



1700 Richardson Side Road, Ottawa

Planning Rationale
Official Plan Amendment
June 13, 2025 – Revised October 15, 2025



Prepared for Minto Communities

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October 2025

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Executive Summary

Minto Communities is seeking an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to redesignate the property at 1700 Richardson Side Road from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside” in the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan. The change reflects the land’s current condition and its limited suitability for agricultural use.

The subject property is located immediately abutting the existing urban boundary for the City of Ottawa in the former City of Kanata. The lands are located east of Huntmar Drive, south of Richardson Side Road, and west of the Carp River Corridor. They have a total area of 31.4 hectares.

Consistent with policy 9.1.1.3 of the City of Ottawa Official Plan, an area-specific Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared and is submitted as part of the application. The AIA includes a revised Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) for the subject property and concludes that the subject property is no longer suited for agricultural use.

The proposed re-designation has also been assessed for consistency with the Provincial Planning Statement which speaks to consideration of an agricultural system approach to maintain and enhance a geographically continuous agricultural land base and support and foster the long-term economic prosperity and productive capacity of the agri-food network.

Through this Planning Rationale and the accompanying AIA, it has been demonstrated that the proposed re-designation of the subject property will not negatively impact the agricultural system. The lands are currently within a highly-fragmented agricultural area and are not currently cultivated, resulting in no economic impacts from the redesignation. The change to rural uses would continue to allow for contributions to the agri-food network while reflecting the long-term potential of the lands and providing a reasonable alternative to the conversion of prime agricultural areas to other uses.

It is Fotenn’s professional opinion that the proposed redesignation of the subject property from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside” meets the requirements of the Planning Act, is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, conforms to the Official Plan for the City of Ottawa and constitutes good planning.

Introduction

Fotenn Planning + Design (“Fotenn”) has been engaged by Minto Communities to prepare this Planning Rationale as part of an Official Plan Amendment application that seeks to amend the designation of the lands at 1700 Richardson Side Road in Ottawa (the “subject property”) from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside” on Schedule B9 of the City of Ottawa Official Plan.

The subject property is located in the west end of the City of Ottawa within the Kanata West area, just north of the current urban boundary for the City of Ottawa. The subject property abuts the Carp River corridor to the east, Richardson Side Road to the North, and Huntmar Drive to the west. South of the subject lands is a recently constructed low-rise residential neighbourhood.

The proposed Official Plan Amendment seeks to redesignate the subject property from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside”. The lands are cut-off from the broader agricultural system by recent road upgrades that make getting machinery to the subject property in order to farm it difficult. The subject property is also in an area that is relatively disconnected from the broader agricultural system. An amendment to designate the lands as Rural would reflect the current status of the lands as fallow land.

3.0 Site Context and Surrounding Area

3.1 Site Context

The subject property is located on the southeast corner of Richardson Side Road and Huntmar Drive in the former City of Kanata. The property abuts Richardson Side Road to the north, Huntmar Drive to the west, the Carp River to the east, and the Minto Arcadia subdivision to the south.



Figure 1: Site Location

The lands are vacant and are not actively farmed. A hedgerow splits the property east to west and a watercourse extends along the southern boundary. The lands have an irregular property line along the Carp River and a portion of the lands are identified as being within the floodplain of the river.

The lands have approximately 450 metres of frontage on Richardson Side Road, 607 metres of frontage along Huntmar Drive, and a total site area of 31.38 hectares.

3.2 Surrounding Area

The subject property is located north of the urban boundary in Kanata West. Surrounding uses are described as follows:

North: North of the subject property are agricultural lands along Huntmar Drive. Northeast of the subject property is the Carp River and the urban area of the City of Ottawa east of Terry Fox Drive. Northwest of the subject property north of Richardson Side Road are agricultural lands, a church, a rural dwelling and a construction company headquarters.

East: Immediately east of the subject property is the Carp River. Further east is Terry Fox Drive, a major arterial road through Kanata, and the low-rise residential neighbourhoods known collectively as Kanata Lakes along Kanata Avenue.

Southeast of the subject property is the Kanata Town Centre, a major retail and entertainment district with amenities including retail food stores, retail stores, restaurants, a cinema, personal services businesses and more.

South: South of the subject property is a low-rise residential subdivision known as Arcadia which features a mix of detached, and townhouse dwellings. There are also two (2) public parks. Further south is Campeau Drive which provide east-west access through Kanata West and to March Road in the east. Further south is the Canadian Tire Centre stadium and additional development lands within Kanata West.

West: West of the subject property on the west side of Huntmar Drive are agricultural lands. Southwest of the subject property is the Kanata West Business Park and Retail Centre and the Tanger Ottawa shopping centre. Northwest of the subject property is a golf course and private sports centre. Further west is an active quarry and the Carp Road business area.

3.3 Road Network

As per Schedule C4 - Urban Road Network and C9 – Rural Road Network of the Official Plan, the subject lands are in proximity to arterial roads on Huntmar Drive, Campeau Drive and Terry Fox Drive. Arterial roads are roads that serve through-travel between points not directly served by the road itself and limited direct access is provided to only major parcels of adjacent lands.

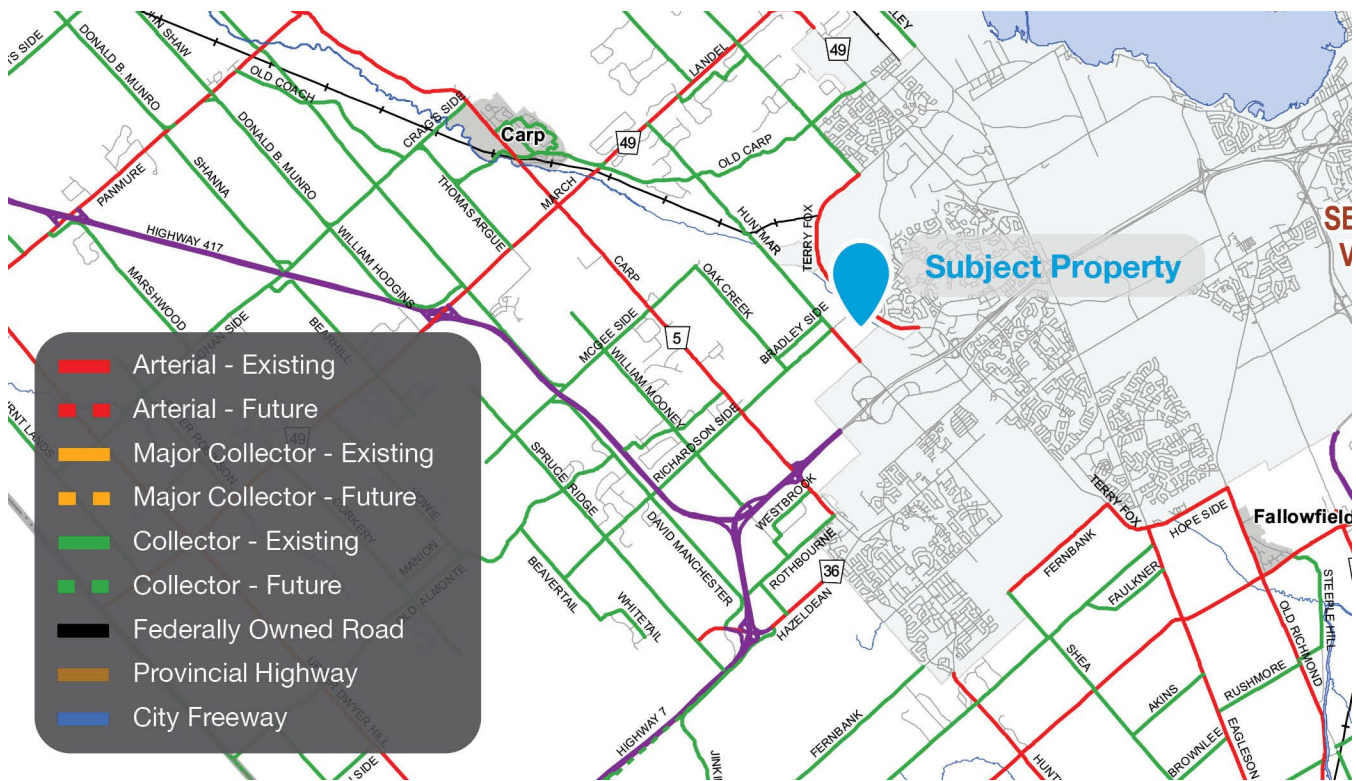


Figure 2: City of Ottawa Official Plan Schedule C4 - Rural Road Network

North of Richardson Side Road, Huntmar Drive becomes a Collector Road. Similarly, west of Huntmar Drive, Richardson Side Road is also designated as a Collector Road. Collectors are roads that serve neighbourhood travel to and from major collector or arterial roads and usually provide direct access to adjacent lands.

In 2020, the City reconstructed the intersection of Huntmar Drive and Richardson Side Road – replacing the previous four-way stop with a single entry and exit roundabout.

3.4 Pathway Network

Schedule C8 – Active Transportation Network – Rural Cycling Routes of the Official Plan identifies the pathway network within the Carp River corridor as major pathways with connections into the urban area to the south, along Terry Fox Drive to the east, and ultimately along the Renfrew rail corridor to the north into the Village of Carp and beyond. Richardson Side Road is identified as part of the Proposed Paved Shoulder active transportation network within the City's Official Plan.

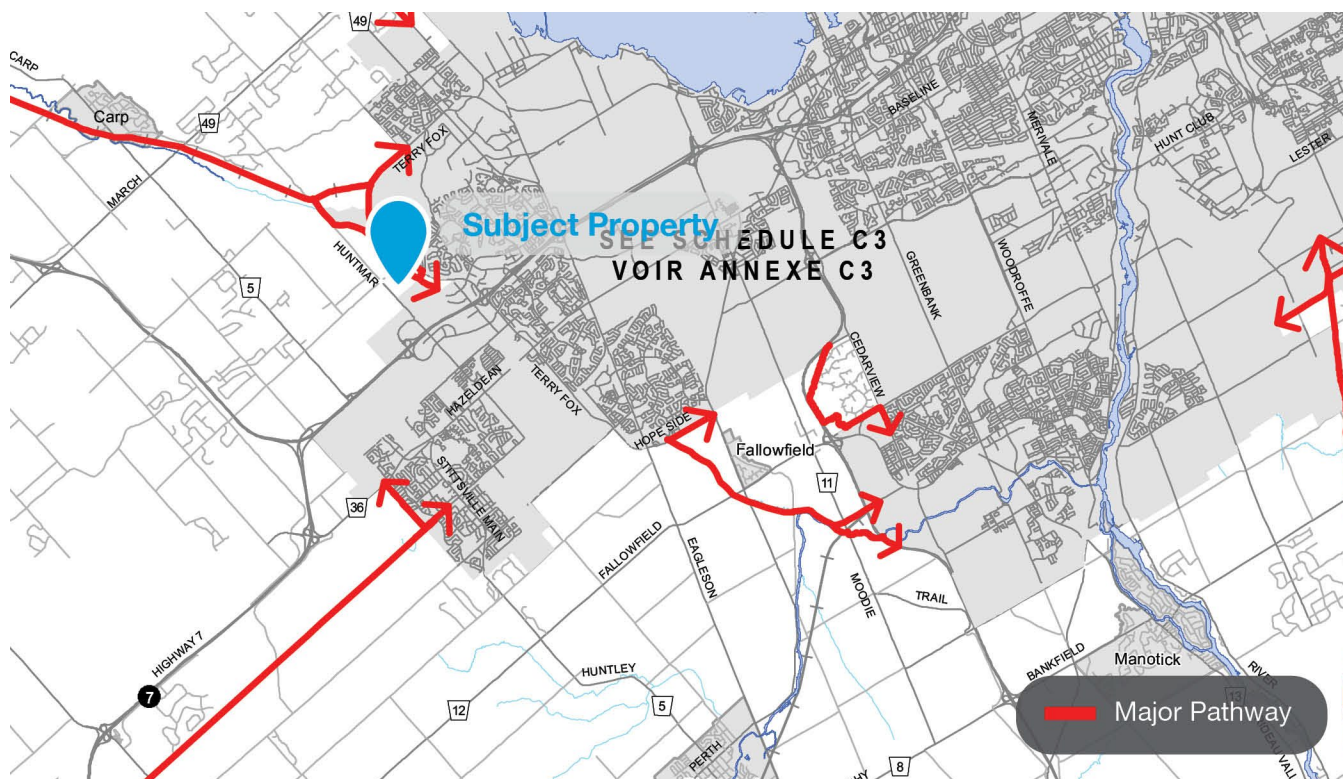


Figure 3: City of Ottawa Official Plan Schedule C8 - Active Transportation Network - Rural Cycling Routes

3.5 Natural Heritage System

The subject property is not designated as part of the Natural Heritage System however the Carp River corridor south of the subject property is identified as an Urban Natural Feature within the urban boundary. This feature is identified on Schedule C11 of the Official Plan. Policies relating to the Natural Heritage System are discussed in Section 5.3.5 of this report.

Proposed Application

The applicants are seeking to have the subject property redesignated to facilitate the use of the lands as “Rural Countryside”. No specific development is proposed for the property, but the policies of Section 9.2 speak to the diversity of uses that are permitted within the designation, including:

- / Forestry, conservation and natural resource management activities;
- / Agriculture, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses;
- / Residential uses according to the policies of the Official Plan;
- / Animal services boarding, breeding and training and equestrian establishments;
- / Bed and breakfasts;
- / Utility Installations;
- / Cemeteries; and
- / Sand and gravel pits.

Other uses are permitted through a Zoning By-law Amendment include outdoor recreational and tourism uses, small-scale light industrial and commercial activities under specific pretenses, institutional uses in specific cases, and small-scale wineries, cideries, breweries or distilleries.

The applicant is seeking this redesignation in recognition that the lands are no longer comprised of “Prime Agricultural Area” nor are the lands suited, in the long-term, to continue to be used for agricultural purposes, but are more appropriately designated and used for other rural uses reflective of the characteristics of the land and the surrounding area.

5.0 Policy and Regulatory Framework

5.1 Ontario Planning Act

The *Planning Act* sets the regulatory framework for planning in Ontario. It regulates local planning administration, the development, approval and amendment of official plans, community improvement, and zoning by-laws along with various other statutory planning tools. It also establishes the process for the subdivision of land. Its regulations detail application procedures, notice requirements, and public participation requirements among other matters.

The Official Plan Amendment application has been submitted in accordance, and in compliance with, Section 22 and Ontario Regulation 543/06 of the *Planning Act*.

5.2 Provincial Planning Statement

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) was issued under the Planning Act and is the primary provincial land use planning document, applying across Ontario. The Planning Statement (or “Policy Statement”) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS is issued under the authority of section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on October 20, 2024.

Municipal Official Plans are the most important vehicle for the implementation of the PPS and for achieving comprehensive, integrated long-term planning. Meanwhile, in order to protect provincial interests, planning authorities shall keep their official plans up-to-date with the Provincial Planning Statement and the policies of the Provincial Planning Statement continue to apply after adoption and approval of an Official Plan. Further, where a planning authority must decide on a planning matter before their Official Plan has been updated to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, or before other applicable planning instruments have been updated accordingly, it must still make a decision that is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement.

The new PPS also provides policy direction on matters applying only to Ontario’s largest and fastest growing municipalities with the greatest need for housing. This term is defined, and a list provided in Schedule 1 of the PPS, which includes the City of Ottawa.

The 2024 PPS recognizes that Ontario is a vast province with a diversity of urban, rural, and northern communities that is distinguished by different populations, economic activity, pace of growth and physical and natural conditions.

Relevant policies of the PPS are discussed as they relate to the proposed application below.

Chapter 2 contains policies relating to building homes, sustaining strong and competitive communities in Ontario. Section 2.5 contains policies for rural areas in municipalities. Rural areas are defined as a system of lands within municipalities that may include rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas. Policy 2.5.1 states that “healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported by:

- a) building upon rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets;
- b) promoting regeneration, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites;
- c) accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas;
- d) using rural infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently;
- e) promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products and the sustainable management or use of resources;
- f) providing opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism, including leveraging historical, cultural, and natural assets;
- g) conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature; and
- h) providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas, in accordance with policy 4.3.”

The subject property is within the “rural area” of the City of Ottawa currently and would remain as part of the area after the proposed redesignation of the lands.

Policy 2.6 contains policies relating to rural lands in municipalities. Rural lands are lands which are located outside settlement areas and which are outside prime agricultural areas. Permitted uses on rural lands, per policy 2.6.1 include:

- a) the management or use of resources;
- b) resource-based recreational uses (including recreational dwellings not intended as permanent residences);
- c) residential development, including lot creation, where site conditions are suitable for the provision of appropriate sewage and water services;
- d) agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and normal farm practices, in accordance with provincial standards;
- e) home occupations and home industries;
- f) cemeteries; and
- g) other rural land uses.

Policy 2.6.2 states that “development that can be sustained by rural service levels should be promoted” and policy 2.6.3 states that “development shall be appropriate to the infrastructure which is planned or available and avoid the need for uneconomical expansion of this infrastructure”.

Policy 2.6.4 states that planning authorities should support a diversified rural economy by protecting agricultural and other resource-related uses and directing non-related development to areas where it will minimize constraints on these uses.

The proposed re-designation of the subject property to “Rural Countryside” in the City of Ottawa Official Plan, or “rural lands” within the PPS, will allow for uses which better align with the current status and lower LEAR score for the lands. The proposed re-designation is appropriate for the infrastructure and service levels that exist on the lands today. The range of uses permitted on the subject property will continue to support the existing diverse rural economy in the area today without impacting agricultural uses.

Chapter 4 contains policies about the wise use and management of resources, including policies on agriculture in section 4.3. Policy 4.3.1 states that Planning authorities are required to use an agricultural system approach, based on provincial guidance, to maintain and enhance a geographically continuous agricultural land base and support and foster the long-term economic prosperity and productive capacity of the agri-food network.

An agricultural system is defined as a system comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agri-food sector. It has two components:

- / An agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas. It may also include rural lands that help to create a continuous productive land base for agriculture; and
- / An agri-food network which includes agricultural operations, infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.

An agri-food network is defined as a network, within the agricultural system, that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional infrastructure and transportation networks; agricultural operations including on-farm buildings and primary processing; infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, and distributors; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.

An Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) was prepared to support the current Official Plan Amendment application to redesignate the subject property from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside” in the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan. Section 5.8 of the AIA discusses land uses and a survey of land uses completed within the study area to identify the mix of agricultural and non-agricultural uses on the subject property and within the study area (1,500

metre radius around the subject property). The findings of this assessment are critical in the consideration of the agricultural system as defined by the PPS.

As noted in the AIA, the land use survey identified three (3) agricultural uses within the study area, including one unoccupied livestock facility and two (2) remnant farms. One (1) on-farm diversified use was identified. No agriculture-related uses were identified. The survey also identified 20 non-farm residents, and six (6) non-agricultural uses including two (2) recreational uses, two (2) institutional uses, a quarry operation and a utility.

Section 5.10 of the AIA notes the negative impact that fragmentation of agricultural lands can have on the viability of agricultural lands and their long-term preservation for agricultural purposes. The report notes that “high levels of fragmentation in an agricultural area lowers the area’s agricultural priority”. The AIA concludes that lands within the study area are “highly fragmented” particularly east of Huntmar Drive and largely as a result of severance, the Carp River, and the floodplain lands owned by the City of Ottawa. The subject lands are further separated from adjacent agricultural parcels by an arterial roadway (Huntmar Drive) and Richardson Side Road to the north.

The AIA also notes that Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) typically uses 250 hectares as a basis for delineating a minimum that would be included within a prime agricultural area or rural land use designation. This comes from the Agricultural Land Evaluation System (ALES) methodology, a second recognized methodology for informing the designation of prime agricultural areas, if a study is needed. Per OMAFRA, “the ALES approach is best described as a ‘table-top’ exercise, where relevant information sources (for example, soil capability, land use, etc.) are analyzed to determine if areas meet the characteristics of a prime agricultural area. In comparison, the LEAR approach relies on Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling to assist with the identification of prime agricultural areas”.

The ALES method recommends that “to be consistent with the PPS, ...contiguous lands, generally 250 hectares or larger, where prime agricultural characteristics predominate should be present to support a prime agricultural designation. This threshold is not intended to prevent approval authorities from designating smaller areas with prime agricultural area characteristics. Conversely, areas that do not exhibit prime agricultural area characteristics are recommended to be contiguously 250 hectare or larger in size in order to be excluded from the prime agricultural area.” The City of Ottawa’s 2016 LEAR also uses a land area of 250 hectares as a minimum block for the Agricultural Resource Area designation or the removal of land from within an existing designated Agricultural Resource Area. The LEAR report notes that smaller areas may in fact be considered if justified and appropriate.

The subject property is part of an Agricultural Resource Area that extends north from the subject property to the northwest edges of the City of Ottawa and has a total area of approximately 19,000 hectares. The subject property is at the far southeast corner, significantly separated from the majority of the Agricultural Resource Area and represents 31.4 hectares of the total Agricultural Resource Area. The subject property abuts the existing urban boundary to the east and south and is separated from the balance of the Agricultural Resource Area by arterials roads. While the size of the subject property is less than 250 hectares, the removal of the lands from the Agricultural Resource Area has been justified through the LEAR review presented in the AIA and justifies the redesignation of the lands to Rural Countryside. It is noted that there are other existing locations where the City of Ottawa has created rural areas within a contiguous area of less than 250 hectares.

In Section 5.12 of the AIA, the economic and community benefits of agriculture are discussed. Specifically, the report concludes that the subject property is located in an area where agriculture still provides some economic and community benefits, but where “it is overshadowed by the economic benefits provided by the various industrial and commercial uses in the area and within the urban boundary”. Further, the subject property is not currently cultivated and does not contribute to the City’s agricultural economy. The redesignation of the lands would continue to allow them to be used for rural purposes and would not result in any impact to the agricultural economy.

The “agricultural system” as defined by the PPS has two primary components: the agricultural land base, and the agri-food network. As is discussed throughout this report, the subject property is not prime agricultural lands per the City of Ottawa’s LEAR system and the subject property’s potential to contribute to the agri-food network will not be impacted by the proposed redesignation of the lands.

Policy 4.3.1.2 states that “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”. A prime agricultural area is defined as “an area where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, and additional areas with a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas may be identified based on provincial guidance or informed by mapping obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs or any successor to those ministries.”

Further, prime agricultural land is defined as “specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection”.

The City of Ottawa has no identified specialty crop areas (per AIA). The subject property has been assessed against the City of Ottawa’s 2016 LEAR system to assess its status as prime agricultural land per the PPS. The LEAR system, as discussed in section 5.5 of this report, was developed by the City of Ottawa to identify lands that should be included within prime agricultural areas and, as a result, designated agricultural resource area in the Official Plan. The results of the LEAR evaluation presented in the AIA identify the LEAR score for the lands are 123.37, below the 125-point threshold used by the City of Ottawa to identify the Agricultural Resource Area. The proposed redesignation to “Rural Countryside” is therefore appropriate.

Permitted uses in prime agricultural areas include agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses based on provincial guidance (4.3.2.1). All types, sizes, and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards (4.3.2.2).

Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted in accordance with provincial guidance for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, infrastructure, one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation (4.3.3.1).

Policy 4.3.4 states that “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 proposed application seeks to re-designate the subject property to “Rural Countryside” but does not propose to include it in the settlement area boundary and therefore policy 2.3.2 does not apply.

Policy 4.3.6.1 states that “planning authorities are encouraged to support local food, facilitate near-urban and urban agriculture, and foster a robust agri-food network”.

The proposed application will not impact the possibility of the lands being used to support the agri-food network in the future.

5.3 City of Ottawa Official Plan

The Official Plan for the City of Ottawa provides a framework for the way that the city will develop until 2046 when it is expected that the City’s population will surpass 1.4 million people. The Official Plan directs how the city will accommodate this growth over time and set out the policies to guide the development and growth of the City.

5.3.1 Strategic Directions

The Official Plan proposes five (5) broad policy directions as the foundation to becoming the most liveable mid-sized city in North America over the next century. These moves include the following:

1) Achieve, by the end of the planning period, more growth by intensification than by greenfield development.

According to the City of Ottawa's Official Plan, Ottawa is projected to grow by 402,000 people by 2046, requiring 194,800 new households. The Official Plan assigns a 60 per cent share of future growth within Ottawa's existing built-up area by putting in place zoning and other mechanisms that avoid or delay further boundary expansions. The remainder of growth will take place through greenfield development in undeveloped greenfield lands and additional developable land assigned through urban boundary expansion.

The proposed application does not include any redevelopment of the lands and would not affect the City's intensification and goal to grow through intensification.

2) By 2046, the majority of trips in the city will be made by sustainable transportation.

The mobility goal of the Official Plan is that by 2046, more than half of all trips will be made by sustainable transportation. 40 per cent of Ottawa's current greenhouse gas emissions are transportation related. Sustainable transportation options are fundamental to 15-minute neighbourhoods and vibrant communities. Achieving this goal relies on the City's investments in transit, particularly the construction of further stages of Light Rail Transit (LRT) and funding of other rapid transit initiatives.

The proposed application is in the rural area and will be served by existing shoulder cycling lanes and the recently constructed roundabout at the northwest corner of the subject property.

3) Improve our sophistication in urban and community design and put this knowledge to the service of good urbanism at all scales, from the largest to the very small.

A goal of the Official Plan is to contribute towards stronger, more inclusive and more vibrant neighbourhoods and Villages. The Official Plan introduces a transect approach to distinguish Ottawa's distinct neighbourhoods and rural Villages, resulting in policies that are better tailored to an area's context, age and function in the city. Policies associated with land use designations, including Hubs, Corridors, Neighbourhoods and Rural Villages are specific to the context of each transect.

The proposed application does not propose any new buildings.

4) Embed environmental, climate and health resiliency and energy into the framework of our planning policies.

The Official Plan contains policies to encourage the evolution of neighbourhoods into healthy, inclusive and walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods with a diverse mix of land uses. It also includes policies to help the City achieve its target of 100 per cent greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2050, its target of a 40 per cent urban forest canopy cover and to increase the City's resiliency to the effects of climate change.

The proposed application does not propose any development on the subject property.

5) Embed economic development into the framework of our planning policies.

In the Official Plan, an economic development lens is taken to policies throughout. While land use policies in the Official Plan alone do not ensure economic development, they provide a foundation for other City initiatives and programs to support economic development. In the Plan, flexible land use designations are adaptable to changing economic conditions, new industries and ways of doing business. The Official Plan also supports a broad geographic distribution of employment so that people have the choice to work closer to where they live.

The proposed application will continue to permit a range of uses that support the diversity of the rural economy in the City of Ottawa.

5.3.2 Transect, Designation, and Overlay

The subject property is designed “Agricultural Resource Area” within the “Rural Transect” on Schedule B9 of the Official Plan. The Rural Transect accounts for nearly 80% of the City’s total land area. The use of land within this Transect varies in intensity. The Agricultural Resource Area comprises nearly 40% of the Rural area and is comprised of “Class 1, 2, and 3 soils, as identified through a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study”. The LEAR system is a high-level decision-making tool that enables every agricultural property to be evaluated quantitatively to assess the capability of soils on the land, the use of the land, and other surrounding influences that might determine the suitability of the property for ongoing agricultural use or not.

Consistent with the PPS, policy 9.1.1 contains policies related to the protection of lands within the Agricultural Resource Designation. Policy 9.1.1.3 of the Official Plan is relevant to the proposed Official Plan Amendment and states that “Official Plan Amendments for the removal of land from an Agricultural Resource Designation, outside of a comprehensive review that does not constitute urban or village expansion, shall only be considered where it is demonstrated that the land does not meet the requirements for an Agricultural Resource Area through:

- a) A municipal-wide Land Evaluation and Area Review; or
- b) An area-specific assessment, where the area is equal to or greater than 250 hectares, or where an area of less than 250 hectares is agreed to by the City. The assessment will demonstrate that:
 - i. Based upon new information, related to one or more LEAR factors, the lands are not part of a prime agricultural area; and
 - ii. Any re-designation avoids the potential for adverse impacts to any adjacent agricultural land and operations, or if unavoidable, such adverse impacts are mitigated to the extent feasible.”

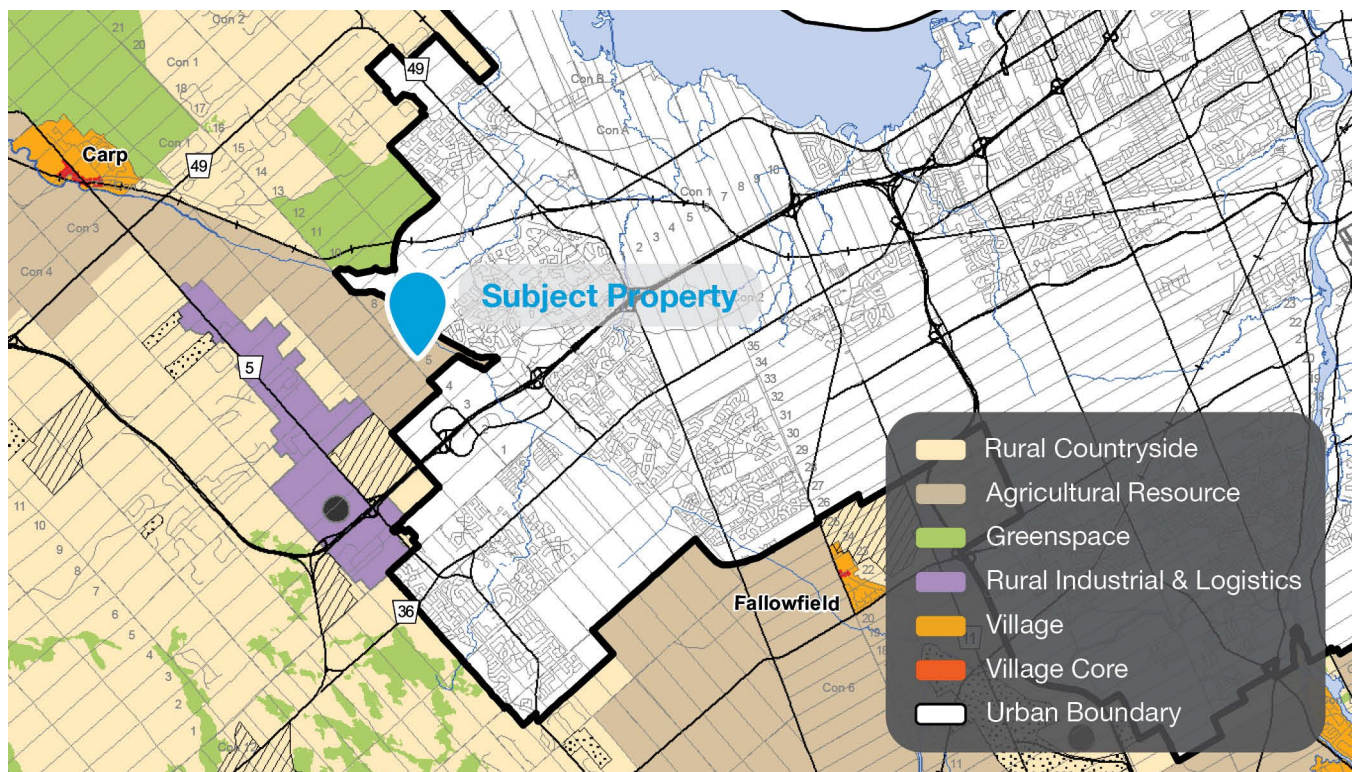


Figure 4: City of Ottawa Official Plan Schedule B9 - Rural Transect

As noted, the Agricultural Resource Area consists of Class 1, 2, and 3 soils as identified through a LEAR study. The 2016 LEAR study served as the basis for the designation of the subject property as Agricultural Resource Area in the 2022 Official Plan.

The 2016 LEAR guideline prepared by the City of Ottawa outlines the proposed approach and sets the minimum LEAR score as 125 points for review as potential candidates for inclusion as part of the City's Agricultural Resource Area. The City of Ottawa's LEAR system and approach is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.5 of this report.

Consistent with the Official Plan policy 9.1.1.3, the applicant has undertaken a LEAR study for the subject property consistent with the 2016 LEAR criteria on the basis of change over time since the previous evaluation in 2016. The area-specific LEAR study has scored the subject property with 123.37 points, below the 125-point threshold for consideration of the lands as part of the Agricultural Resource Area. As such, it is appropriate to consider the lands for an alternative designation reflective of the potential use of the lands.

As discussed above, OMAFRA through the ALES methodology, and the City's 2016 LEAR, both recommend using 250 hectares of contiguous lands for designation of lands as Agricultural Resource Area, and for consideration of removal of lands from an Agricultural Resource Area. However, both documents also recognize the potential to consider areas smaller than 250 hectares where justified and appropriate.

The subject property is part of an Agricultural Resource Area that extends north from the subject property to the northwest edges of the City of Ottawa and has a total area of approximately 19,000 hectares. The subject property is at the far southeast corner, significantly separated from the majority of the area and represents 31.4 hectares of the total Agricultural Resource Area. While the size of the subject property is less than 250 hectares, the removal of the lands from the Agricultural Resource Area has been justified through the LEAR review presented in the AIA and justifies the redesignation of the lands to Rural Countryside. Further, there are other Rural Countryside areas that are under 250 hectares. The revised LEAR supporting the redesignation conforms with the Official Plan and the guidance of OMAFRA and the City's 2016 LEAR.

Per Policy 9.1.2.1 of the Official Plan, on lands designated Agricultural Resource Area, a variety of types and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices are permitted where they are consistent with the Provincial guidelines related to uses and practices in prime agricultural areas. Policy 9.1.2.2 states that on-farm diversified uses and agriculture-related uses that are compatible with and do not hinder surrounding agricultural operations are permitted subject to limitations on size, scale, and location on the property as determined by the Zoning By-law.

Residential uses in the Agricultural Resource Area are limited to a detached dwelling on a lot fronting an existing public road and/or accommodations for full-time farm labour (9.1.3.1).

The revised LEAR score indicates the lands are more suited to a Rural Countryside designation which continues to permit a range of uses that are compatible with the rural area surrounding the subject property.

The policies of Section 9.2 of the Official Plan outline the Rural Countryside designation. The Rural Countryside designation is intended to accommodate a variety of land uses that are appropriate for a rural location, limiting the amount of residential development and support industries that serve local residents and the travelling public, while ensuring that the character of the rural area is preserved.

Per policy 9.2.2.1, permitted uses within the Rural Countryside designation include:

- a) Forestry, conservation and natural resource management activities;
- b) Agriculture, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses;
- c) Residential uses according to the policies of this plan;
- d) Animal services boarding, breeding and training and equestrian establishments;
- e) Bed and breakfasts;

- f) Utility Installations;
- g) Cemeteries; and
- h) Sand and gravel pits.

Other uses may also be permitted through the Zoning By-law including outdoor recreational and tourism uses, campgrounds and sports fields; small scale light industrial and commercial uses where specific criteria are met; institutional uses such as places of worship, medical facilities and post-secondary institutions where specific criteria are met; an on-farm diversified or agriculture-related use where it is proposed to increase the permitted size; and, small-scale wineries, cideries, breweries, or distilleries (9.2.2.2).

Per policy 9.2.2.3, where development excluding agriculture or agriculture-related uses, is proposed within 1 kilometre of a Village or Urban boundary it will be reviewed to ensure that it shall not impede the expansion of the settlement area and all of the following criteria shall be considered:

- a) The use is a compatible use with a village or urban area;
- b) The development has frontage on an existing public road;
- c) The site shall consider future multi-modal connections and be designed to accommodate these along with street trees in the future; and
- d) The use can be adequately serviced by on-site systems and will not place demand on the extension of public services for any reason, including fire suppression or contaminated groundwater.

The policies of section 9.2.3 seek to limit the fragmentation of rural lands and ensure the preservation of health. Specifically, the policies limit the frequency and method by which lots can be created, restrict lot sizes and spacing, and prohibits country lot estate subdivisions except where they were previously approved or meet other conditions of the Official Plan. No multi-unit development is permitted within the Rural Countryside designation.

The uses permitted within the Rural Countryside designation of the Official Plan are appropriate for the subject property given the revised LEAR score and its relative separation from agricultural uses. No specific development is currently proposed for the subject property through the current application; however, any future application would be required to conform to the policies of the Rural Countryside designation.

5.3.3 Growth Management Framework

Per the Official Plan, Ottawa's population is projected to grow by 40% between 2018 and 2046 with 49% of that growth being accommodated within greenfield areas, and the balance (51%) being achieved through intensification. Per policy 3.1.4, 93% of this growth is expected to occur within the urban area, with the balance (7%) is expected to occur within the rural area. A total of 5% of this rural growth is expected to occur within the villages, and the balance outside of them.

No development is currently proposed for the subject property. Permitted residential uses on the property, if constructed, would support the City's growth management strategy.

Section 3.4 contains policies seeking to focus rural growth within villages. Most of that growth should occur within villages where municipal services exist or are planned (3.4.1). Policy 3.4.7 states that municipal water and wastewater services are not intended to extend into the rural area outside of villages. Exceptions to this policy are described in Section 4.7.2 of the Official Plan.

No development is proposed as part of the current applications. It is recognized that the policies would require development on private on-site services. There is no proposal or expectation to extend municipal water or wastewater services to the subject property. The suitability of the subject property to accommodate private on-site services would be evaluated as part of any future application where development is proposed.

5.3.4 Mobility

Section 4.1 of the Official Plan contains policies focused on mobility and transportation, reflecting Council's commitment towards more equitable, safe, and healthy communities and climate change action.

Policy 4.1.1.1 notes that the City intends to establish priorities within the Rural Area to ensure the safety of people to walk, cycle and use transit. Policy 4.1.1.3 and 4.1.1.4 state that Arterial roads in the Rural transect, such as Huntmar Drive, are designed as "Access or Flow" streets intended to provide connections to other parts of the City while also providing access to adjacent properties. Richardson Side Road on the north side of the subject property is a local street that would also provide access to the subject property per 4.1.1.4.

The subject property has ample opportunity for access from existing public roads. Through a future application for development, access locations would be defined.

Policy 4.1.1.13 states that the City has identified a network of active transportation facilities on Schedule C8 for the Rural Area, as well as through the Transportation Master Plan and associated plans. These facilities are to be implemented through the review of development applications, development of spaces within the public realm, and as part of capital projects to build or maintain transportation facilities.

The proposed application does not include redevelopment of the subject lands. Future development applications may include implementation of specific facilities adjacent to the subject property.

Section 4.1.7 contains policies on the protection of rights-of-way throughout the City. Policy 4.1.7.2 states that the City shall protect rights-of-way for the street and road networks as listed in Schedule C16 of the Official Plan. On Schedule C16, Huntmar Drive has a protected right-of-way of 37.5 metres between Richardson Side Road and the north limit of the urban boundary, abutting the subject property. Richardson Side Road does not have a protected right-of-way identified on Schedule C16 abutting the subject property.

Through future development applications, the City will be looking to acquire the necessary widening along the Huntmar Drive frontage.

5.3.5 Natural Heritage, Greenspace and the Urban Forest

The City recognizes, conserves and protects its natural landscape and environment in two ways: by identifying natural heritage features, and by designating the most important natural features in a natural heritage system consisting of core natural areas and natural linkage areas.

Policy 4.8.1.1 notes that Schedule C11 of the Official Plan identifies Ottawa's Natural Heritage System and, to the extent possible, Ottawa's Natural Heritage Features as overlays. The Carp River Corridor, south of the subject property (abutting the urban boundary) is the only natural heritage feature noted in proximity to the subject property. It is described as an urban natural feature.

The proposed application will not have any impact on the nearby Carp River urban natural feature as no development is being proposed.

Policy 4.8.1.3 identifies specific natural heritage features that the City evaluates and protects.

While not identified on Schedule C11, the Carp River is a surface water feature that would; be subject to the natural heritage overlay policies. The impacts on natural heritage are considered in the Natural Environment Existing Conditions Report prepared by McKinley Environmental Solutions and submitted as part of the current Official Plan Amendment. The report notes that the southeast corner of the subject property is within the 15 metre wide hazard setback/Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) regulation limit of the 1:100 year floodplain of the Carp

River and is therefore unlikely to be considered for development. Outside of this area, the report concludes that the subject property does not include any of the designated natural heritage features listed within the Official Plan.

5.3.6 Water Resources

Section 4.9 of the Official Plan speaks to surface water and groundwater features and contains policies focused on their protection. Policy 4.9.3.1 states that the minimum setback from surface water features shall be the development limits as established by a Council-approved watershed, subwatershed, or environmental management plan. In the case of the subject property, as noted within the prepared Natural Environment Existing Conditions Report, the relevant study is the Carp River Watershed/Subwatershed Study.

Per section 4.2.1 of the Natural Environment Existing Conditions Report by McKinley Environmental Solutions, there are no additional setback requirements for the Carp River corridor beyond the 15 metre wide hazard setbacks/MVCA regulatory limits. Applications for development in the future would be restricted by these setbacks to ensure the protection of the surface water feature.

5.4 City of Ottawa Zoning By-law

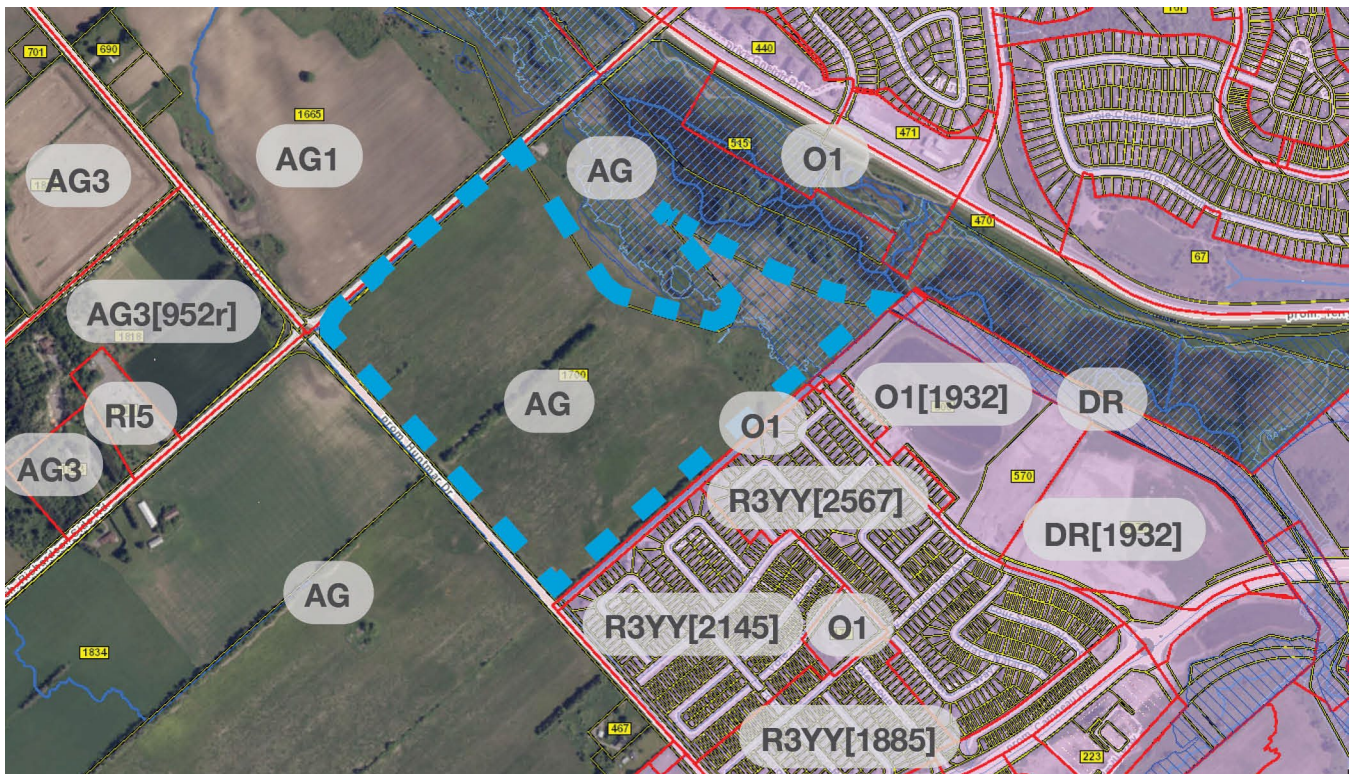


Figure 5: City of Ottawa Zoning By-law

The subject property is currently zoned “Agricultural Zone (AG)” in the City of Ottawa’s Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2008-250. The AG zone is intended to recognize and permit agricultural uses in areas designated “Agricultural Resource Area” in the Official Plan and to restrict the range of permitted uses to agricultural, forestry, and related accessory uses in order to preserve these prime agricultural areas.

Permitted uses within the AG zone include agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, bed and breakfasts, forestry operations, a detached dwelling, on-farm diversified uses, amongst others. Additional residential uses are conditionally permitted in specific circumstances.

The proposed application does not propose any form of development on the subject property. The proposed redesignation of the lands to Rural Countryside could ultimately result in an application to amend the Zoning By-law and recognize the permissions of a rural zone.

5.5 City of Ottawa LEAR

The Province of Ontario through the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) requires municipalities to identify and protect prime agricultural areas for long-term use for agriculture. The PPS also provides for the use of an alternative system to identify these prime areas, and the Province of Ontario has issued a draft guideline for the development of these systems referred to as a Land Evaluation and Area Review or LEAR.

The LEAR system is a high-level decision-making tool that enables every agricultural property to be evaluated quantitatively to assess the capability of the soils on the land, the use of the land and other surrounding influences that might determine the suitability of the property for ongoing agricultural use or not. The LEAR system's primary purpose is to identify those broad areas of a municipality that should be protected for long-term agricultural purposes. LEAR systems have been developed and used by several municipalities and the Province of Ontario to assist in the identification of prime agricultural areas.

The City of Ottawa first employed the Ottawa-Carleton Land Evaluation and Area Review for Agriculture (O-C LEAR) in 1997 to identify lands as Potential Agricultural Resource Area. In 2016, the City updated and modified the methodology used to identify its prime agricultural areas and designated it as Agricultural Resource Areas.

A LEAR score is calculated based on a combination of the Land Evaluation (LE) factor and the Area Review (AR) factors. Land in the LEAR system is assessed based on a scale of points that can range from 0 to 200. Blocks of agricultural lands that exceed the predetermined LEAR threshold value are candidates for inclusion within the City's Agricultural Resource Area designation.

The LE factor is determined by calculating the soil capability points (i.e., the points assigned using the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) classification system, which are then multiplied by the percentage of each CLI Class on the property). The LE component represents 70% of the LEAR score.

The AR factors used in the City of Ottawa's LEAR are:

- / AR1 – the percentage of parcel in agricultural use;
- / AR2 – the percentage of non-conflicting land use; and,
- / AR3 – parcel size.

The City of Ottawa's 2016 uses a threshold value of 125 and above to identify potential lands for inclusion within the Agricultural Resource Area. Those parcels which score 125 or above the threshold value are considered to be candidates for inclusion within the Agricultural Resource Area designation.

The revised LEAR score for the subject property has been assessed by Colville Consulting Inc. and presented in the submitted Agricultural Impact Assessment in support of the current Official Plan Amendment application.

Draft Official Plan Amendment

Part A – The Preamble

1. Purpose

To amend schedules B9 of the Official Plan to redesignate the lands from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside”

2. Location

The subject property is 1700 Richardson Side Road, generally bounded by Huntmar Drive to the west, Richardson Side Road to the north, Carp River to the east, and the urban boundary to the south. The subject property has a total area of approximately 31.4 hectares.

3. Basis

The amendment to the Official Plan was requested by the Applicant to re-designate the subject lands from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside” to better reflect the revised LEAR score for the lands and their surrounding context.

Rationale

A site-specific Agricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared to assess the LEAR score of the subject property. The revised LEAR score demonstrates that the lands fall below the 125-point threshold used by the City of Ottawa to identify the Agricultural Resource Area. Further, despite their current status and use, the redesignation of the lands will not negatively impact their ability to continue to contribute to the agri-food network in the City of Ottawa in the future.

Part B – The Amendment

1. Introduction

All of this part of this document entitled Part B – The Amendment consisting of the following text and the attached Schedule constitutes Amendment No. XX to the Official Plan for the City of Ottawa.

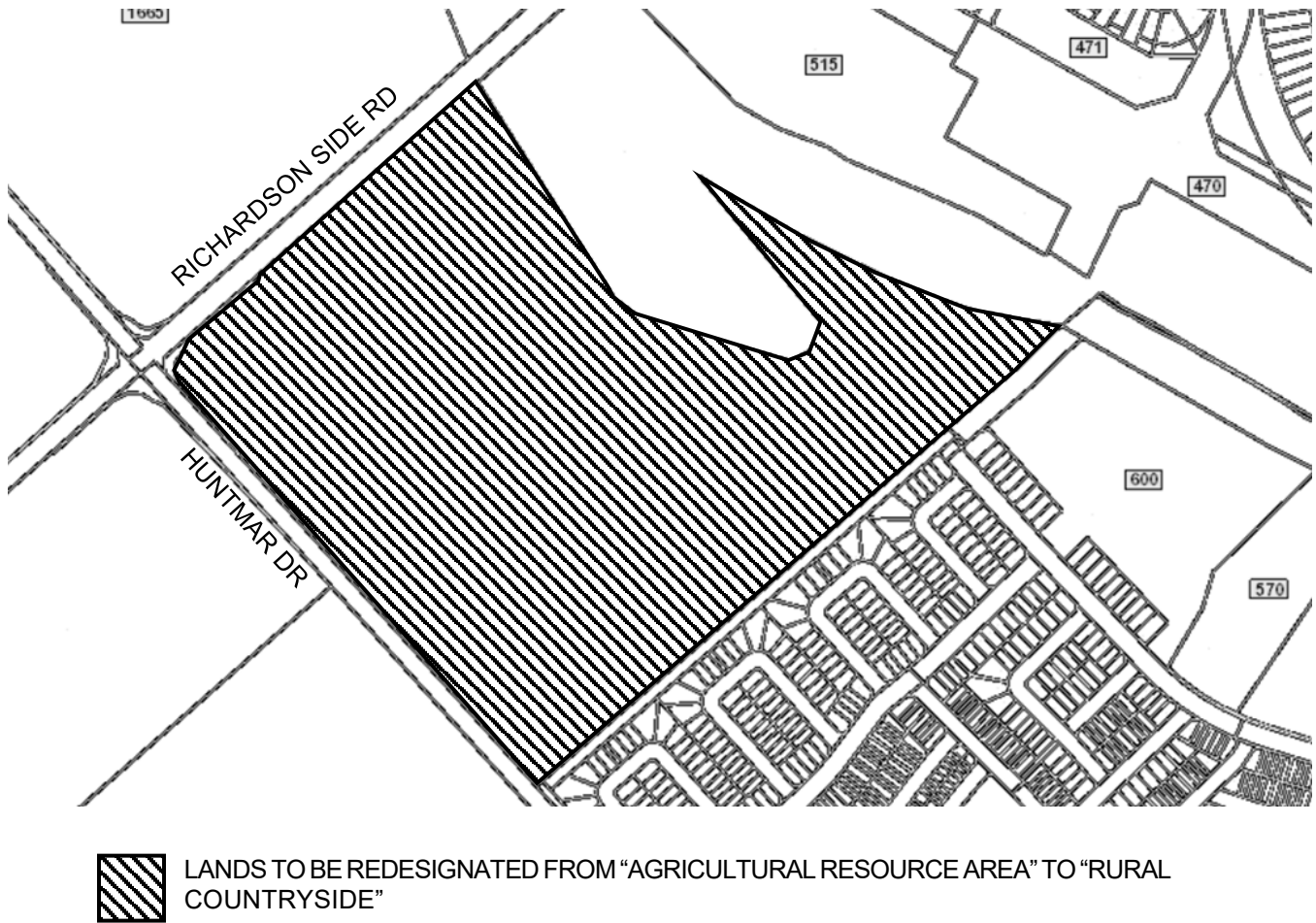
2. Details

The Official Plan for the City of Ottawa is hereby amended by amending Schedule B9 of the Official Plan for the City of Ottawa in accordance with the attached Schedule A to this amendment.

3. Implementation and Interpretation

Implementation and interpretation of this Amendment shall be in accordance with the policies of the Official Plan for the City of Ottawa.

Schedule A



Public Consultation Strategy

All public engagement activities will take place in accordance with the City's Public Notification and Consultation Policy and will comply with Planning Act notification requirements. The following steps and activities have already been undertaken in preparation of the application submission or will be undertaken in the months after the applications have been submitted:

- / Notification of Ward Councillor and meetings with other Councillors
- / The Ward Councillor was notified of the proposed application for the subject site prior to the Official Plan Amendment application being submitted.
- / On-site signage
 - The City will post an on-site sign on all road frontages to notify the public of the application and providing information where to obtain additional information.
- / Community Information Session
 - If requested by the Ward Councillor, a community information session will be held to discuss the proposed application.
- / Planning Committee Meeting Advertisement and Report Mail out to Public
 - Notification for the statutory public meeting will be undertaken by the City of Ottawa.
- / Statutory Public Meeting for Official Plan Amendment – Planning Committee
 - The statutory public meeting will take place at the City of Ottawa Planning Committee.

Integrated Environmental Review

As noted within this report, no environmental features have been identified on the subject property beyond the adjacent Carp River Corridor and the associated floodplain. A Natural Environment Existing Conditions Report was prepared by McKinley Environmental Solutions to assess the natural environment on the subject property. The report highlighted the floodplain and the required setbacks for any future development. Future development applications will be required to comply with setback requirements to protect the surface water feature.

9.0 Summary of Supporting Studies

9.1 Agricultural Impact Assessment

The Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) was prepared by Colville Consulting Inc. to assess the subject property for the proposed redesignation from “Agricultural Resource Area” to “Rural Countryside” in the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan. The purpose of the AIA is to reassess the LEAR score of the subject property based on new information and to identify any potential impacts to surrounding agricultural lands and operations associated with the proposed redesignation.

The AIA assesses and evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed redesignation on agricultural operations, the farming community, and the broader agricultural system. In cases where impacts cannot be avoided, the AIA recommends ways to mitigate adverse impacts. The AIA also assesses whether the proposal is consistent with provincial, regional, and municipal agricultural policies.

The AIA identifies the primary study area as the subject property, while the secondary study area comprises everything within 1.5 kilometres of the subject property boundaries.

The AIA concludes, after assessment, that the subject property are lower priority agricultural lands. The LEAR score of the subject property was recalculated to be 123.37, which is below the 125-point threshold value used by the City of Ottawa to identify its Agricultural Resource Area designation. In addition to the factors used to determine the LEAR score of the subject property, there are a number of factors which reduce the agricultural priority of the subject property.

The Subject Lands are not used for agricultural production, they are located in close proximity to a significant number of non-agricultural uses and the City of Ottawa *settlement area* boundary, there are no investments in agricultural infrastructure or agricultural land improvements, and they are located at the intersection of Huntmar Drive and Richardson Side Road, which experience high volumes of non-agricultural traffic.

Direct and indirect impacts of the redesignation are also assessed and with minimal mitigation, no net impacts are anticipated. The AIA concludes that the redesignation of the subject property is a reasonable consideration from an agricultural perspective.

9.2 Environmental Site Assessment

Paterson Group carried out a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Update for the vacant property at 1700 Richardson Side Road. This is an update of the Phase 1 ESA completed by Paterson Group in 2019. A review of recent environmental data and a site inspection generally confirmed the information and findings contained in the previous Phase 1 ESA and concluded that no Phase 2 ESA is required at this time.

9.3 Natural Environment Existing Conditions Report

McKinley Environmental Solutions prepared a Natural Environment Existing Condition Report (NEECR) to assess the subject property. The report notes that the southeast corner of the subject property is within the 15 metre wide hazard setbacks/Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) regulatory limits of the 1:100 year floodplain of the Carp River. This area is assumed not to be developable. The Potential Development Area is dominated by a Forb Meadow (Fallow Agricultural Fields) that was actively cultivated until 2021 and cleared of vegetation as recently as the autumn of 2024. There is also a Tree Stand and two Deciduous Hedgerows within the Potential Development Area. A Channelized Drain runs along the southeast boundary of the Site. The Channelized Drain is an artificial drainage channel that was dug to convey surface water from the Huntmar Drive roadside ditch. The Channelized Drain is a degraded feature that is likely to provide limited aquatic habitat functions.

The report notes that the potential development area does not include any of the designated natural heritage features listed in the Official Plan.

Although the current OPA application does not include a specific development proposal, this NEECR discusses the anticipated natural heritage related mitigation and retention requirements for the future development of the subject property. This NEECR also discusses the anticipated natural heritage related regulatory requirements for the future development of the Site. Recommendations have been identified in relation to tree retention and tree protection, setbacks and mitigation requirements related to the Carp River Corridor and the Channelized Drain, wildlife impact mitigation, and Species at Risk mitigation and regulatory requirements. The recommendations and requirements identified in this NEECR are intended to be further refined and confirmed as part of the development application review process for the future development of the subject property.

9.4 Transportation

CGH Transportation has prepared a Technical Memorandum summarizing the transportation considerations associated with the proposed Official Plan Amendment. The memo assesses the surrounding road network and notes that the context along Richardson Side Road and Huntmar Drive adjacent to the site is intended to be urban.

The memo also discusses the ability of agricultural vehicles to access the subject property. Specifically, it notes that road access from the nearby agricultural areas to the subject property is via the roundabout intersection of Richardson Side Road and Huntmar Drive and that the design of this roundabout does not permit the full range of agricultural vehicles to navigate the intersection. Alternative routes were also assessed through the urban area which are anticipated to result in long detours, and safety and operational issues.

10.0 Conclusion

In considering the Official Plan Amendment application, supporting studies, and the applicable policy and regulatory framework, it is Fotenn's professional opinion that the proposed redesignation of the subject property from "Agricultural Resource Area" to "Rural Countryside" meets the requirements of the Planning Act, is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, conforms to the Official Plan for the City of Ottawa and constitutes good planning.

- / The proposed Official Plan Amendment considers the larger agricultural system and the protection of prime agricultural lands and areas consistent with the established LEAR for the City of Ottawa. The redesignation of the lands will more appropriately reflect the LEAR score for the lands and will not impact the other remaining agricultural lands from supporting the agri-food network.
- / The subject property is not within a specialty crop area as defined by the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the updated LEAR assessment results in a score below the 125-point threshold established by the City of Ottawa for the consideration of lands for inclusion in the "Agricultural Resource Area".
- / The subject property is within a highly fragmented agricultural area where there are limited agricultural operations and where surrounding properties do not lend themselves to agricultural uses given their size and where half of the surrounding properties are within the urban boundary, and the other half are rural lands that may continue to be used for agricultural purposes. The redesignation to "Rural Countryside" reflects the transition from the urban area to the south to the agricultural lands to the north.
- / As the lands do not constitute a "prime agricultural area" (per the City of Ottawa's established LEAR system) they are no longer suited to accommodate agricultural uses in the long term.
- / The new designation will permit rural related uses that would support the agricultural area to the north and would be more compatible with the urban uses found to the south.



Paul Black, MCIP RPP
Principal