

To:	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	March 13, 2025
Subject / Report No:	PDR-CW-22-25
Title:	Merit Report for Grey County Official Plan Amendment 26 – Ridgeview Lumber
Prepared by:	Cassondra Dillman
Reviewed by:	Scott Taylor
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	Township of Southgate

Recommendation

1. That report PDR-CW-22-25 regarding an overview of County Official Plan Amendment No. 26 (Ridgeview Lumber) on lands described as Lot 18, Concession 13, geographic Township of Proton, now in the Township of Southgate, which would have the effect of redesignating the subject lands from 'Rural' and 'Hazard Lands' to 'Rural with Exceptions' and 'Hazard Lands' to permit the on-farm diversified use to occupy 2.25% of the property area, be received for information.

Executive Summary

Grey County has received a County Official Plan Amendment (OPA) application to increase the size of an on-farm diversified use (OFDU) beyond what the County Plan currently permits in the Rural designation. The subject lands are approximately 41.8 hectares in size and have frontage on Grey Road 9. The OPA would have the effect of increasing the maximum combined area of an OFDU to 9,300 m² (being 2.25% of the lands) whereas the County Official Plan currently permits 2% of total size of the property up to 8,000 m² to be occupied by the OFDU on parcels greater than 20 hectares.

The subject property is designated Rural and Hazard Lands on Schedule A of the County's Official Plan. The applicants are seeking a site-specific redesignation on a portion of the subject lands to facilitate the expansion of the storage areas associated with the existing OFDU (lumber yard).

This report recommends that the Committee receive the report for information. A joint public meeting has been scheduled for March 26, 2025. A thorough planning analysis and recommendation report will follow the agency and public commenting process.

Background and Discussion

Grey County has received a County Official Plan Amendment application (referred to as OPA 26) to increase the overall size of an on-farm diversified use (OFDU) beyond what the County Plan currently permits in the Rural designation. The proposed County OPA would redesignate a portion of the lands from 'Rural' and 'Hazard Lands' to 'Rural with Exceptions' and 'Hazard Lands' to permit the OFDU to occupy 2.25% of the property. A copy of the draft County OPA is included in the attachments section of this report.

The subject lands are described as Lot 18, Concession 13, geographic Township of Proton, now in the Township of Southgate and have a civic address of 185673 Grey Road 9. The lands are on the north-east corner of Grey Road 9 and Southgate Sideroad 13. This property has frontage and access off Grey Road 9. The property is approximately 41.8 hectares (103 acres) in size and contains a residential dwelling, barn, and shop associated with an existing OFDU being a lumber yard. The property was rezoned in 2022 to permit an OFDU.

Figure 1 below shows an aerial view of the subject lands highlighted in blue and the surrounding land uses.



Figure 1: Aerial map of the subject lands

Figure 2 shows Schedule A land use designations from the County Official Plan. The Rural designation is shown in white, Hazard Lands is shown in green, and Agricultural is shown in brown.



Figure 2: Schedule A Land Use Designations, County Official Plan

The applicant is seeking to expand the storage areas associated with the existing lumber yard, including adding more outdoor storage as well as an open-air, covered storage structure, to meet current and anticipated demands and inventory, and continue successful operation of the OFDU. The expansion would result in increasing the overall area of the OFDU, inclusive of buildings, laneways, and outdoor storage areas, by 1,300 m². The outdoor storage area would continue to be located beside and towards the rear of the OFDU area, which will result in less visual impact from the County Road and neighboring properties. The proposed covered storage area is also proposed to be located in a previously disturbed area behind the existing shop.

Staff note that the Official Plan also permits a maximum gross floor area of buildings associated with an OFDU of 1,600 m²; the applicant is proposing a total gross floor area of 1,123 m² (750 m² is the existing workshop building, 373 m² is proposed as open-air, covered storage). As such, no relief is required regarding the gross floor area of buildings associated with the OFDU. Agriculture would continue to be the primary use of the subject lands.

Copies of the applicant's Planning Justification Report and site plan can be found on the County of Grey [website](#).

Land uses surrounding the subject property include the following:

- North: Agriculture and Woodlands
- East: Agriculture and Woodlands
- South: Sideroad 13 and rural residential lots
- West: Township of Southgate administration building and public works yard.

The applicant has also submitted a related Official Plan Amendment (OPA2-25) and Zoning By-law Amendment (C6-25) to the Township of Southgate.

Figure 3 shows an aerial photo (google maps) of the existing building cluster, including the residential dwelling, barn, existing OFDU use (shop and outdoor storage area), and the adjacent Township of Southgate public works yard.

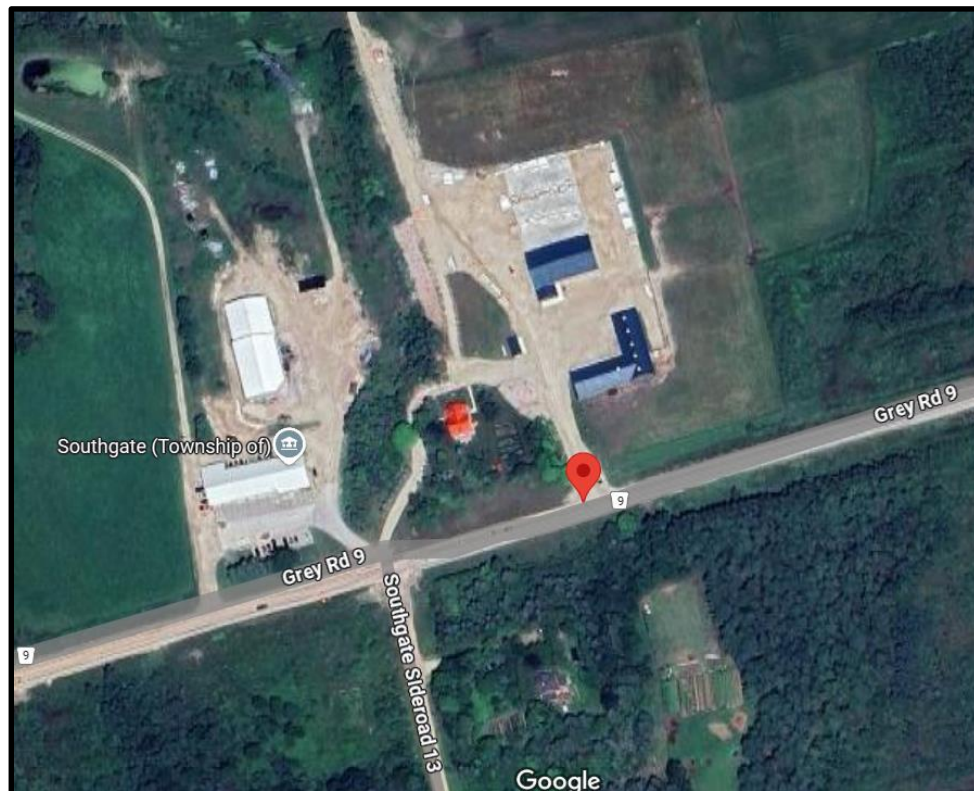


Figure 3: Aerial Photo of the existing building cluster

Analysis of Planning Issues

When rendering a land use planning decision, planning authorities must have regard for matters of provincial interest under the *Planning Act*, be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024, and conform to any provincial plans or County/Municipal Official Plans that govern the subject lands. In this case, the County of Grey Official Plan and the Township of Southgate Official Plan has jurisdiction over the subject property. There are no provincial plans in effect for this area of the County.

A joint public meeting will be required for three applications, the County Official Plan Amendment, Southgate Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment, and is scheduled for March 26, 2025. Notice was provided to all properties within 120 metres of the subject lands and prescribed commenting agencies.

At this time, a detailed planning analysis has not been undertaken. Following the public and agency review process, a thorough analysis and staff recommendation will be provided. Key provincial and County policies have been flagged below for consideration.

Provincial Policy and Legislation

The *Planning Act* speaks to the need to have regard for the appropriate location of growth and development; the protection of agricultural resources; protection of ecological systems; the protection of public health and safety; and the orderly development of safe and healthy communities.

The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS is a policy statement issued under the authority of section 3 of the *Planning Act* and came into effect on October 20, 2024.

Section 2.5.1 of the PPS states that healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by: building upon rural character and leveraging rural amenities and assets; promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products; and providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas. On-farm diversified uses, in accordance with provincial standards, are a permitted use on rural lands (2.6.1) and development that can be sustained by rural service levels should be promoted (2.6.2).

The PPS defines on-farm diversified uses as:

“Uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, uses that produce value-added agricultural products, and electricity generation facilities and transmission systems, and energy storage systems.”

The Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas document is meant to complement, be consistent with and explain the intent of the PPS (2014) policies and definitions as they relate to agricultural, agriculture-related, and on-farm diversified uses. The guidelines recommend that the standard for the acceptable area occupied by an OFDU is up to 2% of a farm parcel to a maximum of 1 ha (10,000 m²).

County of Grey Official Plan

The subject lands are designated Rural and Hazard Lands on Schedule A of the County’s Official Plan. The County’s Official Plan supports the diversification of the Rural economic base and employment opportunities, while also ensuring that development is compatible with the rural landscape. The Official Plan permits OFDUs in the Rural designation, provided the requirements listed in the Plan are met.

Table 8 in the County Official Plan provides the size criteria (i.e. the footprint or lot coverage occupied by the use) for OFDUs based on land use type and property size. Parcels greater than 20 hectares in the Rural designation are permitted a maximum OFDU of 2% of the total size of the property or a maximum combined area of the uses of 8,000 m². Section 5.2.2 (19) provides a list of criteria to consider prior to establishing a new OFDU. Staff note that there is an existing

OFDU (lumber yard) on the subject lands and the proposal is to expand the storage areas related to this use.

County Planning staff will review the scope of the OFDU on this specific parcel of land at the time of the detailed planning review stage.

The Hazard Lands designation is restrictive regarding the types of development permitted. The proposed development is located outside of any lands identified as Hazard Lands.

Schedule B of the County Official Plan indicates that a portion of the subject lands contain Aggregate Resource Area. Section 5.6.2 (1) states that where the Aggregate Resource Area overlaps a Rural or Hazard Lands land use type, the policies and permitted use of the underlying land use types shall apply until such time as the site is licensed for sand or gravel extraction.

Appendix B of the County Official Plan indicates that the subject lands contain Significant Woodlands and a Stream. No development is proposed adjacent to these areas. Further comments will be received from County Planning Ecology staff at the detailed review stage.

Per Appendix D, the subject lands have frontage on County Road 9. Further comments will be received from County Transportation Services staff at the detailed review stage

Following the public and agency processes, a more thorough analysis of the *Planning Act*, PPS, and County Official Plan will be undertaken with a staff recommendation.

Legislated Requirements

These applications will be processed in accordance with the *Planning Act*.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no anticipated financial, staffing, or other resource considerations associated with the proposed County Official Plan Amendment, beyond those normally encountered in processing such applications. The County has collected the requisite application fee.

Relevant Consultation

- ☒ Internal: Planning, Transportation Services
 - ☒ Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets - review will be undertaken at formal review stage.
- ☒ External: the public, Township of Southgate, and prescribed agencies as required by the *Planning Act*

Appendices and Attachments

Link to application documents on the County's [website](#).

[Draft OPA 26 By-law and Official Plan Schedule](#)

[Site Plan](#)