



Staff Report

Planning & Building Services – Planning Division

Report To: 34
Meeting Date: May 21, 2025
Report Number: PBS.25.026
Title: Recommendation Report – Minor Variance A07-2025 – Lot 17,
Concession 2 (Blue Mountain Resort LP)
Prepared by: Manuel Rivera, Planner I

A. Recommendations

THAT the Committee of Adjustment receive Staff Report PBS.25.036, entitled “Recommendation Report – Minor Variance A07-2025 – Lot 17, Concession 2 (Blue Mountain Resort LP)”;

AND THAT the Committee of Adjustment REFUSE a minor variance from Township of Collingwood By-law 83-40 as amended:

1. To add “Base Lodge” as a permitted use to Section 15.1a) of the Village Commercial (C5-67) Zone;

B. Background

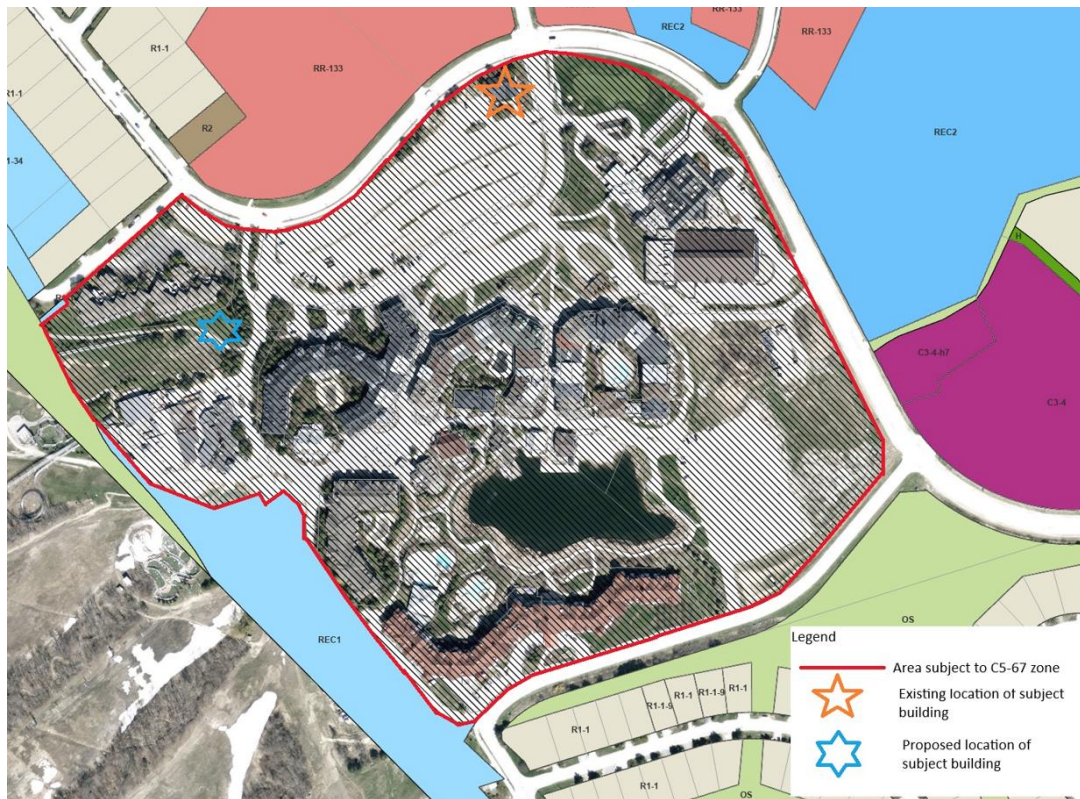
The proposed minor variance seeks approval for the addition of the “Base Lodge” definition for the relocation of the existing Discovery Centre Building within the Village Commercial (C5-67) zone and further requests that this use be listed specifically under subsection 15.1a) where listed uses are subject to the associated regulations cited therein. The provisions under 15.1a) do not include a commercial gross floor area cap of 9,300 m² which otherwise applies to commercial uses listed under 15.1b)

The applicant has advised of their intent to move an existing structure that has historically been used as a sales office, and other office uses to a proposed new location shown in Figure 1 and to operate the proposed uses permitted within the “Base Lodge” definition within that structure. However, it should be noted that, as proposed, the use would apply to the entirety of the Village Core (C5-67) Zone.

Further, while the proposed building location sits within the Village Core (C5-67) Zone, it sits in a different Official Plan designation area, Recreational Ski, from the adjacent lands which are designated Blue Mountain Village Resort Area Core. It also sits outside of the lands subject to the Master Development Agreement. This distinction will be further addressed below.

As proposed, the subject lands of the current application are the totality of the Village Commercial Zoned C5-67 lands located at the Blue Mountain Resort as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



Surrounding land uses are as follows:

North: Lands Zoned for Residential and Short Term/Commercial Resort Accommodation and containing existing development

East: Lands Zoned Recreation and Resort Commercial and containing a golf course and existing development

South: Lands Zoned Open Space and Residential and containing existing development

West: Lands Zoned Open Space, Recreation and containing facilities related to the operation of the ski hill and resort and the Niagara Escarpment

Official Plan Designation

The proposed new building location and adjacent lands are designated within the Official Plan under Policy B3.11 as Recreational Ski. This designation is intended for and applies to lands intended to be used for year-round escarpment recreational activities, in particular, service and maintenance purposes associated with the ski industry.

Permitted uses on these lands are:

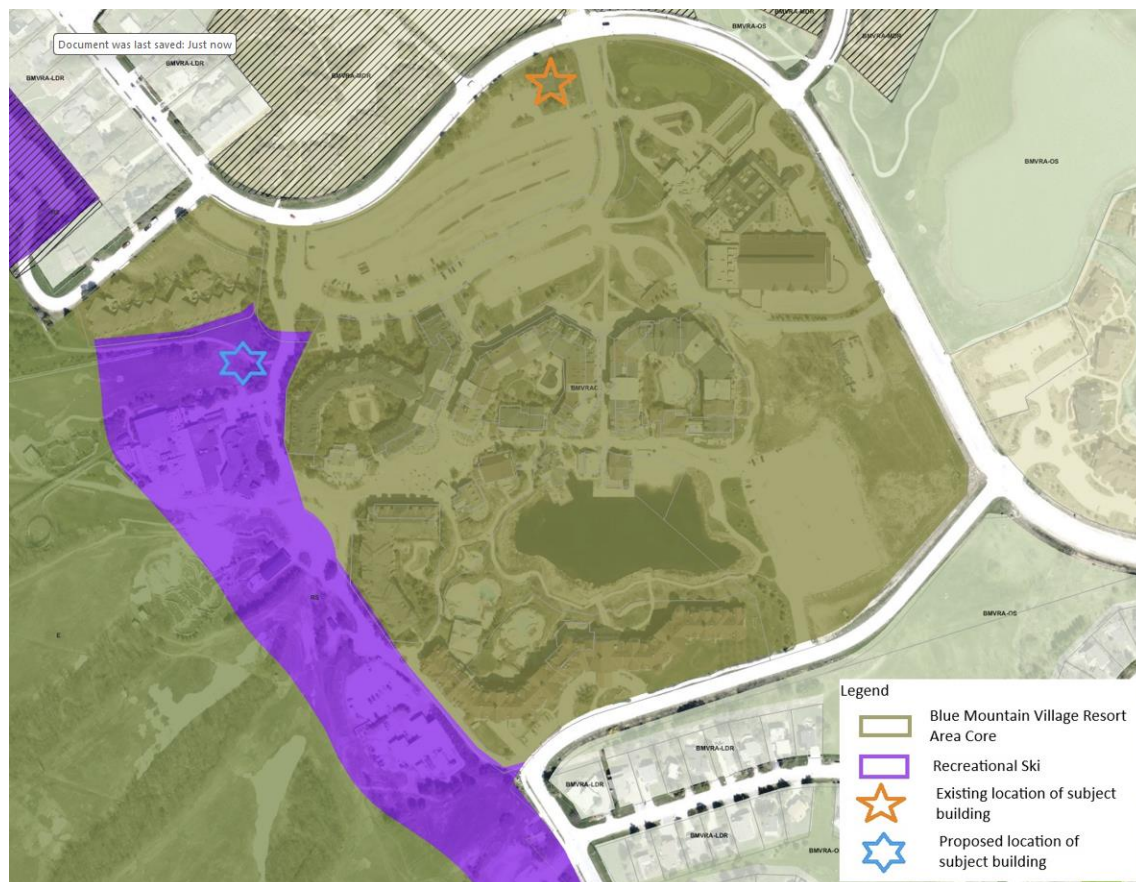
- a) recreational trails and lift facilities;
- b) service and maintenance facilities that support recreational resort uses and operations;
- c) parking areas;
- d) recreational and cultural facilities; and,
- e) outdoor recreational uses.

This designation is distinct and separate from the adjacent Official Plan Policy B3.10.6 Blue Mountain Village Resort Area Core designation which is more fundamentally oriented to residential and commercial uses and is intended to:

provide for an integration of residential, recreational, resort and commercial uses in a location that is both within walking distance of the ski facilities and readily accessible to the surrounding residential population. Lands within the Blue Mountain Village Resort Area Core designation shall function as the primary commercial centre for the surrounding population.

Planning Staff recognize that there are differences between the Resort Area Core and the Recreational Ski designations. As described above, the Resort Area Core is intended to provide for the primary commercial centre for the Village area while the Recreational Ski designation is intended to directly support the Resort facility and operations.

Figure 2 – Official Plan Designation of Subject Lands



Zoning

Commercial uses are capped within the C5-67 15.1b) provisions in order to manage the commercial components of the Village Core.

The proposed new Discovery Centre Building location is zoned C5-67 and is subject to the list of existing permitted uses and regulations set out therein. The way that C5-67 is structured the permitted uses are broken down into 15.1 a,b,c,d, & e. Each subsection is subject to specific additional provisions that distinguish one from the other.

The proposed minor variance seeks approval to add “Base Lodge” specifically within the permitted uses under 15.1 a).

“Base Lodge” is defined as follows:

means a building in which facilities are provided for the day recreation uses which may include eating establishments, taverns, lockers, change rooms, meeting areas, retail and sales facilities, places of entertainment and ticket sales facilities but shall not include facilities for overnight accommodations.

Included among the permitted uses in “Base Lodge” are taverns, retail and sales facilities and eating establishments. These uses are not currently permitted in the list of permitted uses under 15.1 a). However, they are permitted, along with a long list of other commercial uses under 15.1 b) which, within the Village Core (C5-67) Zoned lands are specifically limited and subject to a maximum gross commercial floor area cap of 9,300m².

Uses listed under 15.1b) are subject to the exception provision 67 of the C5-67 zone which states that:

“...the maximum commercial gross floor area for uses permitted in Clause (b) of Subsection 51 shall be 9,300 square metres.”

The commercial gross floor area cap plays an instrumental role in establishing the extent of commercial development in the Village Core (C5-67) Zone. It would also appear that although the lands have different Official Plan land use designations, the fact that the C5-67 zoning also applies to the Recreational Ski lands would appear to recognize that the commercial functions related to retail/restaurant and those other uses listed under Section 15.1b) of the Zoning By-law must be considered together.

It is also noted that a recent review of the total commercial floor area in the village is estimated at 7,552m² which means 1,748 m² of potential commercial development remain and, pending further future development, will be quickly absorbed.

Planning Staff have concerns with the introduction of additional commercial uses and the resulting impacts of increased vehicle/pedestrian traffic, parking, loading space, and other impacts on the otherwise master planned vision for the Village Core.

Master Development Agreement

The subject lands of the relocated Discovery Centre Building is within the Recreational Ski designation and these lands are also excluded from the Blue Mountain Village Master Development Agreement. A full analysis of the implications of the exclusion of the subject lands relative to the proposed minor variance has not been completed.

C. Analysis

While the applicant has stated that it is their intent to relocate an existing building to a new area and then operate the proposed new uses within that structure, the effect of the variance is quite different and has significant implications. The staff analysis demonstrates that the proposed variance is not minor and are therefore recommending refusal. Planning Staff have reviewed the proposal against the relevant planning documents, including the four tests of a minor variance, as outlined in the following section.

Does the proposal maintain the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan?

The proposed variance has not sufficiently demonstrated conformity with the direction of the applicable Official Plan Policy B11 Recreational Ski designation. As stated earlier, those permitted uses listed under the Recreational Ski designation are intended to directly support the Resort facility and operations, and not add to the existing commercial uses of the Village Core. The proposed new uses under “Base Lodge” when introduced under 15.1 a) allow retail and sales facilities, taverns and eating establishment uses that are not subject to the 9300 m2 gross commercial area cap established under 15.1b) to the entirety of the subject C5-67 Zoned lands. The extent to which such uses might be permitted under the designation as part of “Base Lodge” would be properly subject to further review and study to confirm whether or not an Official Plan Amendment is required. The potential effect is a displacement of the primary function of these lands as defined under the B11 Recreational Ski designation.

Planning Staff are not satisfied that the proposal maintains the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan.

Does the proposal maintain the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law?

The effect of adding “Base Lodge” to C5-67 Subsection 15.1a) is to add retail and sales facilities, taverns, and eating establishments permissions under the “Base Lodge” use definition that are not subject to the commercial gross floor area cap that otherwise applies to those uses under C5-67 15.1b). That commercial gross floor area cap is the subject of close scrutiny and, at 9300 m2 is close to being met. Any further development beyond that number would require related studies, approval instruments etc. The effect of the proposal on the commercial market limits within the Village Core C5-67 Zone is properly considered through a Zoning By-law Amendment.

Planning Staff are not satisfied that the proposal maintains the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law.

Is the proposal Minor in nature?

“Base Lodge” is not a permitted use within the C5-67 zone and therefore an application to add the use by variance is fundamentally not minor.

Additionally, the effect of the proposed variance as outlined in the Official Plan and Zoning By-law tests above is not minor in respect of the implications:

- on the commercial gross floor area cap imposed on uses that are permitted under the “Base Lodge” definition, namely taverns, retail and sales facilities and eating establishments; and
- on the primary intent and permitted uses of the Recreational Ski designation

Planning Staff are not satisfied that the proposal is minor in nature.

Is the proposal desirable for the development and use of the lands?

The proposed variance triggers various issues and implications for the purpose and intent of the subject lands that would require further study and consideration to determine if and to what extent the proposal could be considered. At this time, staff cannot conclude that the proposal is desirable for the development and use of the lands.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the application that is requested does not meet the four tests set out on Section 45(1) of the Planning Act. Therefore, based on the analysis of the proposal does not meet the four tests and Planning Staff do not recommend support for this minor variance.

D. Attached

1. Attachment 1

Respectfully submitted,

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	PBS.25.036 Recommendation Report - Minor Variance A07-2025 - Lot 17, Concession 2 (Blue Mountain Resort LP).docx
Attachments:	- A07-2025 - Draft Decision.docx
Final Approval Date:	May 16, 2025

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

Shawn Postma - May 16, 2025 - 3:32 PM