

To: Mayor and Members of Township of East Zorra-Tavistock Council

From: Adam Gignac, Development Planner, Community Planning

Application for Zone Change **ZN 2-25-05 – Townsend Farms Inc.**

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Zone Change Application proposes to rezone the severed lot resulting from Consent Application B25-54-2 from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'. The retained lot from Consent Application B25-54-2 is proposed to be rezoned from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Rural Residential (RR)'.
- The related Consent Application, B25-54-2, was approved by the Oxford County Land Division Committee on December 4, 2025. The Zone Change Application is required to fulfill a condition of the consent.
- Planning staff are recommending that the application be approved as it is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and maintains the intent and purpose of the Official Plan with respect to agricultural lot creation and non-farm rural residential development in prime agricultural areas.

DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

OWNERS: Townsend Farms Inc.
496466 10th Line, Tavistock, ON N0B 2R0

AGENT/APPLICANT: Doug Reaume (MTE OLS)
365 Home Street, Stratford, ON N5A 2A5

LOCATION:

The subject lands are described as Part Lots 18-19, Concession 9, (East Zorra), as in 420897, in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock. The lands are located on the west side of the 10th Line, between Braemar Sideroad and Oxford Road 8, and are municipally known as 496131 and 496139 10th Line.

COUNTY OF OXFORD OFFICIAL PLAN:

Schedule "E-1" Township of East Zorra-Tavistock
Land Use Plan

'Agricultural Reserve'

TOWNSHIP OF EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK ZONING BY-LAW 2003-18:

Lot to be Severed:

Existing Zoning: 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'
Proposed Zoning: 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'

Lot to be Retained:

Existing Zoning: 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'
Proposed Zoning: 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)'

PROPOSAL:

The Zone Change Application proposes to rezone the retained lot resulting from Consent Application B25-54-2 from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)'. The lot to be severed is proposed to be rezoned from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'.

The subject Zone Change Application proposes for the A2-sp zoning to contain a special provision restricting any new dwellings from being built on the subject lands. The zoning would still retain the ability to have one single detached dwelling accessory to a farm on the lot to be severed.

The related Consent Application, B25-54-2, was approved by the Oxford County Land Division Committee on December 4, 2025. The subject Zone Change Application is required to fulfil a condition of the related consent. The surrounding land uses are predominantly agricultural for growing crops in all directions, with some occasional rural residential uses to the north and south along 10th Line.

Plate 1, Location Map and Existing Zoning, indicates the location of the subject lands and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity.

Plate 2, Aerial Map (2020) with Existing Zoning, provides an aerial view of the subject lands and surrounding uses as existing in the spring of 2020.

Plate 3, Aerial Map (2020) with Existing Zoning – Zoomed In, provides an aerial view of the subject lands, with a focus on the lot to be retained.

Plate 4, Applicant's Sketch, depicts the proposed configuration of the lots to be severed and retained, along with the location of existing buildings and structures, as provided by the applicant.

Application Review

2024 PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

Section 4.3 of the PPS directs that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long term agricultural use. In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses include agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and on-farm diversified uses. All types, sizes, and intensities of agricultural uses and normal farm practices shall be promoted and protected in accordance with

provincial standards. New land uses, including the creation of new lots, shall comply with the Minimum Distance Separation formulae (MDS I).

Furthermore, Section 4.3.3 (Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments) discourages the creation of new lots in prime agricultural areas and provides only four instances where such lot creation may be permitted, as summarized below:

- For agricultural uses, provided the lots are of a sufficient size for the type of production common in the area and are sufficiently large enough to maintain flexibility in adapting the operation in the future;
- For agricultural-related uses;
- For a surplus farm residence resulting from a farm consolidation, provided that:
 - The new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and,
 - The planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective; and,
- For infrastructure facilities and corridors in lieu of an easement or right-of-way.

The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 4.3.3.1(c), which permits a lot for a surplus residence subject to the area of the new lot being limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the uses and appropriate sewage and water services.

OFFICIAL PLAN

The subject lands are located within the 'Agricultural Reserve' designation according to the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock Land Use Plan in the Official Plan.

According to Section 3.1.1, the goal of the Agricultural Reserve policies is to ensure prime agricultural lands are preserved for food and fibre production by avoiding the fragmentation of the land base, by minimizing conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, and by supporting the needs of the agricultural community by permitting land uses which are complementary to, and supportive of, agriculture.

A strategic aim of the Agricultural Reserve policies is to prevent situations of land use conflict in the agricultural designation by careful management of non-farm uses, including rural residential development, recreational uses, commercial and industrial uses, and aggregate resource extraction.

The policies of Section 3.1.5.3 (Creation of Rural Residential Lots) apply to the evaluation of non-farm rural residential *development* proposals in the following land use designations and overlays: Agricultural Reserve, Environmental Protection Area, Open Space, Future Urban Growth, and Quarry Area.

Notwithstanding the policies of Section 1.5, Interpretation, for the purposes of the application of the policies in Section 3.5.5.3, the numerical references and measurements are intended to be absolute.

Section 3.1.5.3 outlines that the non-farm rural residential lots outside of a settlement shall be prohibited except in accordance with the following:

- A proposal to rezone an existing industrial (with the exception of aggregate or limestone industrial), commercial, or institutionally zoned lot to a residential use, provided such lot does not exceed 1 ha (2.5 acre) in area. Where such lot is larger than 1 ha (2.5 acre) in area, consideration may only be given to rezoning for *agricultural use*, in accordance with the policies of Section 3.1.5.1; or,
- A proposal to create a lot for a *residence surplus to a farming operation* as a result of farm consolidation, provided that:
 - The proposal is to retain an existing permanent, habitable dwelling that was constructed prior to December 13, 1995, where such dwelling is contained on an agricultural lot that is to be legally consolidated with an abutting agricultural lot, to form one larger agricultural lot under identical ownership;
 - or,
 - The proposal is to retain an existing permanent, habitable dwelling, where the *farm owner* owns multiple agricultural lots which may or may not abut, and providing:
 - The lot containing the surplus dwelling proposed to be severed contains a minimum of 2 existing dwellings, and all such dwellings were constructed prior to December 13, 1995;
 - The resulting agricultural lot is owned by the *farm owner*; and,
 - The resulting agricultural lot is rezoned to prohibit the future construction of a new residential dwelling of any type and an agreement for such prohibition is also registered on the property title. The requirement for the Zoning By-law amendment and agreement, as noted above, shall be implemented through conditions imposed by the County's Land Division Committee at the time that provisional consent approval is given.
- The proposal shall not result in the severance of the only dwelling from an agricultural lot, except in the case of a farm consolidation involving the merger of abutting agricultural lots as one larger lot under identical ownership, where one of the agricultural lots to be consolidated is vacant, but the existing zoning would permit the construction of an accessory dwelling on that lot.
- The lands subject to the application must be zoned for *agricultural use*.
- The proposed rural residential lot shall not be located within the Quarry Area designation, or an area identified as a Limestone Resource or Sand and Gravel Resource Area.
- The proposed residential lot shall not be located within a Future Urban Growth Area.
- Non-farm rural residential lots shall be as small as is practical in order to preserve the County's agricultural land base. Severance proposals to create new or expanded lots for non-farm rural residential development will generally not exceed 0.8 ha (2 acres). Proposals seeking to create lots larger than this area limit will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the additional area is required to accommodate *individual on-site water services and individual on-site sewage services*, the lands have topographic

limitations for *agricultural use* or are physically separated from the remainder of the farm by *significant natural heritage features and areas* and/or watercourses, or to conserve cultural *heritage resources*. In no case shall a new or expanded non-farm rural residential lot exceed 1 ha (2.5 acres) in area.

- Existing or proposed *individual on-site water services and individual on-site sewage services* are demonstrated to be adequate to serve the proposed non-farm rural residential use.
- A proposal for non-farm rural residential development shall satisfy the requirements of *MDS I*, or not further reduce an existing insufficient setback.
- The proposed rural residential *development* shall have direct frontage on a permanent public road maintained year-round at a reasonable standard of construction. New vehicular access to any road shall be in accordance with the requirements of authority having jurisdiction over the road, including the applicable policies.
- To recognize and conserve *heritage resources* in the agricultural areas of the County.

For the purposes of considering the creation of a non-farm rural residential lot where a landowner owns multiple non-abutting farms in Oxford County, staff are to ensure that the owner is a bona fide farmer. The Official Plan contains a definition of a “farm owner” which is defined as:

An individual, partnership, or corporation which:

- a) *Owns, is employed on, and manages an agricultural operation consisting of one or more agricultural lots;*
- b) *Earns a majority of their income from farming (the scale of the agricultural operation should be capable of generating reasonable operating profit under "normal" economic conditions);*
- c) *Spends a majority of their workday in the day-to-day operation of the farm on a full-time, year-round or extended seasonal basis;*
- d) *Demonstrates a continuing commitment to the farm operation and long-term farming, such as through sustainable farming practices, on-going farm maintenance and improvement (i.e., drainage, erosion control, soil improvement, fencing etc.), and direct investment in equipment, buildings, and crops; and,*
- e) *Must have a valid Farm Business Registration Number.*

ZONING BY-LAW

The subject lands are currently zoned ‘General Agricultural Zone (A2)’ in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock Zoning By-law. The ‘A2’ zone permits a variety of agricultural-related uses, including a farm. The ‘A2’ zone requires a minimum lot area of 30 ha (74.1 ac) and a minimum lot frontage of 100m (328.1 ft). The lot to be severed would be approximately 40 ha (98.8 ac) in area, with a frontage of approximately 561 m (1,840.6 ft) on the 10th line.

The lot to be retained is proposed to be used for non-farm rural residential purposes and will be rezoned to recognize the use of the lands accordingly. The ‘Rural Residential Zone (RR)’ requires a minimum lot area of 2,800 m² (30,139 ft²), a minimum lot frontage of 35 m (114.8 ft), and a minimum lot depth of 80 m (262.5 ft). The lot to be retained is proposed to have an approximate

area of 0.4 ha (1 ac), frontage of approximately 53.3 m (175 ft) on the 10th Line, and an average depth of 80 m (262.5 ft).

The applicant has submitted a Zone Change Application that, in addition to rezoning the lot to be retained from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)', would also rezone the lot to be severed from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'. The special provision would prohibit any additional dwellings on the lot to be severed. The zoning would still retain the ability to have one single detached dwelling accessory to a farm on the lot to be severed.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Township Chief Building Official has indicated that an as-built survey stamped by an Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS) of the lot to be retained showing all buildings, structures, septic, and well will be required. A drainage reapportionment will also be required.

The Oxford County Public Works Department, the Township Fire Chief, the Township Public Works Manager, Hydro One, and Canada Post, have indicated no concerns with the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Notice of the public meeting for the proposal was circulated to neighbouring landowners on December 23, 2025, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act. As of the date of this report, no comments or concerns have been received from the public.

Planning Analysis

The application for consent, which proposes the severance of agricultural lands and the retention of a lot for non-farm rural residential use, containing an existing dwelling, has been reviewed under the policy direction of the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and the Official Plan.

The creation of a lot for a surplus residence is permitted provided that the owner owns multiple farms within Oxford County. Given the farm ownership and proposed lot size of the non-farm rural residential lot, staff are generally satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the policies of the PPS regarding non-farm rural residential uses and lot creation in prime agricultural areas.

The applicant has provided documentation confirming ownership of multiple non-abutting farms in Oxford County. The subject lands contain two single detached dwellings, both of which were constructed prior to December 13, 1995, and which are accessory to a cash crop operation. Staff are also satisfied that the applicant complies with the definition of a farm owner as per the Official Plan.

It is proposed that approximately 40 ha (98.8 ac) of agricultural land will be severed and would contain one single detached dwelling and a residential accessory building. The lot to be severed will continue to be used for agricultural purposes, will not result in further fragmentation of agricultural land, and will continue to allow flexibility for future changes in the type of farm operation beyond its current use. The resulting agricultural lot size and configuration is consistent with the PPS and Official Plan direction of maintaining farm parcels of adequate size to adapt to changing agricultural conditions.

The subject Zone Change Application proposes to rezone the lot to be retained from 'General Agriculture Zone (A2)' to 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)' to recognize its proposed use as a non-farm rural residential lot. The lot to be severed is proposed to be rezoned from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'. The special provision for the lot to be severed is required to prohibit additional dwellings on the lands, and would apply to all types of dwellings, including a second single detached dwelling, an additional residential unit, a bunkhouse, and a converted dwelling. The lands would retain the ability for the existing single detached dwelling to be replaced in the future, if required.

In light of the above, it is the opinion of this Office that the proposal is consistent with the policies of the PPS and maintains the intent of the Official Plan and Planning staff recommend that the subject Zone Change Application be approved-in-principle.

The proposed amending Zoning By-Law will be brought forward for Council's consideration once the associated reference plan has been received to generate the appropriate by-law schedules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock approve-in-principle the Zone Change Application submitted by Townsend Farms Inc. (File No. ZN 2-25-03) whereby a portion of the lands described as Part Lots 18-19, Concession 9, (East Zorra), As in 420897, in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock, the lot to be retained through consent B25-54-2, are to be rezoned from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)' and to rezone the lot to be severed resulting from consent application B25-54-2 from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)' to prohibit future residential development.

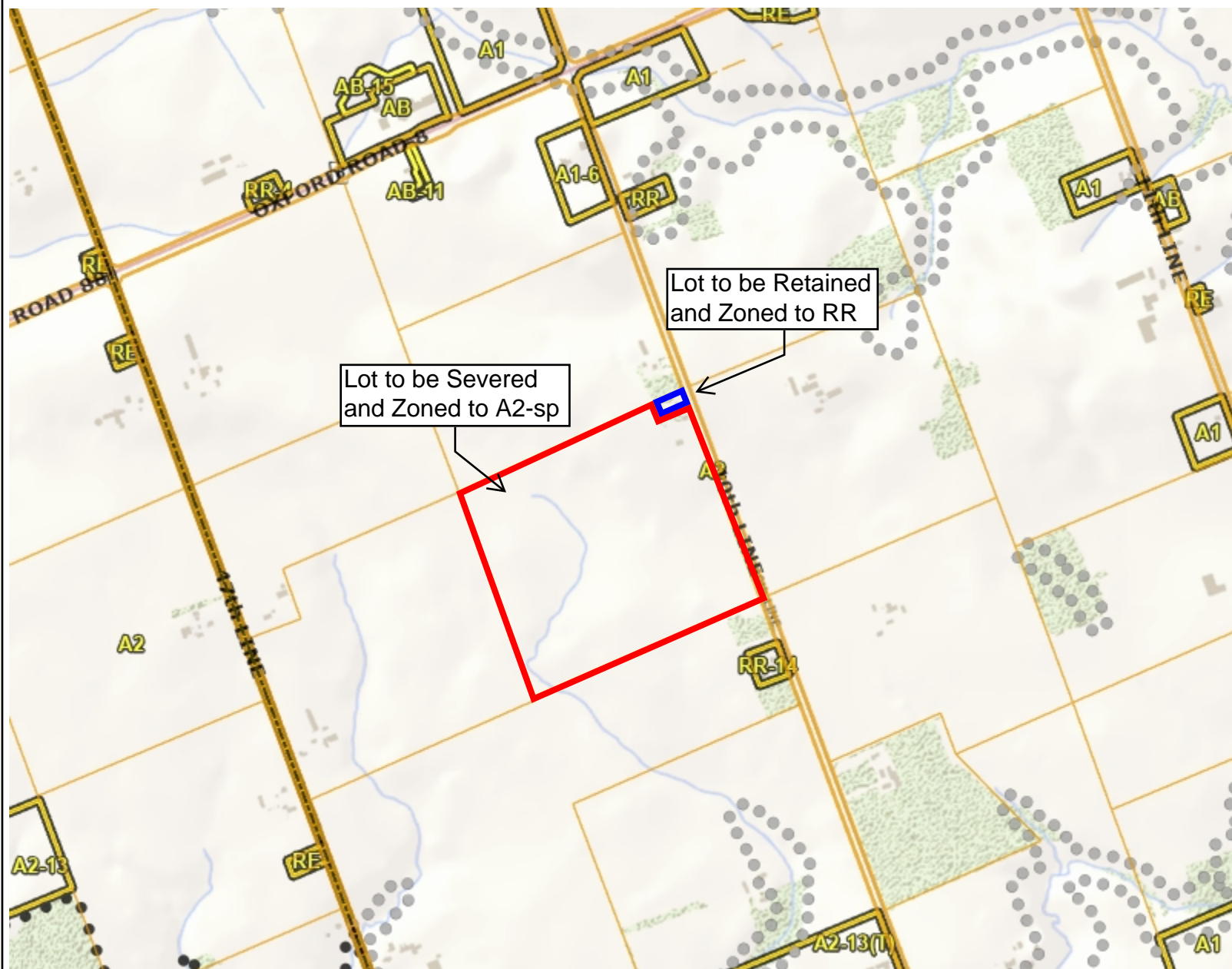
SIGNATURES

Authored by: *"Original Signed By"*

Adam Gignac,
Development Planner

Approved for submission: *"Original Signed By"*

Eric Gilbert, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Development Planning



Legend

Parcel Lines

- Property Boundary
- Assessment Boundary
- Unit
- Road
- Municipal Boundary

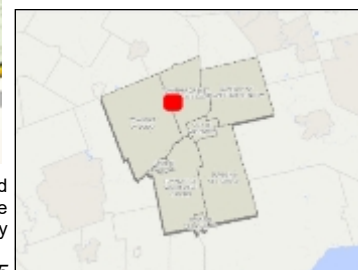
Zoning Floodlines

Regulation Limit

- 100 Year Flood Line
- ▲ 30 Metre Setback
- Conservation Authority Regulation Limit
- Regulatory Flood And Fill Lines

- Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000 to 1:500)

Notes



0 409 818 Meters

NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N



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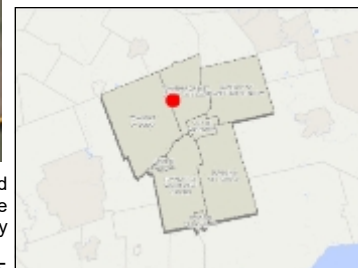
October 2, 2025



Legend

- Parcel Lines**
 - Property Boundary
 - Assessment Boundary
 - Unit
 - Road
 - Municipal Boundary
- Zoning Floodlines**
- Regulation Limit**
 - ◆ 100 Year Flood Line
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Notes



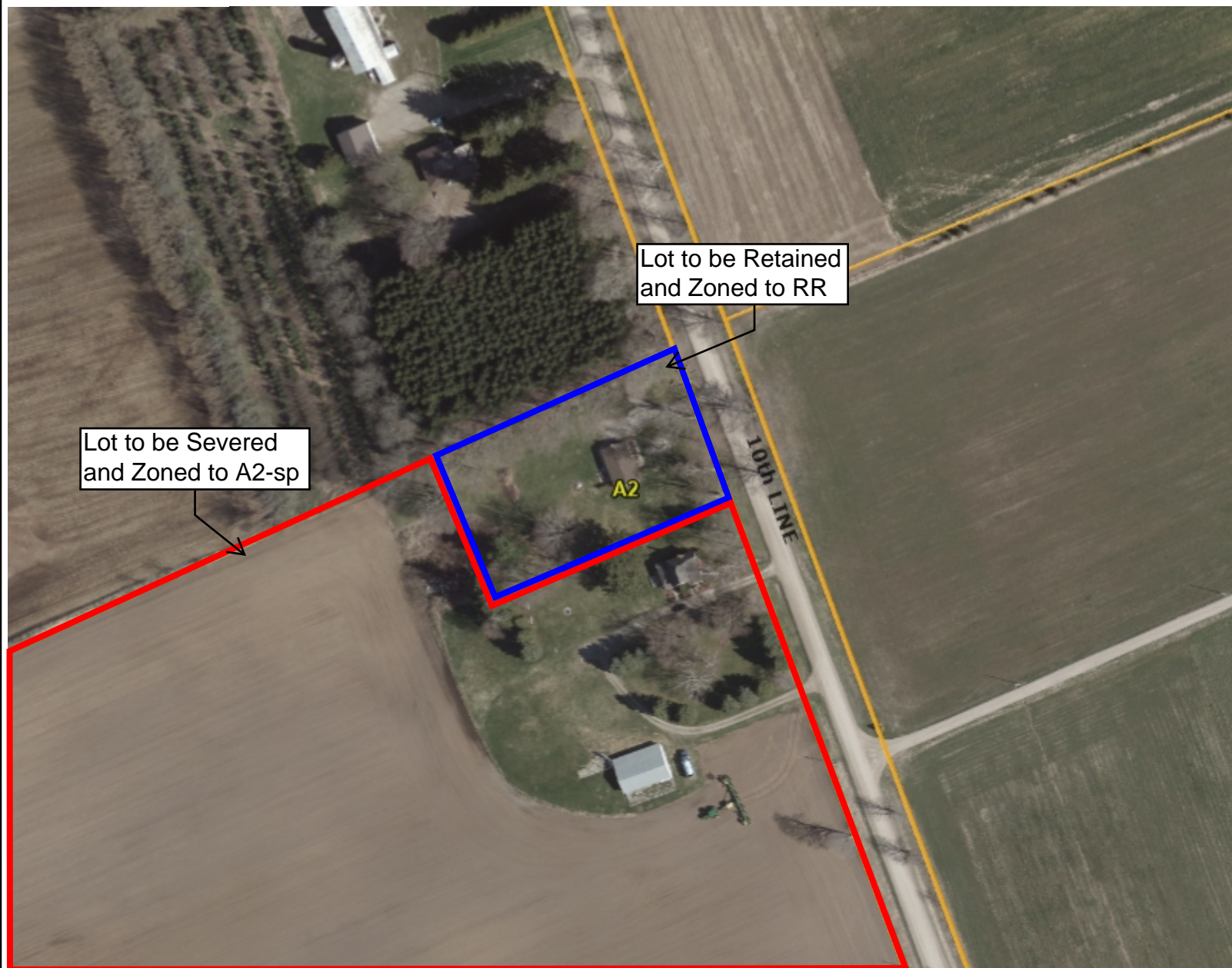
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NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N



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October 2, 2025



Legend

Parcel Lines

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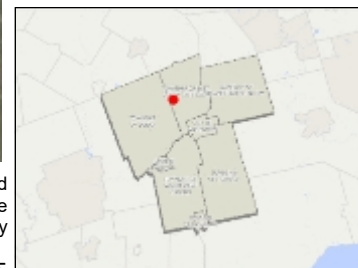
Zoning Floodlines

Regulation Limit

- ♦♦ 100 Year Flood Line
- ▲ 30 Metre Setback
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- Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000 to 1:500)

Notes



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NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N



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October 2, 2025

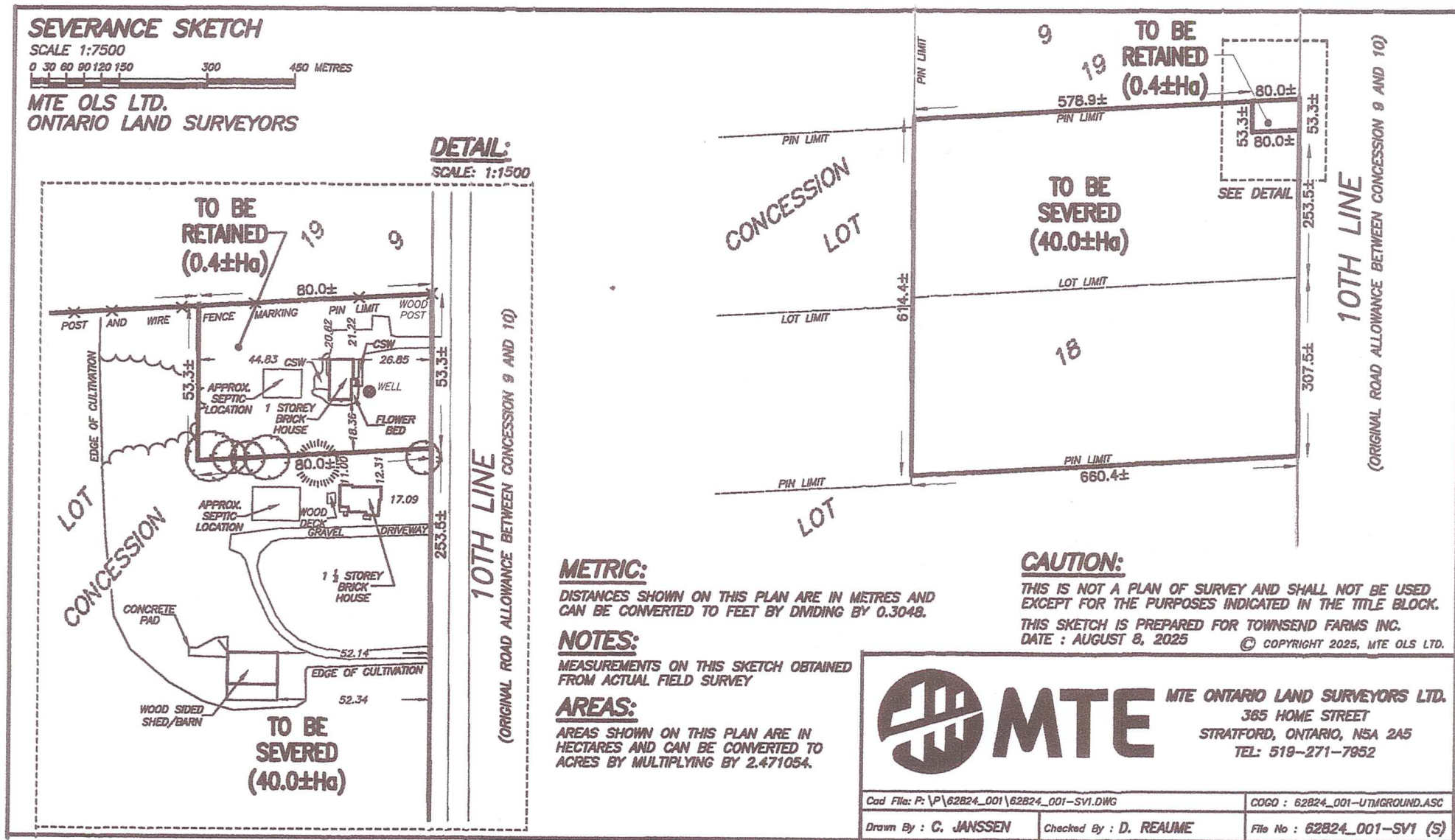


Plate 4: Applicant's Sketch
File No. B25-54-2 and ZN2-25-05 (Townsend Farms Inc.)
Part Lots 18-19, Concession 9 (East Zorra), As in 420897, Township of East Zorra-Tavistock - 496131 and 496139 10th Line