

46 ST. JOHN'S SIDEROAD, AURORA ONTARIO

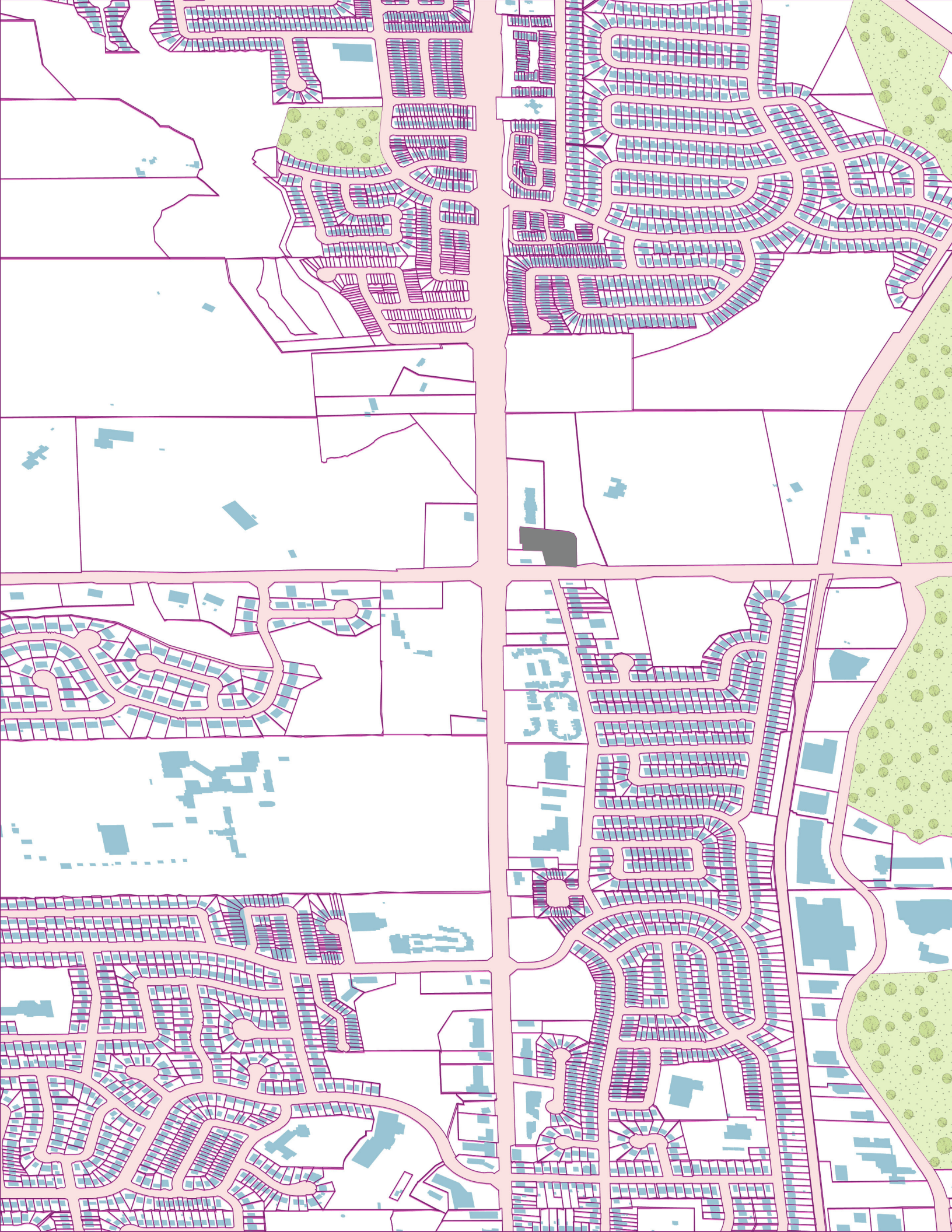
PLANNING RATIONALE REPORT

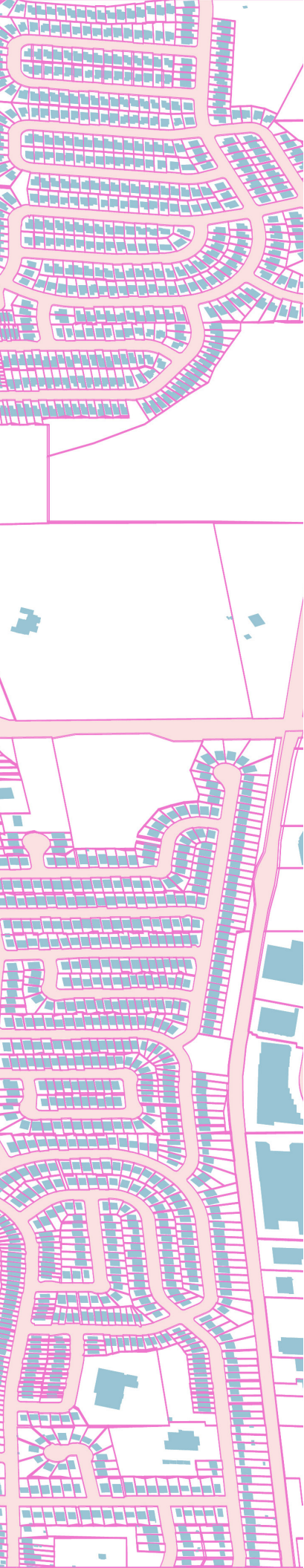
Prepared for:
Biddington Homes Aurora Inc.

**SMART
DENSITY**

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1.0 Introduction

This Planning Rationale has been prepared by Smart Density on behalf of Biddington Homes Aurora Inc. in support of an application to amend the Town of Aurora Official Plan and Zoning By-law 6000-17 to permit the development of the lands known municipally as 46 St. John’s Sideroad in the Town of Aurora (“the Subject Site”). The legal address is Part Lot 86 Concession 1. The Subject Site is located on the North Side of St. John’s Sideroad, just east of the intersection with Yonge Street.

The proposed development will include 5 townhouse blocks with 4-storey buildings, a private street, and mews. A total of 39 residential units are proposed as well as 57 parking spaces, of which 18 are at-grade and 39 are in private garages.

This document provides an overview of both the physical and policy context of the subject

site in support of the application. The proposed development will make a strong, positive contribution to the area by enhancing its character and streetscape, and bringing residential uses to the area.

1.1 Application History

The site was part of a previous development submission in 2019 for 68 stacked back-to-back townhouse dwelling units at 4-storeys with below-grade parking. The application would be for 3 development blocks.

In the early 1990’s the site was also part of an Official Plan Amendment that approved two 4 storey buildings with a maximum of 143 dwelling units. The first of these buildings was completed with the 4-storey 80 units Hadley Grange seniors building, while the second building was never built.



Townhouses separated by the mews.

2.0 Site & Context

2.1 Subject Site

The subject site is L-shaped with an area of approximately 8,062.8 m² and a frontage of approximately 57.6 m along St. John's Sideroad. The site is mostly vacant except for the local road Hadley Grange and informal parking lot that exists on the site. Hadley Grange road provides vehicle access to the 4-storey apartment building for seniors from St. John's Sideroad. The site slopes down Northeastward towards the McKenzie Wetland. The site fronts onto St. John's Sideroad, an arterial road, and is situated along Hadley Grange, a local road.



Image #1: Subject Site - Current Uses



Image #2: Site Context

2.2 Existing Immediate Context

The adjacent land uses and built form context includes the following:

North – Hadley Grange, a 4-storey apartment building for seniors



Hadley Grange, facing North from the subject site

East – The McKenzie Wetland



St. John's Sideroad, facing North just East of the subject site

West – A 1-storey commercial property



St. John's Sideroad, facing North just West of the subject site

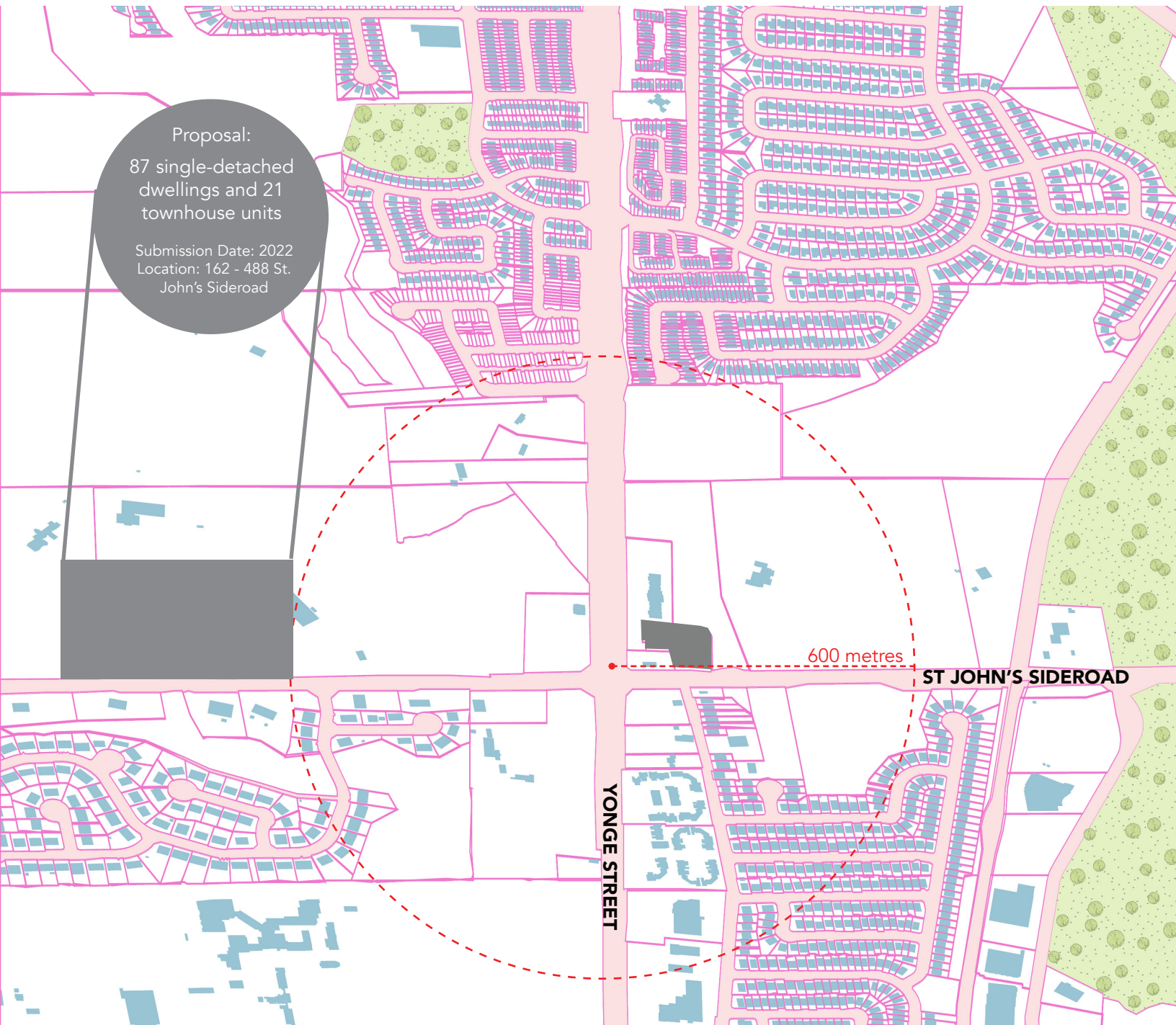
South – Directly across St. John's Sideroad lies Old Yonge Street which has mainly detached 2-storey single-family homes



St. John's Sideroad, facing South from the subject site to Old Yonge Street

Image Sources: Google Street View, 2021

2.2.1 Immediate Development Context



- Completed
- Under Construction
- Proposed
- Subject Site - 46 St. John's Sideroad

2.3 Broader Context

The subject site is located in Northwestern Aurora and is designated under Schedule A as Stable Neighbourhoods. The policy context for this area is discussed under the Policy and Regulations section.

The subject site lies within the periphery of the Stable Neighbourhoods and adjacent to Existing Commercial. The site is located just south of the municipal boundary for the Town of Aurora, where the Town of Newmarket begins. Overall the site is surrounded by open green space including the McKenzie Wetland to the east, Atkinson Park to the south east, the Hadley Grange, a 4-storey apartment building for seniors to the northwest and a single storey commercial building with surface parking directly west of the site.

Further south there are single detached family houses as well as a number of private schools to the west and south west of the site.

2.4 Transportation Context

The subject site fronts St. John's Sideroad, an east-west arterial road with a planned right of way of 36 m (Official Plan - Schedule I and J) that has four lanes, with two lanes in each direction. Yonge Street, an arterial road directly west of the subject site also has four lanes, with two lanes in each direction.

The site has excellent access to transit and is served by existing and future transit infrastructure. The site is located within a 30-minute walk, a 6-minute drive or a 14 min bus ride from the Aurora GO Station. The GO train reaches Union Station from Aurora Station in about 50 minutes. As part of the GO RER project, the service will improve to all-day, two-way headways 15 minutes or better. The site is located along the future VivaNext Rapid way bus rapid transit along Yonge Street, which will run along Yonge Street and Highway 7.

The site is served by the Holland River Valley trail directly to the east for walking and cycling. Additionally, the site is fronted by in-boulevard cycling routes along St. John's Sideroad and Yonge Street to its south and west respectively.

The site is also served by bus lines along Yonge Street. The 96 and 98 Yonge bus routes operate along Yonge Street and have stops located within a 5-minute walking distance. These routes travel north and south between Newmarket Terminal and Pioneer Village, or Finch GO Bus Terminal.



Image #3 Schedule A Structure Plan

- Stable Neighbourhoods
- Existing Major Institutional
- Environmental Protection
- Private Parkland
- Public Parkland
- Existing Commercial
- Site Location
- Aurora Built Boundary

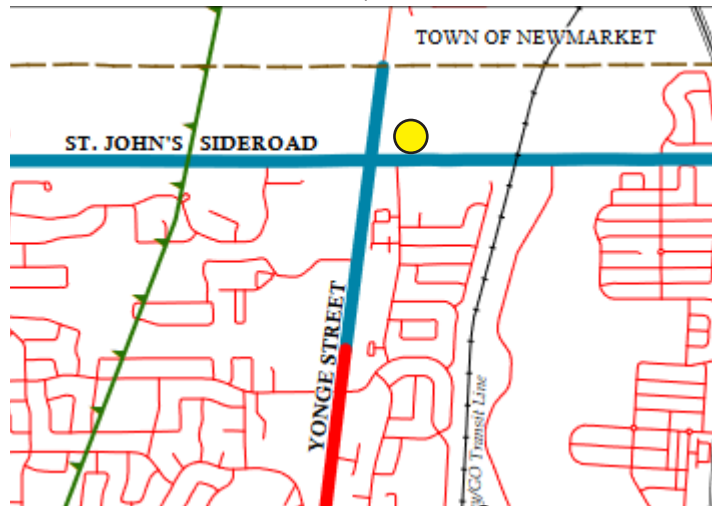


Image #4 Schedule J Right-of-Ways

- Region of York / 36 Metres
- Town of Aurora / 36 Metres
- Local Roads
- Oak Ridges Moraine Boundary
- Site Location

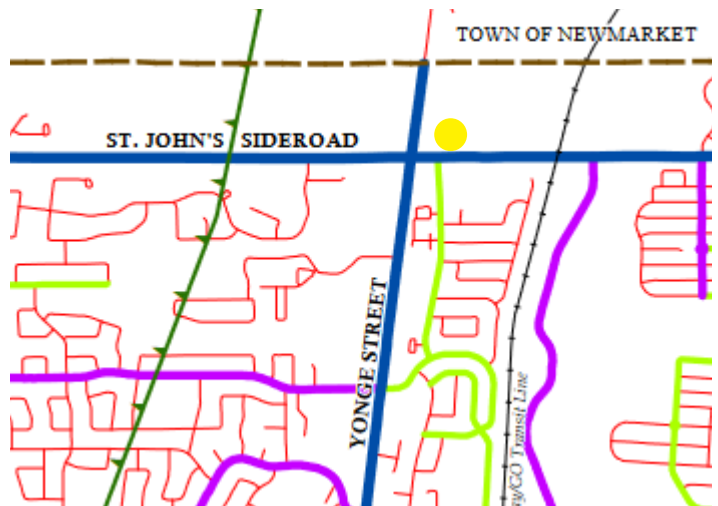
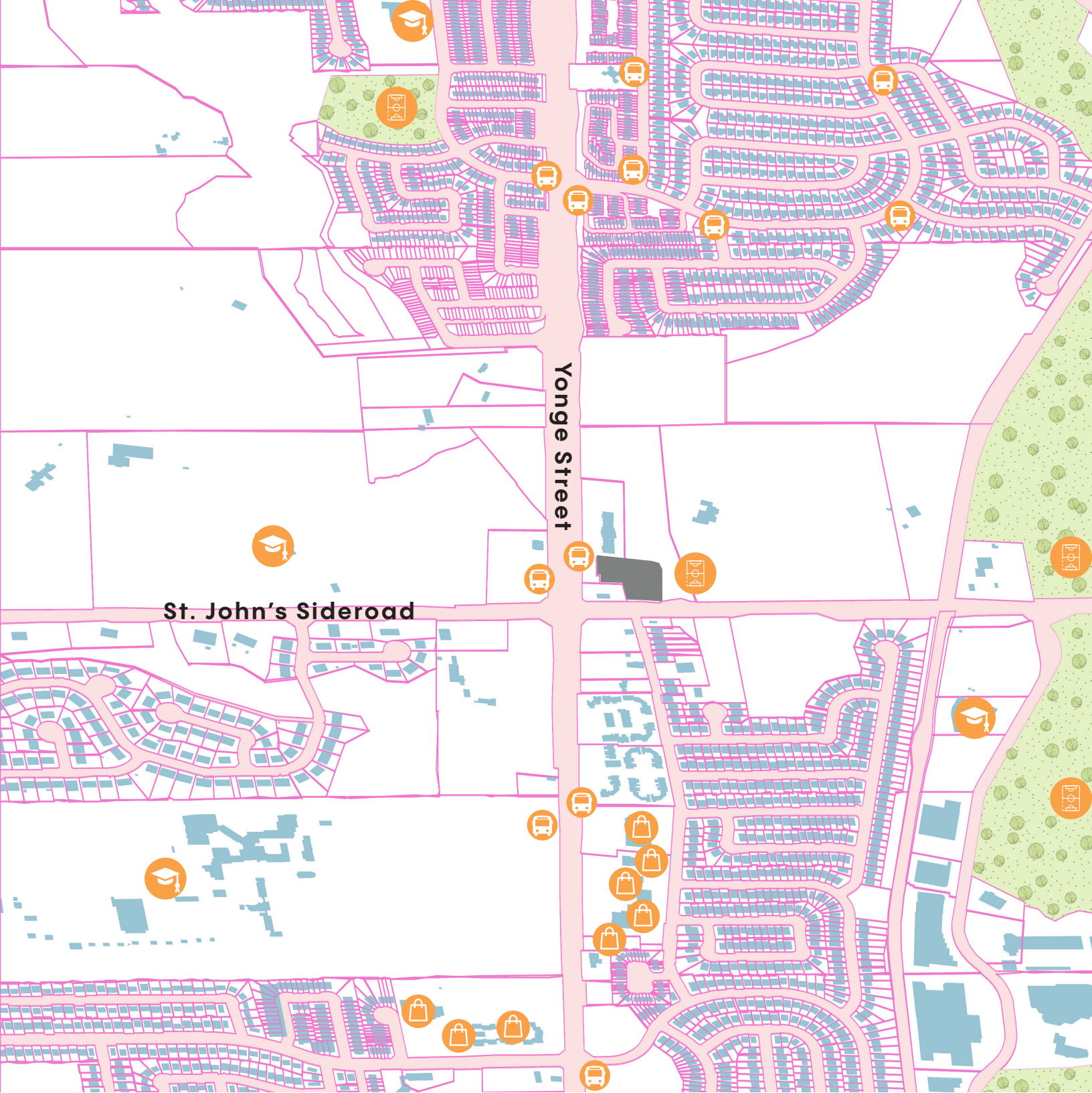


Image #5 Schedule I Structure Plan





- Arterial Road
- Local Road
- Minor Collector Road
- Major Collector Road
- Site Location



Yonge Street

St. John's Sideroad

2.5 Context Map

- Subject Site - 46 St. John's Sideroad
- 
 Park/Sports/Recreation
- 
 Retail/Commercial/Services
- 
 Bus Stops
- 
 School/Education

3.0 Proposal

3.1 Development Proposal

The proposed development is comprised of 5 townhouse blocks in two groups. The townhouse blocks are organized around Mews, a type of shared space that promotes a sense of community and a “people-first, car-second” approach. The development will have a total of 39 residential units and a total of 57 parking spaces, 39 of which are in garages, and 18 are surface parking. A total of 6,982.3 m² of residential gross floor area is proposed on the lot area of 8,062.8 m².

All residential units are 4-storeys in height. Garages occupy the ground level, living areas are on the second level, and bedrooms make up the 2 upper levels. The units also have a fourth bedroom or office on the ground floor. Each unit has rooftop access and either a backyard or a front yard. Each unit also has access to a mews, which is intended to be a space for gathering or recreation for residents. Mews act as both vehicular access to each unit’s

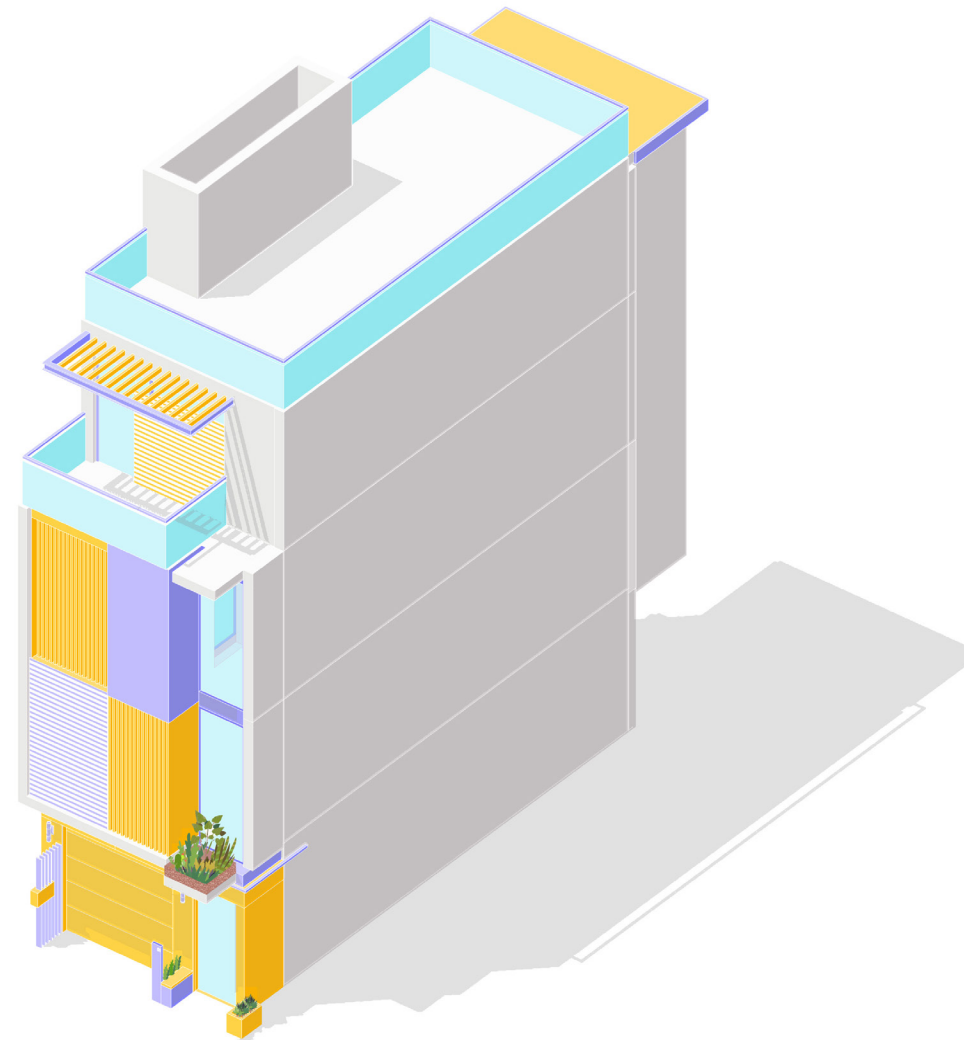
garage, and a safe open space for children to play which is facilitated by traffic calming design. Units fronting onto St. John’s Sideroad and the new private street will have 2 entrances, and those that do not will have 1 entrance along their mews.

The proposed development will be compatible with the adjacent character of the area. Appropriate buffers and setbacks will be provided to ensure that the buildings are attractive, desirable, and compatible with the surrounding properties.



Townhouses separated by the mews.

3.2 Development Images



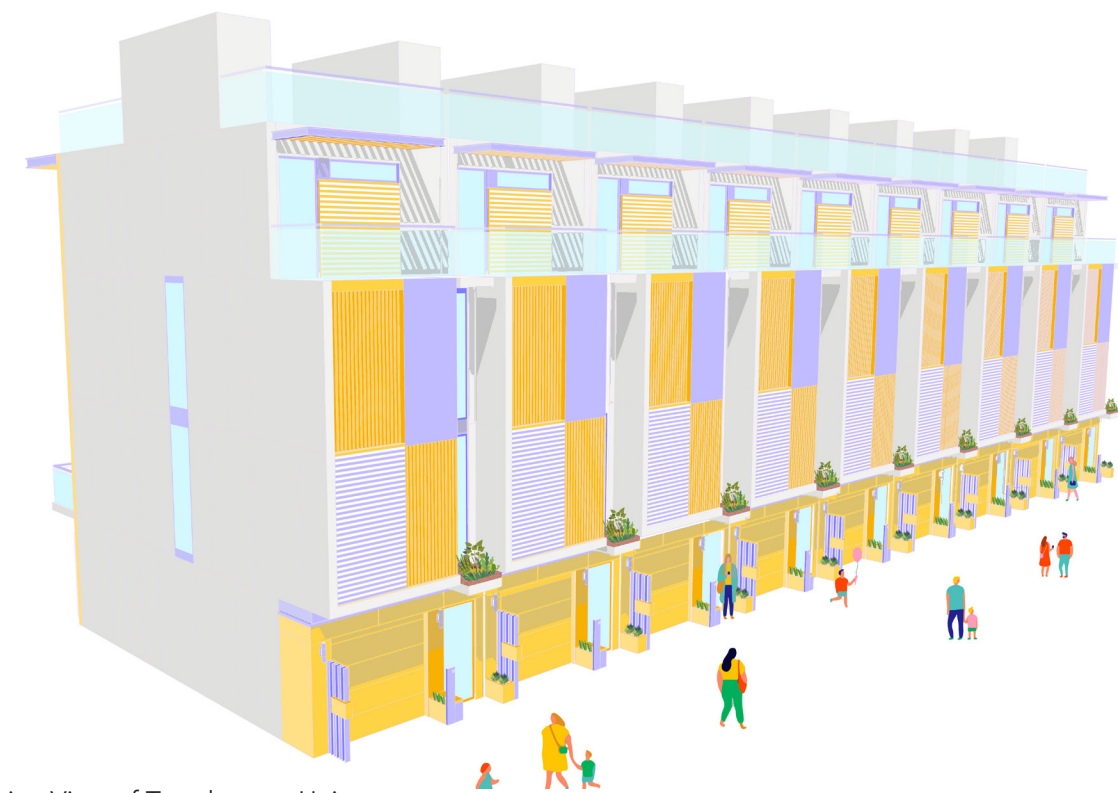
Isometric View of a Stylized Townhouse Unit



Elevation View of a Townhouse Block



Pedestrian View of Mews



Pedestrian View of Townhouses Units

4.0 Policy and Regulations

4.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”), 2020 provides direction on matters related to land use planning and development. The statement directs the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land for healthy, liveable and safe communities. To achieve this, the PPS provides direction for concentrating development in existing settlement areas. The PPS promotes opportunities for transit-supportive development, accommodating a significant range of housing options through intensification and redevelopment.

The subject site is located within a settlement area which is the focus for growth and development. The land use pattern within settlement areas shall be based on a mix of densities and land uses, while optimizing the use of infrastructure and transit (1.1.3.2a,b,f). The proposed development makes efficient use of land within an area where roads, sanitary and municipal services are available. The proposed development would require only minimal extensions of existing infrastructure.

The proposed development delivers a form of housing that is compatible with the existing community.

4.2 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)

A Place to Grow Plan, builds on the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) to establish a unique land use planning framework for the GGH that supports the achievement of complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment, and social equity. Broadly, the Growth Plan is contingent upon the implementation of, and adherence to, a set of core guiding principles. Key among these guiding principles are i) complete communities, ii) intensification and higher densities in strategic growth areas to make efficient use of land and infrastructure and support transit viability, iii) a range and mix of housing options, iv) improving the integration of land use planning with planning and investment in infrastructure and public service facilities (1.2.1).

To support the achievement of complete communities that are healthier, safer, and more equitable, choices about where and how growth occurs in the GGH need to be made carefully. The subject site is classified as a settlement area which can result in better use of land and infrastructure by directing growth to settlement areas and prioritizing intensification (2.1). Applying the policies of this Plan will support the achievement of complete communities that: i) feature a diverse mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses; and ii) provide a diverse range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and affordable housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes (2.2.1).

4.3 Region of York Official Plan

The Region of York Official Plan will guide economic, environmental and community building decisions to manage growth. The plan seeks to promote an appropriate mix and range of acceptable housing to meet the needs of residents and workers (3.5).

The subject site is located within the Urban Area in the Town of Aurora. Intensification within Urban Areas will accommodate a significant portion of the planned growth in the Region to maximize efficiencies in infrastructure delivery, human services provision and transit ridership. These areas will provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhoods (5.3).

The proposed development is adjacent to Yonge Street, a Regional Corridor (Map 1 – Region of York Official Plan), that serves a critical role as the primary locations for the most intensive and greatest mix of development within the Region (5.4.1). Development within Regional Corridors should be of an urban form and design that are desirable and appropriate locations for intensification and mixed-use development (5.4.30).

A section of the site is within the Regional Greenlands System (Map 2) and have also been identified as a Provincially Significant and Provincial Plan Area Wetland. With respect to Wellhead Protection Areas, the site is located within a 0-2 Year Zone of an active wellhead (Map 6). The subject site is outside the boundaries of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan (Map 3).

4.4 Region of York Transportation Master Plan

York Region is expected to grow to 1.79 million people by 2041. The Transportation Master Plan establishes the vision for transportation services by assessing the existing transportation system performance and forecasting future travel demand. The proposed 2041 Transit Network (Map 7) identifies Yonge Street as a rapid transit corridor and St. John's Sideroad as a frequent transit network. Locating density along rapid transit corridors, as the proposed development does, is key to supporting this investment in transit.

The proposed development conforms to the general intent of the YROP by proposing residential development in the Urban Area where such growth should be focused.

4.5 Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is a local watershed management organization, incorporated under the Conservation Authorities Act (1946). The LSRCA is responsible for the conservation, restoration, and management of the Lake Simcoe watershed.

The site is found within the LSRCA area however based on evidence provided by the LSRCA in February of 2019 there is no environmental feature that would be associated with the site.

4.6 Town of Aurora Official Plan (2010)

The Town of Aurora Official Plan establishes the vision, corresponding principles and supporting policies to guide the Town's evolution and development to the year 2031. The Aurora OP was written to direct change in accordance with Provincial and York Region policy, with emphasis on the development of a complete community which is environmentally responsible, supports transit, and utilizes infrastructure efficiently.

The Aurora OP outlines policies that encourage a broad range of housing types, sizes, densities, designs, tenures and prices to meet the needs of the Town's current and future residents (6.0). The proposed development supports the efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure, promotes higher density and intensification and ensures that the development results in a vibrant and complete community (3.1). The subject site is designated as a

Stable Neighbourhood and is adjacent to existing commercial uses.

4.6.1 Environmental Designations

In Schedule E – Environmental Designations of Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM), the adjacent site to the west contains a designation of Environmental Protection. According to the Official Plan the boundaries and extent of the Environmental Protection Area designation shown on Schedule 'E' are approximate. Minor adjustments or refinements to these boundaries may occur through an Environmental Impact Statement or Natural Heritage Evaluation that demonstrates the appropriateness of the adjustment to the satisfaction of Council, in consultation with relevant agencies. Such minor adjustments or refinements will not require an amendment to the OP, otherwise a OPA will be required.

This same area is regulated by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority as shown in Schedule F of the Official Plan. Schedule E1 – Environmental Designations on ORM (OPA 48), does not apply to the site. On Schedule L, the site falls within a Wellhead Protection Area of a 0-2 Year Zone, and a 100 Metre Zone.

In regards to the Environmental Designations, a Floodplain Impact Study that was prepared by IBI in December 2021 concludes that the flood hazard is confined to the floodplain adjacent to the Holland River East. Upon further study and clarification from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority from the Acting Manager of Planning sent via email on February 5, 2019 it was stated that the Environmental Protection (EP117) associated with the site was "a misconception by the Town planner... [and] that the LSRCA never had an issue with EP117 area being zoned to a residential zone..." SLR Consulting concluded in their letter dated December 21, 2021 that EP117 should be removed per the email from LSRCA with the lands to the northeast remaining in the Environmental Protection Zone (EP and EP-5).

SLR Consulting has concluded that no features or functions of provincial, regional or local concern were identified with respect to natural heritage. Although the northeast corner of the site is designated as a Greenlands System, Environmental Protection, there does not appear to be any underlying environmental sensitive conditions per the report prepared by SLR Consulting dated December 21, 2021.

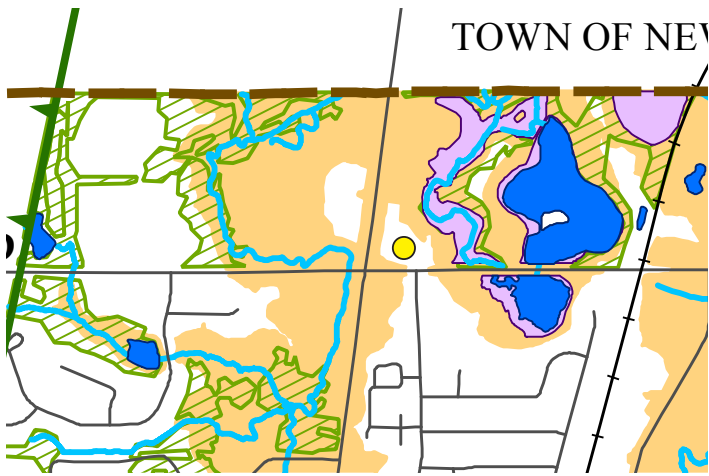


Image #6 Schedule E Environmental Designations

- Site Location
- Environmental Protection
- Wetlands
- Watercourse
- Waterbodies

4.6.2 Cultural Heritage

Under Schedule D of the Town of Aurora Official Plan, the site is not located within the Town’s designated Heritage Resource Area.

4.6.3 Parkland Dedication

Parkland dedication requirements shall be applied in all designations within the Aurora Promenade only (11.10.1). The site falls outside of the Aurora Promenade.

4.6.4 Affordable Housing

Within the Town of Aurora Official Plan, a minimum of 25% of all new residential development must meet the definition of affordable housing as per Policy 6.3 a).

The OP encourages the development of housing that is affordable for low and moderate income households or individuals. As well as a broad range of housing sizes, densities, designs, tenures and prices, to meet the needs of current and future residents.

The proposed development meets the intent of the OP by establishing a range of housing sizes, densities and prices.

4.6.5 Land Use

All new development within the ‘Stable Neighbourhoods’ designation shall have a maximum height of 3 storeys or 9 m, whichever is less.

All new townhouses, multiple-unit buildings, communal housing and special needs housing may only be permitted within the ‘Stable Neighbourhood’ designation subject to achieving

the following criteria to the satisfaction of Council:

- i. the development shall respect the existing character of the surrounding neighbourhood through compatible and complementary building siting, massing, height and scale; and,
- ii. the exterior design of the proposed building or buildings, including materials, colours, architectural detail, landscaping, and streetscape elements shall be compatible with the proposal’s immediate neighbours.

The proposed development meets the intent of the OP and will result in a modest level of intensification that is compatible with the surrounding context. The development will introduce gentle density that focuses on low-rise family oriented dwellings that is compatible with the adjacent 4-storey senior apartment building and the Site Specific Policy allowing 4-storey structures on the site.

4.6.6 Site Specific Policy

The site is located within Site Specific Policy Area 1 (Schedule H) in Section 16 of the Official Plan. Part Lot 86, Concession 1 is designated as Urban Residential to permit a maximum of 143 dwellings in two four-storey structures. Furthermore the area is intended to accommodate primarily low-intensity, environmentally-sensitive residential development.

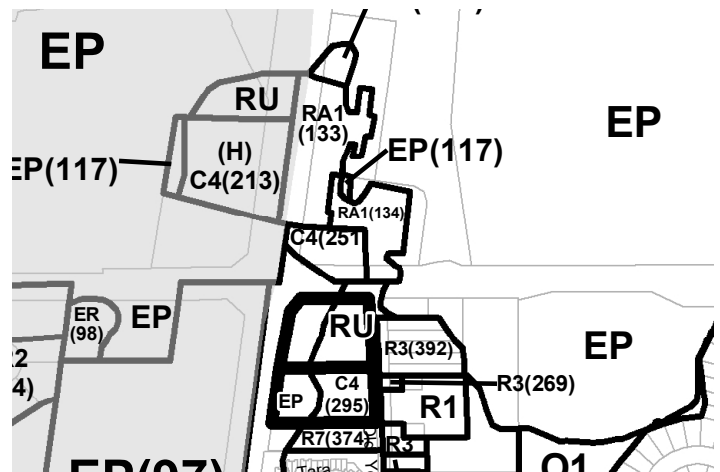


Image #7 Schedule A Zoning Bylaw 6000-17 Map No, 3

- RA1 - First Density Apartment Residential
- EP(117) - Environmental Protection

4.7 Aurora Zoning Bylaw 6000-17

Under the Town of Aurora Zoning By-law 6000-17, the site is located in a Apartment Residential Zone RA1 and an Environmental Protection Zone with two exceptions No 134 and No 117.

Apartment Residential Zone

This contains a minimum lot area requirement of 130 m² per dwelling unit, minimum lot frontage of 30 m, a rear yard of 9 m. The maximum height is 18.5 m.

Environmental Protection Zone

The site is also subject to an Environmental Protection Zone designation with the following permitted uses: athletic fields, agricultural uses, conservation, golf courses, public and private park, stormwater management ponds, and woodlands. No buildings or structures shall be erected in the Environmental Protection (EP) Zone.

Although part of the site is zoned Environmental Protection (EP117), the evidence gathered by SLR Consulting through the Environmental Impact Study in 2019, and the Floodplain Impact Study in 2021 demonstrate that the two relevant designations on the site the Greenlands System, Environmental Protection designation in the Official Plan and the Environmental Protection designation in the Zoning does not appear to be reflective of any underlying

sensitive environmental features. The proposed development is therefore sensitive to the area's environmental features especially those that fall within the McKenzie Marsh Wetland Complex.

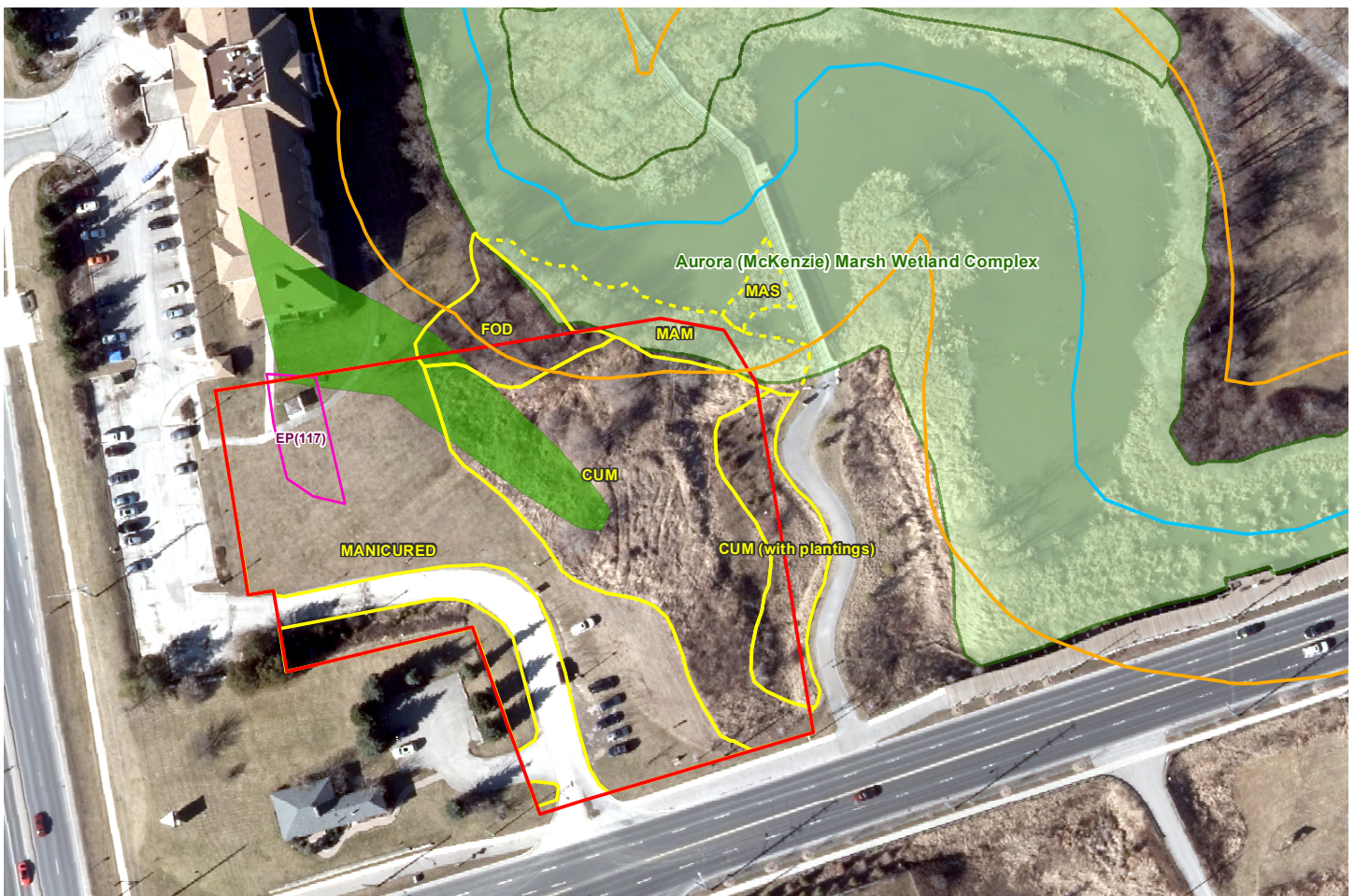


Image #8 Environmental Impact Assessment - SLR Consulting December 21, 2021

- ▭ Property Boundary
- ▭ Aurora Zoning EP(117)
- ▭ Official Plan Greenlands System Environmental Protection
- ▭ Detailed ELC Assessment
- ▭ General ELC Assessment
- ▭ Tributary (30 m Buffer)

5.0 Proposed Amendment to the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw

This development requires both an Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment. An OPA is required to amend the height and number of storeys for a Stable Neighbourhood designation from 3 storeys or 9 m to 4 storeys and 13 m. The OPA would also remove the Greenlands System, Environmental Protection designation within the development limits of the site only to Stable Neighbourhood.

A ZBA is required to rezone the site from an Apartment Residential RA1 (134) to a Townhouse Dwelling Residential Exception Zone to accommodate the proposed development. The ZBA would also remove the Environmental Protection (EP117) designation within the developmental limits of the site only.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed development is consistent with provincial, regional and local policies and guidelines. The site presents an efficient use of land and is well suited for intensification. The proposal provides sufficient buffering to adjacent environmental features and is in close proximity to transit, commercial, retail and other community services.

The massing and scale of the design is appropriate and compatible with the surrounding context. The site is set back and appropriately framed to ensure adequate privacy, pedestrian and vehicle access throughout the development.

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