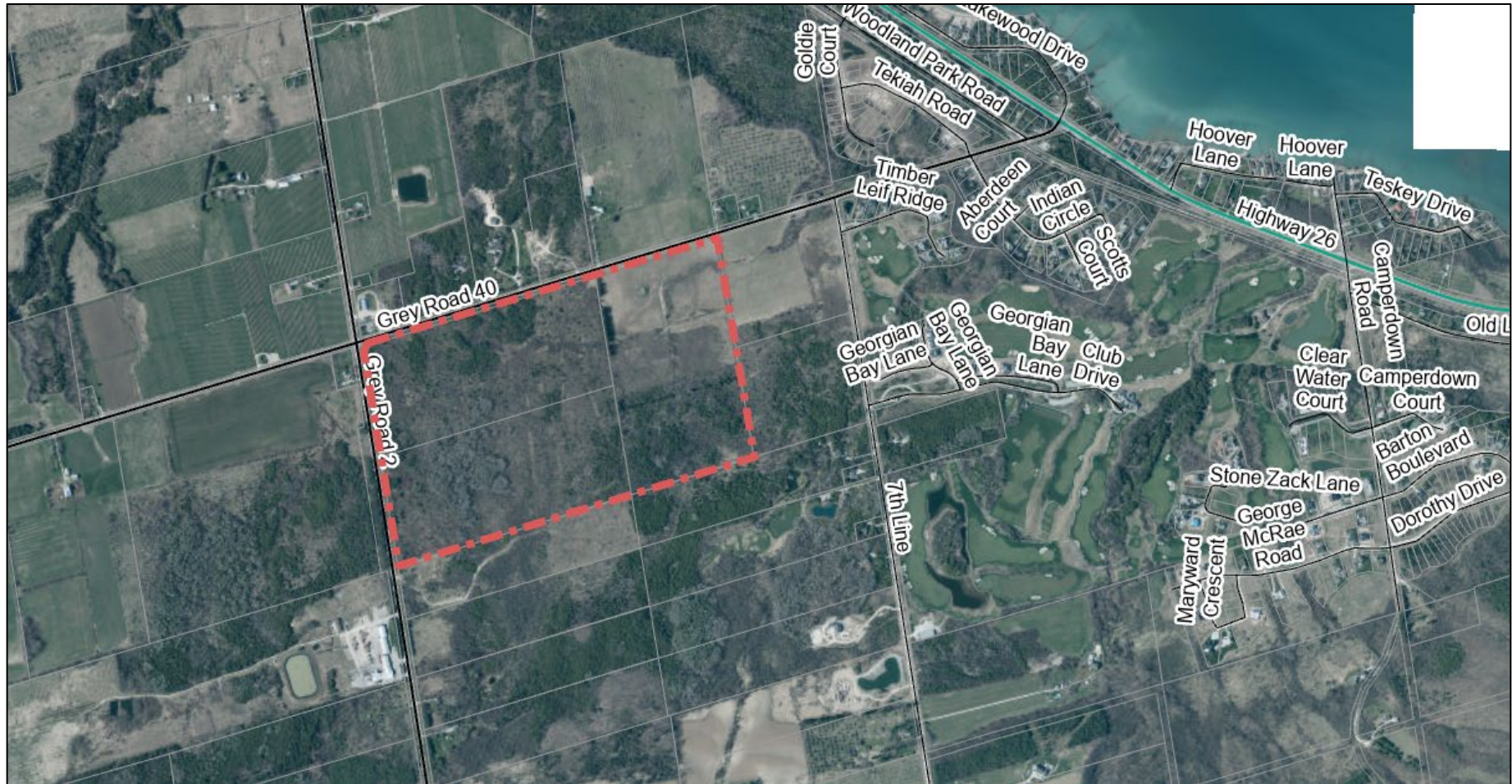




Report PDR-CW-28-25
Final Report on County Official Plan
Amendment 25 - Thornbury Acres
Committee of the Whole
May 22, 2025

This presentation contains a summary of Report PDR-CW-28-25. For more details on this application, please see the Staff Report.

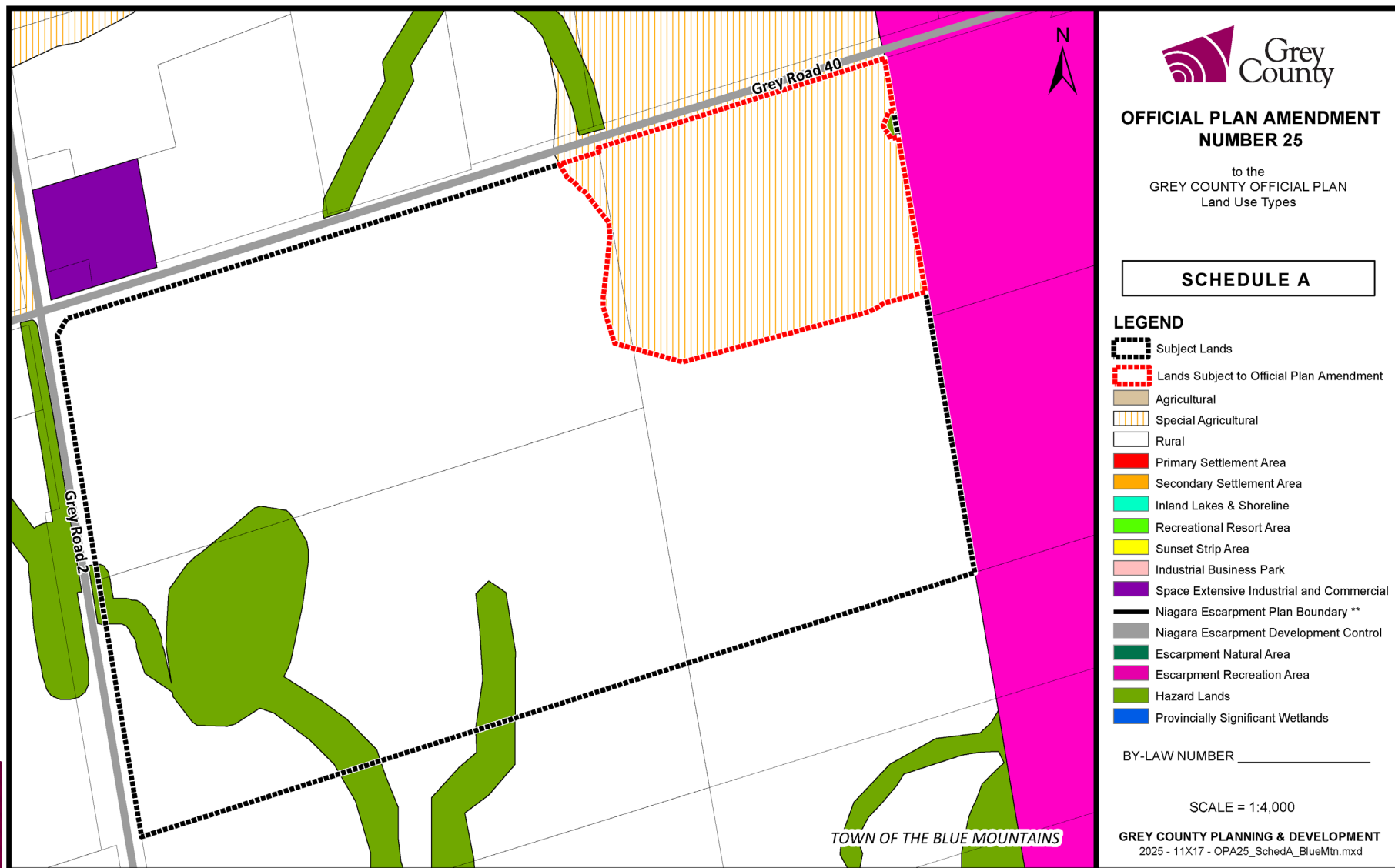
Thornbury Acres - Subject Lands



Background on OPA 25

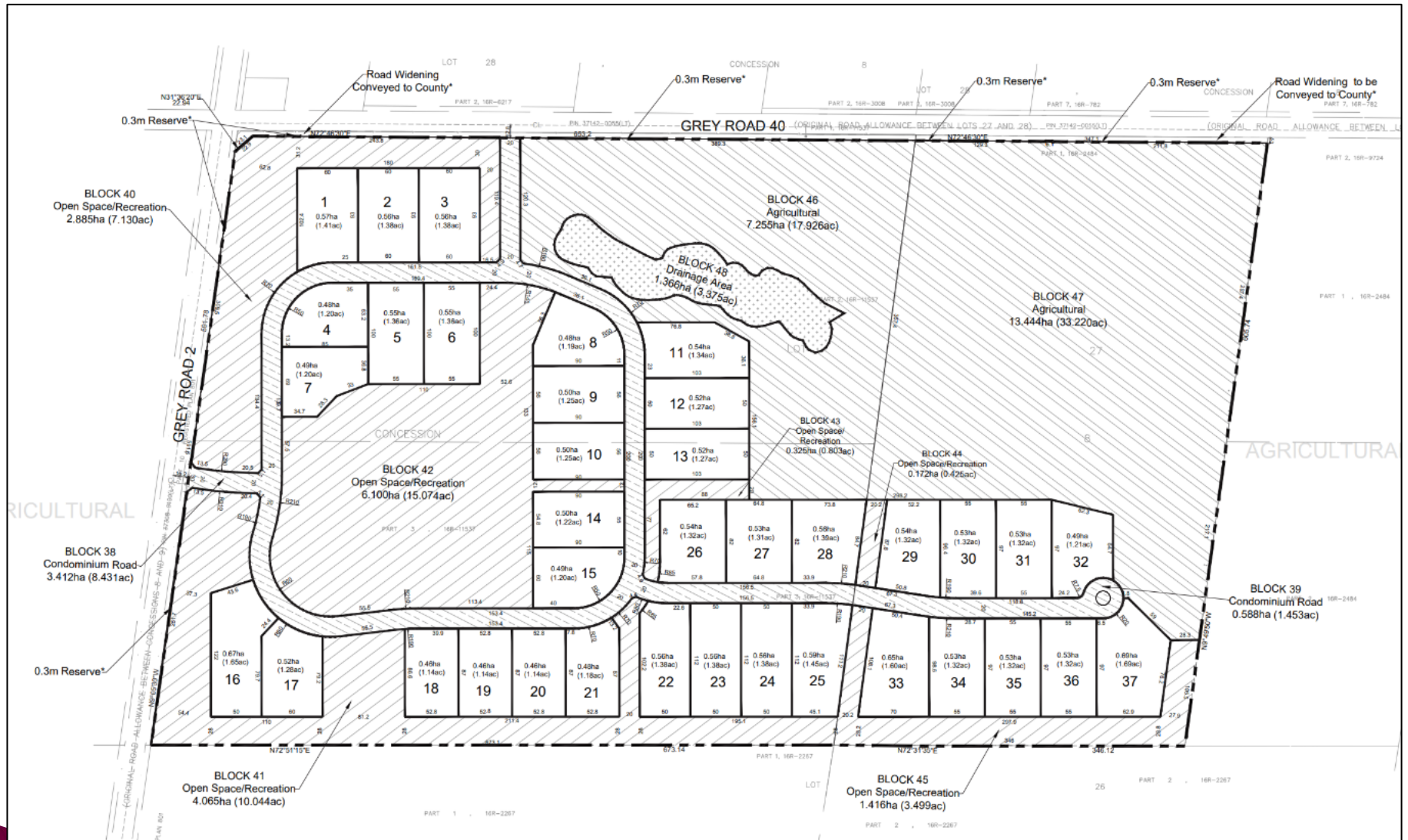
- ▶ County Official Plan Amendment (OPA 25) is a site-specific amendment to permit agricultural uses associated with a residential farm cooperative on the Special Agricultural lands. No residential lots/units or stormwater management ponds would be permitted on the Special Agricultural lands.
- ▶ The related plan of condominium, zoning by-law amendment, and Town official plan amendment applications to permit a residential farm cooperative (RFC) are under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).
- ▶ The developer has recently proposed a modified development plan consisting of the following:
 - A reduction in the number of residential units from 37 units to 31 units,
 - A shift in the location of some of the residential units to preserve more farm and forested lands,
 - Removal of the stormwater pond from the Special Agricultural lands, &
 - A reduction in the number of entrances onto the County Roads.

Lands subject to OPA 25

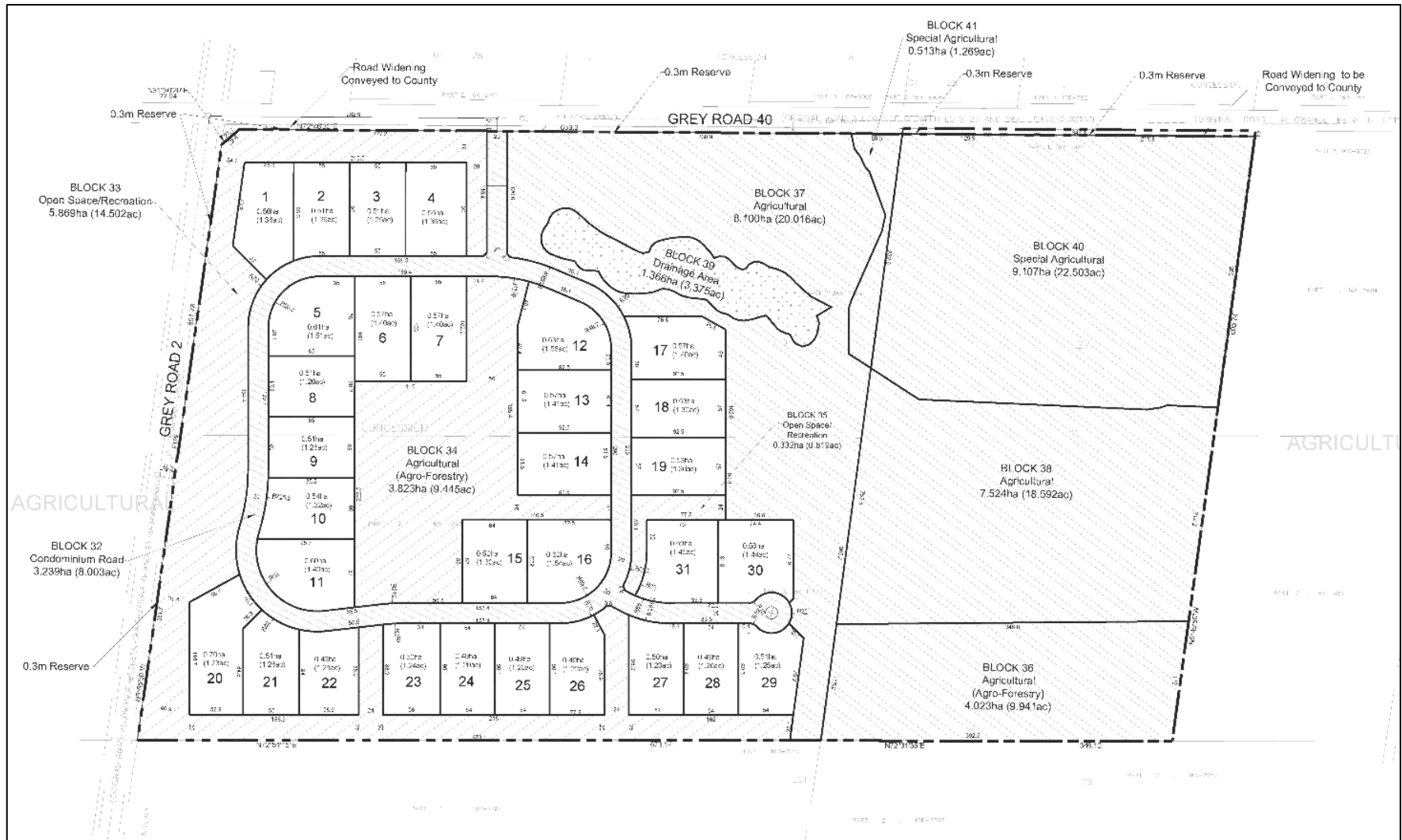


Please be aware this map is for illustrative purposes only. Do not rely on this map as being a precise indicator of routes, location of features or surveying purposes. This map may contain cartographic errors or omissions

Initial Proposed Plan of Condominium



Revised Proposed Plan of Condominium



Additional Background

- ▶ A two-week Ontario Land Tribunal hearing is scheduled to commence on July 7, 2025, relating to some of the existing appeals of the Thornbury Acres development.
- ▶ Town of The Blue Mountains remains concerned with the development, including the revised 31-unit proposal.
- ▶ The County approved OPA 23 to amend the County's Rural policies pertaining to permitted uses and development criteria. Some of the changes in OPA 23 impact residential farm cooperatives. OPA 23 is in force and effect.
- ▶ OPA 23 does not apply to the Thornbury Acres development, but would apply to future proposals for similar development types.

Comments Received on OPA 25

- ▶ The comments were received ahead of the developer modifying their development plans to the 31-unit proposal.
- ▶ The County heard a mix of comments on OPA 25, some with no concerns and others with concerns. Concerns raised with OPA 25 include the following:
 - the number of residential units and scale of the development,
 - whether farm production on-site warrants this amount of housing,
 - whether the County Official Plan policies have been addressed,
 - lack of understanding this development demonstrates about farming,
 - lack of current farm production on-site,
 - fragmentation/loss of farmlands,
 - whether such a development would be precedent-setting, and
 - impacts on neighbours including neighbouring farms.

Planning Analysis

- ▶ OPA 25 only impacts the Special Agricultural lands of the subject development.
- ▶ Provincial Planning Statement 2024 continues to provide protections for Specialty Corp Lands. OPA 25 contains specific wording to ensure no new residential lot/unit creation, or stormwater management infrastructure is permitted in the Special Agricultural lands.
- ▶ Residential Farm Cooperative (RFC) is an undefined term in the County Plan, prior to OPA 23. RFCs are only permitted in the Rural designation.
- ▶ Section 5.4.2(8)(a) of the County Plan requires that: “A minimum of 60% of the original land holding will remain available for the active primary agricultural or recreational use”.
- ▶ OPA 25, if approved, would allow the developer to use the entire 61-hectare site as part of their 60% calculation, versus having to limit that percentage to just the Rural lands.

Planning Analysis continued

- ▶ The County Plan continues to direct most new non-farm growth to settlement areas. Staff would further note that County Council recently approved OPA 23 to further clarify the County's Rural designation policies.
- ▶ Staff remain conflicted about the development, but would note that there were some 'improvements' made through the revised proposal.
- ▶ With respect to the concerns over the precedent that could be set by OPA 25, staff will note the following. Each amendment is tested on its own merits based on the legislative and policy regime in place at the time of the amendment application.
- ▶ Staff are generally not supportive of the number of residential units proposed (31 units), but it is an improvement over the 37-unit proposal.
- ▶ Based on the direction provided by Council on May 8, 2025, there is merit in supporting OPA 25 as a site-specific amendment.

Recommendation

1. That report PDR-CW-28-25 be received; and
2. That all written and oral submissions on Official Plan Amendment Number 25 were considered and helped to make an informed recommendation and decision; and
3. That proposed County Official Plan Amendment number 25 to permit the redesignation of lands designated 'Rural', 'Special Agricultural', and 'Hazard Lands' to the 'Rural', 'Special Agricultural with Exceptions' and 'Hazard Lands' designations on lands legally described as Part of Lot 27, Concession 8, in the geographic Township of Collingwood, now in the Town of The Blue Mountains be supported, and a by-law to adopt the County Official Plan Amendment be prepared for consideration by County Council.