



Staff Report

Planning & Building Services – Planning Division

Report To: COW - Operations, Planning and Building Services
Meeting Date: May 19, 2026
Report Number: PBS.26.038
Title: Recommendation Report – Zoning By-law Amendment Beaver River Trail
Prepared by: Shawn Postma, Manager of Planning

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PBS.26.038, entitled “Recommendation Report – Zoning By-law Amendment Beaver River Trail”;

AND THAT Council enact a Zoning By-law to rezone the subject lands being portions of the Alice Street, Russell Street, and Arthur Street from the Development ‘D’, Residential ‘R1-1’, Agricultural ‘A’, Commercial ‘C1’, and Public Utilities ‘PU’ zones to the Open Space ‘OS’ Zone.;

AND THAT Council direct Staff to continue to evaluate and report back as required on implementation options related to the long-term ownership, management, and protection of the subject lands, including whether the lands should remain as unopened road allowances or be stopped up and closed and established as a separate conveyable parcel both remaining under Town ownership.

B. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide a follow up Staff Report to deputations and public meetings held in support of a proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) to rezone several unopened municipal road allowances to the Open Space (OS) zone.

The subject lands form part of a continuous natural corridor associated with the Beaver River Trail, a long-established recreational trail connecting Thornbury and Clarksburg. The rezoning is intended to:

- reinforce Council’s previously stated intent to protect the trail;
- provide land use certainty through zoning; and
- ensure that future land use decisions recognize the environmental and recreational function of these corridors.

This report builds directly upon the policy direction, public input, and Council deliberations documented through earlier staff reporting and community deputations.

C. Background

The Beaver River Trail has been developed incrementally over time and currently extends approximately 10.7 kilometres, connecting the Georgian Trail and Bayview Park in Thornbury to the Clendenan Dam Conservation Area just beyond Clarksburg. Portions of the trail traverse historical unopened road allowances, including segments of Alice Street East, Russell Street, and Arthur Street.

In 2024 and 2025, increased development pressure adjacent to these corridors raised concerns regarding the long-term protection of the trail and associated natural vegetation. A deputation by the Beaver River Trail Working Group in May 2025 prompted Council direction to explore tools to preserve the trail corridor, including proclamations, stop-up-and-close processes, park creation, and zoning measures.

Subsequent public meetings and deputations demonstrated strong community support for the permanent protection and recognition of these corridors as public open space. Council directed staff to proceed with statutory processes, including rezoning, to advance these objectives.

The applicant is the Town of The Blue Mountains, who is supported by the work completed by the Beaver River Trail Working Group. The application is proposing to amend the Zoning By-law to rezone several unopened road allowance lands to the Open Space (OS) zone.

The OS Zone is intended to:

- recognize lands used for parks, trails, and natural open space;
- restrict development to low-impact recreational and conservation-oriented uses; and
- ensure that land use permissions align with the existing and intended use of the lands.

The proposed rezoning does not alter ownership of the lands, nor does it in itself result in the closure of the road allowances or the creation of new parcels. Rather, it establishes an appropriate land use framework consistent with Council's previously expressed intent.

The Public Meeting also requested comments on the stop up and close of the Road Allowances to create a separate parcel of land.

D. Analysis

Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), which supports the protection of public open space, recreational corridors, and natural heritage

features. The PPS encourages municipalities to promote healthy, active communities by providing safe and accessible recreational infrastructure, including trails.

County of Grey Official Plan

The proposed rezoning conforms to the County of Grey Official Plan (Recolour Grey), which identifies recreational trails and green infrastructure as essential components of community well-being and regional connectivity.

Section 3.8 (Parks, Open Space and Trails) supports the establishment and protection of recreational trail systems and encourages lower-tier municipalities to protect lands that contribute to regional trail networks. The Beaver River Trail is identified as a valued recreational asset connecting settlement areas within the County.

Section 4.2 (Live Grey) promotes quality of life through access to recreational amenities and outdoor spaces. Rezoning the subject lands to OS ensures their continued contribution to County-wide recreation and tourism objectives.

Section 5.3 (Natural Grey) directs that natural heritage features and corridors be protected and enhanced. The OS zoning aligns land use permissions with this policy framework by recognizing the subject lands as part of a naturalized linear corridor.

The proposed ZBA implements County policy by securing the land use status of lands that function as part of an inter-connected trail and open space system.

Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan

The Town's Official Plan identifies the Beaver River corridor as an important natural and recreational feature. The proposed OS zoning implements Official Plan policies by providing appropriate zoning that prioritizes conservation, public access, and low-impact recreation. The Official Plan specifically prioritizes trails under the following policies:

Section A3.2 (Natural Environment) and Section A3.8 (Tourism and Recreation) identify trails and natural corridors as key community assets that support environmental stewardship, tourism, and resident well-being.

Part B – Environmental and Open Space Designations, particularly Section 4.1 (Open Space Policies), supports the designation of lands used for trails, parks, and naturalized corridors, and restricts development to uses compatible with their ecological and recreational functions.

Section D2.7 (Parks, Trails and Open Space) encourages the protection and enhancement of existing trails and supports the use of planning tools, including zoning, to safeguard these lands for long-term public use.

The Beaver River Trail corridor is recognized as part of the Town's broader trail and open space network. Rezoning the subject lands to Open Space implements the Official Plan's intent by aligning zoning permissions with the established land use and Council-directed protection objectives. For this application, the proposal directly implements the Town Official Plan by protecting a publicly accessible trail corridor, reinforcing environmental functions, and limiting future land use to open space purposes.

Additional Comments:

Council has several implementation options available to it with respect to the long-term status of the subject road allowance lands:

Option 1 – Retain Lands as Unopened Road Allowances (Status Quo with OS Zoning)

Under this option, the lands would remain legally established as unopened municipal road allowances but be zoned OS.

Key implications:

- lands remain clearly in municipal ownership;
- zoning limits future development potential;
- flexibility is preserved should future municipal infrastructure needs arise;
- trail use remains permissive and supported, but not necessarily formalized through park dedication.

This option provides the lowest administrative complexity while still achieving significant land use protection through zoning.

Option 2 – Establish Separate Conveyable Parcels While Retaining Town Ownership

Under this option, the Town would proceed with a stop-up-and-close process for some or all of the road allowances, followed by the creation of separate, conveyable parcels that remain in Town ownership and are zoned OS.

Key implications:

- lands are removed from the road system and permanently dedicated to open space;
- parcels may be more easily managed as parkland or trail corridors;

- greater clarity is provided regarding permitted uses and future disposition;
- additional procedural steps, survey and legal costs are required.

This option results in the strongest form of land protection, as it restricts the ability for the Town to establish municipal infrastructure, roads, or other corporate needs in the future. However the lands will remain under Town ownership with future decisions on the lands under the control of Council.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

The protection of these lands as a Public Park will retain the significant existing trees/vegetation and a natural corridor along the urban boundary.

G. Financial Impacts

Planning Services application fees for the zoning by-law amendment process include \$14,400 for Town, County and Conservation Authority Fees. Decisions on the long term options regarding the road allowance will range from no costs to implement Option 1 to approximately \$15,000 to implement Option 2 and the requirements for survey, legal and registration costs.

H. In Consultation With

Beaver River Trail Working Group
Tim Murawsky, CBO / Acting Director of Planning and Building Services

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or Public Information Centre which took place on February 10, 2026. Those who provided comments at

the Public Meeting and/or Public Information Centre, including anyone who has asked to receive notice regarding this matter, has been provided notice of this Staff Report. Any comments regarding this report should be submitted Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning at planning@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

1. Draft Zoning By-law Amendment – Beaver River Trail

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PBS.26.038 Recommendation Report Beaver River Trail .docx
Attachments:	- Zoning By-law Amendment - Beaver River Trail.docx
Final Approval Date:	May 6, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tim Murawsky - May 6, 2026 - 4:35 PM

The Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains

By-Law Number 2026 –

Being a By-law to amend The Blue Mountains Zoning By-law 2018-65 which may be cited as “The Blue Mountains Zoning By-law”

Whereas the Council of the Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains deems it necessary and in the public interest to pass a By-law to amend By-law No. 2018-65;

And Whereas pursuant to the provisions of Section 34 of the Planning Act, RSO 1990, c.P.13, the By-law may be amended by Council of the Municipality;

Now Therefore Council of The Corporation of the Town of The Blue Mountains hereby enacts as follows:

1. That Schedule ‘A’ to The Blue Mountains Zoning By-law 2018-65 is hereby amended by rezoning a portion of those lands known as Part of Alice Street, Part of Russell Street, and Part of Arthur Street from the Development ‘D’ Zone, Residential ‘R1-1’ Zone, Agriculture ‘A’ Zone, Commercial ‘C1’ Zone, and Public Utilities ‘PU’ Zone to the Open Space ‘OS Zone as shown on Schedule A1 to this By-law
2. That Schedule A1 affixed hereto is declared to form part of this By-law.

And Further that this By-law shall come into force and take effect upon the enactment thereof.

Enacted and passed this 1st day of June 2026.

Andrea Matrosovs, Mayor



Corrina Giles, Town Clerk

Town of The Blue Mountains

Schedule A1

By-law No. 2026-_____

Legend

-  Subject Lands Of This Amendment
-  Area to be Zoned OS

