



April 22, 2026

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Sent to: [zonegh@greyhighlands.ca](mailto:zonegh@greyhighlands.ca)

**Re: Draft Zoning By-law**

The Escarpment Corridor Alliance is a registered charity with the vision of creating a protected and connected ecological corridor across the Niagara Escarpment of South Georgian Bay, for nature, for people, for good.

We would like to provide further comments on the draft comprehensive zoning by-law of Municipality of Grey Highlands (“MGH”) presented to Council at its meeting of April 15, 2026.

This is also further to our letter to you of July 23, 2025, and following our review of the next version and the associated mapping.

**NEC Comments**

We have been provided with a copy of the email comments dated October 8, 2025 of the Niagara Escarpment Commission staff (the “NEC”) on the portions of the by-law relating to land in MGH subject to the Niagara Escarpment Plan (the “NEP”).

We fully agree with the NEC that the proposed zoning by-law must comply with the NEP in areas that are within the NEP but not subject to NEC’s Development Control. The NEP is the superior legislation and all municipal zoning and decisions related to land within the NEP area must (as a minimum) comply with the NEP.

As stated by the NEC, “Where zoning provisions overlap with the NEP Area, the policies of the NEP must be applied, and in cases of conflict, the NEP prevails”. Further, the NEC stated that “while the Zoning By-law may be more restrictive than the NEP, it must not conflict with it”.

**Amend Preamble to the Zoning By-law**

The section entitled “Preamble- Purpose of the Zoning By-law” correctly notes that land within the Development Control of the NEC must comply with the NEP. We suggest that it be amended to make it clear that land within the NEP that is under municipal control must also comply with the NEP and, in the event of conflict, the NEP applies. We suggest the changes in italics below:

[www.myescarpment.ca](http://www.myescarpment.ca)

A portion of the Municipality is located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. The Municipality's Zoning By-law does not possess regulatory authority within the Development Control Area of the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC). Areas subject to NEC Development Control are identified in the Zone Schedules (maps) of this By-law. All Development within the NEC Development Control area requires a permit or exemption from the NEC. Any inquiries regarding Development requirements on lands that are subject to Niagara Escarpment Development Control should be directed to the Niagara Escarpment Commission ... ***Lands within the NEP that are not within an Area of Development Control Area of the NEP must also comply with the NEP. In the event of a conflict between this by-law and the NEP, the NEP shall govern.***

### **Official Plan – Purpose of the REC Zoning**

The [Official Plan](#) is clear as to the purpose of the REC zoning, and this should be reflected in the zoning by-law. Section 4.8 of the Official Plan states:

The purpose of the Recreation Area designation is to recognize existing resource based recreational areas as follows:

- i. To recognize areas of existing or potential recreational development of an open space or recreational nature which requires the Escarpment slope for operation and function,
- ii. To define and provide policies for areas of existing development within the Recreation Areas identified in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and
- iii. To provide for new development of a resort residential and tourist commercial nature which may be permitted.

### **Purpose of NEP Recreation Designation**

The NEP's Escarpment Recreation Area category was intended to permit certain types of existing and future development in areas where many types of development would not otherwise be permitted and is primarily for land associated with then operating ski hills (e.g. Beaver Valley Ski Club, Talisman Ski Resort and Old Smokey) as well as certain other lands that were identified as having similar recreational potential (e.g. Vandeleur which was never developed).

To be designated as an Escarpment Recreation Area, the NEP provides that the land must be an "existing or potential recreational development associated with the Escarpment" (section 1.8).

Further, a permitted primary recreational use must be built and operational before any secondary use may be built. Similarly, the associated development must be proportionate to the size of the permitted use and its capacity.

### **Amendments to Draft Zoning By-law**

As currently proposed, a person reading the by-law without a strong background in the NEP may well assume that each of the uses set out in Section 15.0 are actually independent permitted uses – when it is quite clear that they are not without the primary permitted recreational use being in place and the NEP being fully complied with.

We strongly recommend that:

1. The zoning by-law be a clear statement of what is permitted by the NEP rather than a continuation of the current by-law which leaves the impression that the by-law is the applicable rule with a casual reference to the NEP.
2. The zoning by-law reflect the purpose of the REC zoning as set out in the Official Plan and the NEP.

### **Recommended By-law Provision**

We attach recommended changes to the version attached to the materials for the April 15, 2026 Council meeting. Changes are indicated in italics and bold.

### **Mapping Should Reflect Reality**

The zoning of all land currently designated in the existing MGH zoning by-law as “Recreational Resort Zone” should be reviewed carefully in the mapping process. In particular, the former Talisman ski resort and nearby lands are identified as “Recreational Resort Zone” yet it is widely recognized that there will never be a new downhill ski operation or golf course on these lands. These parcels should be re-mapped to be the same as adjacent lands, many of which are under some degree of development restriction.

As well, we believe that some of the hazard wetlands and streams in the Talisman area are not correctly mapped based on observations of the former golf course, updated knowledge of these lands reflected in Grey Sauble Conservation mapping (available on the Grey County GIS website) as well as studies done for the development proposal for the lands. These sources show “watercourse 2”, a wetland/pond adjacent to the Talisman Spring, as well as more extensive wetlands to the north of the site, none of which are shown in the new draft zoning maps. Our observations reflected in the [Google map here](#) also demonstrates extensive spring time and wetland conditions not shown in the draft zoning maps.

On the “upper lands” west of the brow of the Talisman Escarpment slope along 7A, a “D” designation should now be reconsidered given the purchase of the lands to the east by the Bruce Trail Conservancy which will be re-naturalizing the ski hill and conserving the land in a natural state in perpetuity. Given that the D designation anticipated adjacent recreational use and development



which will now no longer occur, the zoning of these lands should reflect the uses to the east which are agricultural and rural. These lands are Prime Agricultural Lands, which we are losing at a rapid pace, and also have extensive karst geology which is not accurately reflected in the designation of well head protections areas (WHPA) for the municipal water plant. Until accurate karst mapping is done and this is reflected in updated WHPA, we must assume that any development on the upper lands could risk contamination of the municipal water supply.

The Escarpment Corridor Alliance is encouraged to see the inclusion of provisions for natural linkages from Grey County's Natural Heritage Study in the by-law update. This is an important addition.

We would be pleased to discuss these recommendations with you at any time.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jarvis Strong".

Jarvis Strong  
Executive Director

cc. Shawn Carey, Director, NEC  
Sarah Marshall, NEC  
Janet Sperling, NEC  
Scott Taylor, County of Grey

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 15.0 RECREATIONAL RESORT AREA

*This zone is intended to be for land that is within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area and is subject to the Niagara Escarpment Plan (“NEP”) but is not within the Development Control of the Minister or his delegates (such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission) under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (the “Act”) as set out in Regulation 826 of the Act. It is also intended for the corresponding lands within MGH that the Official Plan of the County of Grey designates as “Recreation Area” and “Recreational Resort Settlement Area”.*

Within a Recreational Resort (REC) Zone, no person shall use any land, or erect, locate or use any Building or structure for or except such purposes and according to such provisions as may be set out in the following sub-sections **and in compliance with the NEP. In the event of a conflict between the following and the NEP, the provisions of the NEP shall prevail.**

All other provisions of this By-law also apply. This Section must be read in conjunction with the additional reference and requirements found in Section 3: Definitions, Section 4: General Provisions and Section 5: Parking Requirements.

### 1. Permitted Uses

#### (a) On Prominent Escarpment Slope

- Recreational facilities which require the slope for the proper functioning of the operation, such as snowboard runs, ski runs, ski lifts and slides
- Pedestrian and snowmobile trails
- Passive open space areas, and conservation, forestry and wildlife areas

#### (b) Outside Prominent Escarpment Slope

***The following uses if associated with the existing permitted recreational facilities on the prominent slope***

- Ski facilities such as runs and lifts, and Accessory Buildings, structures and facilities
- Snowmobile and pedestrian trails for both summer and winter use, in addition to toboggan runs and slide rides
- Ski chalets and Commercial Development such as lodges, retail stores and service establishments associated with the centre
- Passive open space areas
- Conservation, forestry and wildlife management practices
- Detached, attached and multi-attached residential dwelling units, cottages and chalets
- Resort/tourist Development and related recreational uses and facilities such as golf courses, tennis courts, public or private parks, trail uses, attractions and other similar uses provided the impact on the escarpment is minimal

- Ski centre including associated day use base lodges, maintenance facilities and parking facilities
- Resort, hotel, motel and related Commercial and recreational uses and facilities
- Bed and breakfast establishments
- Home occupations
- Accessory Uses

## 2. Zone Provisions

*[chart not included]*

## 3. Additional Requirements for Compliance

To ensure alignment with the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Grey County Official Plan, and Grey Highlands Official Plan, and any other applicable law or legislation, all Development within the REC Zone shall comply with the following:

### a) Compliance with the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP, 2017)

All permitted uses and Developments shall conform to the NEP Development Criteria, specifically, but not limited to:

- Minimizing visual impact through site-sensitive design and buffering.
- Retaining natural vegetation, with limited clearing for essential infrastructure.
- Protecting natural heritage features such as wetlands, woodlands, and watercourses.
- Ensuring all new Developments are concentrated within existing or planned resort Areas and are proportionate and related to the primary recreational use.

### b) Environmental and Impact Assessments

To safeguard the natural environment, all major Developments shall require:

- Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) for any new resort, expansion, or high-intensity recreational use.
- Stormwater Management Plans to ensure sustainable drainage and runoff control.

### c) Servicing and Infrastructure

- New resort Developments must connect to full municipal services where available.
- Private servicing (wells/septic) shall only be permitted where municipal services are not feasible and must meet all environmental and public health regulations.
- 5.4 Compatibility with Adjacent Land Uses
- Noise and lighting mitigation measures must be implemented to reduce impact on surrounding areas.



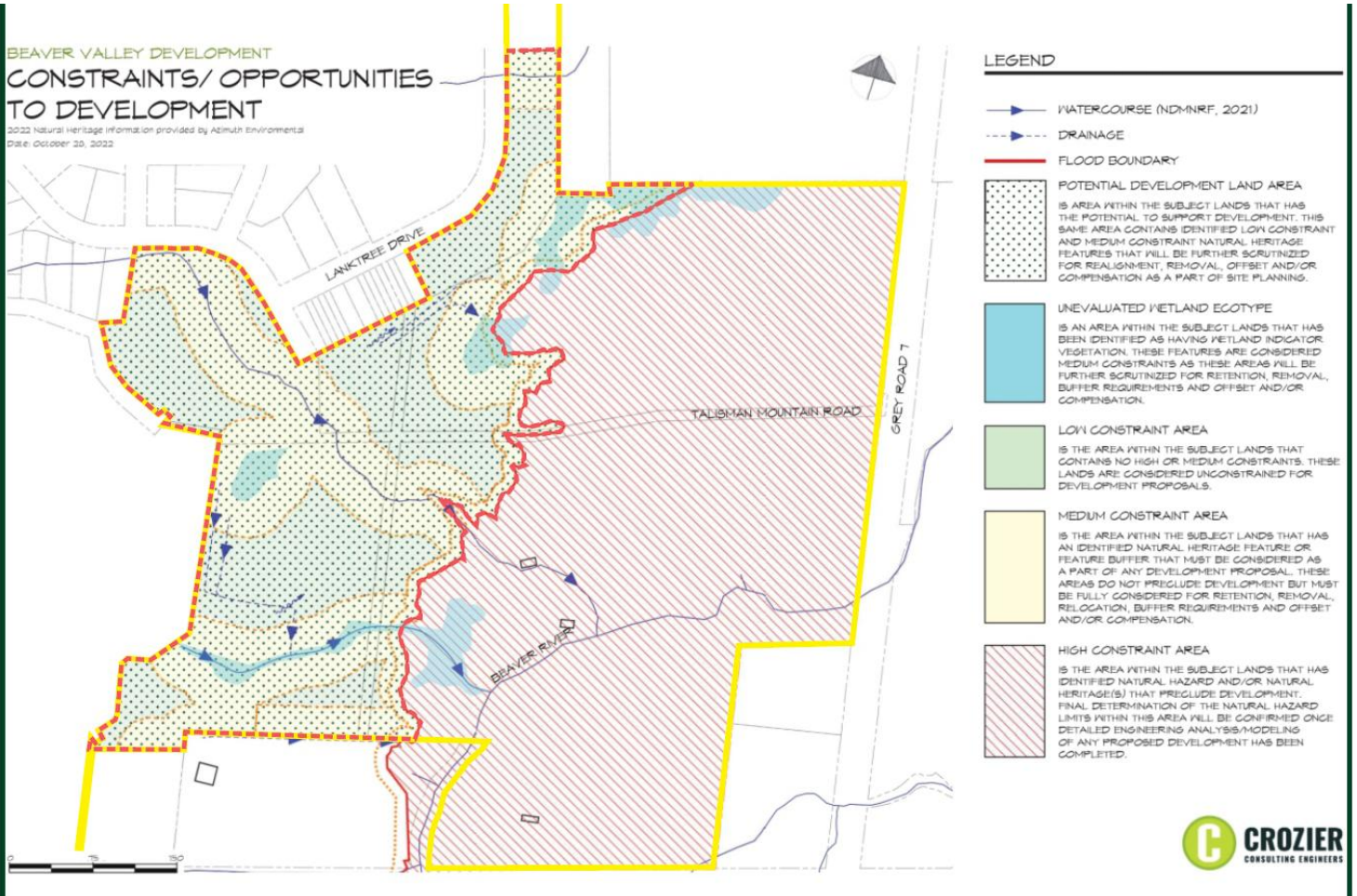
- Buffering and setbacks shall be enforced where a resort abuts residential or conservation zones.

d) Site Plan Control Requirement

All Developments within the REC Zone shall be subject to Site Plan Control, which shall:

- Ensure proper Building placement, access, and parking.
- Require landscaping and screening measures to preserve scenic resources.
- Address natural heritage protection and integration strategies.

**FROM THE SUBDIVISION APPLICATION OF BEAVER VALLEY DEVELOPMENT GROUP TO THE  
COUNTY**



FROM GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

