

**To: Warden and Members of County Council**

**From: Director of Community Planning**

## **Application for Official Plan Amendment OP20-16-3 – Corwic Farms Ltd. (Netherlands Reformed Congregation)**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

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1. That Oxford County Council not approve Application No. OP20-16-3, submitted by Netherlands Reformed Congregation, for lands legally described as Part Lots 4-6, Concession 4 (North Norwich), in the Township of Norwich, to re-designate the subject lands, consisting of 6.5 ha (16 ac) from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Major Institutional' to facilitate a boundary adjustment to the Village of Norwich for the purposes of future expansion of an existing institutional development.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

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- The Official Plan amendment proposes an expansion to the Village of Norwich boundary and the re-designation of 6.5 ha (16 ac) of land from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Major Institutional' to facilitate an expansion to the existing property occupied by the Netherlands Reformed Congregation, located at 43 Main Street East, in the Village of Norwich.
- The Council of the Township of Norwich considered the proposal at a public meeting on June 22, 2021, at which time they passed a resolution stating they were in support of the proposal. An application for zone change has also been submitted to facilitate the proposed development. If approved, a future consent application would be submitted to facilitate a lot addition to the Netherlands Reformed Congregation property.
- Planning staff are not supportive of the proposal as it is not consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement or the County's Official Plan with respect to the expansion of settlement boundaries.

### **Implementation Points**

Council's decision regarding this application will be implemented in accordance with the relevant objectives, strategic initiatives and policies of the Official Plan.







## Financial Impact

The proposal is not anticipated to have any financial impact, beyond what has been approved in the current year's budget.

## Communications

In accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act, notice of complete application regarding this proposal was provided to surrounding property owners on March 3, 2021 and notices of public meeting were issued on May 4 and July 21, 2021. No comments regarding this proposal have been received from the public, to date.

## Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
<b>WORKS WELL TOGETHER</b>	<b>WELL CONNECTED</b>	<b>SHAPES THE FUTURE</b>	<b>INFORMS &amp; ENGAGES</b>	<b>PERFORMS &amp; DELIVERS</b>	<b>POSITIVE IMPACT</b>
		3.ii.			

## DISCUSSION

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### Background

**Owner:** Corwic Farms Ltd.  
325929 Norwich Road, Norwich ON, N0J 1P0

**Applicant:** Netherlands Reformed Congregation  
43 Main Street East, Norwich ON, N0J 1P0

**Agent:** GSP Group Inc. (Brandon Flewwelling)  
72 Victoria Street South, Suite 201, Kitchener ON, N2G 4Y9

**Location:**  
The subject lands are described as Part Lots 4-6, Concession 4 (North Norwich) in the Township of Norwich. The subject lands are located on the north side of Norwich Road (Oxford Road 18), immediately east of the Village of Norwich and are municipally known as 328661 Norwich Road, in the Township of Norwich.

**County of Oxford Official Plan:**

Schedule 'N-1'	Township of Norwich Land Use Plan	Agricultural Reserve
Schedule 'C-5'	County of Oxford Wellhead Protection Area	Wellhead Protection Area 2 Year Time of Travel Zone

**Township of Norwich Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z:**

Existing Zoning: 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'

Requested Zoning: 'Institutional Zone (I)'

**Proposal:**

The County of Oxford and the Township of Norwich have received applications for Official Plan amendment and zone change to facilitate an expansion to the eastern boundary of the Village of Norwich. The proposed expansion has been requested to facilitate an expansion to the Netherlands Reformed Congregation (NRC) campus, located at 43 Main Street East for the purpose of developing a new private school, a new community support building and a new single detached dwelling to be used as a parsonage for the existing church. Additions are also proposed to the existing private school, technical shop, church and retirement home on the NRC lands.

It is proposed that a future application for consent will be submitted to sever the subject lands, which consist of approximately 6.5 ha (16 ac), from the larger farm holding, to be added to the lands to the immediate west, located at 43 Main Street East (occupied by the Netherlands Reformed Congregation). The initial application proposed the re-designation of the subject lands from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Low Density Residential' to facilitate the expansion, but at the direction of Norwich Township Council, the proposal has been amended to re-designate the lands to 'Major Institutional' which will serve the same purpose and facilitate the desired development, without impacting the residential land supply available in the Village of Norwich. The applicants have also submitted an application to rezone the subject lands from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Institutional Zone (I)' to facilitate the proposed expansion and have submitted a Planning Justification Report, an Agricultural Impact Assessment, a Stage 1 & 2 Archaeological Assessment, a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment, a Preliminary Servicing Report and a Real Estate Land Availability Memo in support of the proposal.

The larger farm holding is approximately 153 ha (378 ac) in size and is currently in agricultural production (cash crop) and contains an existing single detached dwelling, accessory to the farm operation, which is located on the southeast side of the property, outside the area proposed to be re-designated. Surrounding land uses are mainly comprised of agricultural lands to the north and east, single detached dwellings to the south and the existing Netherlands Reformed Congregation property, containing a church, a school, a long-term care facility and residential uses to the west. The subject lands are located within a Wellhead Protection Area, but it is noted that the Oxford County Risk Management Officer has reviewed the proposal and indicated they have no concerns.

Plate 1, Location Map with Existing Zoning, identifies the location and configuration of the subject lands, as well as the zoning of the lands within the surrounding area.

Plate 2, Close-up of Subject Lands (2020 Aerial Photo), provides an aerial image of the vacant subject lands, as well as an image of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation lands, to the immediate west.

Plate 3, Applicant's Sketch, shows the proposed configuration of area to be re-designated and rezoned, as well as the approximate location of the proposed development on the subject lands and the lands to be enlarged, as provided by the applicant.

## **Comments**

### **Provincial Policy Statement**

The 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Under Section 3 of the Planning Act, where a municipality is exercising its authority affecting a planning matter, such decisions shall be consistent with all policy statements issued under the Act.

Section 1.1 of the PPS directs that healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by promoting efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long-term and avoid development patterns which would prevent the efficient expansion of settlement areas in those areas which are adjacent or close to settlement areas.

Sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate for an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 25 years, informed by provincial guidelines.

Section 1.1.3 of the PPS provides that settlement areas are urban and rural areas such as towns, villages and hamlets and Ontario's settlement areas vary significantly in terms of size, density, population, economic activity, diversity and intensity of land use, service levels and types of infrastructure available. The vitality and regeneration of settlement areas is critical to the long-term economic prosperity of our communities and it is in the interest of all communities to use land and resources wisely to promote efficient development patterns, protect resources, promote green spaces, ensure effective use of infrastructure and public service facilities and minimize unnecessary public expenditures.

Settlements are defined to mean urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities that are built-up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses and which have been designated in an Official Plan for development over the long-term. Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which, among other matters;

- a) Efficiently use land and resources;
- b) Are appropriate for, and efficiently use, the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available, and avoid the need for their unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion;

Land use patterns within settlement areas shall also be based on a range of uses and opportunities for intensification and redevelopment in accordance with the criteria in policy 1.1.3.3, where this can be accommodated. Appropriate development standards should be promoted which facilitate intensification, redevelopment and compact form, while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety.

Planning authorities are required to establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas, based on local conditions, however where provincial targets are established through a provincial plan, the provincial targets shall represent the minimum target for the affected area.

As per Section 1.1.3.8, a planning authority may identify a settlement area or allow for the expansion of a settlement area boundary only at the time of a comprehensive review and only where it has been demonstrated that;

- a) Sufficient opportunities to accommodate growth and to satisfy market demand are not available through intensification, redevelopment and designated growth areas to accommodate the projected needs over the identified planning horizon;
- b) The infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned for or available 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;
- c) In prime agricultural areas;
  - a. The lands do not comprise specialty crop areas;
  - b. Alternative locations have been evaluated, and there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid prime agricultural areas and there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in the prime agricultural area;
- d) The new or expanding settlement area is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae; and,
- e) Impacts from the new or expanding settlement areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the settlement area are mitigated to the extent feasible.

In undertaking a comprehensive review, the level of detail of the assessment should correspond with the complexity and scale of the settlement boundary expansion or development proposal. A comprehensive review for the purpose of this section is to be;

- a) Based on a review of population projections and employment projections and allocations by upper-tier municipalities and provincial plans, where applicable, which consider alternative directions for growth or development and determines how best to accommodate the development while protecting the provincial interest;

- b) Utilizes opportunities to accommodate projected growth or development through intensification and redevelopment and considers physical constraints to accommodate the proposed development within existing settlement boundaries;
- c) Is integrated with planning for infrastructure and public service facilities and considers financial viability over the life cycle of these assets, which may be demonstrated through asset management planning;
- d) Confirms sufficient water quality, quantity and assimilative capacity of receiving water are available to accommodate the proposed development;
- e) Confirms sewage and water services can be provided in accordance with Section 1.6.6; and,
- f) Considers cross-jurisdictional issues.

Notwithstanding this, municipalities may permit adjustments of settlement area boundaries outside of a comprehensive review provided that;

- a) There would be no net increase in land within the settlement areas;
- b) The adjustment would support the municipality's ability to meet intensification and redevelopment targets established by the municipality;
- c) Prime agricultural areas are addressed; and,
- d) The settlement area to which lands would be added is appropriately serviced and there is sufficient reserve infrastructure capacity to serve the lands.

Section 1.6 of the PPS addresses infrastructure and public service facilities and states that infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in an efficient manner that prepares for the impacts of a changing climate while accommodating projected needs. Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management so that they area;

- a) Financially viable over their life cycle, which may be demonstrated through asset management planning; and,
- b) Available to meet current and projected needs.

Before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities, the use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized and opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible.

Municipal sewage services and municipal water services are the preferred form of servicing for settlement areas to support protection of the environment and minimize potential risks to human health and safety. Within settlement areas with existing municipal services, intensification and redevelopment shall be promoted wherever feasible to optimize the use of the services.

Planning for stormwater management shall;

- a) Be integrated with planning for sewage and water services and ensure that systems are optimized, feasible and financially viable over the long-term;
- b) Minimize or, where possible, prevent increase in contaminant loads;
- c) Minimize erosion and changes in water balance and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate through the effective management of stormwater;
- d) Mitigate risk to human health, safety, property and the environment,
- e) Maximize the extent of function of vegetative and pervious surfaces and
- f) Promote stormwater management practices, including stormwater attenuation and re-use, water conservation and efficiency and low impact development.

Section 2.3 of the PPS states that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture, and that permitted uses in prime agricultural areas include agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses.

Planning authorities may only exclude land from prime agricultural areas for expansions of, or identification of, settlement areas in accordance with the policies of Section 1.1.3.8, as discussed above.

### **Oxford County Official Plan**

In recognition of the importance of efficient land use and development patterns, the Official Plan directs in Section 2.1.1 that County Council shall proactively plan, co-ordinate and stage growth and the provision of public service facilities and infrastructure to sustain financial well-being over the long-term.

The County, in consultation with the Area Municipalities, will identify, coordinate and allocate population, housing and employment projections for the Area Municipalities and identify areas where growth or development will be directed and identify minimum targets for intensification within all or any of the Area Municipalities.

Growth and development will be focused in settlements and their vitality and regeneration will be promoted. It is the intent of the Official Plan to ensure a sufficient supply of land will be provided within settlements to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of residential and non-residential growth, in accordance with the 20 year needs of the County and the Township, while accounting for opportunities to accommodate growth through intensification.

Detailed secondary plans will be required for settlement expansions to address the timing and staging of growth, including any phasing required to ensure achievement of intensification targets, the orderly progression of development and timely provision of infrastructure and public service facilities. In addition, secondary plans should address the location and mix of land uses, minimum and maximum development densities, infrastructure and public service facilities requirements and other land use considerations. Further, the Official Plan provides that modifications or expansions to the boundaries of a settlement will only be considered and evaluated by the County as part of a comprehensive review, except where otherwise provided in the Plan.

Settlements will be required to develop with land use patterns and a mix of uses and densities that efficiently use land and resources, are appropriate for, and efficiently use, existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities, support active transportation and existing or planned transit, are freight-supportive, minimize negative impacts to air quality and climate change and promote energy efficiency. Development and land use patterns that would prevent the efficient expansion of settlements in areas adjacent or in close proximity to settlements will be avoided.

Intensification will be promoted in appropriate locations within settlements, particularly those serviced by centralized wastewater and water supply facilities. Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning so they are financially viable over their life-cycle and available to meet current and projected needs. Further,

infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in a coordinated, efficient and cost effective manner that considers impacts from climate change.

The subject lands are located within the Agricultural Reserve designation according to the Township of Norwich Land Use Plan, as contained in the County Official Plan. The policies of the Agricultural Reserve designation permit a wide range of farming uses together with accessory residential uses required for the farm and farm buildings and structures necessary to the farming operation. Agricultural-related uses and secondary uses, such as home occupations, are also permitted, in accordance with relevant review criteria.

It is the goal of the agricultural policies to ensure that prime agricultural lands are preserved for food and fibre production by avoiding the fragmentation of the land base, by minimizing conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses and by supporting the needs of the agricultural community by permitting land uses which are complimentary to and supportive of agriculture.

Section 3.1.6 – Official Plan Amendments in the Agricultural Reserve, provides that proposals to amend the Official Plan to permit the establishment of new non-agricultural uses in the Agricultural Reserve designation or the expansion of a settlement will be considered according to the following requirements. Such proposals shall prepare and submit planning and technical studies addressing these requirements and settlement expansions shall only be considered through a comprehensive review.

Compelling evidence should be provided demonstrating that the proposed expansion of a settlement area is justified. In this regard the following considerations will be addressed;

- There is a demonstrated need within the planning period for additional land to be removed from agricultural production and re-designated, given the nature and capacity of undeveloped land use designations within nearby designated settlements or within other land use designations;
- The amount of land proposed for settlement expansion is justified considering population, household and labour force projections of the Township and land use density factors for the planning period of this Plan, including opportunities for intensification and redevelopment;
- Any land proposed for the settlement extension is a logical expansion of the settlement;
- The long-term suitability and feasibility of the proposed site for centralized waste water and/or water supply facilities or private water and private septic systems is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board of Health.

Further, the level of servicing planned or available for the proposed development or expansion is consistent with the servicing hierarchy established in Section 5.5.3 of the Plan for centralized waste water and/or water supply facilities, and Infrastructure and public services which are planned or available are suitable for the development or expansion over the long-term.



To assess agricultural impacts, settlement expansions in prime agricultural areas shall demonstrate that;

- The lands do not comprise specialty crop areas;
- There are no reasonable alternatives which avoid prime agricultural areas;
- There are no reasonable alternative on lands with lesser agricultural capability or on lands left less suitable for agriculture by existing or past development;
- Minimum Distance Separation I shall be satisfied;
- Impacts from the settlement expansion on nearby agricultural operations are mitigated to the extent possible.

The proposed settlement expansion shall not create traffic hazards and the road infrastructure shall be capable of accommodating the proposed expansion, in accordance with the requirements of the authority having jurisdiction over the road.

The proposal shall also be consistent with the Environmental Resource Policies and the Cultural Heritage Policies and shall not conflict with the Resource Extraction Policies and the proposal shall be acceptable with regard to the ability to achieve the Goal for Agricultural Policies in Section 3.1.1, the precedent to be established for other sites within the County and the ability to implement planned land uses in the vicinity.

Section 4.2 of the Official Plan states that in order to establish a basis for designating sufficient lands for settlement purposes, the County has adopted population, household and employment land projections for the planning period.

Lands which have been designated for settlement purposes are anticipated to be adequate to meet growth expectations for the planning period and include a margin of surplus to provide for effective market operation and competition. In addition, lands have been designated to identify areas where long term urban level development is feasible.

Serviced Villages are settlements characterized by a broad range of uses and activities which have been developed or are proposed for development on centralized water and wastewater facilities and new development in the Serviced Village designation shall be fully serviced by both water and wastewater facilities.

Proposals to amend the Official Plan to expand the settlement boundary of a Serviced Village shall only be considered through a comprehensive review and will be evaluated in accordance with the policies of Section 3.1.6 and the following criteria;

- The review criteria of Section 3.1.6 supports the expansion, or the results of an Environmental Study Report (undertaken in accordance with the Class Environmental Assessment Act) indicate that the preferred servicing alternative is by both centralized water supply and wastewater facilities and infrastructure, or the boundary adjustment facilitates the inclusion of existing development immediately adjacent to a Serviced Village where service extensions are required;
- The preparation of a secondary plan and servicing strategy for the expanded area, in accordance with the criteria contained in Section 4.2.2.4.1, unless such area consists of existing development;

It is proposed that the subject lands are to be re-designated from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Major Institutional' to facilitate the expansion of the existing institutional uses to the immediate west, consisting of a church, a private school, a community building and a parsonage for the existing church.

In order to address potential land use effects that institutional development may have on adjacent land uses or that adjacent land uses may have on the proposed institutional use, site plan approvals may be required. The site design of institutional uses will be consistent with the following general site design policies, as well as specific design considerations, including consideration of matters such as parking and access, signage and lighting, compatibility with adjacent uses, accessibility, drainage and grading.

In order to provide for the sensitive integration or expansion of religious facilities within the Serviced Village designation, Council shall;

- Ensure that buildings are sufficiently setback from any adjacent residential uses to minimize potential adverse effects associated with the bulk, scale or layout of the buildings;
- Will require fencing and/or landscape buffering to reduce adverse effects of activity areas and visual intrusion on adjacent land uses;
- May require the paving of parking areas and driveways to prevent the raising of dust;
- Will require on-site stormwater management;
- Will ensure that lighting from any source will not adversely affect adjacent residential uses;

Where a church adjoins other types of institutional uses, Area Council may establish reduced or altered parking standards and may consider flexible parking arrangement such as shared parking.

With regard to schools, the following policies apply to all development proposals adjacent to existing schools located in rural settlements;

- Elementary schools shall generally be have a minimum lot area of 4 ha (9.9 ac) and school sites will have a suitable shape and topography for the intended school use.
- New development will incorporate sidewalks, pathways and other facilities for the safe and efficient movement of students to existing school facilities.

The applicants are proposing an expansion to an existing property which contains a number of existing institutional land uses, including a church, a school and a long-term care facility.

Section 6.5.1 of the Official Plan provides that major institutional uses include such uses as clinics, long-term care facilities, funeral homes, community centres and arenas, as well as large scale cemeteries and civic housing. Major institutional uses may also provide supportive housing services to people who are not able to live independently and who require special care.

In recognition of the difficulties associated with attempting to predict land requirements for institutional uses, the Official Plan directs that the proposals to evaluate new or expanded institutional uses shall consider the compatibility of the proposed development with surrounding land uses, as well as potential traffic and environmental impacts. The development shall also be served by centralized water and wastewater services and shall be accompanied by an acceptable site plan and any studies necessary to assist in the evaluation of these criteria.

## **Township of Norwich Zoning By-law 07-2003-Z**

The subject property is currently zoned 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' in the Township's Zoning By-law. Lands zoned as 'A2' are permitted to develop for a wide variety of agricultural land uses and require a minimum lot area of 20 ha (49.4 ac), and a minimum lot frontage of 100 m (328.1 ft) for development.

The applicants are proposing to rezone the subject lands from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Institutional Zone (I)' to facilitate the future expansion of the Netherlands Reform Congregation campus. The 'Institutional Zone (I)' permits a wide range of institutional uses, such as a public or private school, a place of worship and a community centre. The 'I' zone also permits a single detached dwelling, if accessory to a permitted use.

### **Agency Comments**

This application has been reviewed by a number of public agencies. The following comments were received.

The Oxford County Public Works Department has commented that due to the current capacity restrictions at the Village of Norwich wastewater treatment plant, connection to the municipal servicing will not be considered until additional upgrades have been undertaken at the plant.

The County of Oxford Source Water Protection Coordinator has commented that there are no policy restrictions from a Source Water Protection perspective related to the proposed use.

Comments received from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Township of Norwich Building Department have been included as Attachment 4 to this report.

### **Public Comments**

Notice of the applications for Official Plan amendment and zone change were circulated to surrounding property owners in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act on March 3, 2021, and notice of public meeting was circulated on May 4, 2021 and July 21, 2021. As of the date of writing of this report, no comments have been received from the public.

### **Township of Norwich Council**

Township Council passed a resolution recommending in support of the proposed Official Plan amendment, and approved the associated application for zone change 'in-principle' at their regular meeting of June 22, 2021.

### **Planning Analysis**

Planning staff have reviewed the applicants' request, as well as the supporting material submitted, and are of the opinion that the proposal is not consistent with the direction of the Provincial Policy Statement or the County's Official Plan with respect to the expansion of settlement areas.

The initial application for Official Plan amendment proposed the re-designation of the subject lands from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Low Density Residential' to facilitate the proposed institutional development. However, the proposal has been amended to re-designate the subject lands to the 'Major Institutional' designation, which will also facilitate the desired development. This amendment was intended to address staff's concerns respecting the availability of the Township's residential land supply and the Phase One Comprehensive Review which was recently undertaken by the County and determined that there are sufficient residential land available in the Village of Norwich to accommodate the anticipated growth over the 20 year planning horizon.

Notwithstanding the revised proposal, Planning staff remain are of the opinion that the proposed settlement expansion can be considered premature given the absence of a land need, as well as the current availability of wastewater servicing capacity in the Village of Norwich.

The PPS directs an expansion to the settlement area should only occur at the time of a comprehensive review, as discussed above. The applicants have submitted a number of studies and opinions in support of their proposal including an opinion from a local real estate representative stating that there are no other lands available in the Village of Norwich to meet the needs of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation. The criteria outlined in this memo included a location in proximity to the current NRC site located at 43 Main Street East, a site approximately 6.5 ha (16 ac) in size with institutional zoning and located within the boundaries of the Village of Norwich.

While it is recognized that there may be no existing properties within the Village of Norwich that might currently meet this criteria (particularly those which may have the desired zoning already established), Planning staff are of the opinion that there appears to be sufficient space to accommodate the desired development on the existing NRC campus, which contains approximately 3.8 ha (9.5 ac) of existing, vacant underutilized green space and private sports fields to the north of the existing development on the property.

The Official Plan provides that school properties will generally have a minimum lot area of 4 ha (9.9 ac) and while it is recognized that the existing NRC campus does contain a number of other existing institutional and residential uses, the current site of the NRC campus is approximately 11.1 ha (27.5 ac) in size, which results in approximately 34% of vacant or underutilized space on the NRC campus.

As discussed below, the additional 'physical' development of the existing NRC campus would comprise approximately 1 ha (2.5 ac) of land, and no justification has been provided to demonstrate why the proposed development could not be accommodated within the 3.8 ha (9.5 ac) of greenspace on the northern portion of the NRC campus.

The applicants have indicated that the addition of 6.5 ha (16 ac) is required to accommodate the long-term growth plans for the NRC congregation which is expected to grow over the 20 year planning horizon, and that the existing greenspace on the NRC lands are required for outdoor play space and physical education for the school community.

Planning staff remain of the opinion that there appears to be sufficient space to accommodate for the approximate 1 ha (2.5 ac) of desired development on the existing NRC campus within the approximate 3.8 ha (9.5 ac) of existing, vacant green space to the north of the existing development on the property, resulting in 2.8 ha (6.9 ac) of green space for outdoor play area and sports fields for the school population, particularly with removal of the existing parsonage (as proposed) and the establishment of a shared parking arrangement, which could be accommodated through an application for minor variance.

The applicant has also submitted an Agricultural Impact Assessment in support of the proposed boundary expansion, in keeping with the requirements of the PPS. This study included an evaluation of the agricultural resources and land use character of the subject lands and assessed potential impacts the proposed boundary expansion may have on surrounding agricultural lands, and concluded that the proposal will not have a significant impact on the agricultural systems in the study area.

Notwithstanding this conclusion, Planning staff are of the opinion that the removal of approximately 6.5 ha (16 ac) of prime agricultural lands for the purpose of construction of an addition to the existing technical shop (743.2 m<sup>2</sup> or 8,000 ft<sup>2</sup>), a new school (8,361 m<sup>2</sup> or 89,997 ft<sup>2</sup>), as well as a new community building (930 m<sup>2</sup> or 10,010 ft<sup>2</sup>) and a new single detached dwelling is not an efficient use of prime agricultural land and the amount of land proposed to be removed from the Agricultural Reserve designation is not consistent with the requirements for the proposed uses.

Factoring 150 m<sup>2</sup> (1,615 ft<sup>2</sup>) for the proposed parsonage, cumulatively, the gross floor area of the proposed development on the subject lands is approximately 10,185 m<sup>2</sup> (109,630 ft<sup>2</sup>), which would result in approximately 15.5% coverage of the subject lands for development. While no detailed site plan was submitted to indicate how parking or other services will be accounted for it is noted that shared parking opportunities are available and, it is the opinion of staff that the removal of 6.5 ha (16 ac) of agricultural land from the Agricultural Reserve designation to accommodate for a private school and community building resulting in approximately 15.5% coverage of the subject lands is not considered to be an efficient use of prime agricultural lands.

Further, notwithstanding that the submitted Agricultural Impact Assessment concluded that the proposed boundary expansion will not have an impact on the surrounding agricultural uses, staff note that the proposed boundary expansion may result in restrictions for livestock operations to establish in the future and approval of the applicants proposal may result in an undesirable precedent for similar proposals for boundary expansions going forward.

The policies of the PPS and the County's Official Plan also require proposals for settlement expansions to confirm that sufficient water and wastewater services can be provided to accommodate proposed development.

The Oxford County Public Works Department has indicated that the Norwich wastewater treatment plant is nearing capacity and have commented that additional connections, beyond the current settlement boundary would be restricted until such time as upgrades to the plant have been undertaken. Given this, staff are of the opinion that the proposal does not have sufficient services available to accommodate the proposed development and therefore does not meet the policy criteria outlined in the PPS or the County's Official Plan.

## Conclusions

Overall, given the lack of availability of municipal wastewater services, Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposal does not meet the policy criteria for expansions to settlement areas and should not be supported.

## SIGNATURES

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### Report Author:

*'Original signed by'*

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Heather St. Clair, MCIP, RPP  
Development Planner

### Departmental Approval:

*'Original signed by'*

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Gordon K. Hough, RPP  
Director of Community Planning

### Approved for submission:

*'Original signed by'*

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Michael Duben, B.A., LL.B.  
Chief Administrative Officer

## ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment 1 – Plate 1, Location Map with Existing Zoning  
Attachment 2 – Plate 2, Close-up of Subject Lands (2020 Air Photo)  
Attachment 3 – Plate 3, Applicant's Sketch  
Attachment 4 – Agency Comments