

# Planning Justification Report

Proposed Residential Development

*514504 Second Line, Amaranth Township*

*Amendment to County of Dufferin Official Plan*

*Amendment to Township of Amaranth Official Plan*

*Amendment to Township of Amaranth Zoning By-law*

*Application for Plan of Subdivision*

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Background & Context

W.E. Oughtred & Associates Inc. is the planning consultant for The Cellular Connection Ltd. ("Client"), which is proposing to develop the property located at 514504 Second Line in the Township of Amaranth, Dufferin County ("Site"). The lands are legally described as Part of Lot 19, Concession 2 being Parts 2, 5 and 8 Plan 7R-6546. The site, located along the western side of Second Line between 15 Side Road and 20 Side Road, encompasses 33.02 hectares. It is situated north of Dufferin Road 109 and west of Highway 10. The lot is currently developed with an estate-style single-family home, which will remain as part of the proposed development. The southeast corner of the site is leased to Capstone Infrastructure Corporation and is occupied by hydro equipment. Additionally, two residential lots fronting on Second Line were previously severed from the full parcel. The north-east portion of the site is regulated by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the south-west portion is regulated by the Grand River Conservation Authority.

## 1.2 Proposal

The property owner is proposing to register a plan of subdivision consisting of 19 privately serviced residential estate lots, including a lot for the existing home. The subdivision plan includes a single road that will provide access to all lots within the subdivision. The internal road will have two access points from Second Line, one at the northerly extent of the property and one toward the south end of the property. In addition to the proposed 19 residential lots, the plan includes 15.45 ha of lands reserved for the natural heritage system. The existing hydro equipment will be retained on a block reserved for that use. Roadside ditches with permanent pools and infiltration trenches are proposed for stormwater management. Several open spaces with water features are included in the plan, serving as both stormwater management features and natural spaces, which will contribute to the overall appeal of the subdivision. One dry hydrant for fire protection have been installed on site. The dry hydrant was installed in a cistern that was constructed for the existing dwelling. The cistern holds 100,000 U.S. gallons of water and has a dry hydrant connection. The dry hydrant will be available for fire suppression within the proposed subdivision and for properties in the surrounding area.

The property is currently designated for agricultural use accommodating one dwelling. A pre-consultation meeting with staff from the County of Dufferin and Township of Amaranth was held on June 1, 2023. At the meeting, staff confirmed that the subdivision proposal will require a County Official Plan Amendment, local Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and approval of a Plan of Subdivision.

## 1.3 Purpose & Scope

This report has been prepared to support the application for a County Official Plan Amendment as well as the applications for amendment to the Township of Amaranth Official Plan and Zoning By-law and the application for approval of a Plan of Subdivision. The objective of the report is to provide an overview of the existing property and its current land use designations, offer a detailed description of the proposed development, summarize the required Official Plan Amendments and zoning changes required, and assess the compatibility of the proposed development with the Ontario Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, c P.13, the Provincial Planning Statement 2024, as well as the County of Dufferin and Township of Amaranth Official Plans and the Township of Amaranth Zoning By-law 2-2009. In addition to this Planning Justification Report, specialized consultants and engineers have completed the required plans and studies for a complete application.

## 2.0 Location & Context

### 2.1 Site Description

The subject site is located on the west side of Second Line about 1 km south of 20 Side Road. The site is approximately 33.02 ha in area. Two lots were severed from the original farm property by a previous owner in 2018. The remaining lands are mostly vacant and grass covered. The lands are mildly undulating with a gentle slope toward the south and east. There is an existing single-family dwelling that has been recently constructed within the central portion of the site on an elevated area with mild slopes all around. The southeastern corner of the property is leased for hydro equipment use. There are existing stormwater management ponds on the lands, located toward the northerly extent of the property, in the centre of the property and at the southerly extent of the lot. 7.2 ha of the property were previously leased for agricultural use (hay production). The term of the lease has now expired and will not be renewed. Trees are located along the periphery of the property and in the areas near the stormwater ponds. The lands drain naturally to the existing ponds. An aerial photo of the subject property is provided in Figure 1.

### 2.2 Surrounding Uses

The Township of Amaranth is characterized by its agricultural heritage, with a variety of farms producing crops such as winter wheat, oats, barley, mixed grains, corn and hay. Fruit crops including apples, sour cherry and strawberries and vegetables such as sweet corn, tomatoes, green peas and green or wax beans are also grown.

The property at 514504 Second Line in the Township of Amaranth is surrounded primarily by agricultural uses and non-farm residences. To the north of the subject property, there is pastureland and an equestrian operation. Immediately south of the property, there is scrub land and a Provincially Significant Wetland and associated woodlands. There are a total of 13 non-farm residences located on either side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Line, 12 south of the subject property and one to the north of the subject lands. To the west and northwest of the subject lot, there are agricultural lands. Similarly, on the east side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Line, the lands are in agricultural production. An Agricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared by Colville Consulting which provides detailed breakdown of all land uses within 1.5 km of the subject property.

The nearest urban area is Shelburne, approximately 10 km north of the site. Orangeville is slightly further to the south, approximately 15 km. Both towns provide access to grocery, hardware, banks, recreation, entertainment, and other facilities.

### 2.3 Transportation Context

The property is situated on Second Line, a local unpaved road that provides direct access to the surrounding rural areas. The area is served by a network of local roads, making it accessible by car. These roads are well-maintained but can be subject to rural road conditions, especially in winter. Located to the south, Highway 9 is the nearest major Provincial Highway, providing east-west access. It connects to other County roads and towns. To the east, Highway 10 is a significant north-south route that connects to larger urban centers such as Orangeville and Brampton, and to Highway 401 via Highway 410. To the north, Highway 89 offers another east-west route, providing connection to Shelburne and Alliston. As with most rural areas, public transit does not operate in the Township of Amaranth. Most residents rely on private vehicles for transportation. Public transit is available in Orangeville.

### 3.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development involves subdividing the existing site into 19 residential lots and 4 blocks. Lots 1-14 and 16-19 will be new residential estate lots. Lot 15 will accommodate the existing dwelling. Blocks 20, 22 and 23 will accommodate natural heritage features. Block 21 will accommodate the existing hydro equipment. The proposed residential lots will be privately serviced by individual wells and septic tanks. All proposed lots meet a minimum lot area of 0.60 ha (1.48 acres). Lot frontages range from 27 metres to 89 metres. All lots will have sufficient lot area to accommodate private well and septic service. The property owner has previously upgraded the hydro service on Second Line. The upgraded service will be available to all lots within the plan of subdivision.

The development proposal includes construction of a road (Road A) that will provide access to all the residential lots. Road A will intersect with 2<sup>nd</sup> Line at the north end of the property with a second intersection at the south end of the property thereby providing adequate access in case of emergency. Road A will be constructed to municipal standards for assumption by the Township. The proposed plan of subdivision is provided in Figure 2.

### 4.0 Policy, Regulatory & Guideline Contexts

#### 4.1 Ontario Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c P. 1

The Planning Act is the provincial legislation that is the basis for all decisions on land use in Ontario. The purpose of the Act is to promote sustainable economic development in a healthy natural environment within the policy and by the means provided under the Act. The Act provides for a system of land use planning led by Provincial Policy. To that end, the Planning Act requires that all decisions on planning matters be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement as well as conform to, and not conflict with, all other provincial plans.

Section 2 of the Planning Act requires that approval authorities have regard for matters of provincial interest in carrying out their responsibilities under the Act. Matters of provincial interest that are relevant to the subject development proposal are:

- f) the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;

The proposed residential lots will have private sewage and water services. Waste collection services will be provided by the County of Dufferin.

- g) the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;

The proposed development represents a unique and orderly development as it makes efficient use of land in a rural location, which does not have productive agricultural use, with easy access to nearby urban areas. The development will include public roads within the plan of subdivision that will connect to an existing public road (Second Line).

- j) the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;

The proposed estate lots will help to meet demand for more housing in the form of detached dwellings to accommodate larger households.

- p) the appropriate location of growth and development;

The subject site is located approximately halfway between the towns of Shelburne and Orangeville. The Town of Shelburne is approximately a 10-minute drive from the subject property and the Town of Orangeville is a 10-to-15-

minute drive from the site. Residents of the proposed subdivision will have access to nearby shopping, restaurants, entertainment, local services, schools, places of worship, medical facilities and amenities within a short driving distance.

- r) the promotion of built form that is well-designed and encourages a sense of place.

Lots in the plan of subdivision will be offered for sale to purchasers who wish to build custom homes to meet the requirements of their household. Architectural controls will be in place to ensure that the subdivision has a coherent appearance and that dwellings are compatible with each other in terms of exterior cladding, roof styles, orientation on the lot, etc.

Section 3(5) of the Act requires that decisions made by an approval authority be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and conform to other provincial plans. The development application has been reviewed for consistency with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, in Section 4.2 of this report and found to be consistent with the PPS.

Section 51 of the Act deals with subdivision of land. As per 51(24), in considering a draft plan of subdivision, regard shall be had, among other matters, to the health, safety, convenience, accessibility for persons with disabilities and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the municipality and to:

	<b>Planning Act Requirement</b>	<b>How the Proposal Conforms</b>
(a)	The effect of development of the proposed subdivision on matters of provincial interest as referred to in Section 2.	The proposed development is consistent with matters of provincial interest referred to in Section 2, as described above.
(b)	Whether the proposed subdivision is premature or in the public interest.	The proposed subdivision is in the public interest as it will contribute to new lots becoming available in Amaranth for residential development and will fulfill the housing needs of larger households.
(c)	Whether the plan conforms to the Official Plan and adjacent plans of subdivision, if any.	A County Official Plan Amendment to redesignate the lands from Countryside Area to Community Settlement Area is being requested. A local Official Plan Amendment to redesignate the lands from Rural to Estate Residential is being requested. There are no adjacent plans of subdivision existing or proposed.
(d)	The suitability of the land for the purposes for which it is to be subdivided.	Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Investigations have been completed and have confirmed that the lands are suitable for residential development. There are no significant natural hazards present on the lands.
(d.1)	If any affordable housing units are being proposed, the suitability of the proposed units for affordable housing.	No affordable housing units are being proposed.
(e)	The number, width, location and proposed grades and elevations of highways and the adequacy of them, and the highways linking the highways to the proposed subdivision with the established highway system in the vicinity and the adequacy of them.	A single internal road, built to municipal standards, will provide access to all lots. The road will have two points of intersection with 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line, one at the northerly extent of the property and the second at the southerly extent. It is anticipated that the road will be assumed by the Township.
(f)	The dimensions and shapes of the proposed lots.	The proposed lots are generally rectangular with some lots having an irregular shape to

		accommodate natural features. All lots are of sufficient size to accommodate individual, private water and sanitary services. Site specific zoning for lot frontage is required as one lot does not meet the By-law requirement for frontage.
(g)	The restrictions or proposed restrictions, if any, on the land proposed to be subdivided or the buildings and structures proposed to be erected on it and the restrictions, if any, on adjoining land.	There are Provincially Significant Wetlands, Unevaluated Wetlands and Fish Habitat on the subject site. Development will be located outside the natural features and the associated setbacks.
(h)	Conservation of natural resources and flood control.	Stormwater quantity and quality controls will be achieved using Low Impact Development techniques as detailed in the Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report.
(i)	The adequacy of utilities and municipal services.	Water and wastewater services will be private. Each lot will have its own well and septic system.
(j)	The adequacy of school sites.	The Upper Grand District School Board offers public elementary education at Laurelwood Elementary School located in Amaranth and secondary education at Westside Secondary School in Orangeville. The Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board has an elementary school in Orangeville, St. Benedict's, and a secondary school in Caledon, Robert F. Hall. Students residing in the proposed subdivision would be eligible for bussing to all schools.
(k)	The area of land, if any, within the proposed subdivision that, exclusive of highways, is to be conveyed or dedicated for public purposes.	No lands will be conveyed for public purposes.
(l)	The extent to which the plan's design optimizes the available supply, means of supplying, efficient use and conservation of energy.	The property owner has upgraded hydro services on Second Line for construction of the existing dwelling. The upgrade to hydro services will be available to the subdivision lots and other properties on Second Line.
(m)	The interrelationship between the design of the proposed plan of subdivision and site plan control matters relating to any development on the land, if the land is also located within a site plan control area designed under subsection 41(2) of this Act.	The lands are not subject to site plan control.

**4.2 Provincial Planning Statement 2024**

The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS) went into effect on October 20, 2024. It is a streamlined province-wide framework that replaces the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 as well as the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020. The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 notes that the Province has set a goal of constructing 1.5 million homes by 2031, increasing housing options and addressing housing affordability needs to support a diverse and growing population. The PPS provides overall policy direction to municipalities on growth management and land use planning. Municipal Official Plans and local decisions on planning matters must be consistent with the policies of the PPS. All decisions on land use planning matters that are made after October 20, 2024, must be consistent with the PPS 2024. The goal of the PPS is to regulate the development of land to maintain the long-term prosperity and

social well-being of the province while protecting important resources and the quality of the natural environment. The following policies are relevant to the application:

## **2.2 Housing**

1. Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

b) permitting and facilitating:

1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including additional needs housing and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities.

The proposed plan of subdivision will provide more housing in the form of building lots for detached dwellings that will be suitable for larger households. Purchasers of lots will have the opportunity to build custom homes to meet individual household needs including the needs of multi-generational families and those with accessibility requirements. A Market and Socio-Economic Study prepared by Urban Metrics has concluded that the purchasers of the lots will generally be families with children who prefer a detached dwelling in a rural setting over alternative forms of housing in an urban or suburban location.

### **2.3.1 General Policies for Settlement Areas**

1. Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development. Within settlement areas, growth should be focused in, where applicable, strategic growth areas, including major transit station areas.
2. Land use patterns within settlement areas should be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:
  - a) efficiently use land and resources;
  - b) optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
  - c) support active transportation;
  - d) are transit-supportive, as appropriate; and
  - e) are freight supportive.
3. Planning authorities shall support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities, including planning for a range and mix of housing options and prioritizing planning and investment in the necessary infrastructure and public service facilities.
4. Planning authorities shall establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas, based on local conditions.
5. Planning authorities are encouraged to establish density targets for designated growth areas, based on local conditions. Large and fast-growing municipalities are encouraged to plan for a target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare in designated growth areas.
6. Planning authorities should establish and implement phasing policies, where appropriate, to ensure that development within designated growth areas is orderly and aligns with the timely provision of infrastructure and public service facilities.

The proposal is for a new community (rural) settlement area that will accommodate population growth in Amaranth Township and demand for residences adequately sized for larger households including families with children and multi-generational households. The proposed density is appropriate for dwellings on private services and will maintain the rural character of the area. Given that full municipal services are not available in Amaranth Township, it is anticipated that most new development will be detached dwellings on lots large enough to accommodate private services. There is limited capacity for intensification and redevelopment within the Township.

### ***2.3.2 New Settlement Areas and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions***

1. In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:
  - a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;
  - b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
  - c) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;
  - d) the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and where avoidance is not possible, consider alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;
  - e) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;
  - f) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and
  - g) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development.
2. Notwithstanding policy 2.3.2.1.b), planning authorities may identify a new settlement area only where it has been demonstrated that the infrastructure and public service facilities to support development are planned or available.

The subject lands are currently designated Countryside Area on Schedule B to the Dufferin County Official Plan and designated as Prime Agricultural Area on Schedule C. An application to redesignate the lands to Community Settlement Area on both Schedule B and C is being submitted to facilitate subdivision of the lands for residential building lots. Based on the County of Dufferin population projections set out in Section 3.2 of the County Official Plan, the Township of Amaranth population is estimated to increase by 3,800 persons over 30 years, from 4,500 in 2021 to 8,300 in 2051. Estimating an average household size of 3.5 persons, approximately 36 new dwellings will be required each year in Amaranth to accommodate projected population growth. The proposed plan of subdivision on the subject lands will make building lots available to homebuyers who require larger dwelling sizes. Services for the new dwellings will be private and expansion of public services is not required. Further the subject lands are not within a specialty crop area. The lands have been developed with a detached dwelling and there are natural features on the property which fragment the lot and reduce the area that can be utilized for agriculture. Although 2.2 ha of the subject lands are within the MDS for one livestock operation, all proposed lots are outside the MDS thereby meeting the intent of the regulation.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment dated October 2025 has been prepared by Colville Consulting Inc. The Assessment provides a survey of alternative locations for a new settlement area in Township of Amaranth. The survey found that the County of Dufferin designates most lands outside of settlement areas and residential areas as Prime Agricultural Areas. There are small areas at the southeast corner of Amaranth Township that are designated Rural. However, these Rural designated lands include an existing rural residential development, a private airport and lands designated Protected Countryside in the Greenbelt Plan. As such, based on the current land use designations for Amaranth Township in the County Official Plan, it is not possible for the proposed settlement area to avoid Prime Agricultural Areas.

### ***2.5 Rural Areas in Municipalities***

1. Healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by:
  - a) building on rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets;
  - c) accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas.
  - g) conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature.
2. In rural areas, rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.
3. When directing development in rural settlement areas in accordance with policy 2.3, planning authorities shall consider locally appropriate rural characteristics, the scale of the development and the provision of appropriate service levels.

Growth and development may be directed to rural lands in accordance with policy 2.6, including where a municipality does not have a settlement area.

Approval of an application to designate the subject lands as a Community Settlement Area is required for the proposed subdivision. The proposal will create 18 new lots (19 lots in total) for new detached dwellings on private services. The lots will be able to accommodate large custom dwellings that are sought by homebuyers in Dufferin County. The small size of the development is appropriate for the location in a rural area and the proposed lot sizes are sufficient to accommodate private water and private sewer services and maintain rural character. The proposal includes conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural features on site and measures to mitigate impacts on the natural features during and after construction will be implemented.

### ***3.6 Sewage, Water and Stormwater***

4. Where municipal sewage services and municipal water services or private communal sewage services and private communal water services are not available, planned or feasible, individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services may be used provided that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impacts.

Municipal sewage and water services are not available to the subject property and the proposal includes the provision of individual on-site water and sewer services, which is an alternate form of servicing. Lots will be sized

appropriately for private services. A Hydrogeological Assessment dated October 2025 and a Geotechnical Investigation dated October 2025 have been prepared by Canadian Engineering Services Inc. The investigations concluded that the site conditions are suitable for private water and sewer services.

8. Planning for stormwater management shall:

- a) be integrated with planning for sewage and water services and ensure that systems are optimized, retrofitted as appropriate, feasible and financially viable over their full life cycle;

Detailed design of sewage and water services will be confirmed through a separate application.

- b) minimize, or, where possible, prevent or reduce increases in stormwater volumes and contamination loads;

The development proposes to match the post-development flows to the pre-development condition using dry and wet stormwater ponds that will provide storage volume to facilitate release rates in line with the pre-development flow up to and including the 100-year storm event. Enhanced level of control based on MOE for treatment is addressed by infiltration trenches in the right-of-way with 80% of suspended solids removed.

- c) minimize erosion and changes in water balance including through the use of green infrastructure;

Erosions control is provided such that runoff from a 5 mm rainfall event over the entire site is detained on site for a minimum of 48 hours.

- d) mitigate risks to human health, safety, property and the environment;

The stormwater proposal will maintain the pre-development condition as best as possible, effectively treat stormwater and retain the existing water features.

- e) maximize the extent and function of vegetative and pervious surfaces;

Infiltration trenches for stormwater treatment maximize the function of vegetation and pervious surfaces as an alternative to curb and gutter within the right-of-way.

- f) promote best practices, including stormwater attenuation and re-use, water conservation and efficiency, and low impact development; and

The development has adopted standard low impact development practices via infiltration trenches for stormwater management quality. Stormwater quantity is proposed to be addressed with dry and wet ponds, which maintain the pre-development flowrates.

- g) align with comprehensive municipal plans for stormwater management that consider cumulative impacts of stormwater from development on a watershed scale.

The proposal considers the impacts of development and adopts low impact development practices to mitigate these impacts. The stormwater management proposal maintains continuity of the surrounding area with roadside ditches that also exemplify low impact development.

#### **4.1 Natural Heritage**

1. Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.

2. The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible improved recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.
3. Natural heritage systems shall be identified in Ecoregions 6E and 7E, recognizing that natural heritage systems will vary in size and form in settlement areas, rural areas and prime agricultural areas.
4. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
  - a) significant wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E;
5. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
  - b) significant woodlands in Ecoregions 6E and 7E (excluding islands in Lake Huron and St. Marys River);
  - d) significant wildlife habitat; unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or the ecological functions.
6. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in fish habitat except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
8. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas identified in policies 4.1.4, 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.

Natural features on the site include unevaluated wetlands as well as a Provincially Significant Wetland, fish habitat and significant wildlife habitat. While not present on the subject site, there are significant woodlands and habitat for endangered and threatened species on adjacent properties within 120 metres of the subject property. Natural features on the subject lands except for a small wetland in the northeast corner of the site will be maintained. There will be minor incursions into the recommended development setbacks, in some locations. The property owner is proposing restoration of a previously altered wetland and planting native vegetation to enhance the disturbed buffer zones surrounding the wetland features.

An Environmental Impact Study prepared by GEI Consultants provides details on the natural features on site, direct and potential impacts due to development and proposed measures to mitigate these impacts. Opportunities for restoration and enhancement of the natural features are also identified. The report concludes that the proposed development is expected to maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of the site by addressing past disturbances, restoring impacted wetlands, enhancing vegetated buffers and implementing mitigation measures during construction. Educational signage is proposed to encourage stewardship of the natural areas and their setbacks by residents of the subdivision.

#### **4.3.1 General Policies for Agriculture**

2. As part of the agricultural land base, prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, shall be designated and protected for long-term use for agriculture.

In October 2024, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) approved an amendment to the Dufferin County Official Plan (OPA 3). One of the effects of the Amendment was to redesignate much of the land in the

Township of Amaranth, including the subject property, from Rural Lands to Prime Agricultural Area. The subject property is not included in a Specialty Crop Area. The current use of the property is for a detached dwelling. The property owner has previously leased 7.2 ha to a local farmer for hay production. The term of the lease has expired, and the lease will not be renewed. A small area (0.76 ha) at the southeast corner of the property is leased for hydro equipment. The subject property is not currently being utilized for agricultural purposes and fragmentation of lands due to natural features and existing development reduces their capacity for intensive agricultural operations.

#### **4.3.2 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas**

1. Planning authorities may only exclude land from prime agricultural areas for expansions of or identification of settlement areas in accordance with policy 2.3.2.

The criteria in policy 2.3.2 is met if the PPS are met as they pertain to new settlement areas.

### **4.3 Dufferin County Official Plan, Office Consolidation August 2025**

The Dufferin County Official Plan was adopted by County Council on September 11, 2014, and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on March 25, 2015. The County is currently conducting a Municipal Comprehensive Review which has resulted in 3 Official Plan Amendments. Two of the amendments (OPA #2 and OPA #3) were approved by the Ministry on October 9, 2024, and have the effect of updating the County's growth projections to 2051 as well as updating the schedules that show the County's settlement areas, land use and natural heritage, amongst other revisions to the Official Plan. The third Amendment (OPA #4) was adopted by County Council on March 24, 2024. Approval of OPA #4 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is pending.

The County's Official Plan provides policies for matters of significance to the entire County including growth management, economic development and preservation of the natural environment and natural resources. Local official plans that provide more detailed land use planning must be in conformity with the County Official Plan.

The subject property is designated Countryside Area with a small area at the south lot line designated Provincially Significant Wetland on Schedule B to the Official Plan (Community Structure), as shown on Figure 3. The property is further designated Prime Agricultural Area on Schedule C (Prime Agricultural Areas and Rural Lands), as shown on Figure 4. On Schedule E (Natural Heritage Features), the subject lands are shown as having a Provincially Significant Wetland as well as Woodlands along the southern property line and a watercourse that traverses the northern edge of the property and extends into the middle of the lot (see Figure 5). The property must be redesignated from Countryside Area to Community Settlement Area on Schedule B and from Prime Agricultural Area to Community Settlement Area on Schedule C to facilitate subdivision of the lands into 19 lots for residential use, as shown in Figures 6 and 7.

#### **Chapter 3 – Growth and Settlement Areas**

Chapter 3 of the Official Plan sets out policies for Growth in the County as well as policies for Urban and Community Settlement Areas. The majority of growth is to be directed to Urban Settlement Areas on full municipal services and, to a lesser extent, to Community Settlement Areas which are able to accommodate additional growth. Growth management objectives are found in Section 3.1. The proposal meets the following objectives:

- e) Encourage opportunities for redevelopment, revitalization and intensification in appropriate locations and of a scale and character of development that is compatible with the community.

The proposal to subdivide the subject lands into 19 estate lots serviced by private water and sewer services is compatible with the rural setting in Amaranth. The Agricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Colville Consulting

surveyed all land uses within 1.5 kilometres of the subject property and found that there are 39 non-farm residences within that area. These residences are located on either side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Line, north and south of the subject property, along 20 Side Road, County Road 11 and Mono-Amaranth Line. The non-farm dwellings are on large lots with private services. These dwellings vary considerably in design, size and vintage. The proposal to create 18 lots for custom homes on the subject lands is in keeping with the non-farm residences in the neighbourhood.

- g) Encourage the provisions of a broad range of housing types and affordability to meet the needs of the existing and future residents of the County.

The Market and Socio-Economic Study prepared by Urban Metrics has concluded that the proposed estate residential lots will help to satisfy demand for large lots that can accommodate detached dwellings suitable for larger households including those with children as well as multigenerational households. Purchasers with accessibility needs will be able to build homes that meet their requirements.

The County's population and employment growth forecasts guide planning decisions and help to establish land needs to accommodate growth. The growth projections provided in Section 3.2 have been updated through Official Plan Amendment #2. The projected population for Dufferin County in 2051 is 100,700. The County is responsible for allocating this growth to local municipalities. The Township of Amaranth population is projected to grow to 4,680 by 2031 and 8,300 by 2051. This represents an increase of 1,680 by 2031 and 3,800 by 2051 over the 2021 Amaranth population of 4,500.

The County's settlement structure is discussed in Section 3.3. The settlement structure consists of 3 urban settlement areas, Orangeville, Shelburne and Grand Valley. In addition, each Township has several Community Settlement Areas. Amaranth Township has three Community Settlement Areas: Waldemar, Laurel and Farmington. Policies for Community Settlement Areas are set out in Section 3.3.3. Policies relevant to the proposed Community Settlement Area on the subject lands are:

- d) community settlement areas will maintain a rural character and evolve as service and residential centres for their surrounding countryside areas, where appropriate.
- e) expansions of the boundaries of a community settlement will only occur in accordance with the Municipal Comprehensive Review policies in Section 3.5 of this Plan.
- f) growth will be accommodated in accordance with the servicing policies of section 7.3

The property owner is proposing to establish a new Community Settlement Area that will be developed at a density that will maintain the rural character of the area. Individual, private water and sewer services will be provided as per Official Plan Section 7.3 c).

Settlement Area expansions and growth allocations are discussed in Section 3.5. Specifically, it is noted that the County's settlement structure as identified on Schedule B does not provide sufficient land for the County, as a whole, to accommodate all residential and employment growth as forecasted over the planning horizon and the Plan anticipates that urban settlement area expansions will be required.

Section 3.5.1.1 states that an expansion to settlement area boundaries will only be considered through a County Official Plan Amendment. Further, a new settlement area may be identified by a local municipality, in consultation with Dufferin County, where infrastructure and public service facilities to support development are planned or available. Applications to a local municipality to establish a new settlement area should be in conformance with the following policies.

- a) Whether sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth are not available within the county and within the existing settlement areas within the municipality in which the settlement area is located, through intensification, redevelopment and in designated Greenfield areas, using identified intensification target and density target;

Growth projections provided in Table 3.2 a) forecast that the population of Amaranth will increase to 8,300 by 2051. This represents an increase of 3,800 residents over 2021 population levels. Based on an average household size of 3.5 persons, an additional 1,085 dwelling units will need to be constructed over this 30-year time horizon or approximately 36 units per year. Given the unique rural nature of the Township, it is anticipated that most new dwellings will be single detached homes. The proposed development will help to accommodate demand for new housing.

The County of Dufferin Draft Land Needs Assessment, 2022, provides an estimate that 1,140 new homes will be required in Amaranth between 2021 and 2051 (38 dwellings per year) of which 216 units will be outside the existing settlement areas. The proposal to create 18 new lots for new homes will satisfy 8% of the need for new housing outside existing settlement areas.

- b) Whether expansion makes sufficient land available to accommodate the forecasted growth not exceeding the horizon of this plan, while minimizing land consumption.

The proponent expects to sell approximately 5 lots per year. As such, the subdivision will assist in accommodating growth in Amaranth for approximately 4 years.

- c) The timing of the expansion and phasing of development will not adversely affect the achievement of the County's intensification target, and policies and the density target and policies for the designated Greenfield areas;

There are no designated Greenfield Areas in Amaranth Township. Further, the Market and Socio-Economic Study prepared by Urban Metrics has concluded that there is demand for estate-style dwellings from purchasers who require larger homes and cannot find appropriate housing in urban or suburban settings.

- d) the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the application of all the policies of the Plan, including the following:
  - i. There is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
  - ii. The infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full cycle of the assets;
  - iii. The proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent and stormwater master plans or equivalent, as appropriate;
  - iv. The proposed expansion, including the associated water, wastewater and storm servicing, would be planned and demonstrated to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including the quality and quantity of water;

The proposed lots will accommodate private water and sewer services and are suitable for low density residential development in a rural area. Residents of the proposed development will access community services and facilities in Shelburne or Orangeville. Both communities are a 10-to-15-minute drive from the subject site. The Stormwater Management proposal includes low impact development practices, will maintain pre-development volumes and

enhanced stormwater treatment to reduce 80% of suspended solids. Existing natural features on site will be maintained.

- v. Key hydrologic areas and the Natural Heritage System shall be avoided where possible;

All lots on the proposed plan of subdivision respect the sites natural heritage features and required setbacks to those features. A portion of the proposed road encroaches within the 30 m setback to the Provincially Significant Wetland but the proposed setback exceeds of 15 metres. There are no hazard lands on the site.

- vi. Prime agricultural areas shall be avoided where possible. To support the agricultural system, alternative locations across the upper- or single- tier municipality will be evaluated, prioritized and determined based on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impact on the Agricultural System and in accordance with the following:
  - a. Whether the expansion includes land in specialty crop areas;
  - b. reasonable alternatives that avoid prime agricultural areas are evaluated; and,
  - c. where prime agricultural areas cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are used

The subject lands do not comprise a specialty crop area. The Agricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Colville Consulting surveyed alternative locations for the proposed settlement area. The majority of lands outside of settlement areas and natural areas in the Township Amaranth are designated Prime Agricultural Areas in the County Official Plan. Small areas in the southeast corner of the township that are designated Rural are developed for rural residential purposes, occupied by a private airport or designated Protected Countryside in the Greenbelt Plan. Therefore, it is not possible for a new community settlement area to avoid Prime Agricultural Areas. Further, the subject lands are not suitable for intensive agriculture as they are fragmented due the existing natural features and the existing dwelling.

- vii. The settlement area to be expanded is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formula;

The proposed community settlement area is in compliance with the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae except for one livestock operation. However, the MDS encroachment impacts 2.2 ha of the property that is occupied by the Natural Heritage System, the access road and the block for the existing hydro equipment. All proposed residential lots are outside the MDS setback requirement.

- viii. any adverse impacts on the agricultural system, including agricultural operations, from expanding settlement areas would be avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment;

The Agricultural Impact Assessment has concluded that potential impacts associated with the proposed development are primarily loss of prime agricultural lands and the report makes recommendations to mitigate both direct and indirect impacts. With mitigation, it is expected that indirect impacts will be negligible.

- ix. the proposed expansion would meet any applicable requirements of the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation, Niagara Escarpment and Lake Simcoe Protection Plans and any applicable source protection plan;

The subject lands are not within the Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan or Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan or a source protection plan.

- e) The proposed expansion is an efficient, sustainable, and logical extension of the settlement area and the existing or planned infrastructure, public services, and facilities required to accommodate the forecasted growth, are suitable for the development over the long term, are financially viable over their life cycle, and protect public health and safety and the natural environment;

The proposed settlement area will accommodate growth outside of existing settlement areas. Services will be private. The Market and Socioeconomic Study concludes that the expected population residing in the subdivision will have a lower need for public services and facilities than other populations in Amaranth due to higher household incomes than the average for the Township.

- f) The land is physically suitable for development, considering any constraints to development, including topography, hazard lands, natural heritage features and areas, systems, natural resources and source water considerations, and the protection of prime agricultural areas for the long term;

A Geotechnical Investigation and Hydrogeological Investigation have concluded that the subject lands are suitable for development. There are no significant natural hazards present on the subject property. Natural heritage features will be maintained and protected and the required setbacks and buffers will be respected. Although the lands are designated Prime Agricultural Area, the subject property is fragmented by existing development and natural features with limited potential for intensive agriculture.

- g) Where applicable, the proposed expansion will meet the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan;

The property is not within the area regulated by these plans.

- h) Where expansion is considered an Agricultural Areas, the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas, alternative locations have been evaluated and there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid the agricultural areas, and there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;

The subject lands do not comprise a specialty crop area. The Agricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Colville Consulting surveyed alternative locations for the proposed settlement area. The majority of lands outside of settlement areas and natural areas in the Township Amaranth are designated Prime Agricultural Areas in the County Official Plan. Small areas in the southeast corner of the township that are designated Rural are developed for rural residential purposes, occupied by a private airport or designated Protected Countryside in the Greenbelt Plan. Therefore, it is not possible for a new community settlement area to avoid Prime Agricultural Areas. Further, the subject lands are not suitable for intensive agriculture as they are fragmented due to the existing natural features and the existing dwelling.

- i) The expanding settlement area is in compliance with the provinces minimum distance separation formulae;

The proposed community settlement area is in compliance with the minimum distance Separation Formulae except for one livestock operation. However, the area of encroachment into the MDS is 2.2 ha of the property that is occupied by the Natural Heritage System, the access road and the block for the existing hydro equipment. All proposed residential lots are outside the MDS.

- j) The expanding settlement area supports active transportation, and the transportation system can accommodate the existing and proposed volume of vehicular traffic, active transportation, transit and demand for services;

The Traffic Brief prepared by NexTrans has concluded that the existing road network can accommodate additional traffic volumes from the proposal. These additional volumes will be very light owing to the small number of lots proposed and expected resident population of the subdivision.

- k) A suitable plan for phasing, financing, and constructing of the infrastructure for the expansion is demonstrated;

Infrastructure including roads and stormwater management system will be constructed by the proponent. Water and sanitary sewer services will be constructed by purchasers of individual lots.

- l) There is an adequate supply of land designated for employment within or in the immediate vicinity of the settlement area to plan to maintain or move towards accommodating a minimum of one full time job per three residents within or in the immediate vicinity of the settlement area;

There are no lands designated for employment within the proposed settlement area or in the immediate vicinity. Lands designated for employment are located in Farmington and Shelburne. Both communities are a 10- or 15-minute drive from the subject lands.

- m) the proposed expansion will not negatively impact cultural heritage resources;

There are no cultural heritage resources on the subject property or adjacent lands.

- n) where appropriate, cross jurisdictional issues are considered;

The subject property is within the jurisdiction of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority. The proponent has consulted with both agencies, and the EIS provides details of those discussions.

- o) impacts from expanding settlement area on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to settlement area are mitigated to the extent feasible; and

The proposal meets the Minimum Distance Separation requirements as all lots are outside the MDS. However, 2.2 ha of the site are within the MDS of one livestock operation. The lands that encroach are occupied by natural features that will be retained, a portion of the proposed road and the area where existing hydro equipment is located. The Agricultural Impact Assessment provides recommendations for mitigating direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development.

- p) in determining the most appropriate direction for expansions to the boundaries of the settlement area the policies of this plan shall be applied.

Not applicable.

An amendment to this plan will be required in conjunction with a local municipal official plan amendment that provides for the settlement area expansion.

An amendment to the County Official Plan to designate the lands as a Community Settlement Area is proposed. Further, an amendment to the Township of Amaranth Official Plan to designate the land Estate Residential is proposed.

Policies for housing and affordability are provided in section 3.7 of the County Official Plan. The following policies apply to the proposed plan of subdivision:

### **3.7 .1.1 Supply of Land for Housing**

It is the policy of the County that:

- a) Local municipalities are encouraged to provide an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of Dufferin County as outlined below:
  - i. Maintaining at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for minimum of 10 years through residential intensification, redevelopment and land which is designated and available for residential development.
  - ii. Maintaining at all times, where new development is to occur, that land with servicing capacity is available to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units in draft approved and registered plans or in cases of residential intensification and redevelopment, land appropriately zoned in the local municipal zoning bylaws and available for development or redevelopment.
  - iii. Working with proponents to ensure that a full range of housing types and densities, where appropriate, are provided to meet the anticipated demand and demographic changes. All forms of housing required to meet the social, health and well-being of current and future residents, including those with special needs will be encouraged.

The proposed subdivision will provide residential lots with capacity for private services that will help to meet demand for lots to accommodate estate-style detached dwellings in Amaranth Township.

## **Chapter 4 – Countryside**

Chapter 4 of the Official Plan sets out policies for land designated Countryside Area on Schedule B. Countryside Area consists of Prime Agricultural Areas and Rural Lands. Policies for lands designated Prime Agricultural Areas on the Schedule C are found in Section 4.2 of the Official Plan. The objectives of the Prime Agricultural Areas land use designation are to recognize agriculture as the primary activity and land use in these areas, maintain and enhance the agricultural resource base and farming operations, protect prime agricultural area from fragmentation and development for non-agricultural land uses and preserve and promote the agricultural and rural character of Dufferin County. Permitted uses in Prime Agricultural Areas are found in Section 4.2.2 and include agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, on-farm diversified uses, home occupations and home industries as well as conservation and watershed management.

Land use policies for Prime Agricultural Areas are found in Section 4.2.3. Relevant policies are:

- a) The County and local municipalities will designate prime agricultural areas in their official plans, through procedures established by the Province. Prime agricultural areas are designated on Schedule C of this Plan. Any changes to the designation of prime agricultural areas will require an amendment to this Plan, and an amendment to the local official plan.

An amendment to the County Official Plan to redesignate the lands from Prime Agricultural Area to Community Settlement Area has been submitted concurrently with an application to amend the land use designation in the Township of Amaranth Official Plan from Rural to the Estate Residential designation.

- b) In order to avoid land use conflicts within the Prime Agricultural Area designation, new land uses, including lot creation, and new or expanding livestock facilities will comply with the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae, to ensure appropriate standards for separating incompatible uses from existing, new or expanding livestock operations. The Minimum Distance Separation Formulae will be implemented through the applicable local municipal planning documents.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared by Colville Consulting. Colville surveyed all land uses within 1.5 kilometres of the subject lands. The subject property was found to be within the MDS for one livestock facility. However, the area on the subject property that is located within the encroachment are lands that are part of the Natural Heritage System as well as a portion of the proposed road and the area of the existing hydro equipment. All proposed residential lots are outside the MDS.

- d) Proposed development in Prime Agricultural Areas will be serviced with adequate sewage and water services. Development proposals for non-agricultural uses will demonstrate the suitability of the site for the proposed method of sewage and water services and stormwater management to the satisfaction of the local municipality, and any other required approval agencies.

Private, individual water and septic services are proposed for each of the 19 lots in the plan of subdivision. A Geotechnical Investigation and Hydrogeological Investigation have been prepared and have found the subject lands to be suitable for private services. Detailed design for sewage and water services will be confirmed in a separate application, at a later date. A Stormwater Management Report has also been prepared which considers the impacts of the proposed development and adopts low impact development practices to mitigate impacts.

- e) Land may only be removed or excluded from prime agricultural areas for expansions of settlement areas in accordance with the policies of this plan.

The proposal generally meets the policies of the Dufferin County Official Plan.

#### ***Chapter 5 – Natural Heritage and Water Resources***

Chapter 5.0 of the Official Plan provides policies for natural heritage and water resources. Policies for natural heritage features and their functions are set out in Section 5.3. Schedule E to the Official Plan is intended to identify the following known natural heritage features and areas:

- a) Provincially Significant Wetlands (which are designated on Schedule B);
- b) Provincially Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), including Earth Science and Life Science ANSI's;
- c) Woodlands; and
- d) Unevaluated wetlands and locally or regionally significant wetlands.

The subject property includes a Provincially Significant Wetland, as shown on Schedule B. The property is shown on Schedule E as containing Woodlands. However, mapping carried out by the GEI Consultants in 2024 determined that there are no woodlands on the subject property but there are woodlands located on adjacent properties, within 120 metres of the subject lands. Mapping also confirmed the existence of three unevaluated wetlands on the property and significant woodlands on adjacent lands. Further, the subject property contains fish habitat, habitat for

endangered and threatened species and significant wildlife habitat. The County's policies for each of these features are discussed below.

### **5.3.1 Provincially Significant Wetlands**

It is the policy of the County that:

- a) Provincially Significant Wetlands are designated on Schedule B, and will be designated in the local municipal official plans;
- b) No development or site alteration will be permitted within Provincially Significant Wetlands.
- c) The contiguous land adjacent to Provincially Significant Wetlands represents an area where it is likely that development or site alteration would have a negative impact on the feature or area. Development and site alteration will not be permitted on land adjacent to a Provincially Significant Wetland, unless the ecological function of the adjacent land has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions. For the purposes of this policy, the extent of adjacent lands will be defined as 120 meters. An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will be required for all development proposals within 120 meters of a provincially significant wetland. Prior to considering development and/or site alteration, the County and/or local municipality, in consultation with applicable Conservation Authority, will be satisfied that the EIS demonstrates that there will be no negative impacts on the Provincially Significant Wetland and the sustaining ecological and/or hydrological functions.

There are Provincially Significant Wetlands, the Whittington PSW Complex, located on the southern portion of the subject lands. The extent of the PSW was staked with staff from Grand River Conservation Authority in August 2024. An Environmental Impact Study prepared by GEI Consultants recommends a 30-metre development setback from the PSW to provide adequate protection from future development and occupancy. The proposed plan of subdivision respects the 30m development setback except for some very minor encroachments of roads and associated grading into the outer edge of the recommended setback.

### **5.3.2 Habitat of Endangered Species and Threatened Species**

Development and site alteration will not be permitted in or adjacent to habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with Provincial and Federal requirements.

There is candidate habitat for endangered and threatened species within 120 metres of the subject lands but not on the subject lands. These candidate habitats include breeding habitat for Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark and Eastern Whip-poor-will as well as roosting habitat for species-at-risk bat. As discussed in the EIS, there is no anticipated impact to the candidate habitat for Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark as the habitat is located on the east side of Second Line. The habitat for Eastern Whip-poor-will and species-at-risk bat is within existing woodland communities on adjacent lands. Recommendations to protect the adjacent woodlands will also serve to protect these habitats.

### **5.3.4 Woodlands**

The intent of this Plan is to conserve existing Woodlands and vegetation and prohibit incompatible land uses that deter their long-term benefits. Woodlands are illustrated on Schedule E. Some areas may not be identified since the exact boundaries of mapped areas may change over time. Development and site alteration will not be permitted within or adjacent to significant woodlands unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions through the preparation of an EIS.

The Environmental Impact Study notes that there is a significant woodland located south of the subject lands. This significant woodland is associated with the Whittington Provincially Significant Wetland. There are also other woodlands present within 120 metres of the subject lands. There are no significant woodlands or woodlands on the subject site and, as such, there are no direct impacts anticipated because of future development. The EIS recommends a 10-metre setback to the significant woodlands to the south to provide adequate protection from potential development impacts. The Draft Plan is more than 100 metres from the significant woodland, substantially exceeding the minimum setback.

### ***5.3.5 Wildlife Habitat Areas***

Development and site alteration will not be permitted within or adjacent to significant wildlife habitat areas unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions through the preparation of an EIS.

Significant wildlife habitat has been confirmed within wetland areas on the subject lands. These include turtle wintering areas and terrestrial crayfish. Measures to protect and enhance the Provincially Significant Wetland and to restore and enhance unevaluated wetlands on site will serve to protect significant wildlife habitat as well.

### ***5.3.6 Unevaluated Wetlands and Locally or Regionally Significant Wetlands***

Wetlands that are not classified as Provincially Significant Wetlands are considered unevaluated wetlands or locally or regionally significant wetlands. Unevaluated wetlands and locally or regionally significant wetlands are identified on Schedule E, based on available information. Prior to development or site alteration within or adjacent to any unevaluated wetlands an evaluation will be required to determine its significance. Development and site alteration will not be permitted within any unevaluated wetland or locally or regionally significant wetland or adjacent land unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions through the preparation of an EIS.

There are 2 existing unevaluated wetlands on site and additional unevaluated wetlands on adjacent lands to the north. Several wetlands on the subject site have been previously altered, disturbed or removed. The Environmental Impact Study proposes compensation for previous and proposed wetland removals through ecological restoration and enhancement. The study recommends a 30-metre setback from unevaluated wetlands in NVCA jurisdiction with limited reductions to 15 metres with compensation. The report also provides recommendations to mitigate impacts to the wetland during and after construction. A small shallow marsh community proposed is for removal.

### ***5.3.7 Fish Habitat***

Development and site alteration will not be permitted in or adjacent to fish habitat except in accordance with Provincial and Federal requirements.

There are fish habitat within the subject lands. The EIS identifies replacement of a culvert at the northeast corner of the property as having potential to temporarily disturb the White Whitten Drain and fish within it. Other direct and indirect fish habitat is located within the blocks that are reserved for natural features and no direct impacts on these habitats is expected. Further, the EIS recommends a 15-metre setback from fish habitat and other measures including a storm water management strategy that promotes infiltration and construction management practices that will mitigate potential impacts to fish habitat.

### ***5.3.8 Watercourses***

The intent of this Plan is to protect natural watercourses from incompatible development to minimize the impacts of such development on their function.

The White Whitten Drain runs along the northeastern corner of the lands. The proposal includes a crossing of this watercourse for access to the subdivision. Replacement of an existing culvert with a new one designed to municipal standards will be required. Replacement of the culvert may result in temporary disturbance to the channel.

**5.3.9 Adjacent Lands**

For the purposes of this Official Plan, adjacent lands are determined to include all lands within the specified distance of the of the boundary of natural heritage features as set out in Table 5.1.

<b>Table 5.1 – Extent of Adjacent Lands</b>	
<b>Natural Heritage Feature</b>	<b>Extent of Adjacent Lands (metres)</b>
Provincially Significant Wetlands	120
Significant Habitat of Endangered Species and Threatened Species	120
Significant Woodlands	120
Significant wildlife habitat	120
Significant Valleylands	120
Fish Habitat	120
Provincially Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest – Life Science	120
Provincially Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest – Earth Science	50
Unevaluated Wetlands	120
Locally or regionally significant wetlands	120

The Environmental Impact Study has considered all features on adjacent lands that are within the distances set out in Table 5.1

**5.3.11 Environmental Impact Studies**

Where the policies of this Plan require an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) to be prepared, such an EIS will be prepared in accordance with the policies of the local municipal official plan and the requirements of this Section.

Before development is approved in the area subject to the EIS, the EIS will demonstrate that the relevant policies of this plan and the local official plan are met, and provincial plans where applicable. The EIS should also demonstrate that the use will not have a negative impact on significant natural heritage features and related ecological functions.

An EIS will be prepared by a qualified professional and will include identification of the potential impacts from the proposed development and site alteration and will propose mitigation measures to appropriately protect and/or conserve the values of the associated natural features and areas. The EIS should also identify potential linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water and groundwater features to support the implementation of the County's natural heritage system.

An Environmental Impact Study has been prepared by GEI Consultants to evaluate the proposal against provincial policy, the County official plan, local official plan and conservation authority requirements. The report makes recommendations for appropriate development setbacks to the natural features on and off site, for restoration and enhancement of those features and measures to mitigate negative impacts that may result from construction. The EIS concludes that, if recommendations are followed, the ecological integrity of this site will be enhanced.

## ***Chapter 7 – Transportation, Infrastructure and Servicing***

Policies for servicing of developments are provided in Section 7.3. Policies relevant to the proposed development are:

- c) Where municipal sewage services and municipal water services or private communal sewage services and private communal water services are not provided, individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services may be used provided that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impacts. In settlement areas, these services may only be used for infilling and minor rounding out of existing development.

Municipal water and sanitary services are not available. The property owner is proposing private, individual water and sanitary services.

Stormwater management policies can be found in Section 7.3.2. Applicable policies are:

- c) the County and the local municipalities will promote naturalized stormwater management facilities, constructed with gentle slopes. Applications for development will be required to be supported by a storm water quality/quantity management study. The planning and design of stormwater facilities should be undertaken in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment’s Stormwater Management Planning and Design Manual. Consideration should also be given to any applicable stormwater management guidelines or materials prepared by the applicable conservation authority.

A Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report has been prepared for the application. Stormwater management is achieved using Low Impact Development techniques. Overland flow events up to and including the 100-year storm design event will be captured within the site using flat bottom ditches, culverts and existing water features on site. Events exceeding 100-year storm will be directed to the existing ditch on the west side of Second Line using ditches and culverts.

## ***Chapter 8 – Implementation and Interpretation***

Policies for amendments to the County Official Plan are provided in Section 8.3.1, as follows:

It is the policy of the County that:

- a) applications to amend this plan will include a planning rationale report for the proposed change, prepared by the proponent. This will include, but not limited to, information regarding the proposed use, servicing, density if applicable, floor area if applicable, lot layout, site plans as appropriate and applicable. The county may waive the requirement for a planning rationale report for minor and/or site-specific amendments.
- b) Any specific official plan amendment procedures and supporting information requirements as outlined in the policies of this plan will apply in the consideration of the application and the completeness of the application, in accordance with the requirements of the planning act.

The requirements for a complete application were provided at the pre-consultation meeting. All required plans and studies are being submitted with the application. Following the initial submission of the application for County Official Plan Amendment, an Agricultural Impact Assessment was requested and is being included with the second submission.

- c) The county will consider the following criteria when reviewing applications to amend this plan:
  - i. The manner in which the proposed amendment is consistent with Provincial Policy Statements issued under the planning act, and prevailing provincial policy and regulations, and the policies of this plan;

The proposal is generally consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement 2024 and the policies of the County Official Plan.

- ii. the impacts of the proposed amendment on the provision of and local demand for municipal services, infrastructure and facilities;

Private water and sanitary sewer services are proposed thereby not impacting demand for municipal services.

- iii. the impact of the proposed amendment on surrounding land uses, the transportation system, municipal services and community amenities and services;

The proposal includes subdividing the lands for 18 new residential lots as well as a lot for the existing dwelling. A Traffic Brief has concluded that the development will have negligible impact on local roads. Similarly, the small size of the development and projected population should not result in strain on community amenities and services.

- iv. the impact of the proposed amendment on cultural heritage resources and or natural heritage features and areas;

The Environmental Impact Study has concluded that with recommended setbacks to the various natural features, appropriate mitigation measures, restoration of a previously removed wetlands and enhancement of natural buffers, there will be a net ecological benefit to the subject property and surrounding environment.

- v. the impact of the proposed amendment on prime agricultural areas and agricultural uses;

The subject lands are developed with a single-family home in the central portion of the site, hydro equipment in the south-corner and contain a number of environmental features that impede intensive agriculture on the lands.

- vi. the impact of the proposed amendment on the financial sustainability of the County and local municipalities; And

The proposal will have no impact on the financial sustainability of the county and local municipalities.

- vii. any other information determined by the county, in consultation with the local municipality, and appropriate agencies, to be relevant and applicable.

All plans and studies identified at the pre-consultation meeting as being required for a complete application have been submitted. Following the initial submission, an Agricultural Impact Assessment was requested and is being included with the second submission.

- d) where applications to amend both the county official plan and the local municipal official plan are required, the county will encourage the proponent to submit concurrent applications to amend both the county official plan and the local municipal official plan. For county official plan amendments that are determined to be primarily of a local significance, as determined in consultation with the county,

the county may request endorsement of the local municipal official plan amendment by the council of the respective local municipality prior to the consideration of a county official plan amendment.

An application to amend the Township of Amaranth Official Plan and Zoning By-law are being submitted concurrently with the application for County Official Plan Amendment.

#### **4.4 Township of Amaranth Official Plan, Office Consolidation June 2018**

The Township of Amaranth Official Plan was approved by Township Council on December 15, 2004. The fundamental principles on which the plan is based include accommodating new residential growth at the rate of 30 units per year, preserving quality of life and the quality of the environment and maintaining the economic health of the Township through environmental and growth management policies.

The subject property is designated Rural on Schedule A to the Official Plan (Land Use and Transportation) as shown in Figure 8. A small area at the southerly limit of the property is designated Environmental Protection. On Schedule B (Environmental Features) the property is shown as having a Provincially Significant Wetland and wetlands located at the southern extent of the lot and a water feature along the northern property line, as shown in Figure 9.

Policies for Rural lands are provided in Section 3.2 of the Plan. Rural areas are described in Section 3.2.1 as being characterized as having soils in classes 4-7 on the Canada Land Inventory. Rural lands have traditionally been utilized for limited agriculture, hobby farms, residential uses on large lots, recreation and conservation uses and resource related uses. In addition, lot fragmentation has resulted in higher quality lands that are no longer capable of being farmed.

Policies for severance of Rural lands, set out in Section 3.2.4 of the Official Plan, limit the number of severances permitted to a maximum of 3 lots from an original Township lot of approximately 40 ha. In order to subdivide the subject lands into 19 lots for construction of new dwelling units, an Official Plan Amendment is required to redesignate the lands to Estate Residential. The lands to be designated Estate Residential include all proposed lots (1-19). The area of the lands to be designated Estate Residential represents approximately 14.05 ha of the site. Lands that are currently designated Environmental Protection are proposed to remain as such and additional areas of the site with natural features are proposed to be included in the Environmental Protection designation. A small portion of the site where the existing hydro equipment is located is proposed to remain designated Rural. Figure 9 sets out the proposed amendment to the Schedule A.

Policies for lands designated Estate Residential are found in Section 3.3 of the Official Plan. Section 3.3.1 states that the Estate Residential areas are intended to recognize existing estate residential lots in plans of subdivision and areas designated Estate Residential prior to June 16, 2006.

A site-specific Official Plan Amendment will be required to permit registration of plan of subdivision for 18 new estate residential lots and one lot for the existing detached dwelling.

Objectives for lands in the Estate Residential designation are set out in Section 3.3.2. The objectives that apply to the proposed plan of subdivision are:

- b) To direct non-farm residential development to areas where similar development presently exists;
- c) To guide residential growth in the rural area in a manner that will be sustainable and preserve the rural character and natural environment of the Township.

The proposed plan of subdivision will provide opportunities for a neighborhood of new homes on large lots. The proposal will preserve, restore and enhance the natural features on site.

Permitted uses in the Estate Residential designation are single-detached residences on large lots or at low density (Section 3.3.3 a)).

The proposed development will consist of detached homes on large lots at low density.

Subdivision development policies are provided in Section 3.3.4. Policies that are pertinent to the proposed plan of subdivision are:

b) The following design principles shall apply to the development of estate residential subdivisions in Estate Residential areas:

i) Lot size and density shall minimize land consumption and reduce servicing costs while considering the maintenance of the existing character of the Township. In addition to the Development Criteria in Section 4.0, lot size, pattern and density shall be supported and determined by a detailed hydrological study and other studies as determined and completed to the satisfaction of Council to address planning considerations such as design, servicing of the site and stormwater management.

A Geotechnical Study, a Hydrogeological Study and a Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report have been prepared and submitted with the development application.

ii) Lots shall be well proportioned. The depth of any lot should not exceed six times the lot's frontage.

Proposed lot depths do not exceed six times the lot frontage.

v) Existing mature trees shall be preserved wherever possible. Reforestation shall take place so that a substantial portion of the area of each lot is tree covered.

Mature trees around the wetlands and at the periphery of the property will be maintained. A tree inventory and preservation plan has been prepared by Kuntz Forestry and is submitted with the development application.

vii) The natural topography, surface drainage pattern and vegetative cover shall be an essential consideration in the design and layout of roads and lot pattern and shape of proposed lots.

The plan of subdivision, lot shapes and road network have been designed to respect the site's topography, existing drainage pattern and natural features. A Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report has been prepared with detailed recommendations for grading and drainage. The proposed stormwater management will generally retain the existing balance of flows between the Nottawasaga and Grand River watersheds.

viii) Access to individual lots or units shall be from internal public roads.

A single internal road will provide access to all lots. The road will have access points on 2<sup>nd</sup> Line, one at the north end of the property and the second at the south end. The road will be constructed to municipal standards for assumption by the Township.

Section 3.3.5 of the Official Plan specifies that Estate Residential lots shall be placed in an Estate Residential Zone which will reflect an appropriate range of uses for these lots. Site specific Zones may be used to reflect the results of the studies prepared in support of the development application.

An application to rezone the lands to Estate Residential is being submitted concurrently with the application for Official Plan Amendment.

#### **Chapter 4 – Development Criteria**

Chapter 4.0 of the Official Plan provides policies for development and land division for all lands within the Township including policies for Environmental Management and Growth Management.

Policies for Environmental Management are set out in Section 4.1. Policies which apply to the proposed plan of subdivision are:

##### **4.1.1 General Development Criteria**

The uses permitted by this Plan may only be allowed provided that:

- a) The long-term capacity of the site can support the use without a negative impact on the environmental features, functions and attributes such as water quantity and quality, natural vegetation, soil, wildlife, population, visual character and cultural heritage features;
- b) The cumulative impact of development will not have detrimental effects on the environment including air quality, water quality and quantity, vegetation, soil, wildlife, and the natural landscape;

An Environmental Impact Study has been prepared by GEI consultants and concludes that direct and potential impacts from development can be mitigated so that there will be no negative impacts to environmental features and their functions during construction or afterwards.

- c) The site is not considered hazardous to life or property due to unstable soil conditions or possible flooding;

There are no significant natural hazards present on the site.

- d) Development meets applicable Federal, Provincial, County and municipal requirements including health and servicing requirements;

The proposal meets all requirements as detailed in the studies submitted with the application.

- e) Development shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act.

The proposed development is generally consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement.

4.1.2 Stormwater management is to be addressed prior to development with the preparation of a Stormwater Management Report. All major commercial, industrial, institutional and residential development proposals shall be accompanied by a Stormwater Management Report prepared by a qualified professional to the satisfaction of the Township, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the appropriate Conservation Authority. The report shall be prepared in accordance with the Township's design criteria and the following:

- a) the Stormwater Management Planning and Design Manual (March 2003), or its successor, a prepared by the Ministry of Environment;
- b) Best Management Practices (BMP);

- c) a Stormwater quantity system which ensures that post-development run-off rates will not be greater than the pre-development run-off rates for storms up to and including the 100-year event;
- d) the effects of development on watershed flow regimes including the interconnection with groundwater resources.

A Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report has been prepared by GEI Consultants in accordance with the Township’s design criteria and items a-d. The Low Impact Development techniques that are proposed will ensure that over land flow events, up to and including the 100-year storm design event, will be captured within the site using 0.5m flat bottom ditches, culverts and the existing modified stormwater management ponds. Events exceeding the 100-year storm will be directed using ditches and culverts to the existing ditch running parallel to Second Line on the West side.

**4.1.13 Environmental Impact Assessment**

- a) An Environmental Impact Assessment shall be required for any development and site alteration proposed adjacent to Provincially Significant Wetlands and the habitat of threatened and endangered species and within and adjacent to all other Natural Heritage Features as shown on Schedule “B”.

Adjacent lands are defined as 120 metres for Provincially Significant Wetlands, 50 metres for the habitat of threatened and endangered species, 50 metres for significant forest, 50 metres for significant wildlife habitat, 50 metres for significant valley lands, 30 meters for fish habitat and 50 meters for Provincially Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest. An Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken in accordance with the policies of this plan shall include a description and analysis of the following:

- i) The proposed development;
- ii) The boundaries of the natural features and ecological functions of the area potentially affected directly and indirectly by the development;
- iii) The sensitivity of the features and functions to development;
- iv) The direct and indirect effects to the ecosystem that might be caused by the development;
- v) Any environmental hazards (i.e. slope, flooding, contaminants) that need to be addressed as part of the development;
- vi) Identification and evaluation of measures to avoid and minimize impacts and mitigation measures to be employed before and after development; and
- vii) A management plan identifying:
  - how the adverse effects will be avoided or minimized over the construction. And the life of the undertaking; and,
  - how environmental features and functions will be enhanced where appropriate and describing the net effect of the undertaking after implementing of the Management Plan.

The Management Plan shall establish the limits of buffers and/or setbacks adjacent to components of the *Environmental Protection*.

- viii) Any monitoring that may be required to ensure that mitigating measures are achieving the intended goals;

- b) Proposals for the creation of more than three lots partially within or adjacent to the *Environmental Protection* will require a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment. Three lots or less adjacent to the *Environmental Protection* will require the preparation of a scoped assessment.
- c) Detailed Environmental Impact Assessments shall be undertaken by qualified professionals and shall contain specific detailed information regarding the hydrogeological, hydrological and biological functions and linkages related to the following features:
- wetlands;
  - portions of the habitat of endangered and threatened species;
  - fish habitat;
  - significant forest areas;
  - valley and stream corridors;
  - significant wildlife habitat;
  - Areas of Natural and Scientific interest and,
  - a key hydrologic feature within the Greenbelt protected countryside.

A detailed Environmental Impact Study has been prepared by GEI consultants based on a Terms of Reference obtained from the Township and the Conservation Authorities. The study identifies all natural features and their functions, wildlife habitat and fish habitat as well as direct and potential impacts from the proposed development. Detailed recommendations for mitigating impacts to natural features and wildlife are provided including recommendations for appropriate development setbacks to the various natural features and natural habitats on site.

- e) Prior to approving a development on the basis of an Environmental Impact Assessment, Council, in consultation with the Conservation Authority and other appropriate agencies shall be satisfied that the proposed use will:
- i) not discharge any substance that could harm air quality, groundwater, soil, surface water and plant and animal life or human health;
  - ii) be supplied by an adequate supply of water and that the groundwater taking associated with the use will not harm existing water supplies and plant and animal life;
  - iii) not cause erosion or siltation of water course or changes to water course morphology;
  - iv) not interfere with groundwater recharge to the extent that it would adversely affect groundwater supply for any use;
  - v) not cause an increase in flood potential on or off the site;
  - vi) maintain, enhance or restore the natural conditions of affected water courses and protect aquatic habitat
  - vii) not encourage the demand for further development that would negatively affect wetland function or contiguous wetland areas; and,
  - viii) enhance and restore endangered terrestrial and aquatic habitat where appropriate and feasible.

In addition, the Environmental Impact Assessment shall demonstrate that there will be no negative impacts resulting from the proposed use on the significant natural features that are identified on Schedule B to this Plan.

The Environmental Impact Study concludes that with proper mitigation measures during construction there will be no negative impacts to the natural features on site and those on adjacent lands. Further, by addressing past disturbances through restoration and enhancement, the ecological integrity of the lands will be maintained.

Additional development policies for lands designated Environmental Protection are found in Section 3.8.4 of the Official Plan. Relevant to the land designated Environmental Protection on the subject lot are:

- h) A setback for development will be established for Environmental Protection and areas of physical and environmental hazard such as any areas susceptible to flooding and valley slopes, by the implementing authority wherever it may be determined that such setback is necessary to protect the ecological, educational or interpretive value of such areas.

In addition, a greater set back from the top of bank adjacent to the Grand River will be established to maintain the natural landscape of the valley.

The Environmental Impact Study provides a recommended setback to all natural features. The proposed plan of subdivision respects the recommended setbacks except for very minor encroachments into the out edges of the setback. The total area of the proposed encroachment is 0.14 ha.

- i) Natural wetlands that are locally significant or have yet to be evaluated should be protected from development. Development adjacent to natural wetlands show only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any negative impact on the wetland.

There will be no development within the Provincially Significant Wetland. One small shallow marsh community with an area of 0.03 ha at the northeast property line is proposed for removal. The EIS concludes that there will be no negative impact on the wetlands if all mitigation measures are implemented.

Growth Management policies are found in Section 4.2. Policies that are relevant to the proposal are:

4.2.2 Residential Growth in the Township shall occur at a rate of approximately 25 units per year. Plans of subdivision may be phased and creation of lots by consent may be withheld to ensure that this rate of growth is not exceeded and does not occur in one area of the Township. The Township shall prepare an annual report to monitor this policy.

The Township's target of 25 new dwelling units per year appears to be out of date. The County of Dufferin Land Needs Assessment, 2022, estimates that approximately 38 new dwelling units per year will be needed in Amaranth each year between 2021 and 2051. The proposed plan of subdivision will contribute to meeting the Town's growth targets. Individual lots will be offered for sale to purchasers who wish to construct custom homes. The property owner estimates that sale of lots will proceed at the rate of 5 per year.

4.2.3 New growth in the Township shall be distributed between the settlement areas of Laurel, Waldemar and Farmington, the estate residential areas and the rural areas in the Township in accordance with the following guidelines:

Communities	80 percent
Estate Residential Areas	10 percent
Rural and Agricultural Areas	10 percent

Based on the County of Dufferin Land Needs Assessment 2022, 1,041 new dwelling units are required to accommodate projected population growth in Amaranth 2021-2051. 216 of these lots are expected to be outside the existing settlement areas in the Township. The proposed subdivision of the subject property into 18 new estate lots will provide 8% of the lots required outside existing settlement areas.

4.2.4 Within this Plan there are land division policies that apply to the various land use designations. The following policies apply to all land division in the Township:

- a) Ribbon or strip development shall not be permitted;
- b) The size and configuration of new lots shall be subject to the requirements of this Plan and the implementing Zoning By-law;
- c) New lots created by consent and plans of subdivision must satisfy other applicable requirements of this Plan and the following criteria:
  - i) The location, design, size and density of lots shall retain the open rural landscape and protect natural heritage features;
  - ii) The design is in harmony with the natural heritage features, neighbouring development and the landscape.

The proposed plan of subdivision is in the form of a traditional estate residential neighbourhood and does not represent ribbon or strip development. The subdivision will have an internal road network that will connect to Second Line as well as open space blocks that will accommodate the site's natural heritage features. All lots are located outside the required setbacks to natural features. Lot sizes are sufficient to accommodate private water and sewer services and provide sufficient rear yard amenity space. The density of the proposal, lot sizes and subdivision layout will retain the unique rural landscape. There are 39 non-farm residences located within 1.5 km of the subject property including 13 such homes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Line between Side Road 15 and Side Road 20. The proposed lots on the subject lands are compatible with the surrounding community of non-farm dwellings. Natural heritage features will be protected by incorporating appropriate development setbacks as identified in the Environmental Impact Study prepared by GEI Consultants.

- d) Consideration of new estate residential development within lands designated residential prior to June 6, 2006, shall include an assessment of:
  - i) the number, distribution and density of vacant lots in the Township;
  - ii) the additional lots that may be created in conformity with this Plan; and
  - iii) the consequences of the development of the lots about the Growth Management Objectives of this Plan.

The proposed estate residential development will contribute to meeting the Township's residential growth projections and to the variety of lot types and sizes available for sale. A Market and Socioeconomic Study prepared by Urban Metrics confirms that there is unmet demand in Dufferin County for detached dwellings which are the preferred type of housing for many households, especially households that include children. Further, insufficient supply of detached housing has led to housing affordability issues within the County. The Market and Socio-economic Study also reviewed the County of Dufferin Draft Land Needs Assessment, 2022, and concluded that due to increases

in population projections since 2022, the Land Needs Assessment underestimates the need for additional lands to accommodate population growth in Dufferin County.

- g) New lots will not be permitted on lands containing physical constraints to development such as poor drainage, flood susceptibility, steep slopes or any other physical condition that may jeopardize public health and safety.

The subject property does not contain hazard lands which would impact health and safety.

- 4.2.5 a) Private sewer and water supplies will continue to be the preferred form of servicing for small scale development outside of communities.

Private sewage systems and private wells are proposed for each lot which is a preferred form of servicing.

- 4.2.6 The Provincial Minimum Distance Separation Formulae (MDS) will be used in determining appropriate minimum separation distances between new development and livestock operations and determining appropriate minimum distance separation for new or expanding livestock operations outside the designated settlement areas. Separation distances between livestock operations and residential uses shall meet the Minimum Distance Separation requirements. The Township’s Zoning By-law will incorporate the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae (MDS) as zoning provisions applicable in the Township.

Approximately 2.2 ha of the subject lands are located within the MDS of one livestock operation as identified by a survey of surrounding land uses that was carried out for the Agricultural Impact Assessment. However, the encroaching lands are occupied by natural heritage features, a portion of the access road and the existing hydro equipment. All lots are outside the MDS.

- 4.2.10 New development must be compatible with surrounding land uses. Proposals for development shall include an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the adjacent land uses including noise, odour, dust, traffic, the physical form of the development and the visual impact of the development.

The proposal to divide the subject property into 19 estate lots represents low density development that is appropriate in a rural setting. A Traffic Impact Study prepared by Nextrans Consulting Engineers has concluded that the impact of increased traffic from the subdivision will have negligible impact on local roads.

*4.4 Township of Amaranth Zoning By-law 2-2009, Township Consolidation December 2010*

The subject property is currently zoned RU (Rural) with a small area at the southern property line zoned EP (Environmental Protection). The property owner is proposing to rezone approximately 14.05 ha currently zoned RU to ER (Estate Residential) to correspond with the proposed Official Plan Land Use Designation. A further 15.45 ha will be zoned EP including all areas of the property that are currently zoned EP as well as the ponds/wetland features in the northern and central areas of the site and their associated development setbacks. A small area of the site (0.76 ha) that is occupied by the existing hydro equipment will remain zoned RU. No buildings or structures including accessory buildings or structures are permitted in the EP zone, apart from pump houses and buildings and structures for flood control.

Permitted uses in the ER (Estate Residential) zone are single detached dwellings and home occupations.

ER Zone regulations are as follows:

Regulation	Requirement	Proposed
Minimum lot area	0.6 ha	0.6 ha

Minimum lot frontage	30 m	27.0 m
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All lots meet the minimum lot area and frontage requirements of the ER zone except for lot 5. As such, an Exception to permit a minimum lot frontage of 27 metres is being requested.

## 5.0 Public Consultation Strategy

The Planning Act sets out public notice requirements for development applications including installation of public notice signs on the property and holding a statutory public meeting to allow members of the community to comment on the application. Notice of the public meeting is mailed by first class mail to all residents within 120 metres of the subject lands a minimum of 20 days before the Statutory Public Meeting.

If requested, the proponent will hold a Community Information Meeting in advance of the Statutory Public Meeting to present the proposal to neighbouring landowners. Invitations to the Statutory Public Meeting could be mailed by first class to all residents within 120 metres of the property or a larger area, if required. The intent of the Community Information Meeting is to provide information to those residents who could potentially be impacted by the proposal, seek public feedback and answer questions. The proposal may be revised based to address comments and concerns expressed at the Community Information Meeting.

## 6.0 Technical Report Summaries

### 6.1 Functional Site Servicing Report & Stormwater Management

A Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report (FSR/SWM), dated November 2025 was prepared by GEI Consultants Ltd. The purpose of the report is to provide site-specific information for the Town’s review regarding infrastructure for storm drainage, sanitary sewers and water supply. The report provides a high-level review of the pre- and post-development drainage conditions. The proposed development will be designed to meet conservation authority criteria for stormwater management as well as Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Guidelines and comply with Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) 2003 Stormwater Management Planning and Design Manual. Low Impact Design (LID) measures are proposed to provide stormwater management controls including quantity, quality and erosion control.

### 6.2 Grading & Servicing Plan

Conceptual Grading and Servicing Plans, dated November 2025, were prepared by GEI Consultants Ltd. The plans illustrate the proposed lot boundaries, site access, servicing, swales and ditches, and the overland flow routes. The grading of the lands is also illustrated.

### 6.3 Geotechnical Investigation

A Geotechnical Investigation was completed by Canadian Engineering Services Inc (CESI) on October 17, 2025. CESI advanced 10 boreholes at depths of between 5.0 metres and 9.6 metres. Monitoring wells were installed in 5 of the boreholes. Material from the boreholes was analyzed to provide a general soil profile. The report concludes that conventional strip footings may be utilized for the dwellings. Based on water encountered in the boreholes, there appears to be an aquifer on the site at a depth of 2.0 metres to 8.53 metres and both temporary and permanent dewatering will be required for the proposed dwellings. Dewatering is discussed in detail in the Hydrogeological Investigation.

## 6.4 Hydrogeological Investigation

A Hydrogeological Investigation was completed by Canadian Engineering Services Inc (CESI) on December 1, 2025, in conjunction with the Geotechnical Investigation. The report finds that most of the proposed development will have excavation depths below the ground water level and temporary and permanent dewatering will be required. There are no water supply wells, streams or creeks within the radius of influence of the dewatering activity. Water from the dewatering is to be managed in the existing stormwater management ponds on site. As such, no negative impacts to existing groundwater quality or quantity are expected.

## 6.5 Traffic Impact Statement

A Traffic Brief dated December 4, 2025, was prepared by NexTrans Consulting Engineers. The brief was prepared to evaluate the sufficiency of the existing road network and the potential impacts of increased traffic from the proposed plan of subdivision on the road network. The report concludes that given the number of weekday morning and afternoon trips generated from the proposed subdivision, the development will be sufficiently accommodated by the existing road network and the impact on surrounding roads will be acceptable. Further, the proposed site driveway locations are acceptable and the required parking is provided.

## 6.6 Environmental Impact Study

An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) dated November 24, 2025, was prepared by GEI Consultants Canada. The purpose of the report is to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed development on the natural features and ecological functions of the subject property and adjacent 120 metres. The EIS addresses the Provincial Planning Statement and other applicable provincial policies and guidelines, the Dufferin County Official Plan, Township of Amaranth Official Plan and policies of the conservation authorities having jurisdiction. A Terms of Reference was approved by the Township, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority in spring 2024. The consultants carried out background review as well as field surveys and assessments. There were several natural features identified on the subject lands and on adjacent properties within 120 metres. These features include a Provincially Significant Wetland, unevaluated wetlands, woodlands, significant woodlands, significant wildlife habitat as well as habitat for threatened and endangered species and a water course (White Whitten Drain). The report evaluates the direct and potential impacts of the proposed development on each of the natural features and recommends mitigation measures including appropriate development setbacks, stormwater management controls, erosion and sediment controls and construction management best practices. Several wetland communities have been previously disturbed or removed. To compensate, a wetland restoration and enhancement plan has been developed. The measures proposed are intended to result in no net loss in ecological function.

## 6.7 Archaeological Assessment – Stage 1 & 2

A stage 1 & 2 Archaeological Assessment was conducted by Matthew Muttart of Archaeological Consultants Canada (ACC). The report is dated November 23, 2023. ACC conducted Stage 1 background research on the subject lands that indicated that the property has general archaeological potential due to its location on an early transportation route (Second Line) as well as primary and secondary water sources on and near the property. ACC determined that most of the property had either been previously disturbed or was covered in low-lying, permanently wet marshes. However, 3.49 ha of the site was considered to retain archaeological potential and was subject to a Stage 2 investigation by test pit survey at 5 metre intervals. During the testing, this 3.49 ha was found to be heavily disturbed and no artifacts or other archaeological resources were found. Further assessment of the property was not recommended. The report was submitted to the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the Ministry

entered it into the Public Register without technical review as evidenced by the Ministry letter dated December 20, 2023.

### **6.8 Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan**

A Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan dated October 24, 2025, was prepared by Kuntz Forestry Consulting Inc. Kuntz carried out an inventory of all trees over 10 cm Diameter Breast Height (DBH) on the subject lands or within 6.0 metres that could potentially be impacted by development. Trees of all sizes within the road allowance were surveyed. Tree saving opportunities were evaluated based on minimum Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) distance. Six trees and a portion of one polygon on the subject site were identified for removal as they conflict directly with development or the level of encroachment into the TPZ would be intolerable and tree would not recover. The remaining trees (118 individual trees and 2 polygons and a portion of one polygon) will be preserved and protected with tree protection fencing during construction.

### **6.9 Market & Socio-Economic Study**

A Market and Socio-Economic Study was prepared by Urban Metrics and the report is dated October 14, 2025. The purpose of the study is to identify the need for the proposed development. The population and demographics of the subject site have been analyzed as well as the potential impact on soft services. Given Dufferin County growth projections that show the population of Amaranth increasing by 3,800 residents by 2051, the Township will need an average of 38 new dwellings per year between 2021 and 2051. The proposed subdivision of the subject property into 19 estate lots represents less than one year of needed housing supply. The proposed development will help to support growth targets. Since lack of sufficient housing supply is a major factor in housing affordability, the proposed development will increase supply of lots for residential development and help to address housing affordability issues in Dufferin County. The report concludes that the development will have minimal impact on services due to the small population that is anticipated. Further, the residents of the development would be expected to have lower need for social services owing to higher household incomes than the Township average.

### **6.10 Agricultural Impact Assessment**

An Agricultural Impact Assessment was prepared by Colville Consulting Inc. and is dated October 2025. The Agricultural Impact Assessment was prepared in accordance with OMFRA's Draft Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidance Documents (2018) to assess the potential impacts of the proposed Official Plan Amendment on agricultural operations, the farming community, and the broader agricultural system. The report concluded that the subject lands are not within a specialty crop area. Although the lands are located within provincially recognized and municipally designated prime agricultural area, there are no reasonable alternative locations for the proposed development in Amaranth that would avoid prime agricultural areas, as designated in the County of Dufferin Official Plan. Further, there are no reasonable alternative locations which utilize lower priority agricultural lands and the proposed site represents a reasonable choice of location for development. Impacts of the proposal are primarily loss of agricultural land. The report provides recommendations to avoid or mitigate potential impacts. Although the proposed development does not fully comply with the MDS formulae, the proposed Community Settlement Area meets the intent of the MDS and would comply if the encroachment area (primarily natural heritage features) were not included in the new settlement area. The Assessment concludes that the proposed development is compliant with all other relevant provincial agricultural policies except the MDS.

## 7.0 Summary & Conclusion

### 7.1 Proposed Amendment to Dufferin County Official Plan

Redesignate lands currently designated Countryside Area on Schedule B (Community Structure) to Community Settlement Area. Lands designated Provincially Significant Wetland to remain designated as such. Redesignate lands designated Prime Agricultural Area on Schedule C (Prime Agricultural Areas and Rural Lands) to Community Settlement Area.

### 7.2 Proposed Amendment to Township of Amaranth Official Plan

Redesignate 14.05 ha of land currently designated Rural on Schedule A (Land Use and Transportation) to Estate Residential. Lands to be designated Estate Residential include all proposed residential lots (1-19). Lands currently designated Environmental Protection (Block 23) to remain designated as such. Additional areas of the property also occupied by natural features are also proposed to be designated Environmental Protection. In total, 15.45 ha of the site will be designated Environmental Protection. A small area of the site that is currently occupied by hydro equipment will continue to be designated Rural.

### 7.3 Proposed Amendment to Township of Amaranth Zoning By-law 2-2009

The amendment to Zoning By-law 2-2009 will rezone land that are currently zoned RU (Rural) to ER (Estate Residential). Lands to be zoned ER include all proposed residential lots (1-19). Lands currently zoned EP (Environmental Protection) will remain in the EP zone and an additional 7.15 ha of the site will be placed in the EP zone. The lands with existing hydro located will continue to be zoned RU (Rural). All proposed lots meet the minimum lot frontage and area requirements of the ER zone except for lot 5 which has a frontage of 27.0 metres. As such, site specific zoning to permit a minimum lot frontage of 27.0 metres is requested.

### 7.4 Plan of Subdivision

Subdivide the subject site into lots and blocks to create a neighbourhood of estate residential dwellings. The development will be comprised of:

- 19 lots for detached dwellings including one lot (Lot 15) for the existing detached dwelling.
  - All lots to have minimum lot areas of 0.60 ha;
  - All lots to have minimum lot frontages of 27.0 metres.
- 1 block (Block 26) reserved for existing hydro equipment.
- 3 blocks (Blocks 25, 27 and 28) reserved for natural heritage features.
- 1 new road (Road A) to be assumed and maintained by the municipality.

### 7.5 Conclusion

The proposed amendments to the County of Dufferin Official Plan, the Township of Amaranth Official Plan and the Township of Amaranth Zoning By-law to permit subdivision of the existing lands into 19 lots for estate residential development are consistent with the policies of the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 and conform with the intent and purpose of the county and local planning policies and regulations. The proposal represents good land use planning because:

1. The proposed plan of subdivision will increase the supply of residential lots available for sale and contribute to meeting the County and Township's growth targets.

2. The proposed lot sizes, private services for water and sanitary sewers and the density of the development are appropriate for the rural location.
3. Natural heritage features on the site and their ecological functions will be protected and enhanced, ensuring a high-quality natural environment for humans and wildlife to coexist.
4. The subject lands are unique and of sufficient size and character to accommodate the proposed development.
5. The subject lands are fragmented and do not have productive agricultural use, which makes the proposed development appropriate.

Based on the foregoing, we recommend approval of the applications.

Yours truly,



William Oughtred

**Planner's Certificate:**

I hereby certify that this report was reviewed by Tracey Pillon-Abbs Registered Professional Planner, within the meaning of Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994.



Tracey Pillon-Abbs, RPP  
Principal Planner  
Pillon Abbs Inc.



Pillon-Abbs, a  
the Ontario

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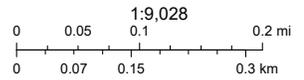
# 514504 2nd Line - Aerial Map 2023



2024-07-17, 2:29:31 PM

2023\_Exported\_Correct Exported\_Tile\_Cache\_4AGOL\_2024\_2

- Red: Band\_1
- Green: Band\_2
- Blue: Band\_3
- Road Labels
- Assessment Lot Parcels



Esri Community Maps Contributors, Province of Ontario, Esri Canada, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, NRCan, Parks Canada | Dufferin County

Figure 1- Aerial Photo of the Subject Lands

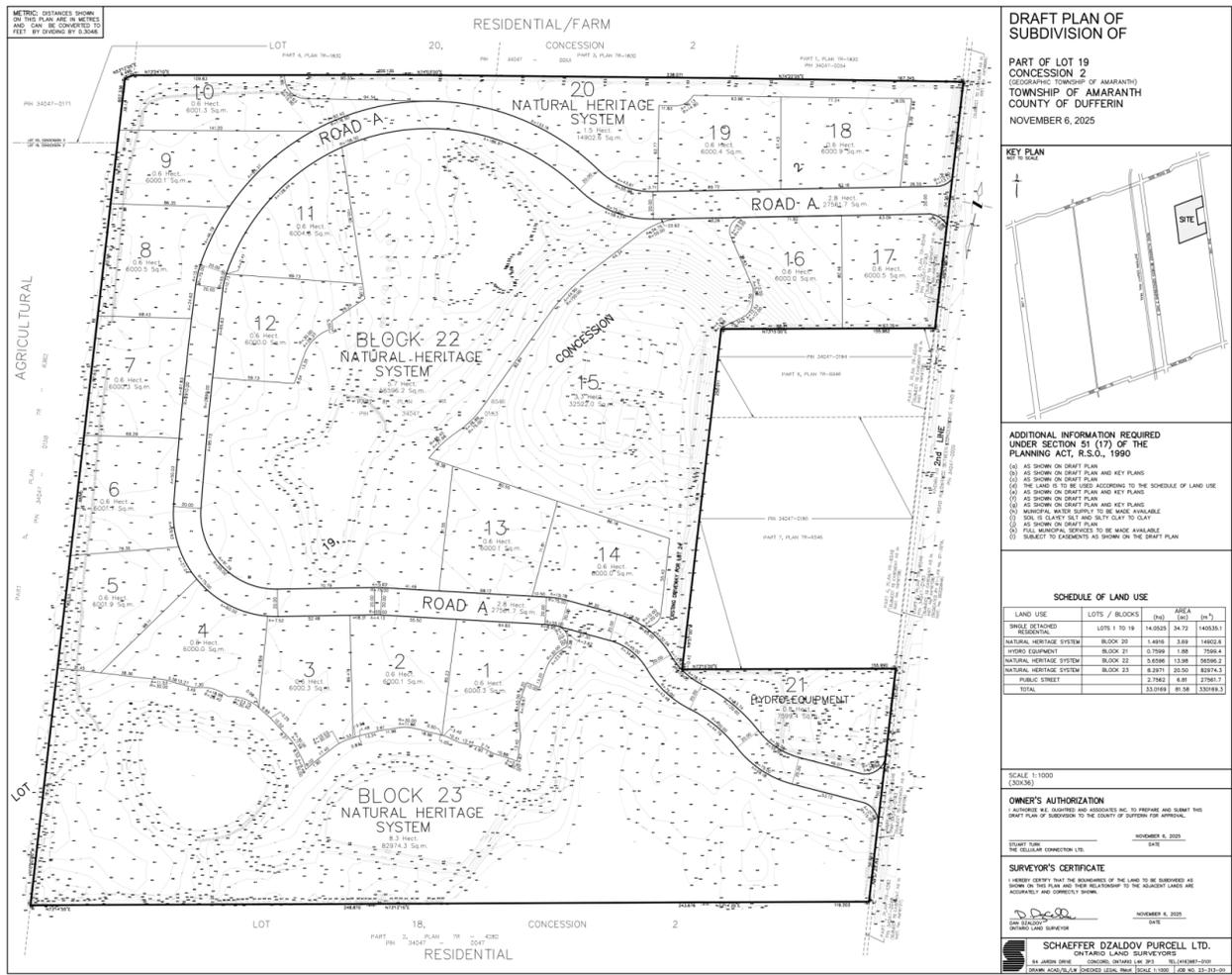


Figure 2 - Proposed Plan of Subdivision

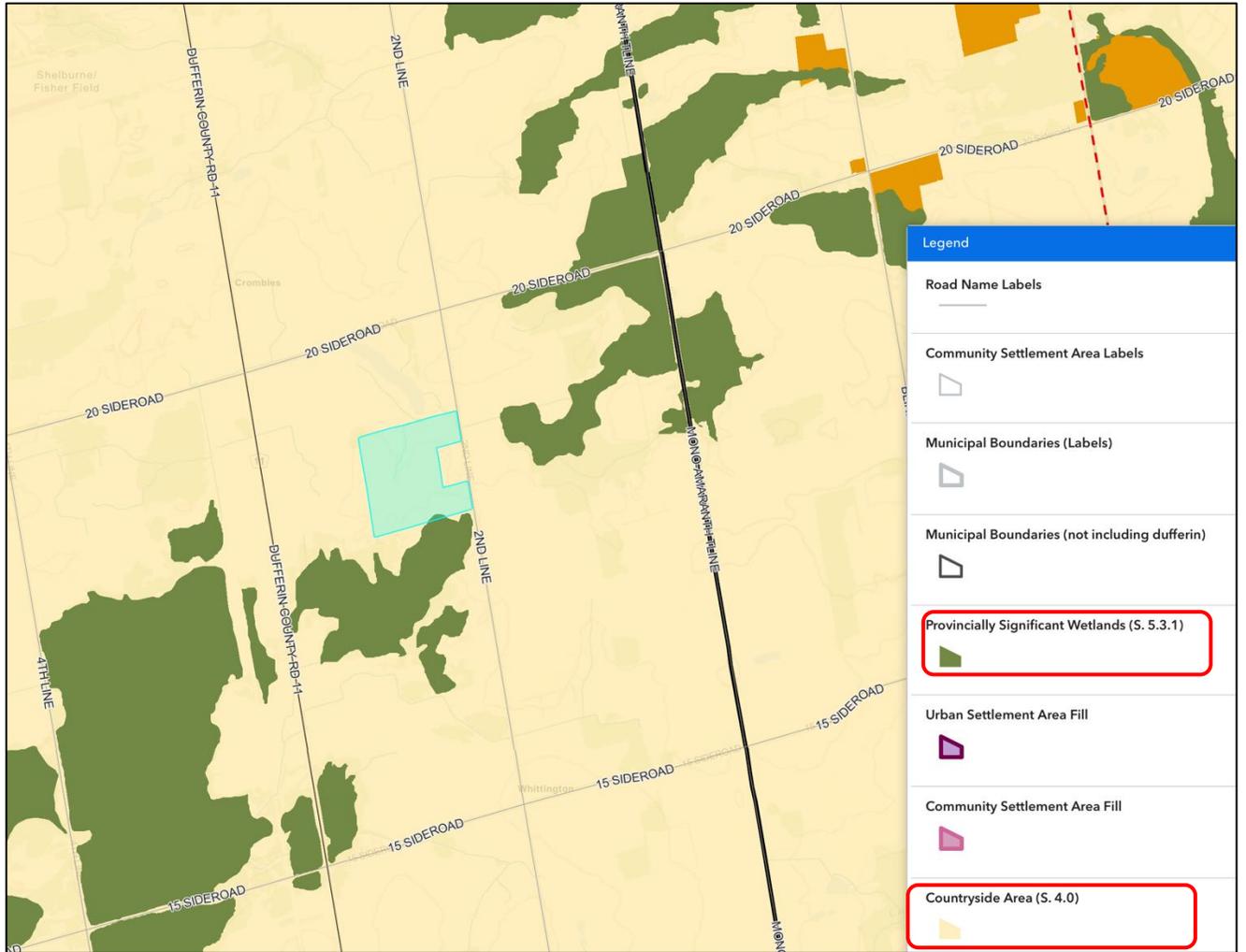


Figure 3 - County of Dufferin Official Plan Schedule B: Community Structure

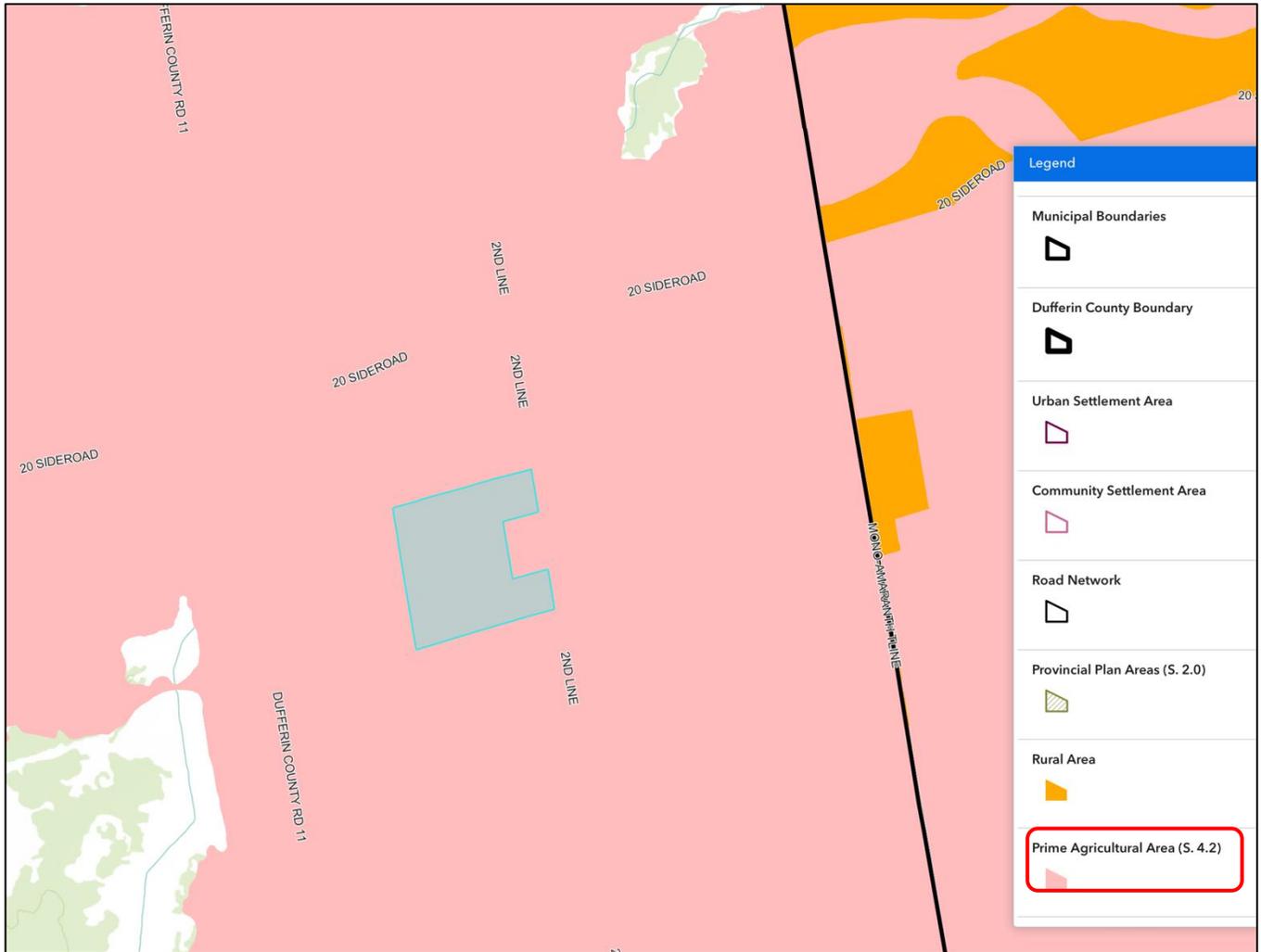


Figure 4 - County of Dufferin Official Plan Schedule C: Prime Agricultural Areas and Rural Lands

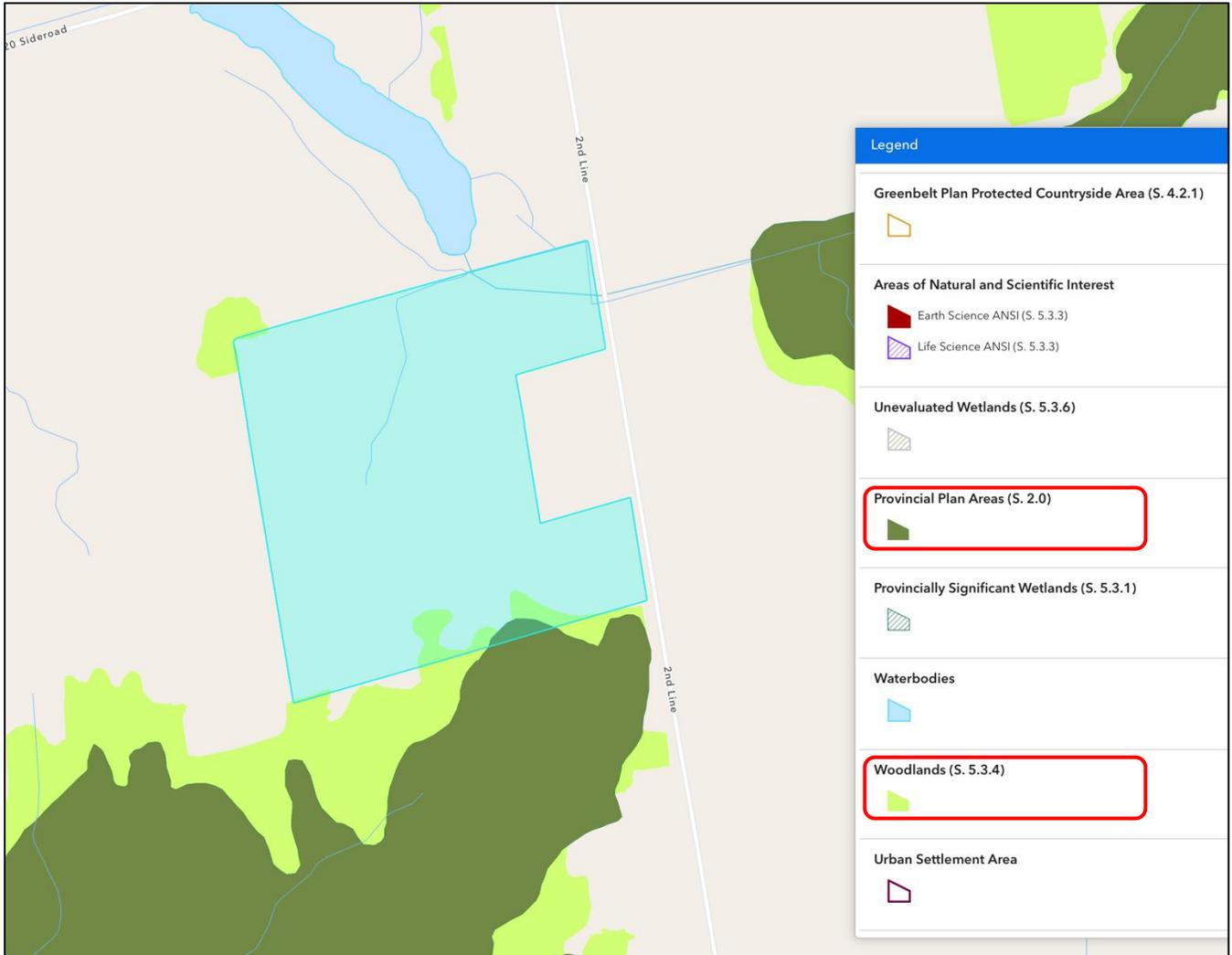


Figure 5 - County of Dufferin Official Plan Schedule E: Natural Heritage Features

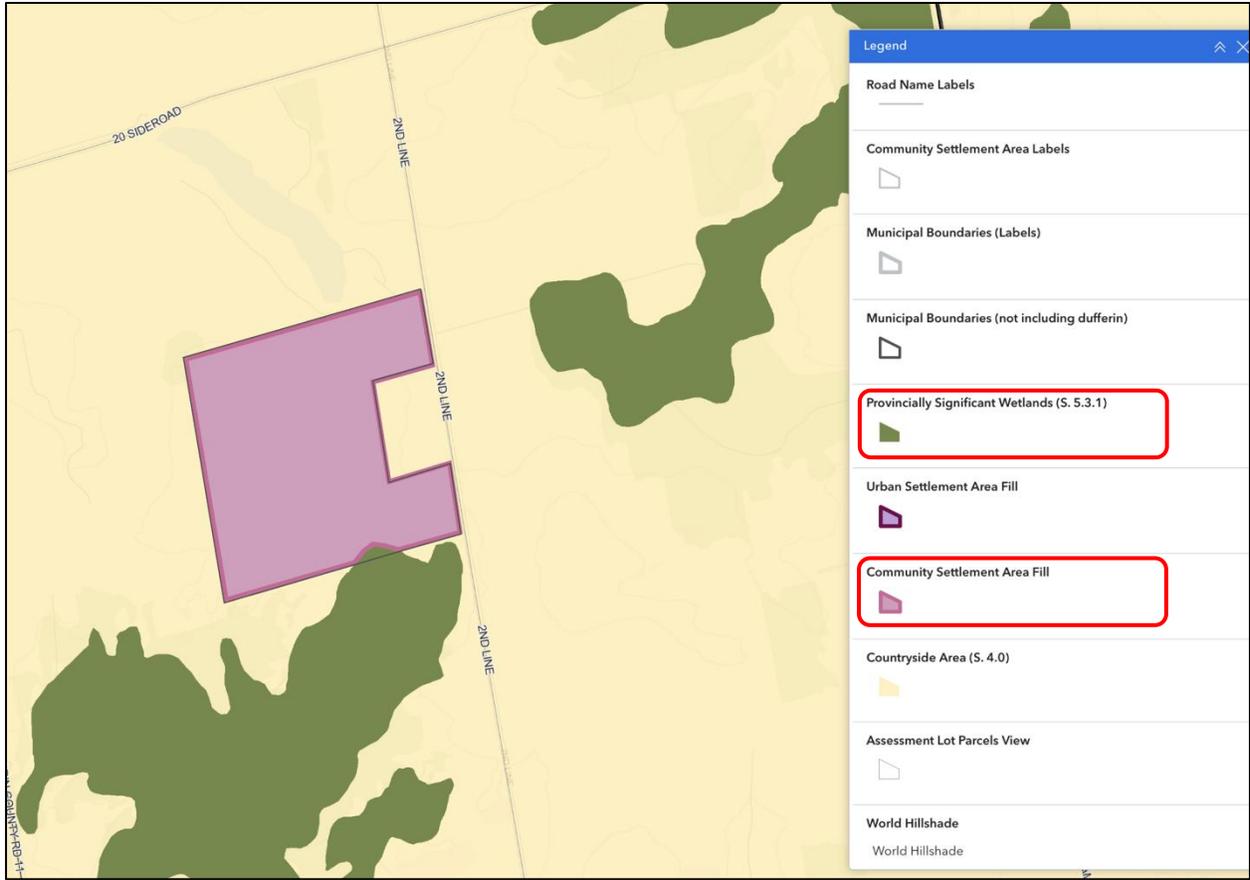


Figure 6 – Proposed Amendment to County of Dufferin Official Plan Schedule B: Community Structure



Figure 7 – Proposed Amendment to County of Dufferin Official Plan Schedule C: Prime Agricultural Areas and Rural Lands

**TOWNSHIP OF AMARANTH OFFICIAL PLAN  
SCHEDULE "A" LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION**

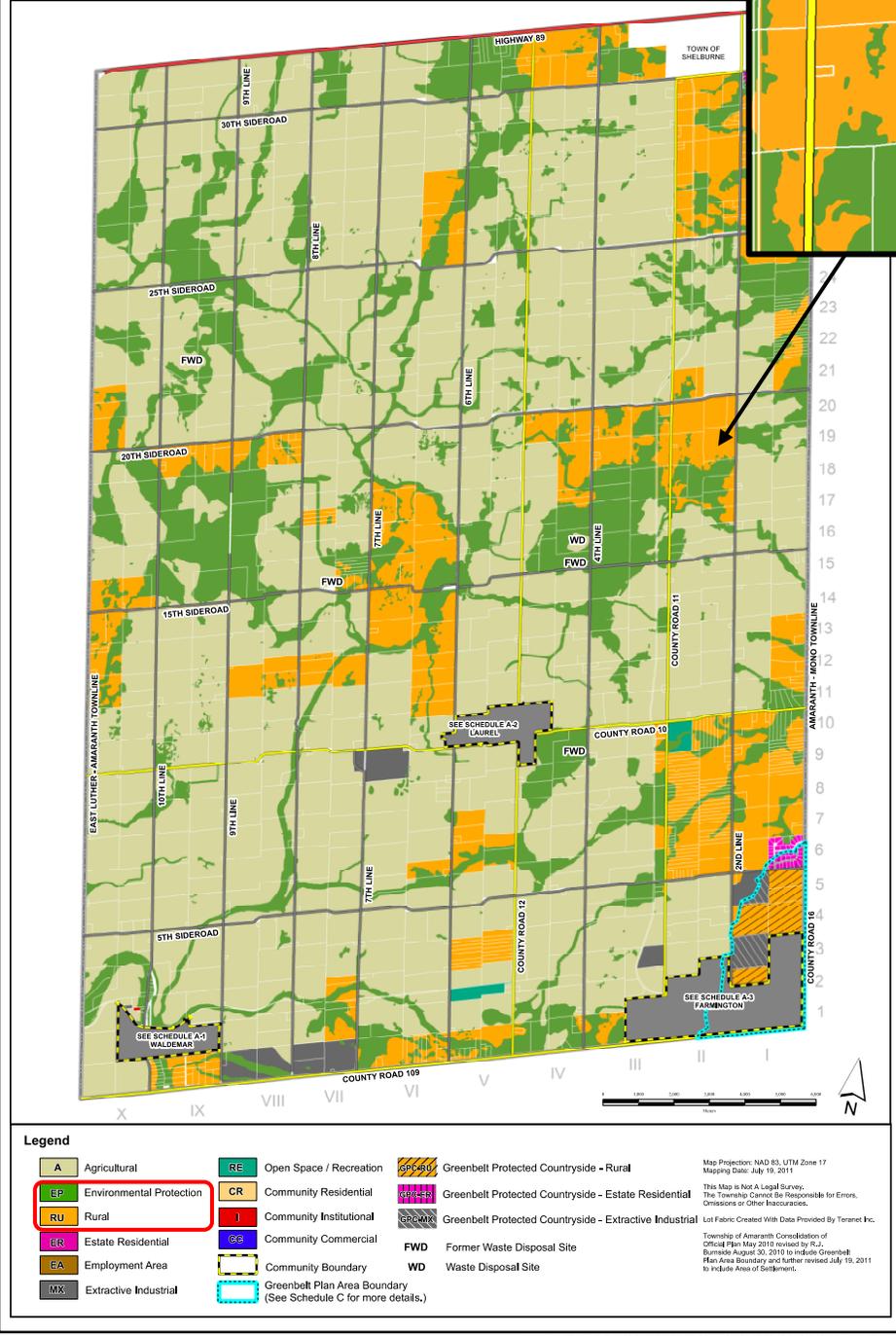


Figure 8 - Township of Amaranth Official Plan Schedule A: Land Use and Transportation

**TOWNSHIP OF AMARANTH OFFICIAL PLAN  
DUFFERIN COUNTY  
SCHEDULE "B" ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES**

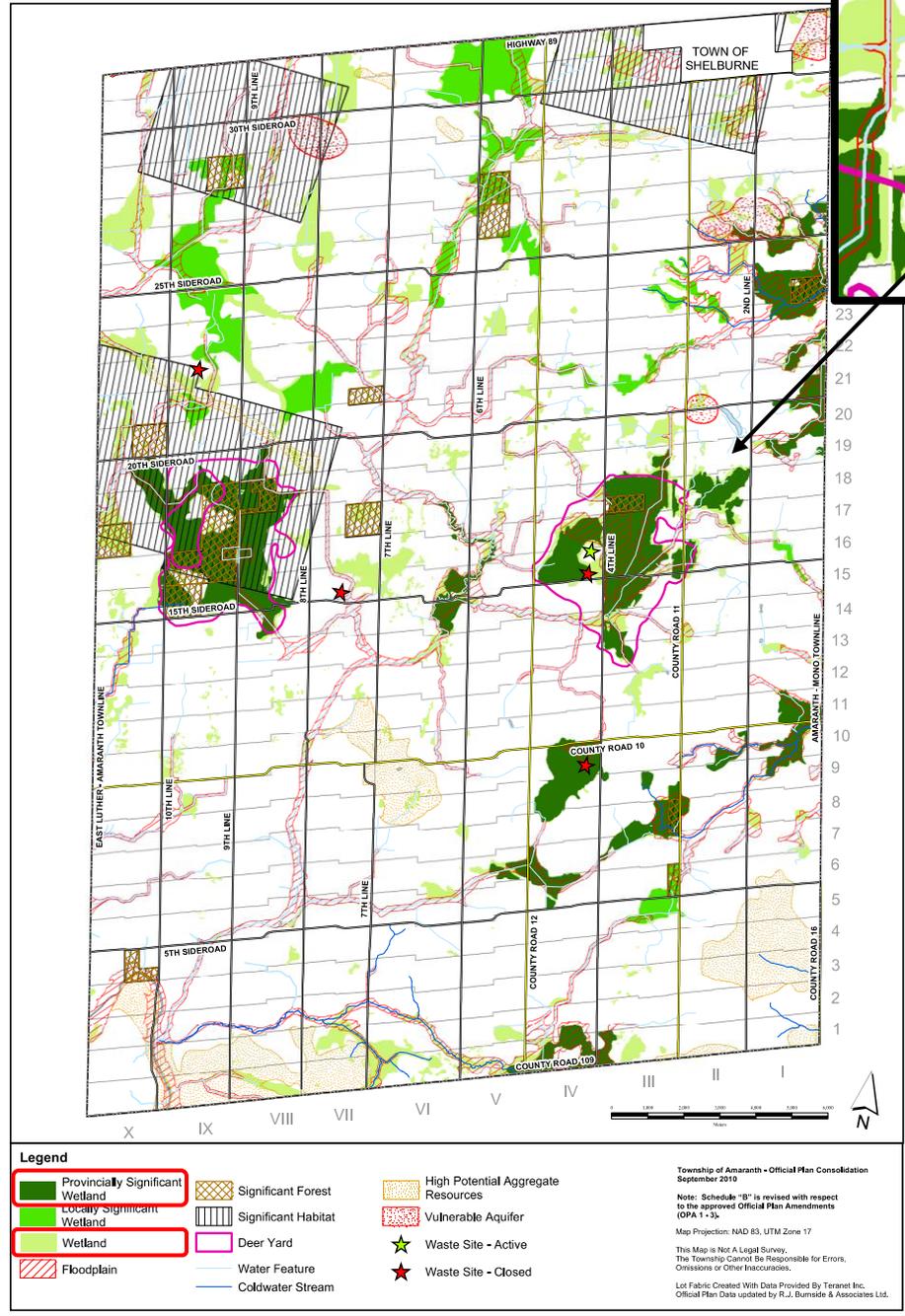


Figure 9 - Township of Amaranth Official Plan Schedule B: Environmental Features

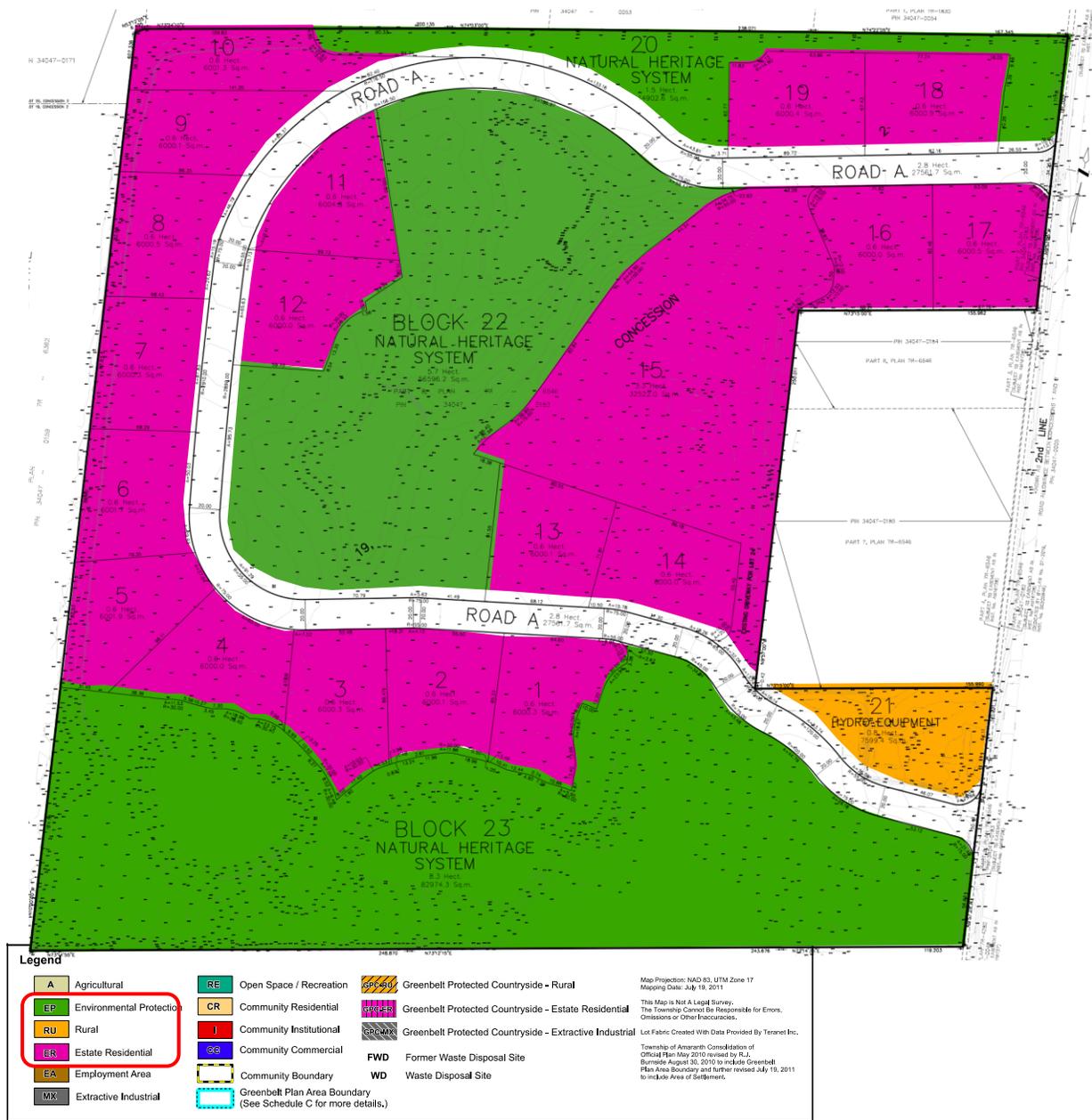


Figure 10 -Proposed Amendment to Amaranth Official Plan Schedule A: Land Use

SCHEDULE A  
 CONSOLIDATION OF ZONING BY-LAW 2-2009  
 TOWNSHIP OF AMARANTH

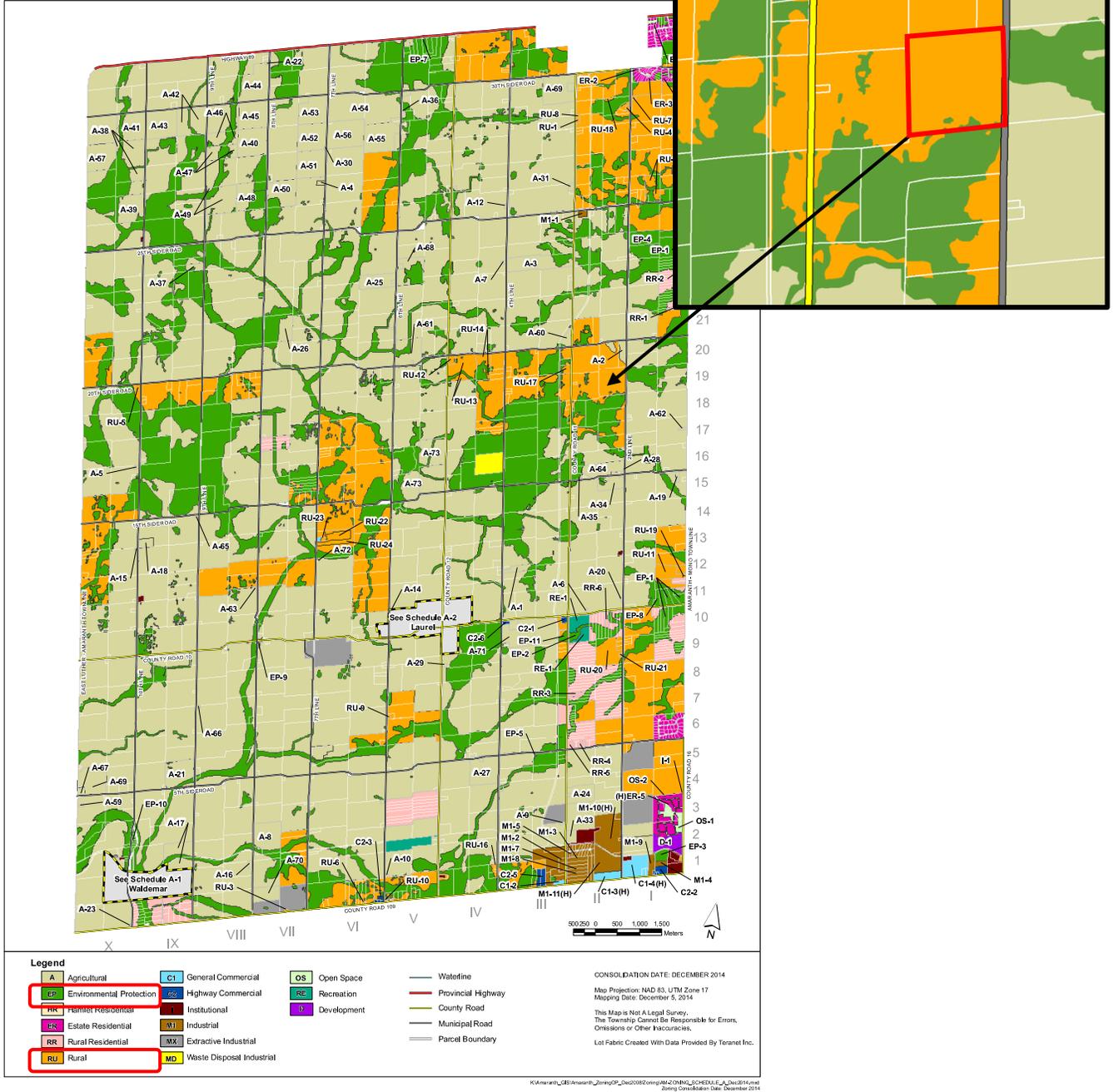


Figure 11 - Township of Amaranth Zoning Map

SCHEDULE A  
 CONSOLIDATION OF ZONING BY-LAW 2-2009  
 TOWNSHIP OF AMARANTH

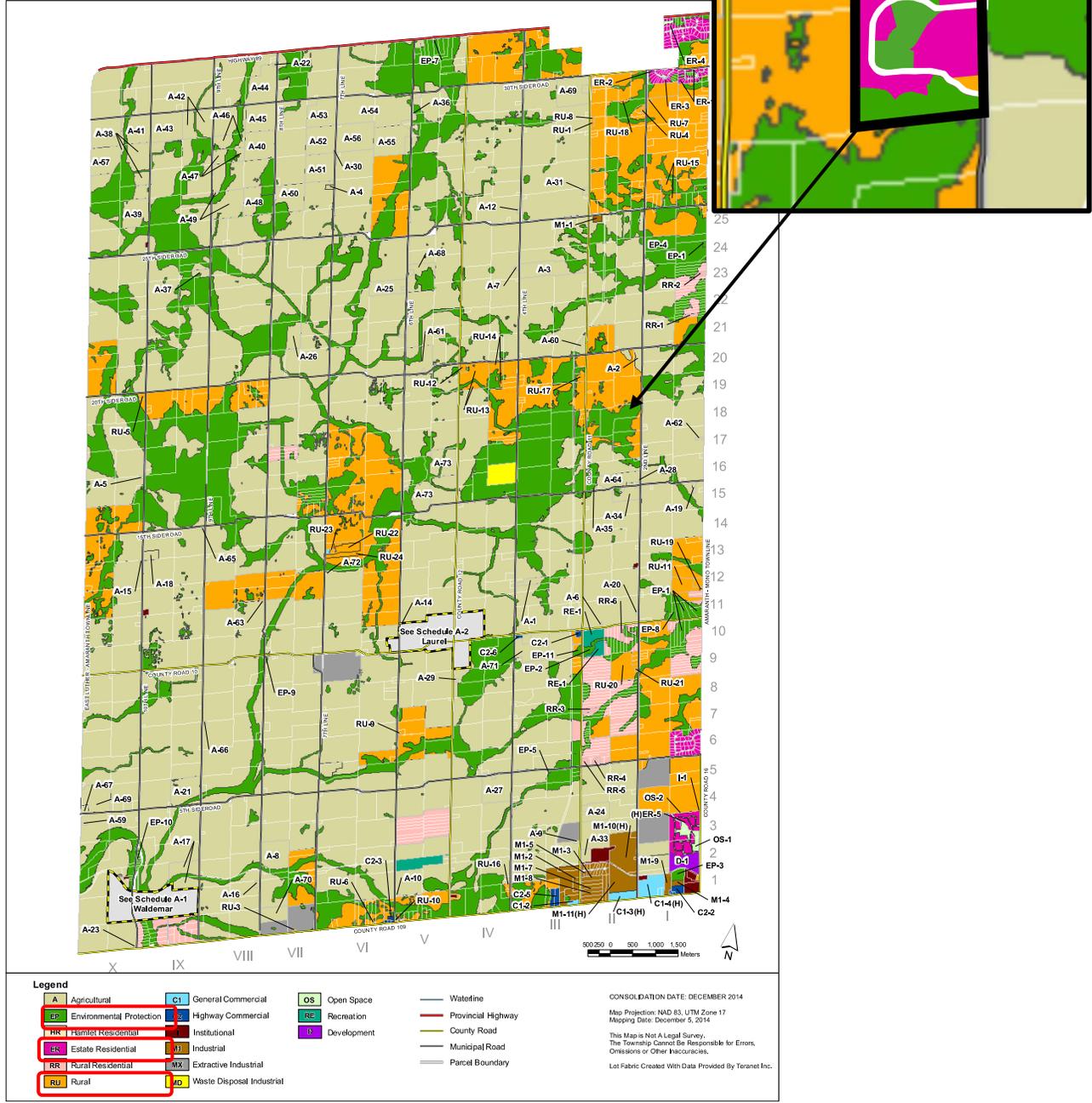


Figure 12 - Proposed Amendment to Amaranth Zoning Map