



PLANNING STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Rural Plan Amendment Application – Main St/Howard Rd, Blackville, Miramichi River Valley

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, September 16th, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 2025-3-1

Pursuant to Section 110(1) of the *Community Planning Act* (c.19), the Miramichi River Valley Council has requested the written views of the GMSC Regional Planning Review and Adjustment Committee (PRAC) on an application to amend: Schedule A, Zoning Map, of the Village of Blackville Rural Plan (By-law No. 57 and Amending By-law No. 88). The amendment proposes to rezone PID 40538761, located at the corner of Main Street (Route 8) and Howard Road in Blackville, from “Central Commercial – Mixed Use (CC-MU)” and “Industrial (IND)” to “Highway Commercial (HC).”

The purpose of the rezoning is to allow a broader range of commercial and residential opportunities, thereby improving the marketability of the property and supporting its future redevelopment.

CONTENTS

Application Overview & Proposed Use	2
Legislative Context.....	3
Planning Considerations – Rural Plan Policy	4
Rural Plan Zoning Regulations	5
Development Services Staff Assessment	9
Neighbourhood Character and Impact	10
Views of the Public	10
Department and Agency Comments.....	11
Staff Recommendation	12
Attachments.....	13

Application Overview & Proposed Use

Table 1: Property Information and Application Overview

Property Owner and Applicant	Blackville Enterprises Ltd (Hal Raper)
PID / PAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PID 40538761• PAN 06663945 – SNB Property Assessment Online
Property Area (per Service NB)	5287m ² (1.3 acres)
Access	Open/uncontrolled access along both frontages (Main St/Howard Rd) Existing paved driveway from Howard Rd to former mill security building
Frontage	~66.5m (Main St) ~59.4m (Howard Rd)
Servicing	Municipal sewer not available; requires potential ~100m extension from the north.
Current Zoning	Industrial (IND) - ~94% of lot Central Commercial – Mixed Use (CC-MU) - ~6% of lot (northwest portion)
Existing Use	Seasonal ice cream stand Former lumber mill security/office building
Proposed Uses	None
Surrounding Uses	Low-density residential, institutional, industrial, commercial

A request to amend the Village of Blackville Rural Plan (By-law No. 57 and Amending By-law No. 88) has been received regarding PID 40538761, located at Main St and Howard Rd, Blackville. No civic address is assigned to this property.

The applicant has requested that the zoning on the property be changed from “Industrial (IND)” and “Central Commercial – Mixed Use (CC-MU)” to “Highway Commercial (HC)”. No specific development is being advanced at this time; rather, the intent is to broaden the permitted uses to enhance the property’s marketability and position it for future sale and redevelopment. Staff had recommended that the applicant consider waiting to rezone until they (or a purchaser) had a specific proposed development to submit, as this would have strengthened the application; however, this is not a requirement of the Community Planning Act.

The property is located on a corner lot abutting Main St, also cross-designated as Rte 8, and Howard Rd in the former Village of Blackville. It is a relatively small lot that was created

in 2019, being subdivided from a much larger portion of the former Blackville Mill property. The property currently hosts a seasonal ice cream stand and the former security/office building for the Blackville Mill, on distinct portions of the property. Its location on a prominent corner within the former Village core makes it a candidate for future redevelopment under the requested zoning.

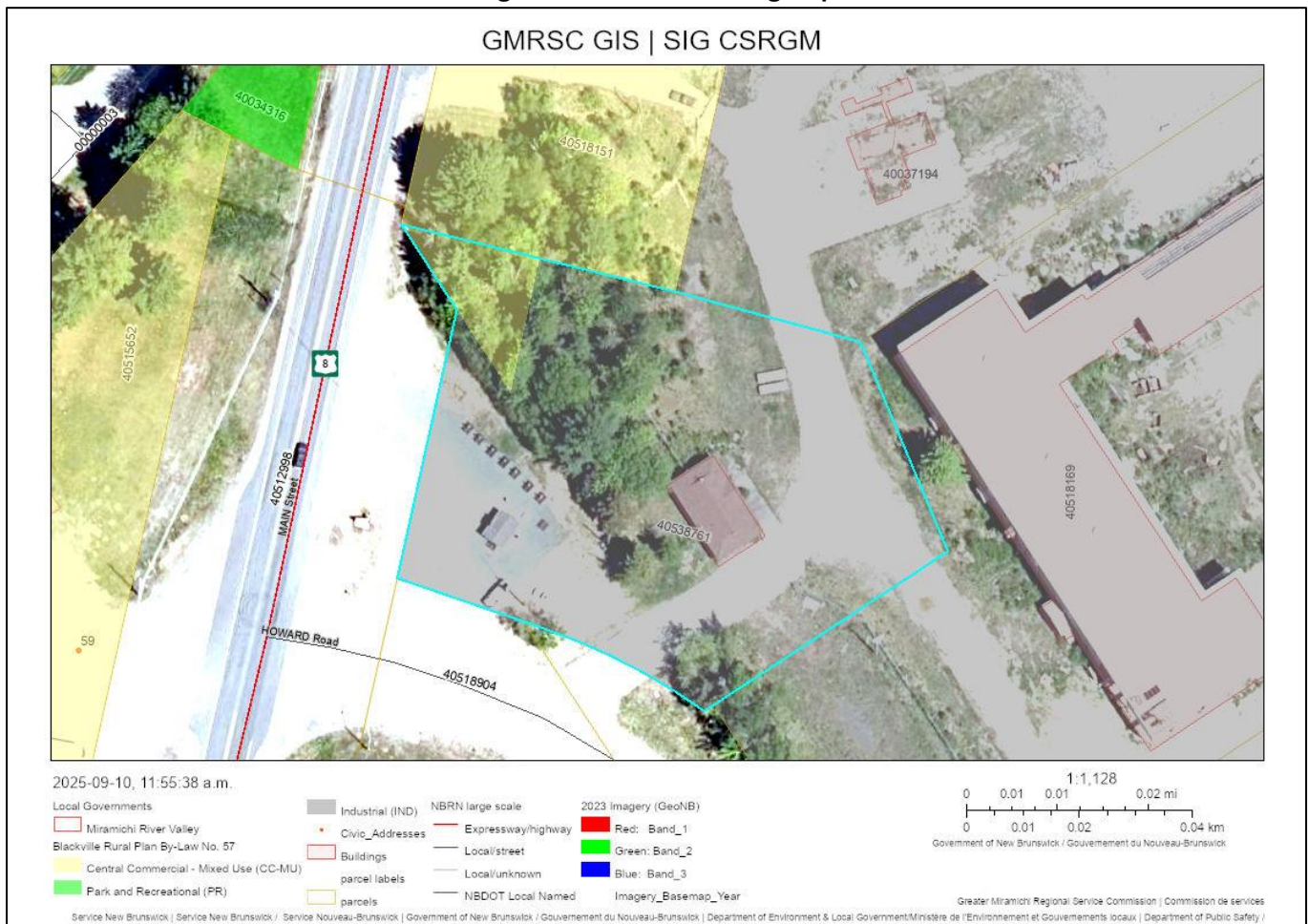
Legislative Context

When a Rural Plan By-law amendment is proposed, in accordance with Section 110(1) of the Community Planning Act, Rural Community Council must request the written views of the Regional PRAC. The Act also outlines additional procedural requirements, including:

- Public hearing and associated notification requirements
- Council vote on the proposed by-law amendments
- Formal registration of the amended by-law

These steps ensure transparency, public engagement, and legislative compliance throughout the amendment process.

Figure 1: Rural Plan Zoning Map



The Village of Blackville Rural Plan (By-law No. 57, as amended by By-law No. 88) establishes both policy direction and zoning regulations to guide land use and development. It functions as a combined municipal plan and zoning by-law under the Community Planning Act, and is used by Council, staff, the PRAC, developers, and residents to inform day-to-day decisions affecting growth and land use.

The Rural Plan is currently under review and update to reflect both the former Village and the newly incorporated areas of the Miramichi River Valley Rural Community.

Planning Considerations – Rural Plan Policy

The Village of Blackville Rural Plan (By-law No. 57, as amended by By-law No. 88) establishes the framework for evaluating commercial development and rezonings. Several objectives and policies are directly relevant to this application:

Table 1: Relevant Rural Plan Policies.

Supporting Goals/Policies/Proposals
<p>6.3.1 Commercial Development Objectives</p> <p>“It shall be an objective of Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to encourage the development of high quality, low scale commercial developments such as professional offices, retail shops, personal service operations to locate in the Village.• to ensure that commercial development does not negatively impact on residential neighbourhoods; and• to allow some commercial developments to have a residential component.” <p>Highway Commercial</p> <p>“Much of the existing commercial development in Blackville can be generally defined as highway commercial. For the most part the existing commercial development occurs on lands adjacent to the main road (i.e., Route 8) in the community. The range of uses generally associated with this form of commercial development is characterized by the need for large areas for vehicle parking, servicing the travelling public or catering to the needs of the automobile. Generally, a highway commercial zone is very permissive, in that it allows for many uses. In the case of Blackville, this zone will be limited to small scale highway commercial type uses such as service stations, convenience stores and restaurants.”</p>

CDP – 6

“It is the policy of Council to accommodate existing highway oriented business located outside the central portion of the Village by establishing a Highway Commercial zone. Further, new highway commercial areas shall not be prezoned, rather each new establishment requesting a highway commercial highway zone designation shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through the rezoning process.”

CDP-5.2 (Central Commercial – Mixed Use Zone)

Industrial developments, resource-based businesses, and automotive establishments are not permitted in the Central Commercial – Mixed Use Zone in order to avoid land use conflicts and protect the character of the Village core.

Overall, the pertinent policies within the Rural Plan support a range of residential and commercial uses on this property. However, one clarification is needed pertaining to policy CDP – 6, which indicates that the Highway Commercial zone shall not be “prezoned”. A strict reading of this policy could imply that an applicant is required to propose a specific development to rezone to Highway Commercial. In contrast, staff interpret this policy to mean that no property shall be zoned Highway commercial as part of a Rural Plan Review (a comprehensive and not development-specific amendment to the by-law). In other words, it is up to an applicant to apply to rezone a property to Highway Commercial.

Rural Plan Zoning Regulations

As no specific development proposal has been advanced with this application, it is important to consider the full range of permitted uses and development standards associated with the Highway Commercial (HC) Zone. These provide a degree of certainty and predictability regarding the types of uses that could be established if the rezoning is approved.

On the subject property, the existing ice cream stand is temporary in nature and could be readily removed to accommodate redevelopment. The former mill security/office building appears, from its exterior condition, to be modern and in reasonably good condition.

Under the Rural Plan, lands in the HC Zone may be developed for the following purposes:

Any land, building or structure may be used for the purpose of and for no other purpose than:

Agenda item: 2025-3-1

(a) One or more of the following main uses:

- an automotive/vehicle repair outlet
- an automobile/vehicle sales room and outdoor display court
- a bank or other financial institution
- a billboard or other advertising sign
- a car wash
- a communication use, including but not limited to radio and TV stations and printing establishment
- a gas bar
- an entertainment use
- a food store
- a funeral home
- a hotel, motel or motor inn
- an indoor recreational establishment including, but not limited to premises for billiards, bowling, curling, dancing, roller and ice skating, theatre or cinema facilities
- a medical, dental and veterinary clinic / office
- a museum, library or cultural centre, or similar use
- a nursing home
- an office use
- a personal service shop
- a parking lot
- a restaurant
- a retail bakery
- a retail or wholesale store, service or shop
- a service station
- a taxi stand / dispatch office
- a multiple unit dwelling
- a tourist information office
- single unit dwelling

Agenda item: 2025-3-1

(b) Community Use	<p>The Committee may authorize, subject to terms and conditions, any combination of the following community uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) a public park(ii) places of worship(iii) fire and police stations(iv) nursing/senior citizens homes(v) other health related facilities to meet the needs of the community and special groups within the community; and(vi) other types of institutional uses.
(c) Secondary use	<p>A rooming house, boarding house, bed & breakfast/ tourist home in conjunction with a single unit dwelling</p>
(d) Accessory Use	<p>Any accessory building, structure or use, incidental to the main use of the land, building, or structure, subject to subsection 7.3.1.1 , if such main use is permitted by this section</p>

While no specific development has been proposed at this time, any future project would be required to comply with the development standards of the Highway Commercial (HC) Zone. These provisions establish certainty regarding scale, siting, and design expectations.

Parking requirements under Section 4.1.20 of the Rural Plan vary significantly depending on the use, and are cumulative where multiple uses are developed on the same lot. This ensures that adequate on-site parking is provided for a range of potential development scenarios.

(a)	the minimum lot area is 969m ² (10,000ft ²); 1,200m ² (12,917 ft ²) for a corner lot;
(b)	the minimum lot frontage is 18 metres (59 ft) for an interior lot; 23 metres (75 ft) for a corner lot;
(c)	the front or flankage yard is 7.6 metres (25 ft);
(d)	the minimum rear yard is 7.6 metres (25 ft);

Agenda item: 2025-3-1

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (e) | the minimum side yard is 3.0 metres (9.8 ft) on one side and 6.0 metres (19.7 ft) on the other side; |
| (f) | the maximum height of the main building is 12.5 metres (41 ft) |
| (g) | the maximum lot coverage is 45 %; |
| (h) | the minimum landscaped open space is 50 % of the required front
yaRoad |

Should any new development be proposed on the property in the future, the following is required of an applicant:

- Submit individual building permit applications for each/any building, whether new or existing (if renovations/change of occupancy is proposed).
- Provide detailed construction drawings, including building elevations.
- Submit servicing, grading, and drainage plans as required at the permitting stage.

All technical submissions will be reviewed by Development Services staff to confirm compliance with zoning standards. Additional consultation with relevant departments and agencies will occur as needed.

It is also noted that servicing represents a constraint on redevelopment. Future development would require either an extension of municipal sewer (estimated at ~100 m) or the design and approval of an on-site sewage disposal system suitable for the proposed use.

Figure 2: Aerial View



Development Services Staff Assessment

The proposed rezoning has the potential to better accommodate new development in a centrally located area of the former village. As discussed, the requested HC zoning designation offers a great deal of flexibility in terms of permitted uses, however, none of these are particularly objectionable nor would any be out of character with this area. Surrounding uses include the Blackville Mill, a former gas station/restaurant/inn, Municipal Office, Fire Hall, seniors home, and some low-density residential uses. The property is located just south of the built-up core of the former Village of Blackville, which offers a small mix of residential, institutional, and commercial uses.

Zone regulations offer some predictability to the extent of potential development, and the relatively small lot size acts as a natural constraint to any larger scale projects. The potential development of any number of the permitted uses in the HC zone, on the property, would certainly add to the mix of uses in the Blackville core in a positive manner, and provide redevelopment options for a mostly dormant and disused property along Main St.

Servicing capacity is a key consideration. The extension of municipal sewer from the north would improve the viability of more intensive redevelopment, while also supporting future growth opportunities for adjacent properties. Staff recommend that the Rural Community and prospective developers continue to explore the feasibility of extending municipal servicing in this area as a means of promoting broader economic and community development benefits.

Neighbourhood Character and Impact

The surrounding neighbourhood contains a mixture of uses. Running north along Main St. there are a mixture of uses, including single-unit homes, commercial uses (grocery store and Hardware store) and a new bungalow court development. Across Main St. from the subject property, there is a municipal park, and a currently closed gas station/cabin rental. Running south along Main St., there are emergency service uses, as well as undeveloped Highway Commercial zoned properties. Nearby, on Bartholomew Road S., there is a church, multi-unit retirement dwelling, and the Blackville Community Centre/Miramichi River Valley Town Hall.

The neighbourhood already contains range of uses similar to what is permitted in the HC zone, including residential (single and multi-unit), and commercial uses (including auto-oriented commercial uses). Accordingly, the range of uses permitted in the HC zone would be largely compatible with other uses in the neighbourhood.

Among the most impactful uses permitted in the Highway Commercial zone are the auto-oriented commercial uses (eg. Gas bar, auto sales outlet, etc.), which could intensify the area beyond what is appropriate for the nearby residential uses. PRAC or Council may consider utilizing Section 59 of the Community Planning Act to impose conditions on the proposed rezoning by-law, including those related to potential development, or to limit permitted uses on the property for greater certainty. Limiting or removing automotive-oriented permitted uses is an option that the PRAC/Council may wish to consider, given the lack of currently operating auto-oriented uses in the area and potential impact on nearby residential uses.

Views of the Public

In accordance with the *Community Planning Act*, the Rural Community will be required to provide public notice of the proposed amendment and hold a formal public hearing prior to Council's consideration. Notice is typically provided through the community's website and social media channels.

While public notice is not required ahead of PRAC meetings, the Committee's agendas and staff reports are made available in advance through the GMSC website. PRAC meetings are open to the public.

The PRAC will consider the application at its September 16th 2025 meeting and provide a recommendation to Council. Final consideration of the amendment, including the public hearing, rests with the Rural Community Council.

Department and Agency Comments

The rezoning application was circulated to a number of representatives, departments and agencies to provide the opportunity to comment or identify any concerns regarding the proposal, relevant to their mandates. The application was circulated to the following:

- Rural Community CAO/Clerk and Mayor
- NB Department of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Greater Miramichi Director of Economic Development
- NB Department of Environment (Remediation Branch)

No comments have been received at the time of publication of this report from the Department of Transportation or from Rural Community Staff. Regarding traffic impact, GMSC staff would add that access to the ice cream shop portion of the property is currently informal (no specific driveway), and GMSC staff expect that redevelopment will only formalize access to the site, thereby minimizing any potential traffic impact.

The Greater Miramichi Director of Economic Development indicated no concern about the loss of industrial land within Blackville, and voice broad support for the rezoning.

The subject property is not flagged as “contaminated” on Service New Brunswick records, however staff noted that the subject property was subdivided from the Lumber Mill property (PID 40518169), which is flagged as such. As a precaution, staff circulated the rezoning with the Department of Environment’s Remediation Branch to ensure there were no land use controls that were intended to be applied to this property. A Senior Remediation engineer from the Department indicated that:

- During the subdivision process, a sample was taken to determine if there was contamination on the subject property. No contamination was found, resulting in no flag on the property.
- The Department recommends that anyone looking to own or occupy the property have a Site Professional conduct test on the property.
- Development on a contaminated but undesignated property is the liability of the owner and not the Department

Accordingly, there are no land use restrictions placed by the department, and the site is not recognized as contaminated. Given the site’s relation to a large industrial site, contamination may nevertheless be present, and it is the responsibility of the owner/purchaser/developer to develop the land responsibly. It is GMSC staff opinion that requiring a test for contamination as part of the rezoning would be inappropriate, given that

Agenda item: 2025-3-1

The Department did not see fit to require one. Nevertheless, development services staff do encourage the applicant to notify potential purchasers of the recommendation from the Department of Environment to conduct a site test prior to development.

Staff Recommendation

Option 1: Approve the rezoning to Highway Commercial (HC), with no conditions

This option would apply the full suite of permitted uses within the HC Zone, providing maximum flexibility for future redevelopment of the property.

Pursuant to Section 110(1) of the Community Planning Act (C-19), it is the view of the Regional Planning Review and Adjustment Committee (PRAC) of the Greater Miramichi Service Commission that the Rural Community of Miramichi River Valley amend Schedule A, Zoning Map, of the Village of Blackville Rural Plan (By-law No. 57 and Amending By-law No. 88) to change the zoning designation from “Central Commercial-Mixed Use (CC-MU)” and “Industrial (IND)”, to “Highway Commercial (HC)”; for the Subject Property described as PID 40538761, located at Main St and Howard Rd, Blackville, Miramichi River Valley.

Option 2: Approve the rezoning to Highway Commercial (HC), with conditions regarding the potential permitted uses

This option would exclude auto-intensive and high-impact uses such as vehicle repair, sales/display courts, gas bars, service stations, car washes, taxi stands/dispatch offices, and billboards, in recognition of the property’s small size, limited servicing, and proximity to residential and institutional uses.

Pursuant to Section 110(1) of the Community Planning Act (C-19), it is the view of the Regional Planning Review and Adjustment Committee (PRAC) of the Greater Miramichi Service Commission that the Rural Community of Miramichi River Valley amend Schedule A, Zoning Map, of the Village of Blackville Rural Plan (By-law No. 57 and Amending By-law No. 88) to change the zoning designation from “Central Commercial-Mixed Use (CC-MU)” and “Industrial (IND)”, to “Highway Commercial (HC)”; for the Subject Property described as PID 40538761, located at Main St and Howard Rd, Blackville, Miramichi River Valley; Subject to the following terms and conditions pursuant to Section 59 of the *Community Planning Act (C-19)*:

That the uses of the subject property be limited to one or more of the following main uses from the Highway Commercial (HC) zone (in addition to the Community Uses, Secondary and Accessory Uses otherwise permitted):

- a bank or other financial institution

Agenda item: 2025-3-1

- a communication use, including but not limited to radio and TV stations and printing establishment
- an entertainment use
- a food store
- a funeral home
- a hotel, motel or motor inn
- an indoor recreational establishment including, but not limited to premises for billiards, bowling, curling, dancing, roller and ice skating, theatre or cinema facilities
- a medical, dental and veterinary clinic / office
- a museum, library or cultural centre, or similar use
- a nursing home
- an office use
- a personal service shop
- a parking lot
- a restaurant
- a retail bakery
- a retail or wholesale store, service or shop
- a multiple unit dwelling
- a tourist information office
- single unit dwelling

Attachments

1. Property Location Map
 2. Site Photos
-

Agenda item: 2025-3-1

Report Prepared On: Thursday, September 11, 2025

Prepared by:

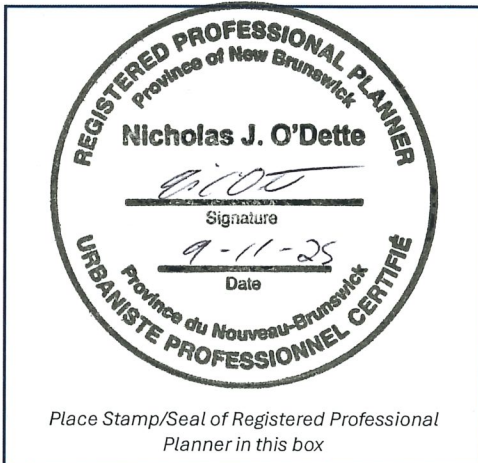

Nic O'Dette, RPP, MCIP
Planning Services Manager



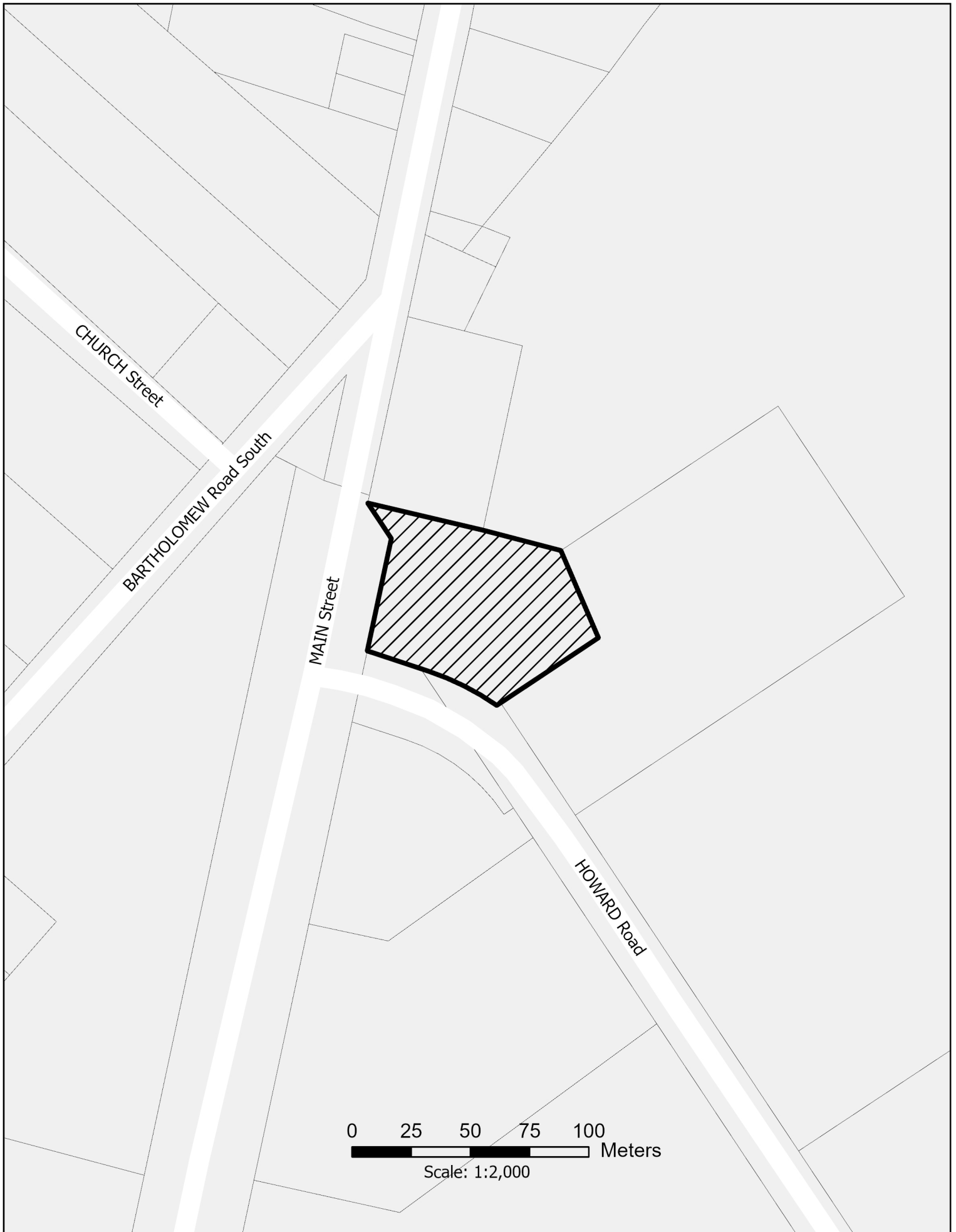
Alex Hanes, MPI
Planner



Prepared Under the Direction of:
Justin Forbes, RPP, MCIP
Planning Director



Attachment 1: Property Location Map



Attachment 2: Site Photos (taken 2025-09-03)

Photo 1: View into the property from the corner of Main Street and Howard Road, showing the seasonal ice cream stand.



Photo 2: Looking north along Main Street across the property frontage.



Agenda item: 2025-3-1

Photo 3: Former mill security/office building, with adjacent mill property in the background.



Photo 4: Looking west across Main Street toward the former gas station/restaurant/inn site.

