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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report PDD-07-2025 Zoning By-law Amendment to Facilitate a Mixed-Use Development with Affordable Housing Unit, Dunnville

For Consideration by Council in Committee on March 18, 2025

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### OBJECTIVE:

To consider an amendment to the Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020 to rezone the subject lands from “General Industrial (MG)” to a site-specific “General Commercial (CG)” zone to facilitate the development of a mixed-use, five (5) storey building accommodating fifty-six (56) residential rental units, day care nursery and community offices.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report PDD-07-2025 Zoning By-law Amendment to Facilitate a Mixed-Use Development with Affordable Housing Unit, Dunnville be received;
2. AND THAT application PLZ-HA-2025-009 to amend the Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020 to rezone the subject lands from “General Industrial (MG)” to “General Commercial (GC)” with site specific exemptions, be approved for the reasons outlined in Report PDD-07-2025;
3. AND THAT the application is considered to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement 2024, and the Haldimand County Official Plan, and has sufficient regard for matters of provincial interest under the Planning Act, 1990;
4. AND THAT the easement agreement for use of the Dunnville Memorial Arena driveway access as part of designated fire route and daycare drop-off, attached to Report PDD-07-2025, be approved;
5. AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the easement agreement attached to Report PDD-07-2025;
6. AND THAT the by-law attached to Report PDD-07-2025 be approved at a future Council meeting.

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**Respectfully submitted:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The subject Zoning Amendment application has been submitted by the Haldimand-Norfolk Housing Corporation to rezone the subject lands from the current “General Industrial (MG)” zone to a site-specific “General Commercial (CG)” zone with special exemptions to facilitate the development of a five (5) storey mixed-use building with fifty-six (56) residential units (rental), a daycare nursery and community offices.

Planning staff are of the opinion that this proposal is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement 2024, and conforms to the Haldimand County Official Plan. Planning staff recommend approval of this amendment for the reasons outlined in this report.

## BACKGROUND:

The subject lands are located on the north side of Ramsey Drive, in the area of Dunnville known as the Frank A. Marshall Business Park. The property is currently vacant with an approximate area of 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres), with 50 metres (164 feet) of frontage on Ramsey Drive, as well as approximately 80 metres (262 feet) of flanking exterior lot line on the future Jim Gregory Drive. The lands have a municipal address of 311 Ramsey Drive and are displayed as the Subject Lands on Attachment 1. Haldimand Norfolk Housing Corporation (HNHC) is proposing a five (5) storey building development consisting of:

- 56 residential rental units on the upper four (4) storeys. The residential component will be made up of four (4) studio units, forty (40) one-bedroom units, and twelve (12) two-bedroom units. A total of sixteen (16) units will be barrier-free;
- The ground floor is proposed to accommodate a daycare nursery and community offices with the balance of space used in support of the apartment units, including laundry room and amenity area, secure storage and charging stations for bicycles and mobility scooter, janitorial space, waste storage and mechanical and electrical service rooms;
- 76 parking stalls; and,
- two (2) lay-bys (one for daycare pick-up/drop-off and one for emergency services vehicles) which would be access via the easterly arena driveway.

The surrounding land uses are a mix of recreational space - Dunnville Memorial Arena and open space adjacent to the west; light industrial uses further to the west and south (future development); agricultural to the north and east, with some additional limited residential dwellings to the south.

The proposed development for the mixed housing project by the HNHC was identified as a priority project by Haldimand County Council to assist in the provision of affordable housing within the municipality. In 2020, the housing project proposal was presented to Council-in-Committee (CSS-02-2020) and supported in principle. The fifty-six (56) residential units include 14 rent-geared-to-income (RGI), 28 affordable units, and 14 market rate units. Over the years, staff from Corporate & Social Services, Finance, and Community and Development Services have worked closely with the HNHC team to advance the development, which has included land securement, financial considerations and *Planning Act* applications. This report focuses on the latter.

The application is to rezone the lands from the current “General Industrial (MG)” zone to a site-specific “General Commercial (CG)” to permit the proposed five (5) storey mixed-use building with special exemptions to recognize the following provisions for the property:

- reduced front yard setback;
- increased building height; and,
- decreased parking requirement.

It is noted that a Site Plan application was submitted concurrently with the Zoning Application to review the technical details of the development including site layout and servicing, grading and drainage, access and parking, landscaping and buffering, and photometrics. While the review of the site plan is on-going, it has progressed to the point where staff can confirm the functionality of the proposal, including the ability to accommodate this level of density on the site and the infrastructure capabilities to accommodate the resultant development (water, sanitary, storm and traffic).

## **ANALYSIS:**

Planning staff completed an analysis of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application against the applicable Provincial and County land use planning policy documents and legislation. The summary of this analysis is below.

### **Provincial Planning Statement, 2024**

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS) provides direction on matters of provincial interest relating to land use planning and development and sets the policy framework for regulating land use in Ontario to address the provincial goal of meeting the needs of the province. In particular and relating to the subject application, there is a focus on creating complete communities and increasing the supply and mix of housing options, addressing the full range of housing affordability needs and supporting other institutional uses and employment opportunities. The subject proposal is in direct alignment with these provincial priorities.

The subject lands fall within the urban boundary of Dunnville, wherein growth and development are to be encouraged and accommodated through a mix of land uses and housing options that efficiently utilizes land and compact form; optimizes existing and planned infrastructure; and supports active transportation.

The proposed development will facilitate effective and efficient land use by developing an existing urban parcel that has municipal infrastructure installed and capacity available with increased density for purpose build affordable housing. Additionally, the application will provide for expansion to existing health, medical and community services in the area through the incorporation of the daycare nursery and the community offices. The location of the development is in proximity to retail/commercial uses and amenity space, which supports the notion of complete communities and encourages active transportation. Moreover, the application is implementing the policies and direction of the PPS by providing housing in a form that is attainable and availability to those in need of assistance.

The PPS speaks to land use compatibility for major facilities (e.g., industrial) and sensitive land uses. The document directs that the uses should be planned and incompatible uses avoided where possible to minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants and to also minimize any potential risk to public health and safety and ensure long-term economic viability of the operations. While the surrounding lands are primarily zoned for industrial uses, the applicable zone category of “General Industrial (MG)” was customized during the approvals process for the Frank A. Marshall Business Park. Through that customization, the range of uses permitted were established as ‘light’ or ‘clean’ which lends to a higher degree of compatibility with sensitive uses. Further, recent changes to the County’s Official Plan have earmarked some of these (presently) vacant and industrially zoned lands for future residential uses. This introduces the policy framework to, over time, transition some of the surrounding area (north and northeast in particular) to uses similar to what is proposed in this application. Additionally, the orientation of the building, with the proposed daycare being located on the west side (towards the arena) and residential amenity space being located within the middle of the subject lands, provide additional mitigation and separation of uses from any industrial uses that could establish to the south/southwest in future.

The subject application is facilitating the policies of the PPS and providing development in a compact and efficient form within an identified settlement area. It serves to address a key priority of the Province—affordable housing—at a critical time in the larger provincial housing crisis. It is aiming to support economic development and community services and is considered to be consistent with the PPS.

## Haldimand County Official Plan

In addressing the appropriateness of the development, policies relating to the intent *Community Commercial* designation (Section 4.B.4) was undertaken, together with the transportation policies (Section 5.A); the servicing policies (Section 5.B.1) and the Affordable Housing policies (7.B).

Within the Haldimand County Official Plan (HCOP) the subject lands are designated *Community Commercial*, which intends to permit a full range of commercial activity as well as support residential uses in the form of apartments. The HCOP also sets a policy framework that supports efficient use of land; focuses growth and development within urban areas where there is municipal infrastructure support and community services and amenities available. New developments within the *Community Commercial* area shall encourage infill and intensification, integrate neighbourhood characteristics and also have consideration to accommodate appropriate off-street parking with integration of traffic movements. The designation permits the proposed mixed-use, and is considered to be an appropriate fit relating to adjacent land uses and the broader services and amenities that are available in proximity to the subject lands. The mixed-use development will provide for additional housing stock within Dunnville in a form that adds to the range of housing opportunities and tenure, while incorporating commercial and institutional spaces in a compact form with connection to municipal infrastructure.

From a servicing perspective (Section 5.B.1), the Official Plan outlines that the provision of municipal infrastructure including roads, stormwater management, water and sanitary services is necessary to support development within urban areas. A concurrent site plan application has been submitted with the subject zoning amendment to assess the technical components of the development. There are existing water mains, sanitary lines and stormwater infrastructure along the Ramsey Drive property frontage which can be connected to. These services all have sufficient capacities available to service the development. Additionally, development should have appropriate road access and not negatively impact the existing transportation network. As noted previously, the subject lands have frontage along Ramsey Drive and flankage along the future road of Jim Gregory Drive. The proposal intends to have an access to Ramsey Drive, in proximity to the future intersection, as well as an access connection to the Dunnville arena property. A future entrance has also been included on Jim Gregory Drive upon construction of that road, which is anticipated in 2026. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was completed as part of the application submission that demonstrated that development will not have any significant impacts on the traffic flows or operations of the road network. Moreover, the development has consideration for active transportation (walking and cycling), via the inclusion and connection of sidewalks to the broader network and proximity to existing community amenities and services and commercial uses. Additionally, bike racks will be included in the site design, with storage opportunities within the building.

Section 7.B of HCOP includes policies related to Affordable Housing, as part of the strategic direction for Haldimand County relating to health and social services. The provision of health and social services is important to maintaining the health and welfare of Haldimand residents, including the provision of affordable and special needs housing. The HCOP sets density targets for the provision of affordable housing units and that the County will work co-operatively with private and non-profit housing providers to achieve the goals. The proposal is a mixed-use development with purpose-built rental units and commercial space, which is adding to the range of housing opportunities and affordability. This project aligns with the increased density objectives expressed in the HCOP for this type of project.

The development is effectively and efficiently utilizing an existing urban parcel of land for the intention of purpose-built attainable housing, as well as providing institutional space in the form of a day care nursery and community office space for the community. There are existing municipal services available and active transportation is incorporated. The proposed development is consistent with the Official Plan and is considered to be appropriate development.

## Haldimand County Zoning By-law HC 1-2020

The subject application is seeking to rezone the subject lands from the current “General Industrial (MG)” zone to a site-specific “General Commercial (CG)” with special exceptions to permit the mixed-use development with the following allowances:

Provision	Zoning Requirement	Proposed Amendment	Deficiency
Front Yard Setback	6.0 metres (19.6 feet)	3.0 metres (9.8 feet)	3.0 metres (9.8 feet)
Building Height – maximum	16 metres (52.5 feet)	20.75 metres (68 feet)	4.75 metres (15.6 feet)
Parking	85 spaces	76 spaces	9 spaces

The requested amendment for the front yard setback will bring the proposed building closer to the street and locate the parking in the side and rear yards. This increases the presence of the building and aids in the characteristic and amenity of the site. The reduction also implements Official Plan policies relating to development occurring in a compact form and encouraging active design measures.

An increase to the building height to 20.75 metres (68 feet), is generally considered minor and not expected to have any negative impact on the area. The adjacent land uses include the existing arena and open space, as well as, either existing or future light industrial uses, which is viewed as compatible. As one of the first developments in the larger greenfield area, this project benefits from the lack of an established area character or height threshold which may otherwise lend to greater compatibility challenges. In a sense, being one of the first projects ‘in’, the HNHC development will set the bar for appropriate scale and density. Additionally, the development and height are promoting efficient use of land and meeting the intention of infill and intensification. The building is proposed to be constructed with a mix of façade finishes which will further assist in visual interest and break-up the overall massing of the structure.

HNHC is proposing 76 parking spaces (61 for residential; 8 for the daycare nursery and 7 shared spaces for the office use and visitor parking), whereas 85 spaces are required based on the parking provisions set out in the Haldimand Zoning By-law. It is also noted that the parking numbers do not include the proposed lay-by/drop-off parking area on the arena property for the daycare nursery. A Parking Justification Report was provided with the application and included an assessment based on HNHC’s experience as an affordable housing operator. The report indicated that actual parking needs for such facilities are lower than the applicable By-law provisions. The parking requirement of HC 1-2020 for apartment units is 1.25 spaces per dwelling unit, whereas from an operational perspective the need by residents for these types of residential facilities is approximately 0.6 spaces per dwelling unit. This is based on real-world experience with similar facilities that have operated for many years in Norfolk (under HNHC) and in other municipalities (Brant, Hamilton – associated with the project architect and housing development partner). This would mean that the proposed development would be adequately served, and actually have an over-supply by the number of spaces being provided on-site. Based on the analysis provided, the reduction of 9-spaces is considered minimal to still meet the general intent of the Zoning By-law.

Staff are of the opinion that the subject application for Zoning By-law Amendment is consistent with the PPS, conforms to the policies of the Haldimand County Official Plan, maintains the intent of the Zoning By-law, and has sufficient regard for matters of Provincial Interest.

## Easement Agreement

A key aspect of the development design is the use of the easterly Dunnville Memorial Arena driveway as access to a daycare drop-off/pick-up area and as part of the designated facility fire route. With respect to the daycare, the driveway would connect to a defined drop-off/pick-up area for parents which would be constructed in the form a lay-by. The lay-by would be located adjacent to the east side of the driveway and within the boundaries of the HNHC property. This is shown on Attachment 2. With respect to the fire route, the driveway currently serves as the designated emergency approach for the arena so the HNHC request would essentially just 'layer' on top of that. A second separated lay-by, for emergency services vehicles only, would be installed adjacent to the daycare lay-by, also within the bounds of the HNHC property. This is also shown on Attachment 2.

To ensure that the driveway remains clear for regular vehicular traffic (accessing the arena/other site facilities) and for emergency access, additional signage will be installed to clearly delineate areas of no parking/no stopping. Further, staff will monitor the area over time to ensure no conflicts arise. The HNHC and daycare staff will also be required to play a role in this by creating proper drop-off/pick-up habits and addressing any necessary corrective measures for parents that abuse the privileges of this feature.

A draft easement agreement is included as Attachment 4. The agreement lays out maintenance and repair responsibilities, insurance requirements and general obligations of the HNHC relative to proper use and operations. The agreement has been developed and consented to by Legal & Support Services; Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations; Emergency Services, Building & Municipal Enforcement Services and Planning & Development.

## FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

As noted, starting in 2020, Council has supported the development of a new, mixed-use facility by HNHC in Dunnville in the Frank Marshal Business Park. Since that time, the design, use and number of units has changed to maximize the number of supportive housing units while ensuring the financial feasibility of this project.

Council has approved a number of financial supports to ensure this project is successful and meets the housing needs of Haldimand residents. These financial supports include:

- Donation of the lands, which are the subject of this report, valued at approximately \$450,000. These lands were formally transferred in early 2024;
- Fully serviced parcel, including water, wastewater and stormwater servicing capacity;
- Waiver of Application and Permitting fees to an upset limit of \$400,000. To be clear, all regular fees still apply but will be reimbursed by the County through the Social Housing Reserve fund. Additionally, as the County ultimately owns the future development, through its ownership of HNHC, the project is exempt from Development Charges, required securities and parkland dedication fees;
- Funding of capital repairs necessary to prepare a number of the surplus units to be sold (14 RGI units in total to be sold and replaced) to maximize the sale of these units and ultimately assisting to offset the total project costs. The estimated total proceeds from the sale of the 14 units is approximately \$5.6 million;
- Investment of capital funds, to a maximum of \$4.6 million, inclusive of \$1.024 million which was approved to be advanced to HNHC for feasibility and pre-construction phases;
- Additional funding commitment to a maximum of \$2.3 million, if alternative funding sources are not identified. Additional provincial grant funding is anticipated which would reduce Haldimand's financial exposure on the project.

Haldimand staff plan to meet regularly with HNHC staff and their consultants during the construction phase of this facility to ensure the project is within budget and the County's financial exposure is mitigated. It is anticipated that this facility will be financially self-sustaining once operational.

## **STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

The application for the subject Zoning By-law Amendment (PLZ-HA-2025-009) was circulated to County departments and external agencies for review and comment. Public notice was given and signs posted.

Comments received are outlined in the following:

**Planning & Development - Development Technologist** – The application for rezoning of the lands currently zoned “General Industrial (MG)” to a site-specific “General Commercial (GG)” zone to permit the proposed development is supportable. As these lands were contemplated for General Industrial use in the 2009 Dunnville Master Servicing Plan, the County should be able to adequately provide servicing without any impacts to the existing systems.

**Building and Municipal Enforcement Services** – Property currently zoned MG (General Industrial), with by-laws 3-DU-91SP and 313-HC-06, with special provision 37.102. Intention to re-zone to CG (General Commercial) with proposed site specifics of min. front yard of 3 m, max. building height of 20.75 m, and reduced parking. Draft by-law also includes wording for an apartment dwelling, which is not currently permitted in CG zone. Building continues to work with the proponent regarding the site plan design.

**Emergency Services (ES)** – Fire Route cannot be located on Ramsey Drive. Revisions to site plan required.

- Response: a designated fire route that utilized the easterly arena driveway has been proposed and is supported by ES staff.

**Economic Development and Tourism (EDT)** – EDT is supportive of employment generating projects.

**Legal and Support Services** has been directly involved throughout the preparation of the submission and review of the applications, and are supportive of the development. The team continues to work with the HNHC regarding shared use agreement for the parking arrangements with the Dunnville arena.

**Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA)** – Only a very tiny corner of the property is within a GRCA-regulated area, and this is 15 metres from the recently revised floodplain. As such, we have no comments or concerns on this file.

Additionally, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River were circulated, however, have not provided a response as of time of preparation of this report. It is noted that archaeological clearance of the subject lands was completed as part of the previous approvals and development of the Frank Marshall Business Park.

## **REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: No

By-law: Yes

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

**REFERENCES:**

None.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Location Map.
2. Conceptual Site Plan.
3. Draft Zoning By-law.
4. Draft Easement Agreement.