

# **49 High Street**

ROLL # 434203100904000

**City of Barrie**

APPLICATION FOR

## **SITE PLAN CONTROL**

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PREPARED BY

### **INNOVATIVE PLANNING SOLUTIONS**

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ON BEHALF OF

**Wild Gray Capital Management Group Inc.**

**December 2024**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Innovative Planning Solutions (IPS) has been retained by Wild Gray Capital Management Group Inc. to prepare an Affordable Housing Report in support of an application for Site Plan Control on lands municipally known as 49 High Street, in the City of Barrie. **Figure 1** shows the location of the subject lands.

The subject lands are currently designated '*High Density*' in the City of Barrie 2024 Official Plan (**Figure 2**) and are zoned as '*Central Area Commercial*' under the City of Barrie Zoning By-law-2009-141. The site is also within an '*Urban Growth Centre*' and '*Intensification Corridor*' per the Official Plan. The site is not within any conservation authority boundary or regulated area.

The proposed development is for a change of use and remodel at an existing building at 49 High Street that is currently used for commercial purposes as well as business offices. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors of the building are proposed to be converted from office to residential rental units. The portion of the ground floor with frontage on Dunlop Street is proposed to remain as commercial space while the rear portion of the ground floor is proposed to be converted into a parking garage to accommodate the new residential units. The second floor will remain as office space. The proposed modifications make efficient use of the existing building while simultaneously increasing the housing supply and providing attainable housing in the downtown core. In order to proceed with this development, an application for Site Plan Control is required. Following the first submission for Site Plan Control, an application will be submitted for a Minor Variance from the parking requirements.

The subject Affordable Housing Report will showcase the way in which the proposed project at 49 High Street will contribute to the affordable housing strategy under the City of Barrie to satiate the growing demand for affordable housing units within the vicinity.

This report will review the subject application in the context of applicable Provincial and Municipal policies to provide necessary rationale for the approval of the proposal, including:

- Planning Act
- Provincial Planning Statement
- City of Barrie Official Plan (2024)
- Affordable Housing Strategy (2023)

## 2.0 SUBJECT LANDS & SURROUNDING USES

The subject lands are located at 49 High Street, in the City of Barrie. The property has a site area of 1,023.716 m<sup>2</sup> and has 62.554 meters of frontage along High Street and 16.474 metres of frontage on Dunlop Street West. The development lands currently contain a 4-storey Building that encompasses the entire area of the property.

Uses in the surrounding area include the following:

**North:** Directly to the North is a surface parking lot, followed by historic single-detached dwellings, many of which have been converted into commercial uses. Further north is Queen's Park.

**East:** Lands to the east are one- and two-storey commercial buildings.

**South:** Land to the south, across Dunlop Street, is currently vacant and zoned C1.

**West:** Lands to the west, across High Street, are historic single-detached dwellings, many of which have been converted into commercial uses.



**Figure 1. Subject Lands**

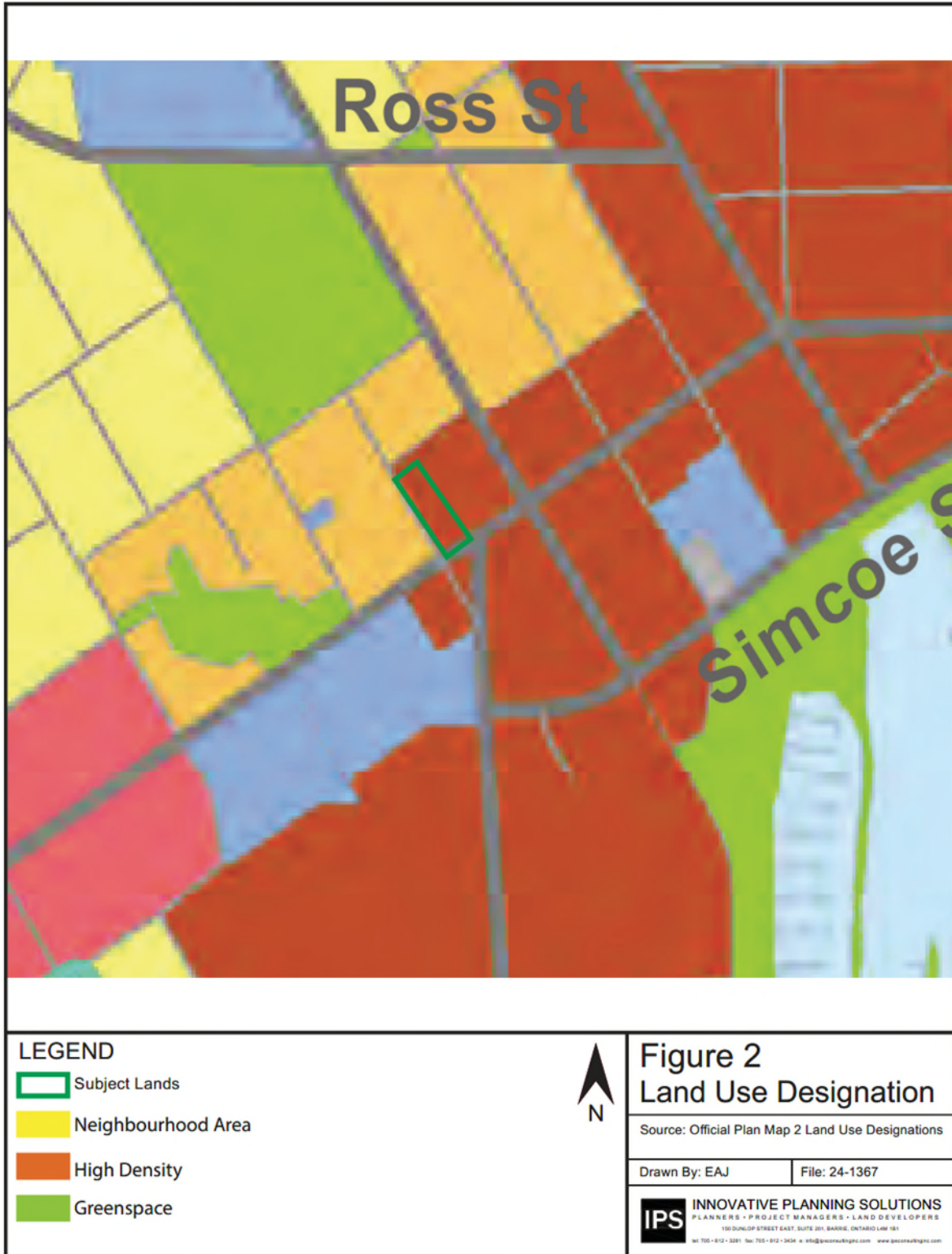


Figure 2. Land Use Designation

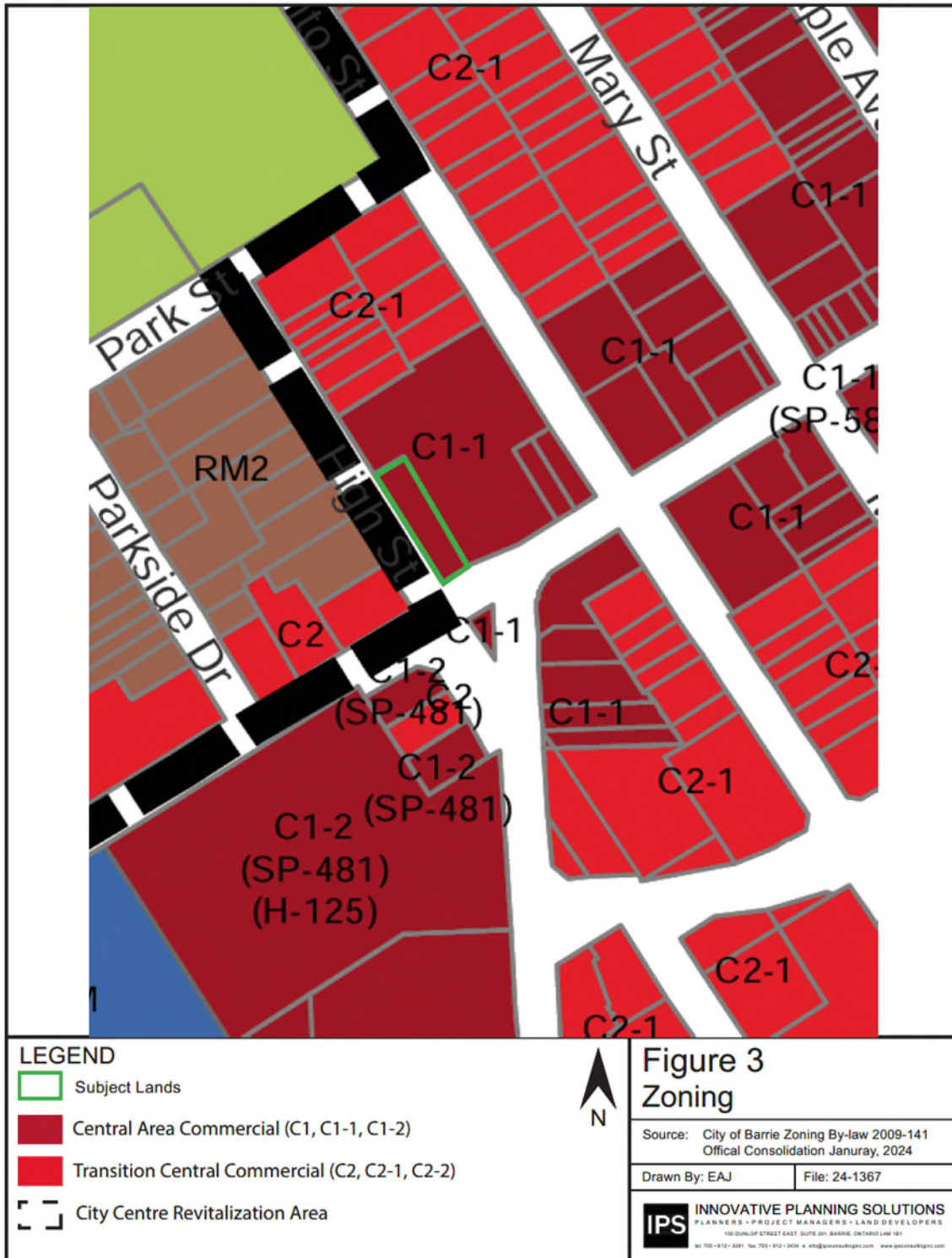


Figure 3: Zoning

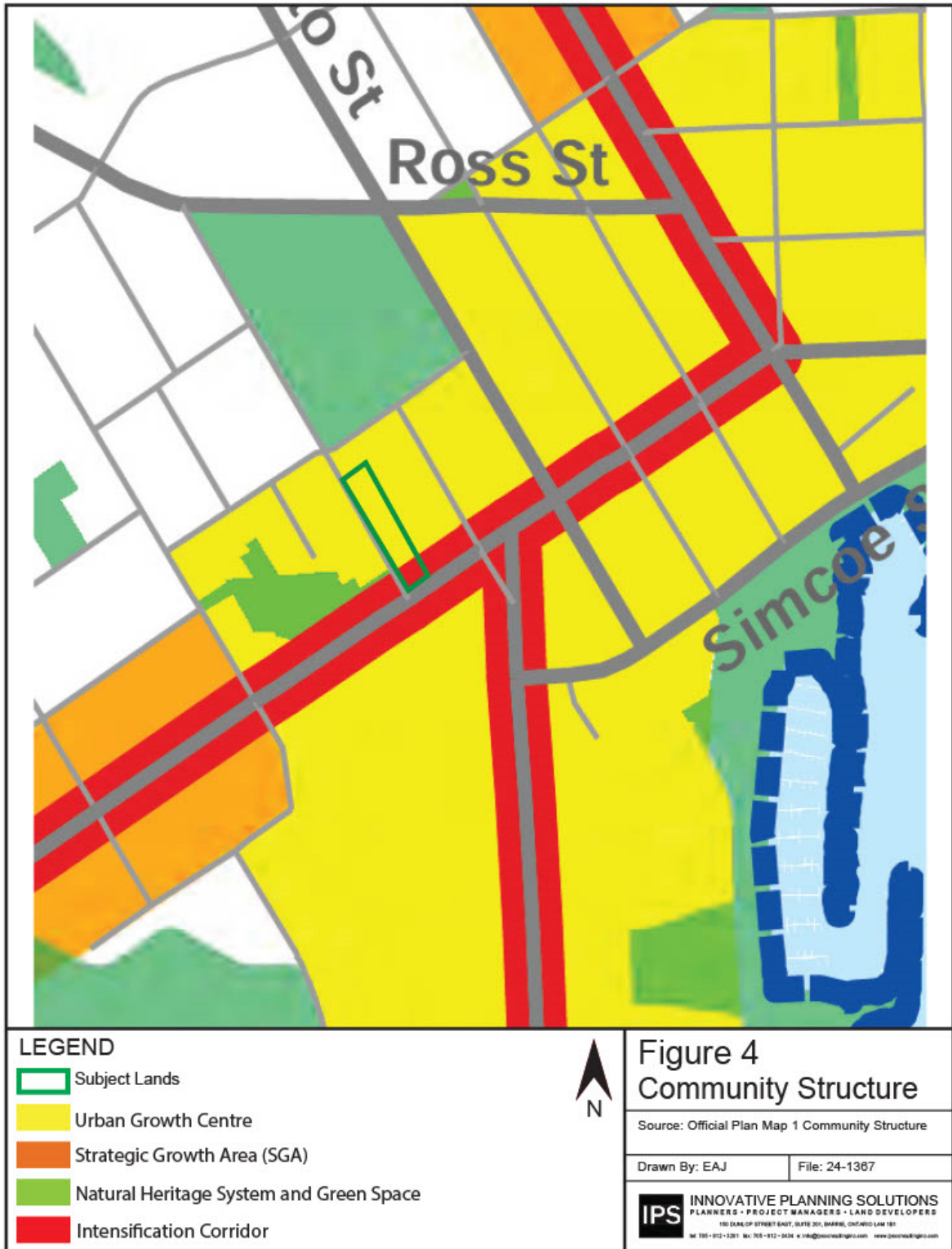


Figure 4: Community Structure

### **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development is for a change of use and remodel at an existing building on 49 High Street that is currently used for commercial purposes as well as business offices. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors of the building are proposed to be converted from office to residential rental units; a total of 20 new apartment units will be created.

The portion of the ground floor with frontage on Dunlop Street is proposed to remain as commercial space while the rear portion of the ground floor is proposed to be converted into a parking garage to accommodate the new residential units. The new parking area will have 13 parking spaces, a ratio of 0.65 parking spaces per unit.

No changes are proposed on the second floor, nor to the height or density of the existing building. Some cosmetic updates only are proposed to the exterior.

## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY & ANALYSIS

This Section will outline the applicable policies guiding the development of the subject lands. Each section will outline applicable plans and policies with a planning rationale on conformity and development principles

The Planning Act (The Act) is the provincial legislation that establishes the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. It describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them. The Act promotes sustainable development while balancing factors such as economic development, preservation of the natural environment and the creation of healthy communities, within a provincial framework focused on provincial interests and fairness.

The policies, as set out in Section 2 of the Planning Act, inform the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), and other matters of provincial interest, ensuring consistency with the Act.

### 4.1 PLANNING ACT

Under Section 2 of the Planning Act, key matters of provincial interest include:

- The adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing.
- The protection of public health and safety.
- The appropriate location of growth and development.
- The promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians.
- The promotion of a built form that is well designed encourages a sense of place, and provides public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive, and vibrant.

The subject lands are located within the City of Barrie where growth and development in all forms is concentrated. The proposed development would provide 20 new rental apartment housing units in a dense urban area with easy access to jobs and amenities. Rental housing is generally a more affordable option than for-sale units, allowing a wider demographic to access housing in a desirable area.

The proposed development is able to take advantage of existing infrastructure and municipal services which exist in the area, including schools, public spaces and parks, commercial

amenities, employment opportunities and public transit. The proposal further provides for the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features, and functions by developing on these lands with no known or identified features.

It is our professional opinion that the proposed development aligns with the Province's Interest in land use planning.

## **4.2 PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT**

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) is a vital part of Ontario's policy-led planning system. The PPS provides the policy foundation that regulates development in order to protect resources, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment.

The 2024 PPS contains policies that fall under four overarching sections, with the goal of fostering an effective and efficient land use planning system:

- Increasing the housing supply by promoting a diverse range of housing.
- Creating a strong and competitive economy that continues to attract investment and mature and provides opportunities to the people who live and work in the province;
- Prioritizing compact and transit-supportive infrastructure that will provide convenient access to housing, employment, services and recreation; and
- Recognizing and protecting the vibrant agricultural sector, natural resources, and sensitive areas by prioritizing development in urban and rural settlement areas.

### **4.2.1 INCREASING HOUSING SUPPLY**

Section 2.1 of the PPS addresses the intent of providing appropriate infrastructure to support the growing population in Ontario. This is achieved through adequate growth planning and the promotion of *complete communities* which provide a mix of housing options as well as transportation options, employment opportunities, and access to public service facilities, institutional uses such as schools, and parks and open space. To achieve this goal requires the efficient use of lands available within Settlement Areas. To meet the long-term needs of residents, the Plan also supports the accommodation of an affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types, including multi-unit housing, with access to employment opportunities. More specifically, the PPS promotes intensification to achieve cost-effective development patterns and reduce servicing costs.

Section 2.2 furthers the rationale that areas need to have various housing options to provide for different types of household and income levels. This section also recognizes that there is a need for residential intensification to meet density targets and provide for both current and future residents. Additionally, the PPS promotes redevelopment on underutilized lands to meet intensification and density targets. As mentioned above this section of the PPS indicates how to appropriately and efficiently provide housing options for the growing population.

Section 2.3 of the PPS outlines policies on Settlement Areas; the subject lands are located within the Settlement Area of the City of Barrie. Settlement Areas are identified as the focus for growth and development. Land use patterns within Settlement Areas are directed to be based on a range of uses and opportunities for intensification and redevelopment, where it can be accommodated. More specifically, land use patterns are to be based on densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently utilize land, services, and resources, and are transit- and active transportation-supportive. Settlement Areas are targeted for accommodating a significant supply and range of housing options through intensification and redevelopment, to promote compact forms of development. This is reiterated for development within designated growth areas to support a mix of uses and densities that allow for the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and public service facilities. The City of Barrie is a “large and fast-growing municipality” (see PPS Appendix – Schedule 1) that is targeted for additional density.

#### **4.2.2 STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS**

Section 2.4 of the PPS specifically addresses policies for Strategic Growth Areas. Strategic Growth Areas should be focal points for growth and development, with the intended purpose of achieving complete communities through intensification and redevelopment, particularly mixed-use developments. To achieve this goal, Strategic Growth Areas should be planned to accommodate significant population growth and to support affordable, accessible, and equitable housing.

The subject lands are within an Urban Growth Center and are very close to a Strategic Growth Area. The proposed development therefore represents an opportunity to promote the adaptive reuse of an existing building in an area designated for growth through the conversion of underutilized office space into new housing units. This type of redevelopment and intensification of population is appropriate and expected in an Urban Growth Centre and near a Strategic Growth Area.

### **4.2.3 INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES**

Sections 3.1 and 3.6 of the PPS plan to accommodate forecasted growth in a manner that promotes the efficient use and optimization of municipal services (water/sewage). Within Settlement Areas, intensification and redevelopment are promoted, wherever feasible, to optimize the use of municipal services. Municipal services are proposed and available for the subject development, per the Functional Servicing Report included with this application.

Additionally, sections 3.2 to 3.3 note that the transportation systems and infrastructure should be adequate to accommodate the forecasted growth. These systems should be multimodal and efficient in moving both people and goods. The intensified development in the area adequately provides for and further enhances the transportation system through a more compact and walkable streetscape. This will in turn contribute to the active transit and multi-modal goals of the PPS.

Consistent with the PPS, the proposed development makes efficient use of an existing building through an adaptive reuse of underutilized office space into residential units. The building is located in an area with existing infrastructure, amenities, and services, and will make efficient use of existing investments in the area. The subject application is consistent with the PPS.

## **4.3 CITY OF BARRIE OFFICIAL PLAN (2024)**

The City of Barrie Official Plan 2051 (“The Plan”) provides policy direction for the future of the municipality, and outlines how the city will grow and develop through to 2051. The Plan outlines that Barrie is the most populous and prominent city north of the Ontario Greenbelt and is significant as a regional urban centre. The Plan visualizes that Barrie will be a vibrant and attractive medium-sized city and outlines the policy framework to support that vision.

The subject lands are designated as ‘**High Density**’ on Map 2 the Official Plan; per Map 1 of the Official Plan, the subject lands are within an ‘**Urban Growth Centre**’, and this stretch of Dunlop Street, which abuts the site, is an ‘**Intensification Corridor**’.

Section 2.3.2 states that Urban Growth Centers (UGCs) are envisioned to be a hub for businesses, residences, and visitors, and that the area should accordingly provide a broad range of uses and activities. UGC locations are planned to be complete communities with high densities and a wide

mix of uses. The proposed remodeling of the existing building will contribute to these goals by providing three uses within one building – commercial, office, and residential.

Section 2.3.6 states that Intensification Corridors are areas planned for higher-density and mixed-use development along arterial streets that connect Barrie's growth centres.

The site is therefore planned for density and development, and is intended to handle density.

Section 2.6.3 provides policies for the lands designated High Density in the Official Plan. A range of uses are permitted within the High-Density Designation including residential, office, and commercial as part of a mixed-use development. Buildings facing an arterial street are encouraged to have ground floor commercial along the frontage, so the proposed development maintains the pedestrian-oriented retail space along the Dunlop Street frontage, in keeping with the policies of the Official Plan. While this land use designation calls for a minimum height of 12 storeys and a minimum density of 300 units per hectare, the building is existing and is therefore permitted to remain as a legal non-conforming building.

The proposal is in conformity with the Official Plan.

## 5.0 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Section 2.2.1(a) of the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) requires that planning authorities provide an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs for low to moderate-income households. Further, this housing should be directed to areas where appropriate levels of infrastructure and public service facilities are or will be available. Housing costs should be minimized and intensification, particularly near transit corridors, prioritized.

The City of Barrie, like many municipalities across Ontario, is facing a housing affordability crisis, with the cost of the housing out of reach for much of the population. Recognizing the continued trend of housing costs outpacing wages, the City of Barrie has put in place a number of policies and initiatives to address this issue. Below is a review of the City's affordable housing objectives as they apply to the development proposal.

### 5.1 OFFICIAL PLAN AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICIES

Section 6.4.2 of the Official Plan (OP) outlines the policies for incorporating affordable housing options into new developments to support the needs of the growing population in Barrie. The City of Barrie aims to achieve affordable housing by offering a mix of housing options at different densities to meet the comprehensive needs of the residents of Barrie. The Official Plan indicates various provisions to support affordable housing when it is provided in new residential projects and redevelopment of residential lands.

Policies within this Section note that the City encourages developers to propose innovative affordable housing options; the proposed adaptive reuse of an existing underutilized office building into rental housing units makes use of existing infrastructure in a well-serviced area of the city while providing a new, more affordable housing type and tenure. The proposed adaptive reuse will be faster to build than a new building, allowing new housing units to come online and begin housing people faster.

Section 6.4.2(e)(iv) indicates that all new residential development and redevelopment in *High Density* land use designations shall provide 15% of their units as affordable across a range of unit sizes. Section 2.3(d)(ii) further indicates that at least 20% of housing units developed in the Urban Growth Centre satisfy the criteria for affordable housing per the policies of 6.4.2.

The City of Barrie Affordable Housing Strategy (2023) includes a Housing Needs Assessment completed in May 2023. One of the key findings of the Assessment is that rental housing

development has been stagnant; in fact, only 350 net new units were added to the rental supply in the past 20 years. Most rental options are on the secondary market, which does not have the same security of tenure as purpose-built rentals. As a result, rental rates have been rising rapidly.

The proposed development will increase the supply of rental housing units by 20 units without any loss of existing housing units. Given the existing pace of approximately 17.5 new units per year over the past 20 years, the proposed development will significantly increase the overall purpose-built rental supply. This in turn should lead to lower prices overall across the rental market. In addition, the units will have parking unbundled, which will be appealing to residents without a car who do not want to be paying for unused parking spaces.

Based on the above, the proposed development satisfies the affordable housing policies of the City of Barrie and will assist in providing more affordable and attainable housing options within the City. The increased supply of these units will help to reduce housing costs across the housing continuum and will ultimately service the entire population.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This report explores the merits of the proposed development as it relates to all levels of applicable planning policy, for lands located at 49 High Street in the City of Barrie.

The intent of the subject application is to facilitate a change of use and remodel of a 4-storey building from commercial and office to commercial, office, and residential. To permit the proposed development, a Site Plan Control application is required. No changes to the current zoning or land use designation are proposed, although a Minor Variance will be submitted concurrent to the Site Plan application for deficient residential parking.

As demonstrated throughout this report, the proposed development aligns with all levels of planning policy, guidelines, goals, and objectives. The City's Official Plan supports a full range and variety of housing options to encourage development that contributes to the creation of complete communities. Growth is directed to Settlement Areas such as the City of Barrie, with support for more compact housing types through infill and intensification to efficiently utilize land, infrastructure, and reduce servicing costs. Collectively, the proposal represents a development form desired by all levels of planning policy, including the new City of Barrie Official Plan

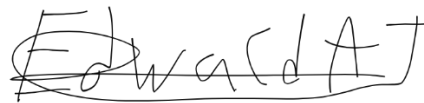
The proposed development will also provide 20 new purpose-built rentals, a housing type that is generally more affordable than for-sale units. The proposal will therefore contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the City, in line with the policies of the Official Plan and the goals of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Respectfully submitted,

### Innovative Planning Solutions



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