



Report to Council

To: Mayor & Members of Council
From: Adele Arbour, Planner
Date: August 11, 2026
Re: **New Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Project – Preliminary Issues Report**

Recommendation:

That Council receive the report from the Planner regarding the New Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Project – Preliminary Issues Report; and further

That Council direct staff to add the Preliminary Issues Report to the Municipal website.

Financial Implications:

The New Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Project is within the 2026 Budget allocation.

Environmental Implications:

There are no environmental implications as a result of this report.

Background:

Jp2g Consultants Inc. have met twice with the Advisory Working Group on May 22, 2026 and June 25, 2026. As we are nearing the completion of Stage I, the deliverables include Minutes of the two Advisory Working Group Meetings and Letters to First Nation Communities and Agencies advising of commencement of the New Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Project.

A social media push has been undertaken by staff, information added to the tax notice and newsletter, and posting relevant information on the municipal website.

Both Building and Planning staff have compiled a list of issues that exist with the current Zoning By-Law B2014-070, as amended. It is intended that this list is a living document which will be added to as the project moves forward, and comments are received from the public and agencies.

The new Zoning By-Law will address recent changes to the County of Peterborough's Official Plan which is currently under review by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), Provincial Legislation and input from stakeholders and public. The format of the new Zoning By-Law is intended to be in a more user-friendly format.

Currently, there is a dedicated section on the Municipal website devoted to the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Update Project at <https://www.trentlakes.ca/build/planning-and-development/zoning/2026-zoning-by-law-update/>. This section contains a Consolidated version

of the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law, County Official Plan (pending MMAH approval), Reports to Council, Project Timelines and will be updated with this Issues Report. Staff are currently accepting feedback from the public through the online form located on the webpage, until September 15, 2026.

To date, the Municipality has received seven (7) comments through public feedback form and one comment from the Senior Project Coordinator for the Transportation, Planning, Engineering, and Construction Department, Pete Hynes of the County of Peterborough.

Open Houses and Public Meetings are intended to be held later this fall. A more detailed Communications and Engagement Plan with dates and timelines will be provided to Council once determined by the Zoning By-Law Advisory Working Group and Jp2g.

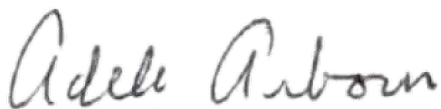
Consultations:

None.

Appendices:

Preliminary Issues Report prepared by Jp2g Consultants Inc. dated July 23, 2026.

Prepared by:



Adele Arbour MCIP, RPP
Planner

Submitted by:



Eric Guay,
Director of Building & Planning/CBO

Approved by:



Michelle Willson
CAO

Preliminary Issues Report

Draft for Committee Review

Municipality of Trent Lakes

New Comprehensive Zoning By-law

July 23, 2026

Prepared for:



1 Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the preliminary issues identified that should be considered when preparing the new Municipality of Trent Lakes Zoning By-law. This preliminary list was the result of a critical assessment of the existing Municipality of Trent Lakes Zoning By-law 2014-070, a review of the new Peterborough County Official Plan, and consultation with the Trent Lakes Project Team.

The intent of the New Zoning By-law Project is to provide the Municipality of Trent Lakes with a modern, user-friendly zoning by-law which conforms to the new County of Peterborough Official Plan. Efforts are to be made to prepare a new Zoning By-law that streamlines the planning approval process and supports the growth and development of the Municipality.

This report captures the “preliminary list” of issues that have been identified and is not presented as a final list of proposed changes to the Zoning By-law. It is anticipated that as the Consultant and the Municipal Project Team proceeds through the early phases of consultation with First Nations, engagement with prescribed agencies and public bodies, and input from the public; that additional issues will emerge and be added to the list of matters to be addressed in the New Zoning By-law.

2 Annotated Preliminary Issues

Layout and Format of Zoning By-law: It is suggested that the layout and format of New Zoning By-law be updated to reflect a more user-friendly appearance and function. The various sections of the New Zoning By-law will be similar to the current Zoning By-law (i.e. General Provisions, Zones, Definitions, Authority and Administration) but how the sections are organized and presented will be in a more user friendly and streamlined manner. In addition to a new layout and format, the new Zoning By-law is also proposed to have new zoning schedules reflecting the latest parcel fabric and identification of natural features from the new County Official Plan. Both the text and schedules should be developed to ensure they meet the Township’s accessibility requirements.

1. **Management of Exception Zones:** A tremendous amount of space in the current Zoning By-law is dedicated to the multitude of site-specific zoning by-law amendments which have occurred over the 12-year lifespan of the document. One of the issues to be determined is the extent to which the New Zoning By-law represents a fresh start. There is an option to remove the majority of historic amendments so that they are not reflected in the new Zoning By-law. This option would result in the historic amendments being captured in a companion, stand-alone document that is prepared as part of the New Zoning By-law Project but which does not form part of the new Zoning By-law. The stand alone document would be used as a staff resource to identify the historic amendments. There would be wording in the New Zoning By-law which acknowledges and honours the historic amendments captured in the companion document.
2. **Natural Heritage System mapping and regulations (County OP):** A large component of ensuring the New Zoning By-law conforms to the new Peterborough County Official Plan is reflecting the protection offered by various “natural heritage” features, such as wetlands. Working with County staff, efforts will be made to ensure that the most accurate depiction of natural heritage features to be protected in the New Zoning By-law is achieved.

3. **Regulations for Home Occupations and Home Industries:** An important source of employment and economic activity for many rural communities are home occupations and home industries. Ensuring the Municipality has modern zoning regulations which promote and manage home occupations and industries is an important element of the Municipality being open for business and investment-ready. The new Zoning By-law would clarify where home occupations/industries are appropriate and the range of uses to be considered home occupations. It is generally recognized that home occupations/industries are not appropriate on shoreline properties and those accessed by private roads.
4. **Additional Residential Units, Increased Residential Density:** In an effort to address the “housing crisis”, the province has mandated that within areas of full municipal sewer and water services, additional residential units are permitted as a right. Many rural municipalities are also considering increased base residential densities, while recognizing the limitations of increased densities on private services. The Municipality should explore the potential for increased residential densities, in conformity with the County Official Plan, to provide more housing options within the Township. This may involve consideration for additional residential units as a right in certain zones, as well as second storey habitable space in accessory structures. Rural communities have the option to implement the additional residential unit regulations that the province has prescribed for urban communities. It is acknowledged that the province does not support increased residential densities on waterfront properties and that this position should be reflected in any new zoning regulation. It is also understood that there has been consideration of ARUs both at the County and Municipal level and that past decisions should be incorporated into the new Zoning By-law.
5. **Boat houses & Docks:** The existing Zoning By-law does well to define and regulate boat houses. It is acknowledged that current zoning regulations permit dryland boathouses but do not permit new in-water (wet) boathouses. Going forward, an important question to be addressed will be whether or not the current policies relating to boathouses in the Municipality should remain or be revisited in the new Zoning By-law. Clarification of the Municipality’s role in the approval and permitting of boat houses and docks will also be an important element of regulating waterfront development.
6. **Waterfront Lot Coverage:** The current lot coverage standard of 20% on waterfront properties is high and somewhat out of step with best practices. It is understood that for many communities, the density of development permitted on waterfront properties is governed by the maximum lot coverage permitted – it is the primary filter through which waterfront development/redevelopment proposals are assessed. What is included in the definition of lot coverage, distinctions between principal structures and accessory structures, and a sustainable lot coverage regulation will be an important element of the New Zoning By-law.
7. **Waterfront development:**
The most prominent form of development within the Municipality is the redevelopment of waterfront properties. Having progressive regulations that respect the legal rights of existing development, while at the same time protecting the quality of our water resources, is an important element of the New Zoning By-law. One component of this work is ensuring an appropriate definition of highwater mark and its use throughout the New Zoning By-law. Clear regulations related to uses permitted in the 30 m water setback, deck encroachments into the 30 m water setback, and expansion of existing structures needs to be clearly



presented and in conformity with the new County of Peterborough Official Plan and established case-law. The goal of minimizing site alteration and new structures in the water yard is to be advanced.

There are options to include regulations of the use of shore road allowances, and the potential to purchase shore road allowances, to be included in the New Zoning By-law or to be regulated through other means. The regulations related to bunkies or guest cabins, their use and level of services, is an important waterfront regulation to be clarified in the new Zoning By-law. Regulations related to the location of new and replacement septic systems on waterfront properties will be assessed and revised where necessary to reflect the best practices.

8. **Promote/Facilitate Growth:** As an underlying goal of the New Zoning By-law Project, efforts will be made to provide the Municipality with a new Zoning By-law that streamlines or reduces unnecessary regulations, and which helps facilitate growth and development. Removing unnecessary barriers to new investment, making the document more user friendly, and ensuring regulations are clear and concise will be advanced in the New Zoning By-law.
9. **Backyard chickens/small lot agriculture:** Many people in our rural communities wish to grow their own food on their own property. Having zoning regulations which are flexible and accommodating, while placing limits on the intensity of agricultural activity on small lots will be advanced in the New Zoning By-law.
10. **Group home regulations:** Group homes are generally permitted as a right where residential development is permitted. There are different types and classes of group homes and new case law which triggers the need to review the current group home regulations to ensure the Municipality's approach reflect best-in-class regulations.
11. **Non-Conforming vs non-complying regulations:** Case law and the Ontario Land Tribunal's recent decisions have changed the way municipalities should treat non-conforming and non-complying land uses. It is generally held that reference to existing non-complying uses should be removed from the Zoning By-law.
12. **Minimum dwelling units size:** Municipalities are being encouraged to critically assess their zoning by-laws and remove barriers to the establishment of affordable housing. By removing minimum dwelling unit sizes, specific approvals for "tiny homes", manufactured homes and modular homes, become streamlined and regulated through the building permit process and not the Zoning By-law. It is recognized that the Municipality's current Zoning By-law does not have a minimum dwelling unit size, which is consistent with provincial direction. Further discussions related to minimum existing lot size(s) to permit as-of-right development or redevelopment may be prudent.
13. **Accessory Uses:** The accessory use regulations are a critical element of any zoning by-law. Ensuring that the Municipality's regulations reflect best-in-class approaches to accessory uses, sizes, setbacks, conversions etc.... will be an important element of the New Zoning By-law.



14. **Sensitive land uses and traditional rural land uses:** As communities grow and residential uses expand throughout the rural area, it is important that traditional rural industrial activities are protected and remain compatible with surrounding sensitive land uses. Ensuring appropriate setbacks between various land uses is an important element of the new Zoning By-law.
15. **Definitions overhaul:** An important element of any zoning by-law are the definitions of the various phrases and words used throughout the document. Case law suggests that ensuring definitions do not contain specific regulations is an important action to be taken when creating a new Zoning By-law. Definitions of height have been specifically identified as needing attention.
16. **Review of Trailer Park regulations:** Trailer parks are an important source of tourist accommodation and supply of affordable housing. Ensuring that the New Zoning By-law adequately regulates this land use is important.
17. **Use of Unopened Road allowances:** Over the past couple of years, especially since COVID, the use of public lands, including unopened road allowances has increased significantly. It is important that the new Zoning By-law contain clear language on the use and enjoyment of the Township's public lands, including unopened road allowances and shore road allowances.
18. **Approach to Rural land uses:** The approach taken regarding rural residential development and the current need for such uses to be placed in a separate zone should be reviewed and alternatives considered to streamline approval processes. Options on how best to regulate hunt camps should be explored.
19. **Review of parking provisions, accessible parking regulations:** The size, number required, and location of parking spaces is an important element of any zoning by-law. Efforts will be made to ensure that the parking regulations reflect the parking needs and realities of the Municipality for the different land uses permitted.
20. **Road setbacks:** The Municipality contains a provincial highway, several county roads, year-round and seasonal municipal roads and numerous private roads. Setback standards for all the various classes of roads will need to be updated and confirmed.
21. **Issue-specific regulations:** The intent is to provide the Municipality with the best-in-class regulations related to a wide range of land uses including but not limited to mini-storage, outdoor patios, storage containers, swimming pools, mobile canteens, hydro line setbacks, and various permitted yard encroachments.

3 Consideration of Preliminary Issues Report

At this stage in the process, Council is asked to receive the Preliminary Issues Report as the basis for the composition of the New Zoning By-law and the primary matters to be explored and investigated. Council has the option at this time to add to the Preliminary Issues Report prior to it being released for public review and comment, should they wish to do so.

Once Council is satisfied with the Preliminary Issues Report, they are asked to provide direction to staff to post the report on the New Zoning By-law Project webpage and invite the public to provide comment.



The report will also be circulated to First Nations and prescribed agencies/public bodies for review and comment.

It is presented that the “Preliminary Issues” list represents a snap shot in time and that it is anticipated that additional zoning related issues will be identified through the review of the report. The consultant will report back to Council in September on new issues identified and how best to address the new issues. It is anticipated that a “Final Issues Report” will be issued by the end September 2026.