1973 OMB Chairman Walter Shub revealed the board's decision: to allow construction. The citizens were outraged. As developer Michael Corrado of Coletara Development recalls, "the town fought it bitterly. It went all the way to the Ontario Cabinet."<sup>198</sup> The appeal to cabinet was also lost and ARA president Dr. E.J. Ashworth is quoted as saying, "We'll have to admit we're beaten."<sup>199</sup>

Not long after these controversial decisions, Ancaster hosted its first election as a newly incorporated town. In the face of public fury, the council underwent a significant turnover. Only 2 out of 7 incumbents were re-elected post-1973.<sup>200</sup> In a letter to the editor, one satirical resident wrote:

"When the Ontario government recently announced that there would be region-wide elections...some of us in Ancaster were struck numb with horror for we realized that our beloved council will not have had time before the elections to carry out its mandate to destroy our community. The sewer issue is still under appeal to Cabinet; many roads

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<sup>196</sup> In June of 1972, ten months before the OMB trial was underway, there were already a total of 1,038 objections filed with the Ministry of the Environment. The *Spectator* lists only four people who wrote in support of the sewer proposal. For this story, see Phil Gibson, "Council stung by sewer criticisms, ousts Beckett," *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 28, 1972.

<sup>197</sup> "OMB holds fate of sewers," *The Hamilton Spectator*, March 21, 1973.

<sup>198</sup> Mississauga-based Coletara is the major developer behind the rapid residential and commercial expansion in Caledonia, notably the Gateway Caledonia Business Park Joint Venture (Michael Corrado interview, June 18, 2015).

<sup>199</sup> "Start of \$10 million sewer may be only weeks away," *The Hamilton Spectator*, January 18, 1974.

<sup>200</sup> "Ancaster Councils 1964-2015," Ancaster Municipal Building portraits, accessed June 18, 2015.

have not yet been widened to four lanes and it won't be possible by October to fell all the trees and transform all the farms into subdivisions.”<sup>201</sup>

Predictably, Reeve Arthur Bowes was ousted by the Mayor-elect of the new Town of Ancaster, Ann Sloat. Sloat was elected on the “anti-growth vote” and was expected to right the wrongs of prior politicians. “We don’t want high-rises, apartments, and concrete jungles,” she says. “We have an absolutely gorgeous town. We have to preserve it at all costs.”<sup>202</sup> Although her energy to “preserve the peace and tranquility” of Ancaster gave residents hope that the town would not be drastically altered, the OMB’s trunk sewer decision meant that the town would have serviced land and resulting growth. To add to the controversy, the *Spectator* reported that the size of the sewer main implemented in Ancaster turned out to be bigger than claimed at the OMB hearings. It is not clear who authorized this decision to upgrade the sewer’s capacity but Kilborn Engineering, the consulting firm who led the sewer design and construction, went from presenting trunk sewers of 24-30 inches in diameter to 27-54 inches—large enough for servicing more than 100,000 people.<sup>203</sup> Along with the construction of infrastructure, over the next few years the Town also witnessed a number of other changes including an increase in speed limits on major roads and the expansion of part of Hamilton’s Civic Airport into the Town of Ancaster.<sup>204</sup>

Despite having servicing finally in place, it would be still a number of years before the lands would actually be developed. With the legislative decisions in place, Allarco was resolved to bide its time in order to justify desired densities, zoning, and market demand. Although the company did not succeed in having its lands annexed by Hamilton, it was optimistic that it would eventually be permitted to build at higher densities in Ancaster. Of course, public opinion in the town could not have

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<sup>201</sup> “The best laid schemes...” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 11, 1973.

<sup>202</sup> “Mayor says anti-growth vote put her in,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, November 7, 1973.

<sup>203</sup> “Province admits Ancaster sewer pipe size increased,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, January 30, 1974.

<sup>204</sup> Hamilton’s airport is now named the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport.

been more at variance. They wanted as low of densities as possible in order to control and lessen the impact of growth. In 1976 the new councillors hired Planistics Inc. to complete a revamped OP which reflected local sentiment. The result was an allegedly anti-development document which showed no prospective growth between urban areas.<sup>205</sup> The plan seemed to indicate that Allarco's mega-development did not exist. This ongoing dispute lingered over the Town for years to come. "Ancaster should remain a community of single family dwellings with low density multiple family dwellings in some areas,"<sup>206</sup> Sloat insisted in 1980. Five years previously, the Town Council had endorsed a residential housing policy which added municipal weight to that approach, restricting the number of annual units permitted to be developed and prohibiting high-rises and other forms of high density development from being built.

### **The Highest Court of Appeal: Taking the Fight past the OMB**

By 1980 a stalemate had been reached. The Edmonton firm avoided dealing with local council as much as possible, and eventually the developer's early plan for a commercial-industrial-residential centre wound up back at the OMB. The company was appealing the Town's OP which prevented the company from carrying out its ambitions. "We're back to David and Goliath who has the advantage of 188 million bucks behind him,"<sup>207</sup> said Mayor Sloat. In the winter of 1980, the board dealt a resounding defeat to Ancaster, ruling in favour of Allarco. According to developer Alec Kelly, Allarco was tactical in its win. "The company could not afford to lose this decision. They hired a high-priced municipal legal firm from Toronto to put their case forward for maximum densities."<sup>208</sup> In his verdict, board chair Douglas Colbourne noted that, "technically, this is the most developable of lands as any presented to this board in a number of years." He also criticized the municipality for stalling the development for an

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<sup>205</sup> Peter Tollefsen interview, August 6, 2015.

<sup>206</sup> "Ancaster to allow growth—but slowly and carefully," *The Hamilton Spectator*, January 9, 1974.

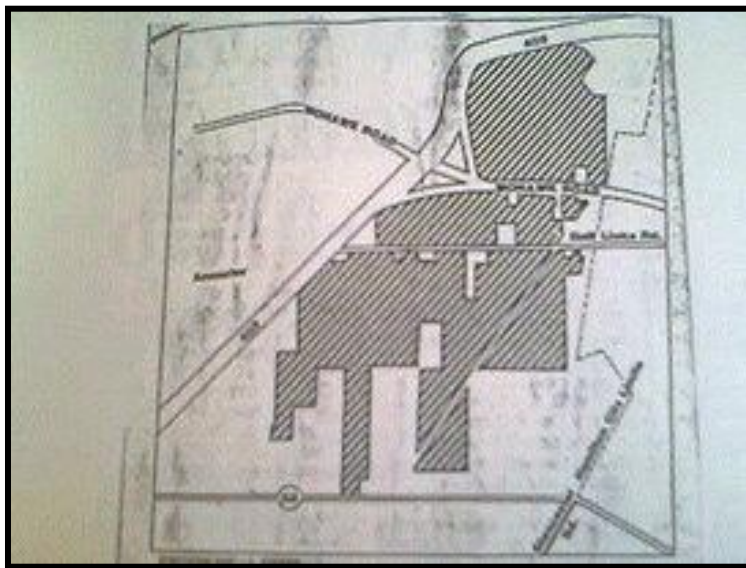
<sup>207</sup> "Sloat vows to fight Allarco," *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 5, 1980.

<sup>208</sup> Alec Kelly, PEN, accessed June 23, 2015.

unusual amount of time, “Considering the period of ownership and number of submissions from day one, one can only express surprise at the patience of the owner of these lands.”<sup>209</sup>

Current City of Hamilton planner John Ames recalls that the original plan for development was to have an industrial park where the Meadowlands Power Centre now stands, a small section of commercial development, and a large area of residential housing south of Golf Links Road. “The original idea, as I understand it, was to actually have residents be able to walk back and forth to work.”

<sup>210</sup> Although the 1,300 acres held by Allarco in 1980 matched quite closely the current extent of the Meadowlands today, there were still a number of parcels owned by farmers along Garner Road. The copied map below shows the extent of the company’s holdings in Ancaster following OMB approval.



**Figure 31** – A rudimentary map showing the extent of Allarco’s land holdings in Ancaster in 1980 (Source: *Hamilton Spectator* map, L. Cooper, 1980).

A secondary issue that Ancaster had to face was that another developer concurrently sought approval to build. Stanlow Holdings Limited owned land at Duff’s Corners (the intersection of Wilson Street and Garner Road) and the developer wanted to create an industrial park for the region. Planning

<sup>209</sup> “OMB move is climax of 10-year struggle,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 5, 1980.

<sup>210</sup> John Ames interview conducted November 27, 2013 at OPPI Western Lake District Film Night.

voices at the time claimed that the town was not in a position to have both mega-centres developed. Both developers quarrelled over becoming sites of priority within the town. With Allarco contesting the industrial park and Ancaster supporting the bid, the OMB decided that Stanlow Holdings earned the right to build on its 750 acres at Duff's Corners.<sup>211</sup>

At the same time, Allarco was confronted with an appeal of its OMB victory. The appeal was initiated by the Town of Ancaster and supported by both Stanlow Holdings and Stoney Creek Council. The eastern suburb was concerned that Allarco's undertaking would arrest growth on the ORC's Saltfleet community development. After another decision in favour of Allarco, the parties—under the leadership of Sloat—followed the chain of jurisdictional appeal all the way to the Executive Council of Ontario<sup>212</sup>. According to former Ancaster planner Peter Tollefsen (1976-1988), “Ancaster's solicitor George Yates recommended that we appeal the OMB decision to provincial cabinet. The mayor filled a bus of locals to demonstrate in Queens Park.”<sup>213</sup> On July 8, 1981—as what may have been one of the last land-use decisions ever made by the Ontario Cabinet—Ancaster was defeated and Allarco was permitted to proceed in their large-scale development plans. The Chairman of the Cabinet had remarked that it would be irresponsible not to allow for adequate densities on land serviced with adequately sized infrastructure. After years of public resentment and municipal roadblocks, rural Ancaster would finally be developed.<sup>214</sup> Tollefsen notes that, “In the end, the OMB decision was upheld but a concession from Deputy Minister Milt Farrow was that we could control the rate of growth.”<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Sherry Sleightholm, “Town wins industrial park battle,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, December 6, 1990.

<sup>212</sup> Bill Davis' Progressive Conservative government (1971-1985).

<sup>213</sup> Peter Tollefsen interview, August 2, 2015.

<sup>214</sup> “Allarco may start this summer,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 27, 1982.

<sup>215</sup> Peter Tollefsen interview, August 2, 2015.

## Chapter 6 – Changing Fortunes: Land Development in the Meadowlands (1981-1998)

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*Living in this abstraction where space is “owned,” people try to secure the greatest financial benefit available from its ownership.*

– Peter Spurr, *Land and Urban Development*

During the postwar years, Ancastrians fought development interests with resolution and tenacity. After the OMB and cabinet decisions were made in 1980 and 1981, the Town found itself on an inevitable trajectory towards change. Although there would continue to be community resentment over the Allarco lands for years to come, many of the citizens who once protested passionately lost interest and stamina. As Steve Spicer, former development manager with the Meadowlands of Ancaster (MOA)<sup>216</sup> recalls, “not many people in Ancaster liked the whole idea of their little town becoming a suburban palace. But once it went to the OMB and then to cabinet and they said ‘this is going to happen here,’ it was set. From then on we [Allarco and subsequent developers] had a decision and a guideline to go on.”<sup>217</sup>

### Development Demise: The End of “Foreign” Investment in the Meadowlands

Despite winning a major land-use battle, Allarco’s fortunes quickly began to change. A slumping housing market and costly legal fees started to weather the Western developer. In 1981, after years of public discord, legal conflict, and a major taxation lawsuit before the Supreme Court, Allarco sold its assets (including the lands in Ancaster) to Carma Developers Limited.<sup>218</sup> Carma was a large-scale development co-operative that grew out of efforts by the Calgary Homebuilder’s Association.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> The Meadowlands of Ancaster is a development company which will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>217</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

<sup>218</sup> *Allarco Developments Ltd. v. Ministry of National Revenue*, 70 DTC 6274 (Ex. Ct.). 1974.

<sup>219</sup> Carma Developers Ltd., now Brookfield Residential, are Calgary’s largest residential development company. For more information on Carma, see Max Foran, *Expansive Discourses: Urban Sprawl in Calgary 1945-1978* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009), 17.

It incorporated, in 1958, as a coalition of forty-three land developers in the oil city.<sup>220</sup> Using references from early editions of the *Calgary Herald* Robert Stamp points out that, “by 1981 Carma produced almost 30 percent of the serviced residential lots in Calgary, and one-fifth of the city’s population lived in Carma-developed communities.”<sup>221</sup> The total acquisition of Allarco amounted to \$130 million. According to Max Foran and Heather MacEwan Foran,

“[this] rapid growth prompted a corporate restructuring in 1981, which created Carma Ltd., as the parent company and three operating subsidiaries: Carma Developers Ltd., operating in Canadian real estate; Carma Developers Inc., operating in U.S. real estate; and Allarco Group Ltd., operating in diversified enterprises.”<sup>222</sup>

According to Alec Kelly—Meadowlands developer and owner of Alec Kelly Ltd—the specific transaction for the Allarco lands totalled approximately \$15 million.<sup>223</sup> Carma Developers Ltd. would operate its Ancaster development arm out of a satellite office already established in Hamilton since 1973.<sup>224</sup>

Yet, not unlike the fortunes of Allarco, Carma experienced significant financial constraints soon after its speculation in Ancaster. “We had originally hoped when we took over the Allarco position that ’82 would be our start-off year. But it just hasn’t gone that fast,”<sup>225</sup> Carma’s vice-president of Ontario operations, Roman Winnicki, told a reporter in 1982. With rising inflation, outsourcing of jobs, and higher levels of unemployment than the U.S., Canada experienced a major economic recession during the early 1980s.<sup>226</sup> The downturn hit the land development field particularly hard. Carma was

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<sup>220</sup> Max Foran, *Expansive Discourses*, 60.

<sup>221</sup> Robert M. Stamp, *Suburban Modern: Postwar Dreams in Calgary* (Calgary: Touchwood Editions Ltd., 2004), 92.

<sup>222</sup> Max Foran and Heather MacEwan Foran, *Calgary, Canada’s Frontier Metropolis: An Illustrated History* (Windsor: Windsor Publications, 1982), 304.

<sup>223</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>224</sup> Foran and Foran, *Calgary, Canada’s Frontier Metropolis*, 304.

<sup>225</sup> Paul Mitchell, “Housing slump stalls Allarco project start,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 15, 1982.

<sup>226</sup> “New Economic Realities,” *Canada: A People’s History*, last modified January 2001, <http://www.cbc.ca/history/SECTIONSE1EP17CH3LE.html>.

particularly vulnerable because it was only active in single-family homes.<sup>227</sup> The firm also owned stocks in plunging Alberta oil companies and was over-endowed with costly land projects. Max and Heather Foran note that “by 1980 the company controlled 17, 202 acres of land in Canada.”<sup>228</sup>

As real estate prices dropped and Carma was forced to downsize, the company was eager to pay down debt from tangential properties such as its approximately 1,300 acres in Ancaster. In 1982, the *Spectator* reported that the development conglomerate reported a six-month net loss of \$159.3 million.<sup>229</sup> Finding a buyer would prove initially difficult as there was very little local interest in large-scale development projects. Developer Michael Corrado articulates the situation as, “they just wanted to get rid of that land as fast as possible.”<sup>230</sup> Chair of Carma Ltd., Ralph Scurfield, was desperate to liquidate assets and make use of the location of the property.<sup>231</sup> His own firm, Nu-West Development Corporation Ltd. owned a 48% share in Carma and was also dealing with the prospect of bankruptcy.<sup>232</sup> According to planning consultant Don May, Scurfield networked with fellow developer Alec Kelly while on the executive of the Canadian Homebuilder’s Association (CHA).<sup>233</sup> Kelly acted as the representative of the Hamilton Homebuilders’ Association and also sat on the board of the CHA until 1983.<sup>234</sup> This connection between Kelly and Carma would prove strategic for the future of the Ancaster lands.

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<sup>227</sup> Lorimer, 62.

<sup>228</sup> Foran and Foran, 304.

<sup>229</sup> Max Wickens, “Massive Allarco project is back on market again,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, August 19, 1982.

<sup>230</sup> Michael Corrado interview conducted June 18, 2015.

<sup>231</sup> Interestingly, similar to Allard, Scurfield owned shares in professional sporting franchises. He was one of the founding owners of the Calgary Flames National Hockey League Team.

<sup>232</sup> Foran and Foran, 304.

<sup>233</sup> Don May interview, June 16, 2015.

<sup>234</sup> The Hamilton-Homebuilders’ Association is now known as the Hamilton-Halton Homebuilders’ Association.



### Local Acquisition: Alec Kelly & the Formation of Cloverleaf Village

With poor market conditions and in a downward spiral, Carma declared bankruptcy in 1983.<sup>235</sup> Acquired by the Bank of Nova Scotia, the task was to discharge Carma's assets rapidly and efficiently. William G. Turnbull was a director with Carma at its headquarters in Calgary and was employed by the bank to sell the company's land inventory, on a commission basis. Turnbull had also made connection with Hamilton developer Alec Kelly.<sup>236</sup> In July of 1983, Turnbull coaxed Kelly to meet and discuss the property.<sup>237</sup> Initial proposals were high, "the price they wanted was \$8.5 million, which was way out of our range at the time."<sup>238</sup>



**Figure 32** – Alec Kelly was perhaps the most influential figure in the development of the Meadowlands. His involvement marked a turning point for the undeveloped agricultural land (Source: Hamilton-Halton Homebuilders' Association Hall of Fame).

<sup>235</sup> It should be noted that although Carma collapsed in 1983, through the direction of new CFO Murray Fox, they managed to recover and re-focus strictly on land development. An American publicly-traded firm, Brookfield Properties, acquired shares of the conglomerate and today owns it outright.

<sup>236</sup> Bill Turnbull's father, Bob, was an acquaintance of Kelly's at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club. According to Kelly, this was how the two initially met (Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015).

<sup>237</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

In order to acquire the land, Kelly relied on a partnership formed with wealthy local landowners and businessmen. The initial impetus for the formation of the shareholders was to purchase and develop the Chancery Manor subdivision, 23 acres of land which was excised from the Hamilton Golf and Country Club.<sup>239</sup> In September of 1983, Kelly and his real-estate partner Alec Murray approached ten partners to finance the land acquisition.<sup>240</sup> The shareholders included the following members: Ron Joyce (co-founder of Tim Hortons), Jim Barclay (Barclay Construction), Charlie Campbell (Abbotsford Homes), Nick Cutaia, Saul Marks, Elmer Farkis, Les Lowenger, Walter Jacques, Ron Kemp (Kemp Construction), Bill Aline, and Keith Walker as well as Alec Murray and Alec Kelly (the managing partner). These twelve men formed “Cloverleaf Village”; a privately held development company in Ancaster.

Negotiations for the acquisition of the future Meadowlands by Cloverleaf Village were facilitated through William Turnbull, a middle-man between the financiers and the bank. Kelly recalls that:

“We [Bill Turnbull and Alec Kelly] were trying to find what the bank would accept. The \$8.5 million they started with was too much. There was no way we could front that kind of money at the time. It was an odd place to be in because we knew that the bank wanted to get rid of the land but they wouldn’t tell us up front what sort of price range they were willing to negotiate on. The first offer we gave them was \$4 million dollars cash, which we put forward through Turnbull. Well the bank came back to us and said ‘get stuffed!’ Going back to the drawing board I proposed \$4.5 million and tried to get my partners on side. It was \$1.5 million down, a \$2 million mortgage at 10% interest for 5 years [or \$1 million for a total of \$4.5 million]. The bank turned down that idea as well. Finally, I

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<sup>239</sup> Located within the Pinecrest neighbourhood in Ancaster.

<sup>240</sup> Alec Murray was a well-known real estate professional in Hamilton. He was the founder of Alec Murray Real Estate Co. Ltd.

came back with the last offer we were going to make. It was \$2 million down and a \$3 million mortgage interest-free for 1.5 years. A total of \$5 million. They eventually accepted it. That right there was six months of hard work.”<sup>241</sup>

In order to amass the necessary funds Kelly as the managing partner, asked each of his partners to produce at minimum \$100,000. “We had the area divided into units,” he says. “There were twenty units divided by twelve people. Each shareholder had a unit or more. A few of them could afford two units so we gave them two and Ron Joyce had four. The price was set at \$100,000 a unit [20 x \$100,000 making up the \$2 million down payment]. That was a lot of money at the time.” Cloverleaf ended the day with over 1,200 acres of land. The closing date for the transaction was December 28, 1983. Kelly says that, “because of the times, our purchase of the so called ‘Allarco lands’ was the talk of the Southern Ontario land development and building industry.”<sup>242</sup> According to long-time Ancaster political figure Lloyd Ferguson<sup>243</sup>, “this deal was a total fire-sale for Kelly and his partners.”<sup>244</sup>

Interestingly, nearly every informant I interviewed spoke positively of Kelly’s personality and his development approach, including politicians and municipal planning staff. Kelly is routinely described as a charismatic and driven developer. According to Steve Spicer, Kelly’s former aide and current developer, “That man was a pit bull. If he wanted something he would pester people until he got it. With him there was no ‘baloney.’ He understood the process very well and was a great negotiator. He hardly ever ‘pissed anybody off’.”<sup>245</sup> Ferguson also remembers Kelly fondly, “Alec was the kind of guy who could walk into the Council chambers, he’d say something, and everyone would believe him. He always did what he said he was going to do.”<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>242</sup> Alec Kelly, professional experience notes (PEN), accessed June 23, 2015.

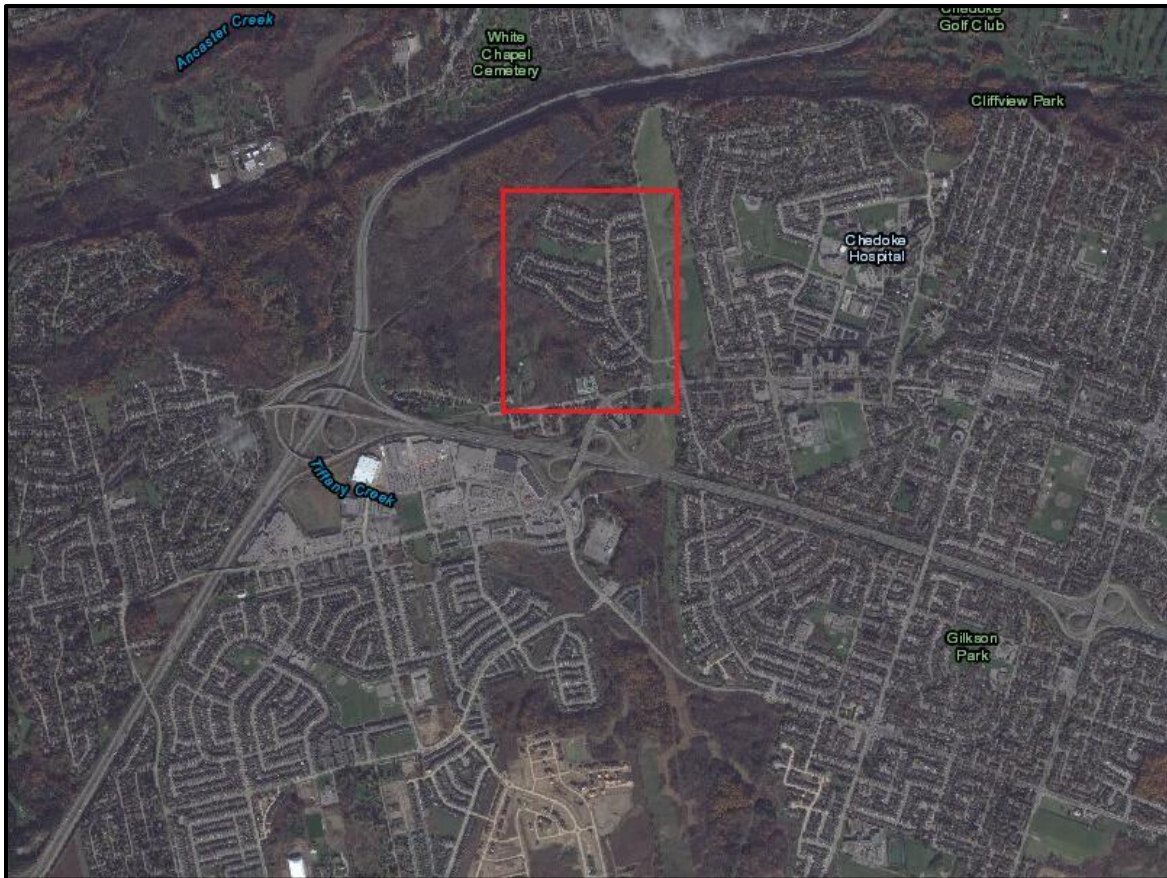
<sup>243</sup> According to Ferguson, “Our family has held an elected position in Ancaster politics, without interruption, since 1954. We’re called the Kennedys of Ancaster.” (Lloyd Ferguson interview, conducted June 18, 2015.)

<sup>244</sup> Lloyd Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

<sup>245</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

<sup>246</sup> Lloyd Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

In 1984, Cloverleaf Village made the decision to pursue its first major residential development in a subdivision known as Scenic Woods. The survey was located between Mohawk Road and the Chedoke Expressway, along Scenic Drive. Being along the along the escarpment brow, the acreage was densely forested, making construction a challenge.



**Figure 33** – The Scenic Woods survey shown jutting into forested land along the mountain brow, now the Iroquois Heights Conservation Area (Source: Scholars GeoPortal, ESRI imagery with labels basemap).

Kelly and his team hired A.J. Clarke and Associates Limited as the project’s engineering consulting firm. Adi Irani, now the CEO of the company, was a senior engineer working on Scenic Woods in 1984. According to Irani, “The project was fast tracked. They [Cloverleaf Village] needed the income from the development and so it went very quickly, especially for the size of the subdivision.” Irani also commented on the environmental complications of the site: “Because it was on natural land near the

mountain, we had to deal with the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Hamilton Conservation Authority. There was also the issue of storm water management (SWM). The practice was in its infancy back in the early 1980s and we did a big SWM report on Scenic Woods.”<sup>247</sup> SWM has been described as a significant issue in the development history of the Meadowlands because of the landscape’s hydrological features. The topic will be explored in greater detail in a later section (Chapter 7). Construction on Scenic Woods ceremoniously began on September 3, 1984 with Mayor Ann Sloat sinking the first shovel into the ground. Kelly and his group chose both Starward Homes Limited and Alterra Developments Limited as the builders of choice for the project’s 115 lots.

Although the acquisition of the land and servicing proposals had been met with stiff public resistance throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Cloverleaf’s development received significant encouragement, particularly from local and regional decision-makers. “The economic situation in the Region [of Hamilton-Wentworth] at that time was stagnant,” reveals Kelly, “and it was felt that any stimulus given to the local economy would reap great benefits later on.”<sup>248</sup> It is also remarkable to notice the dispositional change with which Kelly and his team were approached. In comparison to the popular opinion on Allarco, the Cloverleaf partners appear to have been treated very favourably.

However, one faction which aired concerns over the growth was Ancaster’s low and fixed-income residential community. Inevitably, as the region developed, these individuals felt the effects. 1985 saw over 200 single-family units erected in Ancaster (compared to 21 in Dundas) and an average home-selling price of \$105,548 (compared to \$58,525 in Hamilton).<sup>249</sup> Because of the Town’s predilection for large single-family homes and the application of exclusionary zoning, renters and low-income seniors were often left without adequate housing options. “The town has very expensive housing,” one resident is quoted as saying in *Spectator*. “A number of my friends who are single

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<sup>247</sup> Adi Irani interview, July 13, 2015.

<sup>248</sup> Kelly, PEN, accessed June 23, 2015.

<sup>249</sup> Denise Davy, “Build for us, say Ancaster renters,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, November 4, 1985.

parents have had to leave Ancaster because there are no apartments.”<sup>250</sup> The new Mayor of Ancaster, Bob Wade, replied to concerns by saying, “The majority of people in the town come here for its residential style, and they like being single family owners. It may seem selfish, but we’re part of a larger community, and perhaps what we don’t have in the way of rental housing or whatever is available somewhere else nearby.”<sup>251</sup> 1985 also saw significant change within the Meadowlands itself as Redeemer University College acquired 78 acres of land along Garner Road for its new institutional home.<sup>252</sup>

In view of the community’s considerable changes, in 1985-86, McMaster student Mark Allemang wrote a thesis on Ancaster’s anticipated population growth. He used birth and death rates (the Leslie Model) as well as building permit data in his predictions. At that time, Ancaster had a population of just over 18,000. Below is a table (Table 1) summarizing his predictions as well as the realized population numbers taken from the Census of Canada. Allemang was reasonably accurate in his forecasting but still underestimated the rate and density of development in the Meadowlands.<sup>253</sup>

Allemang’s projections (1985)		Realized population (Census data)	
1991 :	20,227	1991:	23,403
2001:	25,979	2001:	27,485

**Table 1** – Growth in the Meadowlands exceeded estimates (Source: Mark Allemang).

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Jane Coutts, “Ancaster takes pride in town flavour,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 12, 1986.

<sup>252</sup> The institution began as Redeemer Christian Reformed College and was subsequently renamed Redeemer College before becoming known as Redeemer University College in 2001 (“History of Redeemer University College,” Redeemer University College, accessed August 29, 2015, <http://www.redeemer.ca/about/history/>).

<sup>253</sup> Mark Allemang, “Population Forecasting in the Township of Ancaster,” (Master’s thesis, McMaster University, 1986).

According to Kelly, at this juncture, Cloverleaf carried out an important transaction with the provincial government. “We had approximately 300 acres north of Mohawk Road and the Province did not want us to develop. After much negotiation, we agreed to sell 50 acres to the Province for \$1.25 million and to donate the balance for a tax receipt in the amount of, I believe, \$7.5 million”<sup>254</sup> This area was flagged because of environmental concerns. The land was deemed sensitive and designated as an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) in Ancaster’s 1976 Official Plan.<sup>255</sup> The Province was likely also worried that major development would pose immediate risks to the escarpment. *Spectator* articles from the 1950s and 1960s indicate that an ongoing challenge for maintenance crews was to stave off dangerous erosion over Hwy 403. It eventually became known as the Iroquois Heights Conservation Area.

In 1987, Kelly’s conglomerate began to plan for a new shopping centre just south of the 403; the pre-cursor of the Meadowlands Power Centre. The 400,000 square foot plaza was to be a part of a hybrid residential-commercial community known as Cloverleaf Village, named after the company itself. The company relied heavily on a new partnership with the Bank of Montreal in order to finance its ambitious development plans and maintained a longstanding relationship with bank contact Roger Cauldry.<sup>256</sup> The firm also hired May, Pirie and Associates (Burlington) to carry out planning and Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI) (Toronto) to conduct archaeological assessments.<sup>257</sup> As noted in an earlier chapter the number of archaeological discoveries on the future Meadowlands were staggering. Previous work by Art Howey had indicated that the area was of some significance but it was not until ASI completed a thorough investigation that such a large number of historical objects were found. Over a ten-year period following this initial contract, the company uncovered over 34,000 human artefacts.

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<sup>254</sup> Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.

<sup>255</sup> “Iroquois Heights Conservation Area White-tailed Deer Final Report of the Deer Management Advisory Committee,” Hamilton Conservation Authority, September 21, 2011, [http://conservationhamilton.ca/images/iu\\_files/PDFs/IHCA%20DMAC%20final%20report%20Sep%2021%2011.pdf](http://conservationhamilton.ca/images/iu_files/PDFs/IHCA%20DMAC%20final%20report%20Sep%2021%2011.pdf).

<sup>256</sup> Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.

<sup>257</sup> Don May was Principal at May, Pirie & Associates.



The site had been inhabited by Indigenous people for more than 7,000 years.<sup>258</sup> It was, according to the largest archeological and cultural heritage consulting firm in Ontario, “one of the richest properties we have investigated,”<sup>259</sup> and one of the most significant in the province.<sup>260</sup>

Remarkably, it appears that the remaining anti-development (and cultural heritage) voices in Ancaster never fully took advantage of this fact in order to challenge suburban growth. Perhaps this was because of the prior legal losses (development approvals) or perhaps this was because of the more favourable public perception of existing developers. Local politicians and archeologists all recalled that developers in the Meadowlands were quite compliant with archaeological requirements. “I have rarely worked with a development group that has been so co-operative and supportive,” said Art Howey. “From day one, Alec Kelly recognized the importance of this material.”<sup>261</sup> Cloverleaf paid a total of \$225,000 for the archaeological investigations. Laughingly, Kelly tells me, “There was a lot that they uncovered but, you know, thank God we never had a burial ground.”<sup>262</sup>

### **The Arrival of Alterra & the Creation of the Meadowlands**

By 1988, Cloverleaf had merged with another local developer Alterra Developments Limited. “We were being wooed by various companies who wanted to buy our holdings,”<sup>263</sup> notes Kelly. Alterra already owned land in the Meadowlands, securing it during Carma’s demise, but desired more lucrative property. The new company was known as 752401 Ontario Inc. This numbered company was served by the more public name “The Meadowlands of Ancaster” (MOA). According to Spicer:

“Alterra had been buying lots from Cloverleaf at Scenic Woods. They wanted in, so they literally bought half the company. Each of the original Cloverleaf partners sold half of

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<sup>258</sup> Kate Barlow, “Archaeologists chart aboriginal history in Ancaster artifacts,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 23, 1991.

<sup>259</sup> Ron Williamson interview conducted April 27, 2015.

<sup>260</sup> Ross Longbottom, “For sale: Cosy hut just minutes from the millennium,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 27, 1992.

<sup>261</sup> Longbottom, “For sale,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 27, 1992.

<sup>262</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.



their share to Alterra and that's when it became a numbered company, which was the operating company for the Meadowlands of Ancaster."<sup>264</sup>

Within the new partnership, Alterra would handle the home-building operation (along with sales) while the former Cloverleaf team would handle land acquisition and lot preparation.<sup>265</sup> The well-known name for the community came from Kelly:

"When my wife and I went down to Florida, we passed a stadium called 'the Meadowlands' [in New Jersey]. I said to her, 'how about the Meadowlands? Meadowlands of Ancaster?' ... We wanted it to have Ancaster in the name because that had sort of a prestigious feel to it, you know. We thought it sounded much better than the 'Meadowlands of Hamilton'."<sup>266</sup>



**Figure 34** – “Meadowlands of Ancaster,” ca. 2011. This photograph looks west across Golf Links Road. The community may be accessed via Stone Church Road, Mohawk Road, or the Linc from the northeast (Source: Shawn Palmer ReMax Escarpment Realty, [www.shawnpalmer.ca](http://www.shawnpalmer.ca)).

<sup>264</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

<sup>265</sup> It should also be noted that there were numerous builders who would soon join Alterra on the many housing units to be built in the Meadowlands.

<sup>266</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

In the winter of 1988, the company began to push ahead with the development of the former Allarco lands. Unlike Allarco, developers from the MOA seemed eager to gain the trust of the local populace. Because of their local roots and their eagerness to work with the community, development proposals were not viewed as negatively. “They are Ancaster people who have a feeling for what Ancaster wants,” commented former Mayor and current Deputy Mayor Ann Sloat. “They’ll do a nice job. It will change Ancaster a great deal but it will be hometown stuff.”<sup>267</sup> Additionally, the company displayed more flexibility in terms of construction criteria. They were open to slowly phasing in the growth and they were ready to build at lower densities. Kelly’s team proposed population projections of 9,000–15,000 people by the year 2000, compared to Allarco’s 22,000–30,000 estimates. Original plans for the development were also intended to be comparable in character to the “old town” appearance of Ancaster.<sup>268</sup> “We may have lost the battle but we won the war. Now it [the project] is developing along the lines the town wanted in the beginning,”<sup>269</sup> affirmed Sloat.

However, plans put forward by the group were still for the largest single development in the region. The \$1 billion community would feature more than 3,000 housing units as well as a shopping centre and business park. The original industrial zoning for the area between Golf Links and Mohawk Road was, in part, to be maintained although it would include considerably less industry than previous approaches. This was another factor that likely endeared the plan to locals. Most of the area roads were to be widened and, originally, the developers planned to extend Stone Church Road from Upper Paradise (then Upper Horning) to Southcote Roads (Figure 36). The new neighbourhood was to be called “the Meadowlands of Ancaster,” after the company name. “It will be the plum and crown jewel of real estate development in the region,” commented Alido DiIorio, MOA general manager, “we want it to be the flagship community of the area.”<sup>270</sup>

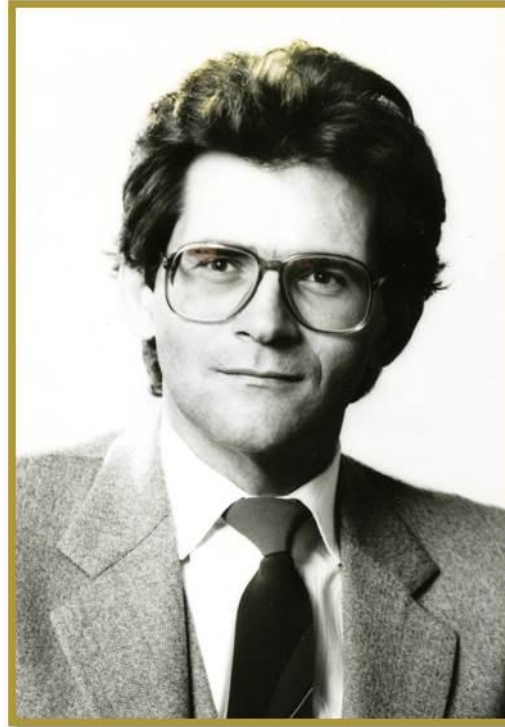
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<sup>267</sup> John Burman, “Major development best deal Ancaster could get, says Sloat,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, Feb. 12, 1988.

<sup>268</sup> The example of 911 Golf Links Road will be given later in this chapter.

<sup>269</sup> “Ancaster prepares for the boom,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, April 9, 1990.

<sup>270</sup> “\$1B development will mean a dramatic change in Ancaster,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, Feb. 11, 1988.



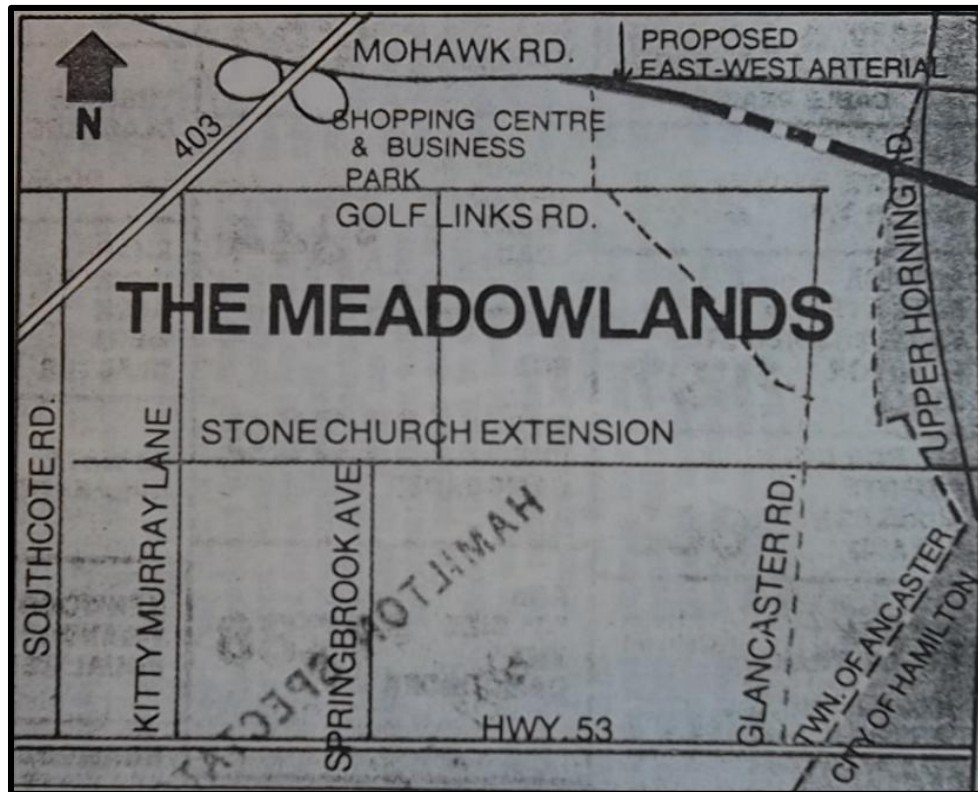
**Figure 35** – Alido DiIorio co-founded Alterra Developments with his partner Richard Cooper in 1973. He served as company president until 1988 when Alterra merged with Cloverleaf Village and he became the general manager of the MOA (Source: Hamilton-Halton Homebuilders’ Association Hall of Fame).

One of the complications early on in the construction of the Meadowlands was the upgrading of transportation infrastructure.<sup>271</sup> For many long-time residents, the shift from rural routes to multi-lane roads was jarring. Golf Links Road, for example, was originally a gravel road with a scattering of farms and rural homes. Ancaster development planner Charlie McConnell (1986–2000) recalled that “a big part of building this neighbourhood from the ground up was transportation. Golf Links was literally a two-lane country road and we had to make it a high capacity road.”<sup>272</sup> In 1988-89, plans were carried out to widen it to four lanes and to connect it with neighbouring streets, affecting approximately 100 residents. The *Spectator* notes the dismayed experiences at the time. “Some people are going to open

<sup>271</sup> Public transit service was also added in 1988. The community had two routes (one to McMaster and the other to the west mountain region of Hamilton) for a total of 14 bus trips each day.

<sup>272</sup> Charlie McConnell interview, July 13, 2015.

their doors onto the street,” said Harold Wade who lived in the historic homestead at 680 Golf Links Road. “People have lived there 30, 40 years and I’m 50 years; the developer wants the road, not the others.”<sup>273</sup> John Prentice, who sat on Hamilton-Wentworth’s regional council, stated that “being 35 feet from a gravel road or 25 feet from a superhighway is a big difference.”<sup>274</sup>



**Figure 36** – An early *Spectator* map of the Meadowlands proposal. Note the transportation system: the abrupt end of Golf Links Road, the “proposed east-west arterial” (Lincoln Alexander Parkway), and the extension of Stone Church to Southcote Road which was never realized (Source: “\$1b development will mean a dramatic change in Ancaster,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, Feb. 11, 1988).

In 1989, Ancaster completed a secondary plan for the new Meadowlands community and soon after produced a comprehensive zoning bylaw in order to include development changes. The town had nearly reached a population of 20,000 and was anticipating a 50% increase over the next ten years. The town had also begun, that year, to implement new development charges. Much to the dismay of the

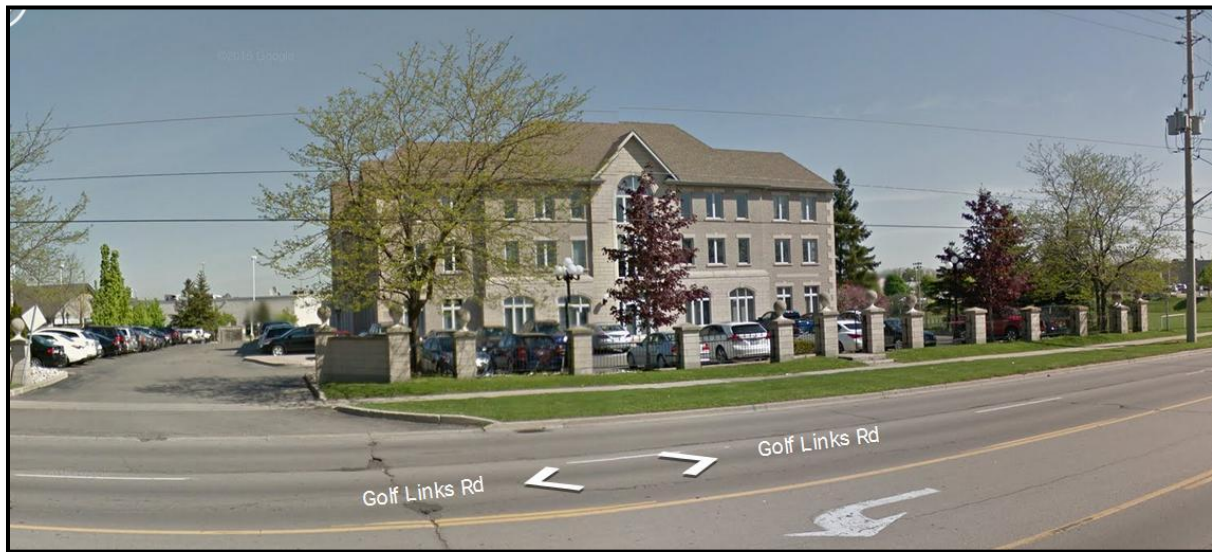
<sup>273</sup> “Region taking another look at plans for Golf Links Road,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 28, 1989.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*



Hamilton Homebuilders' Association, Ancaster council employed a new lot levy of \$2,650 to each new single-family build in order to capitalize on the growth.

The first building erected in the Meadowlands was a multi-tenant office building on the north side of Golf Links. It was built by the MOA and DiIorio is listed as its first tenant. Meadowlands-partner Alterra purchased the building and moved its Toronto-based headquarters to the Ancaster greenfield in 1989. The building, which still stands today, was built with a nod to early Ontario architecture in an attempt to satisfy local sensibilities.



**Figure 37** –The multi-level office structure at 911 Golf Links Road (Source: Google Maps).

### **The 1990s: Construction Continues**

By 1991, Kelly shared that the MOA was considering vacating the residential building market permanently. They experienced, once again, the damages of economic downturn. They had also sold large portions of land to builders and allowed Alterra to manage the end stages of development. But, Kelly said, the development relationship with Alterra was not trouble-free. “A few of our partners

thought that we should not have gone into partnership with Alterra... hindsight is beautiful.”<sup>275</sup> Alterra had encountered numerous construction difficulties previous to its merger with Cloverleaf and was experiencing financial constraint. Three years prior, Alterra found itself unable to keep up with the pace of residential sales and was facing the possibility of legal claims. “Alterra got into a lot of trouble with complications. Lemon signs went on their houses and we decided [at that time] that we should not sell them any more lots unless they cleaned up their act. People were living in Alterra houses with no brick on them for six months or more.”<sup>276</sup> After Phase I of the Meadowlands had begun in the early 1990s, Kelly notes that “they were getting into trouble in Oakville [another development] and we were concerned.”<sup>277</sup> The partnership continued, but by 1992, Kelly and his team made the decision to develop from a distance, discontinuing direct involvement in homebuilding.

From a planning perspective, the 1990s were a time of great change for the Meadowlands. The 1991 comprehensive zoning bylaw showcased a series of significant changes for the new community. The first few years of the decade saw the construction of the Meadowlands Phase I (of V) which included 270 housing units. Phases I and II were built to the lowest densities of all subsequent phases. Most homes ranged from 3,000–4,000 square feet and sat on 50–60 foot lots.<sup>278</sup> MOA developer Steve Spicer recalled the following:

“The people from Ancaster who lived in the village seemed to think they had a reason to comment on what we were doing. Consequently, we had difficulty decreasing lot sizes and increasing density, which is all something that had to happen. The first phase had some 60 foot lots with 8 foot side yards...honestly we were building roads there

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<sup>275</sup> Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> “Ancaster elegance,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 26, 1990.

that must have had 100 feet between front doors, you could see for a mile down the road.”<sup>279</sup>

Kate Barlow of the *Spectator* reported that “the first 211 luxury detached houses have been pre-sold for between \$269,900 and \$360,000,”<sup>280</sup> impressive numbers for the time period. According to DiIorio, architectural aspirations for the Meadowlands were much different than the reality of what was built. “All the institutional buildings, such as schools, churches, the shopping mall and even those in the business park, will be designed to fit in with the town’s heritage architecture.”<sup>281</sup>

Regionally, the 1990s were also dominated by transportation concerns. As populations grew and municipalities began to expand their borders, major infrastructural purchases were considered.<sup>282</sup> According to Kelly, in 1990, the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth approached the MOA in order to solicit land for the future 12.5 km mountain expressway (the Linc). In order to have transportation connections for the Meadowlands in place (especially industrial and commercial components), Kelly attempted to lobby regionally and provincially for the project to be fast-tracked.

“It was brought up that the road was to be built in five years and I asked [the Region] if there was any way that it could be advanced. The calculation for its advancement would be the amount of interest occasioned by its advancement by four to five years. It was to be around \$1,100,000. Since the Region was paying us \$1,800,000 for the land required for the expressway—we suggested that we would pay the interest to advance the construction. It created quite a stir at Regional Council. I recall Geraldine Copps [wife of Victor and mother of Sheila Copps] stating that she felt that there was something wrong with the deal but couldn’t come up with anything. So in 1990 the deal was done

<sup>279</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

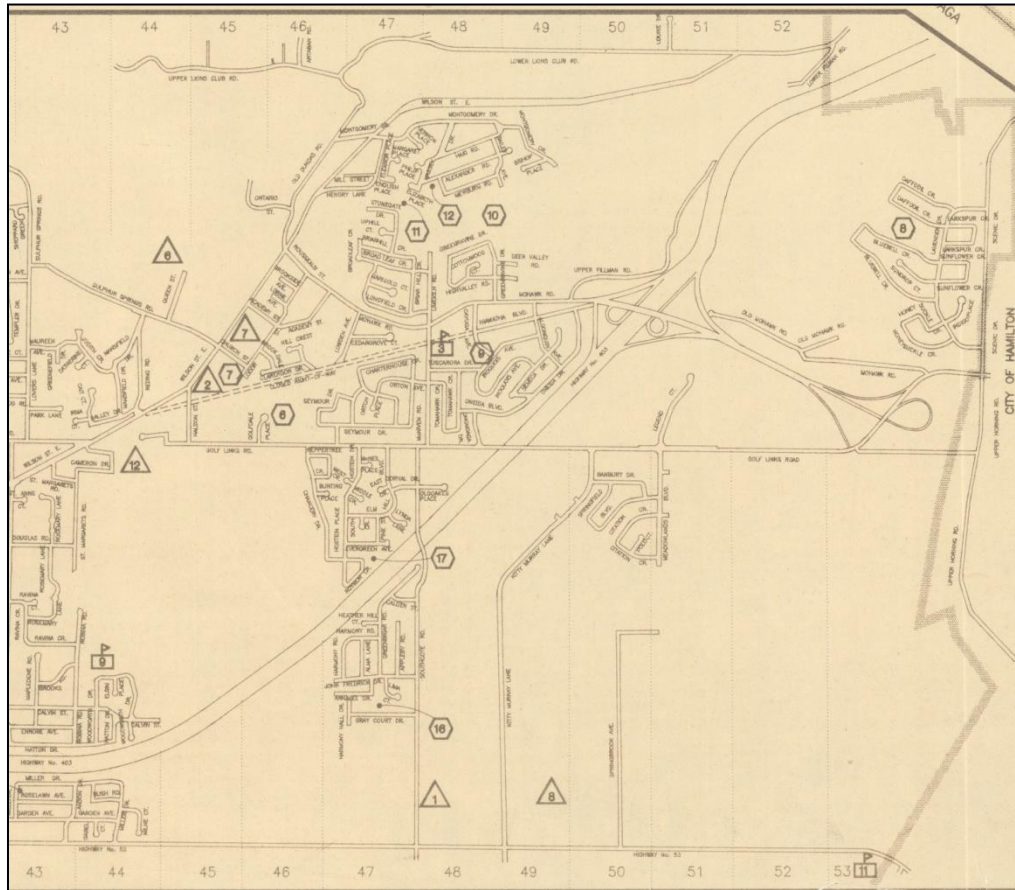
<sup>280</sup> “Ancaster prepares for the boom,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, April 9, 1990.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> The Town of Ancaster approved an urban boundary expansion in February of 1991. See “Expansion of urban area smaller than planned,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, February 28, 1991.

and the road was built four to five years ahead of time—allowing access for our ‘big box’ customers.”<sup>283</sup>

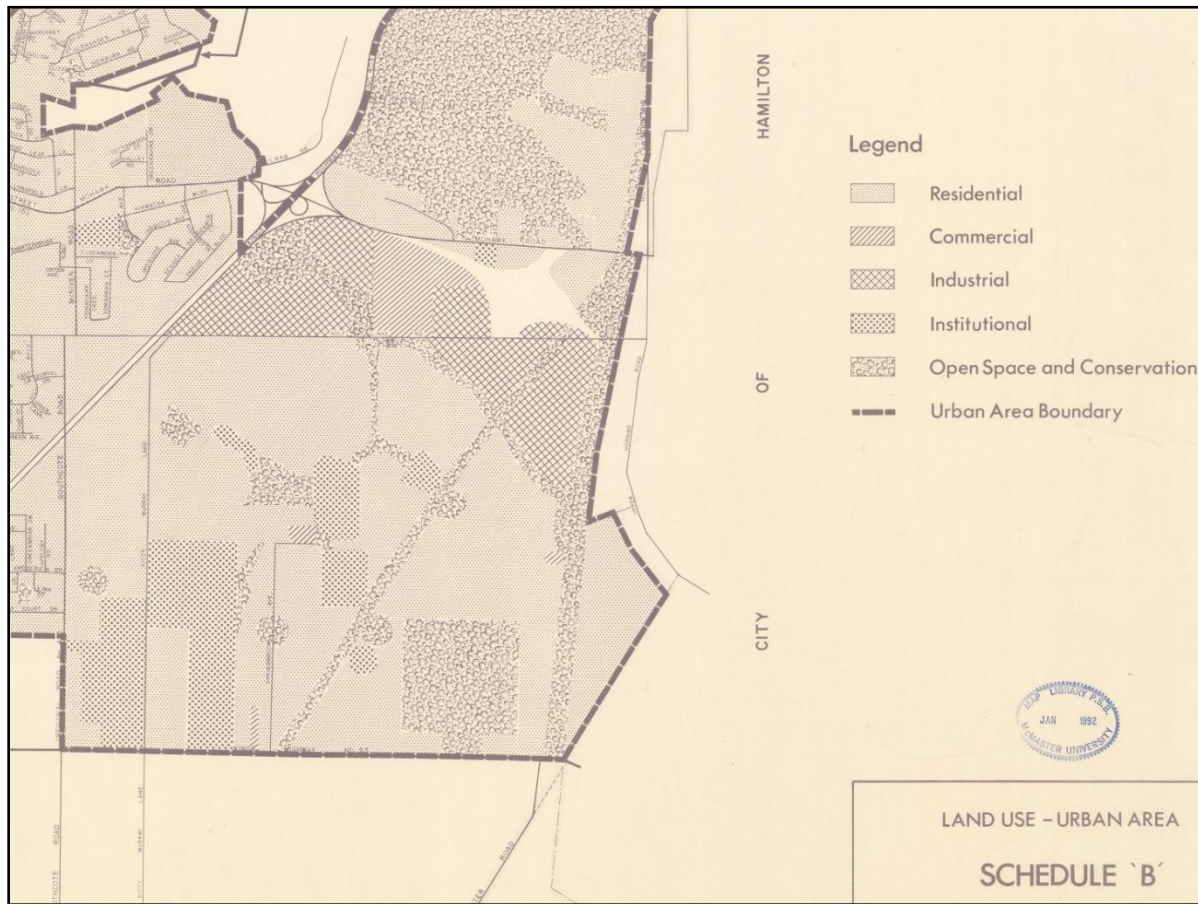
As part of the construction of the Linc, a number of Ancaster roads were altered including Mohawk Road, leading to the creation of isolated routes such as Old Golf Links Road and Old Mohawk Road.



**Figure 38** – The map illustrates the start of the landscape changes undertaken in development. This includes the development of the Harmony Hall subdivision, the re-routing of Kitty Murray Lane, and the beginnings of the Meadowlands Boulevard tract between Golf Links and Kitty Murray (Source: Town of Ancaster 1991 map, LPMC).

<sup>283</sup> Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.





**Figure 39** – 1990 land-use map for the Town of Ancaster OP. It displays a mixture of industrial and commercial zoning given to what is now the commercial Power Centre. South of Golf Links Road, there are significant amounts of open space as well as residential and institutional uses. Also of note is the urban boundary, which today extends to the municipal airport  
(Source: Town of Ancaster 1990, Schedule ‘B’, LRMC).

### **Dufferin Construction & Lloyd Ferguson**

The chief contractor hired by Meadowlands’ developers was Dufferin Construction; one of Canada’s largest building firms. The diversified Toronto-based company would handle the majority of infrastructural construction on the 1,200 acre neighbourhood. In 1991, Dufferin held \$12 million worth of road-paving contracts in the Hamilton-Wentworth region. Before becoming (and while being) a councillor in Ancaster, Lloyd Ferguson was employed by Dufferin. “I had most of my involvement in the early development of the Meadowlands as a manager and servicing contractor,” shared Ferguson.

“Dufferin was the company chosen to do all the servicing.”<sup>284</sup> According to Alec Kelly, the decision to award contracting to Dufferin was bolstered by Ferguson’s persistence, “I came to work early one morning and there was Lloyd sitting on the step waiting for me. He was determined to get the contract and we ended up giving it them. They did a great job and never let us down.”<sup>285</sup>



**Figure 40** – Lloyd Ferguson: Town of Ancaster Council (1983-1993) and City of Hamilton Council (2006-present) (Source: [www.lferguson.com](http://www.lferguson.com)).

In the spring of 1991, Lloyd Ferguson was accused by a small number of his constituents of inappropriate political conduct.<sup>286</sup> Ferguson held a senior management position with Dufferin while sitting on council and it was alleged that he was involved in decisions from which he and his employer stood to gain financially. Ferguson was a strong voice on council who often spoke in favour of growth and development interests. At the time, he was noted for his support of large-scale regional construction projects. Ancaster resident John Kay claimed Ferguson violated conflict of interest

<sup>284</sup> Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

<sup>285</sup> Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>286</sup> “Councillor angry over accusation,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 3, 1991.

legislation by supporting the approval of the Red Hill Valley Parkway and the eventual Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway (the Linc) while at Dufferin.<sup>287</sup> Suspicions also existed that he was too close to the municipal tendering process while on council. In July of 1991, Ontario Court Justice Gordon McTurk threw out the case because the complaint filed against the councillor occurred beyond the required six-week window.<sup>288</sup> Ferguson was pleased to have won the case but embroiled by the accusations, “No question, the man [Kay] has damaged my integrity, embarrassed my employer, caused hardship to my employees and to a lesser extent to other members of council.”<sup>289</sup> He is quoted as vowing to seek a defamation claim against two Ancaster residents who made complaints.

Today, Ferguson still holds strong connections with local development interests. During the 2014 municipal election, his campaign finances indicate \$36,798.50 worth of contributions primarily from developers engaged in Ancaster. In fact, nearly every developer involved with the Meadowlands is listed as a supporter of Ferguson. These include: Richard Cooper (Alterra), Jim Barclay (Barclay Construction), Fred Losani (Losani Homes), Michael Chiaravalle (Chiaravalle Developments Inc.), John Chung (Scarlett Homes), Ward Campbell (Starward Homes), Alec Kelly Ltd., Darko Vranich, Ontario Concrete Pipe, Remax Escarpment Realty Inc., etc.<sup>290</sup> According to Spicer, Ferguson is known for his many hats. “His take on an issue really depended on which seat he was sitting in. As a manager at Dufferin, he just wanted to put pipe in the ground. As a councillor in Ancaster, he took the village’s approach.”<sup>291</sup> Following the end of his term in Ancaster (1993), Ferguson continued to work for Dufferin and retired as the company’s General Manager. He currently sits on Hamilton City Council as Ancaster’s representative (Ward 12).

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<sup>287</sup> “Conflict case in court June 27,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 18, 1991.

<sup>288</sup> “Judge quashes councillor’s conflict charge,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 16, 1991.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Financial Statements: Auditor’s Report 2014, *Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (Section 78)*, City of Hamilton: Lloyd Ferguson, accessed August 20, 2015.

<sup>291</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

## The Power Centre

By 1993, the Meadowlands of Ancaster was eager to proceed with the development of its 50-acre, multi-zoned district north of Golf Links Road (the future Power Centre). As shown in the map above (Figure 39) the area's western section was given a light industrial zoning and the eastern section had a significant portion designated as commercial. The centre is now organized so that all large commercial retailers sit at the back of plaza with parking in front.

In order to help finance the project, Kelly and his partners had begun negotiations with Bramalea Limited, "a Toronto-area developer mainly involved in suburban land development."<sup>292</sup> Bramalea had become proficient at developing shopping malls, and to Kelly and his team the partnership appeared to be a perfect fit.<sup>293</sup> But, as developers from the MOA discovered, the 1990s marked the demise of internalized retail and the beginning of another significant tide of economic recession. Company development manager Steve Spicer:

"It [the Power Centre] was originally supposed to be a regional mall, like Limeridge Mall, but the economic climate changed. People's shopping patterns changed. We realized that Limeridge Mall was suffering at the time, Jackson Square was awful, and even the malls in Burlington were going through some transition. In dealing with [Bramalea], they really understood the commercial market. That's not something that we were experts at and they told us that Power Centres were the future."<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Lorimer, 65.

<sup>293</sup> The company began in 1957 as Bramalea Consolidated Developments Ltd. It was also well known for developing Canada's first "satellite city": the suburb of Bramalea.

<sup>294</sup> Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

Unfortunately, the following year Bramalea was teetering on the edge of insolvency and by 1995 the company declared bankruptcy.<sup>295</sup> Kelly recollects the series of cascading events:

“Bramalea lent the Meadowlands \$10 million to pay for the infrastructure and also the major service required to proceed with the total development. We had many meetings with Bramalea and the design of a major shopping centre was proceeding. Then, as times go, shopping centres were having a hard time and Bramalea was in bankruptcy. We then found out that the loan to us was pledged through the Swiss Bank. Bramalea did not and, I gather, could not complete the agreement with us for a shopping centre—[so] we felt that we were not obligated to pay back the full \$10 million. After much sabre-rattling, we did agree to pay \$6 million to the Swiss Bank and Aldo Dilorio and I got agreement.”<sup>296</sup>

### **Store Wars: The Origins of the Meadowlands Power Centre**

After the initial loan by Bramalea, Kelly and his team proceeded to break ground on the new commercial area. Grading, servicing, and initial construction began in 1994. In 1995, the MOA sold a 10-acre commercial parcel to Price Club Canada Inc. (which later became Costco) for a total of \$5 million.<sup>297</sup> Price Club was the first major corporation to occupy land in the Meadowlands and was originally located immediately north of the office structure at 911 Golf Links Road.<sup>298</sup> The opening of the store in 1995 was a victory for the company, since for years prior its right to operate had been challenged. Price Club was conducting business on land zoned for “prestige industry” and it was claimed they were instead operating as a sort of hybrid grocery store. Alain Pinard, former senior planner for the Town of Ancaster (1990–2001), commented that “no one in our area had ever seen one

<sup>295</sup> “Bramalea declared bankrupt by judge,” *The Globe & Mail*, April 27, 1995.

<sup>296</sup> Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ed Rogers, “1,000 openings as big stores roll into Ancaster,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 14, 1994.

of these before. They were a warehouse but they sold appliances and food. People weren't really sure what they were."<sup>299</sup>

Nearby supermarket Loblaws complained that, as a grocery competitor, Price Club would steal their business. They were also alleging the company was operating under illegal zoning. In *Building Suburbia*, Dolores Hayden calls these types of stores "category killers."<sup>300</sup> In 1992 Loblaws filed an injunction and took Price Club to court. The ruling limited Price Club to bulk, warehouse sales and prohibited them from selling any traditional supermarket items.<sup>301</sup> This was the beginning of what many in Ancaster remember locally as "store wars."<sup>302</sup> In 1993, Price Club merged with Costco Wholesale to become Price-Costco Canada Inc. (thereafter known as Costco). The new company applied for a zoning by-law amendment in order to conduct business as intended. The change was approved by Ancaster Council but appealed to the OMB by Loblaws. The OMB case lists the Town of Ancaster as a case party but the municipality never appeared before the Board. Instead, the clash was between IPCF (the real estate arm of the Loblaws corporation) and Price-Costco Canada.<sup>303</sup> Former Ancaster planner Peter Tollefsen remembers that he was called to attend the appeal: "In the mid-1990s, Costco lawyers tracked me down (I was now a planning director in Ajax) with a subpoena to attend the [OMB] hearing as a hostile witness. I was never called to the stand."<sup>304</sup> Another planner I interviewed, Alex Georgieff, was also involved in the hearing. "I remember being interviewed for the lawyers of Loblaws who were claiming Price Club was a glorified grocery store. They did not want it. They were afraid of the competition."<sup>305</sup> Georgieff worked as a planner for the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth (1974-1994). Alain Pinard also recollects the infamous dispute:

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<sup>299</sup> Alain Pinard interview, July 23, 2015.

<sup>300</sup> Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, 175.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Alex Georgieff interview, July 20, 2015.

<sup>303</sup> *Price Club Canada Inc. v. Ancaster (Town)* [1995] O.M.B.D. No. 22, as per the *Planning Act, R.S.O. (1990)*, Section 34(11), accessed August 24, 2015.

<sup>304</sup> Peter Tollefsen interview, August 2, 2015.

<sup>305</sup> Alex Georgieff interview, July 20, 2015.

“That was a very long hearing (taking three years all together). The decision came out in 1995. They ruled the Town [of Ancaster] documents did not speak to the store and thus they could operate but must do so under restrictions. We [the Town] then created a big box store policy framework (through IBI consultants). This resulted in an OP amendment (#66). That amendment allowed and explained the conditions under which big box stores were permitted. All the retailers were fighting each other in courts and it was costing them millions. But now we had a framework to defend our position and prevent this from happening again. It justified that it was okay for a big box store to apply for rezoning. Costco then applied for a rezoning and were approved.”<sup>306</sup>

Despite protests by a host of small businesses, when Costco was approved in 1995, Ancaster residents were eager to reap the savings of bulk grocery items.<sup>307</sup> According to current City of Hamilton planner John Ames, “the introduction of Costco really opened the flood gates for retail development in the Meadowlands.”<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Alain Pinard interview, conducted July 23, 2015.

<sup>307</sup> Steve Arnold, “Merchants fight back against megastores,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 8, 1995.

<sup>308</sup> John Ames interview conducted November 27, 2013 at OPPI Western Lake District Film Night.





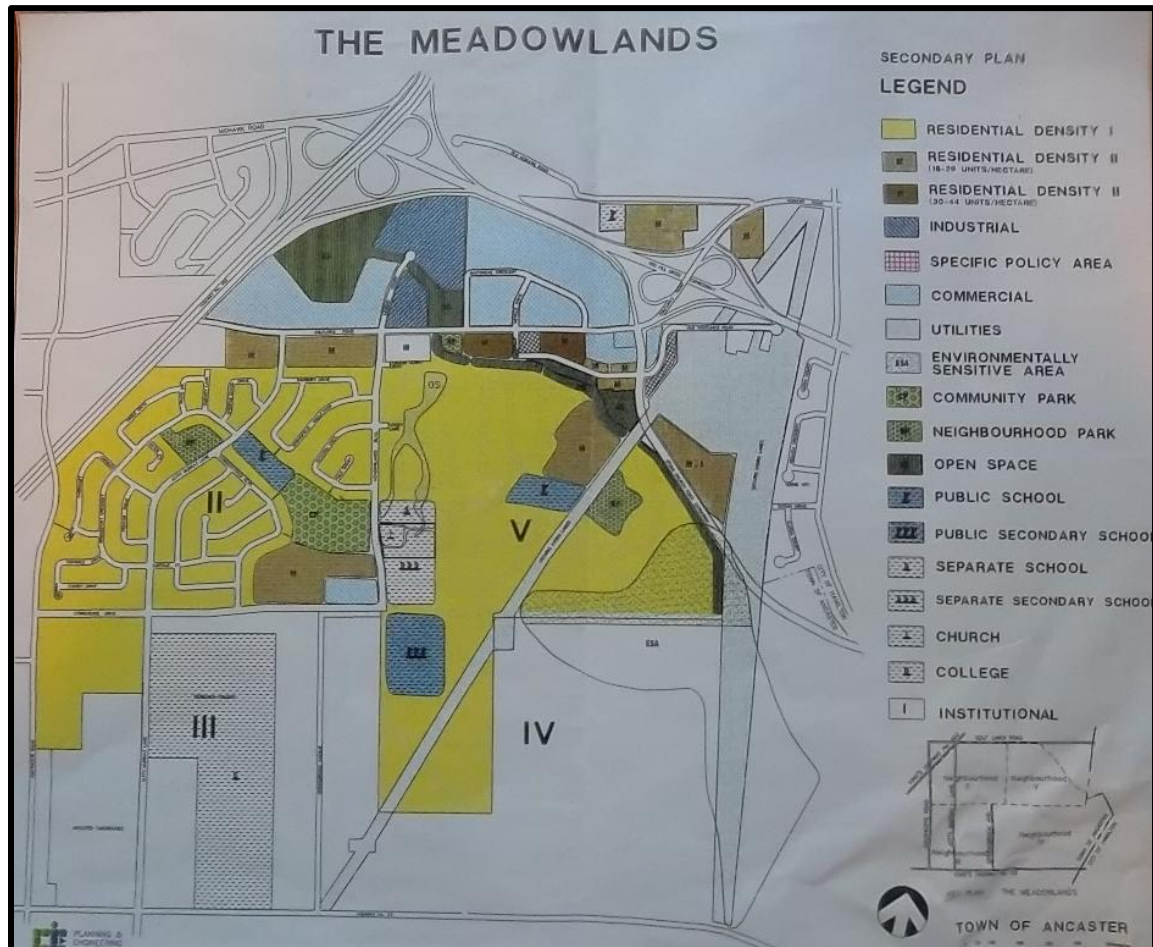
**Figure 41** – An aerial view of the Meadowlands Power Centre in 1999. Note the construction of both commercial and residential uses in Meadowlands V, at the intersection of Golf Links and Stone Church Roads. South of Golf Links, this photograph shows a gas station and medium density apartments already erected (Source: LRMC, 1999 digital orthophotography, CD 4, 12.5cm resolution, City of Hamilton: GIS Services, 1999)

Following Costco’s contentious entry into the Power Centre, Sobeys Inc. purchased a parcel immediately adjacent to the wholesaler. The third retailer in the plaza was a Scarborough-based store known as Aikenhead’s Home Improvement Centre. “Aikenhead’s was the pre-cursor to Home Depot,” revealed Spicer. “It was a small Toronto-area hardware store that formed in the 1960’s, got bigger and bigger, and started the big-box home improvement store in Canada. Hamilton was their second franchise. Beaver Lumber and Home Depot eventually made a deal to buy their company.”<sup>309</sup> Numerous others followed and in 1997, the Meadowlands of Ancaster decided that the area needed other services for the growing number of residents. The company built a medical building (The Meadowlands Health Centre) at 26 Legend Court. Units were leased to doctors, dentists, physiotherapists and eventually the building was sold to one of the tenants, a local physician.

<sup>309</sup> Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.



According to Kelly, “we did not want to be landlords.”<sup>310</sup> In 1998, a large portion of the commercial land was sold to John Ruddy of Trinity Development Group Inc.<sup>311</sup> Trinity has since developed over 25 million square feet of retail space across Canada.<sup>312</sup>



**Figure 42** – The Meadowlands in 1998 after the Costco re-zoning. The map sufficiently shows all the uses and components of the neighbourhood at this time (Source: Town of Ancaster, 1998 Secondary Plan, Planning and Engineering Initiatives, accessed at Fieldcote Memorial Park & Museum).

This chapter, along with Chapter 5, have both highlighted a host of noteworthy discoveries within the narrative of this case study. Together, they have exposed the nature of Ancaster’s growing pains and courtship by both developers and politicians. The community’s transition from rural

<sup>310</sup> Kelly interview, June 23, 2015.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> “Profile,” Trinity Development Group, <http://www.trinity-group.com/company/>, accessed August 22, 2015.

township to suburban destination has been shown to be a contentious and, for many, unwelcome evolution. The process galvanized a group of residents into a unified crowd of protestors who temporarily halted large-scale development plans and challenged them legislatively. Residents provided a strong example of collective NIMBYism in espousing and defending an anti-development mindset. On the other end, politicians and developers operated closely, with matching ambitions for the farming community. Many of these resentments, which appeared unresolved, were eclipsed when new, local developers took over the project for the Meadowlands. Plans for less people, less density, and more architectural appeal seemed to curb public antagonism. Eventually, site plan approvals were issues and construction began on the new large-scale commercial and residential neighbourhood known as the Meadowlands. Another sub-narrative within this study concerns the vagaries of the development industry. Four of the six major private development firms involved in the history of the Meadowlands were forced to give up control of the property due to bankruptcy. Revenue Properties, Allarco, Carma, and Bramalea all dealt with financial insolvency at some point between 1969 and 1995. This case study illustrates how large, sometimes undiversified, land developers are particularly vulnerable to economic downturn. As is noted in Chapter 2, many developers are highly leveraged and over-expand their operations in response to loan approvals.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Lorimer, 74.

## Chapter 7 – Current Contours of Development

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*The landscape persists. All it had to do was forfeit an arm.*

– John Terpstra, *Falling into Place*

Today, the Ancaster Meadowlands is a popular residential community with regionally-important commercial retail space. The phases of the Meadowlands (which were described in their infancies in Chapter 6) continued fill in during the late 1990s and into the 2000s. There were five major phases of development led by the MOA, known as neighbourhoods I-V and ten phases total, the last being largely infill. The three major development firms involved in the Meadowlands were Alterra, MOA, and Trinity. Another company, Paletta International Corporation, owned a significant portion of land within Meadowlands IV.<sup>314</sup> There were also a sizeable number of home builders who participated, to varying degrees, in the construction of the community (see Table 2).

Residential Development	Home Builder
<b>Tiffany Hill</b>	Chiaravalle Developments Inc.
<b>Tiffany Hill</b>	Homes By DeSantis Inc.
<b>Meadowlands of Ancaster</b>	Landmart Building Corp.
<b>The Masters</b>	Landmart Building Corp.
<b>Bel Air Estates</b>	Landmart Building Corp.
<b>Ancaster Glen</b>	Losani Homes Ltd.
<b>Ancaster Arbor</b>	Mattamy Homes

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<sup>314</sup> Paletta International is a Burlington-based land developer that was founded in 1967. The company was purchased in the late 1990s by an Australian corporation that operates in both farming and real-estate: P & L Livestock Limited. (Bloomberg Business, “Company Overview of Paletta International Corporation,” accessed August 25, 2016, <http://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=108806629>).

<b>Tiffany Hill</b>	Rosehaven Homes Limited
<b>Scarlett Homes Ancaster</b>	Scarlett Homes Ltd.
<b>Kitty Murray Woods</b>	Starward Homes Limited
<b>Encore</b>	Starward Homes Limited
<b>Landscapes of Ancaster</b>	Starward Homes Limited
<b>Stonehenge Towns</b>	Starward Homes Limited
<b>Bungalows of Ancaster South</b>	Starward Homes Limited
<b>Garden Park</b>	Winzen Homes Limited
<b>Stoneridge on Tiffany Creek</b>	Winzen Homes Limited
<b>Ancaster Glen</b>	Losani Homes Ltd.

**Table 2** – The many surveys in the Meadowlands area were constructed through the efforts of various home builders. Although this is not a comprehensive list it does include most of the major builders in the neighbourhood (Source: Hamilton-Halton Home Builders’ Association, compiled by author).

In 2001, Ontario municipalities were restructured by the Progressive Conservative government (1995-2002).<sup>315</sup> The Town of Ancaster was merged with the City of Hamilton and was thereafter known as a suburban community with the City (Ward 12). Planning for the Meadowlands was then turned over to Hamilton staff. According to John Ames, a municipal planner, all subsequent residential neighbourhoods were managed through the implementation of numerous secondary plans.<sup>316</sup>

Because of the size of the community, and the length of time over which it was developed, planning policy changes are evidenced within the built environment. Within the Meadowlands, housing densities have increased with each subsequent phase. Phase II included much larger lots than Phases III

<sup>315</sup> The Province went from 850 municipalities to 444 (Siegal, 2005: 129).

<sup>316</sup> John Ames interview conducted November 27, 2013 at OPPI Western Lake District Film Night.

and V, for example. These density changes can be viewed by travelling north to south, from Golf Links Road to Garner Road. Former MOA manager Steve Spicer helpfully commented on this pattern:

Interviewer: “I notice that as you walk down Kitty Murray Avenue, south towards Garner, the housing becomes denser and there are more townhomes. Can you comment on those changes?”

Spicer: “That’s very true. The Province incrementally brought in legislation encouraging compact development. In the Meadowlands it was particularly difficult to achieve what changing times and changing policy required of us. Even though I tried hard to get higher densities and apartment buildings, in the end it wasn’t worth the fight. It was a fight I wasn’t going to win.”<sup>317</sup>

As was shown in previous chapters, Ancaster has a long history of opposing housing types deviating from the single-family home norm. In the 1990s, for example, low-income townhomes were proposed along Old Mohawk Road, at the border with Hamilton. This bid was unanimously turned down by councillors who did not want to see the town undergo changes traditionally associated with affordable housing.<sup>318</sup> Another case involved a Hamilton development company seeking to build apartment buildings along Garner Road. In 2008, Monterey Heights Development Corporation applied for density and height amendments to Hamilton’s Official Plan in order to build one 3.5 and two 4.5 storied apartments.<sup>319</sup> Ferguson and other Ancastrians were vehemently against the plan. “We are unique, we are special. We have to fight for it,” he says.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

<sup>318</sup> Steve Arnold, “Another delay likely in dispute over low-income townhouses,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, January 24, 1995.

<sup>319</sup> Ancaster has long maintained a three-story building height restriction dating back to the 1970’s. The Ancaster Zoning By-Law still stipulates a maximum residential building height limit of 10.5 metres or three-storeys.

<sup>320</sup> Kevin Werner, “Ancaster’s way of life is under attack from Hamilton development, says councillor Lloyd Ferguson,” *Ancaster News*, March 7, 2008.

For Ferguson, Ancaster possesses a certain character that would be altered by dissimilar densities, housing types, and residents. During a planned walking tour in 2015, Ferguson shared his dream for the community, “I’m gonna have a little Niagara-on-the-Lake here eventually.”<sup>321</sup> The street names within many new subdivisions are reflective of that desire for genteel ambience. The Meadowlands contains numerous streets named after English and equestrian backgrounds: Yorkshire, Stonehenge, Suffolk, Surrey, Bridgeport, Palomino, Citation, Thoroughbred, Harrogate, etc. When some of the names were first being proposed and registered, Deputy Mayor Ann Sloat was quoted as saying, “I can’t help but think that the names are getting more and more bizarre.”<sup>322</sup> Other names within the Meadowlands were given for developers who were involved in the suburb. These include DiIorio Circle, Cloverleaf Drive, Meadowlands Boulevard, Lowinger Avenue, and Raymond Road. Finally, as is commonly done in many new developments, some streets were labelled as tributes to individuals who once inhabited the land: Lampman Drive, Kitty Murray Lane, Harmony Road, and House Lane.

Despite the preponderance of single family homes, today there are a variety of densities and housing types built within the Meadowlands including detached and semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, and apartment buildings (Figures 43 to 45).



**Figure 43** – Attached row housing in the Meadowlands, O’Hara Lane (Source: Google Maps, 2014).

<sup>321</sup> Lloyd Ferguson, Jane Jacob’s Walk: Ancaster, May 2, 2015.

<sup>322</sup> “Street names are ‘bizarre’,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, Nov. 8, 1988.





**Figure 44** – One of the few apartment buildings found within the Meadowlands, this low-rise complex is located on Golf Links Road (Source: Google Maps, 2014).



**Figure 45** – One of the neighbourhood's many customized, single-detached homes. This one was found along Kitty Murray Lane (Source: author, 2014).

There are also a small number of gated residential communities within the Meadowlands such as Bel Air Estates and Berkshire Place. Residential and commercial uses are highly separate, with Golf Links Road serving as a dividing barrier. The community also possesses two churches and three elementary schools. Within the commercial Power Centre, there are now 116 retailers and service providers in operation<sup>323</sup>. The district contains a plethora of businesses but is distinguished by the presence of large-scale “big box” retailers (Costco, Home Depot, Winners, Best Buy, etc.) Although many residents think of the Meadowlands as a monolithic development dominated by “big box” stores, in fact it contains diverse commercial operations and spaces (see Table 3).

Commercial & Service Retail	# of Retailers
Banks	4
Supermarkets	2
Restaurants/cafes	21
Clothing/fashion stores	10
Gas stations	2
Movie theatres	1
Department/wholesale retailers	13
Bookstores	1
Liquor stores	1
Medical/dental/pharmaceutical	19
Health clubs	2
Educational/daycares	2
Specialty stores*	13
Human services*	7
Financial	15
Engineering/development	2
Legal	2
Vacant buildings*	1

\*Specialty stores: toy stores, pet stores, photography stores, flower shops, etc. \*Human services: barbershops, taylor shops, dry cleaning services, hair salons, etc. \*Vacant buildings: Target.

**Table 3** – A complete list of businesses within the Meadowlands Power Centre. Many of these companies rent space within multi-storey office structures (Source: author).

During the 2000s, the MOA slowly sold off the majority of its land in Ancaster to builders and began to disband. Spicer commented that “it got to the point that after all the acreage we started with

<sup>323</sup> As of August 14, 2015.



we were down to less than 100. Most of it required more infrastructure to be brought in and Alec [Kelly] was looking to sell off the last pieces left to builders and wrap things up.”<sup>324</sup> Kelly recounts that, as of 2005, his company attempted to obtain one last parcel of land south of Meadowlands Boulevard, within neighbourhood IV.<sup>325</sup> Before acquiring it, Kelly wanted to see Stonehenge Drive connect the Meadowlands to Stone Church Road.<sup>326</sup> Unfortunately for the MOA, this did not occur until 2012, at which point Kelly and his group were principally detached from the project. By 2012, the Meadowlands was largely completed and Ancaster had reached a population of 37,000. Most development that occurred post-2012 within the neighbourhood was infill, beautification, or linked to infrastructural improvements. “There is lots of infill going on right now, but in a few years it will be all built out,”<sup>327</sup> says Lloyd Ferguson. One parcel of land which remains undeveloped exists at the intersection of Stonehenge Drive and Meadowlands Boulevard. The 4 acre site was sold by the MOA to developer John Chun of Scarlett Homes (Figure 46). It is zoned commercially but, according to Kelly, Chun plans on applying for spot re-zoning in order to create a mixed use development on the corner lot. “He is, at the moment, keeping it to develop at a future time for his retirement.”<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> The boundaries of neighbourhood IV are Stonehenge Drive (N), Garner Road (S), the power corridor (E) and Sprinbrook Avenue (W).

<sup>326</sup> Alec Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.

<sup>327</sup> Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

<sup>328</sup> Kelly, interview, June 23, 2015.



**Figure 46** – One of the last sizeable properties that still lies vacant within the Meadowlands despite being zoned for development and surrounded by new homes  
(Source: Google Maps Street View, 2014).

One large residential project which was built after this period was located within the southeastern corner of the community, along Garner and Upper Paradise Roads (Figure 47). This lies within neighbourhoods IV and V (lots 51 to 53), and is now home the following subdivisions: Encore, Garden Park, Tiffany Hill, and the Woodlands of Ancaster.<sup>329</sup> These developments have been a source of environmental concern because of their immediate proximity to the Tiffany Creek Headwaters Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) and Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW). Most of this land was left as open space and agricultural land prior to its acquisition and re-zoning by developers. The two original developers in this vicinity were the MOA and Paletta International who have since transferred land to builders.

<sup>329</sup> Encore is a subdivision produced by Starward Homes. Tiffany Hill was created by a partnership between three home builders: Rosehaven Homes, Homes by DeSantis, and Chiaravalle Developments Inc. Garden Park is a project of Winzen Real Estate Limited. The Woodlands of Ancaster is a development by Losani Homes.



**Figure 47** – Map highlighting new development built immediately adjacent to the Tiffany Creek Headwaters ESA and PSW. This was the last major parcel of land developed in the Meadowlands. It is still receiving finishing touches. (Source: Google Maps, 2014).



**Figure 48** – Promotional map produced by developer Winzen Real Estate Limited. Natural areas are enlarged and adjacent residential builds are minimized (Source: Winzen Real Estate, <http://winzen.ca/garden-park/>).



Prior to any development, lands within Meadowlands IV and V were given the designation of being a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) complex, meaning a location where two or more wetland units are functionally linked.<sup>330</sup> According the Hamilton Conservation Authority, “all wetlands located with this subwatershed [Tiffany Creek] are designated as Provincially Significant Wetlands by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.”<sup>331</sup> Within the *Secondary Plan for Meadowlands Neighbourhood IV*, the Tiffany Creek PSW complex was mentioned, with its north and eastern sections fully protected from development. Wider policy mandates this protection. The Provincial Policy Statement “precludes development and site alteration within PSW’s,” and any adjacent land modifications must include appropriate buffers and setbacks.<sup>332</sup>

In Hamilton, all changes are subject to review by the Environmentally Significant Areas Impact Evaluation Group (ESAIEG) and the Hamilton Conservation Authority. Nevertheless, considerable alterations have taken place to the subwatershed over the years of development. According to Spicer and Kelly, whose firm was involved in hiring environmental consultants to divert tributaries in order to satisfy existing regulations, the area was an obligatory hurdle. “We knew all along that we would likely never be able to fully capitalize on the whole of that property,” says Spicer. “So it was really a matter of defining how far you could go. It included a PSW, a very large woodlot, and apparently there were endangered species there. There was also a salamander that no one ever saw.”<sup>333</sup> In 1999, Kelly’s company, along with Paletta International, contracted four consultants to complete the *Environment*

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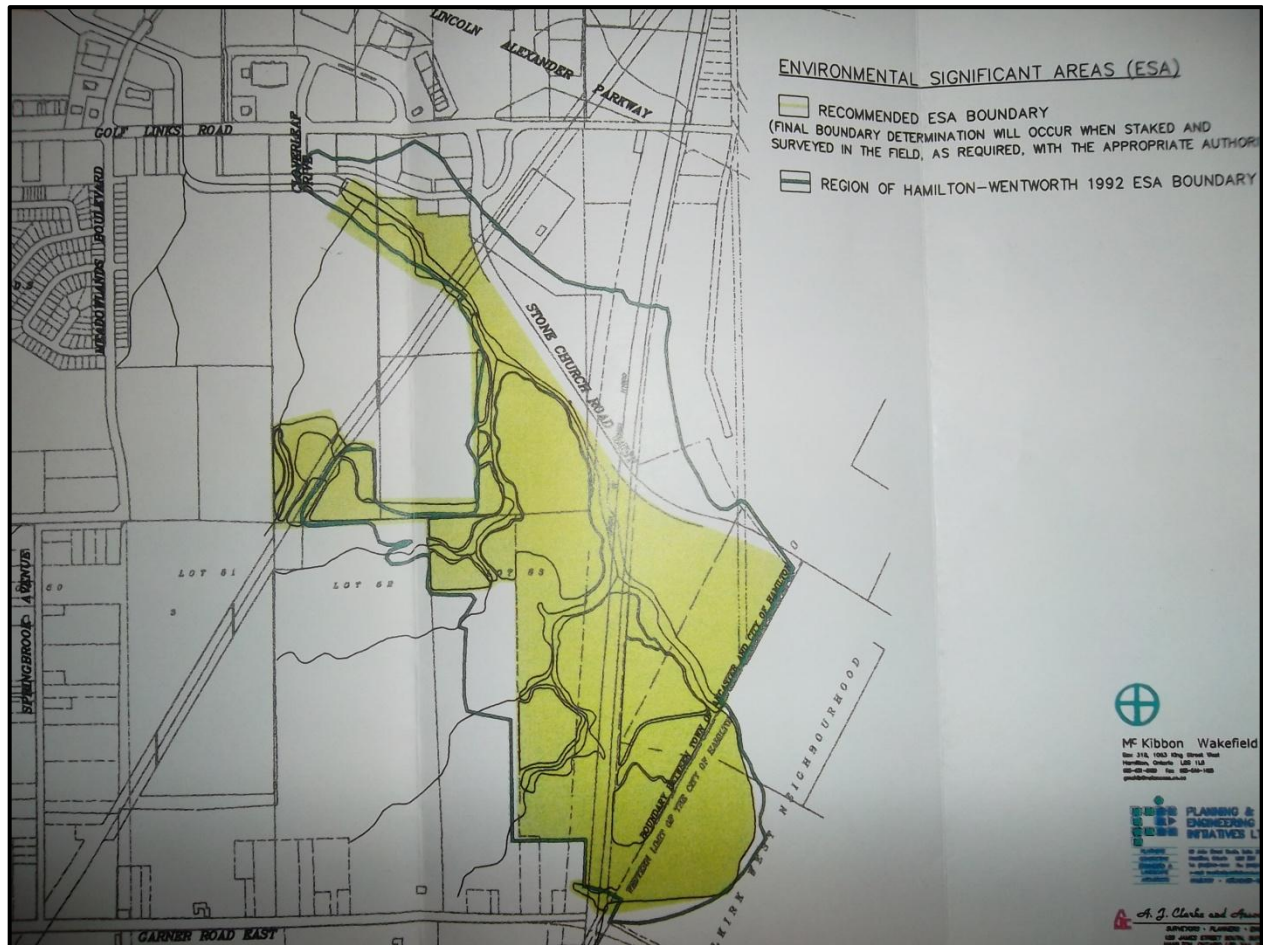
<sup>330</sup> *Significant Wetlands and the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System*, Ministry of Natural Resources, [http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@biodiversity/documents/document/stdprod\\_091597.pdf](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@biodiversity/documents/document/stdprod_091597.pdf). The evaluation system for PSW designation came into play in 1993 in Ontario, around the time that development approvals were being made in the Meadowlands. This policy was developed in response to troubling numbers such as the fact that by the 1980s, 68% of southern Ontario’s wetlands had been converted for other uses. Only the Province has the power to designate PSW’s.

<sup>331</sup> *Tiffany Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan*, TI-3.

<sup>332</sup> Provincial Policy Statement 2014, Section 3 of Ontario Planning and Development Act, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=10463>, accessed August 13, 2015.

<sup>333</sup> Steve Spicer interview, June 17, 2015.

*Assessment Master Plan for the Meadowlands neighbourhoods III, IV, and V.*<sup>334</sup> The document outlines some of the unique hydrological and environmental features to the site and elaborates on the approach to segregating these natural lands.



**Figure 49** – Map taken from the *Environment Assessment Master Plan* which shows the reduction of the ESA. The dark, exterior boundary indicates the original extent as determined by the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth in 1992. The lightly coloured, interior boundary indicates its delineation post-1999 (Source: *Environment Assessment Master Plan for Meadowlands neighbourhoods III, IV, & V*).

In my interviews with both Kelly and Spicer, they each indicate that as much development was done on the site as was legally possible and economically profitable. “We were pretty good at meeting all the environmental requirements,” says Kelly. “There were some times we did cut corners but overall

<sup>334</sup> *Background Report: Meadowlands Neighbourhoods 3, 4, and 5, Class Environmental Assessment Master Plan*, prepared by Planning and Engineering Initiatives Ltd., A.J. Clarke and Associates Ltd., McKibbon Wakefield Inc., Lotowater Ltd., and Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited, October 1999.

we were responsible developers.”<sup>335</sup> Spicer commented that “if you can develop houses up against a woodlot, the lots are worth more money. But, the catch is that because of the surrounding natural area, the constraints are strict enough that you wind up paying more time and money in that process, so it’s not always worth it.”<sup>336</sup> Within Ontario, it is the developer’s responsibility to finance assessments and ready necessary documentation for site plan approval. Having a regulatory framework in which consultants are required to work on the behalf of developers is potentially problematic. This system is vulnerable to the risk that consultants will downplay an area’s environmental importance in order to satisfy developers and ensure future contracts.

In the end, developers and builders managed to urbanize upon a sizeable section of the land. Losani Homes and Paletta International, for example, even succeeded in amending local planning policy in order to build upon natural land immediately within the ESA-PSW complex. Between 2010 and 2013 they successfully were approved for Official Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments for residential expansion at 1061 Garner Road East (Figure 50). The approvals given appear to be based on prior work completed by environmental assessments and SWM planning.<sup>337</sup> An appeal made to the OMB on this re-zoning was dropped in 2014.<sup>338</sup> The new survey, known as the Woodlands of Ancaster, is currently being built with the slogan “Court Lots, Conservation Lands.”<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Alec Kelly interview, June 23, 2015

<sup>336</sup> Steve Spicer interview, June 17, 2015.

<sup>337</sup> City of Hamilton, By-Law No. 11-013, Official Plan Amendment No. 39 and 132 respecting 1169 Garner Road East (Ancaster), last modified December 7, 2010, <http://www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/9DE335CA-51FF-40B7-9214-B03A955DD8BA/0/11013.pdf>.

<sup>338</sup> Ontario Municipal Board, E-Decisions, E-Case Details: PL 140227, accessed August 28, 2015, <https://www.omb.gov.on.ca/ecs/CaseDetail.aspx?n=PL140227>.

<sup>339</sup> Losani Homes, “The Woodlands of Ancaster,” accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www.losanihomes.com/upcoming-communities.php?community=68>.

**1.0 Purpose:**

The purpose of the amendment is:

1. to delete lands from the Tiffany Creek Headwaters Environmentally Significant Areas #46 based on an Environmental Impact Statement;
2. to remove "Special Policy Area E" from the Meadowlands Neighbourhood IV Secondary Plan; and,
3. to redesignate lands to appropriate land uses;

to permit the development of 65 single-detached and 117 apartment dwelling units, on lands located at 1169 Garner Road East, in the former Town of Ancaster.

**Figure 50** – A snapshot of the policy decision made to allow Losani Homes to build upon natural lands within the Tiffany Creek ESA-PSW complex. Taken from the City of Hamilton By-Law No. 11-013 (Source: By-Law No. 11-013. Official Plan Amendments No. 39 and 132, <http://www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/9DE335CA-51FF-40B7-9214-B03A955DD8BA/0/11013.pdf>).

Two other densely forested parcels of land which were recently cleared were found on Stonehenge Road (6 acres)<sup>340</sup> and Golflinks Road (5 acres).<sup>341</sup> Despite these incidents, conservation did occur on a portion of undevelopable land within neighbourhoods IV and V. Together, both Paletta and the MOA donated approximately 95 acres to the HCA for what is now unofficially known as the Meadowlands Conservation Area. "We ended up giving a piece of it to the [Hamilton] Conservation Authority and they gave us a tax receipt. Paletta gave part of it as well. When there are lands that are deemed environmentally sensitive, there isn't much you can do with them from a development standpoint."<sup>342</sup>

In the *Tiffany Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan*, the Hamilton Conservation Authority shows the extent of change incurred over time to the wetlands of the Meadowlands, due to local development. As of 2008, less than 5.4% (0.5 km<sup>2</sup>) of the area was covered by (remnant)

<sup>340</sup> Jeff Mahoney, "Why Hamilton 'needs bylaws with teeth'," *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 14, 2013.

<sup>341</sup> This lot was only partially razed. Municipal by-law officers halted the process when they were alerted to the fact that property owner James McNiven was illegally clear-cutting hundreds of trees (CHCH News, "Permit now needed to clear cut urban woodlands," August 13, 2014, <http://www.chch.com/permit-now-needed-clear-urban-woodlots/>).

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

wetlands. Before development began in the 1980s, 20.4% of the land was wetland, indicating that 73.7% loss in historical wetland cover.<sup>343</sup> The plan lists a number of “remnant wetlands” found within the subwatershed and the Meadowlands. These pockets, for the most part, have been spared from development and many have been quartered off with fencing for SWM purposes. Due to the landscape’s former character as a wetland, drainage is a major issue in the Meadowlands. Steve Spicer describes the evolution of MOA’s development approach regarding SWM:

“I would describe SWM in the Meadowlands as particularly ‘changing.’ The first ponds were built beside Costco and beside the original office building [now the soccer pitches]. At that time all you had to worry about was quantity. We simply had to build catchment areas that held and slowed down the water before it was sent back into the system. There was really no emphasis on the quality of water at all. So we were able then to basically build big bathtubs and they could have secondary purposes. Through the 1990’s the legislation changed significantly and we built higher quality ponds. And today there is even more that goes into the process. They didn’t upgrade the original ones but they built new catchment areas differently.”<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> *Tiffany Creek Subwatershed Stewardship Action Plan*, TI-3 table of natural land cover statistics.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*



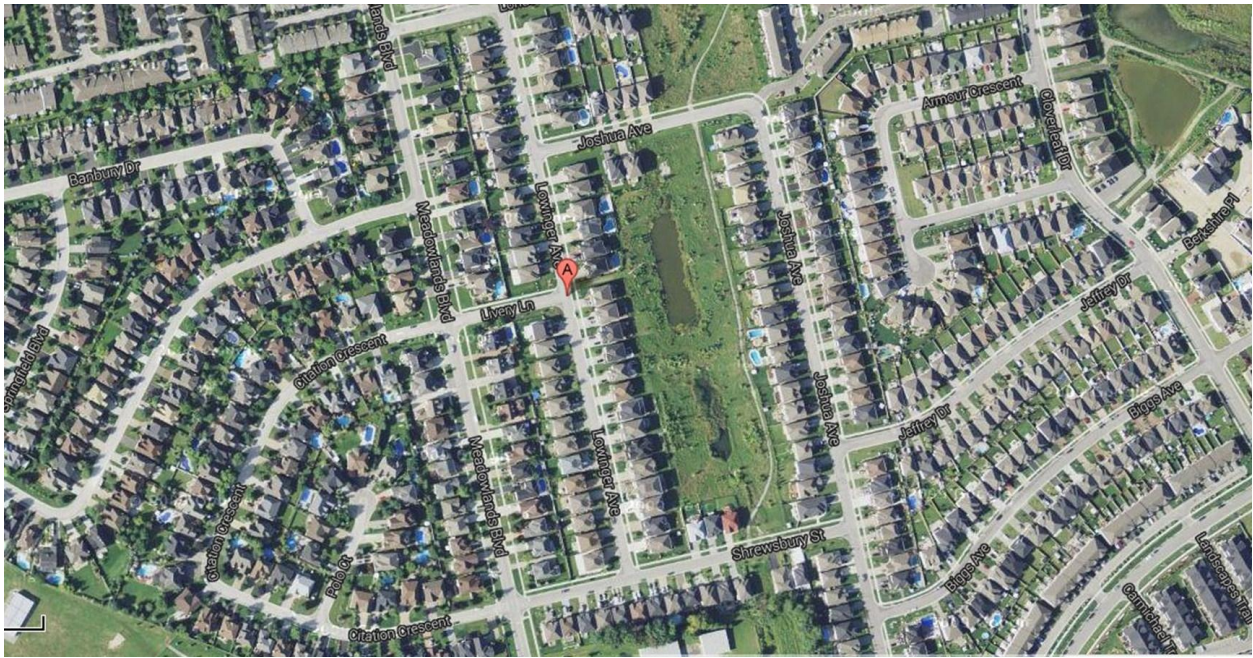


**Figure 51** – Drainage pond which doubles as an aesthetically pleasing backyard for residents in Meadowlands III (Source: author).

There are numerous SWM ponds scattered throughout the commercial and residential areas of the Meadowlands. “The soccer field and the dog park<sup>345</sup> double as retention ponds,” says Ferguson. “They do flood, but rarely but the thing you have to remember is that nobody is going to walking their dog or playing a soccer game when there is a 100-year storm going on.”<sup>346</sup> Two other properties can be found between Lowinger Avenue and Joshua Avenue and another just west of Redeemer University College along Kitty Murray Lane (see Figures 52 and 53).

<sup>345</sup> The former Cinema Dog Park is now known as the Corporal Nathan Cirillo Leash Free Area (Emma Reilly, “City officially names dog park after Cpl. Nathan Cirillo,” *The Hamilton Spectator*, June 10, 2015.)

<sup>346</sup> Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.



**Figure 52** – Image showing a wetland remnant utilized for SWM purposes within Meadowlands V (Source: Google Maps, 2014).



**Figure 53** – Due to its history as a wetland, the Meadowlands regularly experiences flooding. In some low-lying areas the City of Hamilton has posted warnings indicating “these lands may flood during extreme storm events” (Source: author, 2013).

Overall, the trajectory of growth in the Meadowlands has produced a neighbourhood with a regionally-significant commercial area, a variety of housing types, and a series of other localized uses. The landscape's former character as a wetland has added a number of infrastructural complications to the traditional suburban building pattern. Within the Meadowlands, a series of small parks and natural areas have been dually purposed for SWM. As I have outlined in this chapter, development within my study area has significantly altered the natural land, including land within the Tiffany Creek ESA-PSW complex. As one might expect, local developers have capitalized on the selling power of the remaining natural areas in order to successfully market new residential communities.

## Chapter 8 – Resident Survey Results

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*Once a suburban area is established, growth promoters usually seek greater and greater levels of density. The residents' hope of unspoiled nature fails because open land vanishes with increased development.*

– Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*

How do Ancastrians view the growth in the Meadowlands and how do the residents of the Meadowlands, themselves, view their own neighbourhood? Historically-speaking, Ancastrians have passionately disapproved of the idea of developing agricultural land and altering the character of their community. Between 1970 and 1983 the community was unified in its hostility towards developers and their plans. Even today, it appears that some residents still harbour resentment towards the neighbourhood. “I think the local feeling today is that their Town’s eastern boundary is Hwy 403,” said former Ancaster planner Peter Tollefsen.<sup>347</sup> Most of my informants shared that they believe the current public view is anti-development. “Today there is no desire in Ancaster to have more growth,” commented Lloyd Ferguson. “We’re done. We’re pretty well filled up and we don’t want to expand further.”<sup>348</sup> Former MOA development manager Steve Spicer also shared a similar opinion: “to this day, Ancastrians don’t want any more development. We used to make a joke: ‘the last guy in [to buy a house] always wants to be the last guy in.’”<sup>349</sup>

Despite these assessments, the residential population of the Meadowlands continues to grow and these residents, generally speaking, exhibit a fairly strong level of overall satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Many Ancastrians also benefit from the numerous amenities that the neighbourhood offers to the wider community: schools, churches, parks, a university, and of course the convenience of nearby commercial retailers. In this chapter I will present the results of a survey I administered on the

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<sup>347</sup> Peter Tollefsen interview, August 2, 2015.

<sup>348</sup> Lloyd Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

<sup>349</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

experiences of residents living within the Meadowlands.<sup>350</sup> I will also include a small sample of Ancestrians who do not reside within the boundaries of my study area in order to get a wider perspective on the neighbourhood's impression and legacy. The aim will be to uncover how the completed community has emerged from its long and contentious planning history and how the outcome is viewed and experienced by local residents.

### **Survey Design & Participants**

In order to ascertain resident viewpoints I developed a 30-question, semi-structured survey which was made available both online and in person. My aim was to assess resident satisfaction and experiences as well as to measure demographic details. Data collection took place between April and August of 2015, following approval from the McMaster Research Ethics Board in March of 2015.<sup>351</sup> For more information on the methods I employed in this survey, please see my early chapter on methods (Chapter 3).

A total of twenty eight (n=28) residents were interviewed in this study. Most participated through the online survey (26) while only two chose to be interviewed directly in person.<sup>352</sup> I have divided participants into two categories: residents living within the Meadowlands and residents living outside of the Meadowlands (but within Ancaster).<sup>353</sup> In total I received responses from twenty-two participants who lived within and six participants who lived outside. I will discuss the results of residents who lived outside of the Meadowlands in a short segment at the end of this chapter. It should also be noted that many respondents did not answer all 30 questions because I allowed them the opportunity to skip questions with which they were uncomfortable. Consequently, most of the questions only have partial participation ratios. Each participant was given their own identification code for confidentiality and referencing purposes (example: R-14).

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<sup>350</sup> In my study, both "questionnaire" and "survey" will be used interchangeably.

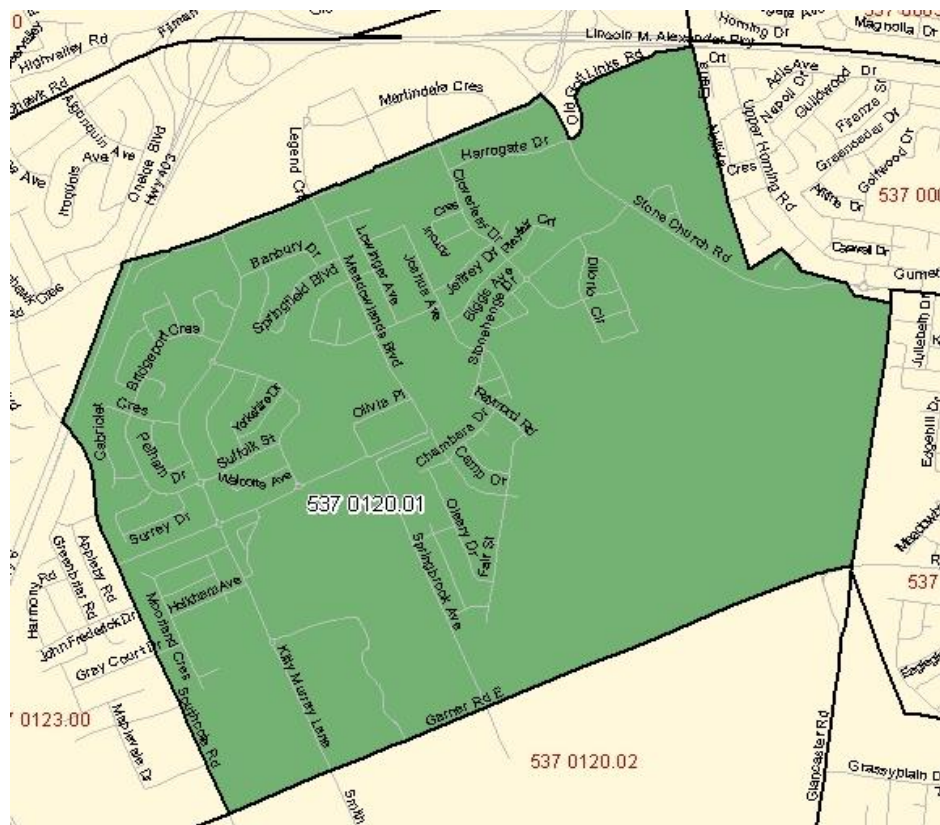
<sup>351</sup> The majority of my respondents were surveyed between May and July of 2015.

<sup>352</sup> Please see Chapter 3 for methodological considerations in view of both formats.

<sup>353</sup> As defined by my study area boundary (Chapter 1).



Results from the survey will be compared to the latest Census of Canada data in order to establish the reliability of my sample in relation to the wider neighbourhood population. The latest Census of Population and National Housing Survey (NHS) was completed in 2011. The residential section of the Meadowlands is covered by one statistical tract (Figure 54). It should be noted that although the boundaries mirror those of my study area very closely, they also encompass a slightly larger portion of land to the east which includes some housing along Upper Paradise Road (the Falkirk West neighbourhood) and the western section of Stone Church Road. The 2011 Census showed that the neighbourhood had a population of 9,531, with a median age of 37 years. The 2011 count was a 33% increase from the prior Census in 2006.<sup>354</sup>



**Figure 54** – The Meadowlands census tract, postal code L9K 1J4 (Source: Statistics Canada National Housing Survey Profile, 2011).

<sup>354</sup> Statistics Canada, 0120.01, Ontario, *National Household Survey (NHS) Profile: 2011 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE, Ottawa, released June 26, 2013, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>, accessed August 29, 2015.

Overall, participants in my study were moderately diverse in terms of gender and age-range variation (both data sets). There was greater female representation (69% of respondents) than male and a disproportionate rate of participation from individuals between middle to late adulthood (69% of respondents were between the ages of 40-60+). In comparison, the NHS displayed a much closer gender ratio of approximately 50% male and 50% female.<sup>355</sup> And the Census showed—similar to my sample—greatest representation between residents 40-54 years old.

### Residents of the Meadowlands

Twenty-two of my respondents indicated living with the geographic boundaries of the Meadowlands. Tables 6 and 7 outline their genders and their ages.

Gender	# of participants*	Total: 20
Female	14	
Male	6	

**Table 6** – Overall study gender balance. \*Note that 2 (of 22) respondents decided to skip the question “what is your sex?” (Q20).

Age cohort	# of participants*	Total: 20
18-20	0	
21-29	5	
30-39	1	
40-49	3	
50-59	6	
60 or older	5	

**Table 7** – Overall age range distribution of participants. \*Note that 2 (of 22) respondents decided to skip the question “what is your age?” (Q19).

Other demographic characteristics explored in this questionnaire included education, income level, employment, ethnicity, and language. These questions were asked in order to gain insights into the current residential character of the community and the types of people that live in the Meadowlands

<sup>355</sup> Number of males living in private households by citizenship: 4,675. Number of females: 4,835 (Statistics Canada, 0120.01), Ontario, *National Household Survey (NHS) Profile: 2011 Census*).

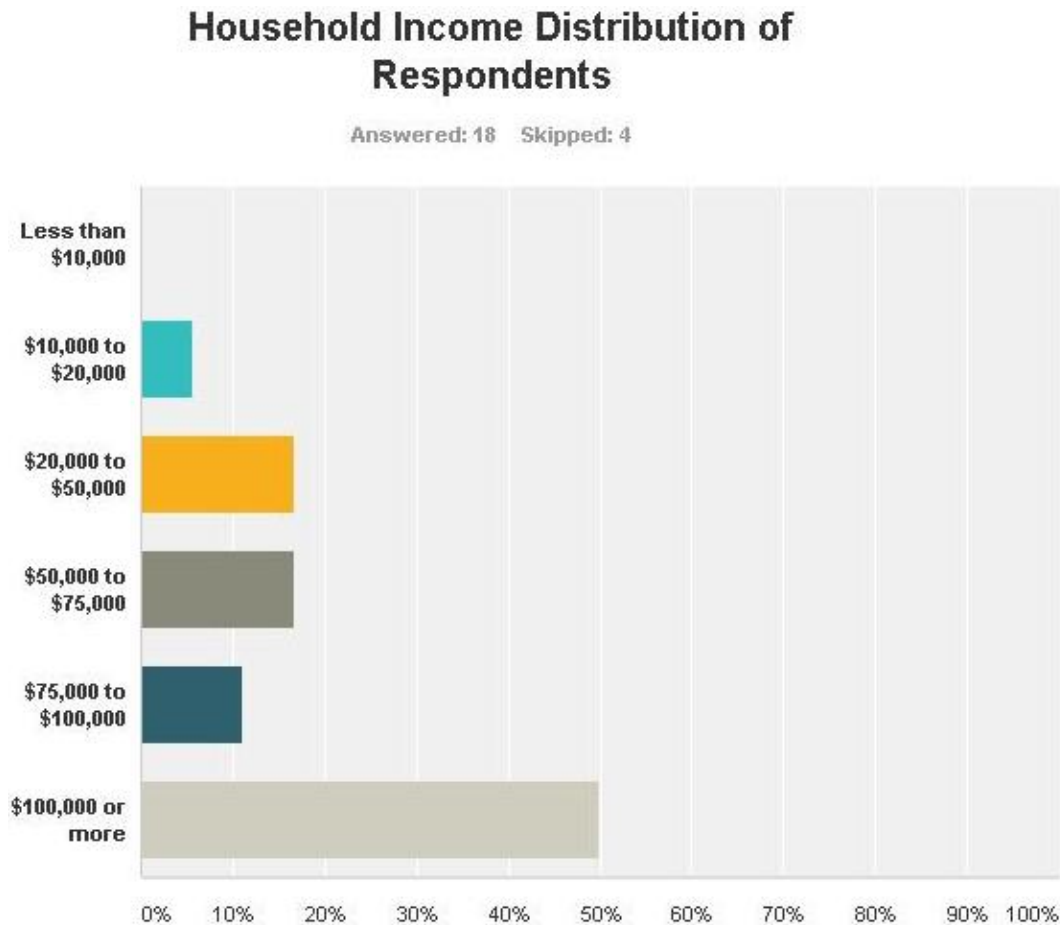
today as well as to check whether they are broadly typical of the area. In my study sample, the majority of participants spoke English as a first language (80%) while only four respondents noted different languages: Arabic (2) and Dutch (2) (Q21). The Census indicates a slightly lower rate of English-as-first-language speakers (63%). Most of my participants living within the Meadowlands identified as Caucasian (95%) with two identifying as Hispanic and Arabic, respectively (Q23). The NHS shows that, within the tract, 83% of individuals identify as being of ‘European’ or ‘Canadian’ in terms ethnic origin.<sup>356</sup> This indicates that my sample is slightly less ethnically diverse than the wider population of the Meadowlands. Given the increasing amount of ethnic diversity within modern suburban communities, this lack of heterogeneity does surface as a minor weakness in terms of the application potential of my survey results.

With regards to income, exactly half of my respondents claimed an annual total household income of over \$100,000 (Figure 55 below). The NHS reports a similar stratification of earning cohorts. 1,670 out of 2,940 households (57%) within the Meadowlands tract grossed more than \$100,000 annually. A similar top-heavy depiction of resident income stratification was displayed in my research.

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<sup>356</sup> Note that separate options were given for individuals of “North American Aboriginal” or “American” ethnic origins.





**Figure 55** – Income distribution (Source: resident survey).

In terms of employment status, there was a significant amount of variation amongst participants (Q25). Of 19 responses, most were employed full-time (11), while some indicated other circumstances: retired (5) and employed part-time (3). The large number of retirees present in my sample may be a result of canvassing during weekdays and during the day time. It could also be thanks to the handful of responses that I received from a church community within the Meadowlands that contains many congregants who are retired. According to the NHS, the employment rate in the area was approximately 64% in 2011.<sup>357</sup> 74% of my respondents claimed either part-time or full-time employment.

<sup>357</sup> Note that this includes all individuals within the “labour force” (over the age of 15). My survey only included participants over the age of 19. This discrepancy is likely minimal but still important to note.

Significant variation was demonstrated in participant educational background. Of 20 responses, one had completed high school or some high school, seven had completed university or some university, four had completed college or some college, and eight had completed graduate school or some graduate school (Q24). In total, 95% of participants living within the Meadowlands had taken some form of post-secondary education and 75% had graduated from their respective programs. Given Ancaster's longstanding upper-middle and upper class character, I was not surprised to find such high numbers of educated residents. However, the curiously high number of individuals who have attended graduate school may be, in part, a result of my survey being disseminated, in part, by former professorial contacts at Redeemer University College. 66% of the Census tract population has completed some form of post-secondary education, while only 22% completed only high school or some high school. This educational level is slightly lower than my survey sample.

I also posed a variety of non-demographic questions including "what name do you use to refer to the neighbourhood in which you live?" (Q1) and "from looking at the following map of Hamilton, what do you consider as the boundaries of your neighbourhood?" (Q2). Of the 22 respondents who lived within the Meadowlands, the majority delineated the boundaries of their neighbourhood quite closely to the boundaries of my study area [the Power Centre (N), Garner (S), Stone Church (E), and Southcote (W)]. Some gave distinctive answers such as David (R-28) who said "anything east of Halson Street is the Meadowlands." Interestingly, three individuals noted Cloverleaf Drive as the easternmost boundary of the Meadowlands and not Stone Church Road. Thirteen respondents said that "the Meadowlands" was the name of their neighbourhood. Another five claimed that "Ancaster" was the best toponym for their neighbourhood. Finally, other individuals defined their neighbourhood at a smaller scale and considered street names, such as "Kitty Murray" (R-17) or "Garner/Southcote" (R-1) as the names of their neighbourhood. Clearly, the official name for the neighbourhood is what is most used by local residents.

In terms of years residing in the Meadowlands, there was significant variation amongst respondents. The longest residency tenure was 28 years and the shortest was 2 years. The mean number of years for residency was 15. This information conforms with the development years that were discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Out of twenty-two respondents, sixteen purchased their homes from previous residents and six individuals who purchased from a home builder.<sup>358</sup> Given the span of years of residency, this variation comes as no surprise. The majority moved to the area from other parts of Hamilton (Q5), but some relocated from more far-flung locations such as Waterloo, Moorefield, Montreal, and Prince Edward Island. Only one resident indicated that he moved to area from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This appears to be unusual based on the steady stream of Torontonians who now purchase or rent in the Hamilton region.

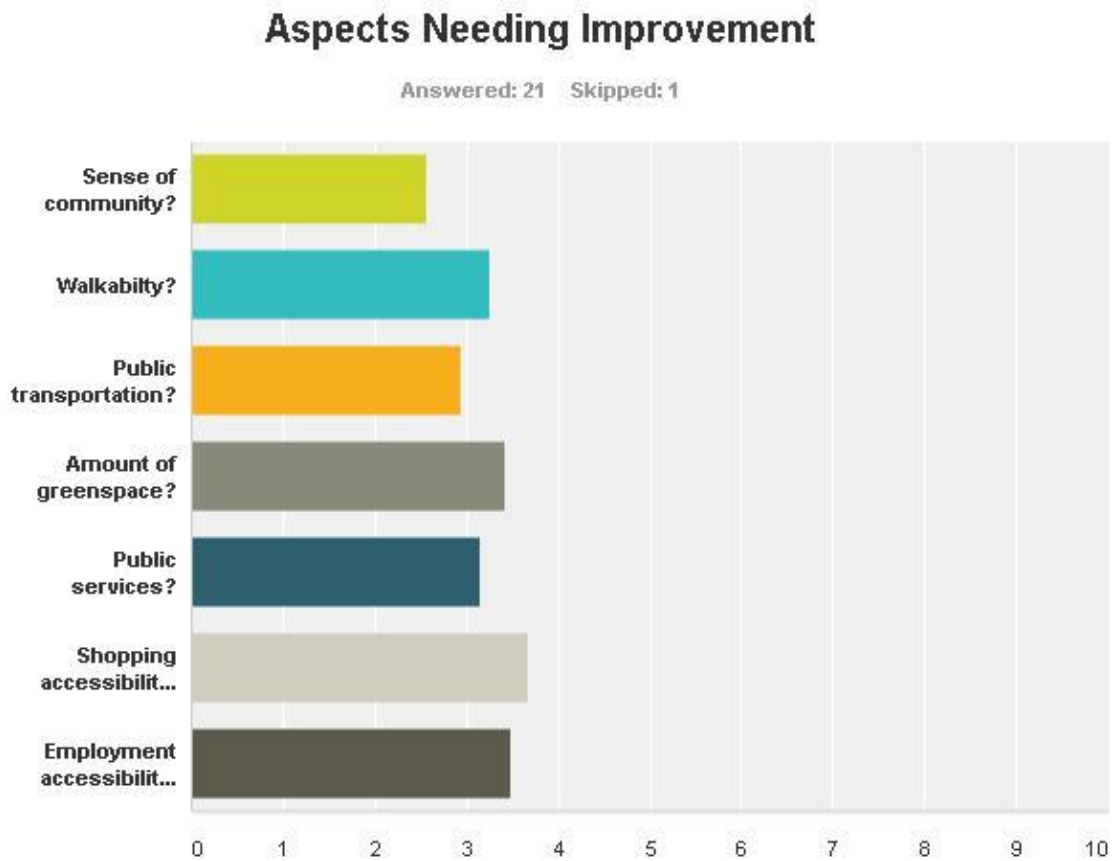
Residents also indicated a variety of reasons for moving to the Meadowlands (Q6). Some shared that their choice was made because of the appeal of the area: “beautiful neighbourhood and homes,” said Jack (R-17). Others were influenced by the price of their home, and the convenience of nearby amenities. The bucolic appeal of Ancaster was another common response that was given: “fresh air and small town feeling” (R-20), “peace and quiet” (R-34), and “large condo near conservation area” (R-12). Zoe, a Meadowlands resident in her mid-twenties, had been living in the neighbourhood for over 28 years. She shared that she was born in the house in which she resided. “Our family home was an old farm house. The Meadowlands was built up around our house” (R-18). Finally, another stated reason for choosing to live in the Meadowlands area was the proximity it provided to work, school, and church. The price of homes was only indicated once.

A little more than half of respondents (55%) shared that they viewed the Meadowlands as a well-designed community (Q13). Some indicated that they had “never considered design before” (R-6) and others deemed the neighbourhood to have serious design flaws (35%). One of the recurring

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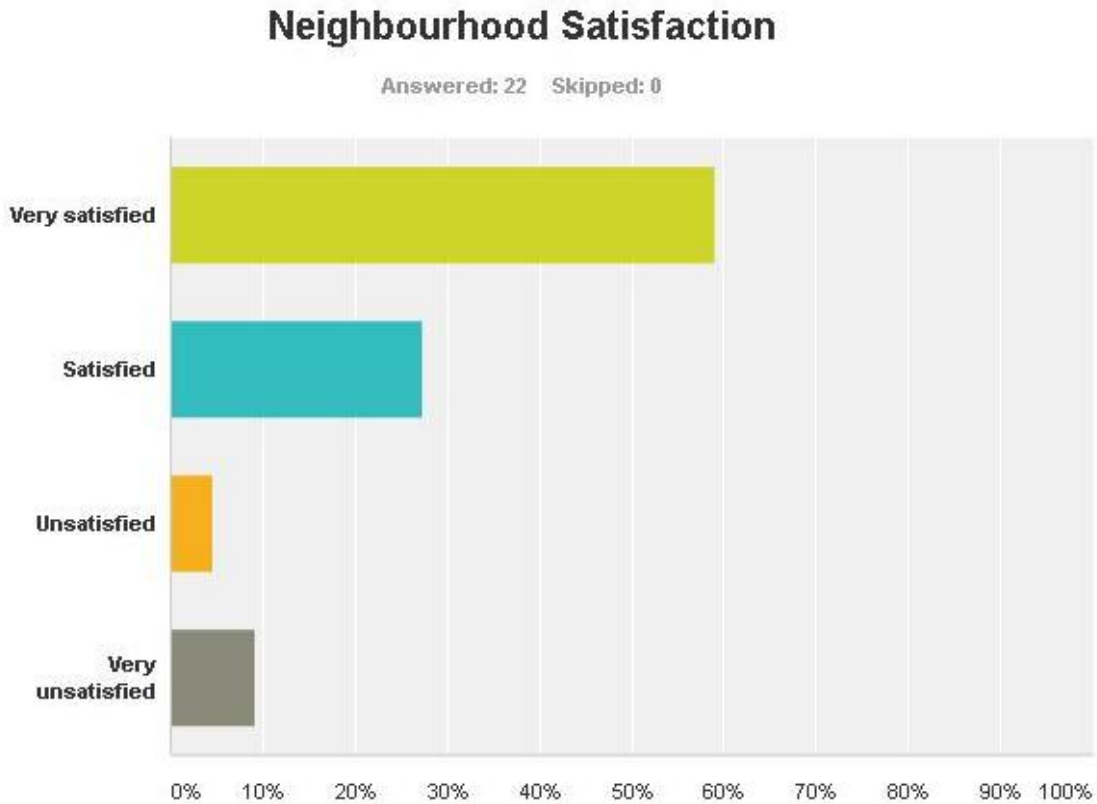
<sup>358</sup> Q4: “Did you purchase your home from the builder or from a previous resident?”

complaints amongst residents was poor traffic flow. Since the Meadowlands has become a central shopping district for the western portion of Hamilton, the roads around the Power Centre are noticeably congested, particularly at peak hours of the day. In response to the question “what do you like least about this neighbourhood?” (Q9), 62% of respondents indicated traffic or transportation-related grievances. The current infrastructural layout of the Meadowlands is such that motorists from interior surveys exit at one of four peripheral roads: Golf Links, Stone Church, Southcote, or Garner. Golf Links and Stone Church provide access to the Linc and the 403, Golf Links and Southcote provide access to Wilson Street, and Garner also provides access to the 403. The majority of traffic congestion occurs along Golf Links Road and within commercial entranceways themselves. “Traffic on weekends,” (R-5) in relation to the popularity of the Power Centre, was a recurring irritation of participants. The inadequacy of public transportation was also an aspect of the community that residents lamented (Q9 and Q14). The neighbourhood currently has service from three Hamilton Street Railway routes: 5 (downtown), 41 (mountain), and 16 (Ancaster). The frequency of service varies based on the time of day, the time of year, and the route itself. Overall, the service is poor in comparison with that of the lower city. In question 12, participants offered a variety of considerations regarding areas needing improvement in the Meadowlands (Figure 56). Out of 21 responses (and with a weighted average calculated between a scale of 1-4 for each sub-question), the results were near-equal for each area requiring improvement.



**Figure 56** – Neighbourhood components needing improvement (Source: resident survey).

Even with all of these suggestions, overall, most respondents seemed relatively content with their choice to live within or nearby the Meadowlands (Q7). Approximately 59% indicated that they were “very satisfied” while 27% indicated that they were “satisfied” with their neighbourhood overall (Figure 57).



**Figure 56** – Responses to the question “how satisfied are you with your neighbourhood overall?” (Source: resident survey).

Among the list of things that they like most about the Meadowlands (Q8) residents noted neighbourhood cleanliness (R-6), “greenspace” (R-9), and “friendliness” (R-11). Proximity to shopping, to schools, and to highways were also mentioned as favourite elements to living in the area. In terms of sociability and sense of community, 55% of respondents indicated that they interact “often” with the people living on their block compared to only 15% who did so “rarely” or “never” (Q10). When looking at the wider neighbourhood (i.e. all of the Meadowlands), the results suggested less social behaviour. Only 17% of respondents interacted “often” with those in the wider neighbourhood (Q11). Most (50%) chose “sometimes” as an appropriate term for their social engagement with “people who live in the wider neighbourhood” (Q11).

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, I asked participants to provide an account of how they experienced change within the Meadowlands. In response to the questions, “how has the area changed, physically and socially, since you moved in? How does this compare with your initial perceptions and expectations of the neighbourhood? (Q17), there were a number of insightful remarks. Each response (18 residents chose to respond) was unique and many touched on distinct topics. Layla pointed out something that had become clear to me as a researcher watching the neighbourhood change, that “landscaping has improved as the survey gets older” (R-30). Noticeably, as new developments mature, trees and grass begin to give these once barren neighbourhoods more aesthetic appeal. Jenny noted that the biggest changes have been the result of an influx of new residents, creating more diversity, crowding, and less community. “Demographic changes have been big. The area is more crowded now with more and more residents and more shoppers. I find that there are also less kids, especially on some of the older streets. Some of these older homes are now going up for sale. There is also a lack of community here” (R-31). Amy, who has lived in the Meadowlands for twenty-two years, also highlighted the area’s demographic changes: “the neighborhood has seen a huge increase in Middle Eastern families. This cultural shift was a bit surprising. We were in one of the first phases within the Meadowlands” (R-24). Another long-time resident, Jessica, shared that “there has been a major increase in population. It [Ancaster] now blends into Hamilton and no longer has its quaint—everyone knows each other—feel anymore. People no longer socialize like they used to. Events such as Heritage Days and the Ancaster Fair feel less intimate and homey” (R-7). A number of participants claimed a negative impact as a result of the residential expansion of the Meadowlands. These complaints ranged from infill, to traffic, and ethnic diversification. The most common complaint (56%) was related to densification and an increase in population. Of the 18 responses, only one individual noticed no change in the community.



## **Non-Meadowlands Residents**

Respondents who lived outside of the Meadowlands shared even greater negative feelings with regards to the changes experienced in Ancaster. Since neighbourhood change is the key theme in my research, this is the only topic with which I will compare the two types of residents. Briefly, these residents were more satisfied with their neighbourhoods, more social with immediate neighbours, and more positive regarding the design of their areas. In response to Q17, “how has the area changed, physically and socially, since you moved in?” these respondents negatively characterized Ancaster’s suburban features. Their complaints ranged from “large single-detached homes” (R-2), to “monster homes” (R-8), and “McMansions and strip malls” (R-13). My research surfaces the divide that exists between residents of rural or “old” Ancaster and newer suburban dwellers. It is clear that Ancastrians who live outside of the Meadowlands tend to hold stronger opinions on the neighbourhood’s negative characteristics than those who live inside the Meadowlands. It should also be noted that generally the longer a participant lived in Ancaster (the length of residency), the more likely they seemed to be to perceive change in the area as negative. As one might expect, Meadowlands residents with more years of residency also had complaints regarding neighbourhood shifts. Those who had lived within my study area for more than ten years were more likely to perceive change negatively as those living there for less than ten years. Longstanding Meadowlands residents shared similar concerns as wider Ancastrians—including population growth, demographic diversification, increased traffic, the loss of greenspace, and urban sprawl.

## Chapter 9 – Conclusion

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*Underneath the media's depiction of suburban serenity is a rich and stormy history.*

– Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows*

The objective of this study was to explore the development history of the Ancaster Meadowlands, a commercial and residential suburb within the City of Hamilton, Ontario. The research was approached with three questions in mind: How did the Meadowlands come into existence? What has been the experience of local residents living in the environs of the neighbourhood? And, why is this account a matter worth documenting?

My research revealed a fascinating history which touched upon several important themes pertaining to Canadian suburban land development. First, the study showed that Ancaster had a surprisingly rich archaeological, anthropological, and ecological history.

Second, my research highlighted the fact that growth carries with it both spatial and social repercussions. In the case of Ancaster, early proposals by Revenue Properties and subsequently, Allarco Developments, involved plans to build on extensive acreage. Such enormous development was poised to undeniably change the character of the community. Residents displayed uneasiness with this evolving suburban identity and were particularly hostile to residential land uses which deviated from the well spaced single-family norm. Through zoning, industry and higher density housing types were sidestepped, ensuring Ancaster's residential future. Residents espoused a classic NIMBY approach—persistently defending the community and their lifestyles against developers for over a decade. A series of decisions by government planning authorities overrode the objections of residents and confirmed Ancaster's development trajectory. In the early 1980s, a new, local developer took control of the project and began to move ahead with more conciliatory development plans. Public indignation

subsequently began to subside in view of the new plans and in view of the perceived inevitability of the project. The developer was also well connected in the community and well supported by Ancaster's Council.

A third, related finding, was that close ties between developers and local politicians appeared to ensure that development plans, however contentious, were approved. In Chapter 5, the stark contrast between NIMBYs and development advocates revealed a community divided. The narrative also showed a conspicuous coalition between public and private interests, formed in order to advance the economic goals of development. Politicians such as Lloyd Ferguson and Art Bowes championed the plans of developers and, at times, acted as their voices on Council. For example, despite public protest, Bowes tenaciously defended the residential and infrastructural ambitions of the Alberta-based company, Allarco, between 1969 and 1973. Although this study has found no evidence of undue influence being brought to bear on local politicians, the connections noted of political conspiracy or illegal remuneration by developers, the relations noted in Chapters 5 & 6 were certainly friendly, if not intimate. They may point to an interesting connection worth exploring in future research.

A fourth finding within the history of the Meadowlands was the surprising number of large development corporations who became financially immobilized. Within a twenty-six year period, four of the six companies who owned land in the Meadowlands ended up in financial constraints. Major economic downturns and high leveraging hurt several of the developers in Ancaster. Revenue Properties found itself on the verge of ruin and sold the land in 1969, Allarco liquidated its shares in 1981, Carma declared bankruptcy in 1983, and Bramalea Limited also defaulted in 1995. MOA developer Alec Kelly shared that even his firm flirted with bankruptcy in 1991 when its partner Alterra “was in extremely poor shape financially.”<sup>359</sup> This string of occurrences points to the wider role of lenders and developers within the real estate industry. As is shown in Chapter 2, the development and

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<sup>359</sup> Kelly, PEN, June 23, 2015.

construction process tends to be highly leveraged and the market is more volatile than most sectors of the economy. Elevated rates of borrowing, low levels of corporate diversification, and the occurrence of significant economic downturns all contributed to the financial ruin of Ancaster's developers in this case study.

Another component of my research involved the use of questionnaires in order to ascertain the opinions of Ancastrians themselves. In Chapter 8 I show that residents living within the Meadowlands tend to be upper or upper-middle class, highly educated, and Caucasian. These demographic characteristics were corroborated with the latest Canadian Census data, indicating that my sample constituted a small but fairly representative section of the community. The data also seems to reinforce that the local stereotype of Meadowlands residents as wealthy, educated, and white is not far off. Additionally, survey results showed that there were reasonably high levels of neighbourhood satisfaction within the Meadowlands, despite indications by residents that the neighbourhood had numerous areas upon which to improve. A large minority of residents (46%) also believed that the Meadowlands was a well-designed community.

This affirmative assessment is not universally shared by Ancastrians but it does represent the view of some. The key informants I interviewed were overwhelmingly positive on the legacy of the community. When I asked each of them how they saw the Meadowlands today, years after their involvement in its formation, they responded with pride. "I think that the Meadowlands is probably the nicest development that has ever happened in the City of Hamilton," remarked Steve Spicer, "there is commercial as well as residential, it is a safe community, and it is aesthetically-pleasing. It was worth every battle we fought."<sup>360</sup> Ancaster's representative on City Council also looked back on the community with delight, "at the end of the day, the homes are nice homes and it's a nice place to raise

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<sup>360</sup> Steve Spicer interview, July 17, 2015.

a family. It's well-planned with parks and sidewalks and trees, and so it's a great place to raise a child, which is one of our main objectives as the city, to be the 'best place to raise a child'.”<sup>361</sup>

On the other hand, individuals who lived in Ancaster but outside of the Meadowlands itself, a second subset I surveyed, did not share such attitudes. These respondents were more fervent in their criticisms of the neighbourhood, buttressing a longstanding local perception that a divide exists between residents of “old Ancaster” and incoming suburbanites, divided by the physical barrier of the 403. Long-time residents of the Meadowlands also showed a level of negativity towards the neighbourhood which was not exhibited by newer residents. They indicated that they viewed many of the changes within the Meadowlands since their arrival as negative. These complaints included increased amounts of traffic, a rise in population, growing ethnic diversification, housing infill, a lacking public transit system, and others. Overall, the survey showed that older, more established residents—both within and outside of the Meadowlands—were more likely to see spatial and social changes as injurious to the community.

On one level the Meadowlands is not a unique neighbourhood. It is composed of typical suburban housing and interchangeable “big box” retail. On the other hand, it contains a rich and unique history. The large number of retention ponds and storm water management infrastructure, for example, point to the community's surprising past as a wetland and crucial feeding-settlement site for early Indigenous peoples. Most of this history has now been erased and, as noted in Chapter 2, efforts to memorialize and celebrate the neighbourhood's past are needed to connect current residents with this culturally significant account. In this sense, the legacy of the Meadowlands is similar to that of other modern North American suburbs which are often disconnected with the history of their localities.

Unquestionably, the development of the Meadowlands has substantially altered Ancaster's physical and social landscape. The resulting neighbourhood is highly automobile-oriented and not

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<sup>361</sup> Lloyd Ferguson interview, June 18, 2015.

easily walkable. Completing errands on foot through the labyrinth of parking that is the Power Centre is no small feat. The area is also highly divided in terms of land uses and contains very few amenities for the improvement of social and cultural life. There are no community centres or events held within the neighbourhood which build identity and connection amongst residents. Lastly, the legacy of the community is marked by the removal of hundreds of acres of forests, farms, and wetland for its construction. Although this is a reality for most suburban milieus across North America, efforts could have been made to better conserve and integrate natural land within surveys. Today, the community is still growing as incomers purchase new homes. The Meadowlands has also established itself as a major commercial destination for Hamiltonians and others in the wider region. As the Meadowlands continues to deal with infill and densification, time will tell how the community will continue to evolve in years to come.

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DO YOU LIVE IN THE MEADOWLANDS?

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study on the development of the Ancaster Meadowlands. You would be asked to share your experiences as a resident of this neighbourhood in-person or online. In order to participate online please visit: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Ancaster](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Ancaster)

Your participation will involve one 10-20 minute session.

For participating, you could win a \$25 gift card from Starbucks or Tim Hortons

For more information about this study or to participate in-person, please contact  
Jeremy Parsons, School of Geography & Earth Sciences, McMaster University  
Email: [parsonje@mcmaster.ca](mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca) or Phone: 289-683-0299

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Contact Jeremy Parsons at <a href="mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca">parsonje@mcmaster.ca</a> Or call: 289-683-0299	Contact Jeremy Parsons at <a href="mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca">parsonje@mcmaster.ca</a> Or call: 289-683-0299	Contact Jeremy Parsons at <a href="mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca">parsonje@mcmaster.ca</a> Or call: 289-683-0299	Contact Jeremy Parsons at <a href="mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca">parsonje@mcmaster.ca</a> Or call: 289-683-0299	Contact Jeremy Parsons at <a href="mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca">parsonje@mcmaster.ca</a> Or call: 289-683-0299
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## Appendix B: Key Informant Interview Schedule Sample

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### Introduction:

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.*

*My name is Jeremy Parsons and I am graduate student at McMaster University. I am doing research on the development of a suburban neighbourhood in Ancaster, gathering relevant research information that will be used as part of a Master's thesis.*

*I will be asking you a number of questions related to your involvement and/or expertise with regards to the development of the Meadowlands. I hope to use this information to trace the community's growth and to better understand suburban planning and development. As is outlined in the letter of information/consent (document attached), your involvement in this interview is purely voluntary and all information collected will be kept in a secure location. This is not a confidential interview and the information you provide will be connected to your name and title in my final thesis unless you indicate that you would not like your name and/or title to be published. The interview should take anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes, depending on our discussion. You may decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and you may end the interview at any point. I will also be recording your voice on an audio recorder, are you okay with that? Okay, let's begin.*

### Sample Questions:

1. What was your role/title and/or relationship to the development of the Meadowlands?
2. What were, in your view, the central reasons why the area was first selected as a site to be developed residentially and commercially?
3. What was the discussion like surrounding the small number of historically significant properties that were within the zoned commercial and residential areas?
4. Can you expand upon some of the details surrounding the environmental complications that were involved in the process of development? What stood out to you most? What issue received the most criticism from the public?
5. Please comment on the process of municipal amalgamation and how that has played a role in the expansion of the Meadowlands commercial corridor.
6. What are you most proud of with regards to how the Meadowlands was realized as a community?
7. Are there any aspects of the planning process or the completed community that you feel were poorly carried out or were mistakes altogether?

8. What was the role of the institution in the planning process of surrounding development? How does the institution see itself in relation to its low-density suburban milieu?
9. Can you explain what you recall on the creation of the Meadowlands Power Centre?
10. What sort of effect has the Meadowlands had on the image of Ancaster? On the historic village core of Ancaster? On the city of Hamilton as a whole? On provincial planning legislation?
11. Can you comment on how environmental planning was done in Meadowlands Neighbourhood IV, a well-known environmentally significant area (ESA)?

**Conclusion**

*Thank you very much for participating in this interview, it was good to meet you. If you have an interest in the study results and did not yet indicate your contact information on the letter of information/consent, I am able to note that now. Thank you again for your time.*

## Appendix C: Key Informant Interview Directory

Key Informant	Role Related to the Meadowlands	Current Role	Date of Interview	Telephone (T), In-Person (P), or E-mail (E) Interview
John Ames	Planner, City of Hamilton	Planner, City of Hamilton	November 27, 2013	P
Jim Green	Local historian	Deceased	December 11, 2013	P
Ron Williamson	Archaeological assessment lead	Chief Archaeologist and Managing Partner, ASI	April 27, 2015	E
Don May	Principal at May, Pirie & Associates	President, Almost There Inc.	June 16, 2015	T
Lloyd Ferguson	Councillor, Town of Ancaster (1983-1993)	Councillor (Ward 12), City of Hamilton	June 18, 2015	P
Ed VanderWindt	Building Official, City of Hamilton	Chief Building Official, City of Hamilton	June 18, 2015	P
Michael Corrado	President, MiCor Developments	President, MichaelCorrado/Coletara Development	June 18, 2015	P
Alec Kelly	Co-founder/lead developer: Cloverleaf Village, 752401 Ontario Inc (MOA)	President, Alec Kelly Ltd.; semi-retired	June 23, 2015	P
Bill Janssen	Planner, City of Hamilton	Director of “Open for Business” Initiatives, City of Hamilton	July 9, 2015	P
Adi Irani	Senior Engineer, A.J. Clarke & Associates	CEO and Chief Engineer, A.J. Clarke & Associates	July 13, 2015	P
Charlie McConnell	Development Planner, Town of Ancaster (1986-2000)	Planning Manager, Town of Oakville	July 13, 2015	T
Steve Spicer	Development Manager, 752401 Ontario Inc (MOA)	Development Manager, Multi-Area Developments	July 17, 2015	P
Alex Georgieff	Planner, Region of Hamilton-Wentworth (1974-1994).	Planning Commissioner, Region of Durham	July 20, 2015	T
Alain Pinard	Senior Planner, Town of Ancaster (1990–2001)	Director of Planning, City of Kitchener	July 23, 2015	T
Bob Wade	Councillor, Town of Ancaster (1978-1984); Mayor, Town of Ancaster (1985-2000)	Retired	July 29, 2015	P
Peter Tollefsen	Planner, Town of Ancaster (1976-1988)	Planning Director, Town of the Blue Mountains	August 2, 2015	E
Paul Smithson	Geography student, McMaster University	Senior Policy Planner, City of Cambridge	August 8, 2015	T

## Appendix D: Key Informant Letter of Information/Consent

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### Investigators:

#### Principal Investigator:

Jeremy E. Parsons  
School of Geography & Earth Sciences  
Earth Sciences  
McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
289-683-0299  
E-mail: parsonje@mcmaster.ca

#### Faculty Supervisor:

Dr. Richard Harris  
School of Geography &  
McMaster University  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
(905) 525-9140 ext. 27216  
E-mail: harristr@mcmaster.ca



### Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this research is to document the development of the Meadowlands neighbourhood over time. I am interested not only in how the area was planned and built but also how it has turned out as a residential and commercial community. I will be looking at the effects of the development on the environment, the local residents, and the City of Hamilton as a whole. Was it well planned? Were the plans well carried out? You are invited to participate in this key informant interview because you are a professional or community member with experience or insight related to the Meadowlands. This research will be published in thesis-format, as part of the completion of a Master's degree.

### How the research will be carried out:

I will be contacting key informants via email and setting up interviews which will take place over telephone, or in person, depending on preference and availability. These interviews will be *unstructured* and will allow informants the freedom to share as little or as much information as they desire and to provide their own unique perspective. The interviews may last anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes, depending on our discussion. As a key informant your participation in this interview is purely voluntary and all information collected will be kept in a secure location. The information you provide may be connected your name and title in my final thesis unless you indicate that you would not like your name and/or title to be published. You may decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and you may end the interview at any point. All interviews will be recorded with audio equipment. All participants involved in my research will be over the age of 18. The interview is being undertaken for research purposes only.

### Potential harms, risks or discomforts:

There are very few potential risks for key informants associated with this research. All questions are voluntary and you are able to skip or refuse answering any questions or sections in the interview. You are also able to withdraw from the study at any time up to August 15, 2015. This is not a confidential interview. Your name and/or title will be linked to the information you provide in the final thesis unless you indicate otherwise.

### Potential benefits:



By providing valuable insight, key informants are contributing to planning research and helping to further understanding of suburban development.

### **Privacy & confidentiality:**

This is not a confidential interview. As was noted in the section on risks, your name and/or title may be linked to the information you provide in the final thesis unless you indicate otherwise.

Data Collection: Interviews will be online, over the phone, or in person. All three methods of correspondence may not guarantee the confidentiality of shared information. In-person interviews may be conducted in office settings, in public places, or out-of-doors depending on availability and preference. Interviews will be audio recorded.

Use of data: The data will be transcribed in the privacy of my workspace, with headphones on. It will be protected in a password-protected file on my laptop computer and on an external hard-drive. My laptop is not left overnight in my workspace. It is transported safely in a laptop bag.

Release of study findings: Study findings that will be disseminated will have key informant identifying characteristics, unless otherwise directed (see above). Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, with key informant information, will be maintained by the researcher.

### **What if I change my mind about being in the study?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to be part of the study, you can stop (withdraw) without any sort of penalty or consequence up to August 15, 2015 due to the fact that I expect to be submitting my thesis around this time. You are also free to answer only the questions you wish. If you choose to withdraw from the study during or after the interview process, you will be asked what you would like done with your data which has been collected (use of partial data, deletion of data, or have data returned to you). Actions will be taken accordingly.

### **How do I find out about the study results?**

I expect to have this study completed by the end of fall 2015. At the end of the letter of information, you will be given the option of selecting to receive the results of the study and my completed thesis. This information will be circulated by email or mail as required.

My completed thesis will also be posted on [www.digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca](http://www.digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca)

### **Questions about the study:**

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at: Email: [parsonje@mcmaster.ca](mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca) OR Phone: 289-683-0299

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat



Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142  
 c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support  
 E-mail: [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)

## CONSENT

I have read the information presented in this letter about the study being conducted by Jeremy E. Parsons of McMaster University.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive any additional details I requested.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time up until approximately August 15, 2015.

I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Informant (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded (check one). ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

2. ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.

Please send them to this email address \_\_\_\_\_

Or to this mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

## Appendix E: Key Informant E-mail Recruitment Script Sample

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### E-mail Subject line:

McMaster Research – A Study on the Meadowlands Neighbourhood

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Jeremy Parsons and I am a Masters student in the School of Geography & Earth Sciences at McMaster University. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Richard Harris on the planning and development of the Ancaster Meadowlands.

As part of my research, I am interviewing professionals such as planners, developers, and politicians to gain first-hand insight and commentary on the growth of the Meadowlands. Since you've played an important role or have valuable knowledge on this process, I would really appreciate speaking with you. I have attached a letter of information with more details as well as a portion on consent.

Please let me know when would be a convenient time for you to discuss the details. I am able to conduct the interview over coffee, over the phone or in your office setting. My contact information is found at the bottom of this email.

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you any have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted you can contact:

The McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat  
 Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142  
 c/o Research Office for Administration, Development and Support  
 E-mail: [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)

Sincerely,

Jeremy Parsons  
 MA candidate  
 School of Geography & Earth Sciences  
 McMaster University  
 E-mail: [parsonje@mcmaster.ca](mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca)  
 Phone: 289-683-0299

## Appendix F: Resident Interview Schedule

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### Introduction:

*Thank you for participating in this survey!*

*My name is Jeremy Parsons and I am graduate student at McMaster University. I am doing research on the development of a suburban neighbourhood in Ancaster, gathering relevant research information that will be used as part of a Master's thesis. I will be asking you 26 basic questions about your experiences and perceptions as a resident of this neighbourhood. I hope to use this information to better understand the experiences of all residents and to find out whether the area has turned out as planners and developers had hoped. This interview should take anywhere from 10-20 minutes. At the end of the survey you will be given the opportunity to place your name into a draw for a \$25 gift card for either Tim Hortons or Starbucks. Thank you once again. Do you have any questions before we start? I will also be recording your voice on an audio recorder, are you okay with that? Okay, let's begin.*

### Questions (\* denotes prompts):

1. What name do you use to refer to the neighbourhood in which you live?
2. From the looking at the following map of Hamilton (\*show map), what do you consider as the boundaries of your neighbourhood? Feel free to list bordering streets or natural areas.
3. How long have you lived in this neighbourhood? (\*Show map: “for our purposes this neighbourhood includes the following boundaries”).
4. Did you purchase your home from the builder or from a previous resident?
5. Where did you live before moving here?
6. Why did you pick this particular neighbourhood to live in? (\*Affordability? Convenience for work? Close to highways? Close to good schools? Liked the look of neighbourhood? Recommended by a friend?)
7. How satisfied are you with your neighbourhood overall? Would you say you are very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied?
8. What do you like most about this neighbourhood?
9. What do you like least about this neighbourhood?
10. How often do you interact with the people who live on your block?
  - i. Almost never

- ii. Rarely
  - iii. Sometimes
  - iv. Often
11. How often do you interact with the people who live in the wider neighbourhood?
    - i. Almost never
    - ii. Rarely
    - iii. Sometimes
    - iv. Often
  12. Do you see a need for improvement in any of the following areas:
    - i. Sense of community/neighbourliness?
    - ii. Walkability?
    - iii. Public transportation?
    - iv. Amount of greenspace?
    - v. Public services?
    - vi. Shopping accessibility and availability?
    - vii. Employment accessibility and availability?
    - viii. Any other aspect not mentioned?
  13. Do you view this neighbourhood as a well-designed community? Why or why not?
  14. What elements do you like and what elements do you feel are missing or inadequate?
  15. (\*Only answer if you are a resident who has purchased your home new) Have you had any contact with the builders or developers of this neighbourhood? Could you briefly describe it?
  16. (\*Only answer if you are a resident who has purchased your home new). Did you have any input into the design, materials or features of your house? (\*ask to specify)
  17. How has the area changed, physically and socially, since you moved in? How does this compare with your initial perceptions and expectations of the neighbourhood?
  18. Are you aware of any other resident of the neighbourhood who you think might be willing to share their opinions about the area?

### Basic Demography

19. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
20. What is your sex? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_
22. What language do you mainly speak at home? \_\_\_\_\_
23. With which ethnicity do you most identify? \_\_\_\_\_
24. What is the highest level of education you have completed? \_\_\_\_\_
25. What is your current employment status? \_\_\_\_\_
26. What is your annual total household income? (approximate)
 

a. Less than \$10,000 annually	c. \$20,000 to 50,000 annually
b. \$10,000 to 20,000 annually	d. \$50,000 to 75,000 annually

e. \$75,000 to 100,000 annually

f. \$100,000 or more annually

## Appendix G: Resident Letter of Information/Consent

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### Investigators:

#### Principal Investigator:

Jeremy E. Parsons  
 School of Geography  
 & Earth Sciences  
 McMaster University  
 Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
 289-683-0299  
 E-mail: parsonje@mcmaster.ca

#### Faculty Supervisor:

Dr. Richard Harris  
 School of Geography  
 & Earth Sciences  
 McMaster University  
 Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
 (905) 525-9140 ext. 27216  
 E-mail: harrisr@mcmaster.ca



### Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this research is to document the development of the Meadowlands neighbourhood over time. I am interested not only in how the area was planned and built but also how it has turned out as a residential and commercial community. I will be looking at the effects of the development on the environment, the local residents, and the City of Hamilton as a whole. Was it well planned? Were the plans well carried out? You are invited to take part in this study as a participant, giving your stories and your experiences regarding the development stages and the current state of the Meadowlands. I am doing this research for a thesis, towards the completion of a Master's degree.

### How the research will be carried out:

I will be hand-delivering information packages to the home addresses of 100 residents currently living in the Meadowlands neighbourhood. This initial contact will serve to notify residents of my research and to recruit individuals to participate. I will give interested residents the option of participating by either completing an online survey or by agreeing to participate in a one-on-one interview.

As a participant you will be asked to share your perceptions on the development of the Meadowlands and any details you would like to share regarding the planning and construction process. You may share as much or as little as you feel comfortable. I will also ask you for some basic background information such as your age and education. Interviews will be done in participant's homes or in a public place. All efforts will be made to ensure that only the researcher and participant will be present during the interview. This ensures that your responses are kept private and confidential and that the data will not be influenced by the presence of distracting external factors. All interviews will be recorded with audio equipment. All participants involved in my research will be over the age of 18 and residents contacted will be required to live in the Meadowlands vicinity within Ancaster, Ontario (either as renters or property owners) and at the time of the interview/survey.

### **Potential harms, risks or discomforts:**

There are very few potential risks for participants associated with this research. As with any social interaction, there are small risks such as encountering an anxious or embarrassing topic for reasons unforeseen to the researcher. Also, because your community is not large, there is the possibility that others may be able to identify you on the basis of references you make, even with the use of pseudonyms. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to tell me. Lastly, because I am using SurveyMonkey, an American survey tool, there is a small risk inherent in their hosting of the data in the United States. Being subject to US Patriot Act, confidentiality/anonymity of that data cannot be fully guaranteed. All questions are voluntary and participants are able to freely skip or refuse answering any questions or sections should they so desire.

### **Potential benefits:**

Participants have the opportunity to have their names entered into a prize draw for a \$25 gift card from Tim Hortons or Starbucks. Additionally, this study has the potential to increase the local awareness and pride of place of the residents and key informants. In participating, respondents may find themselves thinking more about their neighbourhood's design and both its positive and negative characteristics.

### **Privacy & confidentiality:**

You are participating in this study confidentially. It should be noted that this is not an anonymous survey due to the fact that we are asking for your name, e-mail address, and phone number for the purposes of giving out a prize and e-mailing participants with the study results. This supplementary information (such as e-mail addresses) will be separated from the survey data to protect your confidentiality. I will also be sure not use your name or any personal information that would allow you to be identified in my thesis or the results themselves. Any reference to your data in my final thesis will be done through the use of pseudonyms.

Data Collection: Interviews will be conducted in a quiet room, inside the home, as far away from other household members as possible. If the researcher is accompanied by a security "buddy" that is not a member of the research team, a confidentiality form will be signed by that person in the presence of the research participant.

Use of data: The data will be transcribed in the privacy of my workspace, with headphones on. The names of participants will not be on the transcripts or maps. No one but I will have access to the data. It will be protected in a password-protected file on my laptop computer and on an external hard-drive. My laptop is not left overnight in my workspace. It is transported safely in a laptop bag.

Release of study findings: Study findings that will be disseminated will not have personal names, specific addresses or other identifying characteristics in them. Quotes will be used from participants, but names (or other information that could indirectly identify them) will not be used.

Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, without identifying information, will be maintained by the researcher.

### **What if I change my mind about being in the study?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to be part of the study, you can stop (withdraw) at any time up until approximately August 15, 2015. Participants are also free to answer only the questions they wish. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study during or after the interview process, he/she will be asked what they would like done with their data which has been collected (use of partial data, deletion of data, or return data to them). Actions will be taken accordingly. If a participant withdraws from the after having submitted their name into the prize draw, their entry will remain unless otherwise requested by the participant.

### **How do I find out about the study results?**

I expect to have this study completed by the end of summer/beginning of fall 2015. At the end of the letter of information, participants will be given the option of selecting to receive the results of the study and my completed thesis. This information will be circulated by email or mail as required. My completed thesis will also be posted on [www.digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca](http://www.digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca)

### **Questions about the Study:**

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me with one of the following methods:      Email: [parsonje@mcmaster.ca](mailto:parsonje@mcmaster.ca)      Phone: 289-683-0299

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat

Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142

c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support

E-mail: [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)



## CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Jeremy E. Parsons of McMaster University.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time up until approximately August 15, 2015.

I have been given a copy of this form.

I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Participant (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded (circle one). ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

2. ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.

Please send them to this email address \_\_\_\_\_

Or to this mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

☐ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

## Appendix H: Resident Draw Prize Entry Page

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### Gift Card Draw

Would you like to participate in the draw for a \$25 gift card from Tim Hortons? Any draw-related contact information supplied will be deleted once the draw is complete and will not be used in relation to the study. If you choose to withdraw from the study after having entered in the draw prize, you will still be eligible to win the prize unless you request that your entry be removed.

- ☐ “Yes, I would like to participate in the draw.”
- ☐ “No, I would not like to participate in the draw.”

If you indicated “yes”, please provide the following contact information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

