

APPENDIX J – DEVELOPMENT PLAN BY-LAW AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE AREA OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

4 RURAL

Three distinct settlement patterns have developed in the rural portions of the RM of Springfield influenced by factors such as soils, vegetation and topography, transportation networks, proximity to urban areas and other sensitive lands. These areas have been designated as **Agricultural Preserve Area**, **Rural and Agricultural Area**, and **Mixed Rural and Agricultural Area**.

Land designated **Agricultural Preserve Area** encompasses prime agricultural land with large farm units and land holdings. Some areas of lower quality land, or small land holdings have been included in this designation to ensure future agricultural expansion options and to prevent the establishment of land uses not compatible with agriculture. With the exception of areas east of Anola, there is a very small percentage of wooded lands, most of which are associated with farmsteads. A number of rural residential lots have already been created within the prime agricultural areas which, while not seriously restricting commercial grain production, are of sufficient numbers to limit growth potential of the livestock sector.

The **Rural and Agricultural Area** designation is characterized by a highly fragmented land use pattern. Throughout the area, there are a large number of five acre rural residential lots intermixed with 10 to 40 acre size parcels. While the soil capability in much of the area is excellent, historic settlement patterns and past development activity has severely limited the potential for commercial agriculture. With the exception of the area within one mile of Birds Hill Park, most land is still in agricultural production, as hobby and part-time farming has evolved over the years. The recreational equine industry has become a major land use in this area, due in part to the proximity of Birds Hill Park.

Areas surrounding Anola and east of Highway 12 have been designated **Mixed Rural and Agricultural Area**. Much of this area is wooded, with the predominant land use characterized by scattered rural residential holdings, interspersed with larger agricultural holdings of cropland, forage grassland, and bush. Beef production, primarily grazing and cow-calf operations is the most predominant type of livestock operation in this area.

4.1 AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE AREA

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE AREA OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1 To promote the use of prime agricultural land and viable lower class land (where agriculture is the dominant land use) by allowing for a full range of agricultural activities and livestock operations.
- 4.1.2 To protect prime agricultural land and viable lower class land (where agriculture is the dominant land use) from unnecessary land fragmentation and encroachment of incompatible land uses.
- 4.1.3 To encourage the sustainable growth and development of the agricultural industry.
- 4.1.4 To ensure proposed developments do not negatively impact agriculture, the environment or adjacent uses.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE AREA POLICIES

- 4.1.5 The **Agricultural Preserve Area** consists of prime agricultural lands and lands where agricultural activities are dominant or could be viable on lower class agricultural land and where it is desirable and feasible to provide protections for such activities. These areas shall be preserved and protected for a full range of agricultural activities and livestock operations.
- 4.1.6 The following land uses may be accommodated in the **Agricultural Preserve Area**:
- a. General and specialized agricultural uses such as farming, pasturage, agriculture, apiculture, floriculture, aquaculture, horticulture, and agricultural product storage facilities;
 - b. Livestock operations and feedlots subject to the provisions of **Section 3.11 Livestock Operations** of the Development Plan;
 - c. Agri-commercial or agri-industrial uses and small scale industrial, business and commercial operations that are used to diversify active farming operations.
 - d. Resource developments such as forestry activities, mineral exploration and extraction operations, outfitters and game farms as well as wildlife conservation reserves;
 - e. Non-intensive, limited recreational and open space uses such as parks, nature trails, and agri-tourism that cannot be suitably accommodated in urban settlement centres or **General Development** areas; and
 - f. Religious assemblies that cannot be suitably accommodated in urban settlement centres or **General Development** areas may be allowed to establish on existing parcels as a conditional use, subject to the requirements of the zoning by-law and provided that no subdivision is required. Religious assemblies will be encouraged to locate adjacent to existing urban centres or rural residential areas and will be directed away from agricultural uses. The development of a religious assembly in the Agricultural Preserve Area shall not restrict agricultural practices or existing livestock operations, nor should it lead to the evolution of a new settlement centre. Traffic from development of this type shall not be a detriment to municipal or provincial roads or adjacent land uses. A Traffic Impact Study may be required; and
 - g. Hobby farms that are accessory to existing rural residential dwellings.
- 4.1.7 Agricultural parcels within the **Agricultural Preserve Area** shall generally be 80 acres. Variations may be allowed in instances where a public work has reduced the size of the parcel. Smaller lot sizes may also be considered in the case of lot boundary adjustments and title considerations, provided the end result is consistent with the overall intent of the plan.
- 4.1.8 Where additional accessory housing is necessary to assist with an agricultural enterprise, such accommodation shall be provided on the existing farmstead as part of the farm unit if staff or family members living in the additional housing are significantly employed by the agricultural enterprise.
- 4.1.9 Certain specialized agricultural activities such as nurseries, horticultural, and apiaries may be allowed on smaller parcels provided they are compatible with the surrounding agricultural activities and do not generate significant levels of traffic.
- 4.1.10 Agri-commercial or agri-industrial uses and small scale industrial, business and commercial operations that are used to diversify active farming operations may be allowed in the **Agricultural Preserve Area**, subject to requirements outlined in the zoning by-law.
- 4.1.11 Council shall consider the following criteria when considering proposed developments in the **Agricultural Preserve Area**:
- a. The use shall not conflict with agriculture and, wherever possible, locate on lower class farmland;
 - b. The size of the site is appropriate to meet the needs of the use, without being wasteful of agricultural land;
 - c. The parcel has access to the municipal road system and does not negatively impact the provincial highway system. Where the development is proposed in the vicinity of a provincial highway, a copy of the proposal shall be circulated to the province for review and comments. Direct access to the provincial highway system may be restricted;

- d. If required, water, wastewater, and utilities can be economically provided;
 - e. Drainage is adequate on site; and
 - f. The storage, treatment and discharge of all effluent and emissions and disposal of all waste must meet the approval of the province and Council.
- 4.1.12 Limited natural resource developments, non-intensive recreational and open space uses (such as parks, nature trails and agri-tourism) that cannot be suitably accommodated in urban settlement centres or **General Development** areas may be considered provided that such proposals are compatible with existing agricultural operations and that the size of the proposed parcel is appropriate for the intended use. Such uses will be identified as a conditional use in the zoning by-law.
- 4.1.13 Where feasible, existing non-conforming small holdings shall be consolidated as a requirement of subdivision approval.

4.2 RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL AREA

RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL AREA OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 To provide for large lot residential and hobby/specialized farming opportunities in the RM of Springfield.
- 4.2.2 To encourage a variety of recreational opportunities.
- 4.2.3 To recognize and accommodate the unique equine population and land use in this area.
- 4.2.4 To ensure that proposed developments can be serviced to an appropriate rural standards and in a cost-effective manner with respect to road access, water supply, and wastewater disposal.
- 4.2.5 To ensure proposed developments do not negatively impact the environment or adjacent uses.

RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL AREA POLICIES

- 4.2.6 Lands designated **Rural and Agricultural Area** will be retained for large lot residential and hobby/part-time farming uses. Uses that are not compatible with existing and intended land uses will not be allowed.
- 4.2.7 The following land uses may be accommodated in the **Rural and Agricultural Area**:
 - a. General agricultural activities, hobby and non-commercial farms, including equine hobby farms;
 - b. Livestock operations that comply with **Section 3.11 Livestock Operations** of the Development Plan;
 - c. Non-farm rural estate opportunities such as single-family dwellings and mobile home dwellings;
 - d. Small scale agri-commercial and agri-industrial operations;
 - e. Recreational and open space uses such as parks and nature trails; and
 - f. Institutional uses that service the rural community and are compatible with adjacent land uses.
- 4.2.8 Parcels within the **Rural and Agricultural Area** shall be 20 acres. Smaller lots sizes may be considered in the case of lot boundary adjustments and title consolidations of existing parcels, provided the end result is consistent with the overall intent of the plan.
- 4.2.9 The retiring agricultural producer subdivisions policies outlined in **Policy 4.4.1** do not apply within the **Rural and Agricultural Area**.
- 4.2.10 Council shall consider the following criteria when considering proposed developments:
 - a. Development should not conflict with the rural use of the area and, wherever possible, locate on lower class farmland;
 - b. The impact of the proposed development on the existing character of the area;
 - c. The parcel has access to the municipal road system and does not negatively impact the provincial