

Subject: Application for Zoning By-law Amendment at 17019 Woodbine Avenue for Pickering College (File No. ZBA25.003)

Staff Report No. DS-026-25

**Department/
Commission:** Development Services Commission

Date: June 18, 2025

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council direct staff to bring forward the By-law No. 2025-056-ZO to amend the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO by applying a site specific Agricultural Exception Fourteen Zone [AG](14)] to the westerly portion of the subject property, and Agricultural Exception Fourteen Holding Symbol One [AG(14) (h-1)] Zone to the easterly portion the subject property; and,
- 2) That Council confirm that notwithstanding that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment differs from that proposed at the April 16, 2025, Statutory Public Meeting, the revisions are minor in nature, and that no further Statutory Public meeting is required.

Report Highlights

- Application for Zoning By-law Amendment was submitted by EcoVue Consulting (on behalf of Pickering College) on February 28, 2025 to permit an agricultural and land-based learning centre on the subject lands.
- Town staff have received two (2) submissions from the Applicant to date as part of the processing of the subject application.
- A Public Meeting was held on April 16, 2025 in order to receive Council and public comments on the proposal. No significant changes have been proposed since the Public Meeting.

- Comments received from members of the public, Council, and Public Agencies have been reviewed and considered in the writing of this report and staff's recommendation to Council.
- Staff recommend that the proposed application be approved, as it represents good planning and is supportable under Provincial Policy and the Town's policy and regulatory framework.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to make a recommendation to Council regarding the application for Zoning By-law Amendment for the lands municipally known at 17019 Woodbine Avenue, which if approved, would permit an agricultural and land-based learning centre on the subject lands.

This report will:

- Provide an overview of the subject property and site **(Section 2)**;
- Provide an overview of the development proposal **(Section 3.1)**;
- Provide an overview of the site-specific Zoning provisions/regulations being requested **(Section 3.4)**;
- Identify applicable Provincial, Regional, and Town policies **(Section 3.3)**; and
- Provide an overview of comments received from members of the public **(Section 3.7)**.

This report concludes with recommending approval of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment as the proposed development is appropriate for the development of the lands and generally conforms to provincial, regional, and municipal plans and policies.

2. Background:

An application for Zoning By-law Amendment was submitted by EcoVue Consulting (Applicant) on behalf of Pickering College (Owner) on February 28, 2025 to permit the operation of an agriculture and land-based learning centre on the subject lands.

On April 16, 2025, a statutory public meeting was held in order to receive Council and public comments on the proposal.

In May 2025, a final submission was received by the Town, that was generally reflective of the proposal presented at the April 16, 2025 public meeting. Comments from the public, Members of Council, Town Departments and Public Agencies have been reviewed and considered in the writing of this report and the making of the recommendations to Council.

2.1 Location

The subject lands are municipally known as 17019 Woodbine Avenue and are located on the east side of Woodbine Avenue, north of Vivian Road. The subject lands are approximately 31.4 hectares in total lot area (314,000 square metres) and have a frontage of approximately 204.6 metres on Woodbine Avenue. There is also a small road frontage that exists along Vivian Road for the purposes of supporting a secondary road connection to the property. However, it is staff’s understanding that the present condition of this land does not permit vehicular or pedestrian access to the property, and that access is not being proposed for the proposed development, at this time.

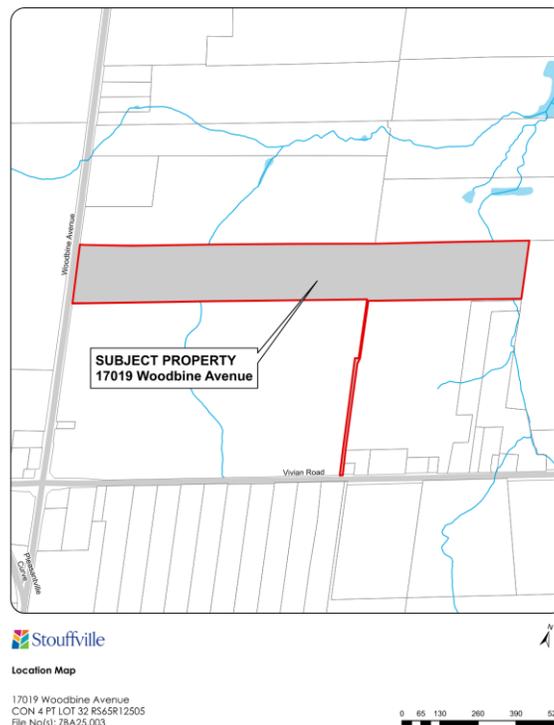
The property presently includes a two-storey single detached dwelling, a two-storey barn, several horse shelters, a one storey detached garage, and two small accessory buildings. A portion of the property is currently being farmed for agricultural purposes.

The subject lands are designated “Agricultural Area” and “Significant Environmental Area” in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan and are zoned “Agricultural”, “Environmental”, and “Flood Hazard” under the Town’s Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO.

Figure 1 below provides the location map for the subject lands. **Figure 2** displays an aerial context map of the subject property. The subject property is outlined in red.

Attachment 1 to this report is a copy of the location map.

Figure 1: Location Map



2.2 Surrounding Land Uses

Below is a description of the adjacent land uses:

North: Agricultural and environmental lands.

East: Agricultural and environmental lands.

South: Agricultural and environmental lands.

West: Agricultural lands.

Figure 2: Aerial Context Map



3. Analysis of Development Proposal:

The sections below provide an overview of the development as proposed for the subject property. This overview outlines the uses, buildings and structures proposed on the subject site; provides a policy review and analysis; as well as outlines the required relief from the Town's Zoning By-law.

3.1 Final Submission (May 2025 Submission)

A revised submission in support of application for Zoning By-law Amendment was submitted by the Applicant on May 22, 2025, and forms part of what is being presented to Council today, as well as staff's recommendation. The revised proposal is generally reflective of what was presented to Council at the April 16, 2025 Public Meeting.

The subject Zoning By-law Amendment application continues to propose the operation of a satellite campus for Pickering College School on the subject lands, which would offer daily agricultural and land-based learning opportunities for students.

Existing Farmhouse Building: Through this proposal, the property's existing farmhouse is proposed to be renovated to facilitate the proposed educational uses on both the ground floor as well as on a portion of the upper level. The remainder of the farmhouse's upper level would contain one (1) residential dwelling unit to house the property's farm manager.

Staff note that the proposed educational facilities are not permitted uses as-of-right on the property, and require relief as requested through this proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application. Additionally, the dwelling unit that is proposed to be located on the upper level of the farmhouse is not a permitted use as-of-right, and requires relief as requested through the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment. Further, the AG Zone permits a single-detached dwelling as a residential use on the property (i.e. the present condition of the subject site).

Proposed Facilities: The proposed facilities associated with the satellite campus for Pickering College School include: gardens, greenhouses, chicken coops, apiaries, campfire circles, and a tenting area. Staff note that agricultural buildings and structures are permitted uses as-of-right on the property, and do not require additional relief. The existing farmland on the property would continue to be utilized for the growing of crops. Additionally, approximately 2,273 metres of on-site trail network is provided throughout the property.

Proposed Parking Area: To support the requested uses, the Applicant is proposing to develop a parking lot that would provide for a total of twelve (12) standard parking spaces, with one (1) additional "Type A" barrier-free parking space, for a total of thirteen (13) parking spaces. Staff note that since the April 16, 2025 Public Meeting, a reduction in the total number of parking spaces has been proposed, however, this reduced number continues to provide sufficient parking as required by the Zoning By-law. For reference, a total of twenty-six (26) parking spaces were proposed in the original submission.

Staff note that the proposed, scoped parking area would offer an interim parking solution to satisfy Zoning requirements while the Applicant works towards the construction of a larger, paved parking lot. Further discussion on phasing and associated Planning Applications can be found under **Section 3.5** of this report.

Figure 3 below displays an extract of the Site Plan submitted to Town Staff in the May 2025 submission. The proposed site plan illustrates the western portion of the property, adjacent to Woodbine Avenue, where the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is proposed to be applied.

Attachment 2 to this report is a copy of the Site Plan drawing dated May 2025.

Figure 3: Site Plan Extract (May 2025 Submission)

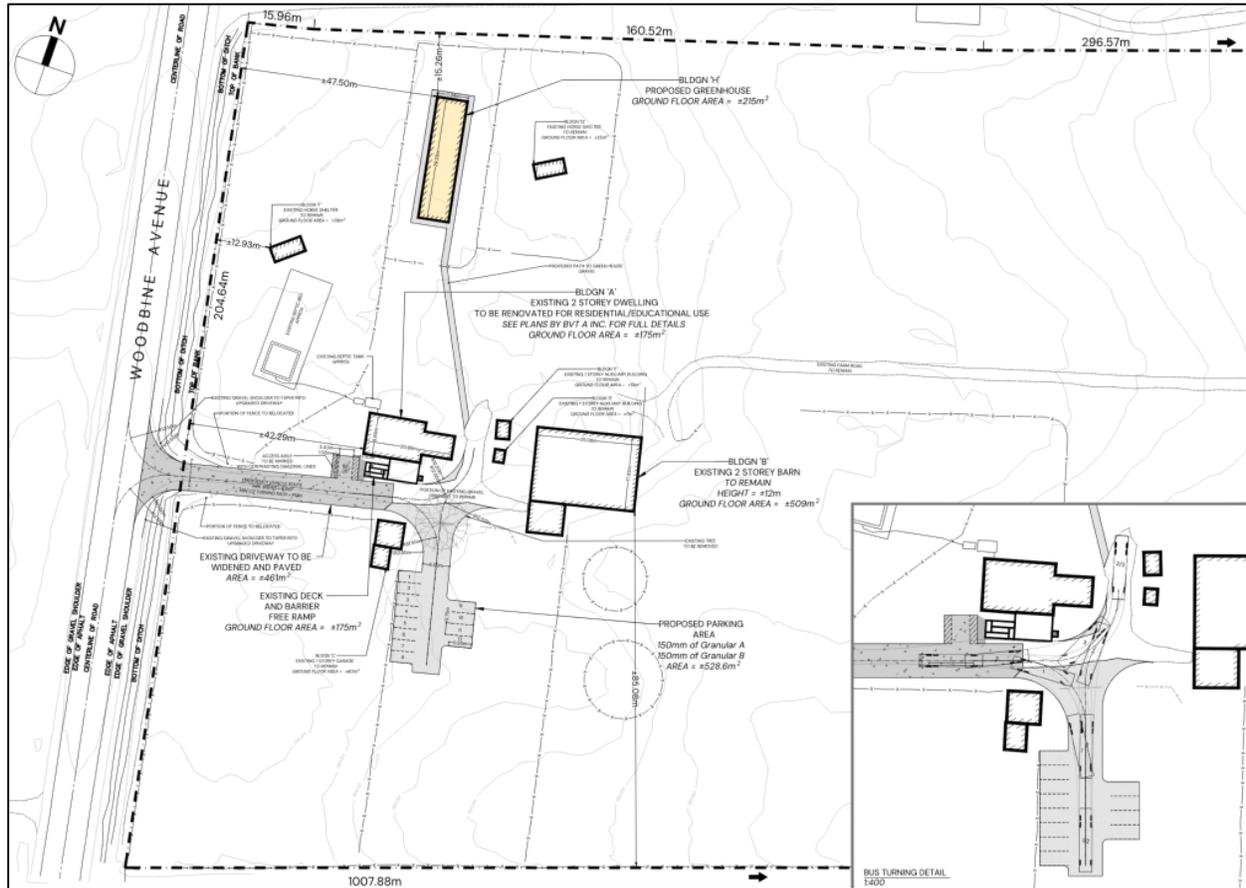


Figure 4 below is a copy of the conceptual rendering submitted by the Applicant in the first submission, demonstrating various activities and uses proposed on the subject lands.

Figure 4: Conceptual Site Plan – Full Site

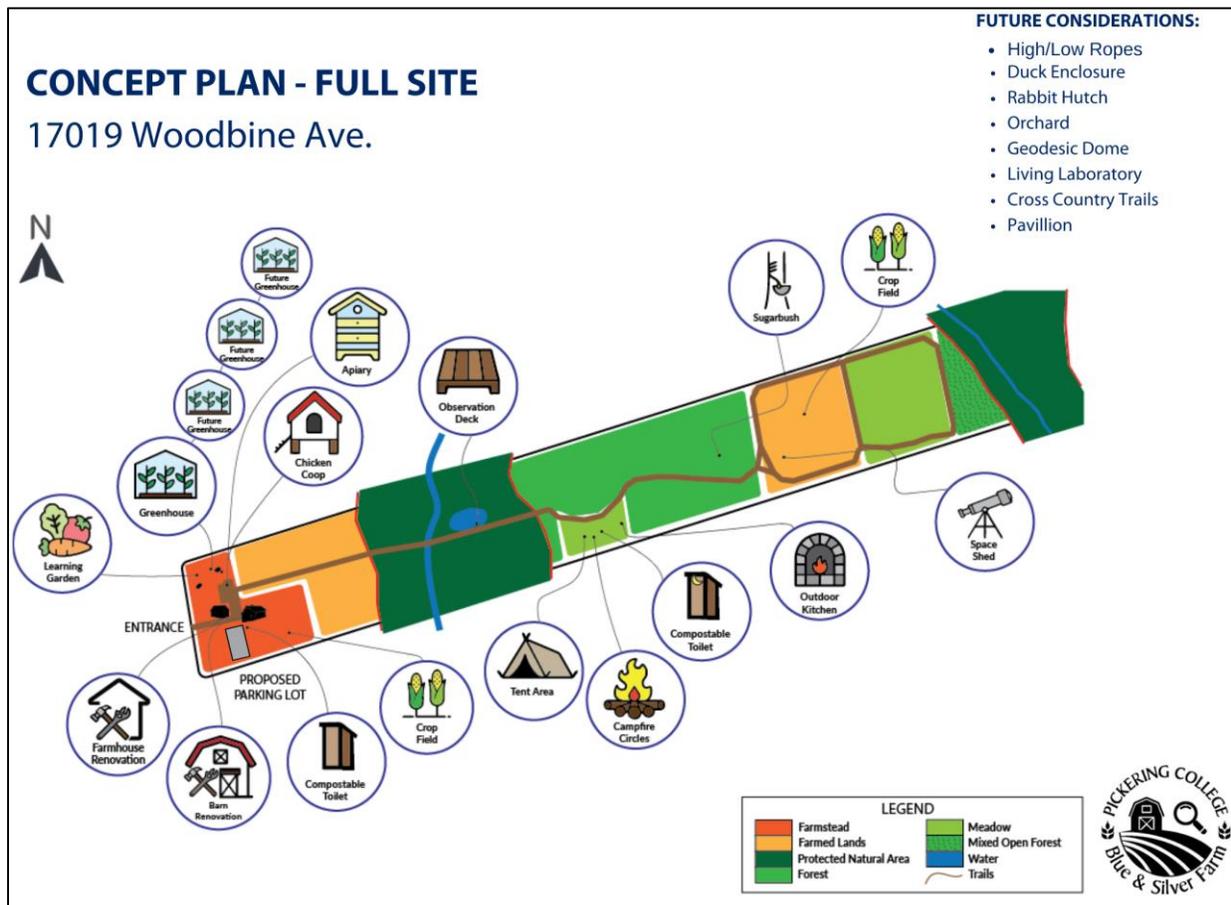


Table 1 displayed on the following page outlines the final site statistics from the latest submission (May 2025).

Table 1: Site Statistics (May 2025)

Regulation	Required	Proposed (Final)	Conformity
Minimum Lot Area	10 hectares	31.4 hectares	✓
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 metres	204.6 metres	✓
Minimum Front Yard Setback	15 metres	12.93 metres (measured to existing horse shelter)	✗
Minimum Interior Side Yard Setback	15 metres	15.26 metres	✓
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	15 metres	1,415 metres	✓
Maximum Lot Coverage	5%	0.4%	✓
Maximum Building Height	12 metres	≤ 12 metres	✓

Standard Parking Spaces	12	12	✓
Barrier-Free Parking Spaces	1	1	✓

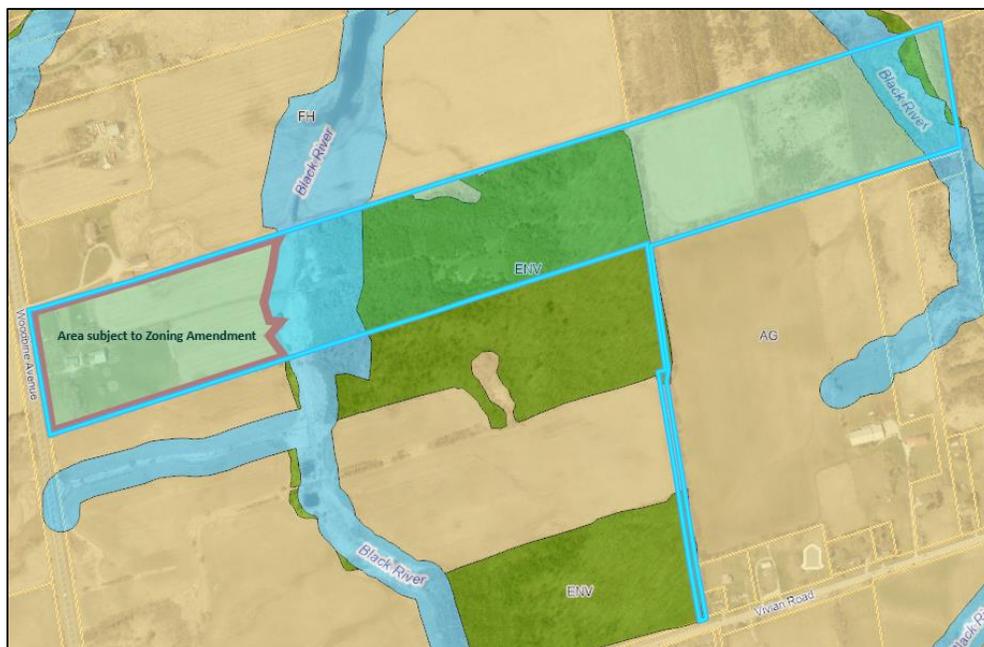
Table 2 below provides zoning information for the subject application.

Table 2: Requested Zoning

Item	Existing	Proposed
Zoning By-law	Agricultural (AG), Environmental (ENV), and Flood Hazard (FH) Zones.	Agricultural Exception Fourteen Zone [AG(14)] <u>AND</u> Agricultural Exception Fourteen Holding Symbol One Zone [AG(14)(h-1)] Proposed zoning amendment is on the western portion of the property i.e. west of the creek (Flood Hazard zone). The remainder of the property's zoning is not proposed to change (ENV and FH to remain in place). See Figure 5 below.
Use	Agriculture.	Agricultural and outdoor education learning centre

Figure 5 below shows the area on the subject property, bounded by solid red line, subject to the proposed zoning amendments.

Figure 5: Site Area Subject to Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment



3.2 Applicable Provincial and Regional Policies

This section will establish the current and relevant policy environment that forms part of the review of the subject planning application. The overview will include Provincial Plans and Policies, the York Region Official Plan, the Town's current Official Plan, as well as the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville New Official Plan which was adopted by Council in May 2024.

3.2.1 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024 is a consolidated statement of the Provincial Government's policies on how municipalities shall manage, and direct land uses to achieve efficient development and land use patterns.

Relevant policies of the PPS 2024 as they relate to the proposal are as follows:

Section 2.5 (Rural Areas in Municipalities) notes that "healthy, integrated, and viable rural areas should be supported by: building upon rural character and leveraging rural amenities and assets, conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature, and providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas".

Section 4.1 (Natural Heritage) notes that "natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term", and that "the diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area... should be maintained, restored, or where possible, improved". Additionally, this section notes that "development or site alteration shall not be permitted on lands adjacent to natural heritage features and areas... unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated, and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions".

Section 4.2 (Water) notes that "planning authorities shall protect, improve, or restore the quality and quantity of water by: minimizing potential negative impacts, maintaining linkages and functions of water resource systems, implementing necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to protect municipal drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas, and protect, improve or restore vulnerable surface and ground water and their hydrologic functions". Additionally, Section 4.2 notes that "development or site alteration shall be restricted in or near sensitive surface water features and sensitive ground water features such that these features and their related hydrologic functions will be protected, improved or restored, which may require mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches".

Section 4.3 (Agriculture) notes that "planning authorities are required to use an agricultural system approach to maintain and enhance a geographically continuous agricultural land base", and that "prime agricultural areas shall be designated and protected for long-term use for agriculture". Section 4.3.2 notes permitted uses in agricultural areas, which include "agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses based on provincial guidance".

The proposed development aligns with the intent of the PPS by emphasizing the conservation of rural character and leveraging rural amenities and assets. Furthermore, the development ensures the protection, improvement, stewardship and restoration of natural features and areas, maintaining the diversity and connectivity of these features, and safeguarding water quality and quantity by implementing necessary restrictions on site alterations. The proposed development also reinforces the systems approach of protecting for long term use of the agricultural and related uses on the lands while also raising awareness, creating learning opportunities about agricultural uses and long term stewardship of agricultural lands.

In Staff's opinion, the proposed development meets the intent of the policies within the Provincial Planning Statement.

3.2.2 Greenbelt Plan, 2017

The Greenbelt Plan is a provincial plan that was created to provide clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated, and what must be protected for current and future generations. The Plan identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base, ecological and hydrological features, and landscape functions.

17019 Woodbine Avenue is located entirely within the "Protected Countryside Area" designation, and partially within the "Natural Heritage System" of the Greenbelt Plan. Additionally, the property is designated as a Prime Agricultural Area.

For lands located within the Prime Agricultural Area of the "Protected Countryside" designation of the Greenbelt Plan, permitted uses include all types, sizes and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices, including agricultural related uses, and on-farm diversified uses. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations.

With respect to lands located within the Natural Heritage System of the Greenbelt Plan, this designation permits a full range of agricultural uses, agricultural related uses, and on-farm diversified uses. New buildings for agricultural uses, agricultural related uses, and on-farm diversified uses are subject to the policies of Section 3.2.5, which prohibit development or site alteration within key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features and their associated vegetation protection zone.

Proposals for new development or site alteration within 120 metres of a key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature requires a natural heritage evaluation or hydrological evaluation. However, such an evaluation is not required for new buildings and structures for agricultural uses, agricultural related uses, and on-farm diversified uses provided a 30-metre minimum vegetation protection zone is provided from the key feature.

The proposed development conforms to the Greenbelt Plan by maintaining the site's existing agricultural operations, emphasizing the conservation of rural character, and

maintaining the diversity and connectivity of ecological and hydrological features. No development or site alteration is proposed within 120 metres of a key natural heritage feature or hydrologic feature, and the proposed uses are in permitted as per the policies of the Plan.

Staff are of the opinion that the proposed development meets the intent of the policies within the Greenbelt Plan.

3.2.3 York Region Official Plan (YROP), 2022

The York Region Official Plan (YROP) was approved as modified by the Province on November 4, 2022 and on July 1, 2024, the Region was deemed an upper-tier without planning responsibilities (Bill 185). Per Section 70.13(2) of the Planning Act, an official plan of an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities that is in effect, which applies to any area of a lower-tier municipality, is deemed to be an official plan of the lower-tier municipality until the lower-tier municipality revokes or amends it. Therefore, the YROP policies continue to apply as administered by the Town.

17019 Woodbine Avenue is located within the “Agricultural Area” designation of the YROP.

Within the Agricultural Area, normal farm practices and a full range of agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are supported and permitted. Agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are to be permitted in accordance with Provincial guidelines, as further defined through local official plan policies. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations.

Any proposed expansions or alterations to existing buildings and structures for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses or on-farm diversified uses within key natural heritage features and/or key hydrologic features and their associated vegetation protection zones are required to conform with the policies in Section 3.4 of the YROP.

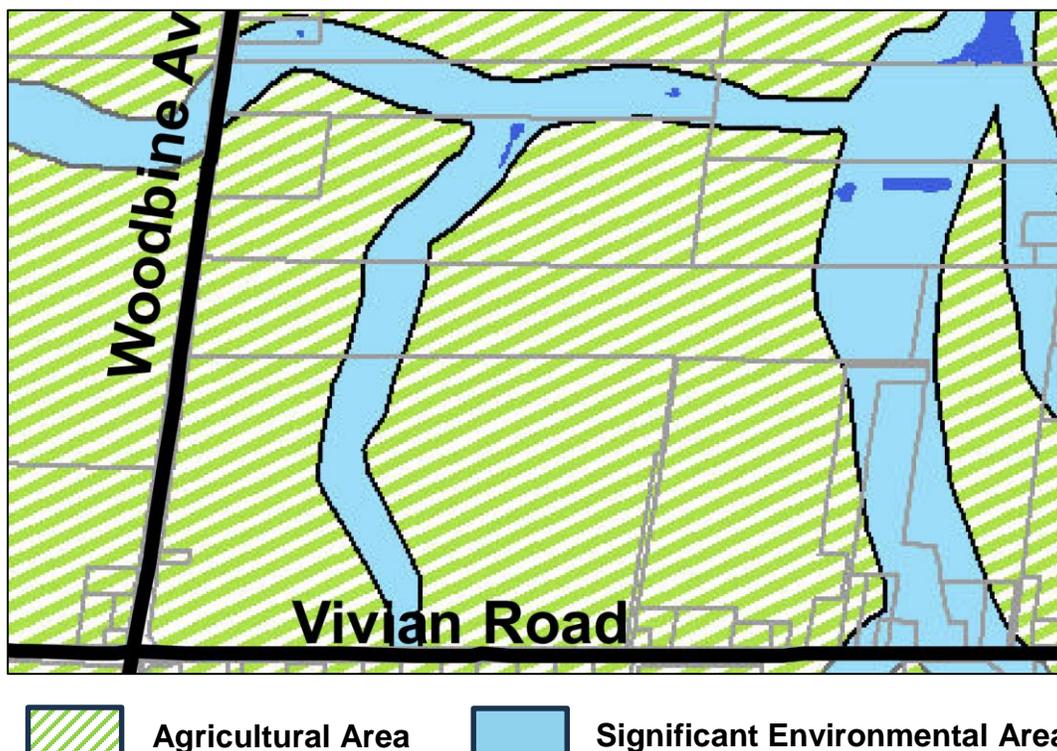
Staff can confirm that the proposed development does not require a Regional Official Plan Amendment as the proposal conforms with the policies and permitted uses of the YROP.

3.2.4 Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan, 2004

The subject property is designated “Agricultural Area” and “Significant Environmental Area” within the Town’s Official Plan, as per Schedule ‘B’.

Figure 6 below shows an extract of Schedule ‘B’ of the Town’s Official Plan, highlighting the designations of the subject property. The subject property is outlined in red.

Figure 6: Town’s Official Plan Schedule ‘B’ Extract



The Agricultural Area designation is intended to protect the Town’s Prime Agricultural Lands and to provide support to the agricultural industry in its use of this resource. Permitted uses in the Agricultural Area designation include agricultural and related uses, as well as residential uses. Farm related commercial and institutional uses may be permitted subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment, provided that they are small scale and directly related to an existing farm operation.

The Significant Environmental Area designation includes lands that have been identified as possessing significant attributes or environmental functions, which may have been deemed to be of Provincial, Regional or Local significance, as well as all valley and stream corridors. Permitted uses within the Significant Environmental Area designation include conservation, enhancement and preservation of the natural environment and passive recreational uses. Staff note that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is applicable to the western portion of the site, outside of the Significant Environmental Area.

Staff can confirm that the proposed development does not require an Official Plan Amendment as the proposal conforms with the permitted uses and policies of the current in-effect Official Plan.

3.2.5 Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, New Official Plan (Adopted by Council in May 2024)

At the May 15, 2024, Council meeting, Council adopted the Town’s New Official Plan (2024-057-OP). Although adopted by Council, prior to coming into full force and effect,

the new Official Plan must be approved by the Province. The Region of York no longer has the jurisdiction to approve the Town's Official Plan.

Under the Town's New Official Plan, the subject lands are designated "Agricultural Area" and "Significant Environmental Area", which permit similar uses and outline similar development policies as the current Official Plan.

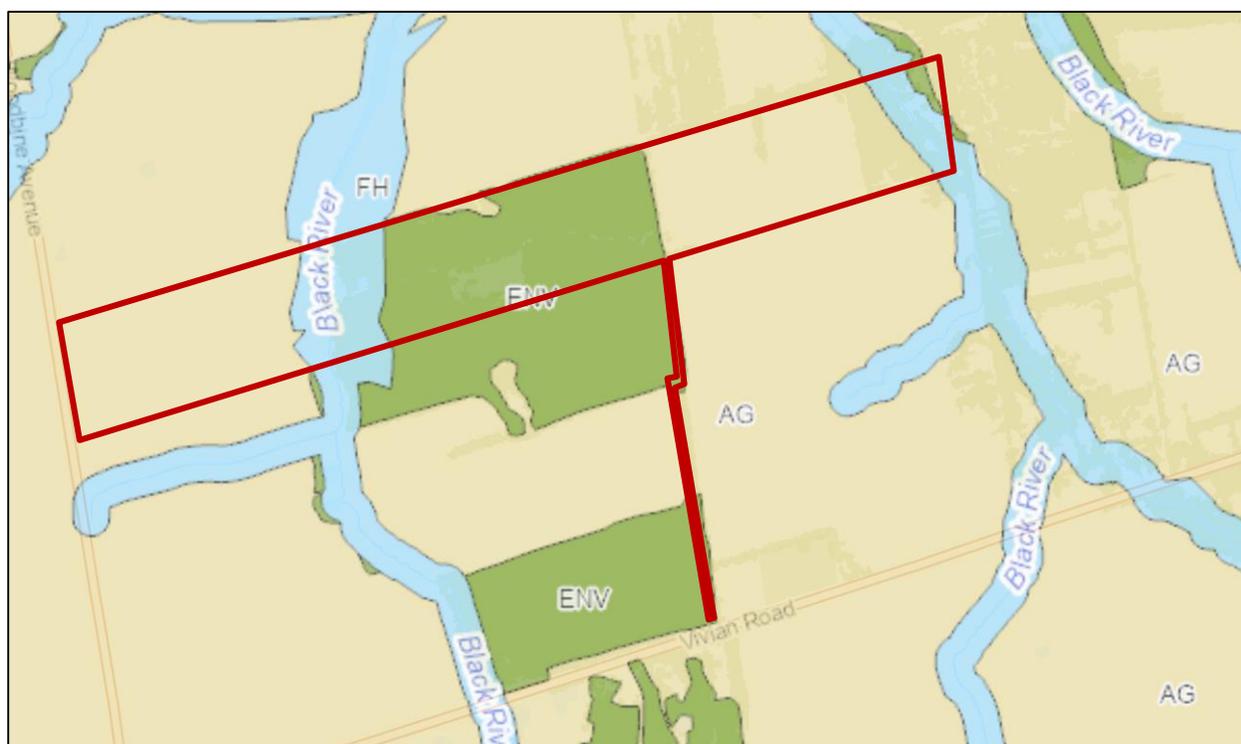
Currently, the policies that are applicable to the subject property are the policies of the Town's existing Official Plan, as discussed in **Section 3.2.4** above.

3.3 Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO

As per Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO, the subject property is zoned "Agricultural" (AG), "Environmental" (ENV), and "Flood Hazard" (FH). The proposed Zoning By-law is applicable to the western portion of the subject property, east of the Flood Hazard Zone.

Figure 7 below shows an extract of the subject property's Zoning. The subject property is outlined in red.

Figure 7: Zoning Map Extract



3.4 Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (File No. ZBA25.003)

To facilitate the proposed development, the Applicant is seeking to amend the Zoning By-law to rezone a portion of the subject lands, west of the creek/Flood Hazard zone. See **Figure 5** above that shows the portion of the lands subject to the applications.

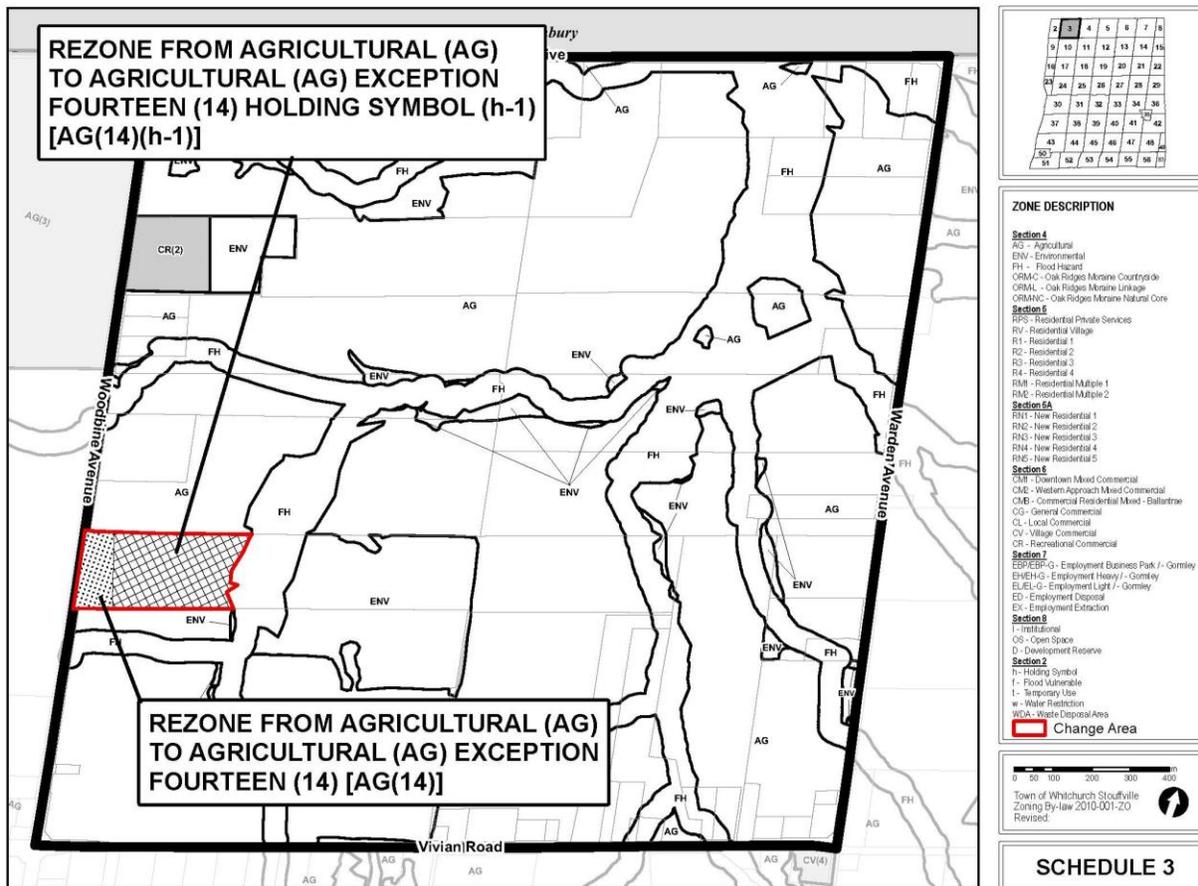
The subject area is proposed to be rezoned as follows:

- From “Agricultural” to the “Agricultural Exception Fourteen” [AG(14)] Zone.
- From Agricultural” to the “Agricultural Exception Fourteen Holding Symbol One” [AG(14)(h-1)] Zone.

The uses under both site-specific exception zones remain the same. Refer to **Section 3.6** of this report for further discussion on the purpose of the proposed Holding Symbol.

See **Figure 8** below that shows the proposed Zoning Amendments for portions of the subject property.

Figure 8: Proposed Zoning Amendment



In order to enable the proposed agricultural and outdoor education learning centre, the Applicant is proposing to introduce an “Agri-Education Space” as an additional permitted use on the western portion of the property which includes the existing Farmhouse building. The proposed “Agri-Education Space” is defined as follows:

“Agri-Education Space: Premises used as an educational space accessory to agricultural or farm-related uses, practices, or operations”.

Staff have also requested that a “Dwelling Unit above a non-residential use” be captured as an additional permitted use on the property to facilitate the upper-level residential unit being proposed. As discussed in **Section 3.1** of this report, the Zoning By-law permits a “Single Detached Dwelling” on the subject property (the present condition of the site). Through this application, the existing dwelling is proposed to be renovated to facilitate educational facilities within a portion of the building, in addition to a residential dwelling unit on the upper-level. In Staff’s opinion, this renovation would no longer categorize the existing farmhouse as a single detached dwelling. In order to accommodate the proposed residential use, a “Dwelling Unit above a non-residential use” is being requested as an additional permitted use on the property.

The Applicant is also seeking a site-specific amendment to legalize an existing non-compliant front yard setback which is measured to an existing horse shelter. No other site-specific amendments are being requested through this application.

Table 3 below includes Zoning regulations as required by the Town’s Zoning By-law, as well as amendments being requested for the proposed development.

Table 3: Zoning Regulations and Proposed Amendments

Regulation	Required	Proposed	Conformity
Minimum Lot Area	10 hectares	31.4 hectares	✓
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 metres	204.6 metres	✓
Minimum Front Yard Setback (Woodbine Avenue)	15 metres	12.93 metres (<i>Measured to existing horse shelter</i>)	✗
Minimum Interior Side Yard Setback (North Lot Line)	15 metres	15.26 metres	✓
Minimum Interior Side Yard Setback (South Lot Line)	15 metres	73.16 m	✓
Minimum Rear Yard Setback (East Lot Line)	15 metres	1,415 metres	✓
Maximum Lot Coverage	5%	0.4%	✓
Maximum Building Height	12 metres	≤ 12 metres	✓
Standard Parking Spaces	12	12	✓
Barrier-Free Parking Spaces	1	1	✓

No changes are being proposed for the existing ENV and FH zones on the subject property. Any uses occurring within the ENV and FH zones would have to continue to comply with the permitted uses under the respective parent zones.

3.4.1 Site Specific Exception: Front Yard Setback

Through the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application, an amendment has been requested to the property's required front yard setback. As noted in **Table 3** above, the Zoning By-law requires a minimum front yard setback of 15 metres – the proposed application requests a front yard setback of 12.93 metres (2.07 metres deficient).

Staff note that the amendment being requested relates to the siting of an existing horse shelter, as seen in **Figure 9** below. While the proposed application does not contemplate development in this area of the property, Staff have encouraged the Applicants to legalize the existing deficient setback through this process.

Figure 9: Existing Horse Shelter, as Observed from Woodbine Avenue



The intent of the minimum front yard setback requirement is to ensure that there is adequate open space provided within a property's front yard in order to maintain a consistent streetscape, as well as sufficient space for a functional driveway and parking arrangement. Staff note that these considerations are more applicable in an urban context, where smaller property sizes are prevalent.

Staff are of the opinion that existing horse shelter's location does not impact the property's function nor the character of the surrounding area. Further, as demonstrated on the attached site plan (**Attachment 2**), a functional driveway and parking area are proposed on the property, south of the existing horse shelter. Additionally, the rural context that is characteristic of the area does not have a consistent streetscape – properties are generally sizeable, with varying front yard setbacks observed. Additionally, staff note that the horse shelter is an agricultural building and is fitting with the area's rural context.

Given the considerations discussed above, staff have no concerns with the site-specific amendment being requested.

3.5 Detailed Site Design & Future Site Plan Control Application

Throughout the processing of the subject application, staff have expressed to both the Applicant as well as Town Department and External Agencies that a Site Plan Control application would be required following approval of the proposed Zoning Amendment (if Council should choose to approve the subject application). The Site Plan Control process would offer an opportunity for Staff to review detailed design matters associated with the proposed parking lot, as well as other site design elements that are not specific to the Zoning (use) of the property.

Since the first submission review of the subject application, the Applicants have submitted a revised Site Plan to staff that displays a significantly scoped, gravel interim parking area. The Applicants have expressed that the proposed 13 spaces parking lot would offer an interim parking solution to satisfy Zoning requirements while they work towards the construction of a larger, permanent, paved parking area for expansion of uses, anticipated in the future. In Staff's opinion, the minimal site works associated with the initial phase of the proposed facility (i.e. use of existing farmhouse building and interim parking lot) does not warrant Site Plan Control. Staff, through delegated authority by Council, has granted exemption of Site Plan Control requirements for the initial phase of the proposed development at this time.

Staff acknowledge that matters covered through Site Plan Control are important to address, and as such, intend to require this process at a more suitable stage of the project. Staff is of the opinion that it would be more beneficial to process a Site Plan Control application when the Applicants are ready to expand and create the large parking area and future uses on the property. Matters to be reviewed with future Site Plan Application for future phases, would include, but are not limited to:

- Required technical studies and reports for the expansion of the facilities and parking area;
- Landscaping design;
- Lighting design;
- Additional buildings or structures as necessary;
- Traffic; and
- Servicing.

In order to capture the future requirement for Site Plan Control (SPC), staff are proposing to implement a Holding Symbol One (h-1) on the eastern portion of the proposed Zoning Amendment area that would require the SPC process for any development (such as the parking lot expansion) that is proposed on this portion of the property. The proposed “(h)” would apply to the lands immediately east of the current parking lot being proposed. Refer to **Figure 8** above for the proposed (h-1) area.

Further discussion on the proposed Holding Symbol can be found in **Section 3.6** of this report.

3.6 Holding Symbol One (h-1)

As discussed in **Section 3.5** of this report, staff, through delegated authority, have granted exemption for Site Plan Control requirements for the proposed initial phase of the development at this time. In staff’s opinion, the Site Plan Control process would be more beneficial at a later project phase when the Applicant is prepared to undertake more significant site works associated with a parking lot expansion and uses on the lands. The parking lot presently proposed for the property is small scale, gravelled, and does not contemplate significant grading changes.

In order to capture the future requirement of a Site Plan Control application, a Holding Symbol is proposed to be applied on the easterly portion of the proposed amendment area of the subject property (i.e. east of the presently proposed parking lot). Any development on this portion of the site, including an expansion to the parking lot, will require the Applicant to fulfill the Conditions of “(h-1)”.

Conditions for Removing Holding Symbol (h-1), as applicable:

- i) Authorization to Execute a Site Plan Control Agreement with the Town

3.7 Public Comments

Since the Public Meeting held on April 16, 2025, Town Staff have received several written and verbal comments from members of the public as well as requests for further notice.

The following concerns were raised by several members of the public with respect to the proposal, both in written submission as well as verbal comments at the public meeting:

- Impact of proposed Educational Use in relation to the Town’s Discharge of Firearms & Hunting By-law i.e. potential prohibition or limitations on discharge of firearms on private property/lands within 200 metres of the subject property being proposed for educational facility.

Staff Comment: In staff’s opinion, the proposed education facility use is consistent with provincial and municipal planning policies, aligns with the Town’s long-term vision for the area and complements existing and planned agricultural land uses. While the by-law may impose limitations on firearm discharge within a defined radius, these measures are not

intended to unduly restrict rural landowners but to balance recreational and agricultural practices with public safety.

3.8 Basis for Recommendation

The Development Planning Division has no objection to the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application as discussed in the sections above for the following reasons:

- i The proposed development represents an intensification of the existing agricultural use of the subject property and is consistent with provincial policies;
- ii An educational facility dedicated to agricultural training and research supports the long-term sustainability of the local farming community. It provides opportunities for youth and adults to gain hands-on experience in farming, agri-business, and environmental stewardship;
- iii Rather than urbanizing or fragmenting agricultural land, this type of facility reinforces the rural identity of the area by promoting land-based learning and agricultural literacy;
- iv Educational uses related to agriculture are inherently compatible with surrounding rural and agricultural land uses as it would involve outdoor learning and hands-on experience, which would enhance the existing agricultural practices and agricultural land use;
- v The proposed development is an appropriate scale and form for the agricultural use of the lands; and
- vi The proposed development will not have any adverse impacts on the surrounding key natural heritage or hydrological features as identified through the development application process.

4. Options:

Further to the analysis undertaken in **Section 3** of this Report, Town staff are satisfied that:

- i. The proposed development is generally consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024);
- ii. The proposed development generally conforms to the Greenbelt Plan (2017); and
- iii. The proposed development generally conforms to the Town and Regional Official Plans.

Town Staff are satisfied that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment represents appropriate planning for the utilization of the lands. Additionally, the subject application has fulfilled the requirements for Statutory Public Notice of Complete Application and Public Meeting in accordance with the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13.

4.1 Option A (Recommended)

That Council approve the site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment for the subject property. This option is recommended as the proposed application represents good planning and

is supportable under Provincial Policy, as well as the Town and Region's policy framework.

5. Financial Implications:

Rezoning the subject property, which is currently an Agricultural / Residential use, to one that permits a Commercial School, will increase the tax base.

6. Broader Intergovernmental Impacts and/or Considerations:

Please refer to **Section 3.2** of the report above.

7. Communication:

- Statutory notification requirements completed in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.
- Council Agenda circulated to interested parties in advance of Council Hearing.
- Notice of Decision to be circulated as per requirements of the Planning Act.

8. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

1. A Town that Grows
A Town that grows in support of complete communities

9. Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Site Plan prepared by EcoVue Consulting dated May 22, 2025

10. Related Reports:

[DS-012-25 Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment at 17019 Woodbine Avenue for Pickering College \(File No. ZBA25.003\)](#)

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