MHBC PLANNING URBAN DESIGN & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

MEMO

To:	Mayor and Council
cc:	Nicole Martin, Holly Boardman
From:	Pierre Chauvin, Nick Bogaert, Chelsea Brooks
Date:	October 16th, 2026
File:	Amaranth Official Plan update, MHBC File "23368 B"
Subject:	Follow-up from October 7th, 2026 Council Meeting

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide additional information and discussion regarding the final Official Plan edits as directed at the October 7th, 2026 Council Meeting. This includes the addition of a new site-specific policy, revisions to surplus farm dwelling severance policies, and revisions related to permitted uses within employment areas.

Surplus farm dwelling severances

Further discussion occurred at the Council Meeting regarding the direction of the proposed policies related to surplus farm dwelling severances. MHBC's previous memo to Council recommended permissions remain in the Official Plan for these types of severances, in order to avoid time-consuming and inefficient planning processes.

As directed by Council at the meeting, the criteria for surplus farm dwelling severances under Policy 6.1.8.10 have been revised to require the farms to be within Dufferin County (similar to the existing Official Plan). Further, the policy now prohibits the severance of the surplus dwelling if the combined lands are less than 80 hectares. Finally, a slight change was made to the wording related to demonstration of the house being habitable, clarifying the Township's role. These updates retain the overall permission, while implementing specific measures as requested for Amaranth Township.

Additional Special Policy Area

Further to comments received and discussions held prior to the Council Meeting, a new Special Policy Area 3 has been added under Section 10 of the Official Plan (along with applicable updates to the Land Use schedule). The purpose of the policy is to provide clarity regarding small-scale industrial and commercial uses on the subject lands.

Permitted uses within Employment Area designation

Concerns were raised at the Council Meeting regarding the range of uses permitted within the Employment Areas designation. MHBC has reviewed this request further and note that under the *Planning Act* (see below), the definition of Area of Employment (pursuant to Section 1(1.1 and 1.2)), does not permit the type of use that Council was concerned about within in an Employment Area.

> ***Area of employment***
> *(1.1) An area of land designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic uses is an area of employment for the purposes of this Act even if the area of land includes one or more parcels of land that are subject to official plan policies authorizing the continuation of a use that is excluded from being a business and economic use under paragraph 2 of the definition of "area of employment" in subsection (1), provided that the use was lawfully established on the parcel of land before the day subsection 1 (1) of Schedule 6 to the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 came into force. 2023, c. 10, Sched. 6, s. 1 (2).*
> ***Same***
> *(1.2) For greater certainty, the official plan policies referred to in subsection (1.1) shall not authorize a use that is excluded from being a business and economic use under paragraph 2 of the definition of "area of employment" in subsection (1) on any parcels of land in the area on which the use was not lawfully established before the day subsection 1 (1) of Schedule 6 to the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 came into force. 2023, c. 10, Sched. 6, s. 1 (2).*

This nuance was inadvertently missed in earlier drafts of the Official Plan. Accordingly, the range of uses under Policy 5.4.2 has been revised to remove *"Fire halls, police and ambulance stations, utilities and facilities necessary to serve the community".* The updated policy now reflects the direction as contained within the *Planning Act*.

Closing

We trust the revisions as outlined in this memo and implemented in the final version of the Official Plan reflect the direction of Council as received at the previous Council Meeting. We look forward to working with Township and County staff as the Official Plan is finalized and approved.