



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	June 23, 2022
Subject / Report No:	County Official Plan Amendment 42-03-540-OPA-14 / Addendum to Report PDR-CW-16-22
Title:	Hutten Landscaping Co. Official Plan Amendment Final Report
Prepared by:	Becky Hillyer
Reviewed by:	Scott Taylor
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	Township of Georgian Bluffs
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That all written and oral submissions on Official Plan Amendment Number 14 were considered and helped to make an informed recommendation and decision; and
2. That Addendum to Report PDR-CW-16-22 be received, and that Amendment Number 14 to the County of Grey Official Plan to permit the redesignation of 6.83 ha of 'Rural' lands to 'Space Extensive Commercial and Industrial – Site Specific' for the purpose of establishing a landscaping business on lands legally described as Part Lot 16, Concession 5, Registered Plan 16R10169 Part 3 (geographic Township of Derby), now the Township of Georgian Bluffs, be supported, and a by-law to adopt the County Official Plan Amendment be prepared for consideration by County Council.

Executive Summary

A proposed County official plan amendment application (42-03-540-OPA-14) has been processed to re-designate a portion of the subject lands to allow for the establishment of a landscaping business. The subject property is approximately 20.2 hectares (50 acres) in size and designated 'Rural' and 'Wetlands' in the County Official Plan. The purpose and effect of the proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA) would be to re-designate approximately 6.83 hectares of the 'Rural' portion of the subject lands to the 'Space Extensive Industrial and Commercial (site specific)' designation. No development would occur within the Provincially Significant Wetlands. Several studies have been undertaken in support of the application, including a Planning Report, Karst Study, Stormwater Management Report and Environmental Impact Study; as well as Letters of Opinions regarding mapped Bedrock resources and Servicing considerations. Two concurrent applications, including Zoning By-Law Amendment (ZBLA) Z-04-22 and Site Plan

Application (SPA) SP-02-22 have been submitted to the Township of Georgian Bluffs and are being processed by the Township. The following report presents an overview of the application from a planning policy perspective, and recommends support for the proposed County Official Plan Amendment 14.

Background and Discussion

The County has received and processed an application from 2765746 Ontario Inc. (Hutten & Co. Land and Shore), represented by Kristine Loft, Loft Planning Inc., to amend the Grey County Official Plan as it applies to the subject lands. The amendment would re-designate approximately 6 hectares of the subject property from the 'Rural' designation to the 'Space Extensive Industrial and Commercial - Site Specific' designation. The subject lands are approximately 20.2 hectares in extent, with approximately 14 ha designated 'Wetlands.'

The proposed development includes two buildings (to be used for retail, office space, a vehicle maintenance shop, storage space and washroom facilities); 89 parking spaces; outdoor storage for landscaping supplies; two plant housing structures; and a stormwater management pond. Landscaping is proposed throughout the redesignated portion, and one access point is proposed at the northeast corner of the subject lands, from Grey Road 18.

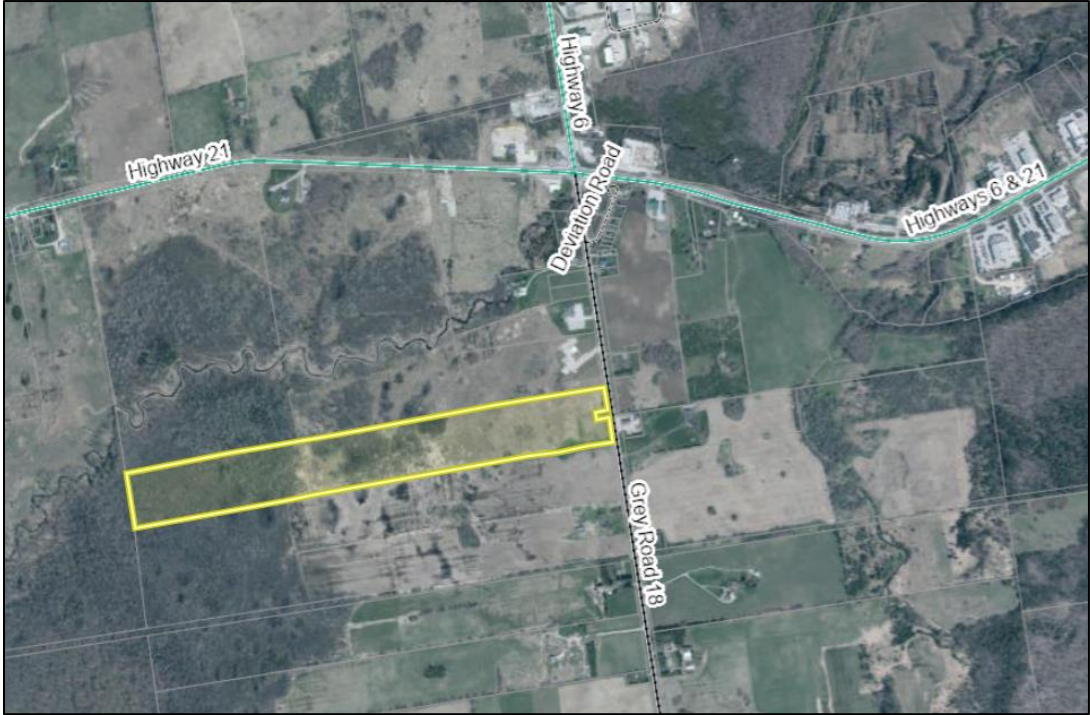
The subject property is legally described as Part Lot 16, Concession 5, Registered Plan 16R10169 Part 3 (geographic Township of Derby), now in the Township of Georgian Bluffs. The lands are located along the west side of Grey Road 18, approximately 250 meters south of the Secondary Settlement Area of Springmount. Surrounding land uses include the Coca-Cola facility and Georgian Bluffs municipal office to the north, a contractor's yard to the east, as well as a mix of smaller residential lots, larger agricultural properties, and natural wetland areas. The subject property is currently vacant. This area of the Township is serviced via individual private services. Aerial images would suggest that no farming, development nor substantial changes to the landscape have occurred on the subject lands since at least 2006.

Map 1 below shows an aerial photo of the subject lands, while Map 2 shows the existing County Official Plan designation of the lands. All of the lands currently designated 'Rural' (shown in white) would be redesignated to 'Space Extensive Commercial and Industrial – site specific.' Wetlands are shown in blue, Hazard Lands in green, the Niagara Escarpment Plan area in grey, Secondary Settlement Area in orange, and the Sunset Strip area in yellow.

The proposal also requires an amendment to the Township of Georgian Bluffs zoning by-law, in addition to a formal Site Plan Approval Application, both of which have been submitted by the applicant concurrently with the subject County Official Plan Amendment. At the time of writing this report, Grey County Planning Staff have received communication from Township planning staff to indicate that the Zoning and Site Plan applications have been tentatively recommended for approval but would only be brought to Township Council for a decision once a decision has been made on the County Official Plan Amendment application by County Council.

A number of reports and studies have been submitted to support the application, including a Planning Justification Report, architectural concept sketches, a Karst Assessment, Environmental Impact Study, Stormwater Management Report, and Letters of Opinion regarding proposed servicing requirements and mapped bedrock resources - [Link to Background Materials](#)

A joint public meeting was held with the Township of Georgian Bluffs on May 4th, 2022. A link to the public meeting minutes can be found [here](#).



Map 1: Aerial Photo of the Subject Lands



Map 2: Current Official Plan Land Use Designations

Public and Agency Comments Received

Public Comments

In accordance with Planning Act, the notice of complete application and public meeting was mailed to all neighbours within a 120-metre radius of the site, notice was circulated to the required agencies and bodies; a sign outlining the development was posted on the property; a public meeting was held on May 4, 2022 in Georgian Bluffs; and all information pertaining to the County OPA and concurrent ZBA and SPA was made available on the County and Township's respective websites.

At the time of writing this report, neither written nor oral comments had been received from any member of the public. During the public meeting on May 4, 2022, there were no members of the public in attendance.

Agency Comments

Comments were received from the following agencies.

Historic Saugeen Metis (HSM)

In comments dated April 4, 2022 the HSM Lands, Resources and Consultation Department noted they have no objection or opposition to the proposed County OPA or concurrent Zoning and Site Plan application.

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA)

Comments dated June 10, 2022 were received by GSCA staff regarding the County OPA, ZBA and Site Plan Application. Comments indicated that the proposed stormwater management pond would appear to be located within the GSCA regulatory area, and therefore a permit would be required from their office prior to any construction of that feature. Staff also sent refined Environmental Protection zone mapping and indicated that the 15 meter setback noted in the by-law may be reduced to 0 meters. Staff also indicated that the 15 meter setback proposed within the Environmental Impact Study and through the Site Plan design should be sufficient to minimize negative impacts on the Black Ash Swamp Provincially Significant Wetland on the property. Generally, GSCA staff indicated no significant concerns with the subject applications and recommended that the EP zone be revised, and that the site plan agreement include the recommendations from the Karst Assessment and the EIS.

County staff comment: Staff are in agreement with the recommendations suggested by GSCA comments and would work with Township staff to ensure that recommendations of the Karst Assessment and EIS are accounted for at the site plan stage.

Grey County Transportation Services

Grey County Transportation Services staff have reviewed the subject application and noted that a commercial entrance permit and relevant sign permit would be required for the development. Road widening for this section of Grey Road 18 was previously attained and will not be required. Transportation comments further noted that County centreline setback policies appear to be achieved, based on the submitted site plan.

County Planning staff have clarified with Township staff that site plan control is being applied through this application. A commercial entrance permit will be required, which will need to go through Transportations Services' permitting process at the site plan stage.

Township of Georgian Bluffs

The County has had close communication with the Township throughout the processing and review of this application. At the time of writing this report, County and Township planning staff were in general agreement that all questions and concerns that arose throughout the review of the application had been adequately addressed by the applicant. Staff understand that the Township will await County Council's decision on the OPA prior to bringing a report to Township Council for approval in respect to the Zoning and Site Plan applications, to ensure compliance with County OP policies.

Township Building staff provided comments specifically addressing the Letter of Opinion regarding servicing developed for the proposal and noted that they are generally in agreement regarding the findings of the study (namely the capacity considerations for the proposed sewage system) and had no further concerns.

The Township also circulated the application to the local Risk Management Official, given that the subject lands are located within a Wellhead Protection Area 'E'. Comments were received to indicate that the property has a vulnerability score of 7.2 and significant drinking water threat policies do not apply. Therefore, no further comments were required.

Enbridge Gas Inc.

Comments dated March 29th were received from Enbridge Gas Inc., noting that there are service lines running in the area of the Site, which may or may not be impacted by the proposed development. Advice was provided to contact Enbridge at least one month in advance of any work to ensure the location of the lines are known and potentially to turn-off or redirect the lines if required.

County staff have recommended to Township staff that this direction be added as a condition at a Site Plan stage.

City of Owen Sound

Comments dated May 6, 2022 were received from the City of Owen Sound Planning Staff, which were later approved by City Council on May 9, 2022. The City's comments reference Section 1 of the Provincial Policy Statement (particularly Policy 1.1.1 and 1.1.5) and request that County Planning staff indicate how the proposal supports healthy, livable, and safe communities; and how the use fits in with rural land uses and is compatible with the rural landscape. The comments also outline Section 5.7.2 of the County's OP, which provide policy direction for the Space Extensive Commercial and Industrial use and request that County staff provide justification regarding how the proposal will address all relevant policy requirements of this section. Namely, City staff question whether the proposed development should be directed to a serviced settlement area; and question the implications for potential expansion of the Secondary Settlement Area of Springmount or the Sunset strip in future.

County Staff Comment: The PPS and OP policies have been considered in relation to this application and are addressed in more detail in the Planning Analysis sections below. Relevant justification has also been provided in the Planning Justification Report submitted by Kristine Loft. Regarding the location of the proposed use, due to the requirement for larger-scale outdoor storage, in combination with the need for easy highway access, minimum demand for services (water, sewage, etc.), and appropriate lands to grow nursery plants, staff are of the general opinion that the proposed use is appropriate for rural lands, as described in the PPS. As indicated in the Letter of Opinion provided by GM BluePlan, the anticipated servicing for the property will be quite minimal compared to many large-scale industrial or commercial uses (predominantly just a septic system to accommodate washrooms for employees and customers) and therefore the use of private servicing is considered appropriate, by the consultants, for the proposed landscaping business. In addition, Kristine Loft has provided comments to suggest that the use of serviced industrial lands for largely outdoor-storage purposes could potentially be an inefficient use of such lands, and there may be merit in conserving larger serviced lots for more intensive industrial uses that require setbacks from more sensitive uses and have more extensive servicing demands. Finally, the 'site specific' designation that is proposed on the property would limit some of the more intensive uses that might otherwise be permitted in the Space Extensive Industrial and Commercial designation, as discussed in sections below.

Regarding the City's comments around implications for the potential expansion of surrounding settlement areas, Staff would acknowledge that there is some merit in this comment. At the same time, the building coverage of the site is relatively minimal, and the proposed use is not out of scale nor character with the surrounding land uses (which include a contractor's yard, the Coca-Cola facility, the Georgian Bluffs Township offices, and a mix of agricultural and residential uses). The extent of the built

area would be approximately 954 m², which is only slightly larger than the 800 m² gross floor area allowance that might otherwise be permitted for an on-farm diversified use associated with a farming property of this size. The total area of the use is however larger than normally considered by an on-farm diversified use. The 'site-specific' nature of the proposed land-use re-designation (included in the OPA appended below) recommends restrictions on a number of the other industrial or commercial uses on the subject lands. The continued protection of the Provincially Significant Wetlands will also limit further intensification of the lands, which should assist in limiting any impact on expanding settlement areas in future.

Analysis of Planning Issues

In rendering decisions, planning authorities must have regard to matters of Provincial interest under the *Planning Act* and be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). The decisions must also conform to the County of Grey Official Plan. The subject lands are outside of the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. Following the legislative and policy analysis review, staff have also included some general planning discussion pertinent to this development. Key Provincial and County policies have been flagged below for consideration.

Provincial Legislation – The Planning Act

Most notable to this proposed official plan amendment are the following matters of provincial interest (in italics) from the *Planning Act*, which will need to be considered, along with a staff comment below each one.

(a) The protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;

The subject lands contain a number of natural heritage features and ecological systems that require comprehensive study and protective mechanisms to ensure that any development on the subject lands will not negatively impact these features. As will be discussed in more detail below, the lands include a large area of Provincially Significant Wetland, a 'Core' area, Significant Woodlands, and mapped Karst features. To address these features, an Environmental Impact Study, Stormwater Management Report and a Karst Study have been undertaken in support of the application. The development on-site will remain outside of these sensitive environmental features.

(b) the protection of agricultural resources of the Province,

The subject lands are approximately 20.2 hectares (50 acres) in size, which is considered the minimum size to be considered 'farm-sized' for a Rural property. In this case, approximately two-thirds of the subject lands are covered in Provincially Significant Wetlands, which leaves approximately 6 ha as 'Rural' lands. Staff would note that 'Rural' lands differ from identified prime-agricultural lands which are generally designated as 'Agricultural' in the County's Official Plan and are characterized by soil types and conditions that are more conducive to cultivation opportunities. Given the relatively small size of the existing 'Rural' area, staff would suggest that it is unlikely that this property would be utilized for purely farming purposes, as it would simply not be viable. Aerial images dating back to 2006 confirm that the property has remained vacant and unfarmed for at least 15 years. Should the proposed landscaping business not locate on the subject lands, the most likely use of the property would be for rural-residential purposes. As a portion of the submitted site plan does include an area for growing nursery

stock and plant housing structures, the proposed use does include some agricultural elements that are also in-keeping with uses appropriate for more rural areas.

Staff would further note that the current Hutten business is on prime agricultural lands and it is now being relocated to rural lands through these development applications.

Staff are satisfied that the proposed use of the subject lands does not infringe on prime agricultural resources within the province, and is an appropriate rural use.

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

The subject lands are not serviced by municipal water or sewer services. A private well and septic system have been proposed for the development. The Letter of Opinion prepared regarding servicing suggests that digging a viable well should be achievable on the property (given their review of surrounding well-water records) and that sewage requirements would be achievable through the use of an on-site private septic system.

As noted above, Transportation Services staff have reviewed the proposal and are satisfied that Grey Road 18 should provide an adequate transportation route for the landscaping business, provided a commercial entrance permit is attained by the proponent.

Staff are generally satisfied that the use of private services and existing transportation infrastructure will be sufficient to serve the needs of the development.

(h) The orderly development of safe and healthy communities

As noted above, the proposed use would be serviced by the existing road infrastructure, which is considered safe and in good condition for use by trucks and equipment entering and exiting the site. Given the nature of the business and the space requirements involved, it is not the type of development that is necessarily amenable to a more “compact” urban form. Nonetheless, safety of the overall development (both to humans and wildlife) has been a priority, as noted through the completion of a Karst assessment to ensure site stability and preservation of water supplies; the completion of an EIS to ensure no negative implications for surrounding ecological functions; circulation to the Risk Management Official to ensure there are no implications to local water supplies; a Stormwater Management Study to design a drainage system that will safely account for and divert stormwater; and a servicing study to ensure that the proposed private septic system and well will not negatively influence surrounding properties.

(k) the adequate provision of employment opportunities

Staff would note that the current proposal would provide a new location for an existing local business that currently provides an array of job opportunities to local residents. The business has outgrown their current location and is seeking to expand their operations to continue to support customers throughout the region. Staff recognize the economic contributions of local businesses to the overall growth and success of the region, and the importance of supporting opportunities for businesses to strengthen their hiring capacities. The location of this business just outside of Owen Sound and Springmount has the potential to offer job opportunities to residents living in both rural and urban

settings and hence staff are satisfied that it is complementary to the Planning Act principle to provide adequate employment opportunities.

(m) the co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies

As noted, the subject Official Plan Amendment has also triggered the need for Zoning and Site Plan applications at the Township level. In order to move all applications forward in a cohesive and collaborative manner, the County and Township undertook a joint public meeting and have been working closely together, and with the applicant, to address any arising questions or concerns with the proposal. Given the Provincially Significant Wetlands on the property, the County has also engaged with Grey Sauble Conservation Authority for their review and comments on the applications.

(p) the appropriate location of growth and development.

As noted, the proposed landscaping use requires access to County Road and/or Highway infrastructure that will support the operation and movement of larger trucks, a large space to accommodate outdoor storage of landscaping materials, and limited servicing to support the use. Development of the subject property will not take away viable agricultural lands, will not infringe on the sensitive wetland features on the site, and should not be significantly out of character with surrounding property uses. Therefore, staff consider the location to be an appropriate location for growth and development of the proposed landscaping business.

Staff are satisfied that the subject OPA application has regard for matters of Provincial interest under the *Planning Act*.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020

Section 1 of the PPS generally directs new growth and development to settlement areas, where full municipal services are provided. Section 1.6.6 of the PPS provides a servicing hierarchy, which includes private wells and septic systems. New development is permitted in rural areas, where it can be supported by rural service levels, and where it will not hinder farming or resource use. As highlighted in previous sections of this report, staff are generally satisfied that the proposed use would not cause undue pressure on rural services and will have minimal implications for the preservation of agricultural lands. The proposed location also takes advantage of existing County Road infrastructure and no upgrades would be required to adequately accommodate the proposed use.

Section 1.1.3.8 of the PPS requires that new uses comply with *Minimum Distance Separation (MDS)* formulae. MDS is meant to prevent odour conflicts between farm and non-farm uses. Policy #10 of the provincial MDS Guideline document states:

An MDS I setback is required for all proposed amendments to rezone or redesignate land to permit development in prime agricultural areas and rural lands presently zoned or designated for agricultural use.

As the subject lands are currently designated Rural (which permits agricultural uses) and zoned Rural in the Township of Georgian Bluffs Zoning By-Law, MDS should therefore be considered in redesignating the lands to the proposed non-agricultural use, being the Space Extensive Commercial and Industrial

designation. In this case, MDS I would apply, and the proposed use would be considered a 'Type A' use. In examining the existing topography of surrounding properties, County and Township staff identified two barns on properties south of the subject lands. When applied as a Type A use, MDS would appear to be achieved from the existing barns to the lot line of the subject property.

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the PPS respectively outline the need to protect Natural Heritage areas (including Provincially Significant Wetlands), as well as the province's water supply. The County's Official Plan closely mirrors the policies of the PPS in this regard and a further assessment of these policy areas will be outlined below.

Staff are satisfied that the subject OPA application is consistent with the PPS.

County of Grey Official Plan

The County's Official Plan, 'Recolour Grey,' contains similar subject matter to the PPS, and the matters of Provincial interest under the *Planning Act*.

Similar to the PPS, the County Plan contains policies to direct the majority of new development to settlement areas, but does permit some new development within the Countryside, where such uses can be supported by rural services and are compatible with surrounding natural heritage features and existing rural land uses. While the Rural land-use designation permits a *contractor's yard and nurseries* by-right, through pre-submission consultation discussions with the applicant, County staff suggested that the proposal may be beyond the scale of what would be considered within the standard Rural designation, and therefore suggested that an application to redesignate the lands to Space Extensive Industrial and Commercial (site specific) may be more appropriate in this instance.

Section 5.7 of the OP outlines the list of permitted uses and several policy criteria to be considered with any new use proposed under the Space Extensive Industrial and Commercial designation. The list of permitted uses included as-of-right in this designation include:

- a) *Fuel distribution*
- b) *Agricultural bulk sales establishment*
- c) *Warehousing*
- d) *Transport terminal*
- e) *Dry manufacturing plant, including assembly, repair and storage*
- f) *Equipment sales and rental*
- g) *Farm machinery sales and service*
- h) *Agricultural produce or livestock terminal*
- i) *Feed mill or grain elevator*
- j) *Sawmill*
- k) *Horticultural nurseries*
- l) *Automobile sales and services*
- m) *Recreational vehicle sales and services*

Staff would note that the above list does not include a "landscaping business," which the proponent has applied to have added to the above list, for the purposes of the subject property. Along with this site-specific designation to add a "landscaping business" to the list of permitted uses, Planning staff would

also suggest that there are a number of uses on this list which would not be appropriate for the property, given the variety of ecologically sensitive features on the site (wetlands, woodlands, karst, etc.) Therefore, staff would recommend that the above list be amended (as indicated within the Appended OPA) to limit the uses permitted on the site to:

- *Landscaping business and ancillary uses including open storage, accessory bulk sales and contractor's yard,*
- *Agricultural bulk sales establishment,*
- *Equipment sales and rental,*
- *Farm machinery sales and service,*
- *Agricultural produce or livestock terminal,*
- *Feed mill or grain elevator, and*
- *Horticultural nurseries.*

Per the above list, the automobile and RV sales, as well as fuel distribution, warehousing, and manufacturing uses have been removed, in order to limit the list of potential future uses to those that may directly benefit the surrounding rural and agricultural community, and which should have less impact on the ecological features of the site.

Section 5.7.2(2) of the OP goes on to note that:

New uses [in the Space Extensive designation] would be permitted subject to satisfying all of the following criteria:

- a) The use requires accessible sites to serve their market area;*
- b) The use serves demands from highway traffic;*
- c) The use requires a large parking or outdoor storage area or requires a large volume single purpose building;*
- d) The location of the proposed use in a general industrial block or general retail block in an urban centre is not feasible due to its storage area or building volume requirements;*

In relation to points (a) and (b) above, the Planning Justification Report submitted by Loft Planning Consultants indicates that the situating of the business on the proposed lands would be appropriate given the need for truck and trailer traffic entering and exiting the site; and would provide a location that is suitably located to their customer base and which avoids long-distance travel on the part of both employees and customers. Regarding points (c) and (d) the report notes that large outdoor areas are required for the storage of docks, mulch, stones and large equipment associated with the landscaping business, as well as large loading and parking areas to store trucks and permit ample parking for customers. In addition, a rural area outside of a settlement area is more appropriate due to these respective storage and parking requirements, as well as the potential noise from equipment associated with loading and unloading materials.

Section 5.7.3 (1) of the OP also limits the Space Extensive use in the special agricultural designation and in prime-agricultural areas; while 5.7.3(2) notes that the space extensive land use type will not be permitted in locations that may interfere with the potential future expansion of settlement areas. As

indicated, the subject lands are not considered a prime-agricultural area and staff would suggest that the proposal should have minimal impact on any surrounding farm properties. Regarding sub-section (2), given the proximity of the site to the Secondary Settlement Area of Springmount just 250 metres to the north, there is some question regarding how this proposal might impact the future extension of this settlement area, as raised by City of Owen Sound staff. As highlighted above, the coverage on the site overall will be quite minimal; the uses permitted on the site will be limited; the potential for expansion of the use beyond what is proposed is minimal given the required buffer from the wetlands; and the use is not significantly out of scale or character with the surrounding land uses, which include the Coca-Cola facility to the immediate north and a Contractor's yard to the east. In addition, through conversations with Township Planning staff, it was indicated that Township Council had previously decided against southward expansion of the Springmount settlement area due to potential implications for the the large Provincially Significant Wetland area to the south-west, and large areas of Niagara Escarpment lands to the south-east. Township staff also noted restrictions from Ministry of Transportation (MTO) regarding jurisdiction of Highway 21 through Springmount. Therefore, County staff are generally satisfied that the proposal should not unduly interfere with any future expansion of the settlement area in such a way that should warrant refusal of this application.

It is noted that a portion of the subject lands are part of a 'Core Area' per Schedule C of the County's Official Plan, while Appendix B shows Significant Woodlands towards the western portion of the property. As indicated, approximately two-thirds of the property is located within a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW). Given these natural heritage features, County and Township staff requested that an Environmental Impact Study be undertaken, which was prepared by SAAR Environmental Limited and submitted to support the application. The findings of the study indicate that the proposed development would be located on a previously disturbed area and, provided that a 30-metre setback be maintained from the PSW, should not negatively impact this feature. The report also outlined a number of recommendations to be implemented at a site plan stage, including the planting of a 'sacrifice crop' of trees to create an additional buffer to the PSW to support wildlife; amongst others.

As per Appendix A to the County Plan, the lands fall within a Wellhead Protection Zone 'E' and a Karst Area. Wellhead Protection Zones indicate areas where contaminants may enter the local water supply, based on particular topography and degree of risk. "Zone E" is considered the lowest risk, and staff would note that most of the proposed area for development is outside of this Zone. Generally, staff tend to be concerned when significant volumes of fuel or chemicals are proposed to be stored on-site. In this case, County staff requested specific information from the applicants regarding the storage of fuel and or chemicals on site, and were provided the following response by the applicant:

We would note the site plan does include 3-4 500 gallon tanks. All tanks will be regularly inspected by the fuel provider and have anti-leaking double walled tanks monitored by vacuum pressure, and will be protected by concrete bollards for protection from close-by vehicular movements.

County staff would recommend that the above comments be implemented at a Site Plan stage and that the applicant ensure all relevant permits are in place. In addition to the above, the application has been circulated to the local Risk Management Official. Comments were received to indicate that the property is within a WHPA-E zone and has a score of 7.2, indicating that

significant drinking water threat policies do not apply. As such, no further comments were offered on the application.

Regarding the noted Karst features on the site, staff requested that test holes be dug at the site of the proposed development and a report be submitted, per the County's OP policies within Section 7.5. Karst topography may be characterized by depressions, cracks or fissures in bedrock that may be indicative of sink holes, underground caverns, crevasses, etc. and which may influence the flow of surface and sub-surface groundwaters and/or the potential stability of new development. For the purposes of this development a Karst Topography Assessment was prepared by GM BluePlan consultants. For the study, a series of seven test holes were excavated to at least 2 metres below ground level. While none of the test holes revealed any karstic features, the consultants did note topographic features towards the northwest corner of the proposed development area, that could be indicative of hydraulically active karst (numerous small depressions, sinkholes). However, this area of the site is proposed for truck parking only, and would therefore not feature any structures (or septic system) that could influence water supplies and/or stability and safety of the site. The consultants recommended that the northwest corner be re-evaluated at the time of top-soil stripping for the proposed parking lot (via test holes) to confirm the presence or absence of karst features and, throughout the construction process, that bedrock surfaces continue to be inspected to confirm whether any exposed karstic features could have structural implications. Given the findings and recommendations of the consultants, Staff are of the opinion that any Karst on site can be safely addressed, provided that the recommendations of the report are considered at the Site Plan and construction stage.

Appendix E of the County's Official Plan shows the potential for Bedrock across the eastern portion of the lands, at the site of the proposed development. The County's Bedrock mapping is used to guide land-use decision making with the goal of preserving viable opportunities for the extraction of Bedrock resources, per Section 5.6.6 of the OP. For the purposes of this development, staff requested that the applicants provide a Letter of Opinion by a qualified professional, to demonstrate that the proposal would not hinder the extraction of bedrock resources on the subject property. The submitted Letter of Opinion, provided by GM BluePlan, concluded that given the small area of the lands outside of the wetland, in combination with the assumed high-water table and potential for hydraulically active karstic features on a portion of the site, extraction of the resource is unlikely to be viable on the property. The consultants also noted that the type of resource (dolostone bedrock) is considered to be fairly low-quality and is considerably poor for widespread applications. Therefore, the overall cost to extract the resource on a small parcel of land would not be viable. Given these findings, staff are satisfied that the proposed development should not limit viable Bedrock extraction operations on the subject property.

Sections 8.9.1 and 8.9.2 of the OP speak to the need for developments to provide adequate servicing and stormwater management facilities to adequately sustain the development into the future. To ensure that the proposal is able to address these policies, staff requested the completion of a Letter of Opinion regarding servicing, as well as a Storm Water Management Study. The servicing letter, prepared by GM BluePlan, looked at well-water records for the six existing wells within 300 metres of the site, noting that only one of the wells had a lower yield than what would be considered viable. The consultants concluded that sufficient water supply is expected to be achievable in the bedrock underlying the site, and staff would note that the overall usage of water on the site should be fairly minimal (predominantly for washing trucks,

flushing toilets). Regarding the proposed septic demands, the consultants outlined the required septic system capacity that would be required to meet the needs of the development, noting that sufficient space and setbacks would be achievable at the proposed site of development. Given this review, staff are generally satisfied that the demand for services resulting from the proposed use should be relatively minimal, and should be adequately accommodated by private services on-site.

The submitted Stormwater Management Report, also prepared by GM BluePlan, recommends the creation of a stormwater management pond along the southern property line, which could also be used as a water reservoir to assist with watering nursery plants. With the recommendations of the report considered, any run-off to the wetland area (which is proposed to increase for the 2-year storm event, but would decrease for the 5, 10, 25, 50 and 100-year storm events) is expected to be treated to an “enhanced level of treatment.” Provided that the recommendations of the report are acknowledged at the Site Plan stage, staff are satisfied that the findings of this study address core concerns associated with stormwater management.

Given the review of the above studies, Planning staff are satisfied that the application demonstrates conformity with the goals and objectives of the County Official Plan, provided that a number of conditions recommended through the various studies and reports are included at a Site Plan stage.

Township of Georgian Bluffs Official Plan

It should be noted that while the Township of Georgian Bluffs Official Plan provides policy guidance to direct development within Settlement Areas, the Township defers to the County’s Official Plan for development outside of settlement areas. Therefore, no amendment to the Georgian Bluffs Official Plan is required for this development.

General Planning Discussion

Beyond the immediate scope of the Official Plan Amendment, staff would note that there is a small parcel of land (approximately 634 m²) that was previously severed along the eastern boundary of the subject property, with frontage on Grey Road 18. This small property is owned by the Township of Georgian Bluffs and is currently vacant. Grey County staff have had verbal confirmation from the applicants that they are seeking to acquire this property to merge with the subject lands. Township staff have indicated that the property would need to be declared surplus and proceed through the required policy channels prior to any change of ownership – a process which may take longer than 6 months. At this time, this small property has not been considered as ‘usable’ lands within the project site plan; but adequate lot-line setbacks have been established (through the proposed zoning by-law application) to achieve minimum zoning requirements in terms of the Township’s zoning by-law.



Map 3: Township-owned Parcel outlined in Black

Planning staff would note that due to the small size of this property, the general lack of municipal services in the area, and the required County centreline setbacks that would be enforced for any new development, potential uses for this property would be very limited. At this time, the smaller property is not part of the application to re-designate to a Space Extensive use, and would remain 'Rural.' However, given the extent of the studies that have been completed around the immediate vicinity, staff might suggest that there could be merit in considering the re-designation of this property to the Space Extensive designation through a future OP housekeeping amendment, in the event that the applicants were to attain ownership of the parcel at a later date. Once again, given the County's centreline setback requirement and the small size of the property, the merging of the smaller parcel with the subject property would be unlikely to trigger any significant increase in scale or intensification of the proposed landscaping business use.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The application was processed in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no anticipated financial, staffing or legal considerations associated with the proposed official plan amendment, beyond those normally encountered in processing an amendment. The County has collected the requisite application fee and peer review deposit for this application. Should the County's decision be appealed, it may result in greater financial and legal considerations, as well as additional staff time.

Relevant Consultation

Internal: Planning Staff

External: The Public, Township of Georgian Bluffs, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, and required agencies under the *Planning Act*.

Appendices and Attachments

[Draft Official Plan Amendment # 14](#)

[Public Meeting Minutes](#)

[Merit Report PDR-CW-16-22](#)