



Planning Justification Report

Zoning By-law Amendment Application
0 Depalma Drive, Town of Cobourg, Northumberland County

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EcoVue Reference No.: 20-2087

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1.0 BACKGROUND

This Report is being submitted in support of an application for a Zoning By-law Amendment on the subject lands, located at the corner of DePalma Drive and Burnham Street in the Town of Cobourg, in Northumberland County (**Figure 1 – Site Location**). The subject lands are currently vacant and are surrounded by a shopping centre and other institutional uses. The property has approximately 175.18 metres (574.73 feet) of frontage along Depalma Drive and 82.45 metres (270.50 feet) of frontage on Burnham Street. The subject property is approximately 1.87 hectares (4.61 acres).

An amendment to the Town of Cobourg By-law 85-2003 is required in order to permit medical offices and ancillary uses in the existing Business Park Exception 4 (BP-4) Zone. This report will examine the proposed amendment in the context of the applicable land use planning policies.

1.1 Description of the Proposal and Reasons for the Amendment

The applicant, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH), is proposing to amend the BP-4 Zone on the property so as to include medical offices as a permitted use. At this time, the BP-4 Zone permits a number of different commercial uses, including office uses. However, the listed permitted uses do not include medical offices, such as offices for various medical practitioners and other related medical services. The applicant intends to eventually develop the site as a commercial plaza with medical offices that will function as an off-site extension of the hospital services. Although future development will occur (which will require additional Planning Act applications, including Site Plan Approval), this Report will focus on amending the existing Business Park Exception Zone to allow for the medical offices and ancillary uses.

The subject lands are designated Urban Area on Schedule 'A' to the County of Northumberland Official Plan, and Employment Area on Schedule 'I' to the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.

1.2 Existing Site Conditions

The subject lands are located just south of Provincial Highway 401 and Northumberland Hills Hospital property. The property is currently vacant and vegetated with long grasses, and trees located along the property lines. The subject lands are surrounded by a shopping centre to the west, a plaza and a public school to the east and employment uses to the south. The property is serviced by local transit and pedestrian and bike pathways.



2.0 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Land use policies are regulations affecting the subject lands include the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) as well as the Places to Grow Act, 2005 and the associated A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) at the Provincial level. At the municipal level, the County of Northumberland Official Plan, the Town of Cobourg Official Plan and the Town of Cobourg Zoning By-law affect the subject lands. In this section of the report, the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) is reviewed in the context of the policies and provisions contained in these documents.

2.1 The Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides a policy framework for land use within the Province of Ontario. It is the responsibility of the local planning authorities – in this case, the Town of Cobourg and the County of Northumberland – to uphold the policies of the PPS pertaining to land use planning and development. In particular, the planning authorities must ensure that their decisions are consistent with key provincial interests including policies related to settlement areas, the wise use and management of resources, and public health and safety.

2.1.1 Settlement Areas

The subject lands are located within the Town of Cobourg settlement area and are therefore subject to Section 1.1.3 of the PPS. Section 1.1.3.1 states that “[s]ettlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development”. Additionally, 1.1.3.2 of the PPS states that “[l]and use patterns within the settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which: a) efficiently use land and resources; b) are appropriate for, and efficiently use, the infrastructure and public service facilities available and avoid the need for unjustified and/or uneconomical expansions”.

The subject lands are designated and zoned for commercial development and have access to existing municipal servicing. The proposed amendment will not alter fundamental principle of use on the site, and will provide a greater range of commercial uses. It is therefore our opinion that the proposed ZBA is consistent with Section 1.1.3 of the PPS.



2.1.2 Employment

Section 1.3 of the PPS speaks to Employment, which states that *“planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by: a) providing for an appropriate range of employment, institutional, and broader mixed uses to meet long-term needs”*. The section further states *“b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses”*. As discussed, the proposed ZBA will provide for a greater range of employment uses and diversify the economic base within the existing employment area of the Town to help meet long-term needs. Therefore, the proposed amendment is consistent with Section 1.3 of the PPS.

2.1.3 Sewage, Water and Stormwater

Section 1.6.6 of the PPS speaks to requirements for the servicing of development. Any future development on the subject lands will utilize existing municipal water and sewage services, which is the preferred form of servicing in settlement areas. Stormwater will also be dealt with through a future application for Site Plan Approval. The inclusion of additional uses in the BP-4 Zone will not have any impact on future sewage, water and stormwater servicing on the property. As such, the proposed amendment is consistent with Section 1.6.6 of the PPS.

2.1.4 Natural Heritage and Water

Sections 2.1 of the PPS states that *natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term, and that development and site alteration not be permitted within significant natural areas and significant habitat of endangered and threatened species*. According to the available Provincial mapping, there are no natural features or areas present on site. Therefore, the proposed ZBA is consistent with Section 2.1 of the PPS.

2.1.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Section 2.6.2 of the PPS states that *“[d]evelopment and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless significant archaeological resources have been conserved.”* As this proposal does not include any site alteration at this time, an



archaeological assessment is not required. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with Section 2.6 of the PPS.

2.1.6 Natural and Human-Made Hazards

Section 3.1 and 3.2 of the PPS addresses developments that occur within natural and human-made hazards. The subject property does not contain any natural hazards such as steep-slopes or floodplains. Therefore, the proposed ZBA on the subject lands is consistent with the policies in Section 3 of the PPS.

2.2 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Town of Cobourg is also included within the area covered by a Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). The Growth Plan, administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Housing, is intended to guide decisions respecting transportation, infrastructure planning, land-use planning, housing, natural heritage and resource protection. Although the PPS provides overall policy direction on matters of provincial interests related to land use and development, the Growth Plan prevails where there is a conflict, with only two exceptions: natural environment and human health.

2.2.1 Policies for Where and How to Grow

2.2.1.1 Managing Growth

Section 2.2.1.2 a) echoes the PPS in that the *“vast majority of growth will be directed to settlement areas that: i. have a delineated built boundary; ii. have existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems”*. As mentioned, the subject lands are located within the built boundary of the Town of Cobourg and municipal servicing is available to the site. The proposed ZBA will simply provide for expanded uses on the site. Therefore, the proposed amendment is consistent with Section 2.2.1.2 of the Growth Plan.

2.2.1.2 Employment

Section 2.2.5 of the Growth Plan speaks to employment. Specifically, Section 2.2.5.1 states *“economic development and competitiveness in the GGH will promoted by: a) making more efficient use of existing employment areas and vacant and underutilized employment lands and increasing employment densities”*. As mentioned, the subject lands are currently vacant, in an existing employment area of the



Town of Cobourg. The addition of medical offices to the list of uses permitted in the BP-4 Zone will provide a greater range of employment opportunities within the Town's employment area.

Therefore, the proposed amendment conforms with Section 2.2.5 of the Growth Plan.

2.2.2 Natural Heritage System

Section 4.2.2 of the Growth Plan sets out policies for protecting natural heritage features and biodiversity throughout the Golden Horseshoe. According to Section 4.2.2.1, "[t]he Natural Heritage System mapping will exclude lands within settlement area boundaries that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017". Since the subject property is located within the Town of Cobourg settlement area, the policies relating to the Natural Heritage System do not apply.

Therefore, the proposed ZBA on the subject lands conforms with the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

2.3 The County of Northumberland Official Plan

The County of Northumberland Official Plan (CNOP) is an upper-tier planning document that provides general land use policies for the entire County, including the lower-tier municipalities like the Town of Cobourg.

2.3.1 Urban Areas/Rural Settlement Areas

Schedule 'A' to the CNOP designates the subject property as Urban Area. Therefore, Section C1 of the CNOP is applicable. Specifically, C1.1 a) states that the Urban Area shall provide "a strong live/work ratio, where the majority of residents are employed in the community in which they live". Further, Section C1.1 e) states "a range of health care services for the majority of the residents" shall also be provided in the Urban Area. Finally, C1.1 f) states that Urban Areas will offer "a range of community and social services to assist the majority of those in need in the community".

As stated previously, the proposed rezoning is to allow for additional uses on the subject such as medical offices and ancillary uses. These uses will allow for employment opportunities for local residents; will contribute to a live/work community; and will also provide for health and social services for those in the community.



Section C1.2.3 of the CNOP speaks to Employment Areas and Uses, specially stating that it is the objective of the Plan to: *b) recognize that there are many types of employment in the County and that each has different locational requirement that are necessary to support their continued viability; and c) provide for an appropriate mix and range of employment and institutional uses to meet long-term needs*". As discussed, the purpose of this application is to establish medical offices in close proximity to the Northumberland Hills Hospital. Through this ZBA, the future development on the subject lands will provide a greater range of uses that will contribute to the long-term needs of the nearby Northumberland Hills Hospital and the community.

Therefore, it is our opinion the proposed Zoning By-law conforms to the County of Northumberland Official Plan.

2.4 Official Plan for the Town of Cobourg

As previously noted, the subject property is designated Employment Area, in the Cobourg West Business Park Secondary Plan according to Schedule "I" to the Town of Cobourg Official Plan (TCOP) (**Figure 3**).

2.4.1 Employment Area

Section 3.10.1 of the TCOP states that "*employment areas shall be planned and developed to ensure a diversity of serviced sites across the Town for industrial/business uses.*" The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment will increase the diversity of services that can be permitted on the subject lands and, in turn, offer more employment opportunities.

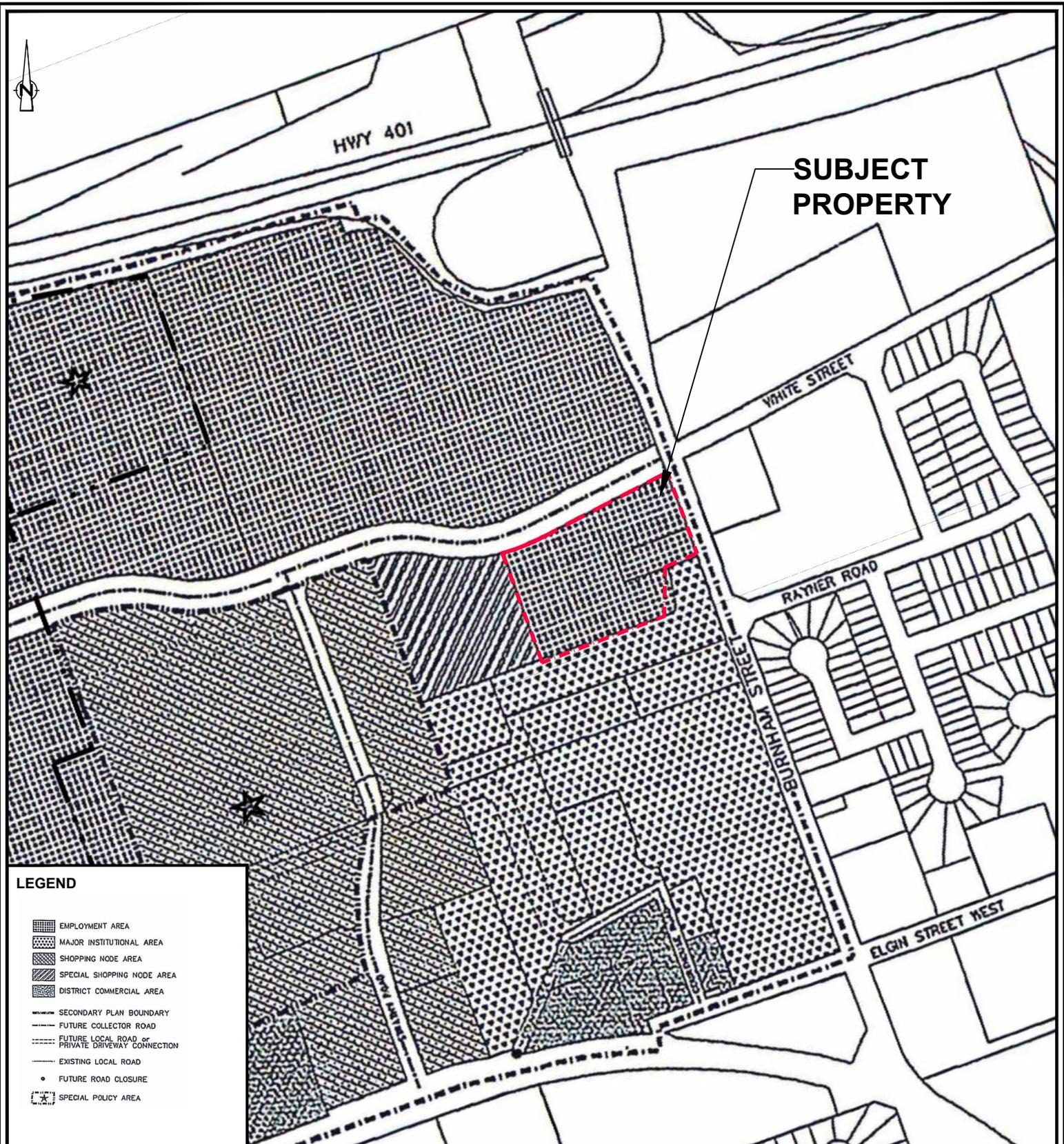
It should be noted that Section 3.10.2 outlines permitted uses in the Employment Area designation. Uses such as *ii) office; iv) research and development; and vi) institutional* are permitted within the Employment Area designation. It is our opinion that medical offices can be included within these permitted use categories.

Therefore, it is our opinion the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is consistent with the polices of the TCOP.



HWY 401

**SUBJECT
PROPERTY**



LEGEND

-  EMPLOYMENT AREA
-  MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL AREA
-  SHOPPING NODE AREA
-  SPECIAL SHOPPING NODE AREA
-  DISTRICT COMMERCIAL AREA
-  SECONDARY PLAN BOUNDARY
-  FUTURE COLLECTOR ROAD
-  FUTURE LOCAL ROAD or PRIVATE DRIVEWAY CONNECTION
-  EXISTING LOCAL ROAD
-  FUTURE ROAD CLOSURE
-  SPECIAL POLICY AREA

**FIGURE 2 - OFFICE CONSOLIDATION TOWN OF COBURG OFFICIAL PLAN
SCHEDULE I**

**COBURG WEST BUSINESS PARK SECONDARY PLAN
LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

**DEPALMA DRIVE AND BURNHAM STREET
COBURG, ON**



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PROJECT NO: 20-2087

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2021

HORIZ. SCALE: 1:5,000



2.5 Cobourg West Business Park Secondary Plan

As mentioned above, the subject lands are located within the Cobourg West Business Park Secondary Plan. Therefore, the policies in Section 14 of the TCOP are applicable.

Section 14.2 speaks to the Development Concept specifically, speaking to the creation of a gateway to the Town of Cobourg *“with high quality, high exposure business/employment campus environment which reflects the unique character of the Town by: i) providing the opportunity to accommodate a wide range of employment and commercial uses, while recognizing and protecting existing uses”*. As discussed, the addition of medical office uses to the BP-4 Zone will provide for a greater range of employment opportunities, while expanding the NHH-adjacent medical services.

The Secondary Plan goes on further to state policies for the Employment Area designation, echoing those stated in Section 3.10 of the TCOP. As discussed above, offices, research and development and institutional uses are all permitted within the Employment Area designation.

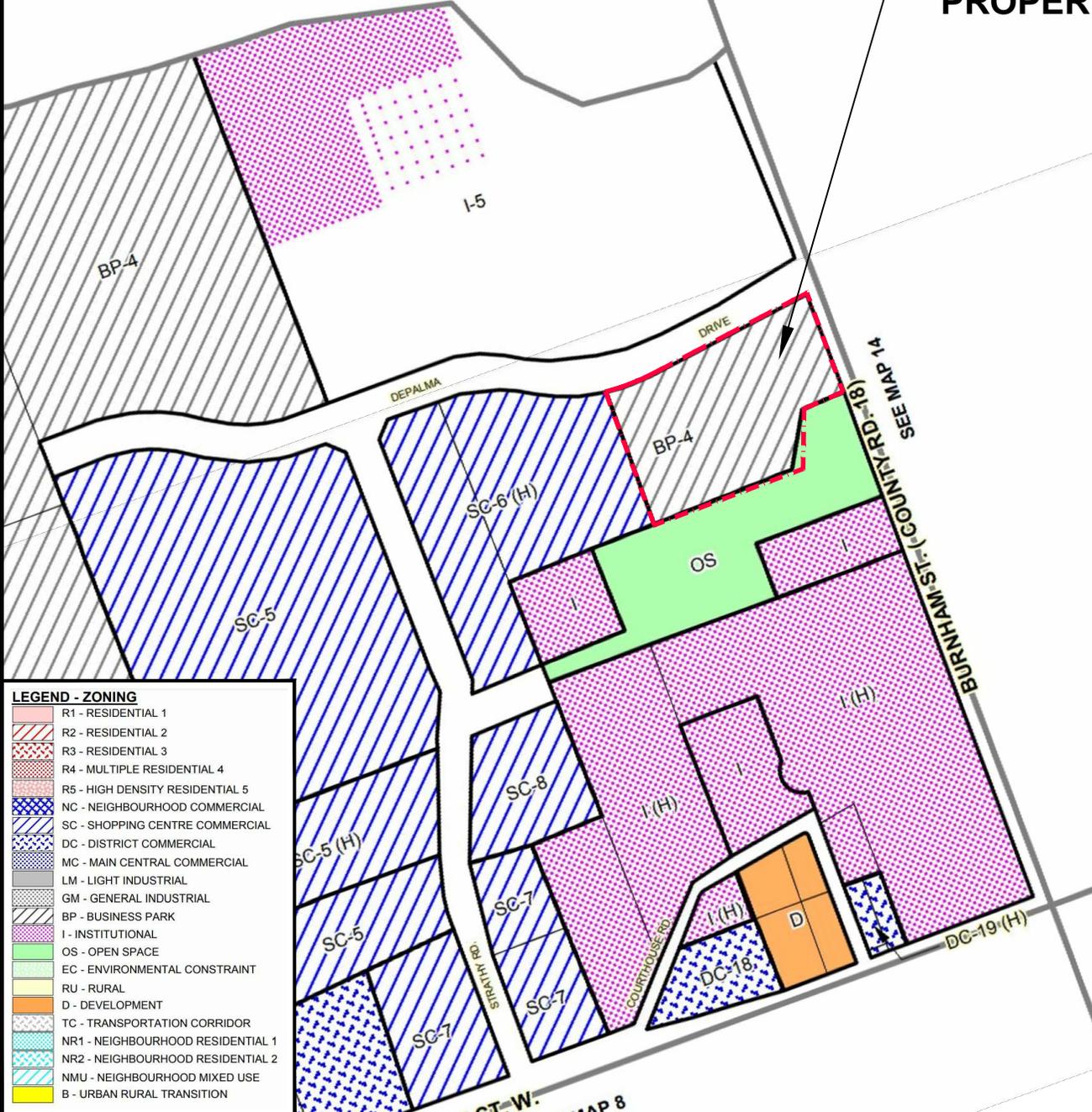
2.6 Town of Cobourg Zoning Bylaw

The subject lands are zoned the Business Park Exception 4 (BP-4) Zone according to Schedule A, Map 15 to the Town of Cobourg Zoning By-law (TCZB) (**Figure 3**). The current zoning does not permit medical offices and therefore, the subject lands must be rezoned to permit the proposed use. It is proposed that the existing BP-4 Zone be further modified to include medical offices and ancillary as a use on the subject lands.

Medical Offices are not defined in the TCZB. Looking to other municipalities, a medical office is typically defined as *“an office used for the medical, dental, surgical and/or therapeutic treatment of human beings including clinics operated by a number and/or a variety of medical professionals, but does not include a public or private hospital.”* The TCZB defines an office use in which an office does not include a clinic. Therefore, an amendment to the BP-4 Zone to include a “medical office” use is required to permit the proposed medical offices.



**SUBJECT
PROPERTY**



LEGEND - ZONING

	R1 - RESIDENTIAL 1
	R2 - RESIDENTIAL 2
	R3 - RESIDENTIAL 3
	R4 - MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL 4
	R5 - HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL 5
	NC - NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL
	SC - SHOPPING CENTRE COMMERCIAL
	DC - DISTRICT COMMERCIAL
	MC - MAIN CENTRAL COMMERCIAL
	LM - LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
	GM - GENERAL INDUSTRIAL
	BP - BUSINESS PARK
	I - INSTITUTIONAL
	OS - OPEN SPACE
	EC - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINT
	RU - RURAL
	D - DEVELOPMENT
	TC - TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR
	NR1 - NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTIAL 1
	NR2 - NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTIAL 2
	NMU - NEIGHBOURHOOD MIXED USE
	B - URBAN RURAL TRANSITION

**FIGURE 3 - TOWN OF COBOURG ZONING BY-LAW No. 85-2003
SCHEDULE A
MAP 15**

PROJECT NO: 20-2087

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2021

HORIZ. SCALE: 1:5,000

NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

DEPALMA DRIVE AND BURNHAM STREET
COBOURG, ON

It is our opinion that the addition of medical offices on the subject lands is consistent with the policies and regulations of the Business Park Zone.

2.7 Summary of Policy Considerations

The proposed ZBA application is consistent and conforms with the provisions set out in the policy and regulations affecting the subject lands, including the *Planning Act, R.S.O 1990, as amended*, the Provincial Policy Statement, A Place to Grow, the County of Northumberland Official Plan, the Town of Cobourg Official Plan and the Town of Cobourg Zoning By-law.

3.0 SUMMARY

This planning report describes the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and provides an analysis of the application in the context of the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement, the 2019 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the County of Northumberland Official Plan, the Town of Cobourg Official Plan and the Town of Cobourg Zoning By-law.

It is the opinion of the author that:

- The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is consistent with the applicable provisions of the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement.
- The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms with the applicable provisions of A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms with the County of Northumberland Official Plan.
- The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment conforms with the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.
- An amendment to the Town's Zoning By-law will be required to permit the proposed medical offices. This Planning Report sets out the details of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment.



- Furthermore, approval of the Zoning By-law Amendment will ensure that the Town will meet the goals and objectives of the TCOP. The Amendment will also ensure that the Zoning By-law is consistent and conforms with the PPS and A Place to Grow.
- The application for the Zoning By-law Amendment should be approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

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