

Planning Justification Report

in support of an
Application for a Zoning By-law Amendment

21383 Woodbine Avenue

in the

**Town of East Gwillimbury
Region of York
March 2025**



Groundswell Urban Planners Inc.
95 Mural Street, Suite 402
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3G2
(905) 597-8204
www.groundswellplan.com
GS File 24-26



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction..... 1
1.1 Subject Lands and Surrounding Area Description..... 1

2.0 Development Proposal.....3
2.1 Proposed Development on Subject Property..... 3
2.2 Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment..... 4

3.0 Planning Policy Overview.....5
3.1 Provincial Planning Statement 2024.....5
3.2 Greenbelt Plan (2017)..... 5
3.3 Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (2009)..... 6
3.5 Regional Municipality of York Official Plan (2024 Office Consolidation)..... 7
3.6 Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (2018 Consolidation)..... 11
3.7 Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (2022)..... 12
3.8 Town of East Gwillimbury Comprehensive Zoning By-Law 2018-043 (2020)..... 14

4.0 Policy Review and Analysis.....16

6.0 Summary & Conclusions.....17

7.0 Appendices: Policy Analysis.....18
Appendix A - Provincial Planning Statement 2024..... 19
Appendix B - Greenbelt Plan 2017.....23
Appendix C - Lake Simcoe Protection Plan 2009.....25
Appendix D - York Region Official Plan..... 26
Appendix E - Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan 2018.....29
Appendix F - Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (Adopted 2022)..... 31

1.0 Introduction

Groundswell Urban Planners Inc. (Groundswell) has been retained by V.A.I. Property Investments Ltd. to prepare and submit a Zoning By-law Amendment application for the lands municipally known as 21383 Woodbine Avenue in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

The following report will provide a brief description of the subject property and undertake an analysis and justification of the proposal against relevant municipal, regional, and provincial planning policies. A comprehensive review of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), Greenbelt Plan (2017), Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, York Region Official Plan (2022), East Gwillimbury Official Plan (2018 and 2022), and Zoning By-law 2018-043 has been included. The report will identify the main supporting policy areas contained within the above policy documents, along with a detailed assessment of the relevant municipal planning documents.

The information contained within this report is considered up-to-date as of February 28, 2025.

1.1 Subject Lands and Surrounding Area Description

1.1.1 Existing Site Context and Surrounding Area

The subject property is municipally known as 21383 Woodbine Avenue in Queensville, Town of East Gwillimbury and is bound by Woodbine Avenue to the west and Holborn Road to the south. The subject property has approximately 406 meters of frontage along Woodbine Avenue and 384 metres of frontage on Holborn Road and is approximately 40.5 acres in size.

The subject property contains two covered storage domes, a storage building, an office building, and a vacant farmhouse surrounded by agricultural fields for the harvesting of sod, operating under J. Lipani & Son Sod Farms. As shown in Figure 1 - Aerial Context the subject property is predominately surrounded by agricultural lands.



Figure 1 - Aerial Context

2.1 Proposed Development on Subject Property

The office building is a rectangular, one-storey structure that is approximately 242 m² in size. The office building fronts onto Holborn Road and has a parking area to the east of the building with 15 parking spaces and a driveway off of Holborn Road. The office building is set back approximately 44 metres from the Holborn Road frontage. This application does not contemplate any further structures at this time. Figure 2 identifies the various components of the subject property.



Figure 2 - Subject Property

2.2 Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment

This application is for a zoning by-law amendment to add a site-specific provision to allow for 'office use' on the subject property to complement the agricultural use of sod harvesting. A draft Zoning By-law Amendment text & schedule is attached to this report.

3.0 Planning Policy Overview

The following is an overview of the significant Provincial, Regional and Local planning legislations which impact the subject property and proposed zoning amendment. For a complete analysis of all applicable policies to the proposed development, refer to Section 7.0 Appendices: Policy Analysis of this Report.

3.1 Provincial Planning Statement 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024, effective October 20, 2024, provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the Provincial Planning Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. It also supports the provincial goal to enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians.

The subject property is identified as a Prime Agricultural area, and the PPS lists the following policies that are relevant to rural and agricultural areas.

Sections 2.5 and 2.6 emphasize the protection of rural and agricultural areas to promote their long-term viability. **Section 4.1** states that all natural features and areas shall be protected and no new development shall be permitted in these areas. **Section 4.3** protects agricultural uses and encourages the maintenance of existing agricultural lands. The proposed development will not impose any limitations for the ongoing agricultural uses on the subject property. The subject property will continue to function as a sod operation, with administrative operations for the operation taking place in the existing building. As no development or structural modifications are being proposed, the current agricultural integrity of the site will be and is preserved.

A comprehensive review of the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 can be found in [Appendix A](#).

3.2 Greenbelt Plan (2017)

The Ontario Greenbelt Plan is a land-use policy document designed to protect environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural land, and natural heritage systems in Ontario. It restricts urban development and urban sprawl in designated Greenbelt areas, ensuring the preservation of forests, wetlands, and agricultural land. The plan aims to support sustainable growth and protect the environment for future generations.

The subject property is designated 'Protected Countryside' within the Greenbelt Plan as shown in Figure 3. The Protected Countryside designation prioritizes the preservation of agricultural land, natural heritage, and water resources while restricting urban development.

The Agricultural System within the Protected Countryside provides a permanent and productive agricultural land base and a complementary agri-food network. The agricultural land base comprises prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands. It permits agricultural activities, including farming and related uses, along with natural resource management and recreational activities that are not harmful to the environment.

The prime agricultural area encourages a wide variety of standard farming practices and agricultural uses as outlined in **Section 3.1.3**. This application is not intended to remove the agricultural use on the

subject property but instead support the agricultural use through the provision of a site specific policy to allow for an office use on the subject property. The subject property is outside of the Greenbelt's Natural Heritage System.

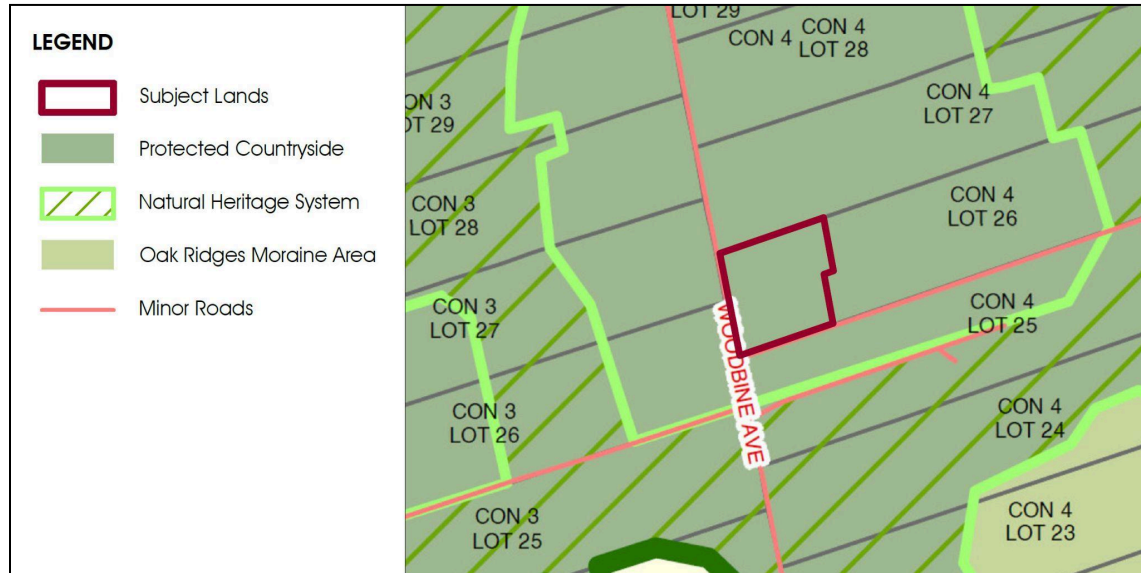


Figure 3 - Greenbelt Plan (2017)

A comprehensive policy review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan can be found at [Appendix B](#).

3.3 Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (2009)

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP) builds on the ongoing work of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) to protect the watershed. The LSRCA has been a vital partner in the implementation of the LSPP and works to lead community, municipal, and other governmental partners in the restoration and preservation of Lake Simcoe's environmental quality and health.

The LSPP is a comprehensive policy framework aimed at protecting and restoring the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed. The plan, introduced in 2009 by the Ontario government, focuses on key aspects like water quality, natural heritage, land use, and the health of the lake's ecosystem.

Additionally, it discusses the importance of preserving the natural heritage system, which includes wetlands and floodplains and requires municipalities to integrate these protections into their official plans and zoning.

As confirmed through the LSRCA Regulation mapping (Figure 4) there is a stream that traverses along the north portion of the subject property. **Policy 6.8-DP** related to Streams does not permit any structures if the structure impedes the natural flow of water. This application will not have any structures within the portion of the subject property where the identified stream is located.

The subject property lies within the Greenbelt area, and as such, **Policies 6.20-6.29DP**, which apply to areas outside of existing settlement areas and the Greenbelt area, are not applicable. As confirmed by the LSRCA, there is the presence of a watercourse and unevaluated wetland that traverses the subject property along the north portion.



Figure 4 - LSRCA Regulation Mapping

As shown in the figure above, parts of the subject site to the north and south east are regulated by the LSRCA. This application does not contemplate further buildings or structural modifications, the current agricultural integrity of the site will be preserved. This is simply to recognize a building that is being occupied as office space for the existing agricultural use.

A comprehensive policy review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan can be found at [Appendix C](#).

3.5 Regional Municipality of York Official Plan (2024 Office Consolidation)

In 2022, the York Region Official Plan (YROP) was approved with modifications made by the province. Currently, the Region of York is one of Canada's biggest municipalities. By 2051, the region is expected to have a population of around 2.05 million people and 991,990 jobs. The 2022 York Region Official Plan outlines how to address the demands of current residents and businesses in the region while guiding future growth and development. Due to Bill 185, the Region of York's planning authority has been removed and no longer has planning responsibilities as it relates to the development approvals process. Nonetheless, the Region of York Official Plan is still significant as it stands today and will need to be taken into consideration.

Under the YROP, the subject property is located in the Agricultural System and is designated as 'Agricultural Area'. The property also contains a sliver of 'Regional Greenlands System' along the north portion. Refer to Figures 5 and 6 below.

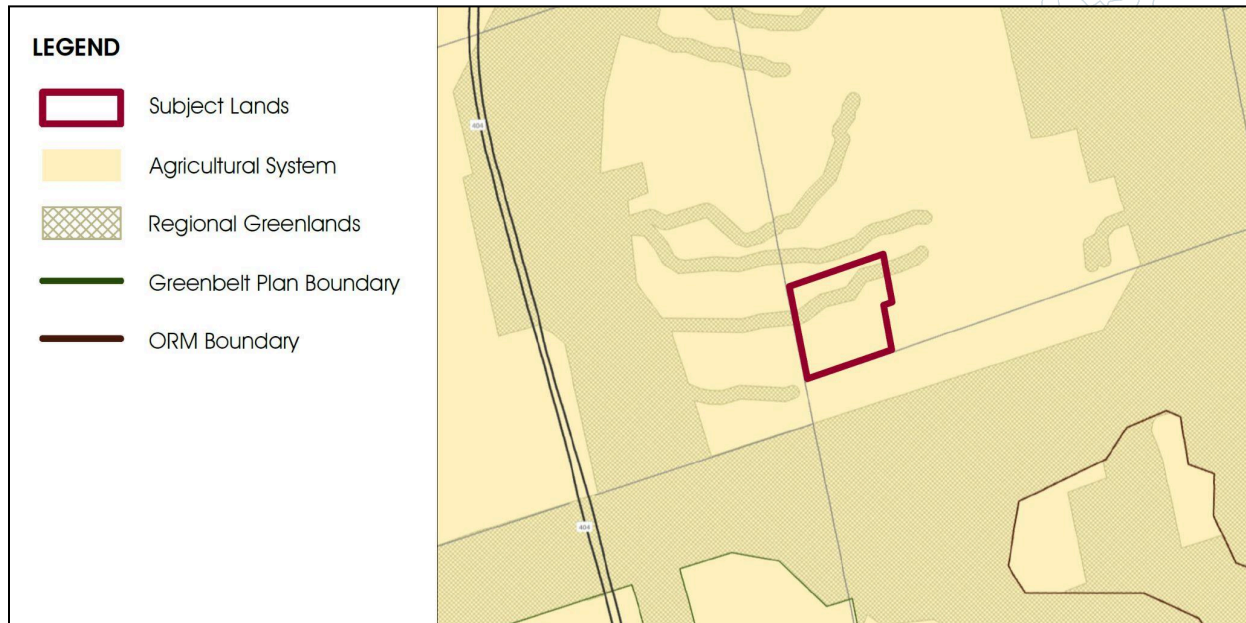


Figure 5 - Region of York Official Plan Map 1 - Regional Structure

The Agricultural System protects agricultural areas, ensuring the viability of agricultural land. **Section 5.1** of the YROP establishes policies to protect the agricultural lands of York Region.

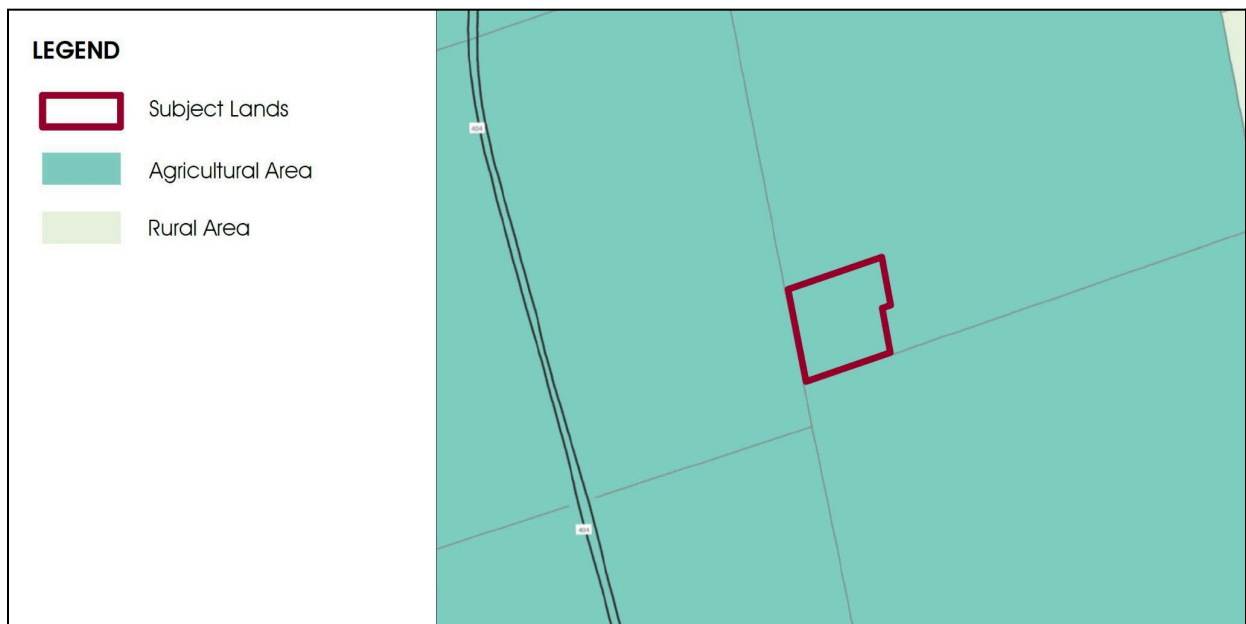


Figure 6 - Region of York Official Plan Map 2 - Land Use Designations

As shown in the Figures below, the subject property is situated within the 'Greenbelt Protected Countryside Designation' and a branch of 'Regional Greenlands System' is found along the north portion.

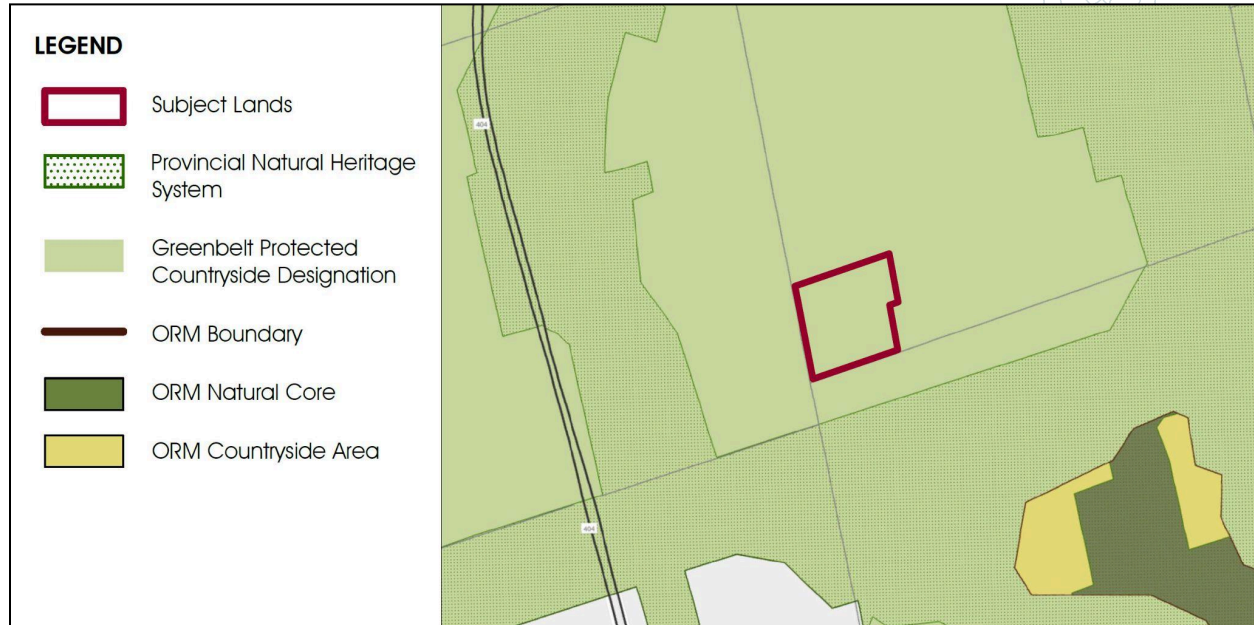


Figure 7 - Region of York Official Plan Map 1c - Provincial Designations



Figure 8 - Region of York Official Plan Map 2 - Regional Greenlands System

The Regional Greenlands System protects and enhances the region's natural system. **Section 3.2.4** states that development within 120 m of the Regional Greenlands System must include an environmental impact study. **Section 3.2.6** states that development be mindful of the surrounding Regional Greenlands System and avoid impacts to key natural and hydrologic features.

The subject property also contains a pocket of wetland (unevaluated as confirmed through the Ministry of Natural Resources mapping) and woodlands, as shown below. The office use is outside of these areas.

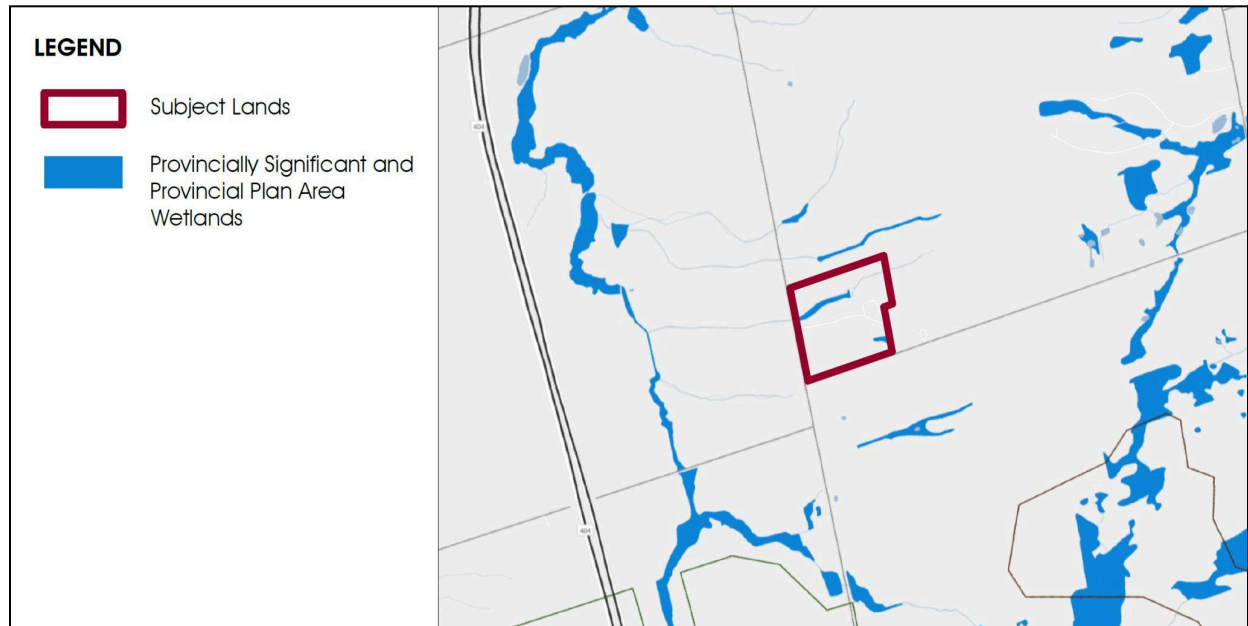


Figure 9 - Region of York Official Plan Map 4 - Key Hydrologic Features



Figure 10 - Region of York Official Plan Map 5 - Woodlands

Section 3.4 provides policies that ensure the protection of all natural features in the region. Both development and site alteration of any kind are prohibited in wetlands and woodlands.

The current agricultural integrity of the site will be preserved with the addition of an office building for administrative purposes of the agricultural related use of sod harvesting. This application does not propose further buildings and is simply to recognize the office use within an existing building.

A comprehensive review of the Region of York Official Plan 2024 can be found in [Appendix D](#).

3.6 Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (2018 Consolidation)

The Town of East Gwillimbury's Official Plan (OP) was adopted by Council in June 2010. Prior to the approval from the Region, the OP was appealed and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in July 2014.

As shown on Figure 11, the subject property is located within 'The Greenbelt - Protected Countryside'. Furthermore Figure 12, designates the subject property as "Prime Agricultural Area".



Figure 11 - Official Plan Schedule A Town Structure



Figure 12 - Official Plan Schedule C Rural Planning Area Land Use Plan

The subject property's Greenbelt Protected Countryside land use designation is Prime Agricultural, which means that it must comply with both the Greenbelt Plan and the Official Plan policies for the Greenbelt Plan Area (Protected Countryside), as outlined in **Section 4.11**.

Section 4.11.1.3 provides that nothing in the OP shall limit reasonable and normal farm practices. Harvesting sod, the primary farming practice on the subject property, is considered a normal agricultural operation under the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998. As such, this application supports the continuation of this activity.

A comprehensive review of the Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan 2018 can be found in [Appendix E](#).

3.7 Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (2022)

The Town updated their Official Plan which was adopted and endorsed by Council in June 2022 and is subject to approval by the Province as the Region no longer has planning authority.

As shown in Figures 13 & 14, the subject property is designated 'Greenbelt - Protected Countryside' within the Rural Planning Area and 'Prime Agricultural Area' in the Town of East Gwillimbury's Official Plan (2022).



Figure 13 - Town of EG's Official Plan (2022), Schedule 1



Figure 14 - Town of EG's Official Plan (2022), Schedule 5

Section 4.5 of the Official Plan states that within the Greenbelt Protected Countryside designation, the Greenbelt Plan's regulations will apply. **Section 4.5.3** explains that the Prime Agricultural Area designation is intended to support agricultural uses.

The subject property also contains pockets of 'Environmental Protection Designation' with an 'Adjacent Lands Overlay' within the Town's Natural Heritage System, as shown in Figure 15 below.



Figure 15 - Town of EG's Official Plan (2022), Schedule 4

Section 4.4.3 explains that The Town's Natural Heritage System must be protected. Development on lands within 120m from the Environmental Protection designation, as indicated by an adjacent lands overlay, requires a Natural Heritage Evaluation that is in support of the proposal by **Section 4.4.4**. According to this section, no buildings or structures, nor the cutting of trees, shall be permitted within the Environmental Protection Designation and the vegetation protection zone. There must also be no negative impact on the Natural Heritage System.

No development or site alterations are proposed within the Environmental Protection Designation. The site will continue to function as an agricultural use with the harvesting of sod and without any changes to land use or built form. The existing small building will remain in use solely for the management and administration of the sod business. The only request being made is to add office use as permitted use, ensuring that the building can officially function as an office to support the agriculturally related use of sod harvesting. As there are no additional structures, expansions, or modifications planned, the agricultural land use and function of the site will be fully preserved, ensuring continued compatibility with surrounding land uses and adherence to official plan policies. Furthermore, no Natural Heritage Evaluation is needed due to no development being proposed.

A comprehensive review of the Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan 2022 can be found in [Appendix F](#).

3.8 Town of East Gwillimbury Comprehensive Zoning By-Law 2018-043 (2020)

Under the Town of East Gwillimbury's Zoning By-law 2018-043, the subject property is currently zoned as Rural (RU). The Rural (RU) Zone applies to lands designated Prime Agricultural Area, Holland Marsh

Specialty Crop Area, Rural Area, Agricultural/Long Term Growth Area and Environmental Protection Area in the Town's OP.

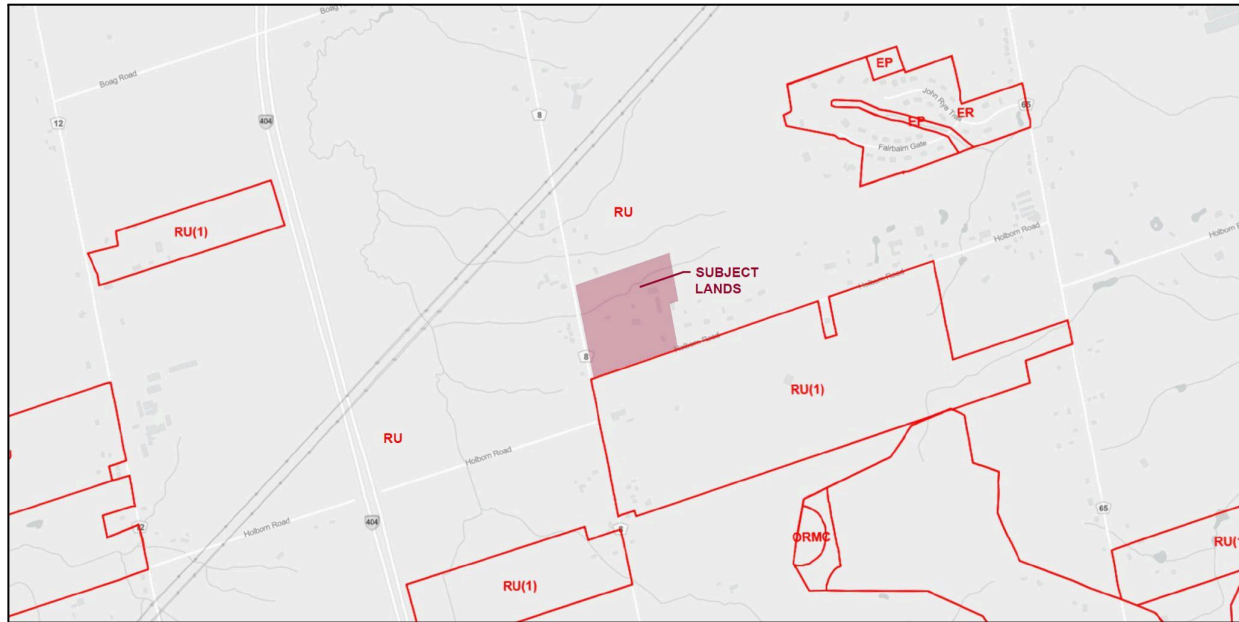


Figure 16 - Town of East Gwillimbury Zoning Map

The permitted uses for the site encompass a range of agricultural and conservation-related activities, ensuring flexibility while maintaining the area's rural character. These include agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, and agri-tourism uses, as well as greenhouses, nurseries, and farm produce outlets, which support local farming operations. The zone also allows for on-farm diversified uses, farm implement sales and supply establishments, and equestrian uses, promoting agricultural business opportunities.

As there is no new development that is being proposed, the Zoning By-law amendment application is to amend the permitted uses on the subject site to include office use. This amendment preserves and safeguards the site's current agricultural methods and natural features without compromising its rural integrity. The area is intended to support the sod company's administrative operations in the current building on the property.

4.0 Policy Review and Analysis

The subject property is compatible with the surrounding area as it maintains its existing agricultural use, which aligns with the rural character and land use patterns of the area. By continuing to operate as a sod agricultural operation, the subject property remains consistent with adjacent agricultural uses, ensuring minimal impact on neighbouring properties.

Furthermore, there are no plans for additional development, site modifications, or increased activity, so there will not be any negative impacts on the local infrastructure, traffic, or environmental features.

From a planning perspective, the proposal represents good planning by preserving agricultural land while allowing for a minor, logical adjustment to zoning permissions. The request to add office use as a permitted use is a modest change that serves an administrative function directly related to the existing business without introducing any incompatible or intensified uses. In keeping with zoning goals and official plan policies, this application supports the long-term sustainability of farming operations while protecting the land's natural heritage features.

The proposal is consistent with the Town's Official Plan policies by preserving the agricultural integrity of the lands as no development is being proposed.

6.0 Summary & Conclusions

This Planning Justification Report is in support of a Zoning By-law Amendment application for the subject property at 21383 Woodbine Avenue, East Gwillimbury.

Policies at the provincial, regional, and local level were reviewed in their entirety to determine how the development conforms to them. After an extensive review of the applicable land use planning policies, we conclude that the proposed request to add a site specific office use permission is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, and maintains the intent of the Region of York Official Plan, Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

It is our opinion that the Zoning By-law Amendment application is justified and represents good planning for the following reasons:

- The proposal conforms to and promotes the policies of the PPS, the Region of York Official Plan and the Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan and Zoning By-law.
- The Zoning By-law Amendment Application does not propose any new development and is solely intended to allow for office uses for the current sod operation on the subject property.

Respectfully submitted,

GROUNDSWELL URBAN PLANNERS INC.



Lucila Sandoval, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner, Partner



Piraveina Ravendiran
Planner

7.0 Appendices: Policy Analysis

Appendix A	Provincial Policy Statement, 2024
Appendix B	Greenbelt Plan, 2017
Appendix C	Lake Simcoe Protection Plan
Appendix D	Region of York Official Plan
Appendix E	Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan 2018
Appendix F	Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (Adopted 2022)

Appendix A - Provincial Planning Statement 2024

The proposed development is supported by the policies listed below.

Policy		Response
2.5	<i>Rural Areas in Municipalities</i>	
1h)	<i>Providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas, in accordance with policy 4.3.</i>	The zoning by-law amendment is to allow for an office use that directly relates to the agricultural use on the subject property and supports the ongoing agricultural operation.
2.6	<i>Rural Areas in Municipalities</i>	
1	<p><i>On rural lands located in municipalities, permitted uses are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) the management or use of resources;</i> <i>b) resource-based recreational uses (including recreational dwellings not intended as permanent residences);</i> <i>c) residential development, including lot creation, where site conditions are suitable for the provision of appropriate sewage and water services;</i> <i>d) agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and normal farm practices, in accordance with provincial standards;</i> <i>e) home occupations and home industries;</i> <i>f) cemeteries; and</i> <i>g) other rural land uses.</i> 	The subject property will continue to operate as an agricultural use for the harvesting of sod and no new development is being proposed.
3	<i>Development shall be appropriate to the infrastructure which is planned or available and avoid the need for the uneconomic expansion of this infrastructure.</i>	There is no new development proposed, as such no infrastructure expansion will be required.
4	<i>Planning authorities should support a diversified rural economy by protecting agricultural and other resource-related uses</i>	The property will not undergo any new development and will continue to be used as

	<i>and directing non-related development to areas where it will minimize constraints on these uses.</i>	a sod farm. All existing rural uses will be maintained and protected.
4.1	Natural Heritage	
4.1.1	<i>Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.</i>	All natural areas as identified in the policy documents are not within the area where the office use is located and no further development is being proposed.
4.1.2	<i>The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features, and groundwater features.</i>	The natural heritage system is protected and maintained as no new development is being proposed.
4.1.5	<i>Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in: a) significant wetlands in the Canadian Shield north of Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E1; b) significant woodlands in Ecoregions 6E and 7E (excluding islands in Lake Huron and the St. Marys River)1;</i>	This application does not intend for site alteration and the request for the office use location is not within a significant wetland or woodland.
4.1.8	<i>Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas identified in policies 4.1.4, 4.1.5, and 4.1.6 unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.</i>	No development or site alteration is proposed on the subject property. The requested office use location is not within a natural heritage feature and/or area.
4.2	Water	
4.2.2	<i>Development and site alteration shall be restricted in or near sensitive surface water features and sensitive groundwater features such that these features and their related hydrologic functions will be protected, improved, or restored, which may require</i>	No development or site alteration is proposed on the subject property. The requested office use location is not within a sensitive surface water features and sensitive groundwater features.

	<i>mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches.</i>	
4.3	Agriculture	
4.3.1.2	<i>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.</i>	All agricultural uses on site will be protected as the agricultural operation will continue.
4.3.2.1	<i>In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities are: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses based on provincial guidance. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be based on provincial guidance or municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents, which achieve the same objectives.</i>	The subject property is within a prime agricultural area. All agricultural uses on the subject property will remain.
4.3.2.2	<i>In prime agricultural areas, all types, sizes, and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.</i>	All agricultural uses on subject property will remain and no further development is being proposed.
4.3.5.1	<i>Planning authorities may only permit non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas for: a) extraction of minerals, petroleum resources, and mineral aggregate resources; or b) limited non-residential uses, provided that all of the following are demonstrated: 1. the land does not comprise a specialty crop area; 2. the proposed use complies with the minimum distance separation formulae; 3. there is an identified need within the planning horizon identified in the official plan as provided for in policy 2.1.3 for additional land to accommodate the proposed use; and 4. alternative locations have been evaluated, and i. there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas; and ii. there are no reasonable alternative locations in prime</i>	The subject property will continue to harvest sod as an agricultural use and no new development is being proposed. The zoning amendment seeks to recognize an as constructed building for office use.



	<i>agricultural areas with lower priority agricultural lands.</i>	
--	---	--

Appendix B - Greenbelt Plan 2017

The proposed development is supported by the policies listed below.

Policy	Response
3.1.3	Prime Agricultural Area Policies
1.	<p><i>All types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected and a full range of agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are permitted based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Area. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agriculture operations.</i></p> <p>The intent of the zoning by-law amendment is to permit an office use that directly relates to and supports the agricultural operation occurring on the subject property. The added use will not hinder surrounding agriculture operations.</p>
3.2.5	Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features Policies
	<p><i>Key hydrologic features include: - permanent and intermittent streams</i></p> <p>As identified by the LSRCA there is a stream that is found along the north portion of the subject property.</p>
2	<p><i>Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside, key hydrologic features are defined by and subject to the policies of section 3.2.5.</i></p> <p>The subject property is found outside of the Greenbelt's Natural Heritage System.</p>
7	<p><i>Notwithstanding section 3.2.5.5, new buildings and structures for agricultural, agriculture-related or on-farm diversified uses are not required to undertake a natural heritage or hydrologic feature. In addition, these uses are exempt from the requirement of establishing a condition of natural self-sustaining vegetation if the land is and will continue to be used for agricultural purposes. However, agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses shall pursue best management practices to protect and/or restore key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features and functions.</i></p> <p>The application seeks to add an office use that will be related to the ongoing agricultural operation on the subject property. The stream as identified by the LSRCA is located along the north portion of the subject property that is well away from the location for the office use.</p>

Appendix C - Lake Simcoe Protection Plan 2009

The proposed development is supported by the policies listed below.

Policies		Response
<i>Policies Applying to Both Lake Simcoe and Streams</i>		
6.8-DP	<i>No structures, including boathouses, shall be permitted in Lake Simcoe, other lakes or in a permanent or intermittent stream if the structure impedes the natural flow of water along the shoreline or in the stream, if the structure is intended to be used as a dwelling, or if the structure or its construction harmfully alters fish habitat. This policy does not prohibit drainage works such as those permitted under the Drainage Act, those required for infrastructure or those structures required for the purposes of stewardship, conservation, restoration or remediation undertakings.</i>	No development or site alteration are proposed within the identified stream along the north portion of the subject property.
<i>Key Natural Heritage and Key Hydrologic Features</i>		
6.20-DP	<i>Policies 6.20 - 6.29 apply to those areas outside of existing settlement areas and outside of the Greenbelt Area and Oak Ridges Moraine.</i>	The subject property is located within the Greenbelt Area and as such these policies do not apply.

Appendix D - York Region Official Plan

The proposed development is supported by the policies listed below.

Policy		Response
3.1	<i>Planning for Natural Systems</i>	
3.1.1	<i>To protect, restore and enhance the Regional Greenlands System and water resource system, features and functions shown on Maps 1C, 2, 4, 7, 12A and 12B and to control new development and site alteration within the vicinity of the System in accordance with the policies of the Plan.</i>	The proposed amendment to the Town's zoning bylaw does not intend to alter or develop on the Regional Greenlands System. The amendment includes a site-specific exception that adds office uses as a permitted use, allowing the existing sod agricultural operation to continue. The Regional Greenlands System continues to be protected as no site alteration is proposed.
3.2	<i>Regional Greenland Systems</i>	
3.2.1	<i>That the Regional Greenlands System (as shown on Map 2) consists of cores, corridors, and linkages. These include the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan's Natural Core Area and Natural Linkage Area designations, the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Plan, the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan, approved local natural heritage systems, key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and functions, and the lands necessary to maintain these features within a system.</i>	The Regional Greenlands System land use is found within the north portion of the subject property which would protect the stream in this location. This application does not intend to disrupt this stream as the proposed office use is located well away from it.
3.2.3	<i>That development and site alteration be prohibited within the Regional Greenlands System</i>	No development is proposed within the Regional Greenlands System.
3.2.4	<i>That development and site alteration applications within 120 metres of the Regional Greenlands System shall be accompanied by an environmental impact study. The requirement for, content and scope of the environmental impact study will be determined through the pre-consultation meeting. The environmental impact study shall also address any requirements of the local municipality and all applicable Provincial plans.</i>	The proposed additional use would appear to be outside of the 120 metres.
3.3	<i>Water Resource System</i>	

3.3.1	To protect, restore and enhance the water resource system as shown on Maps 4, 7 and 12A and 12B.	The application for the added site specific use of an office is outside of the hydrologic feature and woodland as identified in Maps 4 and 5 of the Regional Official Plan.
3.4	Natural Features	
3.4.5	<i>To prohibit development and site alteration within key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, vegetation protection zones and adjacent lands, unless: C. For agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses, subject to the applicable Provincial plan.</i>	The application is for the addition of an office use that is outside of the key hydrologic feature and is related to the agricultural operation on the subject property.
3.4.19	<i>That notwithstanding policy 3.4.5 of the Plan, development and site alteration is prohibited within Provincially Significant and Provincial Plan Area wetlands as shown on Map 4 of the Plan. Due to the scale of the mapping in the Plan, smaller wetlands may not be visible. More detailed mapping is available from York Region.</i>	The application is not for a development or site alteration within the area identified as a 'Provincially Significant and Provincial Plan Area Wetlands' of Map 4.
3.4.27	<i>That notwithstanding policy 3.4.5.a of the Plan, development and site alteration is prohibited within significant woodlands and their associated vegetation protection zone except as provided for elsewhere within the Plan.</i>	The identified woodland on Map5 of the Region has not been categorized as significant and in addition the proposed added use is outside of the woodland.
5.1	The Agricultural System	
5.1.2	<i>That the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the agri-food network shall be maintained and enhanced.</i>	The agricultural uses on site are to be maintained and protected. The added use is to support the agricultural operation on the subject property.
5.1.3	<i>That lands deemed to constitute prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas within the Greenbelt Plan in York Region are designated as Agricultural Area and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area respectively on Map 1A.</i>	The agricultural uses on site are to be maintained and protected. The added use is to support the agricultural operation on the subject property.
5.1.4	<i>That within the Agricultural Area, Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area and Rural Area, normal farm practices and a full range of</i>	The agricultural uses on site are to be maintained and protected. The added use is to support the agricultural operation on the subject property.



	<i>agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are supported and permitted.</i>	
--	--	--

Appendix E - Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan 2018

The proposed development is supported by the policies listed below.

Policies	Response
4.11 Greenbelt Plan Area (Protected Countryside)	
<p><i>All proposals for development within the lands identified as Greenbelt Protected Countryside on Schedule C shall meet the requirements of this Plan and the Provincial Greenbelt Plan. Where there is a discrepancy between this Plan and the Greenbelt Plan policies, the most restrictive policies shall prevail.</i></p>	<p>In our opinion the request to add a site specific office use to the subject property conforms to the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan.</p>
<p><i>Where agricultural uses are permitted by this Plan, the following policies shall apply:</i></p> <p>4.11.1.3 <i>iii) Nothing in this Plan shall limit the ability of the landowners to carry out normal and reasonable farm practices in accordance with the Farming and Food Production Act.</i></p>	<p>The principal use of the subject property is an agricultural operation for the production of sod and is considered a normal and reasonable farm practice in accordance with the Farming and Food Production Protection Act. The requested site specific office use is to support this agricultural operation.</p>
<p><i>Secondary uses on farm properties are permitted within the Greenbelt Protected Countryside subject to Site Plan Control. Prior to approving such an application, Council shall be satisfied that:</i></p> <p>4.11.1.5 <i>i) The use is clearly associated with and located on a farm;</i></p> <p><i>ii) The retail component has a gross floor area (as defined in the Zoning By-law) of no more than 500 square metres;</i></p> <p><i>iii) The majority of the products offered for sale, in terms of monetary value, are produced or manufactured on the farm property.</i></p>	<p>The proposed office use is supportive of the agricultural operation that takes place on the subject property. There is no retail component to this application.</p>
<p><i>The principal uses of land in Prime Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area designation shall be:</i></p> <p>4.11.2.1 <i>(i) Normal farm practices;</i></p> <p><i>(ii) Agricultural uses;</i></p> <p><i>(iii) Agricultural related and secondary uses;</i></p> <p><i>(iv) A single detached dwelling unit on an existing lot of record.</i></p>	<p>The principal use of the subject property is for agricultural uses and the request for an office is to support the agricultural operation occurring directly on the subject property.</p>

Appendix F - Town of East Gwillimbury Official Plan (Adopted 2022)

The proposed development is supported by the policies listed below.

Policies		Response
4.4.2	General Policies for the Natural Heritage System	
4.4.2.1	<p><i>a) Development and site alteration within the Natural Heritage System, as it is defined by this Plan, shall be governed by the policies of this Plan. However, the policy frameworks associated with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, and the York Region Official Plan are also applicable:</i></p> <p><i>ii. Within the Greenbelt Protected Countryside, the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan shall apply. Key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features as protected by the Greenbelt Plan have been incorporated into the Town's Natural Heritage System. Where additional features are designated by the Greenbelt Plan, the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and the relevant policies of this Plan shall apply(.)</i></p>	<p>The proposed zoning by-law application does not propose any new development and only proposes to add office spaces as a permitted use on the site. The office use is located outside of any natural heritage system.</p>
4.4.3	The Environmental Protection Designation	
4.4.3.1	<p><i>a) It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that lands within the Environmental Protection Designation are protected from the impacts of development and that the biodiversity and ecological function of the features incorporated within the Designation are protected, maintained, restored or, where possible, enhanced for the long-term.</i></p>	<p>The proposed office use is outside of the Environmental Protection Designation of the Town's Official and no changes are proposed that would impact this designation.</p>
4.4.3.4	<p><i>c) No buildings or structures, nor the cutting of trees, or the removal or placing of fill of any kind, whether originating on the site or elsewhere, shall be permitted within the Environmental Protection Designation and the vegetation protection zone. Limited site alteration may be permitted to prevent harm to life or property subject to the recommendations of a Natural Heritage Evaluation approved by the Town. This Plan recognizes and enforces the minimum buffer and vegetation protection zones as established under all relevant Provincial and Regional policy</i></p>	<p>No new development or site alteration is proposed on the subject property or within the Environmental Protection Designation. No negative impacts will be made to the environmental protection zone and all existing agricultural uses will be maintained.</p>

	<p><i>d) Development and site alteration shall not be permitted within fish habitat except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.</i></p> <p><i>e) Lands within the Environmental Protection Designation shall generally not form part of any new lots to be created for the purposes of development, other than to facilitate the establishment of the uses permitted by this Plan.</i></p> <p><i>f) The establishment of any permitted use shall demonstrate no negative impact to any natural heritage features or their associated ecological functions, as demonstrated through the required Natural Heritage Evaluation. Where a permitted use requires impact mitigation, the mitigation shall result in no negative impact on the natural heritage features or their associated ecological functions.</i></p>	
4.4.4	The Adjacent Lands Overlay	
4.4.4.1	<p><i>a) The intent of the Adjacent Lands Overlay is to trigger the requirement for the preparation of a Natural Heritage Evaluation to support applications for development.</i></p> <p><i>b) Lands within 120 metres from the Environmental Protection Designation are shown on Schedule 4 as the Adjacent Lands Overlay. Adjacent Lands may have ecological functions or linkages that are important to the long-term health of the features and functions of the Natural Heritage System.</i></p>	The zoning amendment application seeks to add an office use to the subject property to support the existing agricultural use.
4.5	The Rural/Agricultural Area	
4.5.1	<p><i>Development within the Rural/Agricultural Area of the Town shall be governed by the policies of this Plan. However, the policy frameworks associated with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and the York Region Official Plan are also applicable:</i></p> <p><i>ii. Within the Greenbelt Protected Countryside the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan shall</i></p>	The subject property conforms to the policies of the Greenbelt Plan.

	<i>apply. More specifically, the policies for the Greenbelt Settlement Area (Mount Albert), the Greenbelt Hamlet, the Prime Agricultural Area, the Rural Area, the Aggregate Extraction Area, the Recreation Area and the Closed Waste Disposal Sites policies shall specifically apply. In addition, the policies of the Greenbelt Plan related to the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area, the Holland Marsh Wetland Complex, the Environmental Protection Area, the Estate Residential Area, and the Rural Industrial Area also apply, and are included in other Sections of this Plan.</i>	
4.5.3	<i>Prime Agricultural Area Designation</i>	
4.5.3.1	<i>a) The Prime Agricultural Area Designation identified on Schedule 5 provides a continuous and permanent land base necessary to support long term agricultural production and economic activity. The Town recognizes the Prime Agricultural Designation as important natural resources that help support the economic vitality of agriculture and the agri-food network. It is the intent of the Town to:</i> <i>i. Support agriculture as the predominant land use in the Prime Agricultural Area and protect against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base;</i>	The subject site will continue and maintain the existing agricultural use.
4.5.3.2	<i>a) The principal uses of land in the Prime Agricultural Area Designation shall be agricultural uses. Secondary permitted uses may include:</i> <i>i. Bed and breakfast establishments;</i> <i>ii. Home-based businesses;</i> <i>lii. On-farm diversified uses;</i> <i>iv. Agricultural-related uses;</i> <i>v. Agricultural research and training establishments;</i> <i>vi. A single detached dwelling unit on an existing lot of record; and,</i> <i>vii. Additional Residential Units.</i>	The subject property is currently used to harvest sod, which will continue to be maintained under this zoning by-law amendment application.
4.5.3.3	<i>a) All development shall be designed, located, and managed to be complementary to the primary permitted uses in the Prime Agricultural</i>	The proposed zoning by-law application conforms to the policies of the Greenbelt Plan. The agricultural use of harvesting sod will

	<i>72 Area Designation. The Town shall encourage compatible development, redevelopment and rehabilitation throughout the Prime Agricultural Area Designation by supporting development applications that conform to the relevant policies of the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Plan, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, the policies of this Plan, and the regulations of the Zoning By-law.</i>	continue to take place on the subject property.
4.5.3.3	<i>b) Where applicable, all new development within the Prime Agricultural Area Designation shall comply with the Province's Minimum Distance Separation requirements. Further, where permitted uses of a non-agricultural nature are sought through a Zoning By-law and/ or Site Plan Approval, the Town shall require the preparation of an Agricultural Impact Assessment as part of a complete application.</i>	This application proposes to add office use as a permitted use. No new development or site alteration is proposed.
4.5.3.3	<i>g) Agricultural related and supportive uses, including farm employee accommodations may be permitted on existing non-farm lots of record within the Prime Agricultural Area Designation.</i>	The office use is to support the operation of the sod company to be conducted within the existing building.