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URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

390 Essa Road

City of Barrie

390 Essa Road
CITY OF BARRIE
COUNTY OF SIMCOE

URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

PREPARED BY

INNOVATIVE PLANNING SOLUTIONS

150 DUNLOP STREET EAST, SUITE 201

BARRIE, ONTARIO L4M 1B2

TEL: (705) 812-3281

FAX: (705) 812-3438

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URBAN DESIGN BRIEF
OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT

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1.0 PURPOSE

This Urban Design Brief addresses the various guidelines and policies developed to guide urban design within the City of Barrie. The guidelines and policies have been reviewed against the proposed development concept to demonstrate that the proposed built form is consistent with the intent and objectives of the City's direction for Urban Design. This brief is part of a submission for Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications which includes:

- Planning Justification Report – Innovative Planning Solutions
- Functional Servicing Report – Pinestone Engineering Ltd.
- Stormwater Management Report – Pinestone Engineering Ltd.
- Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan – Landmark Environmental Group Ltd.
- Geotechnical Report – Peto MacCallum Ltd.

2.0 CONTENT

This brief will review the Official Plan Urban Design Guidelines (Section 6.5), the City of Barrie Urban Design Manual, and City of Barrie Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines relative to the proposed development of the subject lands. The scale and design of the proposed development will increase the range and type of housing along Essa Road, and increase the stock of units in an area that is currently comprised primarily of low density, single detached dwellings, with some scattered medium-high density residential units. Nearby commercial uses will benefit from increased local customers and population in the area. The proposed development will create a comfortable yet compact built form in keeping with the intensification objectives of the City of Barrie and Province. The proposed development is in a transit conducive neighbourhood with the opportunity to increase the modal share of active and public transportation users within the City of Barrie.

This Urban Design Brief relative to 390 Essa Road addresses issues of urban design relating to:

- Land use
- Urban built form, housing types and densities
- Building placement

- High quality design and materials
- Streetscape and landscaping
- Pedestrian scale and walkability

2.1 Contextual Analysis

The subject lands are located at 390 Essa Road, just north of the intersection of Essa Road and Veterans Drive, . The subject property is located within the Holly Planning Area, as identified on Schedule 'B', and is located within the Built-up Area as identified on Schedule 'I' of the City of Barrie Official Plan. The subject land has a total area of 0.35 hectares (0.87 acres), with approximately 65.1 metres (213.58 feet) of frontage along Essa Road. Essa Road is an Arterial Road as identified on Schedule 'D' of the Official Plan, and is also an Intensification Corridor on Schedule 'I' of the Official Plan. The site is currently serviced by municipal water and sewer. The site is generally flat with tree vegetation generally towards the sites boundaries.

The subject lot contains a single detached dwelling unit and multiple accessory buildings. The dwelling and structures are to be removed prior to development occurring. The abutting lands to the north are occupied by recently constructed residential townhouse dwellings including future stacked townhouse dwellings along lands designated for environmental protection purposes. To the southwest are lands designated for commercial use fronting Essa Road, including a commercial plaza with a variety of amenities. In addition, to the south is an established residential neighbourhood, characterized by primarily semi-detached dwellings. East of the property are predominantly residential dwellings, including a three-storey walk up apartment. West of the subject lands are primarily occupied by an existing residential neighbourhood, characterized by mainly single-detached residential dwellings.

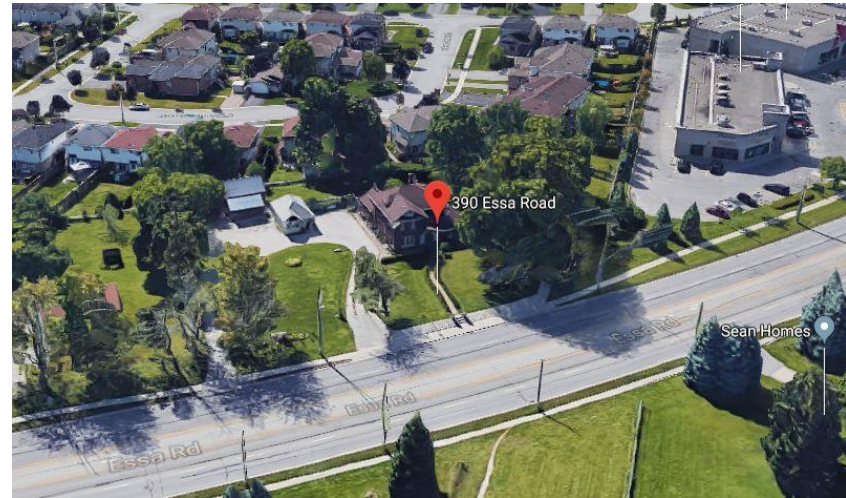
Figure 1: View of 390 Essa Road

Source: Google Maps



Figure 2: View of 390 Essa Road and Surrounding Area

Source: Google Maps



The subject lands are in close proximity to several local bus routes which provide convenient access to Downtown Barrie, Regional Transit opportunities, and other major local destinations. There are four bus stops within 300 metres of the proposed development, including routes 2 and 8 which stop in close proximity to the subject lots along Essa Road, Veterans Drive and Ferndale Drive South. Route 8 provides the most direct access to the Downtown Barrie Transit Terminal, which provides connections to other local routes as well as regional bus services. Route 2 provides local service to the south end of the City, connecting Park Place to the Downtown Barrie Transit Terminal through residential areas. Stops are within walking distance from the proposed development.

A large commercial/retail plaza is located within walking distance of the subject lands including a grocery store, Tim Hortons, Rexall Pharmacy, a fitness facility, dental office, medical centre, and a number of additional retail stores and eateries.

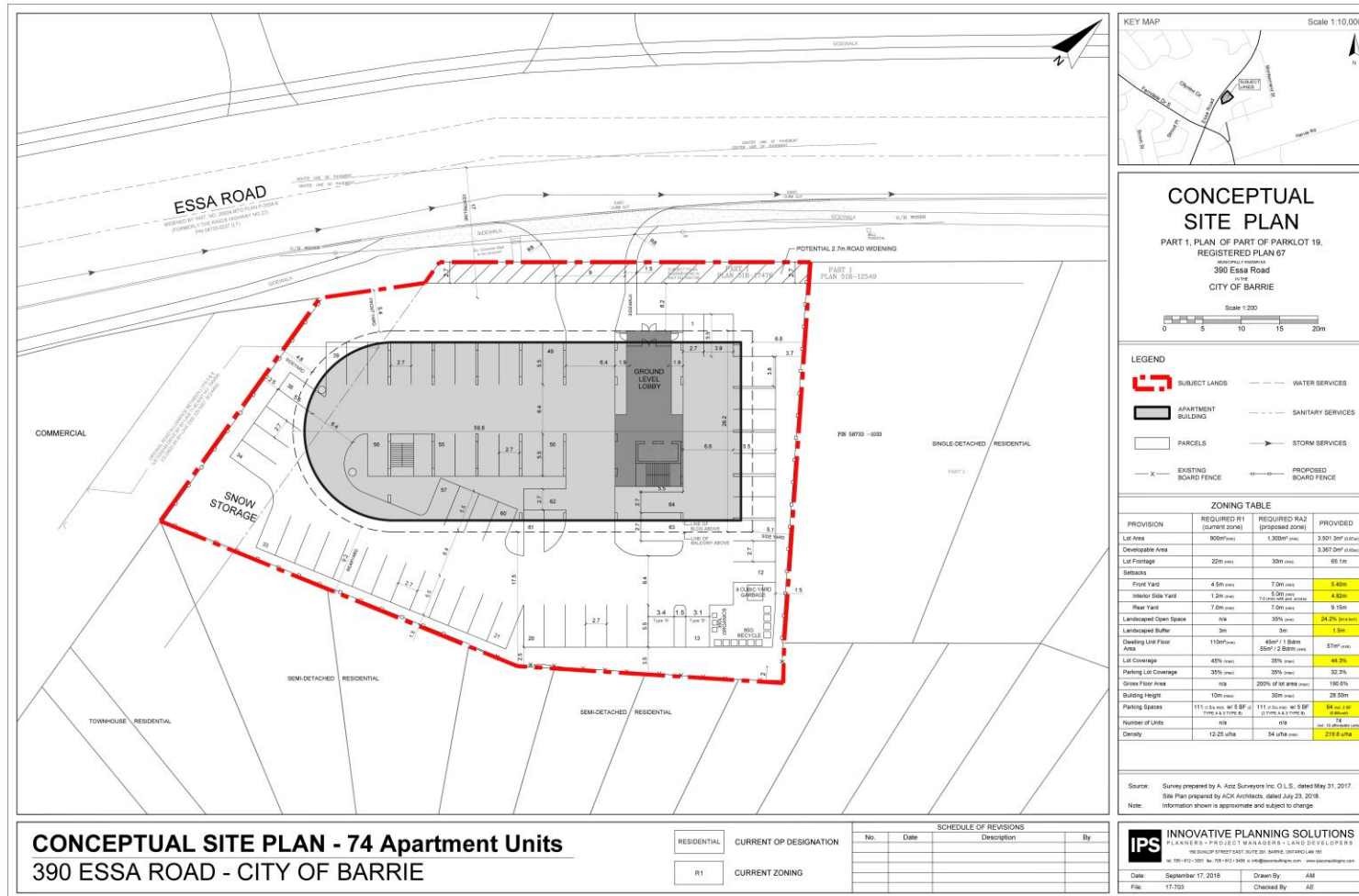
Beyond the above, other important community uses are nearby. This includes several schools and places of worship within walking distance, as well as numerous parks with a range of recreational facilities. The Holly Meadows Community Centre is located approximately two (2) kilometres from the subject lands, and provides a pool, separate toddler pool, two arenas, a full-size gymnasium, a fitness centre, several meeting rooms, a multi purpose room, two activity rooms, youth centre, and child care centre. Additionally, there are two outdoor soccer fields, two outdoor basketball courts, and other outdoor amenity areas surrounding the Holly Meadows Community Centre.

2.2 Site Design

The proposed site plan can be seen in Figure 3. A total of seventy-four (74) units are proposed in one (1) six-storey structure, over five livable storeys. This apartment building will contain both market and affordable renting opportunities. The seventy-four units result in a density of approximately 220 units per hectare. The structure is proposed to reach a height of approximately 28.50 metres.

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Figure 3: Site Plan
Source: Innovative Planning Solutions



The development proposes a total of sixty-four (64) parking spaces dispersed across the site. Parking areas will be accessed through a laneway underneath the building (at the ground level). The parking ratio for the site is 0.87 spaces per unit. The requested reduction to the required parking from 1.5 spaces per unit to 0.87 spaces per unit recognizes the availability of public and active transportation options within close proximity to the proposed development. The property will have automobile access through one entranceway along Essa Road, located to the north of the property. This entranceway has been designed to a 9 metre (29.53 feet) width, accommodating internal and external right and left turning traffic.

Figure 4: Rendering
Source: ACK Architects



Figure 5: Rendering
Source: ACK Architects



The design and orientation of the development proposes a six-storey curvature structure that runs parallel to Essa Road. The structure has dimensions of approximately 23.16 metres by 56.81 metres, with a rounded west façade. The development proposes five livable storeys with approximately twelve (12) units per floor. A lobby is proposed fronting Essa Road on the north side of the building, with access from Essa Road and parking areas to the east and west. The lobby will be connected to the municipal sidewalk by a 1.5m wide pedestrian pathway creating an inviting landscaped area connecting the structure to the façade. The building is buffered to the south by the existing commercial plaza and potentially to the north once redevelopment is realized of this parcel.

The building is surrounded by a strip of landscaped area that provides a buffer between the adjacent properties and the new development. Individual amenity space is provided to each unit in the form of balconies and recreational spaces within the building. Balconies protrude approximately 1.35 metres from the face of the building. The development will also introduce an extensive landscape wall along Essa Road which will incorporate extensive mature plantings to buffer the proposed parking garage from all modes of transportation along Essa Road.

The design of the units will incorporate unique aesthetic properties while utilizing high quality building materials to ensure a façade and structure that promotes a distinctive urban character along Essa Road.

Overall the proposal delivers a high-density development within the built-up area along an intensification corridor, contributing to the range of housing options in a compact urban form. The design maximizes the site's efficiency, and therefore maximizes the use of existing municipal infrastructure along Essa Road. As the lands are located along an intensification corridor, the height and density of the proposed development transitions to a built form that is considered to be respecting of the established low density residential uses to the rear.

3.0 URBAN DESIGN

The City of Barrie has developed a series of policies and guidelines to direct development and urban design throughout the City. In particular, three documents were reviewed relative to this application. The City of Barrie

Official Plan policies found in Section 6.5 provide a vision for urban design throughout the City. The City of Barrie Urban Design Manual was implemented in 2007, and revised in 2014 with the intention of guiding development and identifying the desired built form for new development throughout the City. Finally, as part of the City's Intensification Strategy, the Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines have been implemented to guide development in identified Intensification Areas, one of which being the Essa Road corridor. This section will review the urban design policies found in these three sources as they pertain to the subject development, and how they have been incorporated within the overall design of the site.

3.1 City of Barrie Official Plan

The City of Barrie has developed Urban Design Guidelines, which are found in Section 6.5 of the Official Plan. Policies and guidelines are provided to be a framework for development and maintenance of a healthy, safe, convenient, efficient and aesthetically pleasing urban environment. They intend to improve the appearance of developments across the City incorporating features such as boulevard landscaping, street furniture, lighting, signage, sidewalks and park/plaza development.

Section 6.5.2.2 of the Urban Design Guidelines provides the following recommendations, which pertain to the subject site:

- *Building and Siting:*
 - *The massing and conceptual design of buildings should complement and contribute to a desirable community character;*
 - *All visible sides of buildings should be finished and treated with a high quality of architectural design. Landscaping can be used as additional screening of exposed blank walls;*
 - *Pedestrian links should be designed to ensure safety and provide accessibility between buildings and properties;*
- *Parking Areas:*
 - *Parking areas and driveways should be linked, to reduce the number of turns onto and off a major road;*
 - *Adequate disability parking shall be provided;*
 - *The visual impact of parking areas should be buffered through landscaping;*

- Landscaping:
 - *Planting strips shall be provided along the street frontage;*
- Environmental Features:
 - *The protection of trees, where possible, is encouraged;*
- Signage:
 - *Signs shall complement the architectural design and materials of the buildings;*
- Utilities:
 - *Utilities shall be clustered or grouped, and provide appropriate easements where possible;*
- Energy Efficient Urban Design:
 - *Energy efficiency shall be encouraged through site and building design including building materials, energy conserving landscaping, building orientation etc.; and*
 - *Energy efficiency is promoted through the development of a compact urban form that encourages the use of transit, cycling and walking, a mix of housing uses, and focusing major developments on transit routes.*

These recommendations provide a guideline to designing sites within the City of Barrie. They have been reviewed and considered in the design of the subject lands.

The proposed development proposes a structure that displays a high quality of architectural design and interest. The structure is linked to its surroundings through the use of landscaped area and pedestrian sidewalks, contributing to the safety and accessibility of pedestrians along Essa Road. The proposed bicycle parking encourages residents to make use of active transportation. In addition, parking areas are screened from the street providing a buffer. A Tree Preservation Plan has been undertaken in support of the proposed development. It provided recommendations to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the natural environment and contribute to a welcoming and environmentally friendly design.

3.2 City of Barrie Urban Design Guidelines

The City of Barrie's Urban Design Manual was revised in 2014 and provides direction for many design elements within urban developments. The proposed concept attempts to incorporate many of the design directives found

within this document specifically relative to: the physical environment and building siting; pedestrian and vehicular circulation; site servicing; architectural design; and public transit accessibility.

3.2.1 Physical Environment and Building Siting

- The proposed built form and associated densities are considered to be appropriate for the subject lands given their location within the built-up area along an intensification corridor and proximity to transit and active transportation links. In addition, they satisfy the intensification objectives of the City of Barrie and the Growth Plan.
- Several trees and other natural vegetation have been included in the design of the site, acting as a buffer to the outdoor parking and adjacent residential properties, as well as providing an aesthetic quality to the design of the site.
- A 3.00 metre road widening area has been protected along Essa Road, as required by the City of Barrie.
- The proposed building is setback 5.40 metres from the front lot line providing a pedestrian scaled space that will incorporate landscaped features and pedestrian connection.
- Several vertical architectural elements including varied shading and building materials help to reduce the impression of a lengthy building façade, and diversify the visual presentation and interest of the proposed structure.
- Parking spaces are provided internal to the site, primarily located below the structure (on the ground level). Parking areas are screened from public view through the use of landscaped areas and architectural features.
- The entrance to the lobby and windows of units fronting onto Essa Road will be oriented towards the street to enhance surveillance (eyes on the street).
- A landscaped strip surrounds the site acting as a buffer to adjacent properties and providing amenity space for residents. In addition, individual amenity space is provided for each unit in the form of balconies surrounding the entirety of the structure.

3.2.2 Site Circulation

- Pedestrian access has been incorporated into the design in order to provide safe, convenient, and inviting access from Essa Road. A pedestrian pathway connects the property to the municipal sidewalk, providing access to parking and the lobby of the building.

- Direct pedestrian access to the lobby fronting Essa Road will be provided as the primary means of access for residents. The City of Barrie Urban Design Guidelines promote this type of access as it promotes an active means of transportation and a desired built form for prospective residents.
- Parking has been provided at a ratio of 0.87 spaces per unit, including visitor and barrier-free spaces.

3.2.3 Site Services

- Garbage collection is planned to be private and towards the rear of the site in an enclosure.
- All utilities are currently proposed to be located underground.

3.2.4 Architectural Design

- The structure will promote a strong urban streetscape with high quality architectural design that makes use of varied building materials, colours, textures, and detailing. A variety of materials will be utilized for the design including brick and stone contributing to the architectural interest of the structure.
- Parking areas located below the living area of the structure are accessed through an aisle under the structure.
- Certain design elements will be incorporated (such as balconies, street furniture, and plantings), which are intended to create an attractive, pedestrian scaled space that encourages interaction with passerby's and enhances the 'eyes on the street/amenity space' principle.
- Overall, the architectural design, style, massing and material selection will contribute to the high design of the proposal which provides a visual emphasis to each façade.

3.3 City of Barrie Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines

The City of Barrie has adopted Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines, which help to ensure that new development in intensification areas is compatible with the existing built fabric, creates an attractive and safe pedestrian realm, supports alternative modes of transportation, and is environmentally sustainable. These guidelines apply to developments within Intensification Nodes and Corridors, the Urban Growth Centre, and Major Transit Station Areas. They are meant to provide both the private and public sector a series of tools to guide development and intensification in these areas of the City, and have been consulted with throughout the development of the proposed site plan.

The design guidelines in this document are not intended to be so prescriptive as to preclude excellent design, or development options that are consistent with the intent of the Guidelines. The proposed development was designed in a way that respects the intent of the Guidelines, and provides a built form that is human scale, transit supportive, and compact. This brief will outline the conformity of the proposed development with the relevant guidelines and objectives outlined within the City of Barrie Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines.

Section 2.5 of the Design Guidelines identify the subject lands as a Mixed-Use and Residential Avenue. These avenues are envisioned as major transportation corridors that balance the functional requirements of the street with the provision of an active, pedestrian-supportive streetscape. Primarily low and mid-rise buildings are envisioned for these avenues; existing boulevards are intended to be redefined within the right of way through smaller building setbacks. Figure 6 provides a concept rendering of the future intended built form of Mixed-Use and Residential Avenues.

Figure 6: Mixed-Use Residential Avenue Concept Massing
Source: City of Barrie Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines



3.3.1 Parking

Section 4.2 of the Guidelines provides direction for parking in the private realm. In general, the guidelines suggest a transition away from large areas of surface parking, to be replaced by above ground structured parking. The proposed site plan has been designed to minimize the overall impact of parking to the public view, providing a screened parking area. The majority of the parking spaces are provided below the units on the ground level and to the rear of the site. The following are the relevant policies pertaining to surface parking as outlined in section 4.2.1 of the Guidelines:

- *Surface parking should be located at the rear of buildings. If the lot is not deep enough, the parking should be located at the side of the building;*
- *Where parking areas are adjacent to a public sidewalk, buffers such as landscaping, trees or bollards should be provided between the parking area and the sidewalk. This buffer should be located within the private realm to not reduce the total sidewalk width;*
- *Planting strips, landscaped traffic islands and/or paving articulation should be used to define vehicle routes and smaller parking courts that provide pedestrian walkways, improve edge conditions and minimize the aesthetic impact of surface parking;*
- *The amount of landscaping should be proportionate to the overall parking lot size, but generally, 1 tree for every 8 parking spaces is recommended;*
- *Landscaping, or other parking area screening devices, should not obstruct the primary building façade or total visibility of the parking area; and*
- *Distinctive pavement and/or markings may be used to indicate pedestrian crossings.*

The surface parking that is provided is adequately screened by landscaped features. The landscaping for the parking area does not interfere with the building façade.

3.3.2 General Building Guidelines

The Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines offer several general building guidelines and policies that were considered throughout the design of the subject site. Several elements of the design of buildings are outlined

within the guidelines, including the building orientation and site layout, building heights, building articulation, and the materials used for construction/design. In regards to the orientation and site layout, buildings are to be positioned to frame abutting streets, sidewalks, and amenity areas. Main building entrances should be directly accessible from public sidewalks, and the front streetwall of the buildings should be built to the front property line or applicable zoning standard. The subject lands have been designed to provide a building that has primary entrances fronting the public road, with adequate setbacks so as to better frame Essa Road.

The Guidelines provide significant direction for the height of buildings and appropriate façade step-backs. The relevant policies indicate that buildings within Intensification Areas should generally be limited to a mid rise-scale, which is defined as ranging between 4 and 8 storeys. Additionally, buildings should achieve a minimum height of 2 storeys, or 7.5 metres. The proposed buildings meet the intended height of 6 storeys that is suggested by the range in the Guidelines.

The aesthetic qualities of the building including its façade, access points, roof line, and multiple other details are significant factors in determining how the public view the building and their experience on the street. The series of policies pertaining to building articulation are therefore extensive, and have been considered when designing the buildings themselves. The guidelines suggest that larger buildings should provide a façade that is designed to express individual ownership and units through architectural elements. In particular, when a building frontage exceeds 12 metres in width, the building should be divided functionally and visually into smaller units. There should be consistency with the design and quality of materials that are being used within the development, and building finishes should be complimentary. Finally, glass at the lower levels is encouraged, in order to create visual interest for pedestrians. The design of the structure has taken these guidelines into consideration,

Architecturally, the structure is broken up vertically by separation between balconies and different building materials, colours, and textures. This signifies unit separation and breaks up the frontage of the structure, both of which are supported by the Guidelines.

The material is consistent through the various units, primarily relying on glass and brick visuals, providing contrast through the colours selected. Balconies have been provided, with the entrances to these balconies and the primary building entrances constructed with glass material.


Finally, the building materials that are used have lasting impact on the building, how it is perceived, and how well it is maintained over time. The Guidelines suggest that all new buildings use materials that are chosen for both their functional and aesthetic quality, as well as energy and maintenance efficiency. Materials should demonstrate high quality of workmanship and durability, and materials should be used as intended (not mimicking other materials). Finishes should extend through all sides of the building. The building materials extend all sides of the building, providing consistency and a highly attractive building façade.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment aim to facilitate a high density residential development within a built-up area of the City along an identified intensification corridor. It is intended that the additional residential units will offer a much needed with market to affordable rental housing opportunities along an Intensification corridor that is under transition from primarily single detached residential neighbourhood to a compact, dense, urban community with a sense of place of public realm. With a strong urban streetscape, coupled with quality design as required by the City's Urban Design Guidelines this development is poised to become a functional component of the urban fabric and bring much needed rental units to a City that is nearly a crisis in this housing form. Additional residents will contribute to the vitality of the neighbourhood and its multiple amenities, promote the increased reliance on transit, and provide additional clientele for the many existing businesses in the area.

Respectfully submitted,

Innovative Planning Solutions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Vella'.

Darren Vella, MCIP, RPP

President & Director of Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Edwards'.

Andrew Edwards, BES

Planner