

31 Airport Road  
Site 118, Comp. 19, RR #4  
Dryden, ON, P8N 0A2  
Canada

## City of Dryden Zoning By-Law, Amendment Rationale

### *Why has this zoning amendment been requested?*

AgriTech North is an Indigenous- (Métis), disabled-, and LGBTQ-owned social enterprise corporation with a mission to grow nutritious food for Northern Ontario that is of a consistently high quality, available year-round, and provided at a competitive price, with a particular focus on reducing food costs by at least 25% for Far North indigenous communities. AgriTech North is proposing 250 Duke Street as a start-up location due to its proximity to the Homeward Bound program, where it hopes to source staff from on a continual basis to support their transition(s) and success. The quiet and secluded neighborhood is ideal for these participants in our program, and this project would add minimal additional traffic to the neighborhood. Regular deliveries and pick-ups would largely be conducted by personal vehicle, limiting additional noise. All growing operations are indoors and thus would add no additional outdoor activities. This project is not only socially responsible but is a compatible clean-tech operation with the neighborhood in which the facility is proposed to be located.

### A Fit for Dryden's Economic Plan on Multiple Fronts

In the City of Dryden's 2015 Economic Development Strategic Plan, there are a variety of Critical Paths that this proposal fulfills. "*Critical Path Step 2: Ensuring Inclusivity and Strengthening Relationships*" is met by AgriTech North having a strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) policy that supports hiring indigenous and diversity candidates. This priority by our organization will contribute to Dryden's Critical Path to establishing a reputation as an inclusive and open community.

We meet "*Critical Path Step 3: Supporting Local Businesses*" as there is currently no year-round source of produce production in Northern Ontario. Supermarkets currently rely on imported or cross-country produce sources to meet the needs of local communities. Remote communities struggle to find food in winter months and frequently source from as far as Toronto, which is typically produce imported from the USA and/or Mexico. When looking at all these issues that appear prevalent for about two-thirds of the year, it becomes clear that Northern Ontario has a serious food security crisis, and local businesses can be supported by ensuring there is a local source of produce from AgriTech North available year-round. AgriTech North rises to this challenge and breathes new life into the City of Dryden's history as an agricultural economic center.

We meet "*Critical Path Step 4: Workforce Development*" with more than twenty academic partners contributing over \$200,000 in in-kind research and development contributions to our organization and offering workforce development opportunities as part of our onboarding process.

We are a part of "*Critical Path Step 5: Targeting Economic Opportunities*" from multiple angles. AgriTech North's mission is to meet the objectives outlined in the subheading of "*Industrial and Commercial Development*," attracting young professionals and contributing to growing a thriving technology community. We have begun coordinating co-op programs with Dryden High School, for example, so that we can be prepared to engage local youth even in our early stages. With COVID-19 emphasizing the ability of organizations to succeed even when working in a largely remote context, we expect there to be even greater migration of young professionals into smaller towns. The availability of a fiber internet connection in Dryden ensures that these tech-savvy professionals will not be disappointed when most of their work may be for an organization across the country, but they want to stay in Dryden because they set their roots down while studying with AgriTech North, and we continue to support

them throughout their professional career, wherever they may be working. Our facility is tech-heavy, and as a result, we expect to retain youth in Dryden and attract new youth to the only indigenous-owned research-oriented multi-crop facility in Canada.

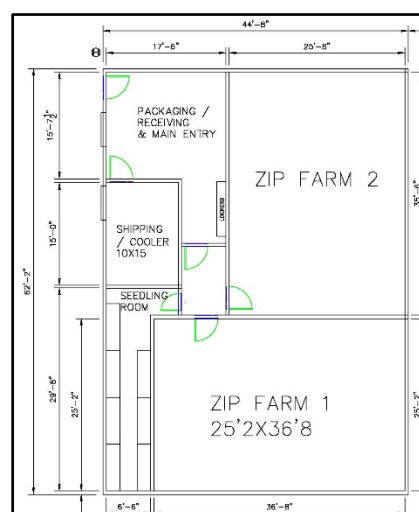
Under the “*Local and Regional Food Network*,” while the Cloverbelt Local Food Co-op has closed, AgriTech North may be part of a suitable enhancement for this marketing sector. AgriTech North is a social enterprise, is at the intersection of industry, academia, and indigenous peoples, and targets food security in Northern Ontario. The CEO of AgriTech North is also a board member and secretary for a newly established non-profit, the 807 Food Co-op, which is focusing on bringing together Northern Ontario producers and establishing a food hub right here in Dryden.

As part of the Action Plan for “*Targeting Economic Opportunities*,” the airport’s negative operating balance is alluded to, but better described in the Dryden Regional Airport Strategic Plan 2021 in the section “*Strategic Priority #1: Financially Sustainable Airport System*.” The City of Dryden has been contributing an increasing operating fund over the past few years, which AgriTech North could play a role in resolving. AgriTech North would primarily increase airport traffic through cargo shipments to the Far North and other remote communities, playing a role in “*Strategic Priority #3: Partnership(s) with Northern Communities*.” The facility will be producing yield year-round, and produce can stay on the plant until ready to ship, to avoid spoilage bottlenecks. In the case storage before shipment is required, AgriTech North can perform as its own warehouse, to ensure food does not spoil while awaiting shipment. As a secondary airport traffic increase, there will be students, professors, collaborators, and other visitors who may be best served by flying into Dryden instead of driving from Winnipeg or Thunder Bay.

Also, as part of the Action Plan for “*Targeting Economic Opportunities*,” growing local food is a priority. In addition to establishing a food distribution network, AgriTech North will grow local produce. Over time, food offerings will diversify, offering a more complete dietary product line that better meets the needs of Northern Ontario residents year-round.

### *Proposed Land Use*

AgriTech North proposes to establish a vertical farm operation within an existing facility at 250 Duke Street to grow food. No exterior additions would occur to ready the building for operations, which will limit potential construction noise. The growing rooms account for approximately 2,500 square feet of the facility. An example layout follows, which needs to be adapted to be suitable for 250 Duke Street, which final plans will be presented for at the time of a Building Permit application. There shall be two larger grow rooms, a small seedling and microgreen grow room, airlock, packing/storage area, and prefabricated drive-in cold storage unit appx. 10’x15’x12’.



*Figure 1: Preliminary Plans for AgriTech North Tenant Improvements*

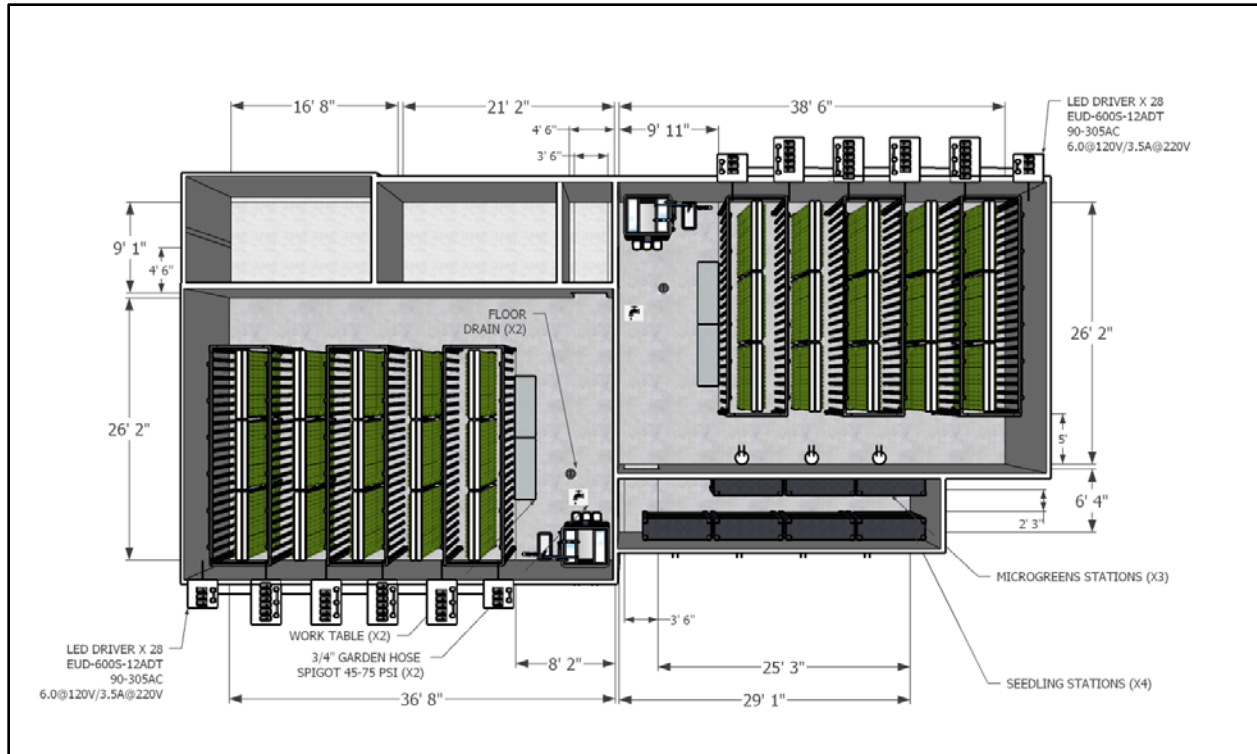


Figure 2: Preliminary Example 3D Model of AgriTech North Operations (Plan)

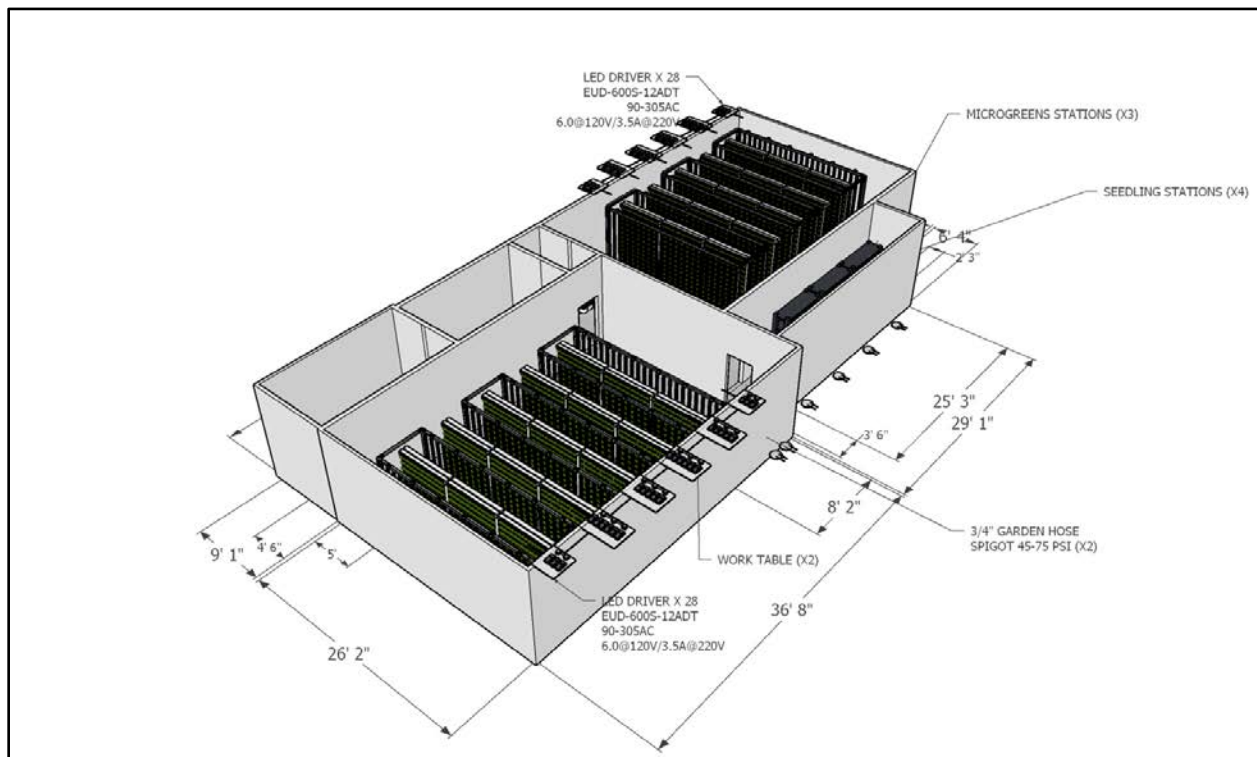
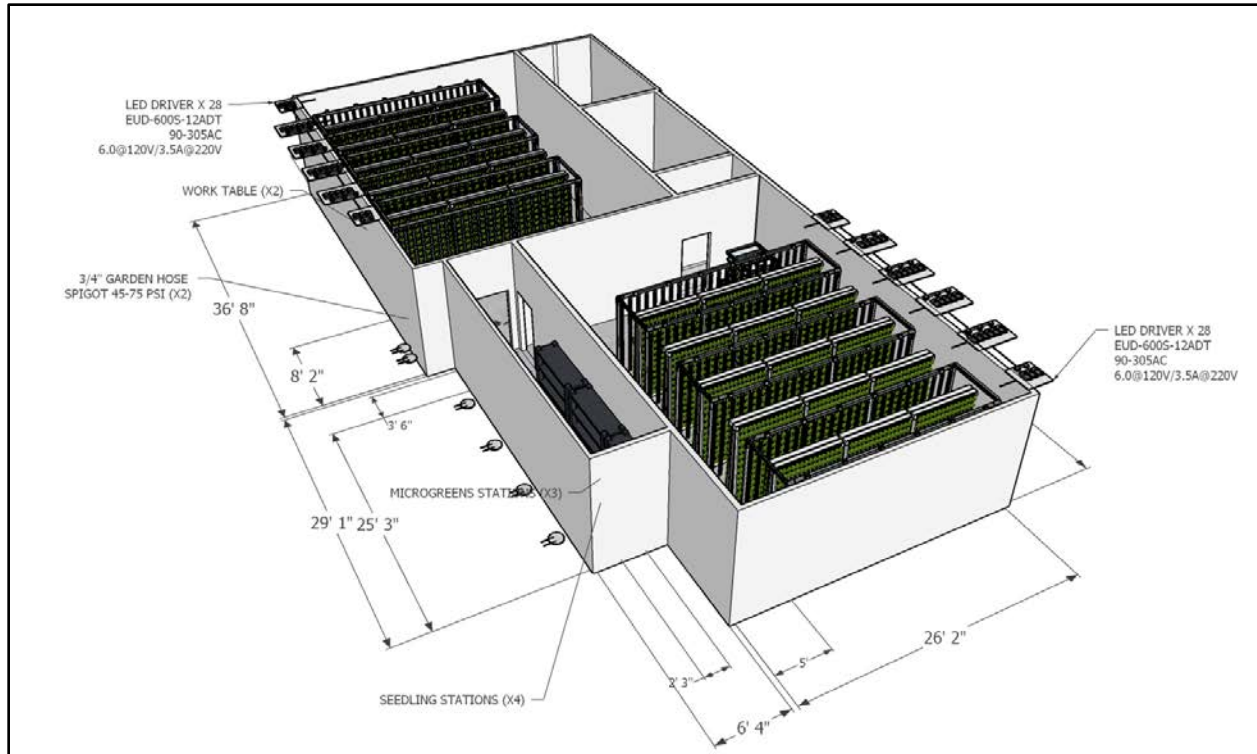


Figure 3: Preliminary Example 3D Model of AgriTech North Operations (Isometric 1)



*Figure 4: Preliminary Example 3D Model of AgriTech North Operations (Isometric 2)*

Thank you so much for considering AgriTech North's proposal for a Zoning Amendment,

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