

Connor Maclsaac

From: Drake, Anna (OMAF)
Sent: March 11, 2026 2:08 PM
To: Connor Maclsaac
Cc: Aimee Alderman, MSc, MCIP, RPP; Shannon Mista
Subject: RE: ZBA-18-2024 - 263 Concession 6 Road - OMAFA Input Request - Follow-up

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Hello Connor,

Thank you for your patience on this. I have made some notes related to our guidance as outlined below:

A use qualifies as an ag-related use where it meets OMAFA's criteria in OMAFA's [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas](#). The six criteria assess whether a use is:

1. a farm-related commercial or farm-related industrial use,
2. compatible with and not hindering surrounding agricultural operations,
3. directly related to farm operations in the area,
4. supportive of agriculture,
5. providing direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity, and
6. benefiting from being located in close proximity to farm operations.

These considerations align with the 2024 PPS definition of *agriculture-related use* and should be applied together with your municipal context and any other applicable provincial plans and policies.

Based on a preliminary, high-level review of the materials provided, I have provided a few additional points of consideration based on OMAFA's [Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas](#) criteria that may further support your assessment of whether this proposal meets the intent of an agriculture-related use.

1. Farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial use

- Consider whether the proposed use adds value to agricultural operations and production in the surrounding area and/or if the use creates a new opportunity for agricultural commodities grown in the area.

2. Shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations

- Compatibility should be assessed both on the subject property and across the broader area where impacts may occur. The use must not hinder normal farm practices or introduce conflicts with nearby agricultural activities, such as sensitivities to livestock facilities or increases in noise, light, dust, or traffic that may affect farm operators or livestock. Any potential impacts should be avoided or mitigated.

- Consider the cumulative effect of introducing another agriculture-related use to ensure that agricultural and rural character are not undermined and that rural infrastructure is not adversely affected.
- Prime agricultural areas should remain dedicated to farming and protected for future generations. Only minimal land should be removed from current or future production, with attention to long-term (multi-generational) effects. Uses should maintain rural character, support continued normal farm practices, contribute positively to the agricultural sector, and require servicing appropriate to a rural agricultural context (e.g., rural road access, water, emergency services).

3. Directly related to farm operations in the area

- Consider the types of agricultural operations surrounding the property and assess whether the proposed use is directly related to those operations. The use should primarily provide products or services associated with, required by, or that enhance agricultural operations in the immediate area.
 - Does the proposed use meet a need or enhance existing farm operations in the area?

4. Supports agriculture

- Consider whether the primary focus of the use is to support agriculture or if there will be a general use component. Will farm operators be the primary customers, and will this component provide a benefit to their operations?
- Farmers' markets must primarily sell agricultural products grown in the area to be considered an agricultural use. Markets selling a mix of local and non-local produce, baked goods, coffee, or crafts may still qualify as agriculture-related if the majority of goods sold are agricultural commodities grown in the surrounding area.

5. Provides direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity

- Consider whether the proposed use will primarily serve farmers in the area, or whether it will also cater to a broader customer base. General-purpose uses are not agriculture-related, even if farmers are among their customers.
- Businesses that sell or repair farm implements alongside general-consumer product lines (e.g., lawn mowers, snow blowers, other equipment, toys, clothing) should be directed to settlement areas, rural lands, or lower-priority agricultural lands.
- Municipalities should require evidence demonstrating that servicing farm operations will be the primary business activity (e.g., customers primarily being local farm operators or inputs sourced from the area). As a best practice, municipalities may also seek evidence that the use cannot be reasonably located in a settlement area or rural lands.

6. Benefits from being in close proximity to farm operations

- Some farm implement dealerships and repair shops have located in prime agricultural areas due to proximity to customers. Under current PPS policy, such uses may be justified only if their primary business activity is serving local farm operations and all other criteria are met.
- Many general-purpose and agriculture-related uses are more appropriately located within nearby hamlets, villages, and towns. If the proposal includes a general-purpose component, consider whether it would be better suited to a settlement area.

Lot creation in prime agricultural areas are discouraged. While the PPS does allow severances for agriculture-related uses, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to

accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services. Consider whether existing properties in the prime agricultural area could accommodate the proposed use, thereby avoiding the creation of a new lot. For example, a site previously used for another agriculture-related use may be available. Locating a new agriculture-related use on an existing lot of record is generally preferred over creating a new lot in a prime agricultural area.

I hope this can be helpful in providing further points of consideration. Let me know if there are any further questions.

Thanks,

Anna Drake

Anna Drake

Rural Planner | Agricultural Land Use Planning
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness | Ontario Public Service



Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people

From: Connor MacIsaac
Sent: March 6, 2026 10:59 AM
To: Drake, Anna (OMAF)A
Cc: aimee.alderman [REDACTED]; Shannon Mista [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: ZBA-18-2024 - 263 Concession 6 Road - OMAFA Input Request - Follow-up

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Hi Anna,

Town staff would be welcoming of any of input on OMAFA Policy as it relates to the application, as directed by Council's motion.

Best,

Connor MacIsaac
Planner II

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
1593 Four Mile Creek Road
P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0
Telephone: (905) 468-3266
Website: www.notl.com

From: Drake, Anna (OMAF) [REDACTED]
Sent: March 6, 2026 10:02 AM
To: Connor MacIsaac [REDACTED]
Cc: Aimee Alderman, MSc, MCIP, RPP [REDACTED]; Shannon Mista [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: ZBA-18-2024 - 263 Concession 6 Road - OMAFA Input Request - Follow-up

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Hi Connor,

I just wanted to confirm the clarification you're looking for regarding your question:

“My question is, would OMAFA staff have any input on the application of the relevant policy in Town staff’s policy evaluation, specifically with regard to Town staff’s evaluation of the proposal against OMAFA’s Publication 851: Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas.”

Are you looking for guidance on which sections of the Guidelines may be relevant in determining whether this application could be considered an agriculture-related use?

If so, I can certainly provide additional clarification on the guidance that would be applicable to your review. While we cannot determine or confirm whether a specific proposal is or is not an agriculture-related use, that determination rests with the municipality, we can highlight the relevant sections of Publication 851 that can assist Town staff in making that evaluation.

Let me know if this is what you were looking for or if I am misunderstanding the request.

Thanks,

Anna

Anna Drake

Rural Planner | Agricultural Land Use Planning
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness | Ontario Public Service



Taking pride in strengthening Ontario, its places and its people

From: Connor MacIsaac
Sent: March 5, 2026 11:36 AM
To: Drake, Anna (OMAF)

Cc: aimee.alderman [REDACTED]; Shannon Mista [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: ZBA-18-2024 - 263 Concession 6 Road - OMAFA Input Request - Follow-up

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Hi Anna,

I would like to follow-up on the below request to OMAFA staff as directed by Town Council. Please let me know if there is any additional information that I can provide.

Best,

Connor Maclsaac
Planner II

Connor.Maclsaac@notl.com

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
1593 Four Mile Creek Road
P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0
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Website: www.notl.com

From: Connor Maclsaac

Sent: February 26, 2026 1:41 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Aimee Alderman, MSc, MCIP, RPP [REDACTED]; Shannon Mista [REDACTED]

Subject: ZBA-18-2024 - 263 Concession 6 Road - OMAFA Input Request

Hi Anna,

I am a planner with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and have been the planner on file for the above referenced Zoning by-law amendment application. The applicant requests to rezone a portion of the subject lands to "Rural (A) Site-Specific" Zone to permit a variety of agricultural-related uses, including an Agricultural Equipment Storage Facility, a Farm Produce Storage Facility, an Agricultural Market and associated offices, asphalt parking area, site entrances, and private servicing facilities. The remainder of the property is proposed to be rezoned to an Open Space (OS) zone. The application materials are posted to the Town's website here: [263 Concession 6 Road - ZBA-18-2024 | Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake](#)

At the February 24th, 2026 Town Council meeting, Town Council passed the motion put forth at the Town's February 3rd, 2026 Committee of the Whole-Planning meeting, which directed staff to receive input from OMAFA on the application regarding conformity with the relevant policy.

My question is, would OMAFA staff have any input on the application of the relevant policy in Town staff's policy evaluation, specifically with regard to Town staff's evaluation of the proposal against OMAFA's Publication 851: Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas. Town staff's evaluation of the relevant policies is summarized in the Staff Recommendation Report which can be found under Item 9.3 here: [Committee of the Whole - Planning - February 03, 2026](#)

Based on OMAFA's land staff coverage map, I believe you are the rural planner responsible for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, but please point me in the direction of the relevant OMAFA staff as required.

Please also let me know if there is any additional information that I can provide.

Best,

Connor MacIsaac
Planner II

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
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