

SUMMARY OF INPUTS FROM APRIL 23, 2026 OPEN HOUSE AND RESULTANT PROPOSED RURAL PLAN CHANGES

WHAT WE HEARD

A total of eighty-one participants signed in at the second public Open House for the Sunbury-York South Draft Rural Plan. The Open House was held in a drop-in format, with presentation materials provided to highlight key notable departures from existing Rural Plans. Capital Region Service Commission and GEMTEC staff were available to discuss the Draft Rural Plan and answer questions. Comments and questions shared by residents at and following the Open House are summarized below.

Agriculture-related topics were raised most frequently, with many residents emphasizing the importance of protecting agriculture and reducing restrictions. Some residents expressed concerns regarding the removal of the dedicated agricultural zones. Several residents noted concerns about the proposed livestock setback requirements, and one suggestion was made to apply less restrictive setbacks to fewer property lines while adding a minimum lot area requirement. One comment suggested changes to the definition of “animal units,” including an increase to the numbers of certain livestock constituting one animal unit.

Several residents provided feedback specific to backyard agriculture operations, including the suggestion that the distinction between backyard agriculture operations and broader agricultural uses could be made clearer. Specific feedback on backyard agriculture provisions included: requests to remove the 4,000 square metre threshold, to allow backyard agriculture in the Serviced Residential zone, to expand what activities are captured in the definition, and to adjust the number and types of animals permitted. Differing viewpoints were expressed about allowing roosters in backyard agriculture operations, with comments both in favour and opposed.

A question regarding the presence of applicable provisions for the keeping of bees was raised. There were also requests to clarify that common gardening practices on residential properties are permitted.

Beyond agriculture, residents raised a range of questions about how specific provisions would apply in practice. Topics included whether and how existing uses may be “grandfathered,” whether minimum separation distances could be clarified as reciprocal, and questions about definitions, (e.g., what constitutes a “structure”). Other items raised included pool enclosure requirements, kennel setbacks, food truck permissions, and lot coverage limits in certain zones. Mixed viewpoints were expressed with respect to cannabis-related uses, including suggestions to permit cannabis production as an agricultural use as well as concerns about permitting these uses.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT RURAL PLAN

Following a detailed review of all input received from the community, several changes have been made to the draft Rural Plan. The updated draft Rural Plan in its entirety can be found on the Sunbury-York South website.

The following is a summary of notable proposed changes that have been made to the version presented at the April 23, 2026 Open Hhouse:

Backyard Agriculture / Livestock

- Feedback communicated some confusion around residents' abilities to conduct broader homesteading activities such as the growing of produce given that "backyard agriculture operation" seemed to only address the keeping of certain livestock species on residential lots. As these provisions are intended purely to regulate small-scale, household keeping of backyard livestock, this use has been renamed "backyard livestock operation" for greater clarity and specificity. Clarifications have also been made regarding gardening (see "Gardening and Harvesting of Trees" below).
- Provisions have been added to allow limited backyard livestock activities involving the keeping of hens, ducks, and rabbits within the Serviced Residential zone.
- Class 1 Home-based Business provisions have also been updated to allow for retail of products that are accessory to a backyard livestock operation, such as the sale of eggs produced by backyard chickens.

Gardening and Harvesting of Trees

- Language has been added to state explicitly that no provisions within the Plan are intended to restrict the ancillary use of land for the growing of fruit, vegetable, or ornamental gardens for personal use, or the harvesting of trees for personal use. It has also been clarified that the by-law does not restrict the sale of surplus produce associated with ancillary gardening.

Animal Units

- The definition of animal units (AU) has been updated to provide greater consistency with respect to offspring, replacing all references to "until weaning" with "until sexual maturity." No changes to the number of animals constituting one animal unit have been made.

Keeping of Livestock

- Provisions under Section 6.6 Keeping of Livestock do not apply to backyard livestock operations. They are intended to provide regulations to address agricultural uses involving

the keeping of livestock **below the threshold** at which the *Livestock Operations Act* would apply. For livestock operations that are subject to the *Livestock Operations Act*, Section 6.6 does not apply. This is not a change, but was a question that came up fairly frequently at or following the open house.

- Under the existing Rural Plans, the following limits apply to keeping of livestock:

New Maryland Parish Rural Plan	Rusagonis-Waasis Rural Plan
Permitted in the R-1, R-2, HBI-1, HBI-2, and HBI-3 zones subject to terms and conditions as may be imposed by the Commission, and meeting the below setback / animal unit (AU) requirements for livestock facilities: • up to 3 AU: 40 metres • 4 to 6 AU: 50 metres • 7 to 10 AU: 60 metres • 11 to 19 AU: 70 metres	Up to 3 AU permitted in the R and R&C zones on property of at least 20,000 square metres, subject to 20 metre setback from any lot line, 30 metre setback from any watercourse, and 75 metres from any well or inhabited dwelling not on the subject property.
Permitted in the A, AE, LI-2, and R&C zones without terms and conditions, but still subject to the above setbacks.	No specific provisions applicable to keeping of livestock in the A zone.

- Under the draft Rural Plan, keeping of livestock as an agricultural use is permitted in the Rural (R), Light Industrial (LI), Heavy Industrial (HI), and Resource and Conservation (RC) zones. Terms and conditions are only applicable to those operations which do not meet the provisions of Section 6.6.
- The following changes have been made to promote allowing the keeping of a small number of livestock that exceed the requirements for a backyard livestock operation:
 - On 1-acre (4,000 square metre) lots, the setback requirement has been reduced to 20 metres from a livestock facility to any lot line for one or fewer animal units.
 - For livestock operations with more than one animal unit, the provisions have been slightly altered to allow a more gradual “stepping up” of setbacks:
 - >1 to 4 AU: 30 metres
 - >4 to 6 AU: 40 metres
 - >6 to 10 AU: 60 metres
 - >10 to 19 animal units: 70 metres

- Proponents of proposed livestock operations which are not are subject to the *Livestock Operations Act* and which do not meet the provisions of Section 6.6 may submit an application to operate subject to terms and conditions as may be imposed by the Commission.

Keeping of Bees

- Provisions have been added to the draft Plan to address the keeping of bees, including a 10-metre setback from hives to any lot line.

Enclosures for Swimming Pools

- Given that swimming pool enclosure requirements are separately established under Section 16 of Provincial Building Regulation 81-126, and that their continued inclusion within the Plan has caused several concerns, this section has been removed.

Kennels

- Provisions have been updated to reduce the minimum lot area from 20,000 square metres to 10,000 square metres, and to reduce the minimum setback to any lot line from 60 metres to 30 metres.
- In order to reduce impacts to sensitive neighbouring uses, any kennels located within 60 metres of a property that permits an early learning and childcare facility, place of learning, or residential dwelling must be visually screened by a continuous barrier of trees, hedges, or solid wooden fencing.

Lot Occupancy

- Provisions have been updated to increase the allowable lot occupancy of buildings and structures in the Residential One (R1) and Serviced Residential (SR) zones from 35% to 40%.

Separation Distances

- Language has been slightly adjusted to clarify that minimum separation distances between listed uses (asphalt plant, salvage yard, wind turbine, waste composting operation, abandoned landfill site, and pit, quarry, or extractive industrial use) and residential/recreational/institutional uses are intended to be reciprocal. For example, not only must a new asphalt plant maintain the indicated minimum separation distance from an existing residential use, but a new residential use must also maintain the minimum separation distance from an existing asphalt plant.

Maximum Area of Dwellings in the Commercial and Light Industrial zones

- Provisions have been adjusted so that floor area maximums in the Commercial (C) and Light Industrial (LI) zones do not apply to residential dwellings.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Circulation to Provincial Departments

The updated draft Rural Plan is being circulated to the Province for feedback. Once all comments are received, the draft Plan will be updated again as necessary to address provincial input.

Public Hearing

Once the final draft of the Rural Plan is available, Council will set a date for the public hearing. At the hearing, the final draft will be presented to the public, and the community will have the opportunity to provide comments.

Adoption of the Rural Plan

The draft Rural Plan will undergo a First and Second Reading at Council, then finally a Third Reading before it is formally adopted.

Amendments the Rural Plan

Once the Rural Plan is adopted, it is intended to be a living document. Pursuant to Section 50 of the *Community Planning Act*, a Rural Plan should be reviewed at least once every ten years after the plan is adopted. Amendments can be proposed to the Rural Plan by way of a rezoning application to the Capital Region Service Commission.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the draft Rural Plan changes or process, please contact Benjamin Clare at:

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