



# CONSILIO

PLANNING SERVICES D'URBANISME

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Consilio Planning has been retained by Kayla Gallant and Jean-Christophe Gallant to prepare this planning rationale report in support of a proposed zoning by-law amendment for property located at in Clarence-Rockland. The owner intends to develop the site as a “Wellness Camping Resort”.

The subject property within the "Rural Policy Area" in the United Counties of the Prescott and Russell official plan. The property is located just outside the settlement area of Rockland (limit East). The property is currently zoned as “Rural (RU) Zone” under the City of Clarence-Rockland Zoning By-law.

The proposed development would consist of the construction of a *Wellness Camping Resort*, a privately owned and operated, all-season facility designed to offer a unique short-term accommodation experience focused on relaxation, health, and well-being.

Accommodations will include a mix of **tiny homes, and repurposed shipping containers**, all thoughtfully integrated into the natural surroundings. These units are intended for short-term stays and will not be individually owned or leased.

The resort will eventually (future phases) also feature a variety of **wellness-focused and recreational amenities**, which could include:

- A **Scandinavian spa** with hot and cold water therapy installations
- **Health and therapeutic services** such as massage therapy, yoga, and holistic treatments
- **Communal gathering areas** designed to foster connection and relaxation among guests

All elements of the development are designed to function as a **unified and complementary operation**, offering guests a comprehensive wellness retreat experience in a natural, low-impact environment. The overall vision prioritizes sustainability, mental and physical well-being, and immersive interaction with nature.

To accommodate the proposed development, a Zoning By-law Amendment is required. The subject property is currently zoned “Rural (RU),” which does not permit the intended use. The proposed amendment would rezone the property to “Tourist Commercial – Exception 5 (CT-5) Zone” to allow for short-term accommodations in tents, tiny homes, and/or repurposed shipping containers, along with accessory wellness and recreational amenities such as a Scandinavian spa, therapeutic services, restaurant as accessory use to the main use, pool and nature trails. The site will function as a unified, privately owned and managed facility. The amendment will also maintain the existing permissions for

residential use on the property, allowing for continued or future residential occupancy in conjunction with the proposed resort.

An UCPR Official Plan Amendment is not required to permit the proposed development, as the subject property is designated “Rural” in the Official Plan. The Rural designation contemplates a variety of low-impact, tourism-oriented, and recreational uses that are compatible with the rural character of the area. The proposed Wellness Camping Resort, which includes short-term accommodations and wellness-related amenities, aligns with the intent of the Rural designation by promoting rural tourism, supporting the local economy, and preserving the natural environment. As such, the proposed use is consistent with the existing policy framework and does not necessitate a change to the Official Plan.

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The subject property is located on Old Highway 17. According to the United Counties of Prescott and Russell’s “À la Carte” GIS system, a stream runs along the entire western boundary of the property. Additionally, a groundwater recharge area has been identified at the rear portion of the site, covering approximately 3.70 acres. The total area of the property is 25.84 acres.

Figure 1: Aerial imagery of the site and surrounding uses. (source Prescott and Russell a la carte)



The surrounding context of the subject site is compatible with the proposed Wellness Camping Resort.

- **North:** The property directly abuts the Ottawa River, offering a scenic natural feature that enhances the setting and supports the wellness and nature-based focus of the development.
- **East:** The adjacent parcel to the east is currently vacant, providing a buffer and opportunity for compatible future rural or recreational uses.
- **West:** A residential subdivision lies to the west, highlighting the site's transitional location between residential and rural areas and reinforcing the importance of careful design and buffering to maintain compatibility.
- **South:** Lands to the south consist of a mix of rural residential properties and farmland, consistent with the broader rural character of the area and supportive of low-impact tourism and wellness-oriented development.

## 2.1 PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed development for a Wellness Camping Resort, consisting of three off-grid glamping units designed to offer unique short-term accommodations in a rural setting. Each unit will be fully self-contained, equipped with a bed, a small kitchenette, and a composting toilet to ensure minimal environmental impact. The project is intended as a low-scale, seasonal pilot to assess viability through rental platforms such as Airbnb. Presently the site contains:

One two-storey cabin (approximately 200 sq. ft.)

One canvas tent (approximately 169 sq. ft.)

One modified shipping container home (approximately 126 sq. ft.)

Additional features include:

A three-season outdoor shower for shared guest use

Unit Features:

- **Capacity:** Each unit is designed to accommodate two guests
- **Heating:** Currently using biofuel, with plans to transition to heat pumps for the 2025-2026 winter season
- **Cooling:** Heat pumps for efficient climate control
- **Power:** Primarily powered by solar energy and supplemented by a generator. Plans are in place to connect to Hydro in 2025

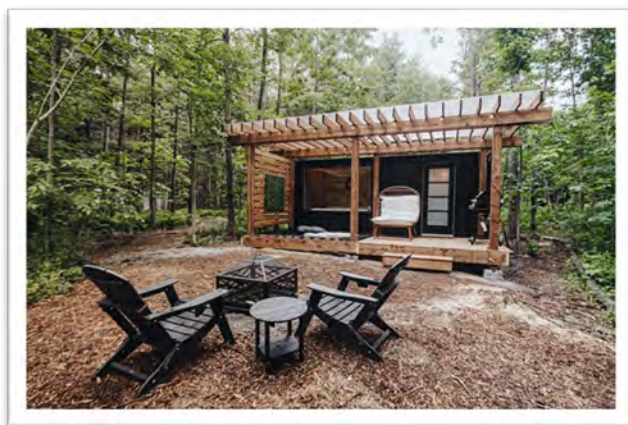


- Plumbing: Grey water is absorbed into the ground, while black water is removed from the site. Cinderella incinerator toilets are planned for installation in 2025
- Water: All water is brought on-site for each guest
- Soap: Only biodegradable soap is used to maintain eco-friendly practices
- Cooking: Cooking is done using propane BBQs
- Parking: One parking spot per unit is provided

The proposed development is intended to proceed in multiple phases:

- **Phase 1** involves a Zoning By-law Amendment to permit the Wellness Camping Resort use. This initial phase also includes the transformation of the existing cabin and residential container to ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code, allowing the business to relaunch and begin offering a unique short-term accommodation experience focused on wellness and nature.
- **Phase 2** will consist of the construction of a Scandinavian-inspired spa, designed to provide a range of wellness experiences centered on relaxation, health, and well-being. Will also add more accommodations units.
- **Phase 3** will include the development of a main building that will serve as a communal hub for guests. This facility is intended to accommodate activities such as yoga classes, workshops, and other group wellness programming. It will also provide a welcoming space for social connection and relaxation, reinforcing the overall intent of the resort as a unified, health-focused retreat.

This project will help demonstrate market interest, operational feasibility, and community compatibility. The use of off-grid systems and sustainable materials aligns with the rural and eco-tourism objectives of the RU zone.



### 3.0 LAND USE PLANNING CONTEXT

The property subject to the application is regulated by the United Counties of Prescott and Russell official plan. The site is designated as “Rural policy area” on Schedule A of the UCPR OP (figure 2). The subject properties are zoned “Residential One (RU)”(figure 3).

Figure 2: Designation of the subject properties, Schedule A of the UCPR OP. (source Prescott and Russell a la carte)

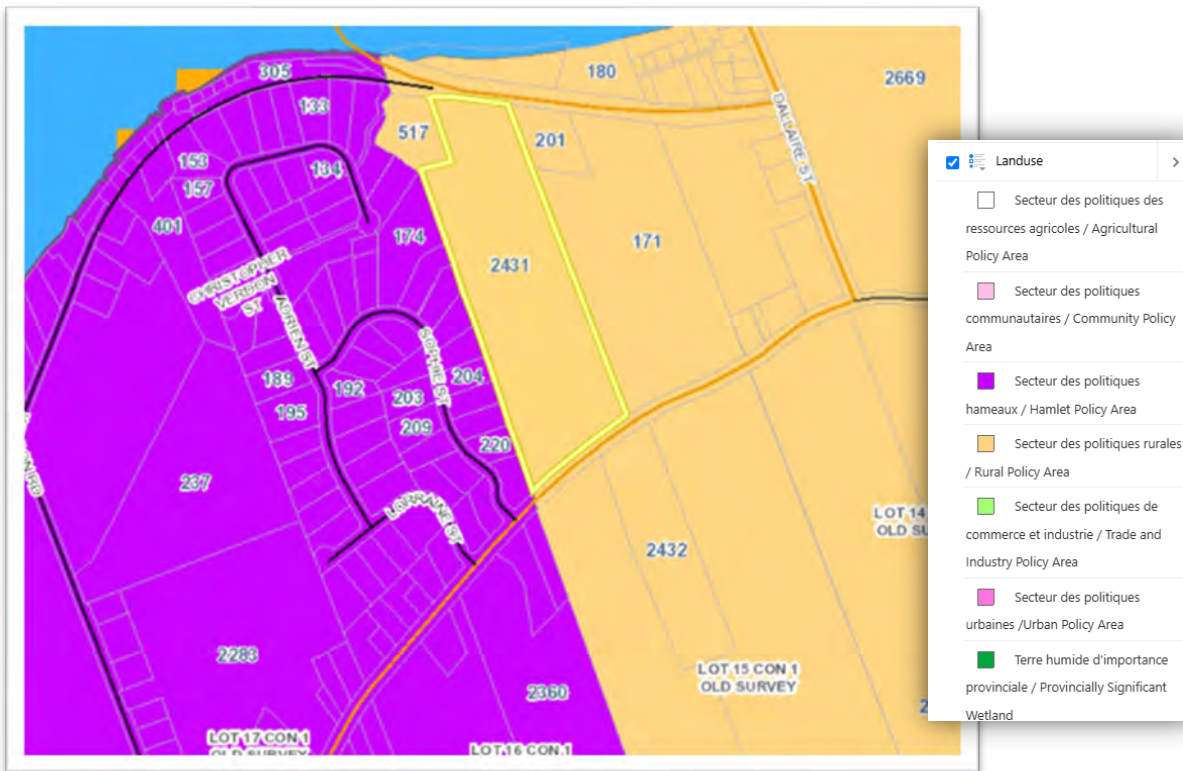


Figure 3: Zoning of the subject properties and surroundings (source: Prescott and Russell “A la carte”).



## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT (2024)

A wellness camping resort proposed on rural designation lands can meet the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), Policy 2.5: Rural Areas in Municipalities in several key ways. Here's how the proposal can be justified in relation to each relevant policy clause:

PPS 2.5(1): Support for Healthy, Integrated and Viable Rural Areas

a) Building upon rural character, and leveraging rural amenities and assets

- The wellness resort concept inherently leverages rural assets such as tranquility, natural scenery, dark skies, and open space. The design can reflect the rural character through low-density, eco-friendly cabins/tents and natural materials.

b) Promoting regeneration, including the redevelopment of brownfield sites

- If the site includes a previously disturbed area (e.g., old farmstead, disused quarry or abandoned rural buildings), the project can be framed as regeneration of underutilized rural land.



c) Accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas

- Although not directly housing, the resort adds temporary accommodation options, complementing nearby rural housing with seasonal or wellness-related stays.

d) Using rural infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently

- The resort can be designed to use minimal infrastructure, rely on existing roads, and use on-site servicing (well/septic, renewable energy, etc.), supporting efficient, low-impact rural development.

e) Promoting diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities

- This project diversifies the rural economy by introducing a non-agricultural, tourism-based use. It offers employment in hospitality, wellness services, maintenance, and local food services.

f) Providing opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism

- The core concept aligns directly with this clause. A wellness resort promotes sustainable tourism, attracts year-round visitors, and may incorporate local natural, historical, or cultural experiences (e.g., Indigenous healing practices, forest bathing, local food, trails).

g) Conserving biodiversity and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature

- The resort can be designed to preserve and highlight natural features, with low-impact development, limited site disturbance, native plantings, and interpretive nature programs that promote conservation awareness.

h) Providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas, in accordance with policy 4.3

- If the land is not within prime agricultural areas, this clause would not apply. If it is, the resort would need to demonstrate that it meets policy 4.3, such as being a secondary use that is compatible and does not remove the land from agricultural production.

PPS 2.5(2): Focus of Growth in Rural Settlement Areas

- While rural settlement areas are prioritized for growth, the PPS allows growth on rural lands (outside settlements) where appropriate and consistent with policy 2.6. The resort would be an example of rural economic development appropriate in scale and servicing.

PPS 2.5(3): Consideration of Rural Characteristics, Scale, and Servicing

- The development can be tailored to fit the scale and character of the surrounding rural area, using appropriate servicing such as private systems and low-density site planning.
- Emphasis on wellness and nature-based activities aligns with local rural character, and small-scale lodging (e.g., glamping pods, cabins) supports this compatibility.

A wellness camping resort located on rural lands in a municipality can align with PPS 2.6: Rural Lands in Municipalities as follows:

PPS 2.6(1): Permitted Uses

a) Management or use of resources

- Not directly applicable unless the resort integrates resource management (e.g., sustainable forestry, ecological education). However, a nature-focused resort could include interpretive programming that supports natural resource awareness and stewardship.

b) Resource-based recreational uses (including recreational dwellings not intended as permanent residences)

- This is the most directly applicable category. A wellness camping resort is clearly a resource-based recreational use as it depends on the natural setting (e.g., forests, waterbodies, scenic views) to offer experiences like:
  - Nature walks
  - Forest bathing
  - Meditation in natural surroundings
  - Seasonal glamping or eco-lodgingThis clause explicitly permits recreational dwellings not intended as permanent residences, such as yurts, cabins, or luxury tents.

c) Residential development

- Not applicable unless permanent residential components are included. If so, only allowed where site conditions support private services.

d) Agricultural and related uses

- Not applicable unless integrated with a farm component (e.g., wellness resort on a farm or including farm-to-table programs). Otherwise, the use must be located to not interfere with nearby agricultural operations.

e) Home occupations and home industries

- Could apply if the resort is operated as a home-based business on an owner-occupied rural property, but less likely for a standalone commercial resort.

f) Cemeteries

- Not applicable.

g) Other rural land uses

- This provides additional flexibility. A wellness resort that does not fall squarely into “resource-based recreational use” could still be considered an “other rural land use” if:
  - It is appropriate to the rural context
  - It relies on natural surroundings
  - It is low-impact and sustainably serviced

PPS 2.6(2): Development that can be sustained by rural service levels should be promoted

The resort can be designed with private wells and septic systems, possibly with renewable energy, and no reliance on municipal services, meeting this criterion.

PPS 2.6(3): Infrastructure Appropriateness

- The proposal must avoid triggering major infrastructure investments (e.g., roads upgrades). By being off-grid capable or minimally serviced, the resort avoids uneconomical infrastructure expansion.

PPS 2.6(4): Protect resource-related uses and minimize conflict

- Site selection is key. If the resort is located away from active farming or aggregate operations, it can minimize constraints. A planning rationale should:
  - Confirm no nearby conflicts (e.g., MDS setbacks met)
  - Demonstrate compatibility with agricultural or resource uses

#### PPS 2.6(5): Minimum Distance Separation (MDS)

- The resort must comply with MDS I formulae, especially if near livestock operations. A justification report (MDS calculation) should be included with planning applications to confirm compliance.

#### Conclusion

The proposed wellness camping resort on rural designated lands is consistent with the intent of the Provincial Policy Statement, particularly Sections 2.5 and 2.6. As a resource-based recreational use and an appropriate rural land use, the resort leverages the area's natural assets to support a diversified rural economy through sustainable tourism. The development is low impact, relies on rural servicing, and avoids uneconomical infrastructure expansion. It is compatible with surrounding land uses, meets Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements, and contributes to the vitality of rural areas by promoting economic diversification, wellness, and environmental stewardship. The proposal respects rural character, conserves biodiversity, and aligns with the broader objectives of maintaining healthy, integrated, and viable rural communities.

## 4.2 UNITED COUNTIES OF PRESCOTT AND RUSSELL OFFICIAL PLAN

The proposed Wellness Camping Resort aligns with the purpose and intent of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell Official Plan as outlined in Section 1.2.1. The Official Plan provides a comprehensive policy framework to guide growth and development in a manner that supports livability, sustainability, and the long-term vision for the region. The proposed development contributes to these goals by promoting rural tourism, encouraging innovative land use compatible with the rural setting, and supporting health and well-being through nature-based accommodations and wellness amenities. Although the Official Plan does not regulate land use directly, the policies provide direction for the use of tools such as zoning by-laws, one of which is being leveraged through the proposed zoning amendment to facilitate the development. The resort embodies the type of place-based, integrated planning envisioned by the Plan by balancing economic development, environmental stewardship, and community well-being in a rural context.

The proposed Wellness Camping Resort is consistent with the intent and policy direction of Section 2.7 of the Official Plan, which governs the Rural Policy Area. The development contributes to the long-term orderly development of the rural area by introducing a low-impact, resource-based recreational use that respects the natural environment and the rural character of the surrounding landscape. The resort promotes rural tourism and economic development in a manner that does not conflict with agricultural, aggregate, or forestry uses, and it is situated on a property that is not currently in active agricultural production. By offering short-term accommodations and wellness-focused amenities such as a Scandinavian spa, nature trails, and communal gathering areas, the proposal aligns

with the Plan's objective of encouraging appropriate rural land uses and tourism-related development. The design maintains the visual and ecological integrity of the site, and the phased implementation ensures orderly growth while minimizing disruption to the surrounding area. Overall, the proposal demonstrates a balanced approach that supports economic diversification, rural vitality, and environmental stewardship, core goals of the Rural Policy Area policies.

While the Official Plan directs population growth primarily to urban and hamlet areas, the proposed Wellness Camping Resort does not constitute traditional residential development. Rather, it provides short-term, temporary accommodations that are intended to support tourism and wellness, not permanent residential growth. As such, the development aligns with the policy's goal of limiting dispersed, low-density residential sprawl in the rural area while still allowing for appropriate forms of rural economic development.

The resort is designed to function as a unified, privately managed operation with no individually owned or permanent dwelling units, which helps maintain the rural character and prevents fragmentation of land. Furthermore, the inclusion of natural amenities and wellness-focused experiences strengthens the rural identity and promotes the area's unique landscape as a destination for nature-based recreation. In doing so, the development supports the broader objective of preserving the distinct character of both rural and urban areas, while contributing positively to the rural economy. Therefore, it complies with the intent of section 2.7.2 3).

The proposed Wellness Camping Resort aligns with the intent of Section 2.7.3 of the Official Plan by introducing an appropriate form of non-residential development that is limited in scale, compatible with its rural surroundings, and consistent with the policy objective of preserving rural identity and character. While the rural area is not the primary location for non-residential growth, the Plan explicitly permits tourism-related commercial uses, including accommodations such as motels, bed and breakfasts, and hotels. The proposed resort falls within this category, offering short-term accommodations and wellness amenities designed to attract visitors while integrating sensitively with the rural landscape.

The development will proceed using private individual services, and future servicing will be implemented based on appropriate technical assessments to ensure long-term viability. Its phased approach will also allow for careful monitoring of impacts and infrastructure needs over time. Importantly, the resort does not introduce intensive commercial activity or urban-level infrastructure demands; rather, it supports a low-impact, experience-based tourism model that promotes wellness, outdoor recreation, and nature appreciation, values that reinforce the identity of the rural area.



### **Section 4.3 Mineral aggregate Resource Policy Area**

The subject property is designated as a **Mineral Aggregate Resource Area** under Schedule E of the Official Plan. Section 3.5.1 of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell Official Plan restricts development in these areas that would preclude or hinder the establishment of mineral aggregate operations unless one or more of the following criteria are satisfied:

**i. Extraction of the resource would not be feasible:**

Based on the nature and location of the site, there is no known active or proposed aggregate operation in the immediate vicinity. Preliminary review suggests that extraction of the resource may not be economically or practically feasible due to factors such as parcel size, surrounding land uses, limited access to transportation infrastructure, and the existing environmental features on site, including significant woodlands. A more detailed assessment could be undertaken at a later stage to confirm this determination if required.

**ii. The proposed land use serves a greater long-term public interest:**

The wellness camping resort promotes sustainable rural tourism, economic diversification, and community wellness, all of which align with the broader goals of the Official Plan and Provincial Policy Statement. It offers a low-impact, environmentally conscious use that enhances rural economic opportunities while promoting public access to nature, healthy living, and education. The resort supports long-term community benefits such as job creation, small business growth, and seasonal tourism, which contribute to the economic resilience of the region.

**iii. Issues of public health, safety and environmental impact will be addressed:**

The proposed development will be subject to detailed technical review at the site plan stage, including the completion of an **Environmental Impact Study** to address potential impacts on significant woodlands and ensure consistency with environmental protection policies. Furthermore, the wellness camping resort is inherently a low-intensity, seasonal land use that avoids risks associated with dust, noise, vibration, or other nuisances that would arise from extractive industrial operations, thereby maintaining public health and safety.

### **Conclusion:**

Based on the above, the proposed wellness camping resort satisfies the policy tests for development within a Mineral Aggregate Resource Area. It is a compatible, low-impact rural use that would not hinder future aggregate extraction, and it serves a greater long-term public interest by supporting sustainable tourism, economic development, and health-oriented rural experiences

### Section 5.5.9 Water Protection and Enhancement

The proposed Wellness Camping Resort represents an optimal and responsible development scenario for a property identified as a Groundwater Recharge Area, as outlined in Section 5.5.9.2 of the Official Plan. The development is low-impact, seasonal in nature, and designed with environmental sensitivity, which aligns with the intent to restrict land uses in recharge areas to those that pose no threat to groundwater quality. The project avoids high-intensity land uses or large-scale impervious surfaces, which could otherwise disrupt natural infiltration processes or increase contamination risks.

According to Section 5.5.9 of the Official Plan, commercial developments that require significant amounts of groundwater may be required to undertake a hydrogeological study to assess potential impacts on the quantity and quality of the water supply for existing development in the surrounding area.

The proposed development will be serviced by private wells. It is proposed to be implemented in two phases:

- **Phase 1** involves the establishment short-term rental cabins, which will operate on a temporary accommodation basis.
- **Phase 2** includes the construction of the main spa and wellness center, which may contain water-intensive amenities.

Given the modest water demands of the ten short-term rental cabins in Phase 1, it is anticipated that this portion of the project will not trigger the need for a hydrogeological study. The water use associated with these cabins is expected to be comparable to that of low-density rural residential development, with no significant impact on the local groundwater resource.

It is recommended that the requirement for a hydrogeological study be deferred to **Phase 2**, at which time the full water demand of the proposed spa and wellness components can be appropriately assessed. At that stage, a study prepared by a qualified hydrogeologist can be undertaken, if required by the approval authority, to evaluate the impact of the full development on water supply in the area.

This phased approach ensures appropriate and proportionate evaluation of groundwater impacts in accordance with Official Plan policy, while allowing the initial low-impact phase of the development to proceed without unnecessary study requirements.

### **Section 5.5.6 Significant Woodlands and Vegetation Cover**

The proposed wellness camping resort has been designed with a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship and the preservation of the natural landscape. It aligns with the policy intent of protecting and enhancing significant woodlands by incorporating the following principles:

1. **Low-impact Development Approach**  
The resort uses a minimal-footprint design, including seasonal structures, eco-cabins, and tent platforms that avoid extensive clearing or grading. This ensures the woodland canopy and root zones are largely preserved, helping to moderate local climate and maintain vegetation cover.
2. **Conservation of Tree Cover and Native Vegetation**  
The layout will be developed to retain the vast majority of existing mature trees and native undergrowth. This maintains photosynthesis functions, contributes to oxygen production, and aids in air purification.
3. **Erosion and Water Quality Protection**  
Through strategic siting of structures and pathways, natural slope stabilization is preserved, and buffer areas are maintained adjacent to water features, contributing to surface water quality protection and soil erosion prevention.
4. **Habitat Preservation**  
The development avoids environmentally sensitive areas, and no habitat fragmentation will result. The resort's operations and landscape management will support biodiversity and existing wildlife habitats, consistent with PPS woodland habitat objectives.
5. **Water Retention and Groundwater Recharge**  
The limited use of impermeable surfaces (e.g., reliance on gravel paths and natural drainage) enhances groundwater recharge and allows the woodland to retain water naturally, supporting local hydrology.
6. **Integration of Recreational and Educational Programming**  
The resort offers low-impact recreational opportunities, such as guided nature walks, wellness trails and forest bathing, which align with the woodland's role in providing recreation and experiential learning without ecological disruption.
7. **Aesthetic and Cultural Value**  
The wellness focus emphasizes the natural beauty and tranquility of the forested environment, enhancing the visitor's connection to the land while respecting its ecological limits. The woodland serves as a key visual and experiential amenity for guests, enhancing appreciation of rural character.

In accordance with Section 5.5.6 of the Official Plan, development within significant woodlands is permitted only when it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or ecological functions of the woodland. As part of the future site plan control process, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will be required, prepared by a qualified professional, to assess and mitigate any potential impacts associated with the proposed wellness camping resort. The EIS will be carried out in accordance with Section 5.6 of the Official Plan and in consultation with the Conservation Authority and Approval Authority. Should the potential for negative impacts be considered minor by the relevant authorities, the EIS may be scoped or waived accordingly. This process ensures that the proposal remains consistent with the PPS and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell Official Plan, supporting both environmental protection and sustainable rural development.

In summary, the wellness camping resort complements the values outlined in Section 5.5.6 by preserving the woodland's ecological functions, enabling low-impact human interaction, and promoting sustainable, nature-based tourism. The proposal is consistent with the PPS definition of appropriate development within significant woodlands and demonstrates a responsible balance between rural economic activity and environmental conservation.

Furthermore, the proposal will rely on individual private services with proper environmental safeguards and will be subject to any necessary consultation with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks or its delegate, as required by the Official Plan. Through careful site planning, the development will preserve natural soil permeability and minimize disturbance to the landscape, maintaining the hydrological function of the recharge area.

Compared to more intensive residential or industrial uses, the resort's focus on wellness, recreation, and eco-tourism provides a compatible land use that supports economic development while prioritizing environmental protection. This makes it a model for balanced, sustainable rural development in sensitive ecological areas.

The proposed Wellness Camping Resort is well aligned with the intent of the River Corridor policies of the Official Plan, which emphasize the protection of shoreline areas, the preservation of natural conditions, and the enhancement of recreational and economic benefits. The development promotes low-impact, nature-based tourism that is inherently dependent on the preservation and appreciation of the river's natural features. This use encourages public interaction with the natural environment in a controlled, sustainable way, rather than limiting or privatizing access, it enhances the public's experience of the riverscape through thoughtful design and programming.

The site plan for the development will respect the policy direction that calls for a 30-metre setback from the high-water mark wherever possible. Accommodations and amenities will be located in a manner that preserves native shoreline vegetation, avoids soil disturbance near the river's edge, and incorporates natural buffers to protect the riparian zone. The proposal does not involve heavy infrastructure or grading near the shoreline, and will incorporate environmental best practices to maintain the ecological function and scenic value of the riverfront.

Additionally, where feasible, the development could explore opportunities to facilitate public or semi-public access to the river through walking trails or lookouts, consistent with the policy objective of enhancing recreational benefits and public access along the river corridor. As such, the proposal achieves a balance between economic development, recreation, and environmental stewardship, making it a model of appropriate riverside development in the Rural Policy Area.

#### 4.3 CITY OF CLARENCE-ROCKLAND OFFICIAL PLAN

The subject property is governed solely by the United Counties of Prescott and Russell Official Plan, as the City of Clarence-Rockland's Official Plan does not apply to lands located outside of the designated settlement areas.

#### 5.0 ZONING BY-LAW

The subject property is currently zoned **Rural (RU) Zone** under Section 13.1 of the City of Clarence-Rockland Zoning By-law. The RU Zone permits a variety of residential, agricultural, recreational, commercial, and institutional uses.

##### **Permitted Uses in the RU Zone**

- **Residential Uses:**
  - Detached dwelling
  - Group home
- **Accessory Residential Uses:**
  - Additional residential unit
  - Bed and breakfast
  - Hobby farm
  - Home-based business, rural
  - Home-based daycare
  - Home industry
  - Short-term rental



- **Retail Uses:**
  - Garden centre
  - Outdoor farmer's market
- **Service Commercial Use:**
  - Veterinary clinic
- **Employment Uses:**
  - Artist studio
  - Custom workshop
  - Outside storage
  - On-farm diversified uses
  - Agriculture-related uses
- **Institutional/Community Uses:**
  - Place of worship
- **Open Space Uses:**
  - Agriculture
  - Boarding kennel
  - Cemetery
  - Conservation use
  - Equestrian establishment
  - Fairground
  - Forestry operation

### **Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment**

This Zoning By-law Amendment seeks to introduce site-specific provisions within the *Tourist Commercial (CT)* Zone to support a mixed-use development focused on wellness and tourism. Notwithstanding the general provisions of the CT Zone, the following site-specific uses and regulations are proposed:

- **Additional Residential Use**  
*A detached dwelling* shall be permitted as an additional residential use.
- **Additional Service Commercial Use**  
*A Nordic Spa* shall be permitted as an additional service commercial use.
- **Shipping Containers for Storage**  
The placement of up to two (2) *unmodified shipping containers* shall be permitted for storage purposes, subject to the following conditions:
  - The containers shall not be permanently affixed to the ground or connected to utilities;
  - The containers shall not be stacked;
  - Screening shall comply with the setback requirements of Section 4.45.2 of the Zoning By-law.

- **Definition – Nordic Spa**

A new definition is proposed as follows:

**Nordic Spa:** An open area, recreational facility, and/or building(s) devoted to thermotherapy and health and wellness activities, including saunas, steam baths, hot and cold pools, massage, and relaxation areas.

- **Parking Standard for Nordic Spa**

The minimum parking requirement for a Nordic Spa shall be **1 space per 22 m<sup>2</sup> of net floor area**.

- **Tourist Establishment – Clarified Use**

The definition of *tourist establishment* shall include:

- *Tiny homes* and *repurposed shipping containers* used for short-term rental purposes;
- The number of rental units may be fewer than three (3).

- **Zone Standards**

The zone standards applicable to a *tourist establishment* shall be the same as those for a *service commercial* use.

## **Zoning Justification – From Rural (RU) to Tourist Commercial (CT)**

City of Clarence-Rockland Zoning By-law No. 2016-10

The subject property is currently zoned *Rural (RU)*, a zone intended to support traditional rural and agricultural uses. While the RU Zone permits limited recreational and tourism-related uses (e.g., campgrounds, bed and breakfasts), it does not adequately support the vision for a wellness-based tourism destination that includes a Nordic spa, short-term accommodations, and complementary services.

The proposed zoning amendment seeks to rezone the property to *Tourist Commercial (CT)* to allow for a mixed-use development that promotes health, relaxation, and rural tourism, while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding natural and rural context.

Justification for the Proposed Zoning Change:

1. Alignment with the Official Plan Vision

The City's Official Plan encourages rural tourism, economic diversification, and innovative land uses that enhance the visitor economy while preserving the rural character. The CT Zone directly supports this policy direction by permitting uses such as spas, tourist accommodations, and wellness-related facilities.

2. Appropriate Land Use Context

The site is well-suited for a low-impact, tourism-oriented development. The proposed uses, including a Nordic spa, small-scale accommodations (e.g., tiny homes, repurposed shipping containers), and wellness amenities, are complementary to the rural landscape and will not generate urban-scale servicing

demands. The development will retain much of the natural setting and integrate landscape buffers to minimize impacts on adjacent properties.

3. Economic and Community Benefits

Rezoning to CT would support local economic development by attracting visitors, creating employment opportunities, and expanding the municipality's tourism offering in a sustainable way. The project contributes to the municipality's long-term objectives for rural economic vitality.

4. Compatibility with Surrounding Uses

The proposed use is compatible with the surrounding rural context, and will be designed to preserve the site's natural features and minimize noise, light, and traffic impacts. The inclusion of only a small number of short-term accommodation units ensures the scale remains modest and appropriate for the area.

5. Servicing Feasibility

The proposed development will utilize private services (well and septic), consistent with the policies for development in rural areas. A servicing brief or confirmation will be provided at the appropriate stage to demonstrate the suitability of the site for the intended use.

6. Limiting Urban Sprawl

By focusing on tourism and wellness rather than permanent residential development, the CT zone provides a framework that limits urban sprawl and preserves rural lands for long-term sustainable use.

The proposed zoning change from Rural (RU) to Tourist Commercial (CT) is appropriate, desirable, and consistent with both the intent of the Official Plan and the policies of the City of Clarence-Rockland. It enables the development of a unique wellness tourism destination that contributes to the local economy while respecting the rural environment.

### Use of Shipping Containers for Accommodation

Although Section 4.45.1 d) of the Zoning By-law restricts the use of shipping containers for human habitation, a site-specific exception is proposed to permit a repurposed shipping container as **short-term accommodation units** within in the Wellness Camping Resort. This includes:

- Repurposing containers to meet OBC standards for safety, sanitation, and habitability
- Locating containers according to an approved site plan
- Prohibiting stacking and permanent year-round residence

- Recognizing their temporary, seasonal role in the resort

Under Section 4.45 of the City of Clarence-Rockland Zoning By-law, shipping containers are regulated based on the type of zone and the principal use of the lot. Section 4.45.1 applies to Residential Zones or lots used for residential purposes, where shipping containers are permitted only on a temporary basis and are explicitly prohibited for human habitation.

In contrast, Section 4.45.2 applies to all other zones not used for residential purposes, which is the applicable section for this proposal. The subject property is intended to be used as a campsite, which is classified under the Zoning By-law as a commercial or recreational use, not a residential use. As such, the provisions for non-residential zones apply.

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment will establish site-specific provisions to:

- Permit the use of repurposed shipping containers as short-term tourist accommodations, subject to Ontario Building Code compliance;
- Permit the use of up to two shipping containers for storage purposes on-site, provided they are located outside of required yards, screened from view, and accessory to the permitted use;
- Structure and screen storage locations to enhance functionality and minimize visual impact on adjacent properties.

#### Building Permit Requirement

Shipping containers used for accommodation purposes or installed in a permanent manner (e.g., on footings or connected to services) are considered structures under the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and will require a building permit. This ensures compliance with health, safety, and structural standards, particularly where human occupancy is involved.

For this proposed development:

- Shipping containers used for temporary or mobile storage (e.g., moving tools or supplies for seasonal campsite use) will be:
  - Located outside of required yards;
  - Accessory to the principal recreational/camping use;
  - Not visible from adjacent properties or roads, via screening or placement.

These containers will not be permanently affixed and will be used for non-habitable, accessory storage purposes. As such, they should not require a building permit unless their use or configuration changes (e.g., connected to services or structurally modified).

The shipping containers proposed for accessory storage on-site are not modified, altered, stacked, or connected to any utility services, and will remain at ground level. As such, they do not meet the definition of a structure requiring a building permit under the Ontario Building Code.

The City of Clarence-Rockland Zoning By-law (Section 4.45.2) permits shipping containers in non-residential zones, such as the proposed use on this property. Since the containers used for storage:

- Have not been structurally altered or repurposed for habitation;
- Are not stacked or fixed to foundations;
- Remain movable and do not affect the function of the site;

They are considered accessory structures not subject to building permit requirements. Their placement and screening will be reviewed through the site plan approval process to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

Clarence-Rockland defines campground in the CT zone as follows:

*“...the overnight or temporary camping or parking of recreational vehicles or tents for recreational or vacation use.”*

This definition does not account for tiny homes or repurposed shipping containers, so it does not cover your proposed short-term stays in those types of structures.

To lawfully include tiny homes or repurposed containers as rental accommodations under the CT zone, you would need to amend the definition or add them as explicit permitted uses via a CT-XX exception, just as you would for the spa component.

Proposed Use	Currently Permitted in CT Zone?	Action Required
Nordik Spa (Wellness)	Not included	Add via CT-XX exception
Campground (RV/tents)	Permitted	No change
Tiny homes/containers	Not included	Add via CT-XX exception



## Conclusion

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment seeks to introduce a site-specific exception to the existing Tourist Commercial (CT) Zone to accommodate innovative short-term accommodations and wellness-related amenities that are not currently contemplated under the standard zoning provisions. By permitting the use of repurposed shipping containers and tiny homes for short-term lodging, along with accessory wellness features such as a Nordic spa, this amendment supports a diversified rural tourism economy while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding rural context.

The proposed uses are aligned with the intent of the CT Zone to support tourism, contribute to local economic development, and provide a unique recreational experience. Provisions for site plan control, building code compliance, and buffering ensure the development will be both functional and well-integrated into the landscape. The amendment provides a flexible yet regulated framework to accommodate modern rural tourism trends, while respecting the character and policy objectives of the City of Clarence-Rockland Zoning By-law.

## 6.0 SITE PLAN PROCESS

A **Site Plan Control process** will be required to facilitate the proposed development of the Wellness Camping Resort. Through this process, the municipality and other agencies will have the opportunity to review and approve detailed elements of the project such as building placement, site access, parking, internal circulation, landscaping, servicing, stormwater management, and buffering from adjacent uses. The Site Plan Agreement will ensure that the development proceeds in a manner that is orderly, functional, and consistent with municipal design standards, while also addressing compatibility with the surrounding rural character and protection of environmental features such as the nearby watercourse and groundwater recharge area.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed Wellness Camping Resort represents a unique opportunity to introduce a high-quality, nature-based tourism use that aligns with the intent and policies of the Rural Policy Area designation. This development will offer short-term accommodations and wellness-oriented amenities that cater to visitors seeking relaxation, health, and well-being experiences in a rural setting, without compromising the area's agricultural, natural, or environmental integrity.

Allowing this use will bring significant economic and social benefits to the Clarence-Rockland community by attracting visitors who will support local businesses, services, and attractions. Increased tourism activity will contribute to the vitality of the local economy, diversify the tourism offer in the region, and enhance the overall appeal of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell as a rural destination.

The Tourist Commercial zone is the most appropriate policy framework for this type of development, as it is intended to support small-scale, resource-based recreational and tourism uses that are compatible with the surrounding environment. This proposal respects the rural character of the area, protects natural features such as the adjacent watercourse and groundwater recharge area, and makes efficient use of existing rural infrastructure.

To facilitate the project, a **Zoning By-law Amendment** is proposed to rezone the property from Rural (RU) to Tourist Commercial (CT) exception 5(CT-5). This will include a clear definition of the use *Nordic spa*, ensuring that all phases of the development, from the adaptive reuse of existing structures to the future construction of spa facilities and communal buildings, are recognized and permitted under the zoning framework. This amendment will provide long-term clarity and predictability for the property, while supporting sustainable rural development and contributing to the local tourism economy.

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