

OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28

CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

BY-LAW NO. 26-034

BEING a By Law to Adopt Amendment No. 28 to the Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan.

WHEREAS public information sessions were held in 2024 and 2025 to introduce the project to the public and provide them with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments;

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills held a public meeting on November 18, 2025, respecting the recommendations of the study;

AND WHEREAS Committee of the Whole held a meeting on April 1, 2026, to consider Official Plan Amendment No. 28;

AND WHEREAS Committee of the Whole has recommended to Council to enact and pass Official Plan Amendment No. 28 at its April 1, 2026, meeting;

AND WHEREAS the Council has reviewed the information and material and has considered public comments as they relate to this amendment and has passed Resolution No CM-26-159 on May 26, 2026, endorsing Committee of the Whole's recommendation;

AND WHEREAS the Council has given serious consideration for the need to adopt an amendment to the Official Plan of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills to amend the Official Plan with the attached policies;

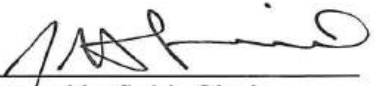
NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills, in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13, as amended, hereby ENACTS as follows:

1. That Amendment No. 28 to the Mississippi Mills Official Plan, a copy of which is attached to and forms part of this By-law, is hereby adopted.
2. That the Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to make application to the County of Lanark for the approval of Amendment No. 28 to the Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan.

BY-LAW read, passed, signed and sealed in open Council this May 26, 2026.


Christa Lowry, Mayor




Jeanne Harfield, Clerk

**OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT No. 28
TO THE COMMUNITY OFFICIAL PLAN OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS**

**Rural Villages and Rural Vitality
Municipality of Mississippi Mills**

May 20, 2026

**AMENDMENT NO. 28
TO THE COMMUNITY OFFICIAL PLAN
MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS**

The attached explanatory text constituting Amendment No. 28 to the Community Official Plan of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills was prepared for and recommended to the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

This Amendment to the Community Official Plan of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills was adopted by the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills in accordance with Sections 17 and 21 of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, by By-law No. 26-034 passed on the 26th day of May, 2026.


Christa Lowry, Mayor


Jeanne Harfield, Clerk

OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT No. 28
TO THE COMMUNITY OFFICIAL PLAN OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

PART A - THE PREAMBLE, contains an explanation of the purpose and basis for the amendment, as well as the lands affected, but does not constitute part of this amendment.

PART B - THE AMENDMENT, consisting of the following text and schedule constitutes Amendment No. 28 to the Municipality of Mississippi Mills' Community Official Plan (COP).

PART C – BACKGROUND REPORT FROM PUBLIC MEETING

PART A – THE PREAMBLE

BACKGROUND

After the amalgamation of Pakenham, Ramsay, and Almonte, a new Community Official Plan was created (approved in 2006) to reflect the uniqueness of the different areas, which included the agricultural areas, rural areas, and rural villages of each former Municipality.

Since 2006, there have been many changes in Mississippi Mills. Inter-provincial migration, changes within the agricultural sector, a global pandemic altering the real estate market, provincial planning changes, and a housing affordability and supply crisis have all had lasting impacts on the rural and agricultural areas of the Municipality.

With a changing rural and agricultural landscape, updated population projects from Lanark County, and a focus on the viability of rural areas and villages, there is a need to ensure that the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are up to date with current planning trends and reflect current best practices to support the rural villages and rural vitality of Mississippi Mills.

The Municipality initiated Official Plan Amendment 28, the Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project, in 2024.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Official Plan Amendment is to strengthen and update Official Plan policies to reflect the current and future needs of the Municipality's rural villages and areas. The effective management of growth and change is important to ensure the long-term social, economic, and environmental viability of the rural communities and villages in the Municipality, while continuing to protect and preserve the distinct rural character of these areas.

LOCATION

The subject Official Plan Amendment and corresponding Zoning By-law Amendment are Municipal-wide Amendments. All lands within the Municipality are subject to this amendment – both in settlement areas and outside of settlement areas.

BASIS

The Background Report included as Part 'C' forms the basis of this amendment.

PART B – THE AMENDMENT

All of this part of the document, entitled Part B – The Amendment, consists of the following text and schedule to Amendment No. 28, constitutes Amendment No. 28 to the Community Official Plan (COP) of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

DETAILS OF THE AMENDMENT

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan (COP) is hereby amended as follows:

Item 1: Section 2.5.1, Goals and Objectives, is modified by deleting the first paragraph in the section and replacing it with the following:

It is a goal of this Plan to:

Promote managed, coordinated and fiscally responsible growth, which represents an efficient use of land and is environmentally sustainable and to direct the majority of new growth to areas where municipal services are available and where capacity exists to support new development.

Item 2: Section 2.5.1, Goals and Objectives, is modified by deleting items 5 through 12 and replacing them with the following and renumber accordingly:

5. Require the majority of development to be on municipal sewer and water services or communal services.
6. Encourage infill and lot creation in the Villages with growth and development that supports the long-term viability of the Villages.
7. Encourage additional residential units in the rural and agricultural areas and within the Villages to provide greater housing options.
8. Limit new residential lots in rural areas and ensure their compatibility with surrounding agricultural land, rural land uses, and natural features, including natural hazards and resources with providing greater opportunity for rural diversified uses.
9. Establish an inventory of lands in settlement areas, including the Villages, which are available for development, as well as those that should be protected from development.
10. Require growth and development to pay its fair share of growth-related costs.
11. Encourage growth and development to use environmentally sustainable and energy efficient building practices that encourage use of responsible, local materials and services, such as LEED®.

12. Encourage the use of additional residential units, compatible intensification and redevelopment to assist with the provision of affordable housing.

Item 3: Section 2.5.3, Mississippi Mills Growth and Settlement Strategy, is modified by deleting the first paragraph in the section and replacing it with the following:

This Plan sets out a clear course for managing long term growth and development, maintaining agricultural resources and supporting the rural and small-town character of Mississippi Mills.

Item 4: Delete Section 2.5.3.2.2, Settlement Strategy, in its entirety and replace with the following:

The 70/30 Settlement Strategy of this Plan is based on a comprehensive review and will represent a fundamental shift in where growth will be accommodated. The comprehensive review has included the population projection information noted in Section 2.5.3.1. The Plan is designed to direct:

- 70% of long-term growth to Almonte on full municipal services; and
- 30% of long-term growth to rural areas and villages developed on private services.

Item 5: Section 2.5.3.2.3, General Policies, is modified by deleting item 4 in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

4. Due to the existence of municipal sewer and water services, Almonte can develop at a much higher density than the Villages. The Municipality should strive for an urban residential density of approximately 15 to 35 residential units per gross hectare of land for development proposed by Plan of Subdivision. Intensification within existing built-up areas shall develop in accordance with the policies of Section 3.7.7 Infilling.

Item 6: Section 2.5.3.2.3, General Policies, is modified by deleting item 11, modifying items 6 to 9 and item 12 and renumber accordingly:

6. The Villages play an important role in growth of the Municipality and shall accommodate growth through infilling and necessary boundary expansions to the Villages. The Villages do not currently have centralized or communal water supply and wastewater treatment systems. Over time, this Plan encourages the Villages to be serviced by centralized or communal services and until such time, the range of uses shall be limited to those which can be supported by private services. The size of new residential lots will generally range from 0.4 hectares to 1.0 hectares. New residential lots greater than 1.5 hectares are generally discouraged and shall only be permitted where existing site constraints, natural features or other existing constraints lend to greater lot size(s).
7. The introduction of municipal or communal water supply and wastewater treatment systems into existing or new Rural Settlement Areas and Villages

- shall require a feasibility study to determine the viability of new infrastructure along with a secondary plan implemented via an amendment to this Plan. The Secondary Plan will direct growth and development and include density ranges for new residential development.
8. This Plan clearly identifies the boundaries of Rural Settlement Areas and the Villages. The limits of these areas established by this Plan are intended to be fixed limits unless the boundaries of the Villages are expanded through an amendment to this Plan to accommodate growth. Proposals to expand the boundaries of these settlement areas shall only be considered in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended, which may include an amendment to this Plan or incorporated as part of a Community Official Plan update associated with a Five-Year Review.
 9. The creation of new residential lots outside of identified settlement areas shall take place by consent to sever (severance) including cluster lot development in accordance with the Rural Lot Creation policies of Section 5.
 10. The detailed servicing policies of the Plan are in Section 4.8.3 Sewage Disposal and Water Supply.

Item 7: Section 3.1.4.1.1, General Policies, is modified by deleting items 3 through 6 and replacing them with the following:

3. Development within 120 metres of provincially significant wetlands or 50 metres of locally significant wetlands may take place in accordance with the land use designation only when it has been demonstrated through an Environmental Impact Study that there shall be no negative impacts on the natural features or ecological functions of the wetland(s). Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of non-farm rural residential lot creation or a new rural diversified use, an Environmental Impact Study may not be required if it can be demonstrated that the building envelope for a new residential use or rural diversified use is outside of 120 metres of a provincially significant wetland(s) or 50 metres of a locally significant wetland(s). The Zoning By-law may include a setback from a provincially significant wetland. The Municipality may require an agreement to implement an appropriate building envelope.
4. Notwithstanding policy #3 above, development shall not be permitted within 30 metres of the highwater mark associated with a watercourse, unless an Environmental Impact Study demonstrates that a reduction to the 30 metre setback will not result in negative impacts to the watercourse. Decreases to the 30 metre setback shall only be considered for existing lots of record when it is demonstrated that there is no other practical alternative for development of the land.
5. Notwithstanding policies #3 and #4 above, the Zoning By-law may contain regulations which allow for minor expansions or alterations to existing buildings

or structures or the construction of accessory buildings or structures within the adjacent lands without an Environmental Impact Study. Development that proposes a reduced setback(s) shall address sedimentation control, grading and drainage and maintain an adequate natural vegetative buffer including tree retention between the development and the wetland or watercourse.

6. Development within 120 metres of watercourses and provincially significant wetlands, 50 metres of a locally significant wetland may be subject to Site Plan Control, in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and *Planning Act*.

Item 8: Section 3.1.4.4.1, General Policies, is modified by deleting items 3 and 6 and replacing them with the following:

3. Development within 120 metres of a significant woodland may take place in accordance with this Plan, only when it has been demonstrated through an Environmental Impact Study that there shall be no negative impacts on the natural features or ecological functions of the woodland. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the case of non-farm rural residential lot creation or a new rural diversified use an Environmental Impact Study may not be required if it can be demonstrated that the building envelope for a residential use or new rural diversified use falls outside of 120 metres of a significant woodland. The Municipality may require an agreement to implement an appropriate building envelope.
6. In rural areas, retaining existing natural vegetation along public roads shall be encouraged and should incorporate the retention of native and non-invasive vegetation when identifying routes for establishing new roads, identifying building envelopes, and servicing locations. Specific provisions relating to protection of vegetation may be incorporated into development agreements, as appropriate.

Item 9: Section 3.2, Agricultural Policies, is modified by deleting paragraphs 3 through 7 and replacing them with the following:

Recognizing the importance of the agricultural industry, agri-food network, on-farm diversified uses, and the threats faced by the urbanization of the rural lands, this Plan establishes a policy direction which shall ensure the protection of the agricultural land base within Mississippi Mills from conflicting land uses.

This Plan recognizes the significance of local farmers and the positive impact both large scale and small-scale agricultural operations have on the local economy. The Municipality shall work with local commodity groups, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the County of Lanark Agricultural Committee and other groups supportive of the agricultural industry to maintain a positive climate for farmers to invest in the local agricultural industry.

The "Agricultural" designation reflects the Province's prime agricultural areas identified

throughout an alternative agricultural land evaluation system (LEAR) approved by the Province following input from public consultation and the Agricultural Committee and endorsed by the Mississippi Mills Agricultural Advisory Committee.

The Plan recognizes that traditional rural uses of land, notably agricultural uses, forestry uses, rural recreational activities such as hunting, fishing and snowmobiling, and pit and quarry operations take place in the rural area and are allowed to continue to take place. Through the specific land use policies of this Plan, these traditional uses shall be permitted as integral parts of the rural character of the Municipality. Future residents should be aware that there are certain activities associated with these uses which may result in noise, odours, and traffic impacts.

The Plan attempts to separate incompatible rural land uses and protect the rural character of the Municipality; however, those who live in the rural areas must expect that traditional rural land uses will continue and that new rural land uses will be established.

Item 10: Section 3.2.1, Goal and Objectives, is modified by deleting items 2 through 5 and replacing them with the following and renumber accordingly:

2. Restrict development on agricultural lands to those uses which are compatible with or supportive of the agricultural industry, in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.
3. Prohibit farmer "retirement lot" severances within the Agricultural designation, in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.
4. Encourage the agricultural industry to carry out sustainable stewardship of the land in accordance with Environmental Farm Plans, Nutrient Management Plans, and Provincial Best Management Practices.
5. Encourage the development of Additional Residential Units in the Agricultural designation, in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.

Item 11: Section 3.2.2, Permitted Uses, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

Permitted uses in the Agricultural designation are agricultural uses, agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses, principal dwellings, additional residential units, and farm worker housing, as defined by the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended, and conservation and management of the natural environment. The permitted uses are subject to the provisions of the Zoning By-law.

Item 12: Section 3.2.3, General Policies, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

1. The establishment of new buildings and structures or the expansion or change of use of existing structures within the Agricultural designation shall be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae.

Item 13: Section 3.2.4, Land Stewardship, Sustainable Operations and Nutrient Management, is modified by deleting item 1 and replacing it with the following:

1. Agricultural operations are subject to nutrient management legislation regulated by the province for the management of materials containing nutrients in ways that shall achieve optimal crop yields and product quality, manage input costs and enhance the protection of soils and water resources. This legislation provides for a sustainable future for agricultural operations and rural development.

Item 14: Section 3.2.5, Residential Development, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.2.5 Agricultural System

The agricultural system is comprised of a group of interconnecting elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. The two key components of the agricultural system are the agricultural land base and the agri-food network.

1. An agricultural land base consists of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas and may also include rural lands that help to create a continuous productive land base, as follows:
 - a. The agricultural land base includes all lands designated Agriculture, as well as lands within the Rural designation that are actively used for agricultural production.
 - b. Non-agricultural uses should be located outside the agricultural land base. Where a non-agricultural use is proposed within the agricultural land base, impacts on the agricultural system shall be avoided and, where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated in accordance with this Plan.
2. An agri-food network includes agricultural operations, infrastructure, services, and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.
 - a. Where a non-agricultural use is proposed on or adjacent to a site that forms part of the agri-food network, impacts on the agricultural system shall be avoided and, where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated in accordance with this Plan.

Item 15: Section 3.2.6, Agricultural Commercial & Industrial Development, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.2.6 Residential Development

Residential development within the Agricultural designation shall be subject to the following policies:

1. One single detached dwelling and related accessory structures shall be permitted on a lot having frontage on an open and maintained road and subject to other provisions of this Plan and the Zoning By-law.
2. Additional Residential Units and farm worker housing are permitted in accordance with provincial guidance, including the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.
3. All residential dwellings shall be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation formulae.

Item 16: Section 3.2.7, Severances and Lot Creation, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.2.7 Non-Agriculture-Related Uses

1. Limited non-agriculture-related uses are permitted in the Agricultural designation in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement and may be subject to Site Plan Control, as identified in the Site Plan Control By-law.

Item 17: Section 3.2.8, Prime Agriculture Area Re-designation, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.2.8 On-Farm Diversified Uses

On-farm diversified uses are secondary to principal agricultural uses of a property and are limited in area and scope. The introduction of on-farm diversification is intended to enable farm operators to diversify and supplement their farm income and to accommodate value-added and agri-tourism uses in prime agricultural areas. Such uses may be permitted subject to any applicable by-laws and guidelines and are subject to the following policies:

1. On-farm diversified uses shall remain secondary to the principal agricultural uses of the property;
2. On-farm diversified uses shall demonstrate that they are clearly secondary in scale to the primary agricultural use of the property, be located within the limits of the property and be relative to the size of the property;
3. On-farm diversified uses may be subject to Site Place Control, in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and *Planning Act*;
4. On-farm diversified uses shall be developed in accordance with all applicable municipal, provincial, and federal requirements for road access, noise, emissions, odour, water and wastewater standards, fire protection, emergency,

services, and other public and rural services;

5. Value-added agricultural uses such as on-farm bakeries, farm to table restaurants, feed and seed supply outlets are permitted. These value-added agricultural uses may sell or produce products as part of the agricultural operation and products as part of another local agricultural operation;
6. In addition to the above policies, development which includes energy storage systems, as defined by the Provincial Planning Statement, are permitted subject to the following:
 - a. It is demonstrated that sufficient setbacks are provided from lot lines to prevent conflict and mitigate impacts to neighbouring properties. In no circumstance shall the minimum setback from any lot line be less than 20 metres.
 - b. The area of development maintains a minimum distance of 750 metres from an existing residential dwelling and demonstrates that a minimum 750 metre radius can be achieved from any properties where a residential use is permitted.
 - c. The area of development maintains a minimum distance of 500 metres from any livestock facilities or any lots which are uses for temporary or permanent livestock grazing.
 - d. The area of development maintains a minimum distance of 2 kilometres from the Mississippi River or any tributary of the Mississippi River and a minimum distance of 1 kilometre from any watercourse including any municipal or private agricultural drains.
 - e. A hydrogeological study is provided which identifies any groundwater sensitivities and recommendations for the protection of groundwater.
 - f. An Emergency Response Plan is provided identifying fire protection needs, emergency access, suppression requirements, and any other risks associated with the proposed energy storage system. Where the submitted Emergency Response Plan exceeds the Municipality's emergency response capacity, the proponent shall provide the additional resources, equipment, and/or support necessary to ensure that the Emergency Response Plan is followed.
 - g. Energy storage systems are not permitted in source water protection areas.

Item 18: Section 3.2.9, Farming and Food Production Protection Act, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.2.9 Prime Agriculture Area Re-designation

The removal of land from an Agriculture designation for municipally initiated expansions of existing settlement areas is permitted in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.

Item 19: Insert the following section after Section 3.2.9, Prime Agriculture Area Re-designation:

3.2.10 Agricultural Impact Assessments

1. An Agricultural Impact Assessment shall be required in the following circumstances to demonstrate how impacts on the agricultural system are avoided and, where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated:
 - a. Where a new expanded non-agricultural use is proposed within the Agricultural designation.
 - b. Where adjustments or expansions are proposed to settlement areas in accordance with the policies of this Plan.
 - c. Where an infrastructure project occurs within or crosses any land within the Agricultural designation.
2. An Agricultural Impact Assessment may be required in the following circumstances to demonstrate how impacts on the agricultural system are avoided and, where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated:
 - a. Where a new or expanded non-agricultural use is within an influence area or is in close proximity to lands used for agricultural production.
 - b. Where a mineral aggregate extraction operation is proposed in the agricultural land base.
 - c. Any other circumstance where the size, scale, nature, location, and type of use is such that an Agricultural Impact Assessment is required at the sole discretion of the Municipality.
 - d. New or expanded agriculture related uses or on-farm diversified uses may be permitted without the completion of an Agricultural Impact Assessment.

Item 20: Insert the following section after Section 3.2.10, Agricultural Impact Assessments:

3.2.11 Farming and Food Production Protection Act and Support for Agriculture

This Plan supports the application of the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act (FFPP Act)* throughout the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

The *FFPP Act* encourages the conservation, protection, development, and improvement of agricultural lands to produce food, fibre and other agricultural products. Agricultural activities may lead to nuisances or disturbances for non-farm residential uses, including odour, noise, and dust. These impacts are often temporary or seasonal and pose no threat to health or public safety. Pressures exerted on agricultural uses make it increasingly difficult for agricultural operators to effectively produce food, fibre and other agricultural products. In agricultural areas, agricultural uses and normal farm practices should be promoted and protected in a way that balances the needs of the agricultural community with provincial health, safety and environmental concerns. The *FFPP Act* offers the protection of farming operations from nuisance complaints and protection from restrictive municipal by-laws.

The Plan recognizes the significance of local farmers and the positive impact both large-scale and small-scale agricultural operations have on the local economy. The Municipality will work with local commodity groups, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other groups supportive of the agricultural industry to ensure a positive climate for farmers to invest in the local agricultural industry is maintained.

Item 21: The introductory paragraphs for Section 3.3, RURAL POLICIES, are modified by deleting them in entirety and replacing them with the following:

3.3 RURAL POLICIES

When Ramsay and Pakenham Townships were first settled, agriculture and forestry represented the predominant economic base.

Over the last few decades, Mississippi Mills has experienced an increased amount of both inter- and intra-provincial migration from surrounding urban areas.

The pressure for residential development is evident and recognized on rural lands and can be beneficial to the Municipality provided that it is limited and does not negatively impact on agricultural operations, other resource-based industries, and environmental features.

This Plan recognizes that traditional rural uses of land, notably *agricultural uses*, rural recreational and diverse use, and pit and quarry operations take place in the rural area and are allowed to continue to take place. Through the specific land use policies of this Plan, these established uses shall be permitted as integral parts of the rural character of the Municipality. Certain activities associated with traditional rural uses may result in noise, odour, traffic, seasonal peaks of operations and other impacts which may be considered incompatible with other uses, particularly rural non-farm residential uses. Special rural uses are specific land uses in rural areas that require special consideration due to their unique function, scale, or potential impacts on surrounding rural or agricultural lands. This Plan acknowledges these uses and establishes detailed policies for the evaluation of these uses prior to the establishment of a special rural use.

The following goals, objectives and policies apply to lands placed within the "Rural" land uses designation.

Item 22: Section 3.3.1, Goal and Objectives, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.3.1 Goal and Objectives

It is a goal of this Plan to:

Provide for an appropriate range of rural uses which protect rural resources, established rural uses, and environmental features.

The following objectives are designed to implement this goal:

1. Require development within rural areas to be appropriately buffered and, if necessary, separated by a reasonable distance from the boundary of the "Agricultural designation" and other non-compatible rural uses and resources.
2. Provide direction for the location of new rural, non-rural residential lots including the construction of dwellings, considering established rural land uses and environmental features.

Item 23: Section 3.3.2, Permitted Uses, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.3.2 Permitted Uses

On lands designated as "Rural", permitted uses are agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, rural diversified uses and on-farm diversified uses, as defined by the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.

The following uses shall also be permitted:

1. On-farm diversified uses, in accordance with Policy 3.2.8;
2. Rural diversified uses, in accordance with the Rural Diversified Uses policies in this Plan, which includes rural commercial and rural industrial uses, antique and craft shops, artisan studios, butcher and bakery shops, farm-related commercial and industrial uses, sawmills, feed mills, agricultural processing facilities, contractor's yards, and tourist commercial establishments;
3. Special rural uses, in accordance with Section 3.3.7.2;
4. Non-farm rural residential uses including additional residential units, home-based businesses, group homes, and bed and breakfasts;
5. Resource-based or resource-related industries;
6. An accessory residential unit for a permitted rural diversified use on the same lot as long as it can be demonstrated that the rural diversified use presents no

reason to prohibit a residential dwelling unit.

7. Tourist commercial uses including:

- i. Tourist lodging facilities, summer camps, places of entertainment, recreational facilities;
- ii. Cultural uses, such as sites of historic interest, museums and related facilities;
- iii. An accessory dwelling for the tourist commercial use.

Item 24: Section 3.3.3, General Policies, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.3.3 Zoning By-law

To support the rural area, generally the uses in Section 3.3.2 will be permitted along with provisions to address compatibility with other rural land uses. A Zoning By-law Amendment may be required on a site-specific basis to permit uses in specific locations on a property or a Minor Variance to vary zoning provisions.

Item 25: Section 3.3.4, Residential Development, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.3.4 General Policies

1. The establishment of new buildings and structures or the expansion or change of use of existing structures within the Rural designation shall be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation formulae.
2. Agricultural operations within the Rural designation shall operate with the Land Stewardship and Sustainable Operations policies in Section 3.2.4.

Item 26: Section 3.3.5, Severances and Lot Creation, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.3.5 Rural Residential Development

Residential development within the Rural designation shall be subject to the following policies:

1. One single detached dwelling shall be permitted on a lot having frontage on an open and maintained road and subject to other provisions of this Plan.
2. Up to two additional residential units are permitted on a lot in the Rural Designation in accordance with Additional Residential Unit policies in this Plan.

3. All residential dwellings shall be subject to Minimum Distance Separation formulae.
4. Special provisions may be established for the location of a dwelling abutting scenic or heritage roads in accordance with Section 4.3.7 of this Plan.
5. Development shall take place in accordance with the Rural Design Guidelines of this Plan.

Item 27: Section 3.3.7, Rural Commercial & Industrial, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.3.7 Rural Diversification

It is the intention of this Plan to direct most commercial and industrial activities to Almonte and the Villages. Rural areas will generally be the focus of resource industrial and commercial uses, resource-based recreational activity and other rural uses; however, this Plan recognizes that rural areas provide a unique location for specific rural diversified uses that are suited to areas where there is less density with no immediate impacts to residential uses, agricultural operations or environmental features.

Rural diversified uses, including on-farm diversified uses, are appropriate in rural areas by virtue of their specialized function and their support of sustainable economic development.

3.3.7.1 Rural Commercial and Rural Industrial Policies

1. Rural diversified uses shall be compatible with surrounding uses and have a minimum impact on the environmental features and natural resources.
2. Rural diversified uses must meet the Minimum Distance Separation formulae.
3. Rural diversified uses must demonstrate that the demand for water is not beyond what is necessary for the private use of employees or residents. Uses requiring considerable amounts of water must be accompanied by a hydrogeological report which addresses adequacy of groundwater supply and soil suitability for disposal of wastes.
4. Lot sizes shall be adequate for the proposed rural diversified use. In assessing the appropriateness of the lot size, consideration will be given to parking and loading, servicing, storage, signage, landscaping and buffering requirements.
5. Lots shall have frontage on and direct access to an open public road, maintained year round, and vehicular access will be limited in number and appropriately signed. Wherever possible, shared access points, service roads and similar traffic design features which limit multiple entrances onto public roads will be considered.

6. A traffic study may be required to demonstrate the traffic impacts and identify any road modifications such as turning lanes, signalized intersections and the addition of any traffic lanes.
7. Lighting and utility infrastructure shall be designed to ensure adherence to all municipal, county, and provincial standards. All lighting shall comply with the Municipality's Outdoor Illumination By-law, as amended.
8. Signage shall be in accordance with the Municipality's Sign By-law, as amended.
9. Adequate off-street parking and loading facilities shall be provided. Where possible, parking areas shall not be located in the front yard or visible from the road. The visual appearance of parking areas will be buffered by landscaping, fencing or screening.
10. Outdoor storage areas, such as garbage and recycling, shall be enclosed by landscaping, screening or fencing.
11. Where rural diversified uses are located adjacent to residential uses, appropriate screening, buffering, separation distances or other measures shall be required which are designed to minimize or mitigate potential land use conflicts or adverse effects.
12. Development or redevelopment, including additions or alterations, shall be subject to Site Plan Control in accordance with the Municipality's Site Plan Control By-law and the *Planning Act*.
13. Tourism is an important part of the local economy with many of the tourist assets located in the rural area. Tourist-related commercial development in the rural area is permitted; however, new tent and trailer campgrounds, golf courses and ski hills shall only be permitted through an amendment to this Plan, in accordance with the Rural Diversification policies.
14. Golf courses include several accessory uses, such as club houses, pro shops, driving ranges, banquet halls, reception areas, maintenance shops, storage sheds and other similar uses catering to the day-to-day needs of the clientele and management of the operation. Existing golf courses are designated Parkland and Open Space. Development to establish new golf courses or driving ranges shall only be permitted through an amendment to this Plan, in accordance with the Rural Diversification policies.
15. Tent and trailer campgrounds include seasonally operated parks for tents and recreation vehicles, park model trailers and facilities such as an accessory dwelling, marina, convenience store and other similar uses. Existing tent and trailer campgrounds are designated Parkland and Open Space. Development to establish new tent and trailer campgrounds shall only be permitted through an amendment to this Plan, in accordance with the Rural Diversification policies and the following:

- a. Central water stations and toilet facilities are provided to the satisfaction of the Municipality and appropriate approval authority.
 - b. No campsite shall be located within the floodplain, other natural hazards, or local and provincially significant wetlands.
 - c. Existing topographic and physical features of the site should be retained in their natural state. Existing trees shall be preserved, where possible, and supported by a Tree Conservation Report.
16. Wrecking and salvage yards provide for the storage, dismantling and salvage of used motor vehicles or other equipment. Such sites need to be chosen carefully because of the appearance and characteristics of this use. Development to establish new or expanding wrecking or salvage yards shall only be permitted through an amendment to this Plan and shall satisfy the Rural Diversification policies, Special Rural Uses policies, and the following:
- a. It is demonstrated that the lot size is adequate for the proposed wrecking or salvage yard including buffer areas, adequate setbacks from roads and sensitive land uses and meets the Provincial *"Guidelines D-6, Compatibility between Industrial Facilities and Sensitive Land Uses"*, as amended.
 - b. Adequate, permanent screening from public view either naturally or by fencing, berming or planting shall be required.
 - c. Access to the wrecking or salvage yard shall be controlled by fencing, gates, or other appropriate control devices.
 - d. It shall be demonstrated through a hydrogeological study and Environmental Impact Study that the wrecking or salvage yard is an adequate distance from any waterbody or wetland.

3.3.7.2 Special Rural Uses

Certain large-scale or distinctive special uses may be appropriate in some rural areas under specific conditions. These special rural uses are distinct from traditional rural and diversified uses. These uses shall be evaluated for their scale, impact on surrounding land uses and infrastructure capacity. All special rural uses shall satisfy the Rural Diversification policies and the following:

- 1. Special rural uses shall only be permitted through an amendment to this Plan and shall not be permitted within the Agricultural designation.
- 2. Special rural uses must be located an adequate distance from sensitive land uses such as residential uses, to ensure that the sensitive land use and related outdoor amenity areas are not negatively impacted.

3. Studies to determine the general lot area for a special rural use shall be undertaken to determine the potential impact on environmental features including use of groundwater, stormwater management, pesticide management, natural resources, rural character and the requirements for private services shall be provided in accordance with this Plan.
4. Special rural uses shall not be located on a rural road which is not designed, constructed or maintained to accommodate the anticipated traffic volume unless the required upgrades to the road is approved by the Municipality at their discretion, with full construction costs and associated long-term annual maintenance borne upon the applicant.
5. Special rural uses shall be supported by several technical studies, prepared by qualified individuals, including but not limited to hydrogeological assessment, noise study, traffic impact study, stormwater management and site servicing study. Additional studies may be required as per Section 5.3.17.2.
6. The Zoning By-law shall place the special rural use in a separate zone.

3.3.7.2.1 Shooting Ranges

Shooting ranges are facilities designed for the controlled discharge of firearms or archery equipment for recreational, competitive, or training purposes. Planning applications to establish new shooting ranges or expand existing shooting ranges shall satisfy the Rural Diversification policies, Special Rural Use policies, and the following:

- a. A shooting range shall be located to minimize impacts to adjacent and nearby properties including livestock facilities and sensitive land uses.
- b. New shooting ranges must be compliant with the *Firearms Act* and the Shooting Clubs and Shooting Ranges Regulations (SOR/98-212), under the authority of the Chief Firearms Officer (CFO) of Ontario.
- c. A shooting range shall not be located closer than 2.0 kilometres from an existing residential use, settlement area or a lot where a residential use is permitted. This distance shall be measured from the closest lot line of the lot to be used for a shooting range and the closest lot line of a lot containing a residential use or permitted to be used for a residential use.
- d. A shooting range shall not be located closer than 2.0 kilometres from a lot used for livestock including seasonal grazing or the temporary or permanent housing of livestock. The distance shall be measured from the closest lot line of the lot proposing the shooting range to the closest lot line of the property being used for livestock uses.

- e. A noise study shall be required to demonstrate that the shooting range will not exceed any Provincial noise guidelines for indoor noise or outdoor amenity spaces.
- f. Other studies shall be required to determine the safety, impact on groundwater, traffic and natural resources.
- g. The shooting range shall be consistent with any applicable federal and provincial safety and design standards for shooting ranges, including the Chief of Firearms Range Design and Construction Guidelines.

3.3.7.2.2 Outdoor Paintball Facilities

Outdoor paintball facilities are specifically used for the game of paintball and tend to encompass a variety of obstacles and terrain for gameplay. Such sites need to be chosen carefully, due to the size, appearance, and characteristics of this use. Planning applications to establish outdoor paintball facilities or expand existing paintball facilities shall satisfy the Rural Diversification policies, Special Rural Use policies and the following:

- a) Outdoor paintball facilities shall not be located closer than 2.0 kilometres from an existing residential use, settlement area or a lot where a residential use is permitted. This distance shall be measured from the closest lot line of the lot to be used for an outdoor paintball facility and the closest lot line of a lot containing a residential use or permitted to be used for a residential use.

3.3.7.2.3 Motocross and other types of Racetracks

Motocross and other types of racetracks are generally off-road dirt circuits designed for motorcycle racing. The tracks tend to feature natural terrain and dynamic elevation changes with a variety of turns, jumps and other obstacles. Planning applications to establish motocross tracks or expand existing tracks shall satisfy the Rural Diversification policies, Special Rural Use policies, and the following:

- a) Motorcross racetracks shall not be located closer than 2.0 kilometres from an existing residential use, settlement area or a lot where a residential use is permitted. This distance shall be measured from the closest lot line of the lot to be used for a motocross racetrack and the closest lot line of a lot containing a residential use or permitted to be used for a residential use; and
- b) Campgrounds may be permitted as an accessory use to a motocross racetrack on the same lot as the motocross and racetrack and shall satisfy the Tent and Trailer Campground policies.

Item 28: Section 3.4, Rural Settlement Areas and Villages, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.4 VILLAGES

There are four villages in Mississippi Mills: Pakenham, Appleton, Blakeney and Clayton. The Villages range in land size and population. The Villages represent concentrations of rural development in a community setting consisting of dwellings, local commercial and business uses, as well as supporting services, such as places of worship, community centres and arenas, post offices, and recreational areas.

The Villages were originally established as centres providing local services and events to the larger agricultural community. Over the years, the Villages have experienced some growth and change through infilling and minor expansions, and each has evolved with its own identity. There are also some common characteristics among the Villages which can serve as the basis for developing policies for future growth in these areas. As the Villages continue to evolve overtime, it is important that new development fit with the overall character and unique identity of the Villages and the specific needs of the community.

3.4.1 Goal and Objectives

It is the goal of this Plan to:

Preserve the general character as well as the individual identity of each Village.

The following objectives are designed to implement the goal:

1. Ensure that the established pattern of development is continued.
2. Enhance or establish a focal point for each settlement area.
3. Encourage good pedestrian access, opportunities for interaction and improved public realm spaces.
4. Promote the natural and heritage attributes as an integral part of the community.
5. Encourage small-scale, locally owned businesses within the boundaries of the Village provided that they are compatible with residential uses and comply with applicable zoning and regulatory requirements.
6. Encourage home-based businesses within the boundary of the Village provided that they are compatible with residential uses and comply with applicable zoning and regulatory requirements.

3.4.2 Permitted Uses

On lands designated "Village", the following uses shall be permitted:

1. The uses permitted within a Village include low density residential and accessory uses, multiple residential uses, home-based businesses, group homes, bed and breakfast establishments, local commercial, institutional and public uses,

community facilities, parks and recreational facilities and limited agricultural activities in accordance with this Plan.

3.4.3 General Policies

The boundaries shown on Schedule 'A' represent the limits for development within each Village. Any proposal for the expansion of the boundaries shown on Schedule 'A' shall only take place in accordance with Section 2.5.3.2.3 of this Plan. Any such amendment shall have regard for the relevant policies of this Plan, specifically the growth and settlement, environmental, agricultural and design sections.

1. All new development and redevelopment in the Villages shall be compatible with the general built form and density of the existing neighbouring development.
2. All new development and redevelopment shall demonstrate adequate water supply and sewage disposal facilities. Only those uses which do not require large volumes of water or produce large volumes of sanitary waste shall be permitted. The Municipality may require a hydrogeological or other servicing study to be provided to demonstrate that the development will not have a negative impact on water quality or quantity and that the soil conditions can support the required private sewage system. Such studies shall be prepared to the satisfaction of the Municipality and the province or its delegate.
3. The Municipality shall place the Villages of Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton and Pakenham into zones that permit a variety of residential and non-residential uses.
4. New local village commercial uses may be permitted subject to a site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment and in accordance with the following policies:
 - a. It is demonstrated that the site is large enough to accommodate the buildings and structures, accessory uses, landscaping and servicing infrastructure;
 - b. Adequate off-street parking and loading space are provided;
 - c. The proposed local commercial uses are appropriate for the area;
 - d. Uses which generate significant amounts of traffic shall be located or designed to minimize the impact on surrounding uses and existing transportation infrastructure; and
 - e. Local commercial uses shall be subject to Site Plan Control and the Site Plan Control By-law, in accordance with the Planning Act.
5. The Municipality will carry out further studies to define the existing focal points within the Villages and to develop strategies for enhancing and improving the elements that contribute to these communities.

6. Minimum lot sizes within the Villages shall be based on the appropriate requirements for the proposed water and sewage systems, as well as site specific considerations of topography and vegetation. Residential lots should be a minimum of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) in size and no more than 1.0 hectare in size. In waterfront situations, larger lot sizes may be permitted to ensure minimum setbacks can be maintained from highwater mark, floodplain and other environmental features, and to ensure that development remains outside of any natural hazards.
7. New multiple residential uses, such as townhouses or low-rise apartment dwellings may be permitted subject to a site-specific zoning by-law amendment and in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. The site is large enough to accommodate the building and servicing infrastructure;
 - b. Adequate off-street parking is provided;
 - c. Adequate outdoor amenity areas are provided;
 - d. Uses which generate significant amounts of traffic shall be located or designed to minimize the impact on surrounding land uses and the existing transportation network; and
 - e. Multiple residential uses and institutional uses may be subject to Site Plan Control, in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and the *Planning Act*.

3.4.4 Pakenham

The Village of Pakenham is a vibrant, independent community that thrives through a balanced mix of uses, making it a self-contained and sustainable hub for its residents. From residential areas to local shops, schools, and recreational spaces, Pakenham offers everything its residents need within close reach. This blend of essential services and amenities creates a cohesive, walkable environment where people can live, work, and play. Rooted in rich cultural heritage and guided by a forward-thinking, self-sufficient spirit, the village continues to evolve while honoring its past. The adjacent Mississippi River presents a valuable opportunity to expand recreation, tourism, and environmental stewardship – further enriching the village character and long-term vitality.

3.4.4.1 Policies

1. A hydrogeological study for any infill, residential intensification or new, non-residential uses that require potable water will be required within the boundaries of the Village of Pakenham to demonstrate that private services can be provided that meet regulatory standards.

3.4.5 Clayton

Clayton is a small village with a friendly and engaged community and rural feel, near the western border of Mississippi Mills and Lanark Highlands. The community's rural and seasonal lifestyle depends on the Village of Clayton as a resource for connection. A 15-minute drive from Almonte, the Village is serviced by Tatlock Road (County Road 9) and Bellamy Mills Road. Many of the residents of Clayton reside on these two busy roads, in a variety of charming and unique homes, many of them fronting onto Clayton Lake and the Indian River, which pass through the middle of the Village. Clayton is a hub for residents of the rural area of Mississippi Mills and Lanark Highlands, largely due to the Clayton General Store which supplies goods and services to the residents. The community is further enhanced by the Clayton Community Centre, active churches, and the generous community volunteers that reside in and around the Village.

3.4.5.1 Policies

On the lands designated as Special Policy Area II in Clayton, the following special conditions shall apply in addition to the other relevant policies of this Plan that apply to multiple residential developments:

1. The dwelling type allowed shall be limited to a one storey multiple residential building.
2. The maximum number of dwelling units permitted shall be 25.
3. No development shall be permitted below the 1:100-year flood line of the Indian River as established by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority, except as otherwise permitted by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.

3.4.6 Appleton

Situated along the Mississippi River, the historic Village of Appleton is a quaint and idyllic part of Mississippi Mills. Appleton was once known for its rich and prosperous milling industry, and this is still representative of Appleton's cultural heritage today. The residents of Appleton enjoy a walkable riverfront village environment with access to the Mississippi River for recreation. The residents of Appleton take pride in their village's heritage and natural beauty, ensuring its character endures through preservation and mindful growth.

3.4.6.1 Policies

On the lands designated as Special Policy Area I in Appleton Village, the following special conditions shall apply exclusively:

1. The permitted uses shall be restricted to private hydro-electric power generating facility and related buildings and structures and to the existing

semi-detached dwelling.

2. Any structures relating to the power generating facility shall meet all of the requirements of the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act.
3. Any structure which has an impact on water levels shall satisfy the requirements of Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.
4. Access to the power generating facility and to the existing semi-detached dwelling may be from a private right-of-way registered on title.

3.4.7 Blakeney

The Village of Blakeney is celebrated for its rich history, natural beauty and community. Blakeney is located along the Mississippi River and is home to the Blakeney Rapids, which attracts many outdoor enthusiasts. Maintained by volunteers, Blakeney Rapids Park offers a network of walking trails and views of the rapids and waterfalls. The Blakeney Bridge serves as a vital connection within the community and greater Municipality. The Village of Blakeney is rich in natural assets and offers residents and visitors a welcoming and tranquil atmosphere.

3.4.7.1 Policies

1. A hydrogeological study for any infill, residential intensification or new, non-residential uses within Blakeney that requires potable water will be required to demonstrate that private services can be provided that meet regulatory standards.

Item 29: Section 3.5, Aggregate & Mineral Resources Policies, is modified by moving the section in its entirety to Section 3.6, renumbering the subsections accordingly, updating any references to Section 3.5 to 3.6 throughout the Plan, and replace Section 3.5 with the following:

3.5 Rural Settlement Areas

Existing Rural Settlement Areas are defined with a fixed boundary on Schedule 'A' of this Plan and generally identify rural residential subdivisions that have been largely created during the last 50 years and typically consist of single detached residential uses.

The goal, objectives and policies apply to lands placed with the "Rural Settlement Areas" land use designation.

3.5.1 Goal and Objectives

It is a goal of this Plan to:

Preserve the general character as well as the individual identity of each

Rural Settlement Area.

The following objectives are designed to implement the goal:

1. Ensure that the established pattern of development is continued within the existing boundary of the Rural Settlement Area.
2. Encourage opportunities for infill and additional residential units.

3.5.2 Permitted Uses

1. The uses permitted within Rural Settlement Areas are low density residential uses and home-based businesses, additional residential uses, bed and breakfast establishments, and parks and recreational facilities.
2. In accordance with Policy 2.5.3.2.3 Policy 10, the development of new rural residential subdivisions is prohibited. Any lot creation must be located within the existing boundaries of the Rural Settlement Area designation.
3. New uses that require large volumes of water or produce large volumes of sanitary waste shall not be permitted.

3.5.3 General Policies

1. The boundaries shown on Schedule 'A' represent the limits for development within each Rural Settlement Area.
2. All development and redevelopment shall demonstrate adequate water supply and sewage disposal facilities; hydrogeological or other studies may be required to demonstrate adequate water supply and sewage disposal facilities. Only those uses which do not require large volumes of water or produce large volumes of sanitary waste shall be permitted.
3. Minimum lot sizes within Rural Settlement Areas shall be based on the appropriate requirements for the proposed water and sewage systems and site-specific considerations of topography and vegetation. Generally, lots for single detached residential uses shall be minimum of 0.4 hectares and generally no more than 1.0 hectares. For properties with frontage on watercourses, larger minimum lot sizes may be required to ensure sufficient area to accommodate a minimum setback from the highwater mark, shoreline buffering requirements, floodplain considerations and other environmental constraints.

Item 30: Section 3.8, Parkland and Open Space, is modified by moving the section in its entirety to Section 3.9, renumbering the subsections accordingly, and updating any references to Section 3.8 to 3.9 throughout the Plan.

Item 31: Section 3.7, Commercial and Industrial Land Use Policies, is modified by moving the section in its entirety to Section 3.8 and renumbering the subsections

accordingly and updating any references to Section 3.7 to 3.8 throughout the Plan.

Item 32: Section 3.8, Commercial and Industrial Land Use Policies, is modified by deleting the six introductory paragraphs in their entirety and replacing them with the following:

Section 3.8 Commercial and Industrial Land Use Policies

The economic base of Mississippi Mills is very diverse. The local economy consists of a strong agricultural industry, a vibrant small business sector, tourism and growing arts and high-tech sectors. There is also a very successful home-based industry. Like many small-town rural communities, the public sector (health, education, local government) represents the largest source of employment.

Recognizing the strengths of the local economy and the challenges that exist by being located close to a major urban market, this Plan establishes a clear policy direction which shall provide a positive climate for economic investment and job creation. The Plan also undertakes to identify an adequate supply of land to allow existing businesses to expand and for new businesses to locate within the Municipality.

Inherent in the growth and development of the local economy is the preservation of the area's small-town character. This is achieved through a strong commitment to the existing downtown cores of Almonte and Pakenham as vibrant mixed-use areas, and to encourage future mixed-use development in Clayton, Appleton and Blakeney.

This Plan also recognizes the importance of commercial and industrial uses throughout the Rural and Agricultural area, where uses are resource based, recreational, or require larger areas to operate, in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.

The land use policies relating to commercial and industrial development are intended to permit a broad mix of land uses and to provide entrepreneurs with a clear set of policies on which to make investment decisions. The various areas of commercial and industrial development are intended to complement each other through a varying scope of permitted uses.

The following policies shall apply to all lands within the various commercial and industrial land use designations, detailed in Schedules 'B' and 'C' of this Plan.

Item 33: Section 3.8.1, Goal and Objectives, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.8.1 Goal and Objectives

It is a goal of this Plan to:

Develop the economic potential of the area and create employment opportunities

which strengthen the social fabric of the community.

The following objectives are designed to implement the goal:

1. Promote economic development which shall generate a balanced tax base and offer a comprehensive range of services within the community.
2. Promote the expansion and retention of existing business and economic sectors and promote opportunities for new business to diversify the area's economy, add to the commercial/industrial tax base and create new employment opportunities.
3. Direct the majority of new business to established commercial and industrial locations, including the downtown areas of Almonte, the Mississippi Mills Business Park, the Villages, established highway commercial areas and any new industrial locations in the Rural designation.
4. Promote and preserve the downtown cores of Almonte and Pakenham village as vibrant mixed-use areas with potential for infilling and redevelopment.
5. Permit a broad range of home-based businesses in residential and rural areas, provided they are compatible with surrounding uses.
6. Protect and preserve Employment Areas for current and future uses.

Item 34: Section 3.8.5, Industrial – Employment Area, is modified by deleting the first paragraph in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

The Municipality's primary industrial investment area is the Mississippi Mills Business Park and designated "Business Park – Employment Area". There are also several industrial uses located throughout the rural and urban areas of the community which are designated "Industrial – Employment Area". Industrial development is an important component of the Municipality's economic base. The Plan recognizes existing industrial uses and provides for an adequate supply of land for future industrial development, both in Almonte, the Villages, and the Rural designations.

Item 35: Section 3.6, Residential, is modified by moving the section in its entirety to Section 3.7 and renumbering the subsections accordingly and renumbering references to Section 3.6 to 3.7 throughout the Plan.

Item 36: Section 3.7.9, Additional Residential Policy, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

In accordance with the *Planning Act* and Provincial Planning Statement, additional residential units are permitted. The Zoning By-law provides provisions for additional residential units, including the following:

1. Adequate off-street parking and outdoor amenity space is provided on-site;

2. Landscaping and buffering of parking areas to adjacent residential uses is provided;
3. The lot meets the minimum lot area and frontage requirements of the zone, or a Minor Variance is approved to permit the development;
4. In the case of a property on municipal services, generally only one service is provided to a lot and as a result, any additional residential units should be connected to a singular residential, municipal service unless specific approval for separate connections to municipal services is approved by the Municipality;
5. In the case of a property on municipal services, the Zoning By-law will generally require one parking space per additional residential unit. A Minor Variance to eliminate the requirement of one parking space may be considered subject to the following policies:
 - a) It is demonstrated that on-site tandem parking is not feasible on the lot due to existing constraints;
 - b) The property is located within 400 metres walking distance of a food retail store and other services;
 - c) The owner enters into an agreement with the Municipality registered on title that any resident of the additional residential unit will be formally notified that on-site parking is not available and that the Municipality has an on-street winter parking ban in effect every season through a lease agreement or other such means; and
 - d) On-street parking, by way of a residential parking permit, is available on the street which the property fronts.
6. In the case of a property on private services, any additional residential unit should generally share at least one of the two private services with the other dwelling. A Zoning By-law Amendment or Minor Variance to permit dedicated separate well and septic system for an additional residential unit may be considered subject to the following policies:
 - a) It is demonstrated that the dedicated well and septic system for the additional residential unit is necessary due to topography, environmental constraints, natural hazards or other existing site constraints that cannot be altered;
 - b) The owner enters into an agreement with the Municipality registered on title that acknowledges that the additional residential unit cannot be severed; and

- c) The location of the additional residential unit does not create a new residential cluster.
- 7. Within the limits of a Rural Settlement Area and in the Villages of Pakenham, Clayton, Blakeney and Appleton:
 - a) The minimum lot area should be at least 1.0 hectares in size. For any lots less than 1.0 hectares, a Minor Variance could be considered to permit the development of an additional residential unit provided that it is demonstrated through a Hydrogeological Study and any other servicing studies required by the Municipality, that the property is of sufficient size to support the required private servicing; and
 - b) The Zoning By-law will require one parking space for each additional residential unit. Due to the lack of food retail stores, employment areas and other services within walking distance, a Minor Variance to eliminate the required parking is generally not supported by the policies of this Plan unless it can be demonstrated that parking cannot be provided because of site-specific constraints and extenuating circumstances.
- 8. In the Agricultural, Rural and Rural Settlement Area designations, up to two additional residential units are permitted in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended, and the following:
 - a) Where two additional residential units are proposed, at least one is located within or attached to the principal dwelling; and
 - b) The location of an additional residential unit(s) is in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended and satisfies the following:
 - i. Is accessed along the same frontage of the principal dwelling unit generally sharing the same driveway; and
 - ii. Is generally located within 40 metres of the principal dwelling unit. A Minor Variance or Zoning By-law Amendment to increase the distance between the principal dwelling unit and an additional residential unit could be considered if it is demonstrated that the proposed location is required due to environmental or natural hazard constraints, topography or other constraints that cannot be altered.
- 9. Additional residential units shall not be permitted within areas identified as a natural hazard, including but not limited to, floodplains, unstable soils, or a site having unsafe access during a 1:100-year flood event or within a wetland, as identified by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.

Item 37: Section 3.7.10, Bed and Breakfast Policy, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

Bed and Breakfast operations are permitted within a single detached dwelling subject to the requirements of the Zoning By-law.

1. The Zoning By-law may provide bed and breakfast regulations which ensure:
 - a. Adequate off-street parking;
 - b. Minimum floor area for guest rooms;
 - c. The bed and breakfast is conducted in the principal residence of the operator;
 - d. In the case of private servicing, a lot area that can support private servicing to accommodate the bed and breakfast;
 - e. The maximum number of guest rooms for overnight accommodations.
2. Bed and breakfast operations may be subject to Site Plan Control, in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and the *Planning Act*.

Item 38: Section 3.7.11, Home-Based Business Policy, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

Home-based businesses are an important means of realizing small business start-ups and stay-at-home self-employment. Home-based businesses are permitted subject to the requirements of the Zoning By-law.

1. The Zoning By-law may provide home-based business regulations as follows:
 - a. A detailed list of permitted home-based business uses;
 - b. A maximum percentage of the floor area of the residence or accessory building which may be used for the home-based business;
 - c. The external appearance of the residence is maintained and regulate outdoor storage;
 - d. Appropriate parking standards and rates are provided and prohibit uses that are deemed to be significant traffic generators.
2. Home-based businesses may be subject to Site Plan Control, in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and the *Planning Act*.

Item 39: Section 3.7.12, Group Home Policies, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following.

3.7.12 Day Nurseries and Daycares

1. Day nurseries and daycares may be permitted within the Residential, Village, Settlement Areas and Rural designations subject to the following requirements of the Zoning By-law and in accordance with the following policies:

- a. It is demonstrated that the establishment of the facility is compatible with the surrounding area;
- b. Employee parking is provided including a designated drop-off and pick-up area for caregivers;
- c. Outdoor play areas are located on-site with play areas fenced and shaded with adequate buffering from adjacent properties; and,
- d. Day nurseries and daycares may be subject to Site Plan Control, in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and may be required to enter into an agreement with the Municipality to be registered on title.

Item 40: Section 3.7.13, Garden Suite Policies, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

3.7.13 Country Inn

The term "Country Inn" is used to describe a unique form of accommodation for the travelling public, similar to a Bed and Breakfast, but of a slightly larger scale. Such facilities are ideally suited for older buildings with historic character; however, may be established in new buildings. In addition to serving meals to those seeking accommodation, country inns may also serve meals to the general public, although this should not be the principal function of the inn.

1. County inns may be permitted within the Residential, Village, Settlement Areas and Rural designations subject to the following requirements of the Zoning By-law and in accordance with the following policies:
 - a. Country inns shall be placed in a separate zone;
 - b. Country inns located in residential buildings that are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, on the Heritage Register or with documented heritage value will maintain the unique historic characteristics of the building in accordance with the heritage and design sections of this Plan.
 - c. The country inn maintains the residential façade of the building and does not significantly change the residential, rural or village character of the area; and

- d. The Zoning By-law may provide provisions for country inns including the following:
 - i. There are a maximum number of guest rooms;
 - ii. There are a minimum of required parking spaces; and
 - iii. That the country inn is generally located on or near an arterial road and it is demonstrated to have minimal traffic impact on the road network.
- e. County inns shall be subject to Site Plan Control in accordance with the Site Plan Control By-law and may require an agreement with the Municipality registered on title.

Item 41: Section 3.6.14, Day Nurseries, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and updating any references to Section 3.6.14 throughout the Plan.

Item 42: Section 3.6.15, Country Inn, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and updating any references to Section 3.6.15 throughout the Plan.

Item 43: Section 4.2.1, Goal and Objectives, is modified by deleting items numbered 4 through 8 and replacing them with the following:

- 4. Adopt rural design policy which reflects the elements of rural character and the principals of current rural planning and village trends.
- 5. Define tangible elements of Mississippi Mills rural character including uses and lot sizes, building envelopes and setbacks from roads, , parkland and open space locations and access including waterfront.
- 6. Require new non-farm residential dwellings to be setback from the road and where possible, screened from view by taking advantage of natural tree cover and terrain.
- 7. Promote development which incorporates environmentally sustainable design.
- 8. Establish the Zoning By-law, Sign By-law and Site Plan Control, in accordance with the *Planning Act* and *Municipal Act*, as tools to ensure that the design goal and objectives are addressed.

Item 44: Section 4.2.3, Rural Design, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

4.2.3 Rural Design

Rural character is defined by the elements that make up the rural landscape. Components of rural landscape include open spaces, forests, rivers and waterways,

farms, small settlement areas, natural resource areas, wilderness and natural habitat and landforms. Rural character is not homogeneous and is represented by different features throughout the Municipality.

The objective of this Plan is to direct development in the rural area to the established Villages to ensure that these important places maintain a sustainable population which will help to support the Villages in the long term.

Other than growth in the Villages, the other most significant form of development is the creation of rural non-farm residential lots in the rural area. This form of development has historically had the greatest visual and physical impacts on the traditional rural landscape of Mississippi Mills. Other forms of development in the rural area should also be assessed against these design criteria.

The following policies apply to non-farm, rural residential development and non-residential development in the Rural designation:

4.2.3.1 General Policies

1. Development applications will demonstrate how they conform to the Council approved Rural Design Guidelines.
2. The construction and maintenance of existing roads shall take into consideration the landscapes that exist and efforts will be made to maintain existing trees and traditional rail fences along existing roads.
3. Development applications will demonstrate the impact the proposed development will have on the natural environment by:
 - i. Ensuring that the setbacks from natural features, rural resources and agricultural lands required in this Plan are adhered to;
 - ii. Ensuring that the site is large enough to accommodate the scale and intensity of the proposed development; and
 - iii. Designing and locating lighting to control spillage on adjacent properties and protect the night sky, in accordance with the Municipality's Outdoor Illumination By-law, as amended.
4. To create visually appealing buildings and enhance the rural character, development applications with the Municipality will:
 - i. Establish setbacks for new non-farm residential development and other forms of rural development in the Zoning By-law;

- ii. Encourage new residential buildings to be designed to maximize the direct exposure to natural light;
 - iii. Establish rural residential design guidelines to assist in identifying the characteristics of traditional rural residential design;
 - iv. Encourage the protection or enhancement of natural areas between the roadway and any proposed buildings or structures; and
 - v. Encourage rural non-farm residential development to establish or maintain traditional fence designs, such as rail fences and rock fences.
- 5. To design sustainable buildings that are efficient, durable and adaptive over time, the Municipality will:
 - i. Encourage sustainable designs that reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs;
 - ii. Promote the adaptive re-use of existing buildings where possible; and
 - iii. Encourage street layouts, building orientation, and landscaping to maximize potential gains from solar energy and exposure to light.

Item 45: Section 4.2.5, Rural Settlement Areas and Village Design, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

4.2.5 Rural Settlement Areas and Village Design

The traditional villages of Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton and Pakenham possess unique design character features.

1. Development proposals for the expansion of villages requires an amendment to this Plan, in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended. Village expansions are subject to the following policies and demonstrate how they conform to Council approved Design Guidelines.
2. This Plan envisions the expansion of existing villages as more than residential subdivisions. In proposing such development, the following principles should be considered:
 - a) Define public spaces and parks with a purpose. Instead of being the left-over parcels, these areas should be deliberately planning from the very beginning as critically important, value-adding elements of the community.
 - b) Focus on the core rather than on the boundary and the importance of core areas serving as centres of gravity to draw people together, such as parkland, bodies of water and neighbourhood businesses, to help define a

community.

- c) Use order rather than repetition in the sign of village streetscapes, creating a sense of cohesion without the repetition of identical design.
 - d) Use human-scale proportions, including accessibility considerations in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan, porch to street distances, and public open spaces.
 - e) Encourage road design and active transportation networks to support walking and cycling.
 - f) Encourage a range of housing sizes and types to allow people to remain in their community as their housing needs change.
 - g) Encourage a mix of uses rather than purely residential land uses.
 - h) Locate uses that are compatible with environmental features.
3. Generally, the expansion of existing villages should:
- a) Include a sewage and water servicing strategy which can support greater density, a variety of housing types and non-residential development.
 - b) Connect the new pedestrian and cycling networks with existing networks.
 - c) If not already existing, identify key areas which can evolve to a central core where there can be a mix of uses that provide services and amenities to residents.
 - d) Ensure that highly vulnerable aquifers and significant ground water recharge areas are protected from incompatible development.

Item 46: Section 5.3.4, Temporary Use By-laws, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

In certain circumstances, it may be desirable to pass a Temporary Use By-law to implement the policies of this Plan or to implement measures for specific land uses, despite the fact that the identified land use may not be permitted. It may also be beneficial to zone lands for temporary commercial, industrial or institutional uses in locations which do not conform with this Plan in accordance with the following policies:

1. Council may, by by-law passed under Section 39 of the *Planning Act*, authorizing the temporary use of lands, buildings or structures for any purpose set out therein. The maximum time period for temporary use is three years, in accordance with the *Planning Act*, as amended.

2. Consideration may be given to extending temporary zoning for uses once before the time period has expired. Notice of a Temporary Use By-law shall be given in the same manner as that of a Zoning By-law under Section 34 of the *Planning Act*, as amended.
3. Any use introduced under a Temporary Use By-law does not acquire legal non-conforming use status once the by-law has expired. Once the by-law has expired, the use must cease.
4. It is not the intent of this Plan that a Temporary Use By-law should be used to permit a new use while an amendment to the Community Official Plan or Zoning By-law is being considered to permit the use on a permanent basis; however, once a temporary use is established and it becomes apparent that the use should be permitted on a permanent basis, the use may continue under a Temporary Use By-law while any required amendments are being considered for approval.

Item 47: Section 5.3.11, Consent to Sever Land, is modified by deleting the section in its entirety and replacing it with the following:

5.3.11 Consent to Sever Land

The County of Lanark Land Division Committee has the authority to consent applications including lot creation, granting rights-of-way and easements within the Municipality. The Municipality can request that the Land Division Committee impose conditions on the approval consent applications and recommend to approve, defer or refuse the application.

There are specific policies included in this Plan concerning the type, location and amount of development that is permitted by consent within the various land use categories.

5.3.11.1 General Lot Creation Policies

The following policies apply to all designations and land uses whether development takes place by consent or plan of subdivision. All sections of the Plan dealing with the creation of lots shall apply where appropriate.

1. It is demonstrated that the lot creation complies with Sections 51 and 53 of the *Planning Act*, as applicable.
2. The size of the lots must be in accordance with the requirements for the type of use and servicing method proposed. Servicing studies may recommend appropriate lot sizes in accordance with the requirements of the Municipality and other agencies.
3. A hydrogeological study may be required to demonstrate that an adequate and

potable water supply and conditions for a proper sewage system exist and meet the requirements of the Municipality and other agencies.

4. Lots will not be created on lands which are unsuitable for development because of environmental conditions and natural hazards.
5. All lots will have suitable road access in accordance with the relevant policies of this Plan. Proposals which result in the creation of land-locked parcels of land shall be strongly discouraged and must accompany justification for the lot creation including demonstrating adequate access for the proposed use(s).
6. The location of lots must provide appropriate separation distances from incompatible uses and natural resources, including agricultural lands in accordance with Provincial Guidelines.
7. Lots must accommodate driveway(s) so that no safety hazards are created and meet the requirements of the Municipality or County, as the case may be. Two or more lots may share a single driveway where soil conditions, topography, safety, sight lines or other site constraints warrant such an arrangement, and the shared driveway is established via an easement approved by the Land Division Committee and registered on title.

5.3.11.2 Specific Consent Policies – Rural and Agricultural Designations

Rural and Agricultural Designations

1. Farm-related severances in the Rural and Agricultural designation may be considered for a surplus farm dwelling, built prior to the adoption of the Community Official Plan (December 13, 2005), which has been made surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation and subject to the following:
 - a. Future residential uses are prohibited through the Zoning By-law on the parcel rendered vacant as a result of the surplus farm dwelling severance. As a condition of the surplus farm dwelling severance, the Municipality shall request that the Land Division Committee impose a condition on the parcel rendered vacant as a result of the severance that requires an approved Zoning By-law Amendment which prohibits the construction of any type of residential dwelling.
 - b. The lot area and frontage of the surplus farm dwelling lot is kept to a minimum and generally should be 1.0 hectare in size. Lot sizes larger than 1.0 hectare shall be permitted if the location of site features such as existing buildings, private servicing or established access (driveway) to the site required more than 1.0 hectare. Lot sizes less than 1.0 hectare in size shall be no less than 0.4 hectare and supported by studies that demonstrate that maintaining private servicing is feasible.

- c. The proposed lot containing the surplus farm dwelling is not subject to Minimum Distance Separation formulae; however any future additional residential unit is required to meet the Minimum Distance Separation formulae.
2. A lot addition or boundary adjustment may be supported where there is a demonstrable need for increased lot area due to constraints such as reduced lot area, natural hazards such as floodplains, or natural features such as watercourses or wetlands.
3. A lot addition or boundary adjustment for non-farm residential lots may be permitted provided the cumulative area of all lot additions generally does not exceed 1.5 hectares. The area of natural hazard lands or wetlands shall not be used to enable development that was not permitted before the lot addition or lot boundary adjustment.

Rural Designation

1. The number of rural non-farm residential lots created by severance per land holding shall be limited to two lots plus the remanent lot except where otherwise specifically provided for in this Plan. The lot size shall generally be a minimum of 1.0 hectare. Lots greater than 1.0 hectare may be supported when site conditions warrant an increase in lot size. The minimum lot size shall not include lands within the Flood Plain designation, other natural hazards, or wetlands.
2. A severance of an established, permitted commercial or industrial use may be considered provided the lot size is kept to a minimum to keep as much land in agricultural production as possible and efforts have been made to locate the operation on land of low capability for agriculture. The severance of commercial or industrial property is only permitted where there have been less than two severances for commercial, industrial or residential lot creation from the holding since July 1, 1973.

Agricultural Designation

The severance of lots within the Agricultural designation shall be in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement as amended, the applicable policies of Section 5.3.11 and the following policies:

1. Severance for lot additions and boundary adjustments between agricultural holdings may be permitted provided that no new lot is created, and it is demonstrated that the size of the lots are appropriate for the type of agriculture existing or proposed.
2. Severances for agricultural uses may be considered for the creation of a new agricultural holding provided that:

- a) Generally, the minimum lot area for agricultural parcels is 40 hectares (100 acres);
 - b) The severed and retained lots are of a size that is appropriate for the type of agricultural uses(s) proposed or established and are of sufficient size to maintain flexibility for future agricultural uses and operations.
- 3. Severance of an existing agricultural related use in the Agricultural designation is permitted subject to the following:
 - a) The severance does not result in the creation of more than two lots from the holding since July 1973;
 - b) The lot size is kept to a minimum to allow for the continuation of the established use; and
 - c) The creation of the lots meet the Minimum Distance Separation formulae.

5.3.11.2 General Consent Policies

- 1. Consent applications will demonstrate that the creation of lots is in conformity with Section 53 of the *Planning Act* and:
 - i. Would not require a plan of subdivision;
 - ii. Is compatible with the surrounding area;
 - iii. Would not result in undue impacts to traffic;
 - iv. Is an orderly and efficient use of land;
 - v. Would not hinder the development of the retained lands;
 - vi. Does not result in strip development; and
 - vii. Meets all other policies of this Plan.
- 2. The Municipality shall not support consent applications that do not conform to the policies of this Plan.
- 3. Supporting information addressing matters such as environmental protection, potable water supply, sewage disposal, road access, design and compatibility may be required as part of a consent application.
- 4. The Municipality shall be satisfied that the development can be supplied with municipal services, such as fire protection, water supply, storm drainage, sewage

disposal facilities and road maintenance.

5. The Municipality may enter into an agreement with the owner to implement specific recommendations for studies.
6. In addition to the condition of an agreement, the Municipality may request other conditions be imposed by the Land Division Committee, which may include the following:
 - i. An approved zoning by-law amendment or minor variance;
 - ii. Site Plan Control, in accordance with the Planning Act;
 - iii. Dedication of land or cash-in-lieu of parkland, in accordance with the Municipality's Parkland By-law as amended and the *Planning Act*;
 - iv. Conveyance of land or an easement for utilities, access control or damage;
 - v. The construction or upgrading of roads or the installation of drainage facilities;
 - vi. The establishment of buffer strips and landscaping implemented through the Zoning By-law;
 - vii. Floodproofing, in accordance with the appropriate approval authorities;
 - viii. The installation of water supply or sewage disposal systems;
 - ix. Financial guarantees deemed necessary by the Municipality;
 - x. Demolition or change of use of buildings and structures;
 - xi. Measures to remediate the property due to hazardous or contaminated conditions, in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act, as amended;
 - xii. Implementation of mitigating measures to ensure compatibility amongst land uses implemented through the Zoning By-law or Site Plan Control, as appropriate; and
 - xiii. The requirement for conducting studies or the implementation of any study required to support the development proposal.
6. Notwithstanding any policies of this Plan, consents may be supported by the Municipality for the following purposes:

- i. To correct lot boundaries;
- ii. Convey additional land to an adjacent lot, provided the conveyance does not lead to the creation of an undersized lot;
- iii. To clarify title of the land;
- iv. To permit an easement or right-of-way;
- v. A lease or charge/mortgage;
- vi. For the creation of original township lots; and
- vii. For municipal or other government purposes.

Item 48: Section 5.14, Delegation of Authority, is modified by deleting item 2(e).

Item 49: Section 5.15, Definitions, is modified by adding the following definitions in the correct alphabetical order:

Agri-food Network:

In accordance with the definition of Agri-food Network in the Provincial Planning Statement as amended.

Agricultural System:

In accordance with the definition of Agricultural System in the Provincial Planning Statement as amended.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS):

One or more devices, assembled together, capable of storing energy to supply electrical energy at a future time, not to include a stand-alone 12-volt car battery or an electric motor vehicle.

Development:

In accordance with the definition of development in the Provincial Planning Statement and *Planning Act*, as amended and applicable.

Holding:

A parcel of land held in a conveyable ownership as of July 1, 1973, or an original township lot.

On-Farm Diversified Uses:

In accordance with the definition of On-farm diversified uses in the Provincial Planning Statement, as amended.

Item 50: Section 5.15, Definitions, is modified by deleting the definitions for “Original Township Lot” and “Secondary Uses” in their entirety and replacing them with the following:

Original Township Lot:

The east or west half of a lot which was laid out as part of the original survey of Ramsay or Pakenham Townships and which is typically a 40-hectare (100 acre) parcel of land (e.g. East ½ of Lot 12, Concession 3).

Secondary Uses:

Uses secondary to the principal use of the property, including home-based businesses, home industries and on-farm diversified uses.

Item 51: Update any references to Sections and subsections which have changed as a result of Items 1 to 51 throughout the Plan.

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 18, 2025

TO: Council

FROM: Hayley McCartney, Policy Planner

SUBJECT: **Background Report**
Official Plan Amendment 28 – OPA 28
Rural Villages and Rural Vitality Project
All lands within the Municipality of Mississippi Mills

OWNER: Municipality-Initiated Official Plan Amendment

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT:

The Municipality initiated Official Plan Amendment 28, the Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project in 2024, to strengthen and update Official Plan policies to reflect the current and future needs of the Municipality's rural villages and rural areas. The effective management of growth and change in the rural area and villages is important to ensure the long-term social, economic, and environmental viability of the rural villages and rural areas in the Municipality, while continuing to protect and preserve its distinct rural character.

RURAL VILLAGES AND RURAL VITALITY:

Over the past year and a half, Staff have conducted research through online resources and in-person public consultations and have produced a variety of reports that have been used to guide policy development and refinement.

For the opening phase of OPA 28 in February 2024, Staff created a [Rural Villages and Rural Vitality Project Framework](#) (Attachment A). Within the framework, Staff introduced the main goals of OPA 28 and the project themes, Rural Villages and Rural Vitality. Within this report, an initial public consultation schedule targeted approval by late 2024/early 2025. The initial completion date was pushed back to late 2025 due to the size and significance of the amendment and the extensive consultation required to complete the project. Additional information on the consultation is expanded upon in the Public Consultation section of this report.

The amendment proposes to update Official Plan policies to address several key topics.

Rural Settlement and Rural Village Policies

Amendments are proposed to the **Rural Settlement** policies of the Official Plan in Chapters 2 and 3. One of the most notable amendments in Chapter 2 is the removal of the Rural Settlements as one of the main foci for growth in the rural areas. Rural Settlements are not villages, rather they are smaller developments, mainly rural residential subdivisions that are no longer permitted in the Official Plan. While incremental infilling and additional residential units could occur in these rural settlement areas, staff are of the opinion that the focus of rural development should be directed to the established villages of Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton and Pakenham.

For **Rural Villages** the Official Plan, goals, objectives, permitted uses, and other general policies are introduced for the four (4) villages of Mississippi Mills – Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton, and Pakenham. Previously, only Pakenham had specific policies as a “village” while the Appleton, Blakeney and Clayton had some (minor) special Official Plan policies. Introducing village-specific sections to the Official Plan also provided the opportunity to introduce individual character statements and village-specific policies for each community along with guiding policies to direct future development within the villages. The introduction of these policies provides a framework for each village, recognizing that over time, each village has grown to have their own sense of place and identity.

Rural Vitality

For the **Rural Vitality** topics, the amendment introduces and updates to Rural and Agricultural policies to better align with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), including new policies for agricultural systems and agricultural impact assessments. The amendment also clarifies and strengthens policies that support on-farm diversified uses (in the Agricultural designation), adds new policies for special rural uses, and refines existing rural severance policies to ensure the support of sustainable rural growth and development.

Rural Vitality within the Rural Designation

Special Rural Uses

The amendment introduces an overall category of ‘special rural uses’ which include on-farm diversified uses and uses that may be established in the Rural designation but not permitted in the Agricultural designation. There are several uses which in the Rural designation policies of the Official Plan such as campgrounds, golf courses, ski hills and wrecking/salvage yards, which require a site-specific Official Plan Amendment to establish these uses along with policies which are repeated (verbatim) for each use. These policies are maintained in the amendment; however, the amendment eliminates the repetition of policies and amalgamates these uses within the ‘special rural use’ policy section.

The special rural use policies have also been expanded to include other rural uses including shooting ranges, paintball facilities and motorcross/racetracks again, requiring

a site-specific amendment to the Official Plan and specific policies to be addressed for each type of use that is proposed.

Rural Lot Creation – Rural Area and Villages and Settlement Areas

Policies related to rural lot creation appear many times in the Official Plan and in many different sections, which can cause confusion and different interpretations of the same policy. Amendments are proposed to consolidate general consent policies, which would apply to *all* lot creation in the Chapter 5 and eliminate the repetition of policies throughout the Official Plan.

Environmental Impact Statement

Section 3.1 of the Official Plan addresses environmental policies; specifically, Section 3.1.4.4.1 (3) is a requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for significant woodlands. Currently, the policy requires that any development, which includes, rural non-farm lot creation, must undertake an EIS if the new lot is within 120 metres of a significant woodland. While this requirement follows the Ministry of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Reference Manual, it can also cause a barrier for applicants to create non-farm rural residential lots and depending on the location of the significant woodland, such as separated by a road or watercourse, there can be little impact to the woodland as a result of the creation of the lot if the building envelope is outside of the 120 metres. The amendment proposes a new policy whereby if it can be demonstrated that there is a feasible building envelope outside of the 120 metres, then the requirement for an EIS could be waived.

Severance Policy Analysis

In June of 2024, the Department hired a consultant to complete a review of the rural severance policies. The review consisted of an analysis of the Municipality's current rural severance policies and provided recommendations based on their review. Three (3) reports include:

- A [Current State Report](#) (Attachment C), which examined the existing rural severance policies in the Official Plan and how they compare to recent updates to provincial planning legislation.
- A [Comparison Report](#) (Attachment D), which reviewed rural severance policies from other similar municipalities.
- A [Recommendation Report](#) (Attachment E), which provided recommendations for potential amendments to the existing rural severance policies for the consideration of Staff and Council.

With respect to the review of the severance policies, staff have considered the above noted reports and have analyzed the rural severance history for the past five years as well as the growth targets in the Official Plan which direct 30% of growth to occur in the rural area. Considering the population projections for Mississippi Mills (as a whole) and factoring in the 30% target of growth to occur in the rural area, approximately 72 units

are required per year in the rural area. These 72 units could be provided by lot creation in the rural area and in the villages.

Rural Severance Inquiries and Applications

For properties within the Rural designation, the Department receives approximately 25 severance inquiries per year. This average has been determined based on the inquiry tracking that was implemented in 2022. Of these inquiries approximately 50% meet the rural severance policies. Based on a 10-year review, the Municipality receives an average of 12 non-farm rural residential severances per year. This indicates that almost everyone who inquires about a rural severance and meets the rural policies for severance, follows through with the severance and a lot is created.

Staff are of the opinion that this information does not necessarily illustrate that the current rural severance policies are limiting development; rather the data indicates that property owners who inquire and meet the current policies are likely to follow through with a severance application.

Staff are of the opinion that at this time, modifying the rural severance policies would not result in a significant increase to lot creation and achieve the rural growth target in the Official Plan. At best, if the policies were amended to be more flexible, the Municipality could see double the number of rural non-farm severances a year to 25 lots, which does not achieve the target of 72 lots/units per year.

In addition, the cumulative effect of rural non-farm lot creation results in greater demands on the Municipality for services such as garbage collection, road maintenance and snow ploughing. Non-farm rural residential lot creation also impacts expanding and future agricultural operations that are required to maintain separation distances between livestock facilities and residential uses through the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae. The greater the residential uses in the rural area that are within an 'influence area' of livestock farms, the more constrained new or expanding farming operations can be.

Staff are of the opinion villages could play a greater role in achieving the 30% rural growth target in the Official Plan and that the villages could benefit from modest growth in a variety of ways.

Vacant Land and Village Severance Opportunities

To further inform the rural severance analysis, staff completed a high-level vacant land analysis of the villages. The conclusion from this analysis is that there is some growth potential within the existing boundaries of the villages; however, there are also some constraints for development which include:

- Floodplains and the protection of natural areas - all four villages have some watercourse that traverses its boundaries,
- Documented water quality issues in Pakenham as well as Blakeney,

- Village boundaries that are inconsistent, bisect properties, and do not follow identifiable boundaries such as roads and lot lines, and
- Existing constraints such as natural hazards (slopes).

The villages provide an opportunity for efficient development benefiting from the existing municipal services that are provided in a denser area compared to the rural area and could help to build upon the sense of place and community which exists in Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton and Pakenham. In addition, for those villages that have non-residential uses such as local commercial, services and amenities such as schools and community centres, population growth in the villages can help ensure these amenities, services and non-residential uses remain and thrive over the long term. For those villages with few amenities, services or a mix of uses, population growth can help to encourage new uses to establish which residents could benefit from and can contribute to a sense of identity and place.

Rather than modify the current policies for rural, non-farm lot creation as a tool to increase rural growth, staff are of the opinion that a closer analysis of the villages as part of the upcoming five-year review of the Official Plan is warranted. A comprehensive assessment of the potential for development in the villages within the existing boundaries needs to be completed as well as identifying areas for growth and addressing any barriers for growth in the villages.

One challenge to growth for Pakenham is the historical issues with water quality. There have been a series of hydrogeological studies for development applications as well as some studies (well tests) completed by the Municipality in the past. As part of the assessment of the villages, staff are exploring the possibility (and cost) of having these historical hydrogeological studies reviewed by the Municipality's hydrogeologist to have a better understanding of the water quality issues in Pakenham. This approach will be further analyzed in the coming weeks and may form part of the recommendations coming out of the Official Plan Amendment 28 project.

In addition, as the technology with communal servicing improves, staff will explore this option further to determine if a feasibility study for communal servicing could be an opportunity that the Municipality may wish to explore in the future.

70/30 Urban Rural Growth Target

As part of the five-year review process, a closer analysis of the 70/30 split of urban/rural growth should be examined. Historically, development in the rural area and villages has not achieved the 30% growth target and may warrant a more nuanced approach whereby the 30% growth target is further split between the rural areas and the villages to help guide the Municipality on which areas to focus and create greater opportunities for rural and village growth.

Rural Vitality Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

Staff are exploring the opportunity to create a CIP to help support rural economic development for on-farm diversified uses and within the villages. There are currently

opportunities at the provincial level for grants for rural economic development and if approved, staff anticipate that one of the recommendations will be to develop a rural economic CIP in the future recommendation report.

Rural Vitality in the Agricultural Designation

Staff recognize that many **On-Farm Diversified Uses** are already occurring on farms across Mississippi Mills; however, the policies of the Official Plan are outdated. An [On-Farm Diversified Uses Discussion Paper](#) (Attachment G) was developed to introduce the idea of on-farm diversified uses, while exploring the policy context from the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and examples of on-farm diversified uses and the local economic benefits. The amendment proposes adding a new section in the Official Plan that speaks to on-farm diversified uses in Section 3.2 which applies to the Agricultural designation. On-farm diversified uses are also permitted in the Rural designation in addition to the other commercial, industrial and special rural uses.

It is important to note that the Provincial Planning Statement includes battery energy storage systems (BESS) as an on-farm diversified use in the Agricultural designation (prime agricultural lands). As a result, there are specific policies within the new On-Farm Diversified Use policies that speak to BESS and requirements that must be met as part of the planning application process.

Additional Residential Units (ARUs)

In the past several years, staff have observed an increase of the number of applications for ARUs on lots in the Rural and Agricultural designations. Since 2022, 16 building permits have been issued for ARUs in these areas. ARUs are an opportunity to provide multi-generational housing options as well as rental housing options for rural residents.

One challenge with ARUs in the villages are the smaller lots which may not be able to support the private servicing requirements for an ARU, whereas the rural area has larger lots with more flexibility to establish ARUs. Regardless of the challenges that may exist in the villages, ARUs present an opportunity for rural residents to 'age in place' and provide gentle intensification of the villages. The proposed changes to the severance policies include a range for lot sizes from 0.4 ha to 1.0 ha for new lots in the villages. This range will allow for flexibility for development to occur on smaller lots that may be more reflective of the historical lot fabric and larger lots that provide greater flexibility to establish ARUs.

ZONING BY-LAW #11-83:

If the subject Official Plan Amendment is approved, a subsequent Zoning By-law Amendment application would be brought forward to implement changes to the Municipality's Zoning By-law #11-83 that align with the amended Official Plan policies. This future Zoning By-law Amendment application would be required to follow the required statutory process, including public notice and a public meeting.

SERVICING & INFRASTRUCTURE:

Staff do not foresee any servicing or infrastructure concerns resulting from the proposed Official Plan Amendment.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION:

Following the initiation of Official Plan Amendment 28 in early 2024, Staff conducted a wide range of public consultation to introduce members of the public, specifically in the Municipality's villages and rural areas, to the project. This ranged from hosting open houses to visiting local community events with information regarding OPA 28.

1. Clayton Sunday Social – June 2, 2024
2. Clayton Community Centre Volunteer Committee Meeting – June 3, 2024
3. St. Andrews Church Presentation in Pakenham – June 5, 2024
4. Union Hall AGM and Community Potluck – June 6, 2024
5. Open House at Pakenham Library – June 11, 2024
6. Appleton Strawberry Social – June 23, 2024
7. Pakenham Strawberry Social – July 7, 2024
8. Open House at Clayton Community Centre – July 11, 2024
9. Almonte Civitan Club Presentation – July 22, 2024
10. Community Open House in Almonte – September 11, 2024
11. Pakenham Focus Groups 1 & 2 – October 21, 2024
12. Pakenham Focus Group 3 – October 24, 2024
13. Public Information Centre in Almonte – April 30, 2025
14. Public Information Centre in Pakenham – June 16, 2025
15. Pakenham Public Consultation – October 14, 2025
16. Clayton Public Consultation – October 16, 2025

An online survey was launched on the Municipality's website in March 2024 and remained open for participation until December 2024. The purpose of the survey was to engage residents from the villages and rural areas to help shape the project. The questions in the survey prompted respondents to reflect on what they value in the villages and rural areas, and what change or growth should look like. Valuable insight was gained from the survey responses which highlighted community preferences, needs, and opportunities. A total of 192 individuals participated in the survey, with 96% of respondents residing in Mississippi Mills.

As noted above, in October 2024, Staff hosted focus group sessions to gain more in-depth understanding and insight into the perspectives of residents of Mississippi Mills. Three (3) separate focus group sessions at the Pakenham Library were held, which consisted of thirteen (13) participants in total spread out through the three (3) sessions. Staff were able to gain valuable local sentiments, preferences, and concerns and produced a [Focus Group Responses Report](#) (Attachment F).

A full analysis of the feedback received from the public consultation throughout the project will be submitted with the future Recommendation Report.

NEXT STEPS:

A staff report analyzing the merits of the Official Plan Amendment will be prepared following the public meeting to fully consider any and all public comments received.

All of which is respectfully submitted by, Approved by,

Hayley McCartney



Hayley McCartney
Policy Planner

Melanie Knight
Director of Development Services and
Engineering

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment A – Rural Villages and Rural Vitality Project Framework
2. Attachment B – Survey Results Report
3. Attachment C – Current State Report
4. Attachment D – Comparison Report
5. Attachment E – Recommendation Report
6. Attachment F – Focus Group Responses Report
7. Attachment G – On-farm Diversified Uses Discussion Paper

Project Framework:

Official Plan Amendment 28

Rural Villages & Rural Vitality

Authors:

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Dated:

June 3, 2024

File Number:

Official Plan Amendment 28

Prepared By:

Municipality of Mississippi Mills
Planning Department

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Project Framework paper was prepared by Planning Staff at the Municipality of Mississippi Mills in preparation for a proposed Municipally initiated Official Plan Amendment 28 and the related Zoning By-law Amendment to incorporate amendments to the Community Official Plan and necessary Zoning By-law #11-83.

This framework will explain why the Municipality is proposing the amendments to the Official Plan policies and the Zoning By-law provisions.

2.0 BACKGROUND

After the amalgamation of Pakenham, Ramsay and Almonte, a new Community Official Plan was created (approved in 2006) to reflect the uniqueness of the different areas including the agricultural and rural areas and rural villages of each (former) Municipality.

Since 2006, there have been many changes in Mississippi Mills. Inter-provincial migration, changes in the agricultural sector, a COVID-induced real estate market, Provincial planning changes and a housing affordability/supply crisis have all had effects on the rural and agricultural areas of the Municipality.

With a changing rural and agricultural landscape, updated population projections anticipated from Lanark County, and a focus on the viability of rural areas and villages, there is a need to ensure that the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are as up to date with current planning trends and reflect the most current best practices to support one of the backbones of Mississippi Mills – its rural villages and rural vitality.

The effective management of growth and change is the utmost importance to ensure the social, economic and environmental viability of a municipality. This project will seek to provide a planning framework to guide the answers to the following questions:

- What makes a Village unique?
- What are residents missing in a Village?
- How much more development can a Village support?
- How much more development can the rural area support?
- What servicing opportunities exist to support and improve a Village?
- What services are missing right now in the rural areas and Villages?



- Which partners and stakeholders are required to fulfill the vision for the future of the rural areas and villages?

As the project evolves with public consultation and the evaluation of best practices and planning trends, other key questions may be asked (and answered).

3.0 THEMES

3.1 RURAL VILLAGES

There is a need to conduct thorough assessment of the current conditions, needs, opportunities, and constraints of the Rural Villages. Pakenham, Appleton, Blakeney and Clayton Villages are all valuable areas of Mississippi Mills and the community. These Villages are important



places of community, culture, and growth. Villages derive their character for their rural charm and small scale, which the Municipality can support by ensuring that these areas are planned and maintained with the intention of preserving this character while accommodating for the needs of the local, growing community.

3.1.1 Vacant Land Assessment

Staff will conduct a detailed assessment of vacant land in the Villages and assess these locations to determine where future development would be most reasonable, if it were to occur, including an assessment of the lands that are currently within the Village boundaries. Public input regarding the assessment of vacant land and any known constraints will be valuable at this stage of the project. There may be areas which can accommodate for new homes, new services and commercial uses. The identification of vacant land will assist Staff with understanding where growth is possible and what types of development these vacant areas are best suited for.

Information gathered as part of the vacant land assessment will not result in any

immediate changes to Village boundaries; however, it will inform any future comprehensive review studies to evaluate the settlement boundaries of the Villages and Almonte.

Identify constraints/opportunities to development:



Enhancing the quality of life in the Villages is a key component of OPA 28. Through public consultation and using current planning best practices, constraints to development that exist in the villages and how they are impacting the residents will be identified. Constraints could prevent the sustainable and healthy growth of the Villages or could limit the ability of current residents to access their daily needs. Opportunities for development within the Villages by identifying the locations that may benefit the community will also be identified.

With the anticipated completion of the Municipality's Transportation Master Plan (TMP), any recommendations arising from the TMP will be reviewed and evaluated to determine if any should be included as Official Plan policies.



3.1.2 Rural Village Commercial Review

An assessment of existing commercial uses to determine how they are used, and what opportunities and constraints are present for existing commercial spaces will be undertaken as well as a review of whether there are any opportunities or need for new commercial uses, and if so, what commercial uses the residents would benefit from.



Constraints will also be assessed, which may identify current barriers to the establishment of new commercial uses or barriers to sustain the current commercial uses the Villages. Key commercial corridors for rural village commercial uses will be identified to determine where commercial uses could best be located.

3.1.3 Village Zoning Review

Existing zoning and land use mapping may not accurately reflect the current land uses and vacant land in the Villages. Staff anticipate that there are inconsistencies between the existing planned function (zoning) and existing uses. As a result, Staff will conduct a



zoning review to determine existing uses, local needs, future development opportunities and consult the public in this process.

On site assessments in and around the villages will be undertaken to gain a thorough

understanding of the current land uses. It is important to go on site to conduct land assessments because this will ensure that Staff will be able to adequately assess land uses.

3.2 RURAL VITALITY

3.2.1 Rural and Agricultural Policies

The Planning Department has identified the need for a comprehensive review of the Official Plan's Rural and Agricultural policies. This review is initiated to address an accumulation of discrepancies and redundancies that were found in the Community Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-law #11-83.

The objectives of the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment are to amend select provisions to:

- Clarify rural commercial and agricultural commercial uses to provide clear guidelines for land use within these designations.
- Align rural and agricultural uses to ensure consistency and coherence in zoning regulations.
- Define the distinction between certain uses specifically as it relates to rural commercial uses and agricultural commercial uses.
- Clarify the role of Site Plan Control as it relates to specific rural and agricultural commercial uses to streamline the development process and ensure compliance with regulations.

A comprehensive review and amendment of Rural and Agricultural policies within the Municipality is a viable step to ensure efficient land use planning and fostering sustainable development in rural areas. By clarifying regulations and addressing inconsistencies, the proposed amendments will provide greater clarity and certainty while promoting the responsible stewardship of agricultural lands.

3.2.2 On-Farm Diversified Uses

The agricultural industry in Mississippi Mills is a pivotal economic and social influence, contributing significantly to the local economy and community fabric. In recognizing the evolving landscape of agricultural practices and economic diversification, there is a growing need to expand the scope of on-farm diversified uses within the Municipality.

On-farm diversified uses are secondary to principal agricultural uses of a property and are limited in area and



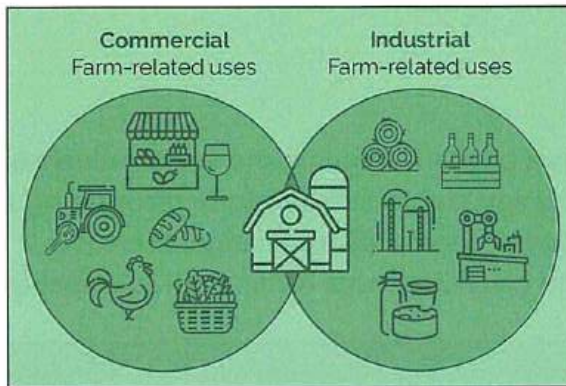
scope. The introduction of on-farm diversification is intended to enable farm operators to diversify and supplement their farm income and to accommodate value-added and agri-tourism uses in prime agricultural areas. Examples of on-farm diversified uses include farm gate retailing, wineries and breweries, small on-farm retail stores selling local produce and farm-related products, as well as accessory uses to on-farm diversified uses including corn mazes, wagon rides, on-site snowshoeing, skating or hiking areas.

The intent is to ensure that the Municipality has supporting policies to encourage these types of uses while ensuring that if a planning process is required, it is as efficient and effective as possible to eliminate barriers to establishing these supportive diversified uses.

To effectively integrate on-farm diversified uses into the municipal planning framework, the following steps will be undertaken:

- Public consultation with farm operators as well as rural residents to understand their needs and identify any barriers to the development of these types of diversified uses.

- A review “[The Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas](#)” developed by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to determine suitability of on-farm diversified uses in Mississippi Mills, while considering local context and needs to understand if they are appropriate. Additional



research will be undertaken to identify conditions or restrictions that should be required for any on-farm diversified uses along with public consultation to assess the needs of the local farming industry. Further research is required to understand the limitations outlined in the OMAFRA Guidelines including scale and impact of new development associated with the on-farm diversification.

- A best practice review of other rural, municipal on-farm diversified use policies and guidelines. Of note, [Brant County](#) has produced a number of guidelines as well as zoning provisions and Official Plan policies to support their agricultural sector.
- A review of the planning approval process to streamline the implementation of on-farm diversified activities for farmers, including reducing administrative barriers and costs, while maintaining regulatory oversight. A comprehensive review of planning procedures, such as zoning and Site Plan Control, will be reviewed to incorporate appropriate on-farm diversified uses.
- It is anticipated that the Community Official Plan will also need to be amended to update the agricultural and rural policies, incorporating on-farm diversified uses as permitted uses to align with the Provincial Policy Statement, the direction from OMAFRA and current agricultural planning trends.
- The Zoning By-law will also need to be amended to clarify permitted uses for the Agricultural and Rural zones, to align with the updates to the Official Plan. This may include adopting “as-of-right” zoning for agricultural and rural uses and other permitted uses that are compatible and appropriate with agricultural and rural areas. For example, farm gate retailing (small produce stands) could be permitted as-of-right.
- Comprehensive guidelines outlining best practices for planning and implementing for on-farm diversified use projects to ensure consistency and clarity for farmers and

operators is also anticipated to be one of the outcomes of this project.

The integration of on-farm diversified uses is intended to provide one promising avenue for enhancing economic vitality of Mississippi Mills' agricultural community while preserving its rural heritage and natural resources. By carefully considering the impacts and implementation of the strategies above, on-farm diversified uses can contribute to a path towards a more sustainable and resilient agricultural future for the municipality.

By fostering a supportive regulatory framework, clarifying policies, reducing barriers, and streamlining approval processes, Mississippi Mills can harness the potential of on-farm diversified uses to enrich local economies, foster agricultural innovation, and deepen connections between producers and consumers.



3.2.3 Rural Severance Policy Review

In January 2024, Council issued a motion tasking Staff with reassessing the rural severance policies within the Municipality.

This follows a previous directive from August 2011, where Council requested staff to review the current severance policies along with two other options, being permitting allowing a third severance on a land holding that existed as of July 1, 1973, where the retained lot would maintain a minimum lot size of 20 ha (50 ac); and, permitting two severances on a lot that existed as of January 1, 1985. At the time, staff performed a detailed analysis of the number of existing potential severances and rural building lots, the existing municipal infrastructure investment and distribution of lots resulting of the change in policy, and it was recommended to maintain the current rural lot creation policies. For more detailed information, please refer to the attached Building and Planning Report presented to the Committee of the Whole on May 12, 2015, attached to as Appendix A.

As part of the review of the severance policies, additional policies may be added to address common considerations that arise during the severance process that relate to

forced roads, driveway locations, minimum and maximum lot areas for non-farm rural severances as well as the implications of 'as-of-right' additional residential units.

Staff will revisit a review of these policies and supporting documentation to determine if updates to the rural severance policies are necessary and required to align with current objectives and needs for the Municipality and Provincial direction.

3.3 SPECIAL RURAL USES

There are many non-farm, non-residential uses that are often proposed in rural areas because of the need for large areas of land, separation from residential uses, or co-location criteria specific to the use. Examples include battery energy storage systems, solar and wind farms, shooting ranges (both commercial and personal) and commercial-based recreation activities such as paintball fields, driving ranges and dirt bike tracks.

These uses are typically located in rural areas of municipalities, but there may only be one or two of these types of uses in each municipality. These uses not only require large areas, but they may also generate noise, dust, odours, traffic at peak times (such as weekends or during certain times of the year), and use large, expansive areas. These types of uses would not be permitted in the Agricultural designation of the Official Plan but could be considered in the Rural designation. A review of the existing commercial and tourist commercial rural policies will be completed to ensure the appropriate Official Plan policies are in place to evaluate any of these types of uses in the rural areas of the Municipality.

In addition, over the past number of years, the rural areas have been identified as new opportunities for other types of commercial (non-residential uses) such as nature-based day care centres and eco-tourism opportunities (not including campgrounds/trailer parks). These uses will also be evaluated for their appropriateness in the rural context of Mississippi Mills.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Public consultation and feedback from the local village, rural and agricultural communities will inform the development of the Rural Villages and Vitality strategies and policies.

The following proposed schedule will be implemented to ensure that the study is executed effectively and that all stakeholders from varying groups are consulted:



Project Launch (February to March 2024):

At the onset of the project, a dedicated webpage will be developed with an overview of the project, including web links related to different approaches to on-farm diversified uses, agri-tourism opportunities, and other issues or organizations with valuable insight such as local agricultural organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) and OMAFRA. A feedback form and surveys will also be available on the webpage to allow participants to provide feedback as soon as the project is launched.

Initial Public Consultation (March to May 2024):

Initial public consultation sessions will be arranged to introduce the overall project and gather feedback from:

- Council;
- Local rural community groups – Staff will attend local community meetings as guests to present the project and gather feedback;
- Open house or drop-ins in the Village Communities, such as:
 - Pakenham Library
 - Clayton Community Centre
 - Union Hall Community Centre
 - North Lanark Regional Museum, Appleton
 - Blakeney Park, Blakeney

Draft Policy Development (June to August 2024):

At this stage, staff will review all the information from the consultation and best practice

review to develop policies.

Final Consultation (September to October 2024):

Staff will return to the local communities to share draft policies and for further consultation similar to the initial public consultation process.

Draft Amendments (November 2024 to March 2025):

Planning Staff will circulate the application in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act* to the public, internal departments and external agencies and organizations.

Draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) for each theme will be presented to Council for consideration.

5.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT

This study, and the implementation of proposed amendments, will establish clear and uniform policies and provisions for the above noted policies across the entire Municipality. These provisions will reflect the intent of the Official Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement, remain cognizant of the Municipality's needs, and respect the Municipality's existing rural character.

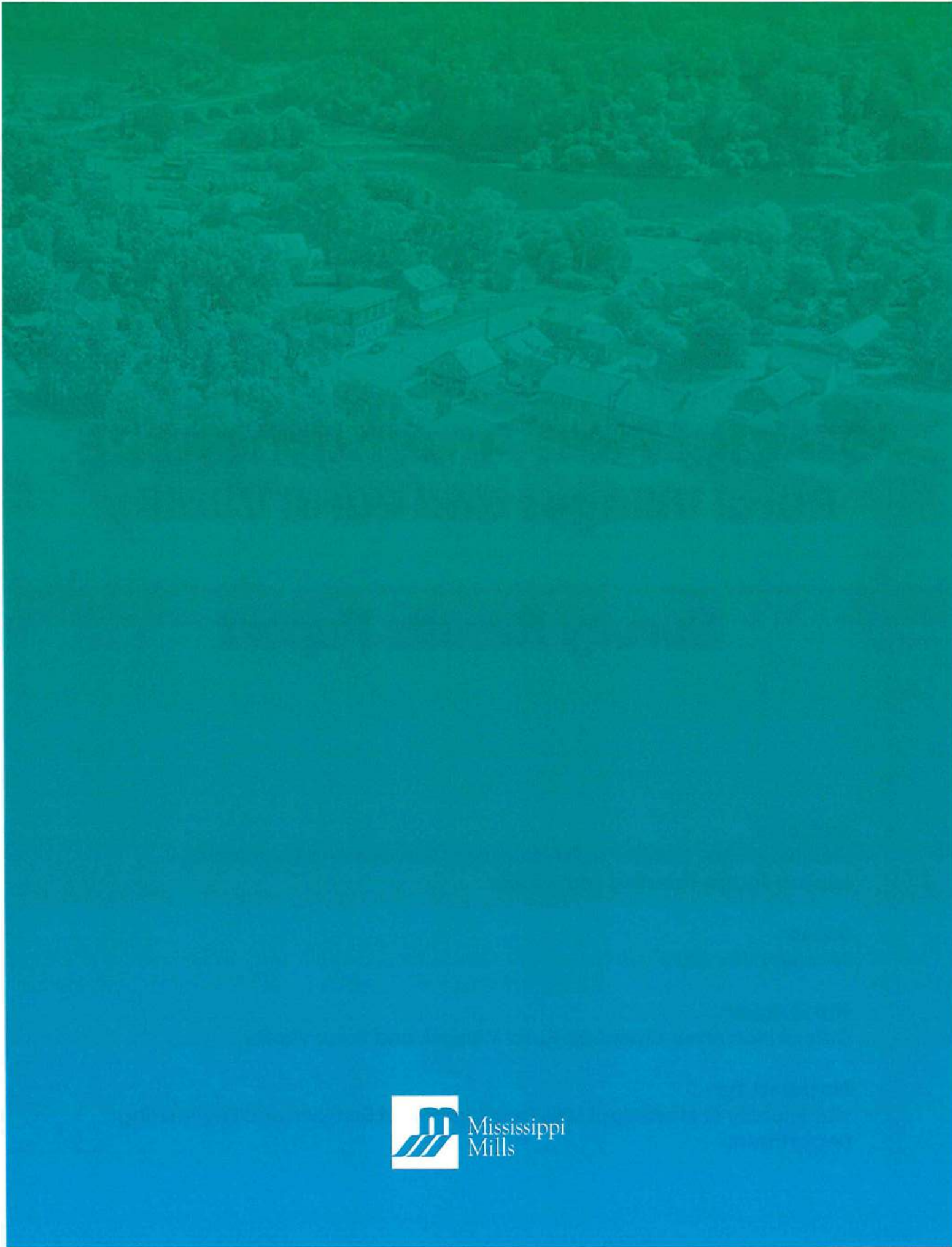
6.0 AFFECTED LANDS

The subject Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment are Municipality-wide Amendments. All lands within the Municipality rural and agricultural areas are subject to this amendment.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

The project webpage was launched in March (www.mississippimills.ca/OPA28) and public consultation has begun. Draft policy development will soon follow.

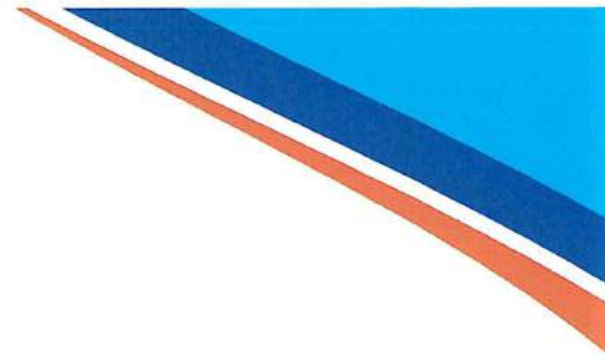
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Official Plan Amendment 28: Rural Villages and Rural Vitality

Survey Results Report

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Dated:

February 6th, 2025

File Number:

Official Plan Amendment 28: Rural Villages and Rural Vitality

Prepared By:

Municipality of Mississippi Mills Developmental Services and Engineering
Department

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey was to engage residents from the villages and rural areas to help shape the Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project, Official Plan Amendment 28 (OPA 28). The data collected will help Staff gather insights into the unique needs and priorities of the local community prior to the Official Plan policy development. The questions in the survey were intended to prompt respondents to think about what they valued in the Villages and Rural Areas, and how they felt these areas could be supported as they grow and change. By understanding community preferences, needs and opportunities, the results of this survey will help to inform planning initiatives that strengthen and support both the Rural Villages and Rural Areas within Mississippi Mills.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The online survey was launched at the onset of the project and remained open for participation from March 2024 to the end of December 2024. Recognizing that internet access can be limited in rural areas hard copies of the survey were also distributed to specific locations where residents were likely to frequent such as local businesses and bulletin boards to try to reach as many residents as possible. The survey was actively promoted using multiple mailed postcards to encourage widespread community engagement, with a focus on the Villages and Rural Areas.

Public Consultation Events

Staff held multiple public engagement opportunities including open houses, community

gatherings and attended several organized community events, which provided residents the opportunity to engage directly with planning staff. The survey was distributed at all of these public engagement opportunities.

Socia Media

The survey was shared across the Municipality's social media platforms, targeting different demographic groups and those who may not attend in-person events.



Website and Newsletter

The survey was also featured on the Mississippi Mills website and highlighted in the MM Messenger, a quarterly newsletter from the Municipality. This multi-pronged approach aimed to reach a diverse cross-section of residents, ensuring a representative sample from all Villages and Rural Areas.

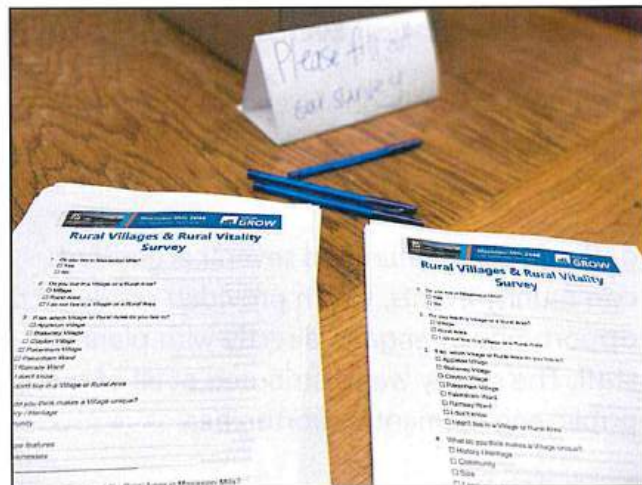
The survey consisted of eleven (11) questions, with three (3) short answer questions and eight (8) multiple-choice questions, with the option to add further comments.

Respondents were asked if they live in Mississippi Mills and which area they reside in. They were asked about what they loved about the Villages and Rural Areas, what makes them unique, what kinds of uses were missing, and any additional comments they wanted to contribute. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide their contact information should they wish to be notified of the survey results and of any further surveys. A thorough review of the survey results is discussed in Sections 3 and 4.

3.0 RESULTS OVERVIEW

A total of **192 individuals participated in the survey**, with **96% of respondents residing in Mississippi Mills**. OPA 28 is focused on both Rural Villages and Rural Areas, so understanding where participants live was crucial. The survey distinguished between residents in Rural Villages and Rural Areas to capture unique needs of each and every community.

Most respondents live in Rural Areas, while 28% reside in a Village. Additionally, 14% of respondents indicated they do not live in either a Village or Rural Area. The survey gathered responses from all the rural communities, including Appleton, Blakeney, Clayton and Pakenham Villages, as well as the Ramsay and Pakenham Wards.



4.0 DETAILED FINDINGS

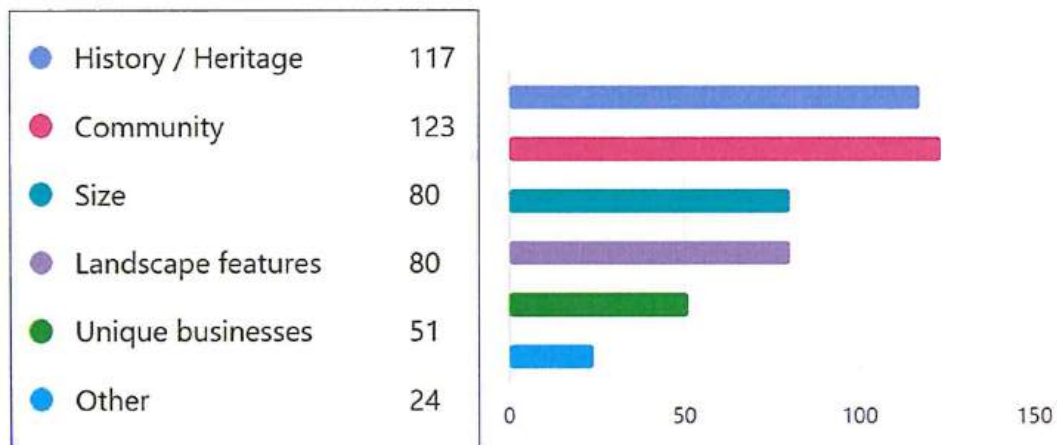
Refer to Attachment C for a full list of responses. Key findings from the survey are summarized below.

4.1 Unique Village Qualities

The most common themes that make a Village unique are summarized below:

- i. Community: The most frequently mentioned unique quality is *Community*. Respondents highlighted that the *sense of belonging, local relationships* and the people who shape the Village life is important to them.
- ii. History and Heritage: The Villages are also valued for their *historical character, preserved architecture and cultural roots*, which create a sense of continuity and identity for each rural community.
- iii. Size: Many respondents appreciate the *smaller, manageable scale of the Villages*, which contributes to their close-knit feel that contrasts with urban sprawl.
- iv. Landscape Features: Natural surroundings, such as the Mississippi River, *open spaces and unique scenery*, are seen as essential features to the village environment. These landscapes are seen as integral to the Villages' appeal.
- v. Unique Businesses: *Local, independently owned businesses*, including general stores and cafes, *contribute to the village's charm* and distinctiveness. These businesses help *define the character of the Villages* and support the local economy.
- vi. Additional Comments: The *peacefulness* of the villages was also highlighted as a cherished characteristic. Respondents expressed appreciation for the *quiet and tranquil environment* that contribute to the overall appeal and quality of life in the Villages.

Figure 4.1 – Results for Unique Village Qualities

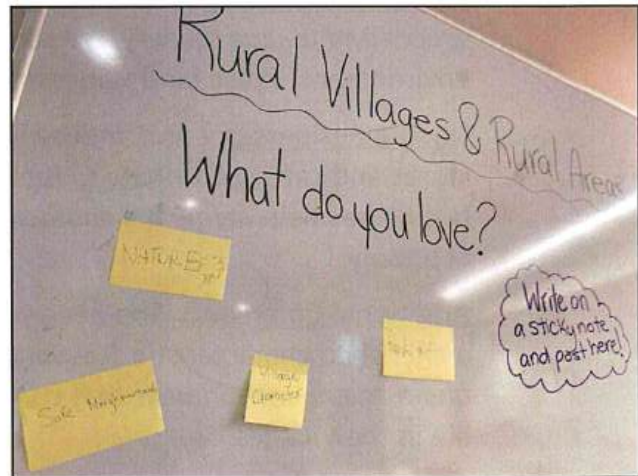


4.2 What Residents love about the Villages and the Rural Areas

A notable **28% of respondents valued a strong sense of community in the Villages and Rural Areas** of Mississippi Mills above other features. The most common themes that residents love about the Villages and Rural Areas are as follows:

- i. Community: A *strong sense of community, neighbourly support, and shared values* were consistently highlighted. Many respondents appreciate the close-knit atmosphere, where they feel connections and a sense of belonging. The friendly interactions and opportunities for involvement in community activities contribute to the overall sense of togetherness.
- ii. Lifestyle: The *calm, rural atmosphere*, away from busy traffic and urban areas, provides residents with a serene lifestyle.
- iii. Nature: Access to *nature and scenic landscapes*, including rivers, wildlife, and open spaces, is highly cherished. Many respondents emphasized the importance of preserving green spaces, farmland, and natural areas.

The rural setting *provides opportunities* to enjoy quiet walks, observe wildlife, and appreciate the beauty of the environment.



- iv. Character: Each village's *distinctive identity*, historical architecture, heritage features, and local unique businesses contribute to the *authentic rural charm*. Respondents value the *character and cultural richness of the villages*, with some noting that the villages should *maintain their original boundary* to preserve their uniqueness and size.
- v. Access to Urban Areas: The villages offer rural living while remaining close to Almonte and Ottawa for additional amenities and services.
- vi. Additional Comments: Respondents also highlighted a range of other valued features, such as: community spirit, preservation of nature, peacefulness, character and charm.

Figure 4.2 – Themes for what residents love about the Villages and Rural Areas

47 respondents (28%) answered community for this question.

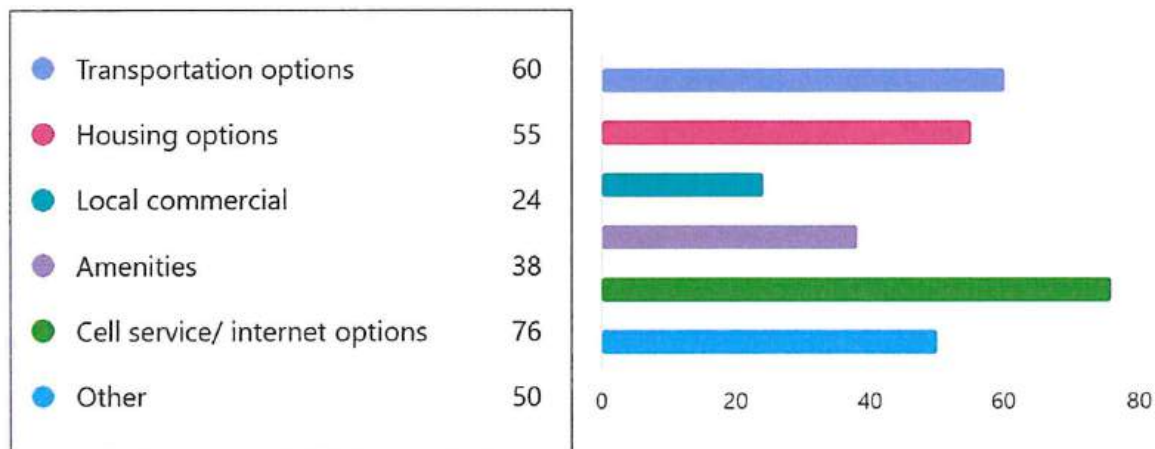


4.3 Gaps in the Villages or Rural Areas

The most common themes that residents are missing in the Villages and Rural Areas are as follows:

- i. Cell Service and Internet Options: *Reliable, high-speed internet* and *improved cell service* were identified as a critical need. Many respondents noted that connectivity is insufficient, impacting business operations and overall communication.
- ii. Housing Options: There is a desire for a *broader range of housing*, including options for seniors, affordable housing, and low-density developments that *maintain the rural character* of the community.
- iii. Transportation Options: *Limited public and alternative transportation options* such as carpooling, make it *challenging for residents*, particularly seniors and youth, to travel within and outside of their communities. Many accessible transportations options are a priority for many.
- iv. Local Commercial: Respondents expressed the *need for more local businesses*, including additional grocery stores, more "fast food" options, and improved access to local coffee shops. There is a desire for *family-oriented, local amenities* including playgrounds, splash pads, and recreational facilities.
- v. Additional Comments: There are concerns about village infrastructure, including *improvements to water and sewer systems*, along with the need for safer, active transportation infrastructure. Some respondents mentioned the desire for *improved public access to rivers or shorelines* and multi-purpose trails along roadways, street lighting, and recreational and social events.

Figure 4.3 – Results for what residents are missing in the Villages or Rural Area



4.4 Missing Uses in Villages

The feedback emphasizes the need for balancing growth that supports local employment, housing, and community amenities while preserving the unique character of the villages.

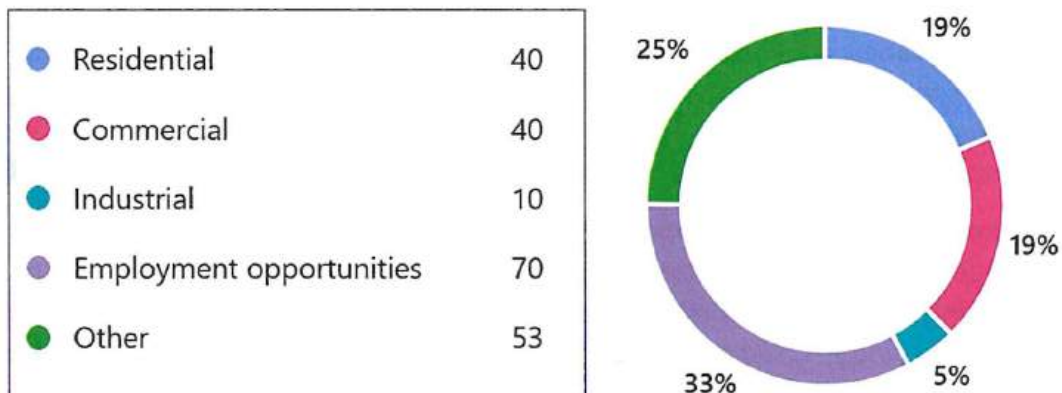


The following summarizes common themes identified by respondents:

- i. Employment Opportunities: Several respondents expressed a *need for more local employment opportunities*, particularly stable, full-time positions for younger families. Many respondents also highlighted *the importance of fostering small local businesses and entrepreneurial ventures*. There is also a desire for more industrial and commercial job prospects, although the focus remains on maintaining the village's character.
- ii. Residential Development: There is a demand for *affordable housing and options for seniors*, though many respondents *cautioned against overdevelopment*. They emphasized that any new residential growth should be *carefully balanced to preserve the Village's character* and should be managed carefully to ensure it aligns with the community's values and needs.

- iii. Commercial Development: While there is *some interest in expanding commercial services* like restaurant and retail, many respondents felt that a *nearby town already meets these needs*. A preference was for mixed-use development where appropriate to provide more diverse services while still maintaining the village feel. Additionally, there is a call for *more small, locally owned businesses* to support the local economy.
- iv. Infrastructure and Amenities: There is a *strong desire for more recreational facilities*, such as parks, sports fields, playgrounds, swimming pools and active transportation facilities such as bike lanes. Respondents also called for *improved active transportation infrastructure* to support healthy, community-driven lifestyles. Key infrastructure needs include *high-speed internet* and *adequate sewage and water treatment services* to support village growth and quality of life.
- v. Additional Comments: Respondents favoured a *balanced approach to development*, ensuring that growth in employment, residential, and commercial sectors is well-coordinated and aligns with the village's rural feel. Many respondents want to maintain the peaceful, small-town atmosphere and rural character of the Villages and Rural Areas. It was highlighted that any changes should *carefully consider their long-term impact on the environment and community well-being*.

Figure 4.4 – Results for Missing Uses in Villages



4.5 Missing Uses in the Rural Areas

Similarly, respondents indicated a desire for balanced development that supports economic growth, housing diversity and local employment while preserving the rural environment and agricultural focus. The following summarizes common themes:

- i. Employment Opportunities: Many respondents would like *more local employment options*, particularly in *agriculture, small industries and tourism sectors*. Many

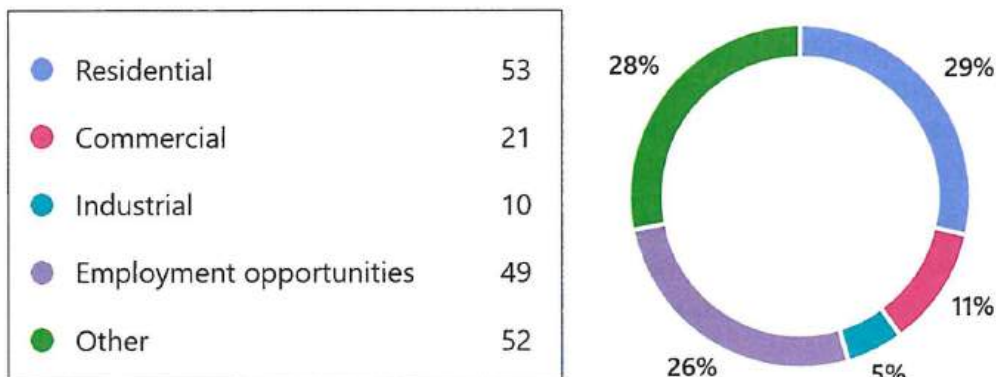
respondents emphasized the need for jobs that can support rural life while boosting the local economy.

- ii. Residential Development: It was highlighted that there is a need for diverse housing, especially affordable options and cluster housing. Their desired goal is for the Rural Areas to offer *a broader range of housing opportunities* while preserving the rural landscape.
- iii. Commercial Development: There is an interest in *small-scale commercial development*, including local shops and restaurants, to enhance rural life without urbanizing the area. Respondents want commercial development that *complements the rural character* rather than transforming the area into a more urban environment.
- iv. Additional Comments: There is an interest in agricultural initiatives, including *regenerative farming and agri-tourism* to not only promote the agricultural economy but also to help preserve rural identity of the area. Other suggestions include *improvements to infrastructure*, including improvements to road maintenance, safe walking and cycling lanes, *recreational facilities, and community event spaces*. A common sentiment is the desire to *preserve rural character* of the area.



Many respondents are opposed to large development, preferring to *maintain the rural landscape and limit urbanization*. The importance of *protecting natural areas, wildlife habitat, and water drainage systems* were emphasized. There is also a need for improved transportation options that *support the farming community and local businesses*, as well as sustainable solutions for farming.

Figure 4.5 – Results for Missing Uses in the Rural Areas



4.6 Feedback

Feedback for the Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project highlights a range of priorities and concerns from the community as summarized below:

- i. Amenities and Infrastructure: Respondents expressed *a strong need for improved infrastructure*, including bicycle and snowmobile friendly routes, safer active transportation lanes, and improved road conditions, particularly in the villages of Appleton and Clayton. There is also a call for facilities like *community centers, public washrooms, and indoor gathering spaces* to foster social connections.
- ii. Development: Many respondents want *to protect the rural character* and avoid over development in these areas. Suggestions include limiting large-scale subdivisions and promoting low-density rural housing options.
- iii. Housing: Affordable housing is a major concern of respondents. Many suggested that *allowing more flexibility in severance regulations* to permit additional housing on rural properties and land for family use would make housing more affordable. Additionally, respondents also advocated for reduced municipal fees to make affordable housing more achievable.
- iv. Community Well-Being: There is a call for a community health and safety planning perspective, addressing *seniors aging in place, active transportation, and mitigating isolation*. Improved access to reliable cellular and internet services in rural areas is seen as critical for *safety and connectivity* for residents.
- v. Economic Vitality and Tourism: Suggestions include enabling *small-scale rural accommodations*, like short-term vacation rentals and luxurious camping

- accommodations, to boost tourism and support local farms. Respondents would like to see *policies that support organic growth and small businesses*.
- vi. Environmental Protection: *Protection of natural resources, wildlife habitats, and groundwater* is a priority. Some respondents are opposed to development on agricultural lands or lands with environmental features, emphasizing the need to preserve rural landscapes.
 - vii. Traffic and Safety: Increased traffic volume and speed in rural villages are major concerns, with requests for *traffic calming measures* and safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Figure 4.6 – Additional feedback from residents

29 respondents (27%) answered villages for this question.



5.0 DATA ANALYSIS

The survey results from the Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project provide valuable insights into the needs and priorities of the residents of Mississippi Mills.

The data reveals **a strong appreciation for community, historical heritage, and natural landscapes in the Villages**, which contribute to a sense of identity and belonging. Respondents also expressed **a deep attachment to rural lifestyles, valuing the tranquility, access to nature, and proximity to urban amenities**.

There are several areas where respondents feel improvements are necessary, including **reliable internet and cell service, more housing options, and alternative transportation options**. Additionally, there is a call for the **development of local businesses and community amenities**, such as grocery stores and recreational facilities, to reduce dependency on larger urban centers.

While there is support for controlled growth, many respondents emphasized the **importance of preserving the rural character of both villages and rural areas**. The

feedback highlights the desire for balanced development that promotes local employment, housing diversity, and infrastructure improvements, without compromising the unique rural environment.

These insights will be instrumental in shaping the policies and strategies under OPA 28, ensuring that they reflect the community's values and priorities while fostering a sustainable future for both the Rural Villages and Rural Areas of Mississippi Mills.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The survey results for the Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project under OPA 28 offer valuable insight into the priorities of residents living in the Villages and Rural Areas of Mississippi Mills. Overall, participants expressed strong support for preserving the community's heritage, natural landscapes, as well as rural and village lifestyles while emphasizing the need for improvements in infrastructure, housing, and local services.

To address these needs, **the survey highlights the importance of balanced development that promotes rural vitality, while maintaining the unique character of the Villages and Rural Areas.** The findings will help guide the development of policies under OPA 28, ensuring that future growth supports both community values and the long-term sustainability of these integral areas in Mississippi Mills.

ATTACHMENT A – SURVEY QUESTIONS

ATTACHMENT B – RESPONSES OVERVIEW



Rural Villages & Rural Vitality Survey

1. Do you live in Mississippi Mills?
☐ Yes
☐ No
2. Do you live in a Village or a Rural Area?
☐ Village
☐ Rural Area
☐ I do not live in a Village or a Rural Area
3. If so, which Village or Rural Area do you live in?
☐ Appleton Village
☐ Blakeney Village
☐ Clayton Village
☐ Pakenham Village
☐ Pakenham Ward
☐ Ramsay Ward
☐ I don't know
☐ I don't live in a Village or Rural Area
4. What do you think makes a Village unique?
☐ History / Heritage
☐ Community
☐ Size
☐ Landscape features
☐ Unique businesses
☐ Other _____
5. What do you love about the Villages and the Rural Areas in Mississippi Mills?



6. What are our residents missing in the Villages or Rural Area?
- ☐ Transportation options
 - ☐ Housing options
 - ☐ Local commercial
 - ☐ Amenities
 - ☐ Cell service/ internet options
 - ☐ Other _____
7. What kind of uses do you think are missing in the Villages?
- ☐ Residential
 - ☐ Commercial
 - ☐ Industrial
 - ☐ Employment opportunities
 - ☐ Other _____
8. What kind of uses do you think are missing in the Rural Areas?
- ☐ Residential
 - ☐ Commercial
 - ☐ Industrial
 - ☐ Employment opportunities
 - ☐ Other _____
9. Do you have any additional comments or feedback related to this Rural Villages and Rural Vitality project?
- _____
- _____
10. If you would like to receive results from this survey, please leave your contact information.
- Name: _____
- Address: _____
- Email Address: _____
11. The Municipality intends on conducting a 1 to 2 more follow-up surveys throughout the project. Please indicate whether the Municipality can send you direct links to these additional surveys.
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey!

Please return to **Almonte Old Town Hall** after completing
Address: 14 Bridge Street, Almonte
Or scan and email to: mplanner@mississippimills.ca

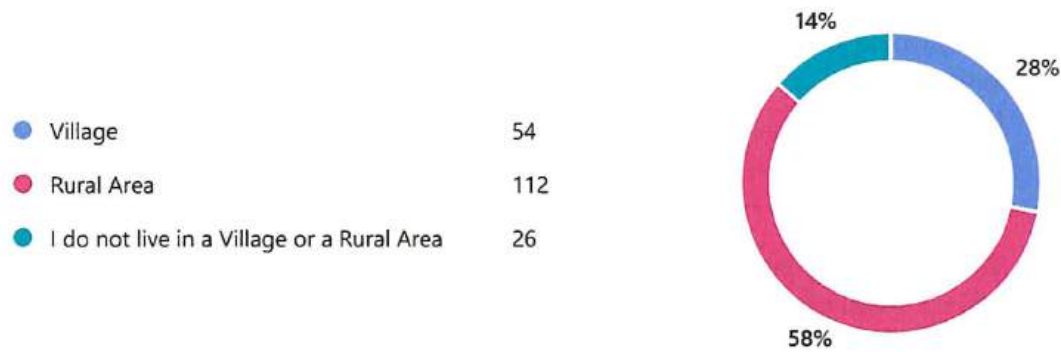
ATTACHMENT B - RESPONSES OVERVIEW



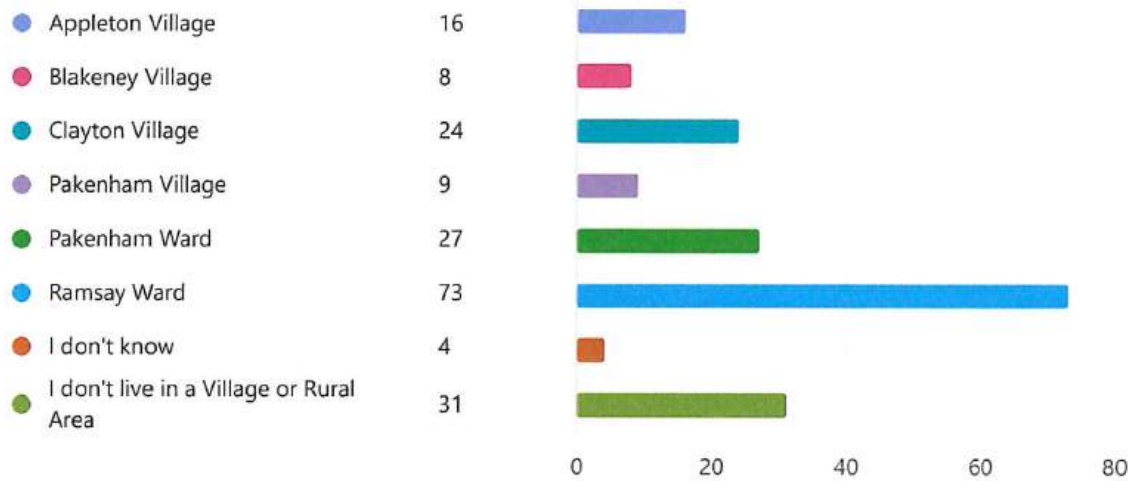
1. Do you live in Mississippi Mills?



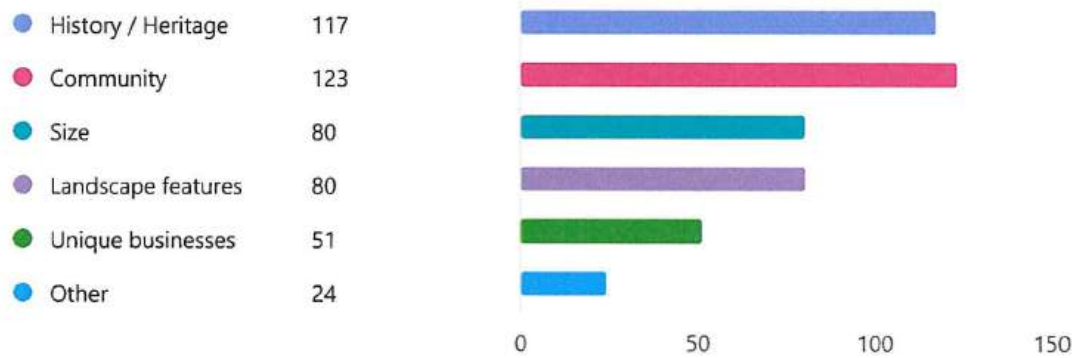
2. Do you live in a Village or a Rural Area?



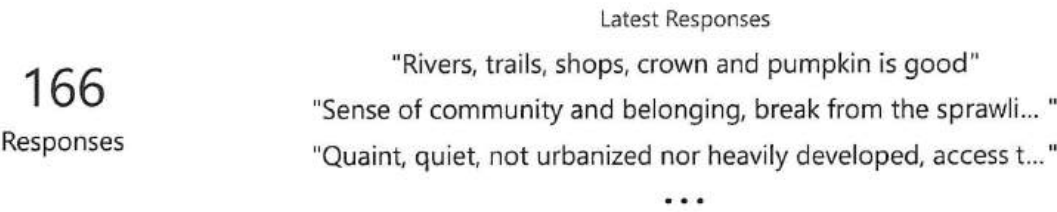
3. If so, which Village or Rural Area do you live in?



4. What do you think makes a Village unique?



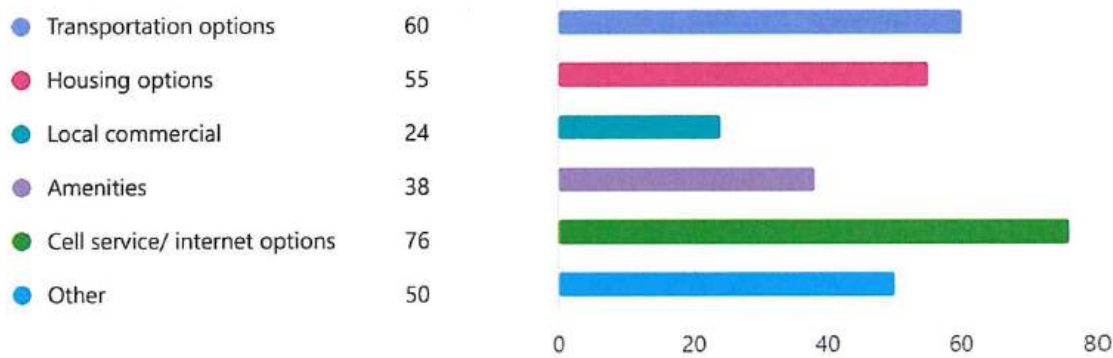
5. What do you love about the Villages and the Rural Areas in Mississippi Mills?



47 respondents (28%) answered community for this question.

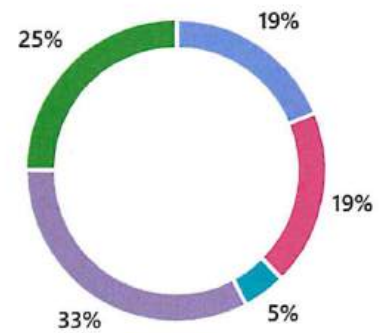


6. What are our residents missing in the Villages or Rural Area?



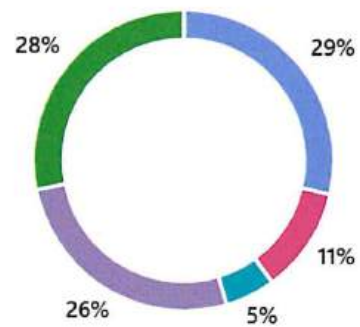
7. What kind of uses do you think are missing in the Villages?

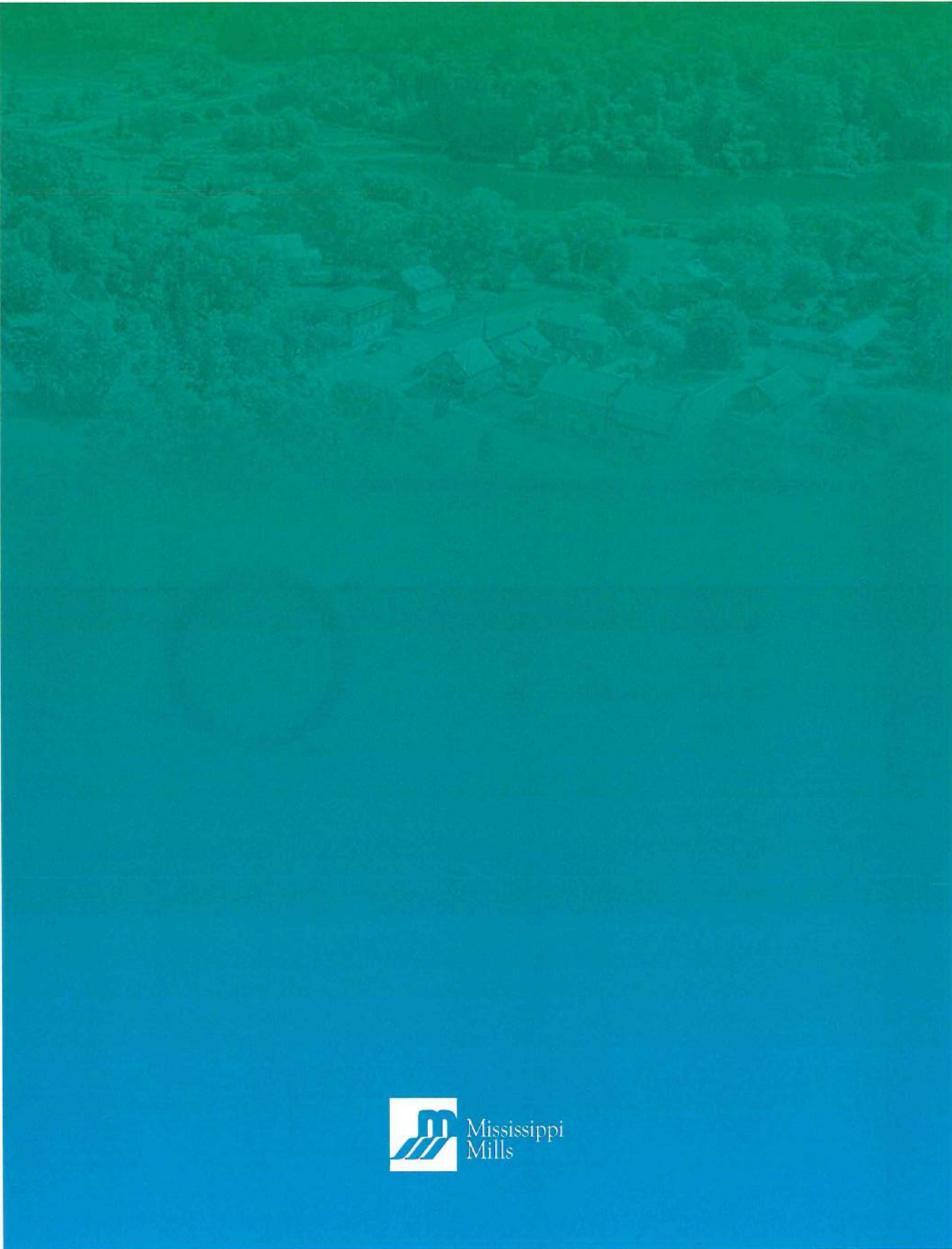
Residential	40
Commercial	40
Industrial	10
Employment opportunities	70
Other	53



8. What kind of uses do you think are missing in the Rural Areas?

Residential	53
Commercial	21
Industrial	10
Employment opportunities	49
Other	52





Mississippi
Mills



Mississippi
Mills

MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

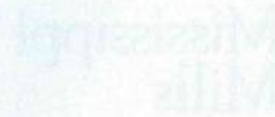
OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28
RURAL SEVERANCE POLICY REVIEW

FINAL CURRENT STATE REPORT

July 23, 2024



wsp



FINAL CURRENT STATE REPORT

OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28 RURAL SEVERANCE POLICY REVIEW

MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

REPORT (VERSION 1)

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1 INTRODUCTION

WSP understands that the Municipality of Mississippi Mills ("the Municipality") seeks to review policies for non-farm rural severances on lands designated "Rural" in the Municipality's Community Official Plan (Approved December 4, 2019, as amended)("COP"), in order to ensure that Official Plan policies reflect current planning trends. The findings of this review will support the broader Municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment 28 – Rural Villages and Vitality ("OPA 28"). The review will evaluate the existing rural severance policies in the COP against current Planning legislation and provincial policies, compare rural severance policies in similar municipalities, and recommend potential amendments to the COP policies applicable to non-farm rural severances.

This Current State Report ("Report") is intended to:

- Provide Municipal Planning staff and Council with a summary of recent changes to the Planning Act, and any effects on rural severances;
- Review the existing severance policies in the Municipality's COP which are applicable to properties designated "Rural", and examines their consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 ("PPS 2020"), the Draft Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 ("Draft PPS 2024"), and any applicable policy direction from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs ("OMAFRA");
- Examine the conformity of the existing rural severance policies to the Lanark County Sustainable Communities Official Plan ("SCOP"); and
- Review the Municipality's approved Official Plan Amendment 29 ("OPA 29") and ongoing Official Plan Amendment 33 ("OPA 33"), as well as a previously completed rural severance policy review prepared by J.L. Richards (2015), to inform potential future policy recommendations.

It should be noted that this review is focused on non-farm rural severances and does not address farm-related severances on properties located within the Rural designation or on lands designated as prime agricultural areas.

1.1 BACKGROUND – RURAL SEVERANCES REVIEW

In August 2011, the Mississippi Mills Municipal Council requested staff to review the existing rural severance policies and explore policy options to allow additional severances under specific conditions, including: (1) permitting a third severance on land holdings that existed as of July 1, 1973, where the retained lot would maintain a minimum lot size of at least 20 hectares; and (2) permitting two severances on lots that existed as of January 1, 1985. After a detailed analysis of potential severances and rural building lots, and the impact on municipal infrastructure and lot distribution, the Municipality decided to maintain the existing rural severance policies.

On January 24, 2024, the Council issued a motion directing Planning staff to reassess the existing rural severance policies, recognizing there have been changes to provincial legislation and policies, and to ensure that the policies reflect current planning trends, the evolving rural landscape and demographics, and planning objectives within the Municipality.

WSP will assist the Municipality with undertaking the review of rural severance policies, the scope of work for which will include:

- This Current State Report, to examine the existing rural severance policies in the COP as they relate to recent updates in Planning legislation, provincial policies, and County policies;
- A Comparison Report, which will review rural severance policies and best practices from other similar municipalities across Ontario, including the lower-tier municipalities in Lanark County;
- A Recommendation Report, which will provide a series of recommendations for the Municipality's consideration with respect to potential policy amendments to be included as part of OPA 28. It is anticipated that recommendations may address the number of rural lots permitted to be created, in addition to the parcel to be retained, as well as other associated issues including but not limited to forced roads, driveway locations, lot sizes, and additional residential units.

1.1.1 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28

The review of the existing rural severance policies in the Municipality's COP forms part of the broader OPA 28, a Municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment and related Zoning By-law Amendment which recognizes anticipated updated population projections from Lanark County and aims to ensure that the COP and Zoning By-law are up-to-date with current planning trends and best practices to support Mississippi Mills' rural villages and rural vitality. Through Official Plan Amendment 28 ("OPA 28"), the Municipality will conduct a vacant land assessment, a rural village commercial review, a village zoning review, and comprehensive reviews of rural and agricultural policies, including on-farm diversified uses, special rural uses (i.e., non-farm, non-residential uses), and rural severance policies.

As part of OPA 28, the Municipality will be undertaking public consultations to gather input from the community and help shape the strategic direction for rural development, focusing on enhancing the viability of rural villages and the broader rural economy. An initial Public Open House was held on July 11, 2024. Public consultation is ongoing, and a final round of public consultations is planned for September 2024.

The Draft OPA 28 and Zoning By-law Amendment will be prepared by Municipal staff from November 2024 to March 2025, at which time it will be brought to Council for consideration of approval by Municipal staff.

2 POLICY CONTEXT AND REVIEW

2.1 PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The following section considers provincial policy in relation to the Municipality's rural severance policies.

The land use planning framework in Ontario is based on a hierarchy of provincial planning legislation and land use policies and plans. The Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990, c. P.13, as amended ("Planning Act"), is the provincial legislation that sets the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 ("PPS 2020") establishes policy directions applicable to all municipalities and planning authorities across Ontario related to matters of provincial interest concerning land use planning and development, and the management and protection of resources of provincial interest and public health and safety. In May 2024, the Province released an updated draft of a proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 ("Draft PPS 2024"). At the time of this Report, the PPS 2024 is not yet in effect.

2.1.1 PLANNING ACT

The Planning Act sets out the regulatory framework for land use planning in Ontario. It describes how land uses may be planned and regulated, and which public bodies have the authority to impose policies and regulations.

The main purpose of the Planning Act, among other priorities, is to integrate matters of provincial interest into provincial and municipal planning decisions. The Act requires that all decisions be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and conform to applicable provincial plans.

In the Planning Act, a severance is a type of consent application, referred to as a consent to sever. A consent is required if a property owner wishes to subdivide a parcel of land or enter into a lease longer than 21 years. Although most municipalities with an approved Official Plan have specific policies for severances, the Planning Act provides the consent-granting authority to municipalities with tools for the decision-making process, which is further established through the policies of municipal Official Plans.

Section 53 of the Planning Act provides provisions for consent, including the criteria that must be considered for consent applications under subsection 51(24). This includes considerations such as determining if the application meets the intent of the municipal Official Plan and Zoning By-law, the suitability of the land for the proposed purpose, the shape or size of the lot, and the adequacy of services, among other criteria.

Any changes to the rural severance policies of the Community Official Plan or related Zoning By-law provisions must meet and be informed by the most current version of the Planning Act.

Recent changes to the Planning Act are summarized in **Sections 2.1.2 to 2.1.5**. While the majority of changes do not impact rural severances, the changes are provided for general information. The most significant recent change which directly impacts future rural severances is the **restriction of third-party appeal rights for consent applications**, further discussed in **Section 2.1.3**.

2.1.2 BILL 109 – MORE HOMES FOR EVERYONE ACT, 2022

The More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 (Bill 109) received Royal Assent on April 14, 2022 and made various changes to the Development Charges Act, 1997, New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017, Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and Planning Act. The primary objective of Bill 109 is to address the housing crisis by accelerating the planning and development processes across Ontario, by creating more authorities for the Minister, providing new tools for municipalities, and implementing penalties for failure to process applications quickly. One of the key amendments includes delegating the authority for site plan approvals from municipal councils to staff, a move designed to streamline the approval process. This delegation is expected to speed up housing projects, thereby increasing the housing supply in a shorter time frame.

A notable provision of Bill 109 is the introduction of mandatory application fee refunds for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, and Site Plan Control applications if they are not processed within prescribed timelines. Municipalities were required to refund fees if they fail to meet the deadlines for decisions on these applications, with refunds increasing from 50% or 100% over time. However, **these changes to the Planning Act have seen been repealed through the more recent Bill 185, as summarized in Section 2.1.4.**

2.1.3 BILL 23 – MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

The More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022, and enacted changes to a number of Provincial Acts, including: the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, Municipal Act, Conservation Authorities Act, Ontario Heritage Act, and Ontario Land Tribunal Act. Additionally, there are planned changes to O. Reg. 232/18 regarding inclusionary zoning, changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, and to the Ontario Building Code. This Act builds on the efforts of Bill 109, adopting a more aggressive approach to removing barriers to housing construction and reducing costs for developers. Key changes to the Planning Act include:

Permitting Additional Residential Units

Changes to Sections 16, 17, 22, 34 and 35 of the Planning Act, direct municipalities to implement policies and regulations that permit up to three (3) residential units in a single dwelling, or a residential unit in an ancillary building when the primary dwelling contains no more than two (2) residential units. The changes do not permit appeals with regard to Official Plan policies and zoning provisions that authorize additional residential units in serviced

residential areas.

Limiting Site Plan Control

The Planning Act currently establishes the right for municipalities to enact a site plan control area. Bill 23 amends the Act to exclude development of no more than 10 residential units from site plan control. In addition, site plan control may no longer consider the exterior design of buildings except as it relates to sustainable design, the protection of adjoining lands, and matters of health and safety. See also **Section 2.1.4** for further amendments related to site plan control enacted through Bill 97.

Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications

Section 51 of the Planning Act is amended to remove the requirements to hold a public meeting prior to approval of a Draft Plan of Subdivision application.

Appeal Rights and Planning Responsibilities for Conservation Authorities

Under a new Section 1(4.1) of the Planning Act, Conservation Authorities lose their appeal rights for Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, and amendments, as well as interim control by-laws, minor variances, **consents**, and plans of subdivision, except where the appeal relates to Natural Hazard policies as per Section 3.1 of the PPS, 2020 or any successive policies (excluding wildland fire policies).

Additionally, The Conservation Authorities Act, 1990, is amended to limit the purview of Conservation Authorities to focus on natural hazards and groundwater. The amendment further limits Conservation Authorities' responsibilities to review and comment on planning applications, either on behalf of the municipality or on their own.

Restricted Third-Party Appeal Rights – Consent and Minor Variance Applications

The Bill amends the Planning Act to restrict third-party appeal rights for **consent** and minor variance applications, limiting this right to a "specified person" as defined in the Planning Act. This term includes specific entities such as utility companies, oil and natural gas pipeline operators, railway companies, and telecommunication infrastructure operators. This change effectively narrows the ability of other third parties to appeal decisions related to these planning instruments, focusing appeal rights primarily on the applicant, the relevant municipality or approval authority, the Minister, and the specified public bodies who made submissions prior to the decision. The definition of "specified person" has been further amended through Bill 185, discussed in **Section 2.1.5**.

2.1.4 BILL 97 – HELPING HOMEBUYERS, PROTECTING TENANTS ACT, 2023

On April 6, 2023, the Ontario Government tabled Bill 97 – Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023. Bill 97 amends a number of Provincial Acts, including the Planning Act, Municipal Act, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Act, Development Charges Act,

Building Code Act, Residential Tenancies Act, and City of Toronto Act. On June 8, 2023, Bill 97 received Royal Assent.

Bill 97 amends changes made to the Planning Act through Bill 23 to exclude development for residential purposes on a parcel of land from site plan control, if that parcel of land will contain no more than 10 residential units, unless the parcel of land includes any land in a prescribed area. O. Reg. 254/23 identifies the following prescribed areas:

- Any area within 300 metres of a railway line, other than certain exclusions specified in the O. Reg.; and
- Any area that is within 120 metres of a wetland, the shoreline of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System, an inland lake, or a river or stream valley that has depressional features associated with a river or stream, whether or not it contains a watercourse.

2.1.5 BILL 185 – CUTTING RED TAPE TO BUILD MORE HOMES ACT, 2024

Bill 185, enacted on June 6, 2024, introduces substantial changes aimed at accelerating housing development by simplifying the planning and approval processes. This legislation amends multiple acts, including the Planning Act, to reduce barriers and streamline procedures, thereby facilitating the creation of new housing. Notably, it resulted in significant changes to the ability to file appeals of Planning Act decisions to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). Key changes include:

Pre-Application Consultation Requirements

Municipalities are not permitted to require pre-application consultation meetings with development applicants for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, site plan approval, and draft plans of subdivision; these meetings are now voluntary. If an approval authority deems an application to be incomplete, applicants can also bring motions to the OLT before filing an application, which can decide whether a requirement to provide certain information as part of a complete application is reasonable. However, Official Plans can still provide policies to require certain information to be submitted with an application.

Fee Refunds

The application fee refund requirement introduced through Bill 109 for failure to decide on Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control applications is repealed. Application fees will not need to be refunded by municipalities. However, the timelines remain for rights to appeal: 60 days after receipt of a Site Plan, 90 days after receipt of a Zoning By-law Amendment and 120 days after receipt of an Official Plan Amendment. The previous refund rules apply to any application received before the changes in Bill 185 come into effect.

Changes to Appeal Rights – Third party appeals

Third party appeals are no longer permitted for municipally approved Official Plans, Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-laws, and Zoning By-law Amendments; only appeals by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and (where applicable) the approval authority, “specified

persons”, public bodies, and registered owners of land that an Official Plan or Zoning By-law applies to, provided oral or written submissions were made to the municipality prior to adoption. “Specified persons” now includes NAV Canada, airport operators, aggregate and environmental compliance permit holders with sites within 300 metres and the owners of any such sites, as well as power generation corporations, oil and gas utilities, railway companies, and telecommunications companies, for example.

Changes to Appeal Rights – Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments that propose to add land to an area of settlement can now be appealed to the OLT.

2.1.6 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT, 2020

The current Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS 2020”) came into effect on May 1, 2020 and replaced the former PPS, 2014. The PPS 2020 provides high-level land use planning policy direction for all municipalities across Ontario on matters of provincial interest.

Section 1.1.4 of the PPS sets out policies for “rural areas”, defined as “a system of lands within municipalities that may include rural settlement areas, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas.” **The PPS further defines “rural lands” as lands which are located outside settlement areas and which are outside prime agricultural areas, which is consistent with the lands designated “Rural” in the Municipality’s COP.**

Policy 1.1.4.1 supports healthy, integrated and viable rural areas by:

- a. building upon rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets;
- b. promoting regeneration, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites;
- c. accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas;
- d. encouraging the conservation and redevelopment of existing rural housing stock on rural lands;**
- e. using rural infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently;**
- f. promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities through goods and services, including value-added products and the sustainable management or use of resources;
- g. providing opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism, including leveraging historical, cultural, and natural assets;
- h. conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature; and
- i. providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas, in accordance with policy 2.3.

Policy 1.1.4.2 provides that in rural areas, rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted. **Further, per Policy 1.1.4.4, growth and development may be directed to rural lands in accordance with Policy 1.1.5.**

Policy 1.1.5 sets out specific policies for rural lands in municipalities. More specifically, **Policy 1.1.5.2 (c) sets out permitted uses**, including “residential development, **including lot creation**, that is locally appropriate”.

It can be interpreted that the PPS is generally supportive of lot creation in rural areas, if it is consistent with other applicable policies for development on rural lands, including compatibility with the rural landscape and ability to be sustained by rural services levels (Policy 1.1.5.4), and compliance of new lands, including the creation of lots, with the minimum distance separation formulae (Policy 1.1.5.8).

The creation of new residential lots in rural areas may be limited by the policies noted above, due to the existence of livestock facilities and application of required minimum distance separation formulae. Further, the creation of new residential lots may limit the ability of existing livestock facilities to expand or new facilities to be established. Any changes to rural severance policies must consider impacts to such uses.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES

Section 1.6 of the PPS 2020 sets out policies pertaining to Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities. This section directs municipalities to provide infrastructure and public services in an efficient manner which shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management. The policies of this section establish a hierarchy of preferred forms of servicing (Policies 1.6.6.2 through 1.6.6.5), and provide that planning authorities may allow lot creation only if there is confirmation of sufficient servicing capacity, including for hauled sewage from private communal and individual on-site sewage services.

All municipal Official Plan policies, including the Municipality’s OPA 28, as well as individual development applications made under the Planning Act, are required to be consistent with the PPS 2020.

2.1.7 DRAFT PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT, 2024

On April 10, 2024, Ontario released an updated draft of the proposed Provincial Planning Statement (“Draft PPS 2024”), following the initial draft issued for public comment in April 2023. This updated draft includes mostly minor changes from the 2023 version.

If adopted, the Draft PPS 2024 will replace both “A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe” and the PPS 2020. This integration aims to create a single, housing-focused land use planning document designed to expedite government approval processes. While some policies and definitions in the Draft PPS 2024 are entirely new, many are modifications of those from the PPS 2020, reflecting the Province’s goal of supporting increased housing development. Once approved, all municipal planning documents and decisions on planning matters must be

consistent with the Draft PPS 2024, as mandated by subsections 3(5) and 3(6) of the Planning Act.

At this time, the policies in the Draft PPS 2024 do not contain significant changes to the PPS 2020 policies related to rural lands. Policy 2.6(1)(c) permits residential development, including lot creation, where site conditions are suitable for the provision of appropriate sewage and water services. Policy 2.6(2) continues to promote development that can be sustained by rural service levels, and Policy 2.6(5) continues to require that new lands uses, including the creation of lots, comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

Generally, draft policies pertaining to consents and lot creation have only been changed to ensure that consistent language is used throughout the document. The Draft PPS 2024 remains generally supportive of lot creation on rural lands, subject to the required servicing and provided that efficient development is maintained.

2.2 ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS POLICIES

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is responsible for the agriculture, food, and rural sectors of Ontario and works to promote, support, and protect the agri-food sector and vibrant rural economies. OMAFRA has developed several guidelines to this effect, including the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, 2016 (Publication 851). This document provides important guidance for municipalities in permitting uses in agricultural areas and for implementing the minimum distance separation formulae.

Released in 2016, the guidelines assist decision-makers, farmers, and others in interpreting the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS, 2020) and outline the range of uses that may be permitted in prime agricultural areas. Generally, this document aligns with the policies found in the 2020 PPS, which discourage lot creation on prime agricultural land. It also provides additional criteria for the instances where a severance might be accepted on a farm or in prime agricultural land. However, this document does not address non-farm severances on rural lands, outside of prime agricultural areas.

2.3 LANARK COUNTY POLICY CONTEXT

Lanark County adopted its Sustainable Communities Official Plan ("SCOP") on June 27, 2012 and it was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on June 18, 2013. The SCOP combines an Official Plan under the Planning Act with an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, and guides development and land use planning in the County. It sets out the vision, goals, objectives, land use policies, and Schedule of land use designations guiding the County's physical, social, and economic growth over a 20-year planning horizon. It also provides a framework for coordinating and evaluating development applications, such as severances, subdivisions, and zoning amendments.

2.3.1 RURAL AREAS

Section 3.0 of the SCOP provides policies for the Rural Areas within the County, designated as “Rural Policy Area” on Schedule A, and composed of lands located outside of Settlement Areas, as well as natural resource areas and natural heritage areas. Rural areas are not the principal sector for development, as population and employment growth is intended to be directed to Settlement Areas identified in local municipal Official Plans.

Section 3.3.3 of the SCOP contains policies for lot creation in rural areas. More specifically, it provides that **“the creation of new lots in rural areas shall be limited in nature and shall generally occur through plans of subdivision or consent. The use of the Planning Act’s consent provisions may be appropriate under certain circumstances. The criteria identified for land division by consent in local Official Plans shall also apply”**.

Section 3.3.4.2 directs that development in rural areas shall generally proceed on the basis of private water and waste water systems, while Section 3.3.4.3 also permits the use of communal services which are not connected to full municipal sewage and/or water services, provided that they are for the common use of more than five units / lots and are owned, operated, and managed by the municipality, another public body, or a condominium corporation or single owner which has entered into an agreement with the municipality or public body, pursuant to Section 51 of the Planning Act.

Additionally, Section 3.3.4.5 directs that local Councils shall regulate rural residential and non-residential development through the development of local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws, and that **the use of subdivision and condominium control shall apply, as well as the granting of consents by the appropriate consent granting authority**. Consents, among the other development controls, shall be based on the following criteria:

1. permit and zone a range of housing types and sizes;
2. ensure adequate buffering of residential areas from incompatible non-residential uses through separation distance, landscaping or other appropriate means;
3. identify and zone permitted non-residential uses;
4. permit accessory apartments in accordance with Section 16(3) of the Planning Act;
5. ensure the protection of resources from incompatible uses through appropriate setbacks and the use of Minimum Distance Separation formulae where appropriate;
6. ensure the protection of natural heritage features.

The policies state that the minimum lot area required in rural areas shall be based on the area required to ensure adequate private water and septic wastewater disposal systems, and will be set out in local Zoning By-laws. Further, local municipalities may require larger lot areas than may be required for servicing, in order to maintain the character of a community.

Local municipal Official Plan policies regarding rural severances (i.e., consents) must conform to the policies of the SCOP. Lanark County, through an appointed Land Division Committee, is the approval authority for the issuance of consents.

2.4 MUNICIPAL POLICY CONTEXT

The following section summarizes the policy context within the Municipality of Mississippi Mills, including policies related to rural severances and lot creation in the Municipality's Community Official Plan (Approved December 4, 2019) ("COP"), as well as relevant OPAs and previous policy studies pertaining to rural severances.

2.4.1 MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS COMMUNITY OFFICIAL PLAN (DECEMBER 4, 2019)

Section 3.3 Rural Policies of the COP sets out policies for lands located within the Rural designation, which do not include prime agricultural lands which have been placed in the Agricultural designation. The preamble identifies that over the last 20 years, there has been a significant influx of urbanites into the rural areas of the Municipality, on severed non-farm residential lots and in rural estate subdivisions. The COP also acknowledges the pressure for residential development on rural lands, and that it can be beneficial to the municipality provided it is limited and does not encroach upon agricultural operations, other resource-based industries, and environmental features.

Section 3.3.2 Permitted Uses of the COP permits a variety of rural land uses within the Rural designation, including non-farm residential dwellings and accessory uses, including garden suites, second dwelling units, home-based businesses, group homes, and bed and breakfast establishments.

Section 3.3.3 contains general policies for the Rural designation and Section 3.3.4 sets out policies for development adjacent to locally significant agricultural operations with the designation, including the following requirements relevant to rural severances:

- New buildings and structures, or the expansion or change of use of existing structures, shall be subject to the appropriate Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) calculations (3.3.3(1));
- New non-farm buildings and structures on lands adjacent to the Agricultural designation shall be setback 150 m from the boundary of that designation (3.3.3.(2)); however, development may be permitted on existing lots of record where this setback cannot be achieved, subject to approval from the Committee of Adjustment; and
- New non-farm buildings shall be setback 30 m from lands which are being utilized as part of an active agricultural operations, and the creation of new lots shall ensure there is an appropriate building envelope outside of this 30 m setback. However, on existing lots

of record where this setback cannot be achieved, development may take place within this setback, subject to approval from the Committee of Adjustment.

Section 3.3.5 contains policies to guide residential development within the Rural designation, including:

- Permitting one single detached dwelling and accessory structures on a lot having frontage on an open and maintained road (3.3.5(1));
- Restricting the severance of a permitted second dwelling from the balance of the property (3.3.5(2));
- Requiring that all residential dwellings be subject to the Minimum Distance Separation calculation (3.3.5(4));
- Consideration for visual impact of the development of a residential dwelling and associated accessory structures on the surrounding rural character, including compliance with setback requirements from the road as set out in the Zoning By-law (3.3.5(6)); and
- Requiring development to take place in accordance with the Rural Design Guidelines of the COP (Section 4.2.3)(3.3.3(7)).

Section 3.3.6 addresses severances and lot creation, and imposes various policy limitations. The COP regulates the creation of **rural non-farm residential lots through severance (3.3.6(4)). Each land holding shall be limited to two (2) lots plus a remnant lot (i.e., retained lot)**, except where otherwise provided for in the COP. A holding is defined as a parcel of land held in a conveyable ownership as of July 1, 1973 or an original township lot. A third severance for a non-farm residential lot may be considered if it is for severing an accessory detached dwelling built between 1998 and 2005 that is deemed surplus to a farming operation and has its own well, septic system, and entrance. Consents for boundary adjustments, partial discharges of mortgages, easements, or rights-of-way do not count towards the severance limit.

Section 3.3.6(5) provides that, for rural residential lots, permitted uses include single dwellings, home-based businesses, garden suites, bed and breakfasts, and limited agricultural activities.

Related policies include:

- Driveways must be placed at least 150 m from neighboring driveways on the same roadside, though exceptions can be made based on various planning considerations;
- Each lot must be able to support the proposed development with private services and have frontage on a maintained public road, with direct access onto a County Road or Provincial Highway being discouraged;
- The minimum lot size is one hectare (1 ha), exclusive of lands within designated flood plains, and the potential for Council to require larger lots depending on site conditions;
- A required 30 m setback for residential developments from active agricultural operations;

- No adverse impacts on significant landscape features, vegetation, and wildlife habitats, or other significant natural resources;
- Shared driveways for two (2) or more lots may be permitted under certain conditions; and
- Residential uses including accessory structures, private or communal wells and sewage disposal facilities, and access roads are not permitted on prime agricultural land or where there are aggregate resources, wetlands, floodplains or significant habitat of endangered or threatened species.

Section 3.3.7 provides policies related to cluster lot development, defined as a grouping of three (3) to five (5) lots (not including the retained parcel) created by consent for rural non-farm residential development. **This is a new development approach and treated as a pilot project, with a maximum number of 40 residential lots which can be created.**

The COP states that the “number of lots permitted in any specific cluster lot development proposal shall be determined based on the number of lots which were previously severed from the original township lot. The number of previous severances shall include all lots, including those created prior to July 1973:

- a. If an original township lot has had one (1) or fewer previous severances, a cluster lot development proposal involving the maximum of five lots could be considered.
- b. Where the original township lot has had two (2) previous severances, a cluster lot development proposal involving four lots could be considered.
- c. Where the original township lot has had three (3) previous severances, a cluster lot development proposal involving the minimum three lots could be considered.
- d. In no case shall a cluster lot development proposal, plus previous severances result in a situation where there are more than six lots created from an original township lot, excluding the remnant parcel.

The establishment of cluster lot development shall be discouraged within 1 km of the Almonte urban boundary. Further, if there is an original township lot which has not had any previous severances, the property owner may be able to pursue the creation of lots under severance policies of Section 3.3.6 or a cluster lot development proposal, but not both.

Section 3.3.7 contains detailed policies applicable to cluster lot development proposals, addressing minimum lot area of the parent property, internal road requirements, servicing requirements, density of development, placement of dwellings, buffering between active agricultural operations, ownership of lands, site plan requirements, among other matters.

The existing cluster lot development policies in the COP are currently being reviewed by the Municipality through the ongoing OPA 33. The Draft text of OPA 33 maintains the majority of the existing policies and removes reference to the policies as a pilot project; it contains some modifications and additions, such as proposed policies required holding zones for new cluster

lot development subject to specific requirements. As such, **the review of rural severance policies as part of the scope of OPA 28 will not include a review of rural residential cluster lot development, but may include recommendations which identify that cluster lot development should not occur through the consent process.**

2.4.2 MISSISSIPPI MILLS RURAL LOT CREATION POLICIES COMMUNITY OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW REPORT (J.L. RICHARDS, 2015)

The Mississippi Mills Rural Lot Creation Policies Community Official Plan Review (May 12, 2015) was prepared by J.L. Richards ("J.L. Richards Review") to review the current rural severance policies in the COP and undertake a background analysis of previous severances and GIS calculation/simulation of the effects of implementing the current policies to determine the number of potential new lots and where they might be located based on locational criteria. The evaluation involved a two-step process where properties were initially screened for eligibility under existing policies and then further refined based on developmental constraints. A detailed database was created from severances over the last 41 years, using several environmental and land use filters applied by Municipal staff and J.L. Richards.

As a result of the J.L. Richards Review, the following severance options were proposed:

- **Option 1 - No change:** This option would retain the current policy that allows two (2) severances per land holding held in a conveyable ownership as of July 1, 1973. For parcels, within the Municipality's Natural Heritage Plan, the lot creation would be limited to one (1) severance.
- **Option 2 - Permit an additional severance on a lot where the retained parcel is greater than 20 ha:** In addition to the existing policies, a third severance could be considered where retained parcels maintain a lot area larger than 20 hectares if they have been held in a conveyable ownership as of July 1, 1973, complying with all other existing policies.
- **Option 3 - Move the Land Holding Date from July 1, 1973 to January 1, 1985:** This option maintains a maximum number of two (2) severances plus the retained lot, with the land holding creation date being updated from July 1, 1973 to January 1, 1985. Parcels of lands falling within the Natural Heritage Plan would be limited to one (1) severance.
- **Option 4 - Land Holding Date of January 1, 1985 with Natural Heritage Area (Lots with a min. 20 ha):** This option proposed a maximum of two (2) severances plus a retained lot, with a land holding creation date of January 1, 1985, with the subject lot having a minimum lot area of 20 ha. Parcels of lands falling within the Natural Heritage Plan would be limited to one (1) severance.

The J.L. Richards Review emphasized that these options aim to manage and support rural development effectively while balancing municipal sustainability and respecting local infrastructure and ward-specific growth impacts. Options that increased the number of

permitted severances and changed the land holding date represented options in response to Council's desire to explore policy changes that deviated from and eased up current severance restrictions to create additional lots while addressing certain concerns, in recognition that there are owners of existing rural residential lots that would not seek severances and would not contribute to rural growth opportunities through lot creation.

Ultimately, only Options 1, 2, and 3 were reviewed and staff recommended maintaining the current rural severance policies. No changes were implemented to the existing policies in the COP.

2.4.3 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 29 - PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREA DESIGNATION REVIEW

In the 2006 COP, the Prime Agricultural Area designation consisted mostly of Canada Land Inventory Class 1 to 3 soils and active farming areas following consultation with area residents and OMAFRA. As part of the Municipality's OPA 21 (Five Year Review), OMAFRA staff were consulted to discuss the need to update the Prime Agricultural Areas and related policies. The Agricultural review was deferred from OPA 21 and completed through the separate OPA 29, adopted on September 20, 2022. Through OPA 29, the Municipality identified Prime Agricultural Areas where prime agricultural lands predominate, and was assisted by J.L. Richards & Associated Limited (J.L. Richards) in researching past Agricultural Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) projects, as well as provincial guidelines, and developing an alternative LEAR methodology for Mississippi Mills in collaboration with OMAFRA and the Municipality's Agricultural Advisory Committee.

The effect of OPA 29 is to repeal and replace Schedule A – Rural Land Uses to the COP and make certain policy revisions to the COP to be in full force and effect on January 5, 2024. Schedule A has been revised to update the Agriculture designation and Rural designation as a result of the LEAR and redesignation of certain properties. With respect to lot creation (severance) potential, the change in designation from Rural to Agriculture or vice versa impacts a landowner's ability to sever non-farm residential lots if the landowner has an original township lot (as of July 1, 1973). The Agriculture designation limits lot creation to surplus farm dwelling severances, farm consolidations and severances that generally meet the minimum 40 ha agricultural lot area.

OPA 29 further results in the deletion of the Rural – Agricultural Overlay and related policies in the COP applicable to lands that were considered to be locally significant agricultural operations located outside the Agriculture designation, and subject to policies in Section 3.3 of the COP requiring new non-farm buildings to maintain a 30 m setback from active agricultural operations or seek Committee of Adjustment approval. OPA 29 deemed the Overlay and related policies unnecessary with respect to the implementation of setbacks from active agricultural uses, as there are other land use planning tools such as Minimum Distance Separation guidelines and zoning setbacks that enforce suitable setbacks between non-farm residential uses and agricultural uses.

2.5 MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS ZONING BY-LAW (OFFICE CONSOLIDATION MARCH 2020)

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills Zoning By-law (Office Consolidation March 2020) (“ZBL”) establishes provisions to guide development on all properties within the Municipality, and sets out general provisions applicable to all development, as well as a series of Zones and associated permitted uses and lot and building requirements (e.g., minimum lot areas, setbacks). **For the purposes of this Current State Report, the zoning requirements for the Rural Zone (RU) Zone have been reviewed, which is the Zone that implements the Rural designation in the Municipality’s COP. Any future severances on lands zoned RU will be required to comply with the requirements of the ZBL.**

The following uses are permitted in the RU Zone:

- Detached dwelling
- Detached dwelling accessory to an agricultural use
- Garden suite
- Group home type A within a non-farm single detached dwelling
- Accessory apartment
- Agricultural uses
- Bed and breakfast
- Conservation areas
- Forestry
- Hobby farm
- Home-based business - domestic and household arts
- Home-based business - professional use
- Home-based business - rural business
- Home-based business - farm vacation
- Hunt or fishing camp
- Pit, Class A
- Sugarbush

For the purposes of a lot severance in the RU Zone, the following relevant performance standards are highlighted in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Zoning Performance Standards for Lot Sizes

Provision	Rural Use	Agricultural Use	Non-Farm Residential
Lot Area, Minimum (ha)	10	40	1
Lot Frontage, Minimum	150 m	150 m	45 m
Lot Coverage, Maximum	5%	5%	15%

3 CONCLUSION

This Current State Report provides an overview of the legislative and policy context applicable to the review of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills' existing non-farm rural severance policies as part of the broader OPA 28, which is focused on supporting Rural Villages and rural vitality. This Report finds that the existing municipal policies meet the requirements of the Planning Act, and are consistent with the current PPS 2020 and Draft PPS 2024 policies relevant to rural lot creation. However, there is potential for modifications to the existing policies to effectively promote rural development consistent with current planning trends and best practices, while respecting requirements related to preservation of rural character, adequate servicing, and avoidance of adverse impacts to natural resources and the natural environment which will be explored in forthcoming reports.

Recent changes to provincial legislation, including Bill 23 and Bill 185, enable municipalities to streamline planning processes and reduce bureaucratic barriers to facilitate timely and more efficient development, however, it is important that municipal Official Plans contain policies that direct this development to appropriate areas and consider the implications of increased rural lot creation on settlement areas, adjacent agricultural lands and natural areas, and overall rural character.

In conclusion, the findings and subsequent recommendations from the review of rural severance policies in Mississippi Mills and other comparative Ontario municipalities are intended to provide a solid foundation for potential amendments to the severance policies applicable within the Rural designation in the COP to be considered through OPA 28. The forthcoming Comparison Report and Recommendation Report will build on this Current State Report, to provide a fulsome overview of best practices and policy options for review by Municipal staff to ensure that Mississippi Mills' rural areas not only thrive but also maintain their unique character in the face of ongoing development pressures.



Mississippi
Mills

MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28
RURAL SEVERANCE POLICY REVIEW

FINAL COMPARISON REPORT

October 21, 2024





FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28 RURAL SEVERANCE POLICY REVIEW

MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS
REPORT (VERSION 3)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills ("the Municipality") is reviewing policies for non-farm rural severances on lands designated "Rural" in the Municipality's Community Official Plan (the "COP"; Approved December 4, 2019, as amended), to ensure that Official Plan policies reflect current planning trends. It should be noted that this review does not address farm-related severances on properties located within the Rural designation, or on lands designated as Agricultural (prime agricultural areas). The findings of this policy review will support the broader Municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment 28 – Rural Villages and Vitality ("OPA 28") currently being undertaken.

WSP was retained by the Municipality to assist with undertaking the review of rural severance policies, the scope of work for which includes:

- A Current State Report (July 23, 2024), which examines the existing rural severance policies in the COP as they relate to recent updates in Planning legislation, provincial policies, and County policies;
- A Comparison Report (October 21, 2024), which reviews rural severance policies and best practices from other similar municipalities across Ontario, including the lower-tier municipalities in Lanark County; and
- This Recommendations Report, which represents the final phase of this review, and provides a series of recommendations for potential policy amendments to be included as part of OPA 28, for the consideration of Municipal Planning staff and Council.

The recommendations in this Report are based on the review of existing rural severance policies in the COP against current Planning legislation and provincial policies, and comparing rural severance policies in similar municipalities. They include amendments to the severance policies applicable to lands within the Rural designation, as well as amendments which are more housekeeping in nature to remove repetitive policies and clarify policies to assist with implementation. The recommendations address the number of rural lots permitted to be created, as well as other associated issues such as forced roads, driveway locations, lot sizes, and additional residential units.

1.1 BACKGROUND – RURAL SEVERANCE REVIEW

In August 2011, the Mississippi Mills Municipal Council directed staff to review the existing rural severance policies and explore policy options to allow additional severances under specific conditions, including the permission of:

- (1) a third severance on land holdings that existed as of July 1, 1973, where the retained lot would maintain a minimum lot size of at least 20 hectares; and
- (2) two severances on lots that existed as of January 1, 1985.

After a detailed analysis of potential severances and rural building lots, and the impact on municipal infrastructure and lot distribution, the Municipality decided to maintain the existing rural severance policies.

On January 24, 2024, Council passed a motion directing Planning staff to reassess the existing rural severance policies, since changes have been made to provincial legislation and policies. This is to ensure that the policies reflect current planning trends, the evolving rural landscape and demographics, and planning objectives within the Municipality.

Official Plan Amendment 33 was adopted by Council on August 27, 2024, and was informed by the "Limited Service Residential and Private Roads Interim Control By-law Study Recommendations Report" (Prepared by Parsons, December 2023). The purpose of OPA 33 was to update and refine the policy framework for development on private roads within Mississippi Mills. The OPA includes revisions to the cluster lot development policies within the Municipality of Mississippi Mills COP to ensure that future developments on private roads are evaluated consistently and that they are compatible with the existing rural landscape and service levels. For clarity, the Municipality's cluster lot development policies do not form part of the Municipality's current review of rural severances.

1.1.1 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 28

The review of the existing rural severance policies in the Municipality's COP forms part of a broader Municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment 28 ("OPA 28"), and a related Zoning By-law Amendment. OPA 28 is informed by updated population projections from Lanark County, and aims to ensure that the COP and Zoning By-law are up-to-date with current planning trends and best practices to support Mississippi Mills' rural villages and rural vitality. Through OPA 28, the Municipality will conduct a vacant land assessment, a rural village commercial review, a village zoning review, and comprehensive reviews of rural and agricultural policies, including on-farm diversified uses, special rural uses (i.e., non-farm, non-residential uses), and rural severance policies.

As part of OPA 28, the Municipality will be undertaking public engagement to gather input from the community, and help shape the strategic direction for rural development, focusing on enhancing the viability of rural villages and the broader rural economy. An initial Public Open House was held on July 11, 2024. Public engagement, including an online survey, is ongoing, and a final round of public engagement activities is planned for October-November 2024.

In July 2024, Lanark County released draft urban residential land supply and land needs to 2051, including draft housing growth projections. For Mississippi Mills, it is forecasted that annual permanent housing growth between 2021 and 2051 will comprise approximately 154 units per year, for a total of 4,630 residential units to the year 2051 (Watson, Lanark County 2023 Growth Study, Area Municipal Discussion #3, Urban Land Needs Presentation, July 2024). While the majority of this growth will likely be accommodated within the urban settlement areas, there is some opportunity to accommodate housing growth within the rural area. The proposed policy updates through OPA 28 can contribute to supporting some rural lot creation and the availability of housing options required to accommodate this anticipated growth.

The Draft OPA 28 and Zoning By-law Amendment will be prepared by Municipal staff in 2025, at which time the Amendments will be brought to Council by Municipal staff for consideration of adoption.

2 KEY FINDINGS

2.1 PROVINCIAL AND COUNTY PLANNING CONTEXT

The Current State Report (July 23, 2024) reviewed the recent changes to the Planning Act and its impact on rural severances. It also reviewed the Municipality's existing severance policies for rural areas,

assessing their alignment with various provincial and local policies, including the Provincial Policy Statement (2020 and 2024), Lanark County's Sustainable Communities Official Plan ("SCOP"), and ongoing amendments to the Municipality's Official Plan.

The key findings from the Current State Report indicate that Mississippi Mills' existing non-farm rural severance policies comply with the Planning Act and are consistent with both the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020 and Draft PPS 2024. However, there are opportunities for improvements to the COP policies to better support rural development while maintaining rural character, ensuring adequate services, and protecting natural resources. The policies of the SCOP direct that rural development is limited, with the most growth being directed to Settlement Areas, and that rural lot creation may be permitted through subdivisions or consents. The SCOP emphasizes private or communal servicing, protection of natural heritage, and maintaining rural character. Rural severance policies of the lower-tier municipalities must conform to the SCOP, and consents must be approved by Lanark County's Land Division Committee.

2.2 COMPARABLE MUNICIPAL PRACTICES

The Comparison Report (October 21, 2024) examined how six municipalities of a comparable population size and urban-rural character across Ontario manage non-farm rural severances. The specific policy approaches to managing non-farm rural severances differ across municipalities, which is reflective of local priorities and challenges. Common themes emerging from the analysis included protecting rural character, implementing strict severance requirements, and ensuring consistency with broader zoning regulations. These municipal practices provide valuable insights for shaping policies that support sustainable rural development.

2.2.1 MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH GRENVILLE

The rural severance policies of Section 9 of the Municipality of North Grenville Official Plan (Adopted May 14, 2028; Approved November 22, 2018) prioritizes the preservation of rural character and landscape as follows:

- Severances are restricted to one new lot per existing land holding (as of June 28, 1999), with a minimum lot size of 1 hectare in rural areas.
- The Municipality considers environmental impacts, cumulative development effects, and existing infrastructure capacity before approving any severances.
- New lots must have a minimum frontage of 60 metres to maintain the rural character and ensure access.

In this case, the key policy approach is a limit of one (1) severance permitted per land holding, and an increased focus on environmental impact and infrastructure assessment.

2.2.2 TOWNSHIP OF KING

The Township of King Official Plan (Adopted September 23, 2019 and Approved September 24, 2020) has some of the most restrictive policies regarding rural severances of the municipalities examined. More specifically, residential lot creation in rural areas is prohibited unless it supports public or non-profit uses, such as infrastructure or conservation purposes. Additionally, the following requirements must be met:

- No severances for estate residential or multiple-unit developments are permitted, effectively preserving rural areas from large-scale subdivision projects. (Section 6.4.4).

Ultimately, the Township of King maintains their rural and agricultural lands by prohibiting land fragmentation.

2.2.3 TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH FRONTENAC

The Township of South Frontenac Official Plan (Adopted September 5, 2000; Approved April 30, 2022; Consolidated January 23, 2024) has more permissive rural severance policies, but includes more prescriptive requirements in terms of the location of severances, as noted below:

- A maximum of three (3) rural residential severances from lots existing as of September 5, 2000 are permitted, ensuring limited lot creation on rural lands. (Policy 5.7.4 (c)).
- Minimum lot sizes for non-waterfront lots are 0.8 hectares (2 acres), with a required frontage of 76 metres (250 feet). Waterfront lots must be a minimum of 1 hectare (2.5 acres), with 91 metres (300 feet) of water frontage. (Policy 5.7.4 (a)).

By enforcing minimum lot sizes, frontage requirements and strict limitations on road extensions, South Frontenac facilitates some rural development while preserving the integrity and serviceability of its rural landscapes.

2.2.4 LOYALIST TOWNSHIP

Loyalist Township Official Plan (Adopted September 27, 2021 and Approved March 23, 2022) requires significant minimum lot sizes and road frontages for rural severances to preserve the rural landscape and limit excessive rural development. Key findings have been extracted below:

- New lots are permitted only when the retained parcel is at least 10 hectares, and the retained lot must have a minimum road frontage of 150 metres. (Policy 5.5.6 (c)).
- The Township limits the creation of new lots to three (including the retained parcel), ensuring that large tracts of rural land remain intact. (Section 6.3.5).
- The Township includes three dates pertaining to the existing lots of record, these dates are dependant on the original pre-amalgamation towns (former Township of Ernestown, former Village of Bath and former Township of Amherst Island) (Section 6.3.5).
- Servicing requirements are stringent, with severances only allowed when on-site sewage and water servicing are adequate. Well testing and septic capacity assessments are mandatory for approval.

The large minimum lot size of 10 hectares, and significant road frontage requirement of 150 metres help prevent the overdevelopment of rural lands, while maintaining adequate servicing capacity and protecting the character of the rural landscape.

2.2.5 MUNICIPALITY OF MIDDLESEX CENTRE

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre Official Plan (Adopted April 19, 2000 and Approved September 12, 2000) and the Middlesex Centre Official Plan (Adopted October 12, 2022 and Approved September 26, 2023) have nearly completely prohibited rural severances, with all non-farm rural lands outside of

settlement areas designated as agricultural. Severances are generally not permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that a plan of subdivision is not necessary for orderly development (Section 10.3.1)

Severance applications are considered only for adjustments or technical reasons, and any exceptions must demonstrate alignment with provincial agricultural preservation policies.

2.2.6 TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGWATER

The Township of Springwater Official Plan (Consolidated December 2018) and the New Township of Springwater Official Plan (not in full force and effect) permits rural severances primarily within existing residential clusters, limiting the number of new lots to three including the retained parcel.

- To prevent "strip or ribbon development", new lots must adhere to a minimum frontage requirement of 38 metres and a minimum lot size of 1,855 square metres. Consents are allowed only when existing clusters of residential development can accommodate the rounding out of a cluster without compromising rural character (28.6.1).
- The Township places additional limits on development near intersections, ensuring that new severances do not extend existing development beyond a compact, clustered form (28.6.1)

In focusing severance permissions within existing residential clusters and enforcing strict lot size and frontage requirements, the Township of Springwater controls rural development to prevent sprawl while supporting limited, targeted growth in established rural residential areas.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This Section presents recommended policy changes to the Mississippi Mills COP to be considered through OPA 28, which aim to align the management of rural severances with growth expectations and regional development goals, while ensuring that rural areas develop in a controlled manner while allowing for some flexibility and rural development opportunities.

3.1 OFFICIAL PLAN POLICIES

Through OPA 28, the non-farm rural severance policies in the existing COP are recommended to be revised as follows. The recommendations may be implemented as one amendment, or one or more changes may be implemented. Either approach would result in more up-to-date policies with current planning trends.

- **Increase Maximum Lot Creation Limits**
 - Increase the maximum number of lots that can be created per land holding within the Rural designation from two (2) lots plus the remnant (retained) parcel to three (3) lots plus the remnant (retained) parcels. This has been informed by the maximum lot creation limits found in other municipalities. This would ultimately result in the permission of 4 lots (3 severed plus 1 retained).

- **One-Time Severance Limitation**
 - Implement a policy that restricts the severance of a parcel to a one-time severance for non-farm uses. This means that once a parcel has been severed, no further severance of either the original or newly created lots would be permitted for residential uses.
- **Modify the Land Holding Date**
 - Update the land holding date to the date in which the Municipality of Mississippi Mills COP was adopted by Council (December 13, 2005) to provide greater opportunities for severances to accommodate for projected growth.
- **Reduce Road Access Requirements**
 - Ensure that all properties have appropriate road access, however, in line with policies in other municipalities, reduce or remove the current separation distance requirements between accesses to provide for greater flexibility in access options for the parcels.
- **Reduce or Remove the Minimum Lot Frontage Requirement**
 - While a minimum lot frontage requirement has been maintained in the recommended policies, removing the lot frontage requirement would reduce the risk of the need for an Official Plan Amendment should a severance meet the lot size requirements but be deficient in terms of lot frontage. If a minimum lot frontage requirement is maintained in the policies, the COP and the Zoning By-law requirements should be consistent.

These recommendations aim to strengthen and modernize the non-farm rural consent policy framework within the Official Plan. By implementing these measures, the Municipality can better manage growth, preserve its rural heritage, and ensure a balanced approach to development that respects both the environment and the needs of its residents.

Additionally, it is recommended that a transition clause be introduced at the time of the adoption of OPA 28:

- **Applications for severances submitted prior to [date of OPA 28 approval] would be evaluated according to the existing Official Plan policies in place at the time of the application submission.**

The following sections present the specific proposed changes to the existing policies in Sections 5.14 Definitions and 3.3 Rural Policies in the Municipality of Mississippi Mills COP, for the consideration of Municipal Planning staff and Council. Proposed changes to the COP are presented as follows:

- Proposed additions are in **bold**; and
- Proposed deletions are shown as ~~strikethrough~~.

3.1.1 DEFINITIONS

As part of the updated COP policies, the following definition is recommended be added to Section 5.14:

- **Existing Lot of Record:** A parcel of land or lot that has been legally established and recorded in the appropriate land registry office prior to the date of adoption of this Plan by Council (December 13, 2005).

3.1.2 SECTION 3.3 - RURAL POLICIES

3.1.2.1 SECTION 3.3.6 – SEVERANCE AND LOT CREATION

Severances and the creation of lots within the Rural designation shall be limited to the following:

1. Farm-related severances may be considered for a farm dwelling built prior to the 1978 adoption of the Community Official Plan (December 13, 2005), made surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation. Farm consolidation refers to the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation, and may include existing situations where a farm operation has two dwellings located on separate agricultural land holdings. Only farmers who are expanding their farm holdings shall qualify for surplus farm dwelling severances. The Municipality shall impose a condition on the severance of a surplus farm dwelling, requiring a zoning by-law amendment prohibiting the construction of a new residential dwelling on the farmland parcel rendered vacant as a result of the severance. The lot area and frontage for surplus farm dwelling lots should be kept to a minimum in order to keep as much land in agricultural production as possible. The Municipality may request a condition on the Land Division Committee decision to require the registration of a covenant on the title of the property stating that the lot is adjacent to an agricultural area and may therefore be subjected to noise, dust, odours, and other nuisances associated with agricultural activities.
2. Severance for boundary adjustments between agricultural holdings may be permitted provided that no new lot is created, and the parcel sizes are appropriate for the proposed agricultural use.
3. Farm-related severances may be considered for the creation of a new agricultural holding provided that:
 - i. Generally, the minimum lot area for agricultural parcels shall be approximately 40 hectares (100 acres). To this extent, this Plan encourages the creation of agricultural parcels in accordance with the original township lot fabric of the area. Nothing in this Plan shall prohibit severance applications which result in the creation of original township lots. For the purpose of this Plan, an original township lot shall be considered a holding.
 - ii. The size of the parcels to be severed and retained is appropriate for the type of agriculture being carried out in the area.
 - iii. The minimum lot area shall be sufficiently large to ensure the long-term flexibility of land to accommodate different agricultural uses in the future.
4. The number of rural non-farm residential lots created by severance per land holding shall be limited to ~~two lots plus the remnant~~ **three lots plus the remnant lot from a lot of record existing on December 13, 2005**, except where otherwise specifically provided for in this Plan. ~~A third severance for a nonfarm residential lot may be considered as long the severance is to sever an existing accessory detached dwelling that is deemed surplus to the. The accessory detached dwelling must be a permanent structure and have been built with a building permit between 1998 and 2005 and have an independent well, septic system and entrance. A holding is defined as a parcel of land held in a conveyable ownership as of July 1, 1973 or an original township lot. A lot of record that existed on December 13, 2005 shall be deemed to exclude any portion of the lot that was subject to a consent application that was conditionally approved prior to December 13, 2005, provided that the consent conditions were satisfied, and the lot was~~

created in accordance with the decision to approve the consent, regardless of whether the consent lot was conveyed after or on December 13, 2005. Consents for a boundary adjustment, partial discharge of mortgage, easement or right-of-way shall not be considered toward the maximum number of consents per holding.

5. The permitted uses on a rural residential lot include a single dwelling, **an additional residential unit subject to the policies of Section 3.6.9**, a home-based business, garden suite, bed and breakfast establishment, and limited agricultural activities. **[Note to Municipality: Section 3.6.9 of the COP should be amended to replace “second dwelling units” terminology and permissions with “additional residential units”]**
 - i. The access point of the driveway onto the public road must be located so that no safety hazards are created. ~~A severance shall be permitted only where the center of the driveway is 150 meters from immediate neighboring driveways on the same side of the road. Council may reduce the 150-meter requirement where soil conditions, topography, safety, sight lines, or other sound planning considerations suggest that a lesser distance would be appropriate.~~ **The Municipality may require the use of shared entrances by abutting property owners or other such measures. Where a shared entrance is required, the landowners shall enter into an easement agreement which shall ensure that maintenance of the entrance will be the mutual responsibility of the affected landowners.**
 - ii. **The Municipality confirms there** is a demonstrated capacity for the lot to support the proposed development on private or communal services.
 - iii. The lot **generally** has a **minimum frontage of 45 metres** on a maintained public road of acceptable standard to support year-round maintenance and emergency vehicle access, **and a minimum depth of 200 metres**. Direct access onto a County Road or Provincial Highway shall be discouraged.
 - iv. Each lot, **both severed and retained** must **generally** be at least one hectare (1.0 ha). ~~Council may require~~ **Larger lots may be acceptable** when site conditions warrant an increase in lot size. The minimum lot size shall not include lands within the "Flood Plain" designation. **A lot that is less than one hectare (1.0 ha) in area must be supported by a hydrogeological study, and can be no less than 0.4 hectares.**
 - v. The creation of non-farm lots adjacent to an active agricultural operation within the Rural designation shall ensure that there is an appropriate building envelope outside of the 30 metre setback from lands which are being utilized as part of an active agricultural operation.
 - vi. The placement of a rural residential severance must avoid having an adverse impact on significant landscape features, significant vegetation, wildlife habitats, or other significant natural resources on the property.
 - vii. ~~Council may permit two or more lots to share a single driveway where soil conditions, topography, safety, sight lines or other sound planning considerations suggest that such an arrangement would be beneficial.~~

(Note: Policy 3.3.6 5(vii) has been consolidated with Policy 3.3.6.5(i) above)

- viii. Residential uses (including accessory structures), private or communal wells and sewage disposal facilities, and access roads shall not be permitted on prime agricultural lands, or where there are aggregate resources, wetlands, flood plains, or significant habitats of endangered or threatened species. Where the development affects lands adjacent to natural heritage features or areas, the appropriate policies of this Plan shall be followed.
- 6. A severance of a permitted commercial or industrial use may be considered provided the lot size is kept to a minimum in order to keep as much land in agricultural production as possible, and efforts have been made to locate the operation on land of low capability for agriculture. The severance of a commercial or industrial property shall not result in a situation where there have been more than 2 severances for commercial, industrial, or residential purposes from the holding since **December 15, 2005**.

3.1.3 SECTION 5.3.11 – CONSENT TO SEVER LAND

3.1.3.1 SECTION 5.3.11.1 - GENERAL LOT CREATION POLICIES

The following lot creation policies apply to all land uses whether development takes place by consent or plan of subdivision.

- i. The size of the lots must be in accordance with the requirements for the type of use and servicing method proposed. The size of lot may be dependent on servicing studies which will be in accordance with the requirements of the municipality and other agencies.
- ii. Nothing in this Plan shall prohibit severance applications which result in the creation of original township lots. For the purpose of this Plan an original township lot shall be considered a holding.
- iii. Information will be provided to substantiate that an adequate and suitable water supply and conditions or a proper sewage system exist, all of which can meet the requirements of the municipality and other agencies.
- iv. Lots will not be created on lands which are unsuitable for development due to environmental conditions.
- v. All lots will have suitable road access in accordance with the relevant policies of this Plan. Proposals resulting in the creation of land-locked parcels of land shall be strongly discouraged.
- vi. In the creation of lots, regard must be given to appropriate separation distances from incompatible uses and natural resources, including agricultural lands.
- vii. The lot must be in an appropriate location for the use proposed and contain a suitable building site, where applicable. Where lots are proposed for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes, a site plan may also be required.
- viii. In reviewing any application to create new lots, the convenience, safety, and welfare of the future residents of these lots will be a major consideration.
- ix. In the Rural designation, the maximum number of lots created per land holding will be **three (3) exclusive of the retained lot**, except where otherwise specifically provided for in this Plan. A holding is defined as a parcel of land held in a conveyable ownership as of

December 13, 2005, or an original township lot. Consents identified in Subsection 5.3.11.2.7 will not be counted as a consent for the purposes of this section.

- x. All sections of the Plan dealing with the creation of lots shall apply where appropriate including but not limited to the general policy for development under Section 4 of the Plan, environmental policies under Section 3.1, wellhead protection policies under Section 3.1.7, agricultural and rural policies under Section 3.2 and 3.3 respectively, and the following sections related to consent policies and plans of subdivision.
- xi. **Once a lot has been severed and has been registered as such, no subsequent severance of either the severed lot or the retained lots is permitted, except under extraordinary circumstances as approved by the Land Division Committee.**

3.2 MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS ZONING BY-LAW (OFFICE CONSOLIDATION MARCH 2020)

This Report does not include specific recommended changes to the Municipality of Mississippi Mills Zoning By-law (Adopted 2011, Office Consolidation March 2020). However, it is important to note that any proposed changes to the Official Plan through OPA 28 by Municipal staff to modify lot sizes and frontages that differ from the current provisions in the Zoning By-law would require a Municipally-initiated Zoning By-law Amendment.

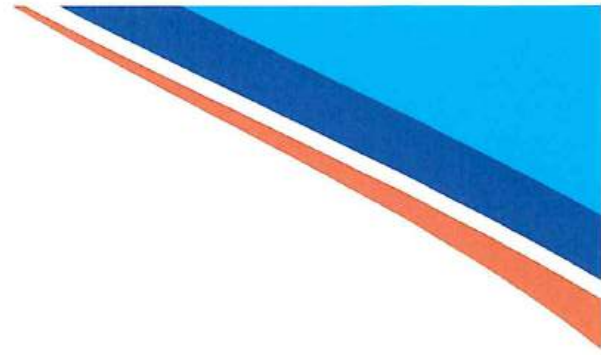
4 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This Recommendations Report outlines WSP's recommendations for proposed amendments to the non-farm rural severance policies in the Municipality of Mississippi Mills' COP as part of the broader OPA 28. These proposed amendments aim to align the existing policies with current planning legislation and policy approaches used in other comparable municipalities, and with the expected housing growth in Mississippi Mills detailed in the draft projections from Lanark County Growth Management Study.

Following the issuing of this Recommendations Report, Municipal Planning staff will review and adapt the proposed changes for non-farm rural severances to reflect the other components of OPA 28, including the results of the community engagement activities on the OPA. Finally, the Municipal Planning staff will present the proposed OPA 28 and related Zoning By-law Amendment to Council for consideration of adoption.



Mississippi
Mills



Official Plan Amendment 28: Rural Villages and Rural Vitality

Focus Group Responses Report

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Dated:

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File Number:

Official Plan Amendment 28: Rural Villages and Rural Vitality

Prepared By:

Municipality of Mississippi Mills Developmental Services and Engineering
Department

1.0 Report Overview:

To end the first public consultation phase for the Rural Village and Rural Vitality Project (Official Plan Amendment 28), the Mississippi Mills Planning Department held focus group sessions to gain more particular insight and perspective from local residents of Mississippi Mills.

The Municipality advertised the opportunity for residents to join the focus groups over the summer months during event visits and at the OPA 28 Open Houses that were held in Pakenham and Clayton. The call for interested local participants for the focus groups was also posted on the Municipality's social media platforms.

Due to a wide range of availability from the interested residents, the Municipality held three (3) separate focus group sessions. The focus group sessions were held at the Pakenham Public Library and were two hours in length each. The first two (2) sessions were held on Monday, October 21st from 2-4pm and from 6-8pm. The last session was held on Thursday, October 24th from 6-9pm.

A variety of questions were posed to the focus group participants which were focused on the villages and rural areas of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills. These questions stimulated both positive and critical thinking as the participants were able to reflect on what makes the villages and rural areas great and what could be improved.

In total, thirteen (13) residents attended the focus group sessions to share their input and perspectives. Planning Staff used this opportunity to gather personal feedback and insights into residents' views and experiences related to the villages and rural areas within of Mississippi Mills.

The focus group sessions followed a structured process where eleven (11) questions were posed to the participants, covering their opinions on the villages to their perspectives on on-farm diversified uses. As each question was asked, participants were encouraged to share their thoughts openly with the group, which led to many conversations and collaboration amongst the participants. Planning Staff documented the participants' answers on large sheets of paper, which provided a visual element that captured the group's feedback and ideas in real time. This approach allowed for both a record of discussion and a shared visual reference for everyone in the room.

Overall, the focus groups were very successful, and Planning Staff were able to gain valuable insight into residents' perceptions of the villages and rural areas of Mississippi Mills.

2.0 Focus Group Responses:

The following sections contain combined answers from the focus group participants who attended either October 21st or October 24th, 2024. The sections outline all the questions asked during the focus groups and the verbal responses are noted below. Please note, there were a few residents who wanted to participate in the focus groups but were unable to attend any of the in-person sessions. Staff provided the residents with the questions and the residents submitted their written responses back to Staff. The written responses are noted at the end of each question section.

2.1 Villages:

The focus group questions were split into themes, which included village and rural areas. There were six questions in the village theme and the questions were mainly based around what the focus group participants thought about the different villages within Mississippi Mills. Additionally, Planning Staff asked the focus group participants what barriers and opportunities they felt were apparent in the villages.

Question #1: When you think of Blakeney – what comes to mind?
Blakeney Park
Bridge
Walking trail – initiative of local people, fishing, interesting to see the commitment that people care
Mysterious and small – a hidden gem
Confederate flag next to park parking lot, torn down pride flag near the corner coming down Martin Street
Sub-element of Almonte
Not clear where it starts and stops
No character

Question #1: When you think of Blakeney – what comes to mind?
Blakeney is an artistic centre
Tourists look for the park, park is a historical centre
Water, waterfalls, waterside community, rapids
Close to Almonte, a shortcut to Almonte
History – a thriving community now hollowed out
No central node
Scenic
Community garden that contributes to the food bank
Good connections to the rail trail and other walking trails
Canadian Olympic Kayaking Team training site
No safe place to walk, not friendly for active transportation

Question #1: When you think of Blakeney – what comes to mind? (Written Responses)
Written Response #1: • Blakeney is my home • Small, quiet, surrounded by farming • Park nearby that is a tourist draw • Road infrastructure needs to be updated • Heavy truck traffic • Many home-based businesses (art studios, musicians, micro farms) • Lack of a central meeting area • Blakeney is not given as much time or consideration as some of the other villages

- Stuck
- Lack of water and sewage connections limits density
- Lack of pedestrian infrastructure

Written Response #2:

- The park by the bridge

Question #2: When you think of Clayton – what comes to mind?

Individuals
General store
Honour library
No cell service for the most part (Rogers is there now)
Need more cell companies to bring service + internet to the area
Landlines have poor reception
Public dock – gets lots of visitors in the summer, kids play in the water, swimming
Lack of access to recreational water, not a lot of places to swim/launch boats
Has a lot going for it – two active churches, a lot of community dances/dinners, snowmobile village
Amazing history
Community Hall
Linn Bower Seniors' residence
Union Hall
Baseball field

Question #2: When you think of Clayton – what comes to mind?

Pear trees – behind the Community Centre, harvested for the food bank

Road conditions are bad

Hub for snowmobilers (place to stop for gas, lunch)

Helpful, cheerful

Throughway – on a county road, bad traffic sometimes with the gravel pit trucks

Heavy traffic

Clayton Lake

Ice fishing, water sports, popular fishing destination

Small, intimate group of villagers

People know each other

Welcoming place

Public access to lake

Memorials, cemeteries

In home services (hairdressers for example)

Heritage buildings + historic farm buildings

River with access to Clayton Lake and Taylor Lake

Creative population

LCBO + gas pumps

Maple syrup

People living around Clayton still identify as being residents of Clayton

Question #2: When you think of Clayton – what comes to mind?
Cluster of homes on back roads
Campgroup
Volunteerism
No safe place to walk, not friendly for active transportation

Question #2: When you think of Clayton – what comes to mind? (Written Responses)
Written Response #1: • Local art scene • General store • Ball field
Written Response #2: • General store

Question #3: When you think of Appleton – what comes to mind?
Flooding
Golf course
Curiosity to general store rebuild
North Lanark Regional Museum
Flower show, garden show
Boat launch (park, there's always kids playing, families gather here, more recreational than just a boat launch)
Apple trees planted by volunteers at the park

Question #3: When you think of Appleton – what comes to mind?
Water based community
Very quaint and small
Associate more with Carleton Place than Almonte
No real reason to go
Off the beaten path
Use to bypass Almonte
Former textile mill – burned and demolished
Appleton marsh – wetlands have been impacted negatively
Bridge
Boutique Art Gallery
Fine dining
Bed & Breakfast
Soccer fields
Scenic route from Carleton Place
Community oriented – younger generation supporting older generation
No safe place to walk, not friendly for active transportation

**Question #3: When you think of Appleton – what comes to mind?
(Written Responses)**

Written Response #1:

- Beautiful
- Could benefit from central meeting area
- Destruction of the general store was a loss
- Soccer fields
- Museum
- Like Blakeney, people tend to drive through to go somewhere else
- Lack consistent pedestrian infrastructure and traffic management
- Close to Carleton Place

Written Response #2:

- The bridge

Question #4: When you think of Pakenham – what comes to mind?

5 Span Bridge + Park

Scoops Ice Cream (for sale now)

4 active churches, cemeteries

There may be a Hindu temple?

Shopping

General Store

Nicholsons

Ski Hill

Golf Course

Question #4: When you think of Pakenham – what comes to mind?
Fair grounds
OVRT for snowmobiles
Elementary school (only rural school in area – K-6)
Opportunities for part-time employment (only Pakenham and Almonte offer this)
Fulton's Pancake House
Cedar Hill Christmas Tree Farm – offers seasonal employment
Fire hall, RCMP station
Centennial Restaurant
Not focused so much on Almonte – residents use Renfrew and Arnprior as well/just as much
Library
Arena
Amalgamation – no one likes it because Pakenham was independent prior to this
Garbage depot (metals, garden waste, etc.)
Car garages
Bank
Keepers Cafe
3 Apples Bakery (gluten free bakery, caterer)
Pharmacy
Five Span Feed n Seed (agricultural hub)
Many attractions (picnic areas, beach, water, fishing, ball diamond, curling club, skiing, golf)

Question #4: When you think of Pakenham – what comes to mind?
Hub for automobile, cycling and skidoo tours
Has character – tourism + agricultural focus to it
Very popular for the fireworks and parades
Feels like a big family
The community has been revitalizing itself, lots of young families are moving in, demographics are changing, now have to better serve a younger demographic
Very large daycare centre (serves a large area)
Throughway
Crossing the road needs to be safer, slow down the cars, needs lights at intersections on the main street
Historical
Fashion (nationally renowned designer)
Post office
Senior living
Has everything except for clean water
Hockey
More restaurants needed
Water + wastewater upgrades needed
Homes can't be sold due to water/servicing issues
Feels forgotten by Mississippi Mills
Mississippi Mills need to lobby Province for funding – offer grants to residents for septic systems
At least 49 full-time businesses

Question #4: When you think of Pakenham – what comes to mind?
Growing community
Large number of rentals
Diverse population

Question #4: When you think of Pakenham – what comes to mind? (Written Responses)
Written Response #1: • Major hub for goods and services • Mount Pakenham is a frequent weekend destination • Daycare and school are major service providers • Excellent local businesses • Rink, curling club, park, ball field • More could be done to slow heavy traffic and speeding care traffic through the village • Pedestrian connection between golf club, trailer park and village (along Highway 29) would increase safety
Written Response #2: • Bridge • Ski hill • Home

Question #5: What are some opportunities for the Villages that would benefit the village residents and surrounding communities?

Accessible, public spaces like Metcalf Park in Almonte (public space helps enhance tourism)

More swimming, picnic tables

Full time job opportunities, there are very few job opportunities that are quality in the villages, need more jobs

More retention of high school graduates and young families

Small farming incentives – community gardens, market gardens

Farm based industries

Public washrooms (Pakenham is pretty good – has the library + Centennial Restaurant)

Fix septic issue in Clayton

Continuing small business programs

More daycares

Youth centres (is very successful in Almonte – there could be a branch in each of the villages)

Hand washing facilities

Transportation (issues for youth, could have a specific use for youth – could be linked to the youth centre)

Unused spaces in the communities – community halls are underused; it would be nice to see the halls used more often

Communities have to evolve – it is natural

Question #5: What are some opportunities for the Villages that would benefit the village residents and surrounding communities?

Lots of room across the board to create more of a tourism hub (beautiful landscape, water, etc.)

Municipality needs to be more encouraging

5-Span Park (could hire seasonal help – youth)

Accommodation is lacking – where are people staying when they visit?

Attractiveness for being a bedroom community – people still look to rural living; people see the value of rural living

Need more housing – water and sewer issues impact this, people want to live here

Ease severance restrictions

We need more community services so people can age in place – ensure the services are available (healthcare, social services, exercise, transportation)

Link to other communities

Economic attractions

Could capitalize on being a rural hub for snowmobilers (snowmobilers tend to not be comfortable stopping in Almonte, more likely to stop in Clayton or Pakenham)

Traffic/speed control

Could work with universities and colleges to offer remote access/learning/placements

More publicity and more internal communication

Programming and activities

Sports bar

More staff at community centres

Playgrounds

More boat launches

Question #5: What are some opportunities for the Villages that would benefit the village residents and surrounding communities?

River sports

Welcome wagons/baskets, baskets when babies are born

**Question #5: What are some opportunities for the Villages that would benefit the village residents and surrounding communities?
(Written Responses)**

Written Response #1:

- Service hubs, currently Mississippi Mills residents have to go to Carleton Place or Almonte for services
- Rotating Service Ontario or Service Canada would help villagers avoid lengthy trips
- Addition of central meeting places in Appleton and Blakeney
- More needs to be done to limit heavy traffic and speeding
- More municipal parks or facilities
- Highlight local businesses and artists (like the Crown and Pumpkin Tour does)

Written Response #2:

- Take advantage of all the great businesses and recreation facilities

Question #6: What barriers do you think there are to change in the Villages?
Why change? What is wrong with the way they are?
Need to keep the small town flavour, if there's too much it loses the charm
After Covid people stopped talking as much, this is the only community that is actually friendly
How do we keep people involved in the community? What happens when there's 1000 new homes on the edge of Almonte?
There is a divide between newbies and oldies
When you move to a quaint village you want that quaint lifestyle, but you may miss the conveniences of the city
Money/finances
Some people live here but don't use the amenities
Sometimes there's a lack of person power in the Municipality – need more municipal staff, volunteers do a lot of things in our communities but that is because there is a lack of staff
Volunteer demographics (not the same scale as it was)
Fatigue (people doing the same stuff all the time can lead to fatigue)
Differences in opinions and opportunities about recreation
Pakenham: water + wastewater impedes development of housing + community development
Need to make it safer (traffic issues, if people don't slow down, they won't see the village)
Natural heritage is under threat – this needs to be a priority
Hollowing out communities
Need to remove municipal red tape or barriers to development
Don't want to be labelled as a commuter town (don't want to be the next Stittsville)

Question #6: What barriers do you think there are to change in the Villages?
Need to protect the village culture and character
Need to manage growth, encourage cautious growth
Cell service in Clayton
Internet
Need to have a will and vision, if there's no vision, where will we go next? Where do we want to be in the next 20 or 30 years?
Public resources/servicing
Lack of community promotion
Existing boat launches are in poor condition
Parking
Amalgamation issues – need to highlight recourses in villages with those in Almonte

Question #6: What barriers do you think there are to change in the Villages? (Written Responses)
Written Response #1: • Zoning restrictions • Lack of municipal services • Lack of walkable areas • Heavy and dangerous traffic • Local opposition to density and unplanned growth
Written Response #2: • Basic infrastructure • Red tape • Money

2.2 Rural Areas:

The second theme for the focus group questions encompassed the rural areas of Mississippi Mills. These questions were formed with the intent of discovering what the focus group participants thought of the rural areas in the Municipality. Additionally, the topic of on-farm diversified uses was introduced and discussed amongst the group within this section of questions.

Question #7: When you think of the rural areas in Mississippi Mills, what comes to mind?
Day trips
Quiet
Farming
Chopped up
Proximity to fire services – by the time firefighters get there your house will be gone
Lack of information – what’s available to you, where you are, what the benefits are
Lack of sense of community
Enjoying the new local newspaper – Community Voice
No industry = no pollution, this is a good thing, clean air
Clean water (except Pakenham)
Lack of policing
Questionable or good wi-fi depending on where you are
Lot severances
Urban biased policies
Fibre-optic ability
Community

Question #7: When you think of the rural areas in Mississippi Mills, what comes to mind?

Hubs and trails on properties that people share together

Small communities of friends

Country roads

Adventure

The great outdoors

Forests, crownland, county forests, designated wetlands

Hunting and fishing

Unmaintained, unmanaged natural areas where people walk on trails, drive snowmobiles, lots of recreational opportunities

Roadside stands and other unique businesses

Access to fresh fruits and vegetables

Healthy living

Plant nurseries

A lovely place to live

Peaceful

Stars

Far apart from neighbours, but still close as a community

Helpful

Bugs

Many roads required

No demands from residents

Question #7: When you think of the rural areas in Mississippi Mills, what comes to mind? (Written Responses)

Written Response #1:

- Backroads
- Sugar bushes
- Mill of Kintail
- Private walking trails

Written Response #2:

- Farms
- Walking trails

Question #8: What do you think draws people to the rural areas?

Quiet

Quaint and ideal

Slower

Outdoors (hunting, fishing, hiking)

Good reputation

Come back home (people who left and return)

Good and helpful people

Equity refugees (people moving here from Toronto, Ottawa, etc.)

The fall colours

Tranquility

Open space

Question #8: What do you think draws people to the rural areas?

Sports and leisure opportunities

Adventure

Vegetable stands and events

Maple syrup and related events, sugar bushes

A way to slow down, decompress, escape

Beer, breweries

For the drive

Tourism

Studio tours, local talent and artists (Maple Run Tour, Crown and Pumpkin, Fall Colours Tour)

White Lake studios

Curiosity

Seasonal attractions (strawberry picking, pumpkin picking, tree farms)

Picnics

Rivers

Beaches

Water sports

More economical living

Lots of services

Animals

Sense of community

Come for business opportunities, business growth

Question #8: What do you think draws people to the rural areas? (Written Responses)

Written Response #1:

- Peace and sanctity

Written Response #2:

- Friendly
- Relaxed
- Private areas

Question 9: When thinking about on-farm diversified uses, what types of uses would like to see in the rural areas?

Maple syrup

Wagon rides

Cheese production – there was a past cheese factory near Union Hall, artisanal cheese (Back40), sheep cheese

Anything related to food, there needs to be strong promotion to eat local and buy local

Bed & Breakfast

Selling milk for Hershey's factory

Dependent on the individual – need to support the individual to do so. Loans, grants, help with promotion

Bureaucratic aid – need to help to help people succeed

Skilled workers

Community commercial kitchen

Partnership with Algonquin College (cheese classes, apiary)

Kasda Farm as an example (they offer bouquets of flowers, goat yoga, puppy yoga, DIY flowers)

Question 9: When thinking about on-farm diversified uses, what types of uses would like to see in the rural areas?

Farmers markets
Breweries
Make rural areas more attractive to bring tourism
Farm tours
Wineries
Farm interaction with process – pick-your-own, berry farm, immersive farm experience, photoshoot opportunities (sunflower farm, lavender farm), pumpkin patch
No paintball
Elderly and in-home/travelling services
Winter activities
Four-season attractions
Family farm events
Dog daycare
Diversified uses of road allowances
We have to consider the history of these uses in order for them to work
Poultry
Cidery
Farm goods
Glamping

Question 9: When thinking about on-farm diversified uses, what types of uses would like to see in the rural areas? (Written Responses)

Written Response #1:

- Local energy generation (solar or wind)
- Local breweries
- Micro-farms
- Artisanal production
- Music ventures and gathering areas

Written Response #2:

- Wineries
- Agri-tourism
- Farm markets

Question #10: What other opportunities are there in the rural areas?

Lumber industry

Tourism (4 season)

Something more targeted, tourist weekends

Potential in the road right of ways (7B, 7C) closed for hiking, cross country skiing, etc.

Group insurance, have an association (like skidoo associations), insurance co-op

Small businesses, home based businesses

Innovation and creativity – it depends on the individual and what they want to do, the municipality should be more open to new ideas and encourage it

Personal liability for at-home businesses

A specific Municipal department that helps people get their new business going with a more rural + village focus

Question #10: What other opportunities are there in the rural areas?

Co-ops (community gardens, housing, etc.)

Rural-focused affordable housing grant program

Using and working with other municipalities and communities (Ottawa, CP, Arnprior, etc.)

Equal spread of services

Collaboration of events amongst municipalities

A fair for all of Mississippi Mills

Protect unique identities of each area

Communities made through neighbourhoods

Getting to know the rural communities

Rural cooperatives – collectively market goods to each other, fostering rural collaboration, outside of the villages, stimulate gatherings

Farm baskets – monthly or weekly combination of multiple farms

Allowing people to grow crops under sharecropping, allotment farming, shared farming spaces, garden parcels on municipal property/unopened road allowances

Lower tax rates

More land for more opportunities

New technologies

Working from home

Municipal assistance in marketing

Question #10: What other opportunities are there in the rural areas? (Written Responses)

Written Response #1:

- Assist in the continued ownership of farms by families
- When large areas of forested land are up for sale, the municipality could assist in maintaining local natural areas with the Mississippi-Madawaska Land Trust

Written Response #2:

- More hiking trails

Question #11: What barriers do you think there are to change in the rural areas?

Province, we need to know what effect Doug Ford will have on us

Growth management

Missing services

Transportation for tourists and locals

Lack of activities in surrounding municipalities

Scope of activities

Sense of isolation and isolation during emergencies

Communication – word of mouth or social media are not always viable in the rural areas, there is a need to rely on home phones or newspapers which are often neglected

Severance policies – should allow severances that permit lots that are big enough to shield neighbours from view

Multi-jurisdictional areas – provincial, municipal, crown limitations

Lack of in-home services for aging in place and for seniors who are living remotely

Zoning and planning applications

Question #11: What barriers do you think there are to change in the rural areas?

Certain uses require services that are not present in a rural context

Community fear of new technology (battery, solar, etc.)

Telecommunications

Provision of health care

**Question #11: What barriers do you think there are to change in the rural areas?
(Written Responses)****Written Response #1:**

- Many of the same barrier to change in the villages also apply to the rural areas
- Environmental sensitivity of these lands is also an important and justified barrier to unnecessary or unwarranted change

Written Response #2:

- Same as the villages

3.0 Conclusion:

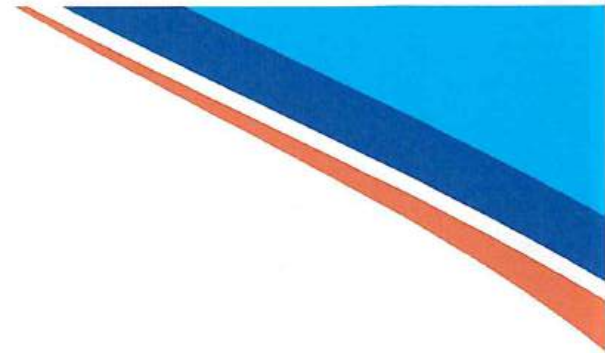
Overall, the focus groups were informative, collaborative and offered valuable feedback and insight in regard to the Official Plan Amendment 28 project. The data that was collected during the focus groups will be used to assist Staff with developing and implementing clear and uniform provisions and policies that best reflect the values of the residents of Mississippi Mills. Through the open discussions, Staff gained a deeper understanding of local sentiments, preferences and concerns. This insight will help ensure that decisions regarding Official Plan Amendment 28 are made thoughtfully, with the goal of benefiting everyone residing in the villages and rural areas of Mississippi Mills.



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Official Plan Amendment 28: Rural Villages and Rural Vitality

On-Farm Diversified Use Discussion Paper

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Official Plan Amendment 28: Rural Villages and Rural Vitality

Prepared By:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Family farms are the foundation of agricultural production in Canada. As per Statistics Canada (2022), 98% of all farms in Canada are family owned; however, smaller and medium-sized farms are becoming few and far between as larger farming operations have increased significantly. This shift illustrates how smaller, family-owned farming operations are facing increasing amounts of pressure from the modern agricultural industry and economy. In addition, some areas of a farm do not have the soil quality to support crops and other agricultural uses. The agricultural sector is evolving in order to keep up with socioeconomic trends, especially in rural Ontario.

A noteworthy solution that has been beneficial to farmers is the introduction of on-farm diversified uses. On-farm diversified uses allow farmers to supplement their primary farm income with complementary uses. Farmers can introduce uses such as agri-tourism, value-added, retail, and home occupations. This gives farmers the opportunity to diversify their income and create opportunity for rural economic growth.



Recently, municipalities have been tasked with balancing agricultural preservation and economic growth. The agricultural industry in Mississippi Mills is a pivotal economic and social influence, contributing significantly to the local economy and community fabric. In recognizing the evolving landscape of agricultural practices and economic diversification, there is a growing need to expand the scope of on-farm diversified uses within the Municipality.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

As per the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), on-farm diversified uses can be defined as *"...uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, uses that produce value-added agricultural products, and electricity generation facilities and transmission systems, and energy storage systems"*.

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) (PPS) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA) Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas (2016) both introduce on-farm diversified uses as permitted uses on agricultural areas, allowing farmers to diversify their income while preserving farmland. A variety of provisions and criteria are outlined within these documents which must be followed in order to qualify as an on-farm diversified use. These provincial guidelines and suggested parameters allow for municipalities to put forth their own appropriate policies and procedures for their own communities regarding on-farm diversified uses. As per the 2024 PPS, on-farm diversified uses are also permitted on rural lands, which are defined as *lands which are located outside settlement areas, and which are outside prime agricultural areas.*

Allowing on-farm diversified uses on rural land, not just agricultural land, is particularly important for Mississippi Mills, which contains vast amounts of rural areas. Rural land holds unique cultural and economic value, which should be preserved and utilized appropriately. Supporting on-farm diversified uses on rural properties where agricultural operations are occurring, provides farmers with the opportunity to explore new income sources, which encourages local innovation and sustainable growth of our rural areas. On-farm diversified uses in our rural areas ensures that rural areas in Mississippi Mills can adapt to changing needs and opportunities.

While Mississippi Mills has a mix of both 'rural' and 'agricultural' areas as per provincial policy, when it comes to on-farm diversified uses, it does not matter what if its rural or prime agricultural identified in the PPS, what matters is that the diversified use is located on a farm that is actively being used for agricultural purposes. As per OMAFA's Guidelines,

"...agricultural uses occur on a farm with the expectation of reward or gain. It does not include agricultural production that is intended for the consumption by members of the household of the owner or operator of the farm, for purposes of recreation or pastime, or on a property that is used primarily for residential use. To ensure the agricultural use on the property is actively being farmed, a municipal planning authority may require evidence that proves this."



Additionally, for those areas identified as prime agricultural, provincial policies require that on-farm diversified uses must be secondary to the principal agricultural use on the property. The agricultural use must remain the dominant use on the property and this is measured by scale and time-based. The scale of the on-farm diversified use must be clearly secondary to the primary agricultural use on the property and within certain limits. A time-based limitation applies to on-farm diversified uses that are temporary, like seasonal events; whereas large, repeated or permanent events are not considered

on-farm diversified uses. The on-farm diversified uses must be **compatible** with surrounding agricultural operations and must not interfere with cropping cycles or other agricultural uses on the property or in the surrounding area. Properties designated Rural (not identified as prime agricultural in the PPS), will have greater flexibility for on-farm diversified uses and are not limited to the scale and time based requirements for those lands designated agricultural.

As noted in OMAFA's Guidelines, acceptable on-farm diversified uses in prime agricultural areas **must be compatible** with the following:

- Permanently displace little-to-no agricultural land
- Do not require site grading and/or drainage unless it improves conditions for agricultural production
- Are one-time uses or held infrequently when impacts to agriculture are minimal
- Any land used for a temporary use must be immediately returned to agriculture
- A harvestable crop is produced on the land the year in which the temporary use is implemented (if applicable)
- Meet compatibility requirements (e.g. do not require significant emergency, water and wastewater services; maintain reasonable noise and traffic levels in the area)
- Impacts to the site itself and surrounding agricultural operations are mitigated (e.g. compaction, drainage, trespassing)

On-farm diversified uses must also be limited in area. Based on provincial policies, on-farm diversified uses in prime agricultural areas must be limited in area in order to minimize the amount of land taken out of agricultural production, ensure agriculture remains the dominant use on the property, and to limit impacts off site to ensure harmony with surrounding farming operations. It is recommended to limit the area using the total footprint of the diversified use(s) by implementing an appropriate lot coverage ratio through the Zoning By-law. Using this approach, the area of an on-farm diversified use would include buildings, storage areas, landscaping, well and septic systems, and parking. As for the lot coverage ratio, this should be mainly based on the size of the individual parcel of land where the use is located, not the entire area of a farming operation which could include many parcels of land.



If possible, diversified uses should use the existing agricultural buildings and structures on the property that are no longer needed for the primary agricultural use. This approach helps to reduce the amount of farmland used and can assist in maintaining the rural character of the area. It is recommended that the gross floor area of buildings for on-farm diversified uses be appropriate for agricultural and rural land. To ensure this, municipalities can enforce maximum gross floor area limits for on-farm diversified uses through the Zoning By-law.

Finally, on-farm diversified uses should be compatible with and not negatively impact surrounding agricultural operations, as per provincial policy. Some examples of on-farm diversified uses may meet the criteria noted above, but it may not be appropriate or

compatible with the existing surrounding area. For example, commercial, agri-tourism or recreational uses tend to attract larger numbers of visitors, which may cause disturbance to nearby farming operations. Municipalities are responsible for ensuring an on-farm diversified use will not hinder the surrounding uses and should consider how any potential impacts can be mitigated before allowing diversified uses in farming areas.



Beyond provincial policies and guidelines, municipalities can develop and implement their own appropriate policies and criteria for on-farm diversified uses in their planning policies such as Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. Many municipalities around Ontario have begun to add policies to accommodate on-farm diversified uses. For example, creating special provisions in Zoning By-laws will allow for farmers to add on-farm diversified uses without seeking out the lengthier and more expensive route of getting to add a use to the zoning



on their property through a Zoning By-law Amendment. The overall goal for developing frameworks and policies is to create a flexible and adaptable way for farmers to diversify their land uses while protecting agricultural land, managing environmental impacts and ensuring compatibility with the surrounding area.

3.0 EXAMPLES OF ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USES

Value-Added Uses:	Agri-Tourism Uses:	Retail Uses:
Cider, Beer or Wine Production	Farm Tours	Farm Shop
Artisanal Cheese Production	"Pick-Your-Own" (apples, pumpkins, flowers, berries)	Bakery
Baked Goods	Christmas Tree Farm	"Farm to Table" Restaurant
Maple Syrup Production	Hayrides	Seed and Feed Supplier
Jam and Preserves Production	Corn Mazes	Plant Nursery



4.0 BENEFITS OF ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USES

On-farm diversified uses offer a variety of benefits to the host farmer and the local community. Some specific benefits include economic resilience, community engagement, and enhanced market opportunities.

Economic Resilience

As previously mentioned, including on-farm diversified uses allows farmers to generate income in addition to their farm production. This can introduce a sense of economic stability to a local farmer who is dependent on single crop revenues. By integrating diverse uses like agri-tourism, value-added, retail or home occupations to a farm, this can allow farmers to mitigate the impacts of economic hardship and uncertainty that can be associated with the farming industry and stabilize their income. This is important for smaller, family-owned farms that are constantly competing with larger farm operations.



On-farm diversified uses allow for more income to be generated which in turn will aid with the longevity and preservation of smaller farming businesses. With more economic resilience and gain, farmers can put this income back into their primary farm operation which benefits the greater community. Furthermore, on-farm diversified uses can help reduce dependence on seasonal income and can ensure a steadier income throughout the year.

Community Engagement



Community engagement is another benefit that can stem from integrating on-farm diversified uses into established farms. Introducing engaging activities and services like farm shops, hayrides, crafting workshops or farm-to-table events can help build relationships between local farmers and their local community. These initiatives foster a greater sense of community while also raising awareness towards the

importance of local food systems and sustainable agriculture. These diverse uses can additionally act as tourism destinations for local community members and tourists, which will assist with diversifying and strengthening the local economy. These opportunities allow for local community members to learn more about and appreciate agriculture, which will lead to an ongoing and supportive relationship between local farmers and their community.

Enhanced Market Opportunities

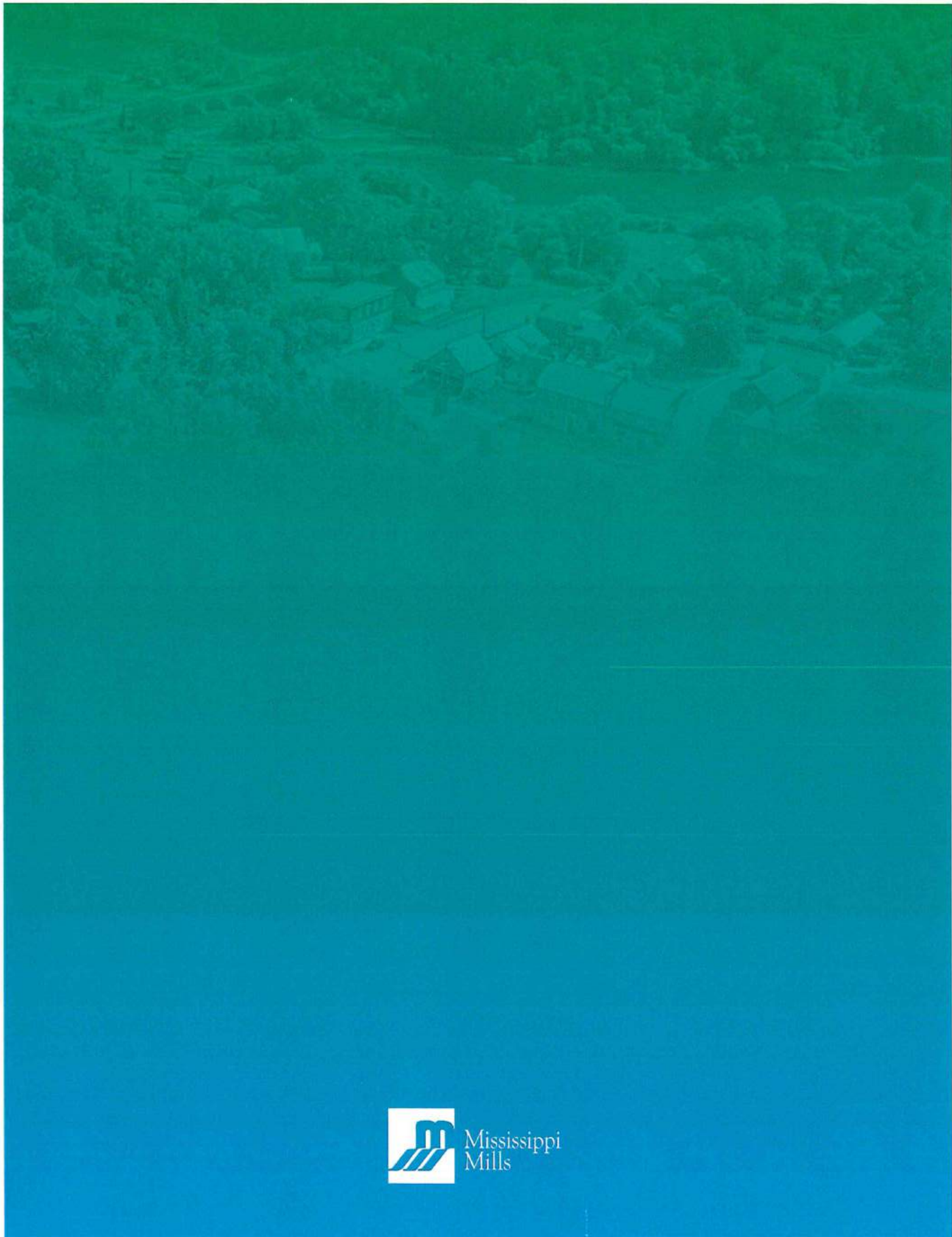
Enhanced market opportunities are another benefit that can arise from the incorporation of on-farm diversified uses. By incorporating diversified uses onto a farm, the farmer can explore a variety of market niches that can set their farm apart from others. Farmers can increase their consumer demand by offering special services or goods, such as organic produce or locally crafted goods. This can overall lead to a unique market presence and gives farming operators the opportunity to be creative and innovative.



5.0 CONCLUSION

The potential that on-farm diversified uses can have on farming operators and their local communities is apparent. On-farm diversified uses represent an exciting strategy that can allow farmers to explore different avenues and supplement their primary source of income. By supporting initiatives such as this and enhancing local policies, municipalities can aid streamline the approval process for on-farm diversified uses and help create vibrant, local agriculture and rural communities, all while supporting farmers as they navigate the ever-evolving agricultural sector in Ontario.





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