

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Community Planning

Application for Official Plan Amendment & Draft Plan of Subdivision Approval

OP 20-03-1 & SB 20-01-1 – Cress-Ridge Farms Ltd.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council approve the application to amend the County Official Plan (File No. OP 20-03-1), submitted by Cress-Ridge Farms Ltd., for lands legally described as Part Lots 17 & 18, Concession 13 (Blenheim), in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim, to redesignate a portion of the subject lands from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Low Density Residential' and to expand the existing settlement boundary of the Village of Plattsville to facilitate a proposed 89 unit residential subdivision;
2. And further, that Council approve the attached Amendment No. 267 to the County of Oxford Official Plan;
3. And further, that the necessary by-law to approve Amendment No. 267 be raised;
4. And that Oxford County Council grant draft approval to a proposed residential subdivision submitted by Cress-Ridge Farms Ltd. (SB 20-01-1) prepared by GSP Group, dated October 8, 2019, for lands described as Part Lots 17 & 18, Concession 13 (Blenheim), in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim, subject to the conditions attached to this report as Schedule "A" being met prior to final approval.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The proposed Official Plan Amendment will expand the settlement boundary of the Village of Plattsville and redesignate the subject lands from Agricultural Reserve to Low Density Residential to facilitate a proposed 89 unit residential subdivision.
- The proposed draft plan of subdivision will facilitate 67 single detached dwelling lots, 10 semi-detached units, 12 townhouse dwelling units, and a stormwater management block served by three (3) new local streets.
- Planning Staff are recommending support of the OPA and the draft plan of subdivision as the applications are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and support the strategic initiatives and objectives of the County Official Plan.

Implementation Points

The application will be implemented in accordance with the relevant strategic initiatives, objectives and policies contained in the Official Plan.

Financial Impact







The approval of this application will have no financial impact beyond what has been approved in the current year's draft budget.

Communications

Notice of Public Meeting was provided to neighbouring property owners in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act on July 14, 2021 and a Public Meeting was held by Township Council on August 4, 2021. Ten letters were received from members of the public. A copy of these letters have been attached to this report for Council's consideration.

Notice of Public Meeting for the January 12, 2022 County Council Public Meeting was circulated to the public on December 23, 2021. As of the writing of this report, staff have received one (1) additional letter from a member of the public and a copy has been attached to this report for Council's consideration. Any materials submitted prior to the January 12, 2022 Public Meeting will be made available for Council's consideration.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
WORKS WELL TOGETHER	WELL CONNECTED	SHAPES THE FUTURE	INFORMS & ENGAGES	PERFORMS & DELIVERS	POSITIVE IMPACT
		3.ii.			

DISCUSSION

Background

Owner:	Cress-Ridge Farms Ltd. (c/o Ralph Cressman) 946778 Township Road 14, Plattsville, ON, N0J 1S0
Applicant:	Greg Voisin Investment Corporation 101 Ira Needles Boulevard, Kitchener, ON, N2J 3Z4
Agent:	GSP Group Inc. (Brandon Flewwelling) 72 Victoria Street South, Suite 201, Kitchener ON, N2G 4Y9

Location:

The subject lands are legally described as Part Lots 17 & 18, Concession 13 (Blenheim), in the Township of Blandford-Blenheim. The lands are located on the west side of Hofstetter Road, south of Township Road 14 and immediately north of the current settlement boundary of Plattsville. The lands are municipally known as 946778 Township Road 14.

County of Oxford Official Plan:

Existing:

Schedule 'B-1'	Township of Blandford-Blenheim Land Use Plan	Agricultural Reserve
----------------	---	----------------------

Proposed:

Schedule 'B-1'	Township of Blandford-Blenheim Land Use Plan	Settlement
Schedule 'B-2'	Village of Plattsville – Land Use Plan	Low Density Residential
Schedule 'C-3'	County of Oxford Settlement Strategy Plan	Serviced Village

Township of Blandford-Blenheim By-law 1360-2002:

Existing Zoning:	'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'
Proposed Zoning:	'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp)' 'Special Residential Type 2 Zone (R2-sp)' 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R3-sp)' 'Open Space Zone (OS)'

Proposal:

The County of Oxford and the Township of Blandford-Blenheim have received applications for Official Plan Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision and Zone Change to facilitate an expansion to the northeastern boundary of the Village of Plattsville. The proposed boundary expansion would expand the northern boundary line of the Village 190 m (623.4 ft) to the north, comprising approximately 7.7 ha (19 acres) of land. The proposed expansion has been requested to facilitate a residential subdivision consisting of 67 lots for single detached dwellings, 10 semi-detached dwelling units, and 12 townhouse dwelling units. A stormwater management facility is also proposed to be included in the draft plan of subdivision.

Further to the above-noted expansion, to redesignate the subject lands from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Low Density Residential', as well as rezone portions of the subject lands from 'General

Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp),' 'Special Residential Type 2 Zone (R2-sp),' 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R1-sp),' and 'Open Space Zone (OS)' to facilitate the proposed expansion and draft plan of subdivision. As part of the proposal, the southerly portion of the properties along the south side of 'Street C' on the draft plan would be maintained as a 13 m (42.7 ft) deep buffer area that would be zoned OS. This OS strip would not permit any buildings to be erected and would act as a natural buffer between the existing lots on the north side of English Crescent and Applewood Street in the subdivision to the south.

In addition to the applicant's proposal to incorporate the subject lands into the Village of Plattsville's settlement boundary, Oxford County is recommending that the lands that contain the Plattsville water tower also be incorporated into the settlement boundary.

The current farm holding on which the proposed settlement expansion will occur is approximately 54.8 ha (135.3 ac) in size and is currently in agricultural production (cash crop). The property is occupied by an existing single detached dwelling accessory to the farm operation, which is located on the north side of the property, outside the area proposed to be redesignated.

Surrounding land uses are mainly comprised of agricultural lands to the north and east, single detached dwellings to the south, and the Nith River, along with the associated floodplain, to the west. An established dairy cattle operation exists to east of the subject lands, across Hofstetter Road.

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 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.

The PPS directs that 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, efficiently use land and resources and are appropriate for and efficiently use

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.

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. Further, Section 1.6.6.1 a) directs that planning for water and sewage services shall accommodate forecasted growth in a manner that promotes the efficient use and optimization of existing municipal sewage and water services.

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 reuse, 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.

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. For Council's information, the current policies of the Official Plan have not yet been updated to reflect the 25 year growth planning horizon recently introduced via the 2020 PPS (as opposed to the 20 year horizon noted above).

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 Blandford-Blenheim 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 Amendment 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 requirements outlined below.

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 exist demonstrating that the proposed expansion of the settlement area is justified. In this regard the following considerations, among others, will be addressed;

- There is a demonstrated need within the planning period for additional land to be removed from agricultural production and redesignated, 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 (formerly) Board of Health (now Southwestern Public Health).

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. Infrastructure and public services which are planned or available will be suitable for the development or expansion over the long-term and protect public health and safety.

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.

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 redesignated from 'Agricultural Reserve' to 'Low Density Residential' to facilitate a residential subdivision. Low Density Residential areas are those lands that are primarily developed or planned for a variety of low-rise, low density housing forms consisting of single detached, semi-detached, duplexes, converted dwellings and street townhouses. In addition to residential uses, services and amenities that enhance the quality of the residential environment and which primarily serve the local residential neighbourhoods by providing services or fulfilling cultural or social needs such as schools, day care facilities, churches and park facilities are also permitted within residential areas.

Township of Blandford-Blenheim Zoning By-Law

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 a portion of the subject lands from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special Residential Type 1 Zone (R1-sp),' 'Special Residential Type 2 Zone (R2-sp),' 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R1-sp),' and 'Open Space Zone (OS)' to facilitate the proposed development, which would consist of single detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and townhome dwellings. A stormwater management facility would also be included.

As part of the proposed rezoning, special provisions are proposed to permit a maximum lot coverage of 50% and to reduce MDS I setbacks for the expanded boundary. With respect to MDS I, staff are of the opinion that while consideration of MDS is important, and required in accordance

with both PPS and Official Plan policies, implementing any relief of MDS requirements is not required in the amending Zoning By-law. Any relief of MDS approved by Council will be reflected in the Official Plan amendment to expand the settlement boundary. Once that occurs, the lands will be within Plattsville and further MDS requirements would not apply.

Agency Comments

The applications were reviewed by a number of public agencies. The following comments were received.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing has provided comments, which have been attached to this report in their entirety for Council's consideration.

Canada Post has indicated that the project will be serviced by centralized mail delivery provided through Canada Post Community Mail Boxes.

The Township Director of Public Works has indicated no concerns and that the development must follow the Township's development standards with regards to right-of-way requirements, sidewalks, street lights, curbs, etc.

Union Gas has requested that as a condition of final approval that the owner/developer provide to Union Gas the necessary easements and/or agreements required by Union Gas for the provision of gas series for the project, in a form satisfactory to Enbridge.

The Oxford County Public Works has confirmed that the current capacity in the Plattsville wastewater treatment system is sufficient to accommodate the proposed 89 residential units. It is noted that allocation of any servicing capacity to a particular development will not be formally secured until such time as that development is given final approval. Further, any approved development will need to be phased in accordance with the County's servicing allocation protocol.

The Township Fire Chief, Hydro One, and the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) have indicated no concerns with the proposal.

Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council

On August 4, 2021 the Zone Change Application (ZN1-20-02), Official Plan Amendment Application (OP20-03-1), and the Application for Draft Plan Approval (SB20-01-1) were considered by the Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council. Following a Public Meeting, Township Council moved to 'approve-in-principle' the Zone Change Application and, further, that Oxford County Council be advised that Township Council supports the submitted Official Plan Amendment Application and Application for Draft Plan Approval.

Planning Analysis

An application for Official Plan Amendment has been received to incorporate the subject lands into Plattsville's urban settlement boundary and to redesignate the lands for residential purposes.

Oxford County Phase I Comprehensive Review

Planning staff have reviewed the applicants' proposal, together with the supporting material submitted, and are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with the direction of the Provincial Policy Statement or the County's Official Plan with respect to the expansion of settlement areas.

The PPS directs that an expansion to the settlement area should occur at the time of a comprehensive review. In this regard, the County has completed a Phase One Comprehensive Review study which was adopted by County Council in April 2020. This study provides the information necessary to address the forecasted growth and land need components of the PPS and Official Plan comprehensive review requirements. Further, the applicants have also submitted a number of reports and studies, including a Planning Justification Report (PJR), Agricultural Impact Analysis (within the PJR), and a Functional Servicing Report in support of the proposed boundary expansion.

Regarding the Phase I Comprehensive Review, this study included an analysis of the Township of Blandford-Blenheim population, household and employment forecasts and associated land need for a 20 year planning period. However, the study also included a 30 year forecast period to ensure it would provide the information necessary to account for an increase in the planning period from 20 to 25 years which was anticipated would (and since has) come into effect as part of the 2020 PPS. The review indicated that the total estimated residential unit growth for the 20 year period 2019 to 2039 was 510 dwelling units, while the residential land supply in the Township (including opportunities for intensification) as of the end of 2019 was estimated to be approximately 500 residential units. The review concluded that *"...it appears that the Township of Blandford-Blenheim will also soon be in need of additional residential land, particularly once the current planning horizon in the PPS is extended from 20 to 25 years later this year."*

With a 25 year planning period in the PPS now in effect, the household forecasts in the study for the 25 year planning period 2021 to 2046 must be considered. These forecasts indicate that approximately 600 dwelling units are now expected to be required, which would exceed the residential land supply by 100 units, and possibly more if the land supply estimates were to be adjusted to account for residential construction that has occurred since 2019. Therefore, it appears that there is a need for additional residential land in the Township's Serviced Villages to accommodate the forecasted growth for the planning period.

Given the above assessment of the forecasted residential growth and land need from the Phase I Comprehensive Review, Planning staff are satisfied that the proposed settlement boundary adjustment would be consistent with the comprehensive review requirements related to land need.

Planning Justification

The applicant has provided an analysis of potential settlement boundary expansion options within the submitted PJR to address the comprehensive review requirements of the PPS and Official plan pertaining to the evaluation of alternative directions for accommodating growth, including how best to protect the provincial interests and prime agricultural lands. Additionally, Planning Staff have also analysed reviewed growth opportunities for the settlement boundary.

The Nith River, and its associated floodplain, lies to the west and south of the Village which restricts expansion in those directions as new residential development is not permitted within floodplains.

The current easterly settlement boundary abuts Hofstetter Road. To expand east, development would need to occur on the east side of Hofstetter Road. Staff have concerns with connectivity between the existing residential subdivisions along Hofstetter Road and any development on the east side of Hofstetter Road as a major thoroughfare (Hofstetter Road) would run between the two areas. This could create issues with pedestrian connectivity. Further, the lands to the east consist of higher capability agricultural land than to the north and are currently being more intensively farmed (i.e. contain an existing livestock operation).

The lands in the southeast area of Plattsville (southwest corner of Hofstetter Road and Albert Street East) have received draft approval for a residential subdivision with commercial components (SB10-06-1) but have yet to be developed. While staff note that there is some land to the south of the lands subject to SB10-06-1 where the settlement boundary could theoretically expand, staff are of the opinion that this is not the appropriate direction to expand long-term. The floodplain of the Nith River lies further south of the lands subject to SB10-06-1 which presents a future constraint. Should a lands need study be done in the future that declares the need for additional lands for Plattsville, whether residential lands or employment lands, in order to facilitate projected growth, expanding further south would be unlikely due to the floodplain. By expanding the settlement boundary to north with the current applications, it would represent a direction that could conceivably facilitate future boundary expansions, without being constrained by natural heritage features, such as a floodplain.

With respect to the review of alternative directions for growth in terms of avoiding prime agricultural lands, the majority of the lands in the Township are classified as having Class I, Class II, or Class III soil, which are considered to be 'prime agricultural area'. Given that Plattsville is surrounded by soils classified as Classes I - III, any expansion of the settlement boundary will result in some loss of prime agricultural land. According to the Canadian Land Inventory, the subject lands contain Class II and Class III soils. While the lands contain Class II and Class III soil, staff note that if the settlement boundary were to expand to the east that it would be expanding into Class I soil. Further, staff note that the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas, which are to be protected.

Based on the above review, it was concluded that expanding to the north was the best option, as the lands are located outside of the Nith River floodplain and have no natural heritage concerns, as confirmed by the GRCA. Further, the proposed development would abut existing residential development within the Village, which is a compatible land use with the proposed development and represents a logical extension of the settlement from a land use and infrastructure perspective. Further, the existing residential subdivision in the northeast corner of Plattsville was developed with a road stub installed on Applewood Street facing north with the intention of providing internal connectivity for future residential growth to the north. In general, staff agree with the applicant's analysis and concur that expanding the boundary of Plattsville to the north is a logical extension of the existing settlement relative to other options and an appropriate direction for growth taking into consideration relevant Provincial interests.

Alternative directions for growth have been explored and evaluated and there appear to be no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands or that avoid prime agricultural lands. Planning staff are of the opinion that the removal of approximately 7.71 ha (19.1 ac) of Class II & Class III lands for the purpose of facilitating a residential subdivision consisting of a mix of density is reasonable given the Township's current land inventory.

Minimum Distance Separation (MDS)

With respect to the requirement for settlement expansions to comply with MDS and the potential impact of the proposal on existing livestock operations within the vicinity, the applicant has provided Minimum Distance Separation I (MDS I) calculations to the existing cattle operation located at 876764 Hofstetter Road (located on the east side of Hofstetter Road, directly across from the area proposed for expansion). According to MDS I calculations, a setback of 240 m (788 ft) is required from the livestock barn and 416 m (1,364.8 ft) from the manure storage facility. The applicant is proposing a setback of 260 m (853 ft) between the existing livestock operation and the nearest portion of the proposed expanded settlement boundary.

When calculating the required MDS setbacks between livestock operations and sensitive uses, land uses are classified as either a Type A Land Use or a Type B Land Use. Type A Land Uses are generally less sensitive uses that have low density of human habitation such as a single detached dwelling located outside of a settlement. Type B Land Uses are generally more sensitive uses that have a higher density of human habitation, such as a settlement. In this situation, should the livestock operation at 876764 Hofstetter Road wish to expand, MDS calculations would typically be completed using the Type B Land Use criteria and be calculated from the settlement boundary of Plattsville.

Staff noted that at the time the applications were submitted that the closest point of the existing settlement boundary of Plattsville is currently setback approximately 355 m (1,164.7 ft) from the above noted livestock operation at 876764 Hofstetter Road. Based on the current setback, it was determined that livestock operation is already restricted in terms of expanding their operation in that location, given the existing deficient MDS setbacks between the existing settlement boundary and the livestock operation. As the proposed settlement expansion would further reduce an existing deficient setback from the existing livestock operation to the settlement boundary, Township Council directed staff to work with the landowner of 876764 Hofstetter Road to investigate options in regard to protecting their future farming interests.

In response to Council's above-noted direction, a Zone Change Application (ZN1-21-12) was initiated to modify the Minimum Distance Separation II (MDS II) setback Factor to a Type B land use from a value of 2.0 to a value of 1.0 for any future expansion or alteration to an agricultural building or structure, or manure storage structure, to be used for the housing of livestock. Zone Change Application ZN1-21-12 was considered and approved by Township Council at the November 17, 2021 Council meeting.

Given the proposed settlement boundary expansion for Plattsville, staff were of the opinion that providing flexibility to an existing livestock operation for possible future expansion it is critical in helping to protect agricultural land and operations.

While recognizing that urban growth is a necessity for settlements, it is equally important to provide support to existing agricultural operations through the land use planning process to protect the land base for farming as well as minimize potential for conflict. It is important to note, however, that the extent to which the existing livestock operation would be able to expand will be dependent on the type of livestock, the number of livestock, and the type of manure storage that is proposed.

For Council's information, the Province's Minimum Distance Separation Document indicates that MDS I setbacks are not required for proposed land use changes within approved settlement areas. Therefore, if the proposal to expand the settlement boundary is approved by County Council, the subject lands will then be within the new Plattsville settlement boundary and dwellings within these lands will not be required to comply with the required MDS I setback calculations.

Official Plan Amendment & Subdivision

With respect to the Official Plan Amendment to expand the settlement boundary and redesignate the subject lands to facilitate an 89 unit residential subdivision, staff are satisfied that the proposed amendment is appropriate and consistent with policies for the designation and development of lands for residential purposes. Based on the location of the subject lands, immediately adjacent to existing residential uses, staff are of the opinion that it is appropriate to expand the settlement boundary to incorporate the lands into the Village of Plattsville. The development of the subject lands for residential purposes is considered to be a logical expansion and suitable land use for the area and will also help to optimize the use of existing water and wastewater infrastructure in the Village and ensure the Township can accommodate forecasted residential growth.

Further to this, staff are satisfied that the proposed subdivision has been prepared with consideration for a mix of housing options and density, compatibility, local road connections, and stormwater management.

The proposed 89 unit residential subdivision proposes a mix of low density housing options, including single detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and townhouses. In terms of density, the project would be developed with an overall net residential density of 16.7 units per hectare (6.7 units per acre) which is in line with the density range within the Low Density Residential designation of 15 units per hectare (6 units per acre) to 22 units per hectare (9 units per acre). The proposed dwelling mix would be approximately 75% single detached dwelling units, 11% semi-detached dwelling units, and 14% townhouse units.

With respect to the street network within the proposed subdivision, Street A, Street B, and Street C will serve an internal local roads within the development. Connectivity to the adjacent lands to the immediate south will be achieved through an existing road stub that would connect Street A with Applewood Street, which is a local road. It is also proposed that Street B would connect to Hofstetter Road, which is located to the immediate east of the proposed development. For the purpose of construction, the Township would be requiring the developer to enter and exit on Hofstetter Road rather than Applewood Street.

The proposed residential subdivision would be adjacent to an existing residential subdivision to the immediate south, which consists predominantly of single detached dwellings. The development of low density residential uses on the subject lands would represent compatible development with existing residential uses in staff's opinion.

Further, the applicant has proposed including a 13 m (42.7 ft) buffer on the lots to the immediate north of the existing lots on English Crescent. This 13 m (42.7 ft) buffer would be zoned Open Space (OS) and would not permit buildings on the lands. The applicant has also advised that the OS zoned buffer would be planted with trees, however, the specifics in terms of the number and species of the trees has yet to be determined. The proposed buffer would have two purposes: allowing for additional separation between the existing dwellings along the north side of English Crescent and the proposed dwellings along the south side of Street C; and the proposed buffer is to be used for drainage as a swale would be located within the buffer and direct surface runoff to the proposed stormwater management facility (Block 90).

Servicing

The applicant has submitted a Functional Servicing Report in support of the applications which concludes that development of the subject lands as a residential subdivision with full municipal and utility services can be achieved through the extension of the existing gravity sewers and municipal watermains.

Municipal water servicing will be achieved for the proposed development through a connection point to the existing municipal water system along Applewood Street. No concerns with water capacity were identified by County Public Works.

While the Plattsville Wastewater Treatment Plant is nearing full operation capacity, the Oxford County Public Works Department has confirmed that the facility has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed 89 residential units. Capacity calculations are completed including existing uses, approved but unbuilt developments (draft plan of subdivision, approved zone changes, etc.), and anticipated future development (i.e. constructing a dwelling on a vacant lot). Given this, staff are satisfied there will be sufficient wastewater servicing capacity available to accommodate the proposed development. Further, the proposed development will help to optimize the use of the existing water and wastewater infrastructure in the Village.

Stormwater management for the proposed development would be provided by the proposed stormwater management facility north of Applewood Street and identified as Block 90. It is proposed that Low Impact Development (LID) measures, including reduced lot grading and rear yard grass swales, will be used within the development. LID measures are generally used to increase the infiltration of stormwater into the soil and to reduce the surface runoff volumes/flow rates.

Zoning By-law No. 1360-2002

As part of the proposed rezoning from 'A2' to 'R1-sp,' 'R2-sp,' and 'R3-sp,' the applicant is requesting an increase to the maximum lot coverage provisions from 30% to 50% of the lot. At the August 4, 2021 Township of Blandford-Blenheim Council Meeting, Council moved to approve the proposed zone change 'in-principle'. Should County Council approve the Official Plan Amendment Application and Application for Draft Approval, staff would return to Township Council with the amending by-law for final approval.

Conclusions

In light of the foregoing, Planning staff are satisfied that the proposed development is consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement and supports the strategic initiatives and objectives of the Official Plan. As such, staff are satisfied that the applications can be given favourable consideration.

SIGNATURES

Report Author:

"Original Signed By"

Dustin Robson, MCIP, RPP
Development Planner

Departmental Approval:

"Original Signed By"

Gordon K. Hough, RPP
Director of Community Planning

Approved for submission:

"Original Signed By"

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

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment No. 1:** Plate 1 – Location Map & Existing Zoning
- Attachment No. 2:** Plate 2 – Aerial Map & Existing Zoning
- Attachment No. 3:** Plate 3 – Official Plan Designation Map
- Attachment No. 4:** Plate 4 – Applicant's Sketch – Proposed Redesignated Lands
- Attachment No. 5:** Plate 5 – Applicant's Sketch – Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision
- Attachment No. 6:** MMAH Comments
- Attachment No. 7:** Letters of Concern
- Attachment No. 8:** "Schedule A" – Conditions of Draft Approval
- Attachment No. 9:** OPA 267