



RON DAVIDSON
LAND USE PLANNING CONSULTANT INC.

February 10, 2026

Township of Southgate
185667 Grey Road 9
Dundalk, ON
N0C 1B0

Attention: Victoria Mance, Junior Planner

Dear Victoria:

**Re: Planning Justification Report
Application for Zoning By-law Amendment
Lot 33, Concession 6
Geographic Township of Proton, Township of Southgate
County of Grey
106438 Southgate Road 10
Owner: Dennis and Nancy Frey**

This Planning Justification Report has been prepared to evaluate the merits of the above-note rezoning application within the context of planning policies contained within the Grey County Official Plan, Township of Southgate Official Plan, and the Provincial Planning Statement.

Please consider the following:

The Proposal:

Dennis and Nancy Frey own a 41.44-hectare farm located along the south side of Southgate Road 10, in the former Township of Proton. They actively farm these lands and several other properties in this general area.

Mr. and Mrs. Frey are in partnership with Mack Shantz, also a farmer, and together through a legal partnership known as Riverview Grain and Ag Ltd. they own a grain elevator handling / drying facility on the subject property. Both parties farm several

properties. Because the grain draining is limited to their own crops, the existing facility is permitted under the current 'A1' (Agricultural) zoning of the site.

Riverview Grain and Ag Ltd. wishes to expand its operation to include custom drying and handling for other farmers in the area. This land use would therefore become a commercial facility, which must be recognized through an amendment to the Zoning By-law. The required application has been filed by the applicant.

The Operation:

A series of grain drain structures were recently constructed on the property in a clustered area approximately 130 metres from the front property line and includes bins, hoppers, dryer, weight scale, and a weight scale building.

Also situated on the property are three seed storage bins located near the front of the property and a large equipment storage building, all of which are used by the Freys for their own farming operation and are not associated with the grain drying operation.

A new storage bin, dryer, and hopper tank will be erected on the site.

Riverview Grain and Ag Ltd. expects their grain handling / drying to increase by only about 10%, as operations will continue to focus primarily on drying their own corn, wheat, soybeans, barley, and oats.

During the months of July to October, approximately 20 to 25 truckers per day are expected to frequent the site. This number will be reduced to only a few trucks per week during the remainder of the year.

Subject Property:

The subject property comprises 41.44 hectares of land, the majority of which are actively farmed. A barn and two other farm buildings previously existed on the subject property, as shown on the 2020 aerial photograph, but were removed prior to the new grain drying equipment being placed on the site.

The grain drying equipment is shown on the Site Plan.

Adjacent Land Uses:

Other lands located within the immediate vicinity of the subject property are mostly used for agricultural purposes. A few non-farm residential lots also exist nearby.

Township of Southgate Zoning By-law:

The subject property is zoned 'A1' (Agricultural), as illustrated on Figure 2 of this Planning Justification Report. The 'A1' zone permits agriculture, commercial greenhouse, detached dwelling, secondary dwelling unit, bed and breakfast, home industry, home occupation, temporary farm help accommodation, forestry, conservation, and accessory uses, buildings, and structures.

A grain drying facility for the landowner's own use would qualify as an agricultural use. Once the scale of the grain draining component of the farming operation expands to include the custom handling and drying of grains from other farmers, however, the land use becomes a commercial use and is then no longer permitted under the 'A1' zone. For this reason, this particular area of the property must be rezoned.

As shown on Figure 3, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment would rezone 2.4 hectares of land to 'A1-x', a new site-specific zone that would permit the proposed operation. The recommended text of the Zoning By-law Amendment would read:

A1-x

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 6 or any other provisions to the contrary, the land zoned A1-x shall be subject to the regulations of the A1 Zone, except for the following:

- a) a grain drying operation shall be permitted in addition to those uses listed in Section 6.1.*

Official Plans:

County of Grey Official Plan:

Schedule A of the County of Grey Official Plan designates the subject property as 'Rural', 'Agricultural', and 'Hazard Lands', as shown on Figure 4. The area to be rezoned lies within the 'Agricultural' designation.

The policies contained in Section 5.2 *Agricultural Land Use Type* of the Official Plan identify agriculture, agricultural-related, on-farm diversified uses, forestry, and conservation, among other activities, as permitted uses. Grain drying is specifically identified as an example of an agricultural-related use on Table 7 of the Official Plan.

According to Section 5.2.2 (5) (d), the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae does not apply to agricultural-related uses.

Section 5.2.2 states the following with regard to on-farm diversified uses and agricultural-related uses:

- 15) *New on-farm diversified uses shall be limited in size and scale, as per Table 8 below and to those uses that can be sustained by local service and infrastructure levels. New agricultural-related uses shall also be limited to uses that can be sustained by local service levels. Municipal official plans may choose to set local road standards required for such uses, which are in-line with the level and type of traffic being generated by the uses. Traffic Impact Studies may be required to determine the impact of the proposed operation on the local road network, as per section 8.3 of this Plan. Servicing or Noise Studies may also be required for new or expanded on-farm diversified or agricultural-related uses. Municipal official plans or zoning by-laws may also choose to limit individual uses that could otherwise be directed to settlement areas. Agricultural-related uses are not required to be limited in size, whereas on-farm diversified uses are required to be limited to the sizes shown in Table 8. Subject to the size limitation requirements of Table 8 of this Plan and section 5.2.2(17), on-farm diversified uses may be considered on lots less than 10 hectares in size in the Rural land use type.*

Regarding the above, please take into consideration the following:

- An agricultural-related use is not limited in size, according to this policy. That notwithstanding, the requested Zoning By-law Amendment will limit the area of operation to 2.4 hectares;
- The expanding operation will not place any demand on municipal services. The applicant is aware that half-load restrictions apply to Southgate Road 10 during the early spring months; however, this places no limitation on the business because no trucks will be frequenting the grain drying operation during this time;
- An Access Review Brief was requested by Township staff during the pre-consultation exercise and concluded no improvements to the existing road network are necessary to support the anticipated traffic increase; and,

- A D-6 Study was also required by the Township to address potential compatibility issues between the expanding grain drying operation and the neighbouring sensitive land uses. Potential dust, odour, noise, and vibration conflicts were assessed in the Study, and the consultant concluded the following:
 - No adverse effect from dust is expected from the proposed development;
 - Odour is not emitted from the proposed development;
 - No adverse effect from noise is expected from the proposed development; and,
 - Vibration is not emitted by the proposed development.

Therefore, no compatibility issues were identified between the surrounding receptors and the proposed development.

Based on the foregoing, the proposed use of the property is consistent with the Official Plan policies pertaining to agricultural-related uses.

No physical constraints apply to the property, according to the various schedules and appendices of the Official Plan.

In light of the above, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms to the Grey County Official Plan.

Township of Southgate Official Plan:

Schedule A of the Township's Official Plan designates the subject property as 'Rural', 'Agricultural', and 'Hazard Lands', as shown on Figure 5. The area to be rezoned lies within the 'Agricultural' designated lands.

The 'Agricultural' policies contained in Section 5.4.1 of the Township's Official Plan are identical to the County's Official Plan policies in terms of permitted uses. Table 1 of the Official Plan recognizes a grain drying operation as an example of a permitted agricultural-related use.

Section 5.4.1.2 *Development Policies* states the following:

- 3) *Agricultural-related uses are not limited in size by this Official Plan; however, the Township's Zoning By-law may contain provisions that restrict the amount of land dedicated to the agricultural-related use and the size of the building(s). Agricultural-related uses shall conform to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks D-6 Guidelines.*

Despite this policy, the size of the operation will be limited by the Zoning By-law Amendment to 2.4 hectares of land.

As explained above, a D-6 Study has concluded that the expanded operation will not create any noise, dust, odour, or vibration issues for the neighbours.

It should be noted that the Township's Official Plan, which was prepared in 2022, directs the next Comprehensive Zoning By-law to allow for agricultural-related uses listed in Table 1 to be permitted without requiring the landowner to go through the Zoning By-law Amendment process. That policy, contained in Section 5.4.1.2, states:

- 1) *The Township's Zoning By-law will generally permit, as-of-right, those agricultural uses and agricultural-related uses listed in Table 1 within the zone(s) that are applied to the countryside, except a marijuana/cannabis production facility.*

To date, a new Comprehensive Zoning By-law has not been prepared to implement the new Official Plan, and so a Zoning By-law Amendment is still necessary in order for the applicant to proceed with the grain drying expansion at this time.

In view of the above, it is evident that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms to the Township's Official Plan.

Provincial Planning Statement:

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) generally permits agriculture, agricultural-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses in prime agricultural areas. Section 2.3.3.1 states:

Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be based on guidelines developed by the Province or municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents, which achieve the same objectives.

The proposed grain drying expansion qualifies as an agricultural-related use, as explained in the PPS implementation document entitled Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, which is discussed later in this Planning Justification Report.

The proposed use will be compatible with and not hinder other nearby farming operations.

Based on the above, the requested Zoning By-law Amendment is consistent with the PPS.

Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas:

These Guidelines are intended to give direction to decision-makers when interpreting the PPS policies pertaining to prime agricultural areas.

The portion of the property that is subject to the requested Zoning By-law Amendment is recognized as a prime agricultural area, as evidenced by the fact that the lands are designated 'Agricultural', as opposed to 'Rural', in both Official Plans.

The Guidelines identify agriculture, agriculture-related, and on-farm diversified uses as activities that may be considered on prime-agricultural land. Non-farm agricultural uses may also be considered in certain circumstances.

Section 2.2.2 of the Guidelines recognizes grain drying as an example of an agricultural-related use.

The following policies apply:

2.2.1 PPS Criteria for Agriculture-Related Uses

All of the following criteria must be met to qualify as agriculture-related uses in prime agricultural areas.

- 1. Farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial use.*
- 2. Shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations.*
- 3. Directly related to farm operations in the area.*

4. *Supports agriculture.*
5. *Provides direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity*
6. *Benefits from being in close proximity to farm operations.*

A grain drying operation is clearly a farm-related industrial use and is compatible with farming and supportive of agriculture. It will not hinder any nearby agricultural operation; in fact, the agricultural operations in the area may actually benefit from having a grain drying business in close proximity to their farms.

Given the foregoing, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is in keeping with the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas.

Closing Comments:

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms to the Grey County Official Plan and Township of Southgate Official Plan and is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement. Therefore, favourable consideration can be given to the rezoning request.

As noted earlier in this Report, this Zoning By-law Amendment would not be required if the Comprehensive Zoning By-law had been updated to reflect the new Southgate Official Plan.

Should you require any additional information, please contact the undersigned.

On a final note, please contact me to discuss a possible public meeting date before actually scheduling the meeting in order to ensure my availability.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Ron Davidson.

Ron Davidson, BES, RPP, MCIP

c.c. Mack Shantz