

Subject: Official Plan Amendment – 1700 Richardson Side Road

File Number: ACS2026-PDB-PSX-0023

Report to Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on 5 February 2026

and Council 11 February 2026

**Submitted on January 30, 2026 by Derrick Moodie, Director, Planning Services,
Planning, Development and Building Services**

Contact Person: Jerrica Gilbert, Planner II, Development Review Rural

613-580-2424 ext. 16972, Jerrica.Gilbert@ottawa.ca

Ward: West Carleton-March (5)

Objet : Modification du Plan officiel – 1700, chemin Richardson Side

Dossier : ACS2026-PDB-PSX-0023

Rapport au Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales

le 5 février 2026

et au Conseil le 11 février 2026

**Soumis le 30 janvier 2026 par Derrick Moodie, Directeur, Services de la
planification, Direction générale des services de la planification, de
l'aménagement et du bâtiment**

**Personne ressource: Jerrica Gilbert, Urbaniste II, Examen des demandes
d'aménagement ruraux**

613-580-2424 poste 16972, Jerrica.Gilbert@ottawa.ca

Quartier: West Carleton-March (5)

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee recommend Council refuse an amendment to the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan for 1700 Richardson Side Road, as shown in Document 1.
2. That Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee approve the Consultation Details Section of this report be included as part of the ‘brief explanation’ in the Summary of Written and Oral Public Submissions, to be prepared by the Office of the City Clerk and submitted to Council in the report titled, “Summary of Oral and Written Public Submissions for Items Subject to the *Planning Act* ‘Explanation Requirements’ at the City Council Meeting of February 11, 2026” subject to submissions received between the publication of this report and the time of Council’s decision.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

1. Que le Comité de l’agriculture et des affaires rurales recommande au Conseil de refuser une demande de modification du Plan officiel de la Ville d’Ottawa visant le 1700, chemin Richardson Side, comme indiqué dans le document 1.
2. Que le Comité approuve l’intégration, en tant que « brève explication », de la section du présent rapport consacrée aux détails de la consultation dans le résumé des observations écrites et orales du public, qui sera rédigé par le Bureau du greffe municipal et soumis au Conseil dans le rapport intitulé « Résumé des observations orales et écrites du public sur les questions assujetties aux “exigences d’explication” aux termes de la *Loi sur l’aménagement du territoire*, à la réunion du Conseil municipal prévue le 11 février 2026 », à la condition que les observations aient été reçues entre le moment de la publication du présent rapport et le moment de la décision du Conseil.

Learn more about [link to Development Application process - Zoning Amendment](#)

For all the supporting documents related to this application visit the [link to Development Application Search Tool](#).

BACKGROUND

Site location

1700 Richardson Side Road

Owner

Minto Communities

Applicant

Paul Black

Description of site and surroundings

The property is located south-east of the turning circle between Richardson Side Road and Huntmar Drive. The lot is approximately 31.0 hectares in area and irregularly-shaped due to bordering the Carp River floodplain to the north, which is owned by the City of Ottawa. The lot is currently vacant and has previously been used for agricultural crops.

Surrounding land uses are agricultural and residential in nature. The urban boundary is south-east and north of the lot. There is a residential subdivision within Ward 4 to the east of the lot while the Carp River serves as the boundary to the north-east. Land uses to the north and west are agricultural, including cash crops as well as a tender fruit orchard.

Summary of proposed development

The applicant has stated there is no proposed development at this time.

Summary of requested Official Plan Amendment

The applicant is seeking to redesignate the lands from Agricultural Resource Area to Rural Countryside based primarily on the argument that the lands are relatively disconnected from the broader agricultural system.

DISCUSSION**Official Plan designation(s) and policies**

The subject lands are designated Agricultural Resource Area under Schedule B9 of the Official Plan. The intent of the Agricultural Resource Area designation is to protect farmland for regional food security, support diversification of farming operations to increase local supply of goods and services in the regional economy, and to protect farmland from uses that would impede productive farming operations.

Under Official Plan Section 9.1.1, the City shall only consider the removal of land from an Agricultural Resource Area designation to allow the expansion of a settlement area or identification of a new settlement area through a comprehensive review by

addressing the matters required by the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS). Official Plan amendments for the removal of land from an Agricultural Resource Area designation, outside of a comprehensive review and that do not constitute urban or village expansion shall only be considered where it is demonstrated that the land does not meet the requirements for an Agricultural Resource Area through either a municipal-wide Land Evaluation and Area Review or an area-specific assessment. Under Section 9.1.1(3)(b), the area-specific assessment must consider an area equal to or greater than 250.0 hectares unless the City has agreed to a lesser amount.

Other applicable policies and guidelines

The City's current criteria for the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) is found within [Volume 1](#) and [Volume 2](#) of a 2016 report titled Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) for Agriculture.

In the background of the report, the LEAR system is described as a high level decision making tool that enables agricultural properties to be evaluated quantitatively to assess the capability of the soils on the land, the use of the land and other surrounding influences that might determine the suitability of the property for ongoing agricultural use or not. Further, the report states that the LEAR system's primary purpose is to identify those broad areas of a municipality that should be protected for long-term agricultural purposes. This report was meant to create a system that addresses the local agricultural conditions in Ottawa, which means there are some differences between Ottawa's LEAR methodology and the methodologies used by other municipalities and the former Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs guidelines (now the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness).

It should also be noted that under the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement, as opposed to the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement and previous legislation, prime agricultural areas can now only be identified in accordance with provincial guidance and mapping.

Planning rationale

City staff are not supportive of the redesignation of 1700 Richardson Side Road since the proposal is not aligned with the policy intent of the Provincial Planning Statement and the Official Plan, specifically regarding the protection of farmland and the agri-food network. The proposed re-designation is likely to set a negative precedent for the fragmentation of Ottawa's prime agricultural system through piecemeal removal of the Agricultural Resource Area designation.

Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas Considered by the PPS

Planning staff noted to the applicant that the submitted materials supporting their application did not have regard for policy 2.3.2 of the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) as required by 4.3.4.1. For context, the policies are as follows:

4.3.4 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas

1. Planning authorities may only exclude land from prime agricultural areas for expansions of or identification of settlement areas in accordance with policy 2.3.2.

2.3.2 New Settlement Areas and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

1. In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:

- a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;
- b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
- c) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;
- d) the evaluation of alternative locations that avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;
- e) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;
- f) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and
- g) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development.

The applicant is of the opinion that PPS Policy 2.3.2 does not apply since the proposed redesignation of the subject lands do not involve a settlement boundary expansion. The applicant argues that Policy 4.3.4.1 does not state that lands may only be removed from prime agricultural areas for the expansion or identification of settlement areas.

The applicant has identified a grey area within the policies. On one hand, the PPS must be read in its entirety, and the heading for 4.3.4 is “Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas”. Section 1 is the only policy under this heading: if there were other use cases for removing land from prime agricultural areas, it would follow that they would be listed under this section. Further, Policy 4.3.4.1 uses the wording “may only”: “Planning authorities **may only** exclude land from prime agricultural areas for expansions of or identification of settlement areas in accordance with policy 2.3.2” (emphasis added). The use of “may only” might imply that no other use cases are contemplated by the PPS.

There are examples of municipalities approving official plan amendments (OPAs) that redesignate prime agricultural land for other uses outside of a settlement boundary expansion. However, in many of these cases that the redesignation was in service of another public good permitted by the PPS, such as major infrastructure projects¹, municipal waste management facilities², major institutional uses in rural areas that could not otherwise locate elsewhere³, and renewable energy projects⁴. Planning staff have not been able to find site-specific cases where prime agricultural land was redesignated to reflect the fact that the lands were no longer cultivated with no development proposed. In the past decade, cases at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) or its predecessors that involved the redesignation of prime agricultural areas were solely concerned with settlement boundary expansions and are not applicable in this circumstance.

Regardless of whether the Provincial Planning Statement permits the removal of prime agricultural areas outside of a settlement area expansion, the proposed redesignation does not represent good land use planning that benefits the current and future communities of Ottawa. As detailed in the following section, Planning staff are concerned that this proposal is not good land use planning since the redesignation of the lands does not fit the larger intent of PPS and Official Plan policies to protect agricultural areas.

¹ Highway 401/401 interchange expansions in Middlesex and Oxford Counties, Highway 7 realignment in Guelph and Kitchen, Highway 417 widening in Ottawa

² Carp Road Waste Facility expansion in Ottawa, Waterloo Region’s Waste Management Centre

³ Emergency services, schools, churches and cemeteries servicing rural populations

⁴ Samsung/Pattern Energy wind projects in Chatham-Kent, Grand Renewable Energy Park in Haldimand County, Erie Shores Wind Farm in Norfolk County

The Importance of Agriculture and the Peri-Urban Boundary in Ottawa

Prime agriculture land is a protected resource in Ontario given its importance to the agri-food network and local food systems. Once farmland is developed, the change is effectively permanent since it is incredibly difficult to restore developed land to a state of cultivation. Municipalities are required to use an agricultural system approach to maintain and enhance a geographically continuous agricultural land base and support and foster the long-term economic prosperity and productive capacity of the agri-food network (PPS 4.3.1.1).

As per the City's Official Plan (OP), farmland accounts for approximately 40 per cent of Ottawa's Rural area with lands that are comprised of Class 1, 2 and 3 soils, as identified through a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study (Section 9.1). It is also important to note that lands designated Agricultural Resource Area may also include other classes of soil to recognize their part in an agricultural system.

Section 9.1.1.3(b) of the Official Plan allows the possibility for land to be removed from the Agricultural Resource Area designation provided the area is equal to or greater than 250.0 hectares or an area of less than 250.0 hectares is agreed to by the City. The 250.0 hectare value, according to the City's [Land Evaluation and Area Review \(LEAR\)](#) system, was based on a provincial guide for developing LEAR systems that recognized that prime agricultural areas function best where the land base is contiguous, unfragmented, and large enough to support viable long-term farming operations and the broader agricultural system.

1700 Richardson Side Road is only 31.4 hectares in size and does not meet the criteria of 250.0 hectares established in the Official Plan. The applicant has provided an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) by Colville Consulting to support the proposed redesignation from Agricultural Resource Area to Rural Countryside regardless. Using the LEAR system, the AIA argues that the LEAR score for the subject lands has decreased by 33.77 points from 157.14 in 2016 to 123.37 in 2025, as calculated by Colville. A large part of the decrease in LEAR score identified by the AIA comes from a decrease of 30 points in the AR1 value, representing the percentage of the parcel in agricultural use, since the landowner has terminated contracts with the tenant farmers that used to work the land. The applicant argues the current LEAR score for 1700 Richardson is below the 125-point threshold used by the City of Ottawa to identify the Agricultural Resource Area, despite recognizing that the lands are mostly comprised of Class 2 and 3 soils.

Planning staff are currently in the process of having the applicant's AIA peer-reviewed to ensure that the findings of the study, particularly in the field of agrology, are sound.

Staff have chosen to proceed with this report recommending refusal of proposed official plan amendment on the basis that the piecemeal redesignation of smaller lots does not meet the intention of the PPS and Ottawa OP to protect farmland and the agricultural system as a whole, regardless of whether the subject lands have a LEAR score below 125 points.

While there is no development currently proposed for this lot might appear beneficial, redesignation for the sake of redesignation is problematic when considering the agricultural system, especially when in close proximity to the urban boundary. Redesignation to Rural Countryside would introduce a new suite of permitted uses on the site, some of which could adversely affect the agricultural system, especially given the lands are near the urban boundary. Regarding the potential adverse impacts to and mitigation measures needed for protecting the agricultural system, a large part of the discussion in both the applicant's Agricultural Impact Assessment and Planning Rationale rely on the fact no development is currently proposed on the subject lands. Redesignating the lands to Rural Countryside, according to the applicant, will permit a broader range of land uses while not negatively impacting the lands' ability to continue to contribute to the agri-food network in the City of Ottawa in the future.

However, if the intent is to maintain the parcel's ability to contribute to the agri-food network in the future, it makes sense to leave the Agricultural Resource Designation in place. In the case of either a settlement boundary expansion or identification or a non-agricultural use (such as an infrastructure project, institutional use, etc.), the planning application must consider why the use must locate on prime agricultural lands versus other locations within the municipality. There needs to be an exceedingly good reason to remove the agricultural land designation, and the tests provided in the PPS contain a high threshold.

The closer farmland is to the urban boundary, the harder it is for farming to survive over time. Land use conflicts between regular farm practices and residents increase, farming becomes economically more difficult due to rising land values, and the agricultural land base is prone to fragmentation. If no development is proposed for 1700 Richardson Side Road, the site still has value in preserving the edge within the peri-urban area and discouraging further urban encroachments into the rural area, regardless of the site's LEAR score. As such, staff's recommendation is that this application to redesignate the lands from Agricultural Resource Area to Rural Countryside not be approved.

Provincial Planning Statement

Staff have reviewed this proposal and have determined that it is not consistent with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

If the applicant's request is approved, the Rural Countryside designation could potentially make the lands more appealing for urban expansion in the future. Urbanization is one of the biggest threats to Ontario's agricultural land base. Fragmentation of farmland harms the agricultural system over time and weakens Ottawa's agri-food sector, which impacts both rural and urban residents negatively.

Maintaining the lands' designation as Agricultural Resource Area will maintain the peri-urban boundary and has no negative impact on residents.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public notice of the application was given through a mail-out of property owners within 120.0 metres of the subject lands and a public notice sign being installed on the property. Six community members requested to be kept informed of the applications progress, which included one resident in support of the proposed amendment and one resident against the proposed amendment.

For this proposal's consultation details, see Document 2 of this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward Councillor Kelly Clarke and Ward Councillor Cathy Curry are both aware of the application related to this report.

Councillor Kelly has the following comments related to this development:

"As a Councillor for a rural ward my job involves a delicate balance between the needs of residents in neighbourhoods and the needs of residents who own and run a business on hectares of farmland. I became a Councillor to help ensure that people living in West Carleton – March get as close to the same experience that I enjoyed when I was growing up here. That involves keeping the area rural and protecting the beautiful and important farmland that makes up this ward.

Ontario is faced with a terrifying loss of agricultural land. Not all agricultural land is turned into apartment buildings or parking lots, some of it is left to sit fallow until the rules for development are more favourable. The case against this land remaining agricultural hinges on the fact that since it has been owned by a developer it has not been farmed. This is land that could have been farmed but not farming was step one in a long process that ends in development. Developers attempting to move inch by inch in order to maximize their profit and minimize dissent is nothing new.

Removing good land from the agricultural resource area is not something I will ever support.

I support City Staff in this decision.”

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

A determination by Council to refuse an official plan amendment may be appealed by the applicant to the Ontario Land Tribunal. If Council determines to adopt the requested amendment, with the passage of Bill 185, as amended, an official plan amendment is only subject to appeal by “specified persons”, essentially utility providers and government entities, and the registered owner of a parcel of land subject to the amendment.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications for this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In the event of an appeal, the hearing would be done from within existing staff resources and may require external assistance funded from within the existing Planning Services operating budget.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This report has no direct impacts on the 2023-2026 Term of Council Priorities.

APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE STATUS

This application (Development Application Number: D01-01-25-0015) was processed by the "On Time Decision Date" established for the processing of Official Plan amendment applications.

The Council approved timeline has been met. The statutory 120-day timeline for making a decision on these applications under the *Planning Act* will expire on February 14, 2026.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 Location Map

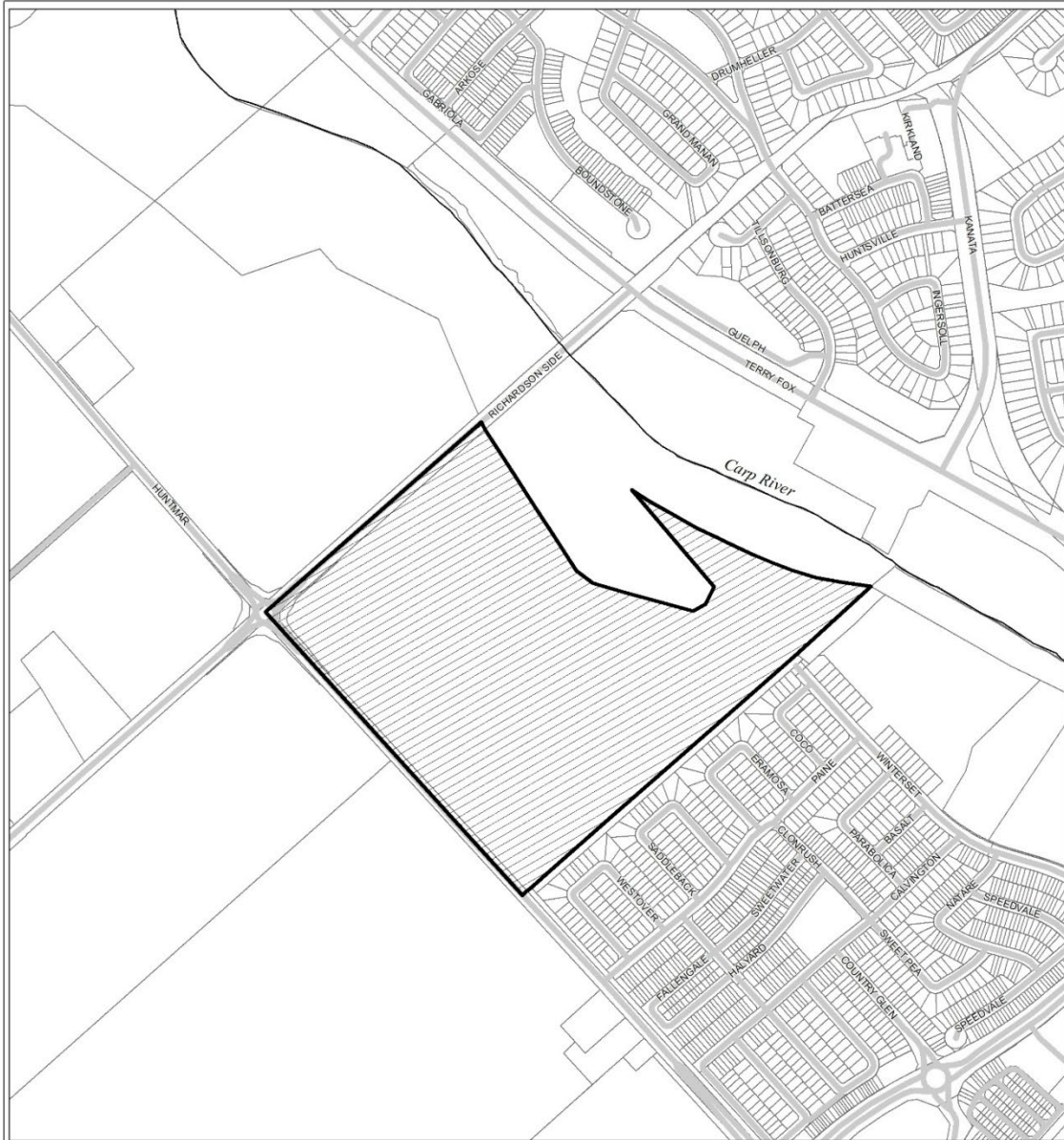
Document 2 Consultation Details




DISPOSITION

Office of the City Clerk, Council and Committee Services to notify the owner; applicant; Ottawa Scene Canada Signs, 13-1920 Merivale Road, Ottawa, ON K2G 1E8; Krista O'Brien, Program Manager, Tax Billing & Control, Finance and Corporate Services Department (Mail Code: 26-76) of City Council's decision.

Planning Operations, Planning Services to undertake the statutory notification.

Document 1 – Location Map



		LOCATION MAP / PLAN DE LOCALISATION OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT / MODIFICATION DU PLAN OFFICIEL	
D01-01-25-0015	25-0809-A	 1700 chemin Richardson Side Road	
I:\CO\2025\OPA\RichardsonSide\1700			
<small>©Parcel data is owned by Terranet Enterprises Inc. and its suppliers All rights reserved. May not be produced without permission THIS IS NOT A PLAN OF SURVEY</small>		<small>©Les données de parcelles appartiennent à Terranet Enterprises Inc. et à ses fournisseurs. Tous droits réservés. Ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation. CECI N'EST PAS UN PLAN D'ARPENTAGE</small>	
REVISION / RÉVISION - 2025 / 06 / 25		 <small>NOT TO SCALE</small>	

Document 2 – Consultation Details

Notification and Consultation Process

Notification and public consultation were undertaken in accordance with the Public Notification and Public Consultation Policy approved by City Council for Official Plan amendments.

Public Comments and Responses

Comment 1:

One resident inquired whether there were parts of the subject lands considered a conservation area near the Carp River. They expressed a desire for these lands to be protected.

Response

The lands are not considered part of a conservation area. If future development is proposed on the site through a planning application, technical studies would be required to establish setbacks from both natural heritage features as well as natural hazards that may be present from the Carp River.

Comment 2:

One resident requested that should the lands be developed that a lot be reserved for a Jain community temple.

Response:

No development is proposed on the subject lands at this time. The City cannot require that the site be developed for a specific religious community. A landowner may choose to set aside a lot for an institutional or community use for a specific community.

Comment 3:

One resident objected to the permanent loss of prime agricultural land. They argue that the claim by the applicant that the parcel is relatively disconnected from the agricultural system is incorrect since the land is bordered on the north and west by other agricultural lands and is part of a contiguous block of farmland that extends well beyond the site. They are concerned that approval of the application is premature, is speculative in that it is likely setting the stage for the development of a large rural estate-lot subdivision and will set a dangerous precedent.

Response:

The concerns over the loss of prime agricultural land and the application setting a precedent are shared by City staff.

Comment 4:

One resident is concerned about the enjoyment of their property if the subject lands are developed with a residential subdivision. This concern stems from the perceived nuisances of the development's construction, including increased truck traffic on Richardson Side Road and Huntmar Drive as well as dust, noise and ground vibration.

Response:

No development is proposed on the subject lands at this time. Nuisances from construction are usually dealt with other City By-laws and are generally not seen as an acceptable justification for a site not being developed.