

May 19, 2026

Shaneque Johnson
Township of Southgate
planning@southgate.ca

**RE: Minor Variance Application – A4-26 Martin
045474 SOUTHGATE ROAD 04, Township of Southgate
Municipality
Roll: 420709000102800
Owner: Laverne Martin
Agent: ADS – AG Development Services Inc.**

Dear Shaneque Johnson,

This correspondence is in response to the above noted application. We have had an opportunity to review the application in relation to the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and the County of Grey Official Plan (OP). We offer the following comments.

Proposal Summary

The Purpose of the minor variance is to reduce the Minimum Distance Separation II requirement for a proposed new shed, barn, and liquid tank east of the existing farmhouse. The required MDS setback for the new barn is 202 metres from the nearest residence, while the actual setback proposed is 183 metres. The new liquid storage tank will meet the required MDS setback.

The Effect of the application is to permit a new livestock barn, shed and liquid storage tank east of the existing farmhouse with a 183-metre setback from the nearest home to the north.

Documents submitted with the application and reviewed by staff:

- MDS calculations, prepared by Cleon Martin, dated April 9, 2026
- Site Plans, Application documents, Notice of Public meeting

The subject lands (+/- 35.9 ha) are identified as the following in the County Official Plan (OP):

- Schedule A: *Land Use Types* – Rural and Hazard Lands

- Appendix B: *Constraint Mapping* – Significant Woodlands
- Appendix D: *Functional Road Classification* – frontage on Southgate Road 4

Comments

Schedule A of the County OP designates the subject lands as Rural. Staff note that all uses permitted in Section 5.2.1 – Agricultural Uses are also permitted in the Rural Designation. The proposed minor Variance is related to an agricultural use on the subject lands. Section 5.2.2 (5) states:

l) Municipalities should not reduce MDS through a minor variance, zoning amendment, or official plan amendment, except where sufficient reasoning has been provided, and the intent of the MDS Guidelines has been maintained. MDS shall generally not be modified for the purposes of permitting new non-farm sized lot creation. In reviewing the rationale for a variance, there should be demonstration that the variance would:

- *not be able to be met through a modification to the development being proposed (e.g. set a building back further than proposed),*
- *make an existing situation better to reduce the potential for conflict*
- *impose undue hardship, such as major farm operation, inefficiencies, or servicing constraints, by not granting the variance, or*
- *be small enough such that there is very limited potential for land use conflict*

1. From the submitted MDS II Report, staff understand that the proposed farm building setback requires a 202 m setback from the nearest residence, whereas 183 m is proposed (representing a 9% reduction).

In general, the expansion of a livestock facility is a typical process for most farm operations and can reasonably be expected over time. While the County OP, and the MDS Guidelines, do not generally support or encourage reductions to MDS setbacks, staff understand that some flexibility in reducing the MDS setback requirements may be required on a case-by-case basis.

Based on the submitted application materials, staff understand the proposed new buildings are within the existing building cluster to maintain MDS setbacks to surrounding neighbours and adjacent SVCA regulated lands and Hazard Lands. The current location also avoids permanently removing land from agricultural production.

2. Staff note that the MDS Guideline document provides further direction and considerations for reducing MDS setbacks in certain circumstances ([Section 8.2 Reducing MDS Setbacks](#)), such as to mitigate environmental or public health and safety impacts, or avoiding natural or human-made hazards.

County Ecology staff have reviewed the proposal and provided the following comments:

3. The subject property contains or is adjacent to potential Habitat for Threatened or Endangered Species, Provincially Significant Wetlands, Other Identified Wetlands, Significant Woodlands, Significant Wildlife Habitat, potential Fish Habitat, and a Stream. In addition, the property is located within a Significant Groundwater Recharge Area.
4. County staff have reviewed the proposal and based on the site plan, the proposed development is situated within the adjacent lands to identified natural heritage features, in areas where existing buildings and infrastructure are already present. Provided the development maintains a 30-metre setback from the stream and its associated valley slope, it is the opinion of County staff that potential impacts will be negligible. As such, the requirement for an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) can be waived. County staff have no concerns, provided this setback is maintained.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact ecology@grey.ca.

Summary

The County requests notice of any decision rendered with respect to this file.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me.

Yours Truly,

Cassandra Dillman
Intermediate Planner

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