

Article 5 — Agricultural Zone

Consolidating the eight agricultural districts now spread across Articles V, VII and VIII into one Article, with one table of allowed uses. Draft 1 for Commission review.

Status of this draft

Not adopted. Not the law. A working draft for the Planning Advisory Commission.

Most of it is a reorganization of existing text. Eight places where it changes or proposes to change the meaning are listed in the change log at the back. Three of those need a vote.

It has not been reviewed by the Township Attorney or Olmsted County planning staff, and no entry has been verified against the County ordinance beyond the comparison already reported.

5.01 Purpose

The Agricultural Zone conserves farmland and the rural character of Oronoco Township, supports long-term agricultural use, and limits the location and density of non-farm development so that it does not interfere with farming or require public services the Township does not provide.

5.02 Districts established

The Agricultural Zone contains the following districts. The abbreviations are used throughout this Article and in Table 5-A.

Code	District	Purpose
A-1	Agricultural Protection	The most protective farm district. Conserves the best farmland and holds non-farm housing to the lowest density in the Township.
A-2	Agricultural Protection	Same purpose as A-1, at a somewhat higher density of non-farm dwellings, where farms and feedlots are more scattered.
A-3	Agricultural	Conserves agricultural investment and prime farmland while permitting low-density non-farm development, not exceeding one dwelling per ten acres.
A-4	Agricultural – Urban Expansion	Holds land near an incorporated city in farming and open space until urban services arrive, so that transition happens in an orderly way.
A/RC	Agricultural / Resource Commercial	Two sub-districts. (1) Aggregate Extraction and Reuse: gravel pits, quarries and the uses that follow once extraction ends. (2) Land Intensive Low Impact Uses: uses needing large amounts of land and a rural setting, generating low traffic and little sewage.
ARC	Agricultural Residential Cluster	Legacy. Two areas. (R) Residential Area: platted lots within cluster developments approved before 17 March 1987. (O) Agricultural, Woodland and Open Space Area: the farmland and open space surrounding them.
RSD	Rural Service Center	Limited residential, commercial and industrial development suited to the character of an existing rural service centre identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

No new Agricultural Residential Cluster district may be created. Existing cluster developments continue to be governed by the plans under which they were approved; a change to an approved plan is processed as an amendment under § 4.00.

5.03 How Table 5-A works

- P means permitted. The use is allowed subject to the conditions in the right-hand column, the standards in Table 5-B, and the general regulations in Article X.
- C means conditional. The use requires a conditional use permit under § 4.02, following a public hearing.
- A blank cell means the use is not allowed in that district.

Two of the zones contain sub-districts whose use lists genuinely differ. Where an entry applies to only one of them, the cell carries a marker:

- (R) — the A.R.C. Residential Area only. (O) — the A.R.C. Agricultural, Woodland and Open Space Area only.
- (1) — the A/RC Aggregate Extraction and Reuse sub-district only. (2) — the A/RC Land Intensive Low Impact Uses sub-district only.
- No marker means the entry applies throughout that zone.

Almost every project also requires a zoning certificate under § 3.06 before work begins, whether or not a conditional use permit is needed.

Overlay districts govern in addition to this Article. Where the flood plain, shoreland or river corridor provisions of Article IX are more restrictive, those provisions apply. Under Minn. Stat. § 394.33, where the Olmsted County Zoning Ordinance is more restrictive, the County standard applies.

Table 5-A — Allowed uses in the Agricultural Zone

Use	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4	A/RC	ARC	RSD	Conditions and limits
DWELLINGS								
Farm dwelling — one per farm	P	P	P	P	P			Farm size differs by district — see Table 5-B
Non-farm dwelling on a buildable non-farm lot	P	P	P	P	P			Must meet Table 5-C
Farmstead dwelling on a non-farm lot	P	P	P	P	P			Must meet § 5.05
Second farm dwelling or mobile home on a farm over 80 acres	P	P	P		P			Residents of both homes must be owners, operators or employees of the farm
Single-family detached dwelling — one per lot				P			P	
One single-family dwelling per lot, on a platted lot of an approved subdivision						P (R)		Residential Area only
One single-family dwelling or mobile home per lot						P (O)		Open Space Area only. Lot must be 35 acres
One mobile home per lot							C	
Mobile home as a second dwelling on a lot	C	C	C	C		C (O)		Only where care is needed, all adults in one home are 60+, an adult in each works the farm, or an adult in each has an ownership interest. In the ARC Open Space Area the lot must be 35 acres and the farming test is full-time
State licensed residential facility, six or fewer residents; licensed adult foster care, five or fewer beds	P	P	P	P		P (R)	P	PROPOSED — see change log C-2. One 4 sq ft sign at the primary driveway
Bed and breakfast	C	C	C	C				Inside the main house of an existing farmstead on a working farm. Minimum 5 acres. At least ¼ mile from a feedlot not on the parcel
AGRICULTURE								
General farming — crops, livestock, poultry, dairying, horticulture, beekeeping, sod farming, forestry	P	P	P	P	P	P (O)		Feedlots per Table 5-D. In A-4 no new feedlot. In A/RC no feedlots at all. In the ARC Open Space Area no feedlot within ½ mile of a non-farm dwelling
Animal feedlot	P	P	P					See Table 5-D — the size decides whether it is permitted, conditional or prohibited
Farm drainage systems, flood control and watershed structures, erosion control devices	P	P	P		P	P (O)		Must meet county, state and soil conservation district minimums. Not listed in A-4 — see change log C-5
Seasonal roadside stand meeting the access and speed criteria	P	P	P	P	P			On a farm; access road under 1,500 vehicles a day and posted 60 mph or less; adequate parking; road authority approval. One 32 sq ft sign per frontage
Seasonal roadside stand not meeting those criteria	C	C	C	C				Adequate parking and road authority approval still required
Temporary or seasonal roadside stand						P (O)		One per farm; parking adequate; traffic not adversely affected. One 25 sq ft sign per frontage
Forest and game management areas	P	P	P	P	P	P (O)		
Stables for commercial boarding of animals	C	C	C	C		C (O)		In A-1, A-2 and A-3, parcels under 35 acres. In A-4 and the ARC Open Space Area, non-farm parcels
Riding academies	C	C	C	C		C (O)		
Kennels	C	C	C	C		C (O)		
Licensed shooting preserves	C	C	C	C				
Licensed farm winery, accessory to a vineyard	C	C		C				Principal use of the parcel must be viticulture. Excluded from A-3 — see change log C-4
Licensed farm winery as a year-round principal use					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Must be associated with and adjacent to a farm engaged in viticulture
Commercial greenhouses and landscape nurseries					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only
Farm implement dealership or sales yard					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Car and truck sales lots are not permitted
Facilities for the sale and distribution of agricultural products					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Seed, fertilizer, pesticides. Not activities carried out as part of a farm operation
Livestock facilities — experiment stations, stockyards, transfer stations, breeding facilities					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. At least ¼ mile from an existing residence or residentially zoned property

Use	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4	A/RC	ARC	RSD	Conditions and limits
Commercial and industrial uses primarily serving agricultural uses					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only
Keeping up to ten chickens, accessory to a single-family dwelling							P	See § 10.52
PUBLIC, INSTITUTIONAL AND CIVIC								
Public parks and buildings	C	C	C					
Public park facilities				P				
Public parks							P	
Public and private schools and parks						C (R)		Residential Area only
Private or quasi-public facilities — schools, churches, cemeteries, community buildings							C	
Churches and community buildings, including cemeteries and accessory living quarters	C	C	C	C		C (R)		Includes chapels, temples and synagogues
State licensed non-residential or day care facility, twelve or fewer; group family day care, fourteen or fewer children	P	P	P	P		P (R)	P	PROPOSED — see change log C-2. One 4 sq ft sign at the primary driveway
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL								
Certain commercial uses — drug and gift stores, gas stations, grocery and food stores, hardware, feed and seed, building materials, lawn and garden stores and nurseries, offices, government buildings, restaurants and taverns							C	
Certain industrial uses — creamery, grain elevator, meat locker, welding shop, auto body shop							C	
Manufactured home sales					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only
Building material storage yards					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Retail sales excluded
Contractors' equipment storage yards					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only
Home improvement trades — electricians, plumbers, building contractors and similar					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Retail sales excluded; work characterized by off-site activity
Personal and household rental storage (mini-storage warehouses)					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only
Welding shops and equipment or vehicle repair facilities					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Routine automotive service excluded
Transmission repair shops					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only
Vehicle impound facilities					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. Screened from view to the standards applicable to junkyards
EXTRACTION, WASTE AND COMPOST								
Extraction of sand and gravel, quarrying					C			Minimum 5 acres in the Aggregate sub-district. Hours of operation, especially hauling and blasting, may be restricted
Asphalt concrete or concrete plants producing road-surfacing material					C			At least ¼ mile from a residence or residential zone; best available odor and emission control. In the Aggregate sub-district must be on the same property as a gravel pit supplying at least 50% of the aggregate
Tree and brush disposal facilities					C			At least ¼ mile from a residence or residential zone
Landfills and demolition landfills					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. At least ¼ mile from a residence or residential zone. Must be sited in the most geologically insensitive area possible
Recyclable waste transfer facilities					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. At least ¼ mile from a residence or residential zone, or entirely within a structure. See § 10.53
Landspreading sites meeting MPCA Rules Chapter 7040	P	P	P	P	P			
Landspreading facilities and sites not meeting those standards	C	C	C					Excluded from A-4. Currently allowed in A-3 but prohibited there by the County — see change log C-4
Compost, commercial small facility	C	C	C	C			C	
Compost, State of Minnesota permitted facility	C	C	C					Excluded from A-4. Currently allowed in A-3 but prohibited there by the County — see change log C-4
RECREATION								
Private parks and open space — hiking, ski trails, picnic facilities	C	C	C	C				No camping, no overnight lodging, no motorized recreational vehicles

Use	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4	A/RC	ARC	RSD	Conditions and limits
Archery and gun clubs and shooting ranges					C			In the Aggregate sub-district, only as reuse after a pit or quarry is restored. At least ¼ mile from an existing residence or residential zone
Golf courses and driving ranges					C			Minimum 40 acres. In the Aggregate sub-district, only as reuse after a pit or quarry is restored
Non-motorized outdoor recreation					C (1)			Aggregate sub-district only, as reuse after a pit or quarry is restored. At least ¼ mile from an existing residence or residential zone
Motocross tracks and other motorized outdoor recreation					C			At least ½ mile from an existing residence or residential zone. Hours may be restricted. In the Aggregate sub-district, only as post-restoration reuse
ENERGY, UTILITIES, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS								
Small non-utility wind energy conversion system	P	P	P		P		C	Not listed in A-4 — see change log C-5
WECS meteorological towers	P	P	P		P			Not listed in A-4 — see change log C-5
Small utility wind energy conversion system	C	C	C	C	C (1)			May include meteorological towers. In the Aggregate sub-district, at least ¼ mile from a residence or residential district
Solar energy farm (photovoltaic systems)	C	C	C	C			C	
Public utility buildings — substations, transformer stations, regulator stations	C	C	C	C		C (O)	C	Without service or storage yards
Public utility service buildings and yards					C			Including electrical transformer stations, substations and gas regulator stations
Communications and telecommunications towers and transmitters	C	C	C	C	C			Including radio, television and commercial wireless
Commercial radio and television towers and transmitters						C (O)		Open Space Area only. Ground area occupied by the tower must be fenced to at least 6 feet
Railroad right-of-way	P	P	P	P	P	P (O)		Freight classification yards and buildings excluded
Personal-use airport	C	C	C	C				As defined in Minnesota Rules 8800.1300 subp. 2. Not for air commerce
Airports and landing fields not limited to the use of the owner					C (2)			Land Intensive sub-district only. At least ¼ mile from an existing residence or residentially zoned property
ACCESSORY AND TEMPORARY								
Home business or home occupation	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	As regulated in § 10.02
Home business where § 10.02 directs conditional use review	C	C	C	C				
Accessory structures and uses incidental to a permitted use	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Must be on the same property. See § 10.22
Accessory structures and uses incidental to a conditional use	C	C	C	C		C	C	Must be on the same property
Temporary uses not exceeding one year	C	C	C	C		C		
Other uses similar to those listed above	C	C	C	C				Determined by the Planning Advisory Commission

Table 5-B — Lot and building standards

All figures are minimums unless the heading says maximum. “Arterial” means a federal, state or county road; “local” means a local road or street. “Sewered” means served by a public or centralized sewage collection and treatment system.

District	Minimum lot area	Minimum lot width	Front — arterial	Front — local	Side street — arterial	Side street — local	Interior side	Rear	Maximum height	Farm means
A-1	2 ac, excluding road right-of-way	150 ft at building site	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	25 ft	25 ft	None	80 ac, or two quarter-quarter sections
A-2	2 ac, excluding road right-of-way	150 ft at building site	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	25 ft	25 ft	None	35 ac, or a quarter-quarter less up to 5 ac
A-3	2 ac, excluding road right-of-way	150 ft at building site	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	25 ft	25 ft	None	35 ac, or a quarter-quarter less up to 5 ac
A-4	35 ac per dwelling unit, including ROW to centerline	150 ft; 60 ft if sewered	45 ft	30 ft	45 ft	30 ft	8 ft	25 ft	Farm buildings none; dwellings 35 ft; public 55 ft	—
ARC Residential Area	2 ac per dwelling unit, maximum 5 ac	100 ft; 60 ft if sewered	45 ft	30 ft	45 ft	30 ft	8 ft	25 ft	Dwellings 35 ft; public 55 ft	—
ARC Open Space Area	35 ac	150 ft at building site	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	25 ft	25 ft	None	—
RSD	2 ac	100 ft; 60 ft if sewered	45 ft	30 ft	45 ft	30 ft	8 ft	25 ft	Dwellings 35 ft; others not stated [C-7]	—
A/RC Aggregate (1)	5 ac unless stated otherwise	200 ft at front building line	45 ft or Table 5-E	45 ft or Table 5-E	45 ft or Table 5-E	45 ft or Table 5-E	Bufferyard, min 50 ft	Bufferyard, min 50 ft	35 ft, +1 ft per 2 ft extra setback	—
A/RC Land Intensive (2)	5 ac unless stated otherwise	Not stated [C-7]	45 ft or Table 5-E	45 ft or Table 5-E	45 ft or Table 5-E	45 ft or Table 5-E	Bufferyard, min 50 ft	Bufferyard, min 50 ft	Not stated [C-7]	—

Additional lot area may be required by the Olmsted County Health Department to satisfy Board of Health regulations. In A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4 and the A.R.C. open space area, each lot must also have 33 feet of frontage on a public road or a recorded access easement at least 33 feet wide, and no dwelling is permitted that would require a new public road to be built. Where a new lot will be served by public or centralized sewer inside an Urban Service Area, the minimum lot area is set by a special district under § 8.10 instead of by this table.

5.04 Non-farm lots and dwellings

A non-farm lot or dwelling is permitted only where it satisfies all of the following.

District	How many non-farm lots or dwellings	Soil requirement	Other limits
A-1	One non-farm lot per quarter section (160 acres). If that quarter section already has a buildable non-farm lot, no additional dwelling.	At least 1 acre of non-prime agricultural soil rated 55 or less on the crop equivalency scale.	Not in wetlands or floodplain. Not within ¼ mile of a feedlot or manure storage not on the same lot.
A-2	One non-farm lot per quarter-quarter section (40 acres). Same rule if one already exists.	At least 1 acre of non-prime soil rated 55 or less.	Same as A-1.
A-3	Two dwelling units per quarter-quarter section (40 acres). Dwelling units and buildable non-farm lots count together.	At least half an acre of non-prime soil rated 55 or less, or a wooded area.	Same as A-1.
A-4	Governed by the 35-acre-per-dwelling-unit minimum in Table 5-B rather than by a quarter-quarter count.	—	—

5.05 Farmstead dwellings

A farmstead dwelling allows an existing farmhouse to be separated from the farm around it. One may be created in A-1, A-2, A-3 and A-4 provided that:

- a habitable farm dwelling legally existed on the farm on 16 April 1983;
- it lies within a farmstead boundary;
- the parcel is at least 5 acres, including the abutting public road right-of-way, unless the road authority holds that right-of-way in fee simple;
- the parcel contains no more than 5 acres of prime cropland;
- not more than one farmstead dwelling is created per farm, and where a farm holds more than one dwelling the others remain on a farm parcel or are removed; and
- the parcel meets the yard, area, lot width and access requirements of Table 5-B.

5.06 Animal feedlots

An animal feedlot means confined feeding, breeding, raising or holding of poultry or animals exceeding thirty animal units where vegetative cover cannot be maintained within the enclosure. Pastures are not animal feedlots. Animal units are calculated as in Minnesota Rules Chapter 7020.

Size	A-1, A-2, A-3	A-4	ARC Open Space Area	A/RC
30 animal units or fewer	Not an animal feedlot. No feedlot rules apply.	Not a feedlot.	Not a feedlot.	Not a feedlot.
31 to 100 animal units	Permitted. Zoning certificate required. A new feedlot must be ¼ mile from the nearest non-farm dwelling, church, school or public park.	No new feedlot. An existing feedlot may expand to no more than 100 animal units.	Permitted, provided no feedlot is within ½ mile of a non-farm dwelling.	Not permitted.
101 to 1,000 animal units	Conditional use permit required. See § 10.26.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
Over 1,000 animal units	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.
In shoreland, river corridor or floodplain	No new animal feedlot or manure storage facility. Modifications and expansions of existing feedlots per Article IX.	Same	Same	Same

Section 10.26 applies to every feedlot requiring a conditional use permit, and no new feedlot or manure storage facility may be located within half a mile of an incorporated city boundary. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency rules and Olmsted County feedlot permitting apply alongside this Article and may set their own thresholds.

The thresholds in Table 5-D differ from the current ordinance. See change log item C-1.

5.07 Conditional use criteria in the A/RC zone

In addition to § 4.02, each of the following must be found before a conditional use is approved in AC-1 or AC-2:

- waste generated by the use is disposed of in a manner approved by the Olmsted County Environmental Commission, and feedlot waste is handled as the MPCA requires;
- where the site is reached primarily by the principal arterial system, the intersection of the arterial and the lower-class highway fronting the site should be grade separated; access points must function at Level of Service B or better after development and have adequate sight distance; not more than one access is provided unless an additional one benefits highway safety; direct access is taken from a local street where the site fronts one; and the applicant provides any necessary turn, acceleration, deceleration or bypass lanes and traffic control;
- the use genuinely requires large amounts of open storage of inventory;
- a landfill of any type is located in the most geologically insensitive area possible;
- a building associated with a non-agricultural use does not exceed 10,000 square feet; and
- extraction of sand and gravel and quarrying is guided primarily by the availability, need and location of the geologic resource.

These criteria are taken from the Olmsted County ordinance, which already applies them to Township property. See change log item C-3.

Table 5-E — Road centerline setbacks in the A/RC zone

The required front and side street setback is the greater of 45 feet from the right-of-way line or the centerline distance below. ADT means average daily traffic.

Road classification	Expressway under 10,000 ADT	Expressway 10,000+ ADT	Super 2 all	Other arterials & collectors under 10,000	Other arterials & collectors 10,000+	Other county & state roads	Other roads
Setback from right-of-way line	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft
Setback from road centerline	95 ft	105 ft	100 ft	95 ft	100 ft	95 ft	78 ft

Change log

Every place where this draft changes, or proposes to change, the meaning of the current ordinance. Reorganization that does not alter meaning is not listed.

No.	Change	Why	Status
C-1	Feedlot thresholds restated as 30 / 100 / 1,000 in one table.	Current text says new feedlots may not exceed 100, then that no feedlot may ever exceed 500, then offers a conditional use permit above 1,000. Nothing addresses 101 to 1,000. This draft adopts the thresholds the Commission described as current practice.	SUBSTANTIVE — requires a vote. Note this makes 501 to 1,000 conditional where the present text appears to prohibit it.
C-2	Licensed residential facilities and day care facilities added as permitted uses.	Minnesota law requires facilities of this size to be treated as a permitted single-family residential use. Olmsted County's ordinance carries the language in every agricultural district. Ours carries it in none.	SUBSTANTIVE — requires a vote and Attorney confirmation.
C-3	Criteria for conditional uses in the A/RC zone carried into this Article.	The County applies six additional criteria in these districts that our ordinance omits entirely. Under Minn. Stat. § 394.33 they already bind Township property. Writing them down changes nothing on the ground.	Restates a rule that already applies. Attorney to confirm.
C-4	A-3 exclusions realigned with the County.	Ours excludes items 9 and 18 from the A-1 conditional list. The County excludes 9, 15 and 24. As written our A-3 allows substandard land spreading facilities and State-permitted compost facilities where the County prohibits them.	SUBSTANTIVE — not yet applied in this draft. Commission decision required.
C-5	A-4's borrowed list read as subdivisions 1 and 5 through 10.	Our text reads "1 and 5 10". The County's identical provision reads "1 and 5-10". A hyphen was lost from our copy.	Clerical. No change in meaning.
C-6	Outdated terminology for group home residents removed.	Sections 6.02, 6.04 and 7.00 use language no longer used in Minnesota statutes or federal fair housing law.	Clerical.
C-7	Gaps left visible rather than filled.	RSD sets no height limit for non-residential buildings. The A/RC Land Intensive sub-district sets no building height limit and no minimum lot width. The County has the same gaps, so deferring to the County does not fix them.	OPEN — Commission decision required.
C-8	A/RC-2's duplicate conditional use table not carried forward.	Section 8.09.2 contains two conditional use tables. The County has one. This draft uses the twenty-five item list specific to the Land Intensive sub-district.	Needs confirmation from the adopting resolution.

Still open

- C-4 has not been applied. The Commission must decide whether A-3 should continue to allow substandard land spreading facilities and State-permitted compost facilities, which the County prohibits there.
- C-7 has not been resolved. RSD has no height limit for commercial or industrial buildings, and the A/RC Land Intensive sub-district has neither a height limit nor a minimum lot width.
- Whether any conditional use permit has been issued for a feedlot above 500 animal units under the present text.
- Whether any land in Oronoco Township is actually zoned RSD. Olmsted County names eleven rural service centers; our ordinance names none.
- Section 10.26 bars new feedlots in shoreland, while Article IX permits them there by conditional use permit above 700 animal units. Table 5-D adopts the stricter reading pending the Attorney's advice.

Next step: Commission review of the change log, then the three items requiring a vote, then this Article goes to the Township Attorney and Olmsted County planning staff.