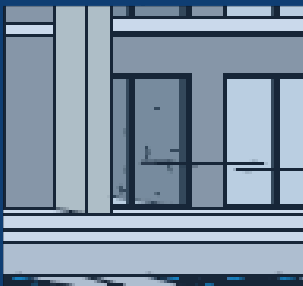
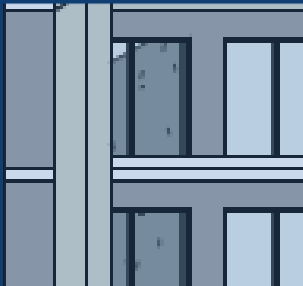
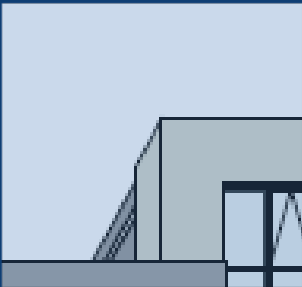


## Planning and Urban Design Rationale Report

20 Cairns Crescent, Huntsville, Ontario

Prepared For: 1000120857 ONTARIO INC.





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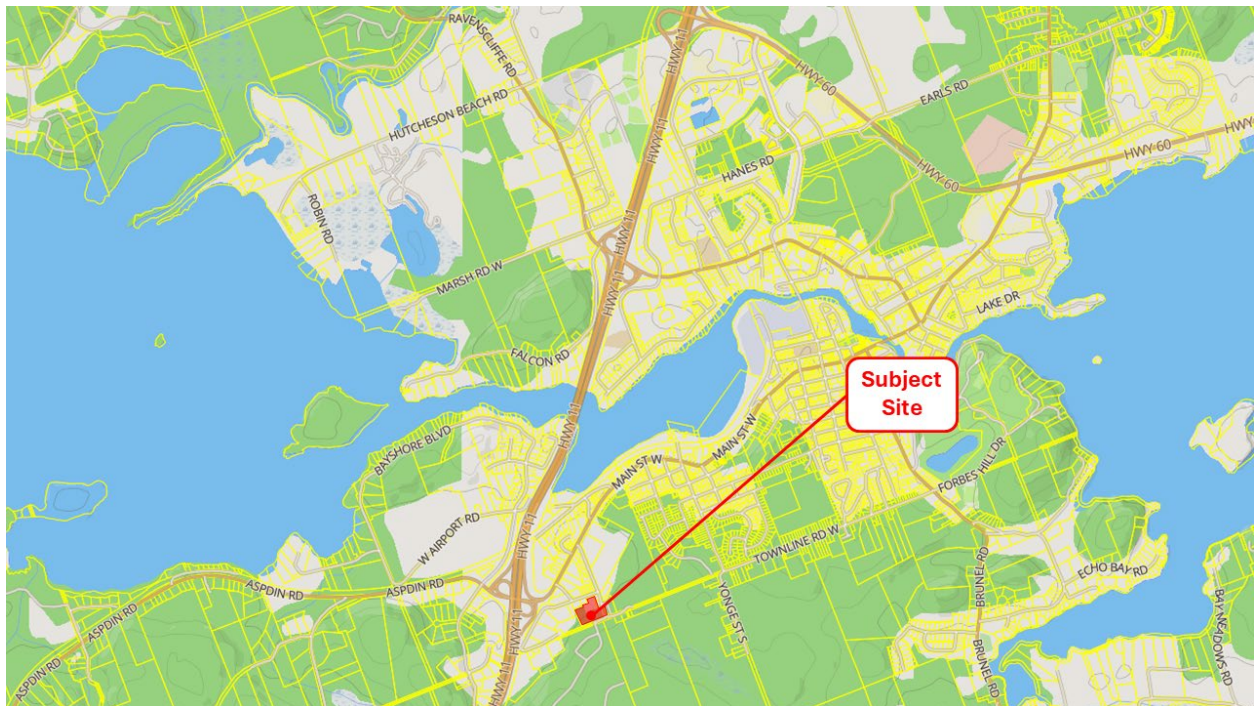
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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Planning and Urban Design Rationale Report has been prepared in support of a Community Planning Permit (“CPP”) application by 1000120857 Ontario Inc for a Major Class 3 CPP on a parcel known municipally as 20 Cairns Crescent (“subject site” or “site”). The subject site is located on the south side of Cairns Crescent, west of Kitchen Road South and east of Crescent Road, in close proximity to the on- and off-ramps for Exit 219 – Muskoka District Road 3 (Main Street West) and Ontario Highway 11 (see Figure 1, Location Map).

**Figure 1 - Location Map**



Source: VuMAP, 2024

The application will permit the transformation of the subject site from its current vacant state, to a purposed-built rental residential development with surface parking. The CPP, if approved, will facilitate a new 4-storey residential apartment building, encompassing 184 residential purpose-built rental units. A portion of residential units may be delivered as affordable, based on funding availability post approval. Parking is proposed mostly at grade to the rear of the building in in both surface and partial below grade arrangements.

The development will capitalize on the site’s development and intensification potential as a sizeable lot with convenient access to major road network, via Main Street West, and great connectivity to other provincial destinations via Highway 11. Additionally, the site is located within walking distance (<500 m) from municipal and regional transit stops, providing connections to Huntsville’s downtown and to other municipalities throughout Muskoka. The vision for the development proposal is built around four key principles:



1. provision of new purpose-built rental housing units;
2. thoughtful site design and amenity space;
3. convenient access to major road networks, and
4. overall land use efficiency on an underutilized site.

From a land use planning perspective, the proposal is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, and conforms with the District of Muskoka and City of Huntsville Official Plans. Among other matters, these policy documents all promote the efficient use of land and infrastructure and intensification of underutilized sites within built-up urban areas, particularly in locations which are well-served by existing municipal infrastructure.

The Town of Huntsville's Community Planning Permit By-law 2022-97 ("CPP By-law") is a tool available to all Ontario municipalities that intended to streamline the development process by consolidating zoning amendments, minor variances, and site plan agreements into a single application. For Huntsville, this means a more efficient and flexible way to regulate and manage development, with applications reviewed within 45 days. For the community, it results in faster approvals, fewer applications, and less need for Council to consider multiple approvals.

The CPP By-law outlines when a Community Planning Permit is required and when development is exempt. If a permit is needed, the By-law categorizes permits into three classes with approval potentially delegated to staff or Council: Class 1: Applications that meet all development standards; Class 2: Applications involving minor variations to the standards; and Class 3: Applications involving major variations from the standards and provisions.

Based on discussions with Town staff, the proposal would be a Class 3 CPP, and does not require an amendment to the CPP By-law.

The proposal will infill and intensify the subject site and utilize land more efficiently by capitalizing on site size and shape, and its proximity to Highway 11 and Main Street West. Additionally, this application understands that larger sites adjacent to on the periphery of neighbourhoods allow for increased density, while minimizing impact on established neighbourhoods, in comparison to lots located internally to the neighbourhood.

From a built form and urban design perspective, the proposed development will represent a high-quality addition to the area in terms of mid-rise residential architecture and site design. The proposal will represent appropriate infilling and intensification for the subject site in keeping with the Official Plan's vision of intensification and the delivery of compact urban forms within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area. The proposed development will not detract from the existing character of the neighbourhood to the east, but rather, will revitalize a vacant and underutilized site and help to repair a section of broken street frontage through the introduction of a mid-rise built form. The proposal will also include high-quality landscaping which will improve the public realm in the area and provide a buffer between the proposed development and the existing residential units to the north and east.

It is our opinion that the proposed development represents good and appropriate land use planning and urban design and reflects an important opportunity to redevelop an underutilized site providing important new rental housing, which will enhance the housing options in the area and support the development of complete communities within the neighbourhood.



# 2.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

## 2.1 Subject Site

The subject site comprises an irregular-shaped lot about 2.1 hectares (5.2 acres) in size with just over 48 metres of frontage along Cairns Crescent. The site is located on the south side of Cairns Crescent, west of Kitchen Road South, north of Markborough Court and east of the Highway 11 and Aspdin Road / Main Street West interchange and Crescent Road. Geographically, the site is located at the southern end of the nearest to Huntsville's most southerly Highway 11 access point off of Main Street West and is about a 5-minute-drive from the downtown, which is located to the northeast of the site. The subject site is legally described as:

*Par of Lot 8, Concession 1, Part of Lot 36 on Registered Compiled Plan 509, Geographic Township of Chaffey, Part 2 on 35R-12017 and Part 2 on 35R-19662; Huntsville; District Municipality of Muskoka.*

The subject site lies in a predominantly mixed-use area with commercial and employment type properties, and residential uses. To the west, there are various businesses and a small plaza. The north features a mixture of commercial and residential areas, while the east and south are primarily undeveloped or natural areas with some residential pockets including a townhouse condo complex to the southeast on Cascade Lane. The site's proximity to major roads suggests ease of access and for all uses.

**Figure 2 - Aerial Context Map**



Source: VuMAP, 2024

The subject site is also within an 5- to 10minute walk (400 to 800 meters) of various amenities located along near and Main Street west, including the Hunters Bay Trail, Orchard Park, Irene Street Park, a café and deli (Algonquin Café & Deli), an orthopedic clinic (Algonquin Orthopaedics), a hotel (Red Maple Inn and Suites), a massage therapist (Body Mechanics Massage Therapy), a self-service car wash (Baywash), a nutritionist (Impact Health), a Service Ontario location, a hardware store (Rolston Home Building Centre), a place of worship (Harvest Church Huntsville), and a grocery store (Muskoka North Good Food Co-op), among other amenities.

Several schools in the area are available through the Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) and the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB).

For Kindergarten to grade 8, Huntsville Public School is located northeast of the site at 16 Caroline Street West, and Huntsville High School, serving grades 9 through 12, is also to the northeast at 58 Brunel Road, both offered through TLDSB. Other potential school options include Pine Glen Public School at 126 West Road, Riverside Public School at 755 Brunel Road, and Spruce Glen Public School at 550 Muskoka Road 3 North, all serving JK to Grade 8. According to TLDSB's 2022-2028 Long Term Accommodation Plan, all public schools in Huntsville are operating under capacity and can accommodate new students.

The SMCDSB offers a Catholic alternative with Saint Mary Catholic Elementary School for Kindergarten to grade 8, located to the north at 36 Silverwood Drive. The nearest Catholic secondary school is St. Dominic Catholic Secondary School in Bracebridge, approximately a 21-minute drive south.

In addition, there are several other private education options in town such as Muskoka Highlands Academy and the Muskoka Montessori School that are available and offer alternatives to the public-school experience in Huntsville.

## 2.2 Surrounding Context

The subject site is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses, with proximity to existing bus transit, commercial retail, institutional uses, and jobs, and an easy access to transportation corridors. The following provides a more detailed breakdown of the uses to the north, east, south, and west.

**North:** Directly north of the subject site are single-detached dwellings along the north side of Cairns Crescent. Further north of the subject site is Main Street West. Commercial uses populate this area including a Service Ontario, medical centres, restaurants and hotels.

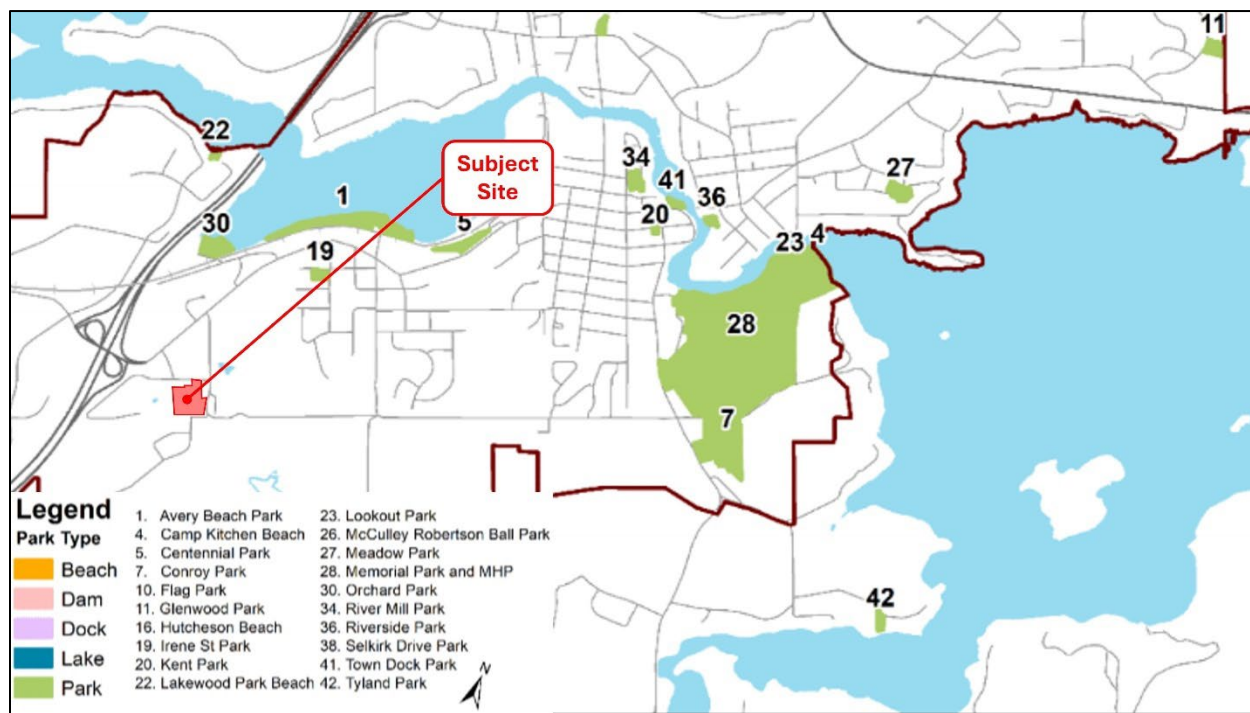
**East:** The subject site is bound by Kitchen Road South to the east. Kitchen Road South contains additional single-detached dwellings. Further East of Kitchen Road South is undeveloped land.

**South:** South of the subject site are additional single-detached dwellings and other vacant properties. To the southeast, there is a small block of condominium townhomes along Cascade Lane and to the southwest there is local supply store and the Muskoka North Good Food Co-op.

**West:** Situated west of the subject site are single-detached residences along Frisch and Joyce Streets. Continuing in this direction brings you to June Rose Callwood Public School, catering to students from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 8. Also to the west are Arthur Voaden Secondary

School and the St. Thomas Public Library. Several parks dot the landscape to the west, including Lions Park.

**Figure 3 - Map of Nearby Municipal Parks**



Source: Community Services Master Plan, 2022

## 2.3 Transportation and Transit Network

### Transportation Network

The subject site has frontage along Cairns Crescent, a paved *Local Road* as indicated on Schedule 'A' of the Town of Huntsville Official Plan. The site also has frontage onto Kitchen Road South, which is designated as an *Urban Collector Road* on 'Schedule A' of the town's Official Plan. Today, the section of Kitchen Road the abuts the site is unpaved. Vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided via both Cairns Crescent and Kitchen Road South. Cairns Crescent runs east-west and does not have sidewalks. Similarly, Kitchen Road South, which runs north-south does not have sidewalks on either side of the street. Both roads appear to serve primarily local vehicular traffic. An interchange with Highway 11, designated as a Provincial Highway, is less than 300 metres south of the subject site.

The subject site is located less than one kilometre away from the Hunter's Bay Trail. The Hunter's Bay Trail is a multi-use trail that provides access to 4.6 kilometers of park area in Huntsville.

### Transit Network

The Town of Huntsville operates a public transit service with two wheelchair-accessible buses equipped with an automated next-stop announcer system. These buses run on a scheduled route or can be booked with 24 hours' notice. They offer courtesy and priority seating for passengers with



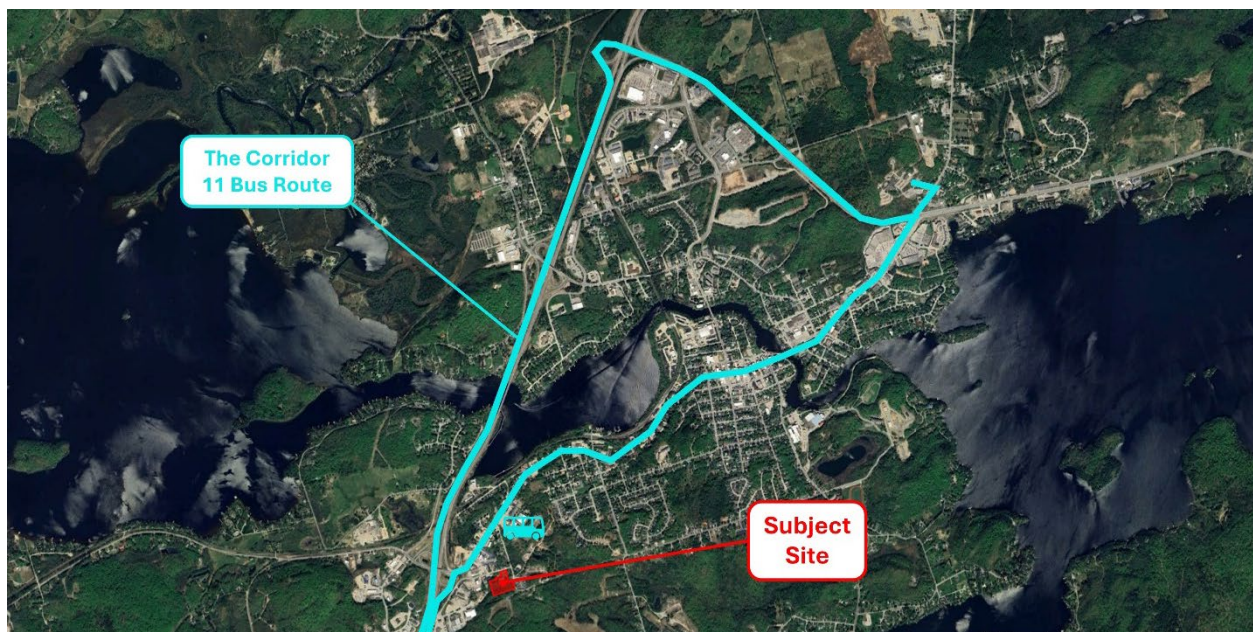
disabilities, seniors, expectant mothers, adults with infants or small children, and others needing front seating. The service generally operates on weekdays from 8 AM to 6 PM and on Saturdays from 10 AM to 6 PM. In addition to the Town, the District of Muskoka operates additional transit service in the area.

Accordingly, the subject site is serviced by both a Huntsville Transit Route bus service and the Corridor 11 Bus Route, which is the closest route option, with a stop located within a 5-minute walk or less along Main Street West to the north.

The Corridor 11 Bus connects communities along Highway 11, running from Huntsville to Orillia with stops in Port Sydney, Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Kilworthy, and Washago. It operates Monday to Friday, excluding weekends, statutory holidays, and the last two weeks of December and connect people in Huntsville to the downtown and the shopping centre in the north end. The service is a partnership with Hammond Transportation and funded by the Ontario Government through the Community Transportation Grant and Gas Tax Program. For schedules and feedback, contact Adele Gant, Transportation Network Coordinator with the District of Muskoka.

In addition to bus transit, transportation options include the Ontario Northland bus, and local taxi, and limo services. Boat access is available for travel between lakes and downtown Huntsville. Muskoka Seniors, a volunteer group, offers rides for seniors to medical appointments and activities, with fees based on distance and advance notice required. Furthermore, the District of Muskoka Specialized Transportation Fund (“STF”) provides financial assistance for transportation to those without access to public transport.

**Figure 4 - Corridor 11 Bus Route**



# 3.0 PROPOSAL

## 3.1 Description of Proposal

The proposal represents an opportunity to redevelop and infill an unused site at a transit supportive density for a new, 4-storey mid-rise residential building with purpose-built rental units. The Community Planning Permit application will facilitate this transformation from its current use as vacant and unused site, into a compact, residential development which will contribute to the range and mix of housing options in the neighbourhood. There is also the possibility of introducing an affordable housing component, through potential future support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ("CMHC") and the Region's Muskoka Affordable Housing Initiatives Program ("MAHIP") following approvals.

The CMHC provides funding and support for affordable housing initiatives across the country. This funding is aimed at addressing the housing needs of vulnerable populations and those with low to moderate incomes. Additionally, MAHIP provides capital incentive funding towards eligible affordable rental housing projects. Following the approval of the CPP, it is the intent of the owner / applicant to work with the CMHC and the Region to seek funding and / or subsidies that would allow them to introduce an affordable housing component into the building.

The proposed building will be 4-storeys tall at a metric height of 17.01 metres, is designed in a "U-shape", and is intended to frame out the north half of the site, with surface parking and partial below-grade parking oriented to the rear. The placement of the building on site has been selected carefully so as to ensure that the building has appropriate separation from the nearest neighbouring houses, maintains as many trees as possible between the shared property lines, and with keeping the parking to the rear of the building and creating a u-shaped footprint helping to ensure lights from vehicles entering and existing the site in the darkness do not pollute neighbouring windows.

In addition, established neighbourhoods in Ontario are typically stable areas characterized by residential buildings of a lower scale, such as detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses. These areas may also include walk-up apartments that are no taller than four storeys. Low-rise neighbourhoods in Ontario often feature a variety of residential buildings, along with parks, schools, local institutions, and small-scale stores and shops that cater to the needs of residents.

Based on the mix of uses in the area from residential to commercial and employment, and due to the presence of several vacant lots, the site is not, in our opinion, part of an established residential neighbourhood. However, by keeping the proposed building to a 4-storey height maximum, the proposal has been designed with the intention of preserving the low-rise residential character of the surrounding homes and creating human-scale architecture.

The proposed 4-storey, mid-rise purpose-built rental building is intended to blend seamlessly into the neighbourhood. The building will house a total of 184 residential units, with 46 units on each of the four levels. The development includes 231 parking spaces, of which 184 are designated for residents and 47 for visitors, ensuring ample parking availability at an overall ratio of 1.26 spaces

per unit. This includes 7 barrier-free parking spaces to accommodate residents and visitors with disabilities.

The proposed residential unit breakdown for the development includes a total of 184 units, distributed across various types. The majority, 136 units or 74%, are one-bedroom units. There are 8 one-bedroom units with a den, making up 4% of the total. Sixteen units are two-bedroom, accounting for 9%, and another 16 units are two-bedroom with a den, also comprising 9%. Additionally, there are 8 three-bedroom units, representing 4% of the total.

The gross floor area of the building is proposed at 12,771.99 square meters (137,476.59 square feet), providing significant living space for residents. The development also offers extensive amenity spaces, both indoor and outdoor. Indoor amenities are distributed across levels 2, 3, and 4 totaling 386.54 square meters (4,160.67 square feet), while outdoor amenities are located on level 1, totaling 424.36 square meters (4,567.81 square feet). Combined, the total amenity space is 810.90 square meters (8,728.50 square feet), enhancing the living experience for residents.

The layout results in the following setbacks: 10.18 meters from the east (side) yard, 43.50 meters from the north (front) yard, 59.74 meters from the south (rear) yard, and 32.60 meters from the west (side) yard, ensuring the building fits well within its surroundings. The narrowest separation is at the northwest corner of the building, where, due to the irregular lot shape, there is a pinch point (technically considered a side yard) between the proposed building and the property line of 3.29 metres. However, this pinch point only persists for distance less than 20 metres along this shared property line.

Vehicular access to and from the site is proposed primarily via Cairns Crescent, which is the main access point for the development along a long linear driveway that accommodates two-way traffic. A secondary access point is proposed at the southeast onto Kitchen Road South, which also accommodates two-way traffic. Full movement turns are proposed at each entrance. The site plan indicates well-defined entry and exit points to ensure smooth traffic flow in and out of the residential area.

Pedestrian circulation has been contemplated as well, with defined crosswalks and sidewalks being proposed throughout the development to enhance pedestrian accessibility and connectivity. The sidewalks connect various parts of the residential area, ensuring safe and convenient pathways for residents. Specifically, the sidewalks are designed to link the residential units with the parking areas, amenity spaces, the main entrance points, and the surrounding neighbourhood, facilitating easy and safe movement within the site.

The site plan also includes designated snow storage areas, strategically placed to manage snow accumulation and ensure that it does not obstruct the primary pathways or parking spaces. These areas are essential for maintaining clear and safe pathways during winter months.

Stormwater management is addressed with a designated stormwater management pond and swales, ensuring proper drainage and preventing flooding. This pond is located in the northwest corner of the site and the swale is located along the southern limits of the surface parking lot, where they can effectively collect and manage runoff water, contributing to the overall sustainability and environmental management of the development.

The outdoor amenity space in the proposed development is located on the ground level, with a large portion (424.36 square metres) located in the southeast north of the driveway access to Kitchen Road South. Residents can easily access this area through multiple entry points from the main building entrances and exits on the ground floor. The space features landscaped areas, seating, and walking paths, creating a communal environment for relaxation and social interaction. Pathways and sidewalks connect the outdoor space to the building entrances and parking areas, ensuring convenient access for all residents.

The landscaping plan for the site features 1.5-meter-wide sidewalks throughout, providing pedestrian access to various parts of the development, including the main building entrance, secondary entrances, parking areas, and outdoor amenity spaces. The main outdoor amenity area includes a pergola, picnic benches, modular seating, and seat walls, offering residents a communal space for relaxation and social interaction. Extensive landscaping with deciduous and coniferous trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses enhances the aesthetic appeal and provides green spaces.

Privacy is ensured with a 1.8-meter-high wood privacy fences along the northwest and west property lines, while ornamental fencing and tree protection fencing, and masonry piers add to the site's security and visual appeal. Bike racks and benches are strategically placed to promote alternative transportation and provide resting spots, and retaining walls with guard rails manage changes in elevation and stabilize the landscaped areas. These features collectively contribute to a well-integrated, attractive, and functional residential development. A large rectangular chunk about 23-metres-deep on the south end of the site has been set aside to be naturalized retaining existing trees and resulting a vegetative buffer along the rear yard.

In addition, the building is proposed to have green roofs. The intent of the green roof here is to enhance sustainability by improving energy efficiency through natural insulation, reducing heating and cooling needs. It is also intended to help manage stormwater by absorbing rainwater and alleviating drainage systems. Additionally, the green roofs will help improve air quality, and support biodiversity by providing habitats for plants and animals. They will also help combat the urban heat island effect by cooling the surrounding air. Overall, the green roofs will help contribute to a healthier environment, reduced energy consumption, and increased urban green spaces.

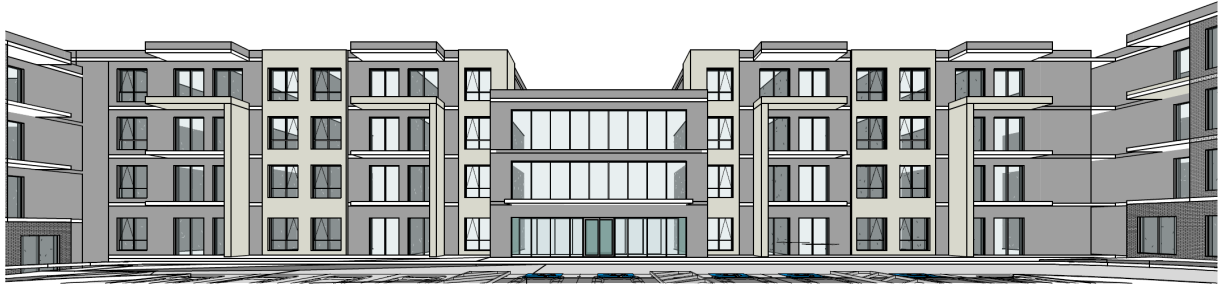
Overall, the site has been thoughtfully designed to ensure that the proposed development is well-integrated, more efficient, accessible, and sustainable, providing a safe and pleasant living environment for the residents.

It is also noted that through discussions with stakeholders, the desire for a "Muskoka aesthetic" would be appreciated on site. In this regard, there is an option available to construct the proposed building with a mansard roof and natural cladding elements to reflect this aesthetic. Accordingly, we have provided a theoretical rendering of what this could like as an Option below in Figures 13 to 15. If this option were selected, the mansard roof would increase the overall height in metres from 17.01 metres to 19.55 metres but not in terms of the number of storeys, and the green roof area would still be present, albeit, with a slightly reduced area.

The following figures 5 to 12 showcase the proposal visually.



**Figure 5 - Rendering - Southeast Perspective**



*Source: Options Architects, 2024*

**Figure 6 - Rendering - Northeast Perspective**



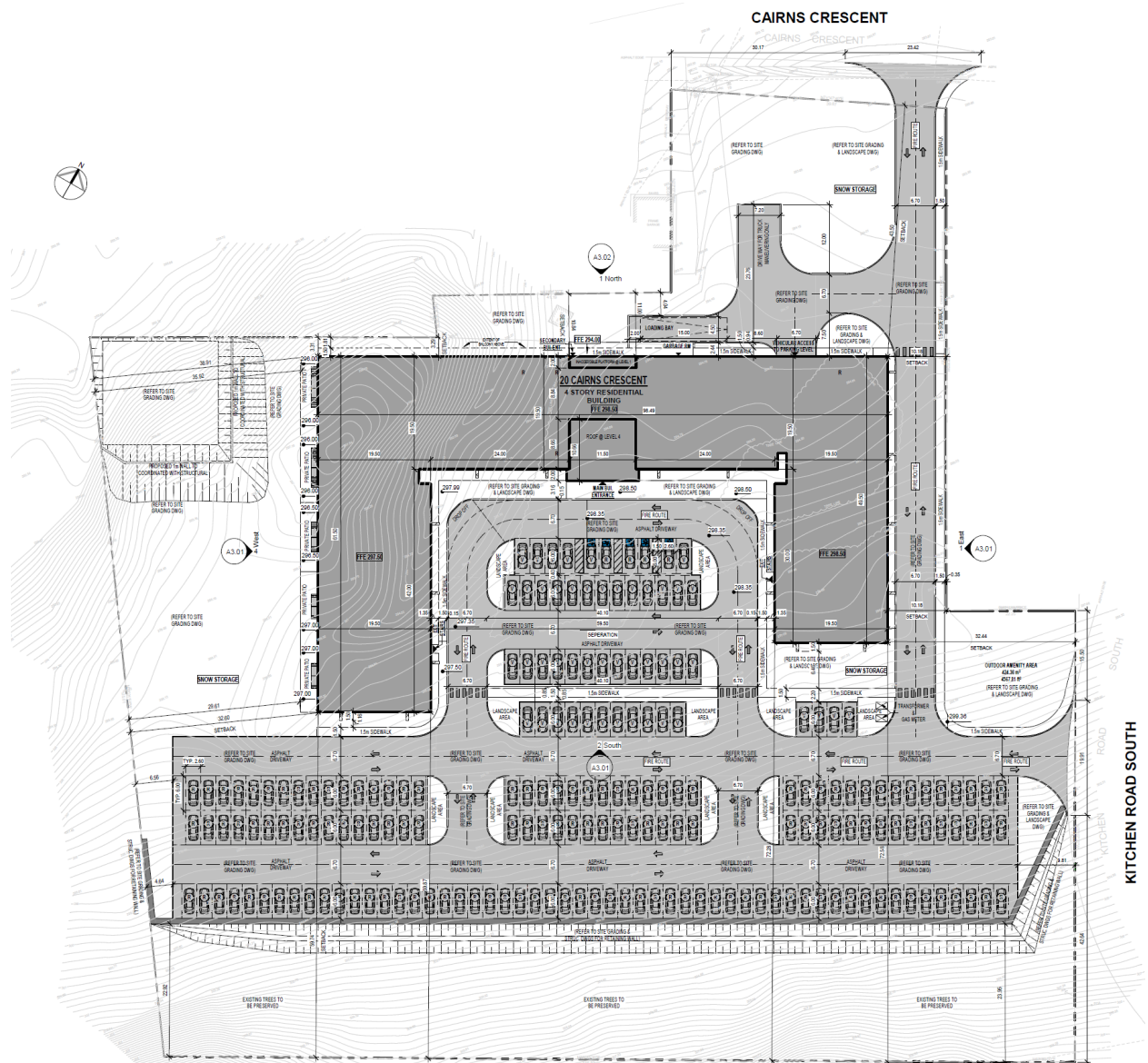
*Source: Options Architects, 2024*

**Figure 7 - Rendering - Northwest Perspective**



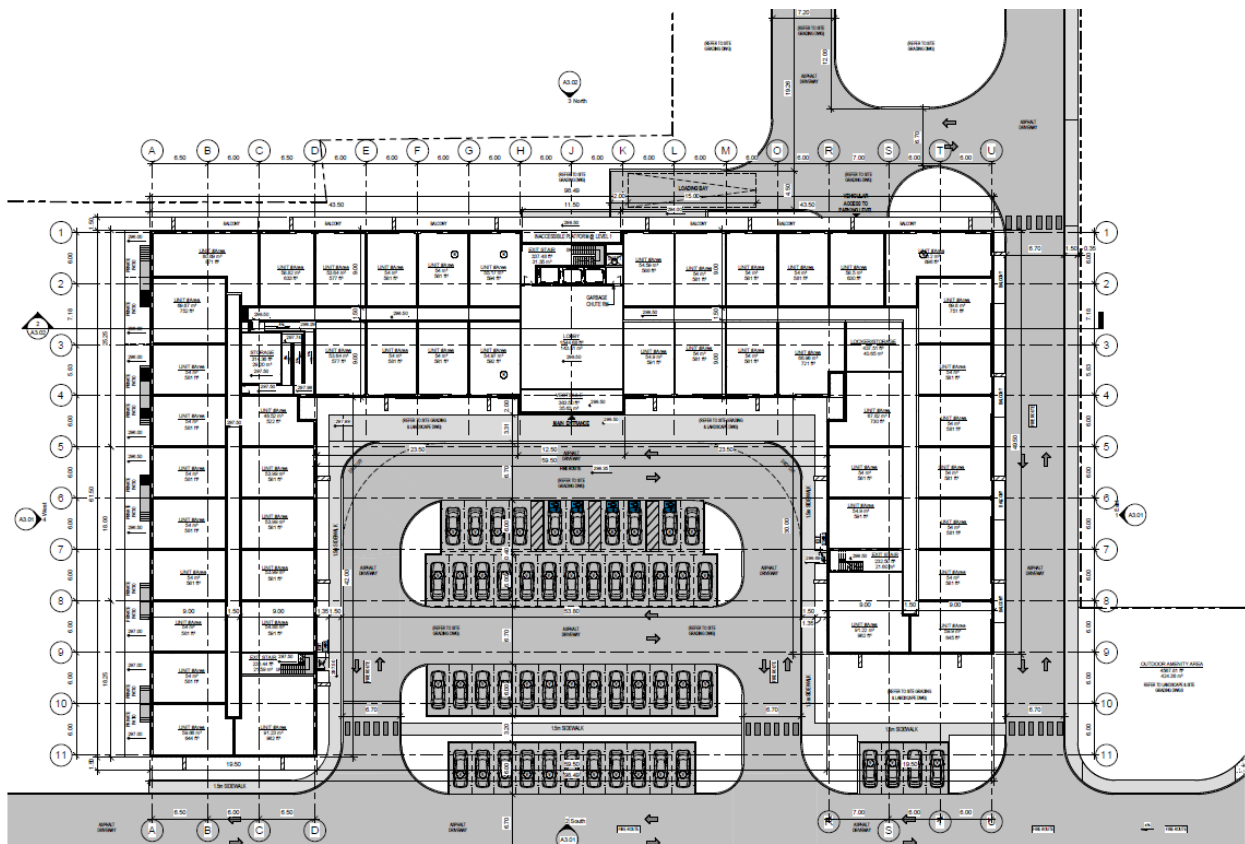
*Source: Options Architects, 2024*

**Figure 8 - Proposed Site Plan**



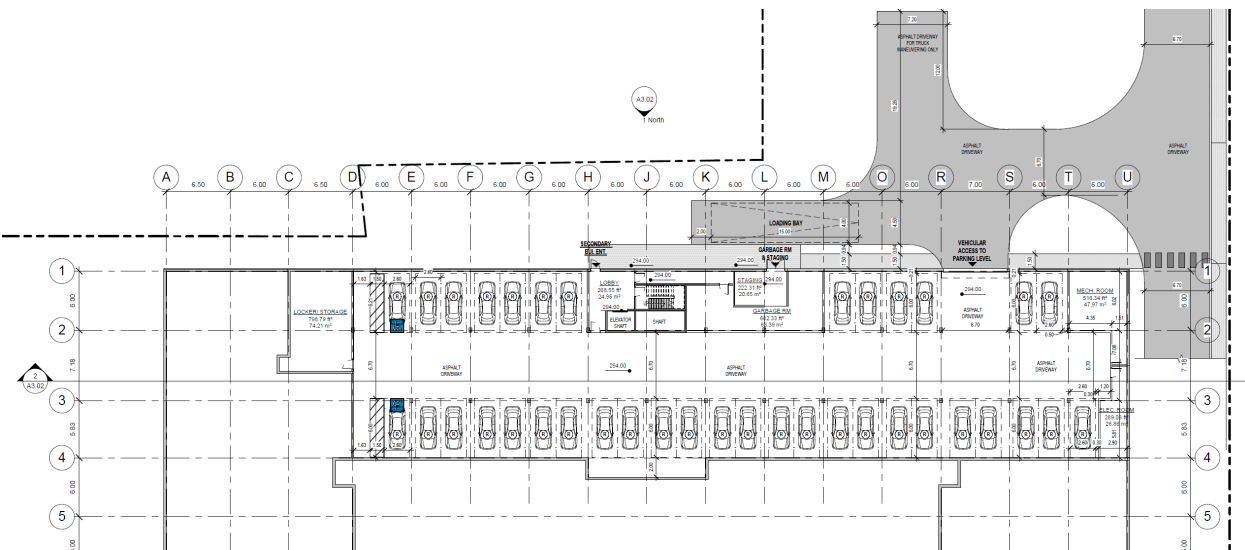
Source: Options Architects, 2024

Figure 9 - Proposed First Floor Plan



Source: Options Architects, 2024

Figure 10 – Proposed Level P1 Floor Plan



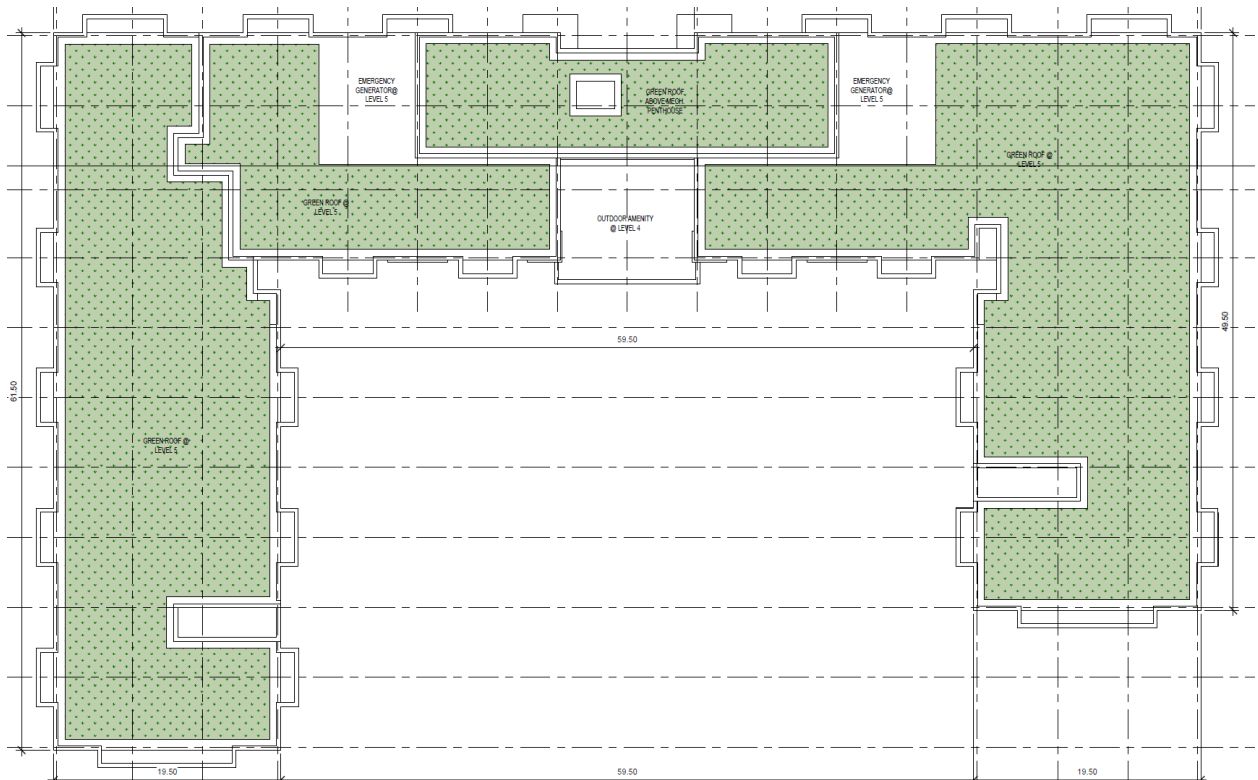
Source: Options Architects, 2024

**Figure 11 - Elevation Plans (In Order: East, West, South, North, South)**



Source: Options Architects, 2024

**Figure 12 - Proposed Green Roof Plan**



Source: Options Architects, 2024



**Figure 13 - Optional Muskoka Aesthetic Design with Mansard Roof (Northwest View)**



**Figure 14 - Optional Muskoka Aesthetic Design with Mansard Roof (North View)**



**Figure 15 - Optional Muskoka Aesthetic Design with Mansard Roof (Concept Elevation)**



② 3D VIEW FROM NORTH EAST.

## 3.2 Key Statistics

**Table 1 - Key Statistics**

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Site Area</b>               | 21,693.20 m <sup>2</sup> (2.169 ha)   |
| <b>Gross Floor Area</b>        | 12,771.99 m <sup>2</sup>  |
| <b>Ground Floor Area</b>       | 3,256.58 m <sup>2</sup>   |
| <b>Density</b>                 | 84.8 units per hectare  |
| <b>Floor Space Index (FSI)</b> | 0.59  |
| <b>Roof Height</b>             | 4-Storeys (17.2 to 19.6 m depending on option)  |
| <b>Unit Mix</b>                | <b>Total: 184 units</b>   |
| <b>One-Bedroom</b>             | 136 units (74%)   |
| <b>One-Bedroom + Den</b>       | 8 units (4%)  |
| <b>Two-Bedroom</b>             | 16 units (9%)   |
| <b>Two-Bedroom + Den</b>       | 16 units (9%)   |
| <b>Three-Bedroom</b>           | 8 units (4%)  |
| <b>Tenure</b>                  | Purpose-Built Rental  |
| <b>Amenity Space</b>           | Indoor: 386.54 m <sup>2</sup><br>Outdoor: 424.36 m <sup>2</sup>                                   |
| <b>Vehicle Parking</b>         | <b>Total: 231 spaces (including 7 barrier-free)</b><br>Resident: 184 spaces<br>Visitor: 47 spaces |
| <b>Loading Spaces</b>          | 1 Space   |

## 3.3 Required Approvals

The Planning Act allows the Town to approve increased height and density for a development in exchange for community benefits. Community benefits that the Town may consider include smart value housing, special needs or social housing, conservation of heritage resources, sustainable building designs, energy and water conservation, public art, non-profit facilities, public transit infrastructure, public parking, land for municipal purposes, parkland improvements, and active transportation amenities like signage, seating, washrooms, lighting, and parking.



Smart value housing means the most affordable option. For rental housing, it is the lesser of a unit where rent does not exceed 30% of the household income for low and moderate-income families, or a unit priced at or below the average market rent in the area.

The Town will consider authorizing increased height and density if a development proposal aligns with the Official Plan's goals and policies, fits with the surrounding area, offers additional community benefits beyond standard requirements, and provides benefits related to the increase in height or density that address relevant planning issues.

In our opinion, the proposal aligns with the Official Plan's goals and policies, fits with the surrounding area, and offers additional community benefits beyond standard requirements. These benefits include purpose-built rental housing, with plans to include some affordable housing if subsidies are secured (i.e., smart value housing), and sustainable building design with energy and water conservation features, such as a green roof.

In our opinion, the proposed development generally conforms with the Official Plan and, specifically, is permitted by the applicable *Urban Residential* designation. The proposed density at 84.8 units per hectare represents modest 41.3% increase from the maximum 60 units per hectare cap. Accordingly, the proposal's community benefits do not result in the need for an Official Plan Amendment.

The proposal does require variations from the standards and provisions Town of Huntsville's Community Planning Permit By-law 2022-97 in order to increase the permitted height and density, as well as to gain relief from other regulations, as necessary, to accommodate the proposal.

Based on discussions with Town staff, the proposal would be a Major Class 3 Community Planning Permit and does not require an amendment to the CPP By-law.

A Site Plan Approval ("SPA") application is being submitted concurrently, and both the required variations from the standards and provisions Town of Huntsville's Community Planning Permit By-law and the SPA will be processed together as part of a single CPP.

# 4.0 POLICY / REGULATORY CONTEXT & RESPONSES

## 4.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to municipal planning decisions. The PPS was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act, 1990, and provides Provincial direction in terms of land use planning and development in Ontario. The current PPS came into effect on May 1st, 2020. Decisions related to planning matters, including Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments made under the Planning Act, shall be consistent with the PPS.

Part IV of the PPS sets out the Province's vision for Ontario, and promotes the wise management of land use change and efficient development patterns:

*Efficient development patterns optimize the use of land, resources and public investment in infrastructure and public service facilities. These land use patterns promote a mix of housing, including affordable housing, employment, recreation, parks and open spaces, and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit before other modes of travel. They support the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long term, and minimize the undesirable effects of development, including impacts on air, water, and other resources. They also permit better adaptation and response to the impacts of a changing climate, which will vary from region to region.*

One of the key policy directions expressed in the PPS is to build strong communities by promoting efficient development and land use patterns. To that end, Part V of the PPS contains several policies that promote intensification, redevelopment, and compact built form, particularly in areas well served by public transit. In particular, Policy 1.1.1 provides that healthy, liveable and safe communities are to be sustained by promoting efficient development and land use patterns; accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types, employment, institutional, recreation, park and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs; and promoting the integration of land use planning, growth management, transit-supportive development, intensification and infrastructure planning to achieve cost-effective development patterns, optimization of transit investments and standards to minimize land consumption and servicing costs.

The proposed development aims to enhance efficient land use patterns by utilizing the site more effectively, with increased footprint, density, and height compared to its current vacant state. If approved, this development will help diversify the housing options available in the neighbourhood and Town, striving to include affordable units subsidized through potential future CMHC or other local funding sources. These new housing units will help address the City's long-term housing needs. Additionally, the proposed density of the development is transit-supportive, with a compact layout and higher residential density within a 10-minute walk of existing transit. The building design prioritizes compactness to minimize sprawl and facilitate residents' access to transit options. Overall,

this proposal aims to optimize the City's transit and infrastructure investments while contributing to the province's goal of constructing at least 1.5 million homes.

## **Settlement Areas**

Section 1.1.3 of the PPS provides the policy direction for lands located within settlement areas. The PPS defines settlement areas as urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are: a) built-up areas where development is concentrated, and which have a mix of land uses; and b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development over the long-term planning horizon provided for in Policy 1.1.2. The PPS states that the vitality and regeneration of settlement areas is critical to the long-term economic prosperity of communities.

The subject site is located within the settlement area of Huntsville, and as such, the policies in Section 1.1.3 apply to the proposal.

Accordingly, Policy 1.1.3.1 states that Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development. Policy 1.1.3.2 supports densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure, and public service facilities and which are transit-supportive, where transit is planned, exists, or may be developed. Policy 1.1.3.3 directs planning authorities to identify appropriate locations and promote opportunities for transit-supportive development, accommodating a significant supply and range of housing options through intensification and redevelopment, where this can be accommodated considering existing building stock or areas, including brownfield sites, and the availability of suitable existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities. In addition, Policy 1.1.3.4 promotes appropriate development standards, which facilitate intensification, redevelopment, and compact form, while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety. In this regard, Policy 1.1.3.5 directs planning authorities to establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas, based on local conditions.

The proposed residential intensification on the subject site is supportive of policy directions articulated in Section 1.1.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement, all of which promote intensification on sites which are within settlement areas, are well served by existing municipal infrastructure, and those that are transit supportive. The proposal will result in the development of the subject site with a transit-supportive residential development at an appropriate scale, making efficient use of urban land while optimizing existing services and infrastructure all while contributing to the Town's supply and range of housing options through intensification.

## **Land Use Compatibility**

Section 1.2.6 of the PPS sets out high-level policies with respect to land use compatibility. The focus for the policies in this section is related to developing land that avoids, minimizes, and mitigates any potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, and risks related to public health and safety. The other intent related to land use compatibility set out in the PPS relates to ensuring the long-term operational and economic viability of existing major facilities which are defined as follows:

*facilities which may require separation from sensitive land uses, including but not limited to airports, manufacturing uses, transportation infrastructure and corridors, rail facilities, marine facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries, energy generation facilities and transmission systems, and resource extraction activities*

In accordance with policy 1.2.6.1, if avoidance is not possible, planning authorities must safeguard the long-term viability of existing or planned industrial, manufacturing, or vulnerable uses from encroachment. This involves permitting adjacent sensitive land uses only if certain conditions are met, as outlined by provincial guidelines. These conditions include demonstrating an identified need for the proposed use, evaluating alternative locations with none deemed reasonable, minimizing, and mitigating adverse effects on the proposed sensitive land use, and minimizing and mitigating potential impacts on industrial, manufacturing, or other vulnerable uses.

Typically, sensitive land uses are any land uses which could be negatively impacted by their proximity to major facilities, however, the subject site is not located adjacent or within proximity to any facilities that would be considered *major facilities* by definition in the PPS.

Notwithstanding, the proposed residential use is located adjacent and near to a mix of non-residential existing commercial businesses; these uses include retail businesses (such as a flooring store), professional service offices (such as a physiotherapist), an equipment rental business, an auto parts store, and a grocery store (e.g., Muskoka North Good Food Co-op), among other nearby non-residential uses.

A Noise Impact Study (NIS) was conducted by Aeroustics, dated July 17, 2024, and is discussed in section 5.6 of this report. The study assessed current noise conditions around the site and predicted potential impacts on both on-site and off-site noise-sensitive receptors. It evaluated noise sources from nearby commercial and employment areas, as well as traffic. The only significant stationary noise source identified was at 1 Crescent Road, a food co-op and coworking space. The NIS also examined necessary noise control measures to meet Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) guidelines.

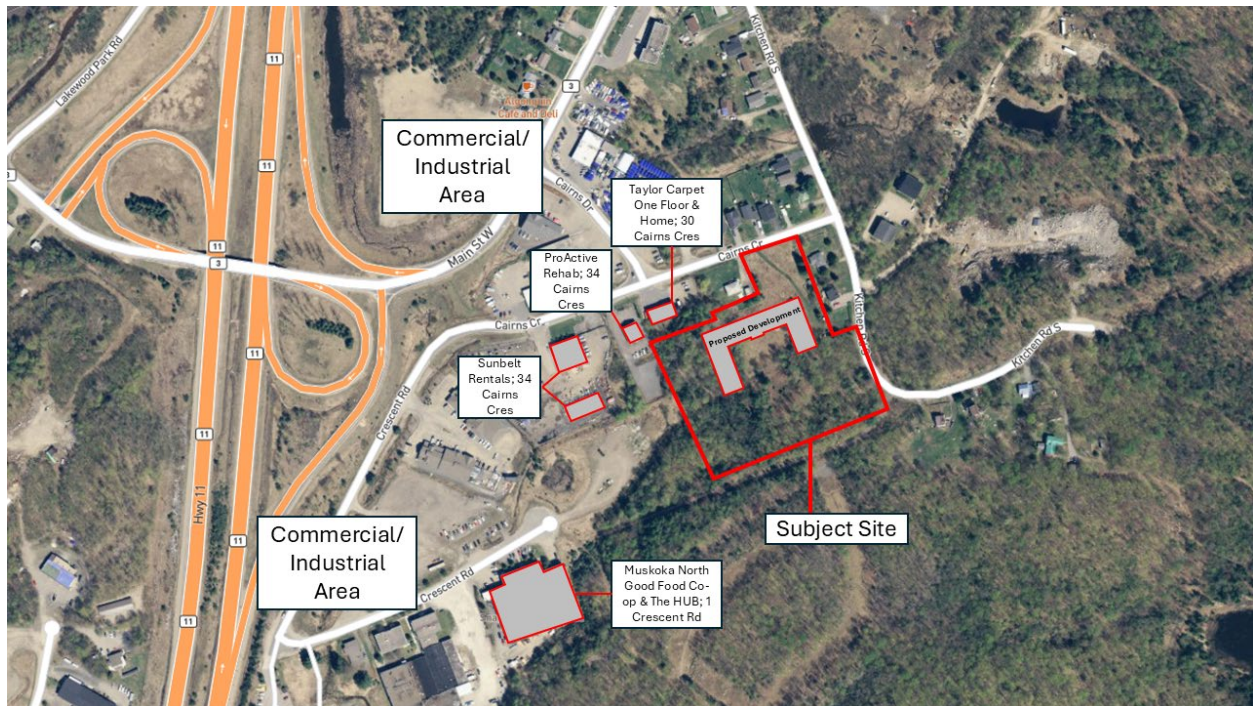
The study concluded that transportation noise levels are within acceptable limits and will minimally affect indoor and outdoor living areas for future residents. Regarding stationary noise, no mitigation measures were deemed necessary, although Aeroustics recommended including a warning clause in future residential agreements.

The land to the east of the proposed development permits commercial and light industrial uses. Aeroustics found that noise from these businesses is sporadic, infrequent, and brief, so they are not expected to negatively impact residential use. The NIS determined that no exterior construction upgrades are needed to mitigate noise.

The figure below shows the site, adjacent roads, and buildings. The nearest non-residential use is Taylor Carpet One Floor & Home at 30 Cairns Crescent, with a separation of about 19 meters from the proposed building's north facade. The next closest building is a physiotherapy clinic (ProActive Rehab) at 34 Cairns Crescent, approximately 52 meters away. Neither business is considered a major facility, and neither is expected to negatively impact the development. Additionally, the introduction of residential uses will not hinder the continued operation or potential expansion of these

businesses. Noise warning clauses and temperature-controlled units will allow residents to minimize environmental noise by closing their windows if desired.

**Figure 16 - Key Plan Showing Site, Adjacent Roads, and Uses**



Furthermore, the Province's D-6 guidelines set out a series of potential influence areas for industrial land uses and establish three classifications of industrial facilities. Paraphrased for conciseness, the three facility types are classified as:

- Class I Industrial Facility: Small-scale business with contained production, infrequent outputs, and no outside storage. Daytime operations only.
- Class II Industrial Facility: Medium-scale processing with outdoor storage of wastes or materials (i.e. it has an open process) and/or there are periodic outputs of minor annoyance. Shift operations allowed, with frequent daytime product movement.
- Class III Industrial Facility: Large-scale manufacturing with frequent annoyance outputs and high probability of emissions. Continuous operations with large product and employee movement.

The D-6 Guidelines specify that a Class I industrial facility may have an influence area of up to 70 meters, a Class II up to 300 meters, and a Class III up to 1,000 meters. However, the actual influence area is determined by site-specific factors. In our opinion, the nearby uses are primarily commercial rather than industrial, and any industrial operations would likely fall under Class I based on their nature and the definitions in the D-6 Guidelines. While some businesses have outdoor storage, there is minimal on-site production (contained if any), infrequent outputs, and daytime-only operations.

Additionally, the industrial/commercial area near the site is zoned as Urban Business Employment, which does not permit the heavy industrial uses typically classified as Class II or higher. While the

grocery store and equipment rental business may generate some noise, it is transient, occurring mainly during business hours, and is not expected to disturb future residents.

The planning policy for the site promotes higher-density residential uses, and the Town has determined that residential development is appropriate near this mix of uses through the production of the Official Plan and Community Planning Permit By-law which establishes the land use planning framework for the site. The temperature-controlled units and warning clauses recommended by Aercoustics will mitigate potential noise issues. Air quality is not expected to be a concern given the nature of nearby uses.

The nearest commercial/industrial structure that could impact the site, such as Sunbelt Rentals at 40 Cairns Crescent, operates during the day and is more than 70 meters away, meeting the required distance for a Class I facility. The Noise Impact Study (NIS) found no significant impact on the proposed development from nearby stationary noise sources, including the businesses mentioned in this section.

Based on the information provided and the findings of the NIS and based on our review of existing surrounding land uses, we do not foresee any compatibility concerns related to potential adverse effects such as odour, noise, or other contaminants, nor do we anticipate any risks to public health and safety, or the preclusion or hindrance to any existing businesses. Any noise-related issues can be effectively mitigated using the measures outlined in the NIS. Furthermore, the proposed residential use complies with the planning framework set out for the site and area and aligns with the Town's growth policies as discussed in this report. Therefore, the increase in residential density on-site is not expected to interfere with the long-term operation or economic viability of existing businesses to the north, west, and southwest.

## Housing

Section 1.4 of the PPS sets out policy direction with respect to housing in the Province. Policy 1.4.1 caters to the diverse housing needs of both current and future residents within regional market areas. Specifically, planning authorities are directed to undertake the following measures. Firstly, they must always possess the capability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum period of 15 years. This can be achieved through strategies such as residential intensification, redevelopment, and the availability of designated lands for residential development. Additionally, in areas where new development is set to take place, it is imperative to ensure that there exists sufficient servicing capacity. This ensures the availability of at least a three-year supply of residential units through lands that are appropriately zoned to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment, as well as lands included in draft approved and registered plans. Moreover, upper-tier and single-tier municipalities have the option to enhance this readiness by maintaining land with servicing capacity capable of providing a five-year supply of residential units through similar zoning and planning strategies.

Policy 1.4.3 requires provision to be made for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities including both market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents by, among other matters, permitting and facilitating all types of residential intensification and redevelopment, promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities and support the use of active transportation and transit, and requiring transit-supportive development and prioritizing intensification in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations.

The proposed development will contribute to the range and mix of new housing for the neighbourhood and Town through residential intensification, helping to accommodate residential growth in Huntsville. Furthermore, the site is proposed to remain residential in nature, and the addition of new housing units on site will contribute towards the available supply of residential units on lands that will be appropriately regulated to facilitate such residential intensification and development.

## **Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities**

The efficient use of infrastructure (particularly transit) is a key element of provincial policy (Section 1.6). Infrastructure and public service facilities are to be provided in an efficient manner that prepares for the impacts of a changing climate while accommodating projected needs. Section 1.6.3 states that the use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized, before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities. With respect to transportation systems, Policy 1.6.7.4 promotes a land use pattern, density and mix of uses that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support current and future use of transit and active transportation.

The proposal will provide a density that is transit supportive and future residents of the building on site will be able to utilize the Town and District's existing transit infrastructure, thereby placing less dependence on automobile use, and minimizing the number of vehicle trips.

## **Transportation Systems**

Policy 1.7.1 of the PPS states that long-term prosperity should be supported through a number of initiatives including: encouraging residential uses to respond to dynamic market-based needs and provide necessary housing supply and a range of housing options for a diverse workforce; optimizing the use of land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities; maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets; encouraging a sense of place by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning; promoting the redevelopment of brownfield sites and promoting energy conservation.

The proposal will help support long-term prosperity through the provision of over 180 purpose-built rental housing units at a transit supportive density, enhancing the range and mix of housing options for the Town. As well, the proposal will be connected existing municipal water and wastewater services, and future residents will be able to utilize existing investments in Town and District transit. Overall, the development will infill a vacant site within the urban area of Town, making for a much more efficient use of space and complementing the overall policy direction of long-term prosperity.

## **Conclusions**

The proposed development is consistent with the policies of the PPS. The subject site is located within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, which is the target area in town for intensification under the PPS. In terms of housing mix and uses, the proposed development provides for a high, transit-supportive density-built form in an area where the residential housing stock is not completely filled in and where there is convenient access to major roads, highways, and amenities. Furthermore, the purpose-built rental nature of the development, provides a housing option and can assist in the improvement of social equity, as rental units are typically more affordable than ownership units. The proposal will increase housing supply and housing choice available in the area by providing for 184 rental housing



units in an area where the predominate tenure is owned, single-family homes. In addition, the building itself will complement a wider range and mix of unit types with one-bedroom units all the way up to three-bedroom units, helping to accommodate families for longer terms. The provision of these mixed unit types will help to fill a gap in the market that can appeal to a wide range of users including but not limited to newcomers to Canada, students, seniors, and young families, among others. Lastly, the proposed development represents responsible and efficient use of existing municipal infrastructure, transit and public services.

## **4.2 Provincial Planning Statement (Not Yet In-Force)**

On August 20, 2024, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (“MMAH”) released a new Provincial Planning Statement (“2024 PPS”). The 2024 PPS is intended to be a streamlined land use policy framework that replaces the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 and the Growth Plans for Ontario. It builds on housing-supportive policies from both documents and provides municipalities with the tools and flexibility to increase housing supply, align development with infrastructure for a competitive economy, support rural viability, and protect agricultural lands, the environment, and public health and safety.

The 2024 PPS comes into force and effect on October 20, 2024, and therefore, the policies within it, have been included in this report, as a way to highlight the new provincial policy directions and are provided for reference only to the emerging new planning framework.

Section 2.1 of the 2024 PPS sets out the new policy framework related to planning for people and homes. The “Planning for People and Homes” policies mandate that planning authorities base their population and employment growth forecasts on the Ontario Population Projections published by the Ministry of Finance, allowing modifications as appropriate. Municipalities may continue using previous provincial forecasts for land use planning. When creating or updating official plans, authorities must ensure sufficient land is designated to accommodate a diverse range of land uses to meet projected needs over a time horizon of at least 20 years but not more than 30 years, following provincial guidance. Planning for infrastructure, public service facilities, strategic growth areas, and employment areas may extend beyond this time frame.

Accordingly, planning authorities are required to maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through designated lands available for development and ensure a minimum three-year supply of land with servicing capacity for new developments, including units in draft-approved or registered plans.

Furthermore, planning should support the achievement of complete communities by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options with multimodal access, employment opportunities, public service facilities, and other uses to meet long-term needs. It should improve accessibility for people of all ages and abilities by addressing land use barriers and enhance social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity-deserving groups.

Section 2.2 of the 2024 PPS provides the province’s new housing policy direction. In this regard, planning authorities must provide a range and mix of housing options and densities to meet the needs of current and future residents. This includes setting targets for affordable housing, coordinating with Service Managers, and permitting housing that meets social, economic, and

health needs. Authorities should facilitate residential intensification, such as redeveloping underutilized commercial and institutional sites, and promote efficient land use and resource management. Additionally, transit-supportive development and prioritizing housing intensification near transit corridors and stations are required to enhance accessibility and sustainability.

Accordingly, the proposed development will result in the creation of 184 new homes at a transit-supportive density, and affordable housing is a component being considered in the development. This in turn contributes towards the range and mix of housing provided in the Town and helps to meet the provinces targets of providing a range and mix of housing options and densities to meet the needs of current and future residents.

The 2024 PPS is not yet in force and effect, and this section was provided for reference only to the emerging new planning framework. Overall, in our opinion, the proposed development is consistent with the not yet in-force 2024 Provincial Policy Statement and is consistent with the policies outlined for growth and the provision of new housing options in appropriate areas.

## **4.3 District of Muskoka Official Plan**

The District of Muskoka Official Plan ("MOP") is a regional policy document that provides high-level policy direction and guides both short-term and long-term development in Muskoka's six area municipalities, including Huntsville. It sets out a vision and goals, ensuring that new development and growth consider various policies to protect the natural environment, align growth with municipal infrastructure, and promote complete, safe, accessible, and inclusive communities. The MOP covers a range of areas, including environmental protection, water quality, resource management, housing, growth and settlement patterns, community vision and objectives, economic development, tourism and resorts, transportation, services and utilities, and implementation.

The latest version of the MOP is a consolidated version by the District of Muskoka (the "District") Council dated March 2023, which covers a planning period to 2038.

In the MOP, the subject site is designated as an *Urban Centre* according to Schedule A: Land Use Designations and is within the fully serviced urban area of Huntsville, as per Schedule B: Urban Service Areas.

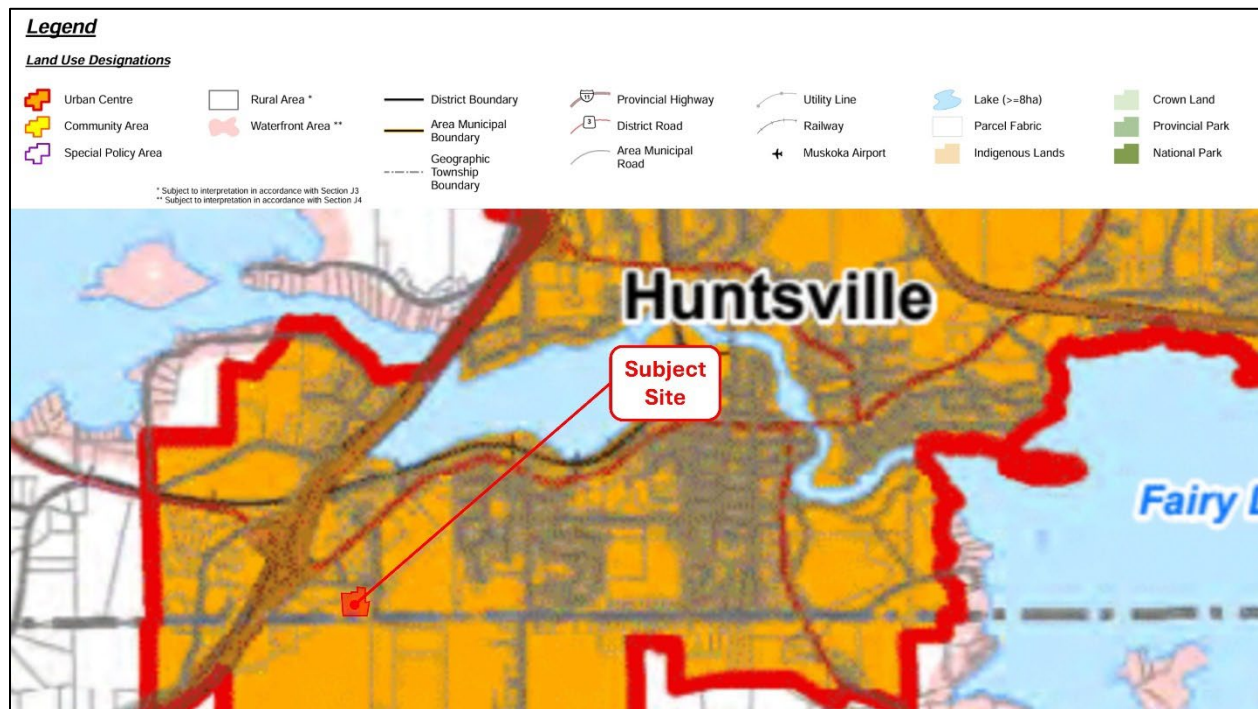
Furthermore, the subject site is not identified by the District as being within or having any regulated habitat, areas of natural and scientific interest, or provincially significant wetlands, according to Schedule C1: Natural Heritage Features and Areas. The site, along with most of the southwest and west end of the Town of Huntsville, is identified by the District as being part of a *Deer Wintering Area (Stratum 2)* according to Schedule C2: Natural Heritage Features and Areas (Wetlands, Muskoka Heritage Areas and Sites, and Significant Wildlife Habitat).

The site is not within any source water protection areas or zones, nor does it feature any waterbody features, as per Schedule D: Water Resources. The site is located within but towards the southwestern edge of the 1,000 m buffer of an abandoned mine, as per Schedule E1: Resource Areas and Other Constraints. The subject site is not located within a floodway, flood fringe area, or any other flood risk area, according to Schedule E3: Flood Risk Mapping.

Lastly, according to Schedule F: Transportation, the subject site is located along an existing area municipal road and is in close proximity to a Class C District Road (Muskoka Road 3, a.k.a. Main Street West).

The following figures illustrate these designations, features, and other mapped items.

**Figure 17 - MOP Schedule A: Land Use Designations**



**Legend**

|                           |   |                              |                              |              |                    |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| <b>Urban Service Area</b> | Hwy 60 Special Servicing Policy Area          | District Boundary            | Urban Centre Boundary        | Utility Line | Provincial Highway |
| Full Service Area         | Santa's Village Special Servicing Policy Area | Area Municipal Boundary      | Special Policy Area Boundary | Railway      | District Road      |
| Single Service Area       |   | Geographic Township Boundary | Parcel Fabric                |              | Municipal Road     |
| Future Service Area       |   |                              |                              |              |                    |

**Legend**

**Natural Heritage Features and Areas**

| <p> Provincially Significant Wetlands</p> <p><b>Regulated Habitat</b></p> <p> Engelmanns Quiltwort Regulated Habitat</p> <p> Eastern Fox Snake Regulated Habitat *</p> | <p><b>Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <th>Class</th> <th>Significance</th> </tr> <tr> <td> Earth Science Provincial</td> <td>Provincial</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Earth Science Regional</td> <td>Regional</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Life Science Provincial</td> <td>Provincial</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Life Science Regional</td> <td>Regional</td> </tr> </table> | Class | Significance | Earth Science Provincial | Provincial | Earth Science Regional | Regional | Life Science Provincial | Provincial | Life Science Regional | Regional | <p> District Boundary</p> <p> Municipal Boundary</p> <p> Geographic Township Boundary</p> <p> Urban Centre Boundary</p> <p> Community Area Boundary</p> <p> Special Policy Area Boundary</p> | <p> Provincial Highway</p> <p> District Road</p> <p> Area Municipal Road</p> <p> Utility Line</p> <p> Railway</p> <p> Muskoka Airport</p> | <p> Lake (&gt;=8ha)</p> <p> Parcel Fabric</p> <p> Indigenous Lands</p> <p> Crown Land</p> <p> Provincial Park</p> <p> National Park</p> |
|--|--|-------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------|----------|--|---|---|
| Class  | Significance   |       |              |                          |            |                        |          |                         |            |                       |          |  |   |   |
| Earth Science Provincial   | Provincial   |       |              |                          |            |                        |          |                         |            |                       |          |  |   |   |
| Earth Science Regional   | Regional   |       |              |                          |            |                        |          |                         |            |                       |          |  |   |   |
| Life Science Provincial  | Provincial   |       |              |                          |            |                        |          |                         |            |                       |          |  |   |   |
| Life Science Regional  | Regional   |       |              |                          |            |                        |          |                         |            |                       |          |  |   |   |

\* The Regulated Habitat of the Eastern Fox Snake (Georgian Bay Population) is described textually and can only be shown partially on this Schedule. For a complete description of the Regulated Habitat, refer to Ontario Regulation 242/08.



Figure 20 – MOP C2: Natural Heritage Features and Areas

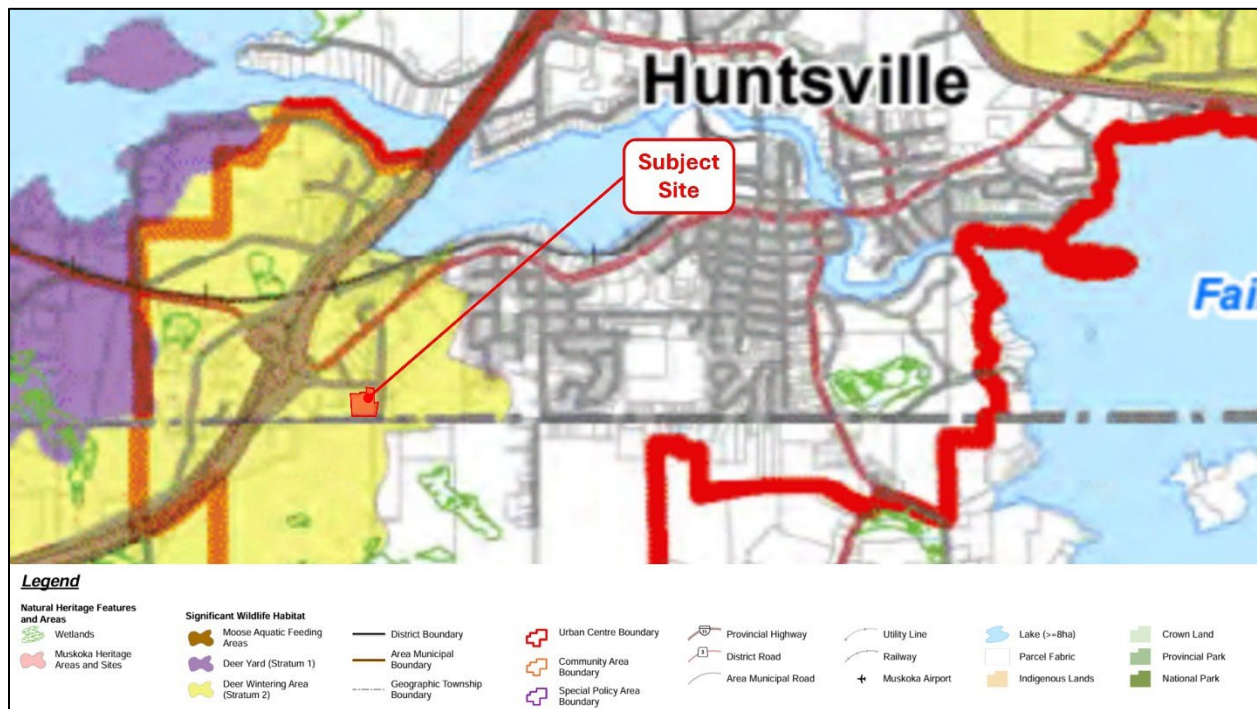
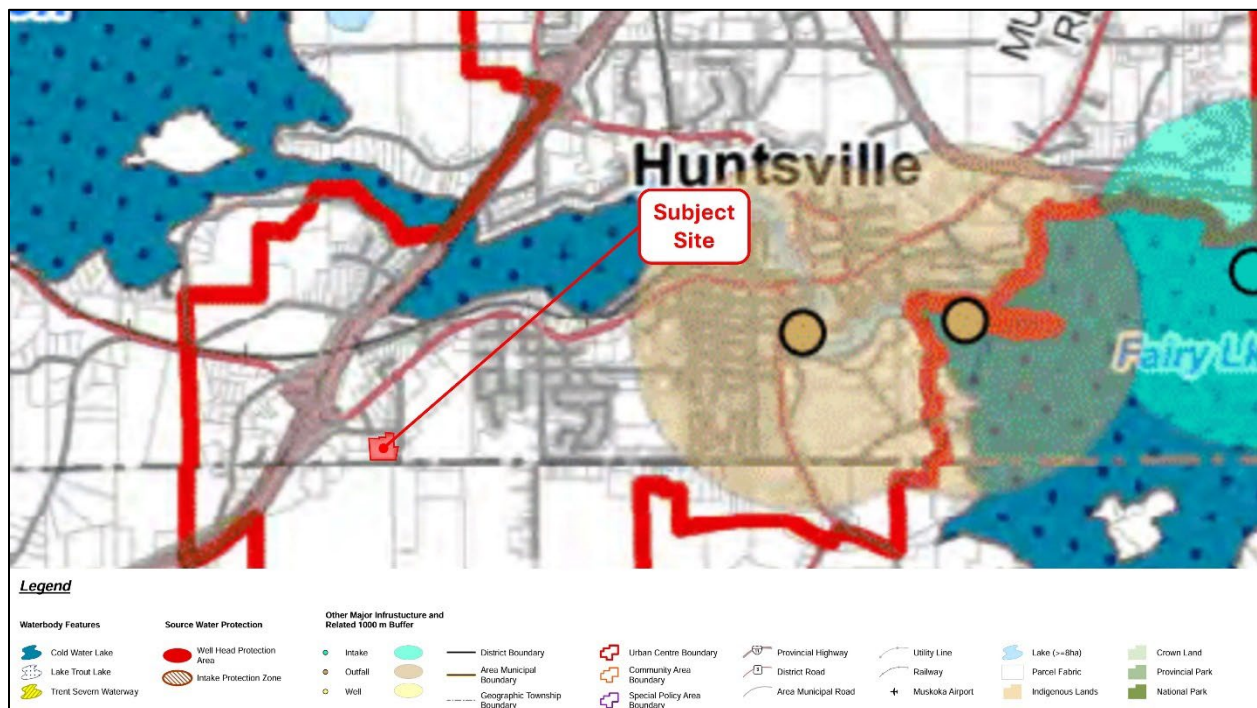
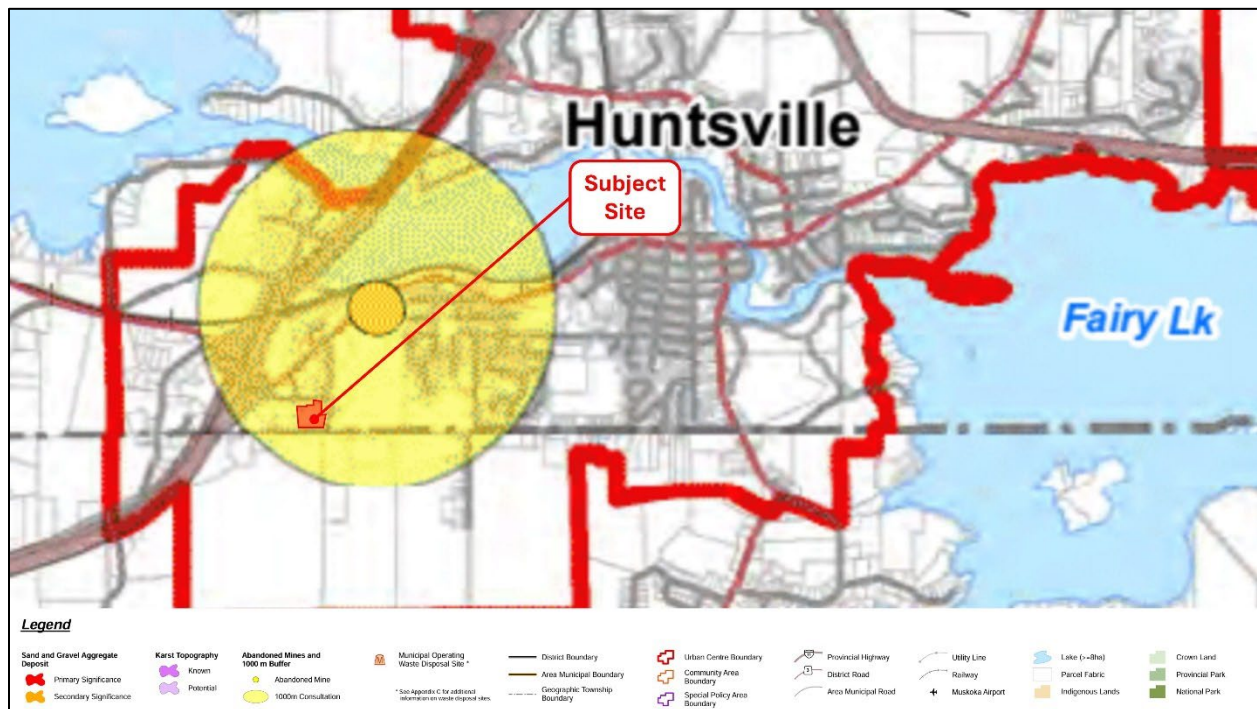


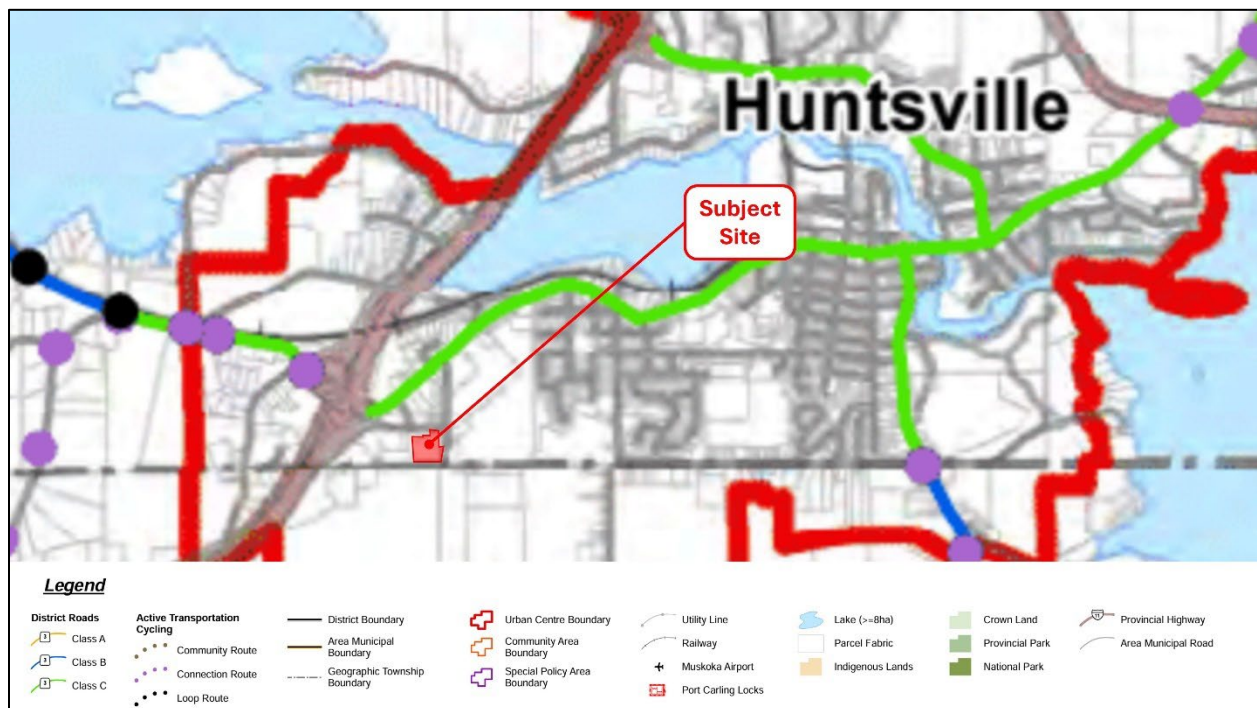
Figure 21 - MOP Schedule D: Water Resources



**Figure 22 – MOP Schedule E1: Resource Areas and Other Constraints**



**Figure 23 - MOP Schedule F: Transportation**



## Natural Heritage

Section C of the MOP provides policy direction on the ecosystems of Muskoka and includes natural heritage and water resources.

As previously mentioned, the subject site is not identified by the District as being within or having any regulated habitat, areas of natural and scientific interest, or provincially significant wetlands, nor is it within any source water protection areas or zones, nor does it feature any waterbody features. The site, along with most of the southwest and west end of the Town of Huntsville, is however, identified by the District as being part of a Deer Wintering Area (Stratum 2).

Policy C1.3.1(b) states that development and site alteration shall not be permitted in significant wildlife habitat unless it has been demonstrated through an environmental impact study that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.

The Policies of C1.4.4.1 provide that the protection and management of significant wildlife habitats are crucial for maintaining self-sustaining wildlife populations and biodiversity in Muskoka. Development can fragment these habitats, impairing their ecological functions, threatening wildlife health, and possibly leading to a loss of wildlife-related activities like recreational viewing and hunting. Comprehensive assessments of significant wildlife habitats have not been conducted across the district, except for deer wintering and moose aquatic feeding areas as noted in Appendix E of the MOP. These habitats vary widely and are often extensive, making comprehensive assessment challenging, especially on private lands.

Significant wildlife habitats may include areas where animals concentrate seasonally, specialized habitats, and habitats for species of special concern, which may be detailed further in Area Municipal Official Plans.

When development is proposed in areas potentially containing significant wildlife habitats, proponents are directed to follow Provincial guidelines and may need to conduct site assessments with qualified professionals to determine the presence of such habitats and assess potential impacts.

Accordingly, the subject site has been identified as being within a Deer Wintering Area (Stratum 2). Policy C1.4.4.2 outlines the management of deer wintering habitat, identifying it as either Stratum 1 or Stratum 2 areas. Stratum 1 is the core habitat where deer concentrate during mid-winter when snow depth restricts their movement. Stratum 2 (which includes the subject site) generally surrounds Stratum 1 and is used by deer during early winter or mild winter conditions. Development or site alteration is generally discouraged in Stratum 1 to protect the dense conifer thermal cover and critical food supply needed by deer in severe winter periods. In Stratum 2, any development should conserve conifer thermal cover, feeding areas, and movement corridors. If such habitats are identified, development locations should avoid impacting them, and any negative effects should be mitigated, especially in designated growth areas.

In more simple terms, some development is permitted with Stratum 2 Deer Wintering Area because it is less sensitive and crucial for deer. Notwithstanding, Palmer was retained to conduct an Environmental Impact Study ("EIS") for the proposed development, which included a Deer Wintering Habitat Assessment. During a March 11, 2022, site visit, the entire property was surveyed for deer usage, focusing on the Stratum 2 deer wintering yard identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources



and Forestry ("MNR"), the Town of Huntsville, and the District Municipality of Muskoka. The survey covered the entire property without the need for transects, recording both direct and indirect evidence of deer, such as visual sightings, tracks, and deer trails. Although the entire property is mapped as a Deer Wintering Area (Stratum 2), the assessment found no direct evidence of deer, such as visual or auditory signs, and only occasional indirect evidence like tracks.

Palmer concluded that the site is unlikely to serve as a true Stratum 2 habitat due to its proximity to developed land and the nearby Stratum 1 habitat. They also found that the urban setting makes the site's role as a deer habitat opportunistic rather than essential. While the forested area is mapped as a Deer Wintering Area, it does not provide the required conifer thermal cover or significant feeding areas, nor does it contain provincially designated features such as significant wetlands or woodlands.

The proposal would result in the removal of the mapped Stratum 2 habitat. However, Palmer found that the site's current vegetation and lack of significant deer use indicate that it does not function as a vital deer habitat. Therefore, tree removal for the development is not expected to impact deer winter cover significantly, as more suitable habitats exist off-site. The assessment concluded that the on-site forest does not serve as a significant deer wintering habitat, and the proposed development will not disrupt essential habitat features. Finally, the proposal does include the preservation of a roughly 23-metre-deep tract of land to the rear of the site, which can be naturalized to ensure retention of as many of the existing site trees as possible.

## **Growth Management, Servicing and Healthy Communities**

Section D of the MOP establishes the objectives and policy direction for the District related to growth management, servicing and healthy communities.

Many of the primary objectives in this regard include managing growth sustainably to make the most efficient use of land, infrastructure, public services, and facilities. Strengthening the settlement structure of Muskoka as a composite of urban, rural, and waterfront areas by focusing growth in Urban Centres and supporting appropriate development in Community Areas, the Rural Area, and the Waterfront Area, is key to maintaining the character and integrity of each area. Encouraging further intensification and use of the lands within Urban Centres, as well as the efficient use of lands in designated growth areas, is important. Ensuring an adequate supply of land and housing choices for present and future residents is essential. Consideration must be given to the economics of providing services to Muskoka's residents as part of any development proposal review to ensure an orderly, efficient development pattern that does not lead to inefficiencies or a decline in municipal services. All urban development should be appropriately phased in conjunction with necessary infrastructure improvements where needed. Encouraging an optimal balance between residential and non-residential uses, including promoting mixed uses on individual parcels of land and within settlement areas, is crucial. Implementing sustainable development practices and supporting resiliency and innovation is vital to maximize resource and energy conservation and to recognize climate change impacts. Lastly, promoting land use and development patterns that support the health and well-being of Muskoka's people and contribute to a higher quality of life is a priority, among other objectives.

## Growth Management

Based on these objectives, most growth and development, including infill and intensification, in the District is directed to Urban Centres. The objectives emphasize focusing growth on Urban Centres, encouraging further intensification and use of lands within these centers, and supporting the efficient use of lands in designated growth areas. This approach aims to strengthen the settlement structure and ensure sustainable development that makes efficient use of resources, infrastructure, and services.

Accordingly, Policy D.2.A establishes that settlement areas (such as Huntsville) are the focal points for year-round population and dwelling growth within the District. Policy D.2.B further describes settlement areas in more detail, breaking them into Community Areas and Urban Centres, with the subject site being within the latter. Urban Centres notably provide municipal water and sewage services. Policy D.2.D provides that new development in designated growth areas should be adjacent to existing built-up areas and have a compact form with a mix of uses and densities to ensure efficient use of land, infrastructure, and public services.

According to Table 2 of the MOP, the population of Huntsville is projected to increase from 19,600 in 2016 to 24,400 by 2036. This represents a growth of 4,800 over the 20-year period and an increase of about 24.5%. Furthermore, as outlined in Table 5 of the MOP, the total number of year-round dwellings is projected to increase from 7,900 in 2016 to 10,130 by 2036. This represents an overall growth of 2,230 dwellings or about 28.2%. Specifically, the number of single/semi dwellings is projected to grow from 6,630 to 8,240 (24.3% increase), multiple dwellings from 380 to 710 (86.8% increase), and apartments from 890 to 1,180 (32.6% increase). According to Table 6 of the MOP, Huntsville has set a target that 60% of these new residential dwellings occupied on a year-round basis should be directed to the Urban Centre by 2036, which is part of a district-wide policy aiming for 70% of new dwellings to be located in Urban Centres. It is noted that the tables have not been updated to reflect 20238 as the overall planning horizon date.

Based on the information provided, the subject site is ideally situated within the Huntsville Urban Centre to accommodate new growth and development. Specifically, the proposal will help the District manage some of the projected growth within the planning horizon, particularly in the provision of apartment dwelling units.

Policy D12 sets a district-wide residential intensification target of 25% for new year-round residential development within the built-up areas of Urban Centres across Muskoka. This target applies collectively to all Urban Centres, rather than to individual development proposals. To meet this target, each area municipality must create an intensification plan that sets local targets, identifies suitable locations for intensification and redevelopment within Urban Centres, and promotes opportunities considering existing infrastructures and the character of areas, including underutilized properties. These plans should focus intensification primarily in the larger centers of Huntsville, Bracebridge, and Gravenhurst, specifying locations of nodes and corridors. They will also address the provision of services and infrastructure needed for growth and may consider elements that support public transit expansion. These intensification plans are to be implemented through the Area Municipal Official Plans.

The proposal to develop over 180 new purpose-built rental housing units within the Huntsville Urban Centre, where full municipal water and wastewater services are available, aligns with Policy D12's

objectives for residential intensification. By situating the development on a vacant and underutilized site within Huntsville's Urban Centre, the project contributes to the district-wide intensification target of 25%, ensuring efficient use of existing infrastructure and optimizing land use. The proposed density of 84.8 units per hectare is transit-supportive, promoting the use of public transit by increasing the number of residents within a walkable distance to transit services. This infill development supports the policy's emphasis on focusing growth within Urban Centres to optimize the use of land and public services, and also addresses the need for additional rental housing. The project not only adheres to the broader goals of sustainable urban growth (in part through the proposal for a green roof) and intensification but also responds to specific local needs, making it a fitting example of how new development can conform to and fulfill regional planning strategies.

### Servicing

Policy D15 of the MOP outlines guidelines for planning sewage and water services to support growth and development efficiently. It mandates that such planning should direct growth in a way that optimizes the use of existing municipal sewage and water services, as well as individual on-site services where municipal services are unavailable. The policy emphasizes that these systems must be sustainable, financially viable, comply with regulatory requirements, and protect human health and the natural environment. Additionally, it considers the impacts of climate change on infrastructure design, promotes water conservation, and integrates servicing with land use planning throughout all stages. Development should prioritize the use of existing services before extending infrastructure. The policy also specifies that the servicing hierarchy detailed in Sections D15.2 to D15.6 applies to Urban Centres, including the "Hidden Valley Recreational Lifestyle and Resort Special Policy Area," and that infrastructure corridors identified through environmental assessments are protected to support growth.

The proposed development within the fully serviced urban area of Huntsville conforms well with Policy D15. Since the development is situated in an area already equipped with municipal sewage and water services, it aligns with the policy's directive to direct growth towards areas where infrastructure can optimize existing services. This efficient use of services not only conforms with the policy requirements but also supports the financial investment already made in these services.

Moreover, the development adheres to the principles of integrating servicing and land use considerations at all planning stages, which is fundamental under Policy D15. By leveraging existing municipal infrastructure, the development also aligns with the policy's encouragement of optimizing the use of existing services before considering infrastructure extensions. This approach of using land within designated Urban Centres for infill development supports not only the specific guidelines of Policy D15 but also broader sustainability and efficiency goals within urban planning frameworks, ensuring that growth is both manageable and strategically aligned with Huntsville's long-term development plans.

Policy D15.2 of the MOP details the approach to municipal sewage and water services in the District of Muskoka. These services are preferred for Urban Centres, and the policy encourages using existing infrastructure for redevelopment and intensification. Any expansion of these services into Future Service Areas requires an amendment to the plan, considering development needs, infrastructure capacity, and environmental impacts. Minor service area adjustments for infill are allowed without an amendment, and special projects like affordable housing or hospitals may also proceed in Future Service Areas without an amendment. The plan aims to provide full municipal

services to all areas over time, but private on-site services are permitted temporarily if conditions are suitable. Service extensions beyond Urban Centres are restricted to specific public needs and do not automatically grant further development rights. An economic impact analysis may be needed for service expansions, and municipal services for developments involving multiple properties, must be managed by the District of Muskoka.

The proposed development within Huntsville's fully serviced urban area aligns with Policy D15.2 by utilizing existing municipal sewage and water services, supporting the policy's preference for servicing within Urban Centres. This approach promotes intensification and efficient use of existing infrastructure without requiring expansion into Future Service Areas, thus avoiding the need for amendments to the plan. By focusing on development within the serviced urban area, the project supports sustainable growth and efficient land use, aligning with the policy's goals of financial and technical feasibility while protecting public health and the environment. This strategic use of existing services also ensures that development is integrated with land use planning, contributing to Huntsville's long-term growth objectives.

## Housing

Section E of the MOP sets out the policy direction for housing in Muskoka. Section E1 established housing objectives that aim to meet current and future housing needs in Muskoka by ensuring a continuous ability to accommodate residential growth for at least 10 years. This is intended to be achieved through residential intensification and redevelopment, along with the availability of designated lands for residential development. Section E1 emphasizes maintaining a three-year supply of residential units with adequate servicing capacity, supported by appropriately zoned lands. A diverse range of housing opportunities is encouraged in Muskoka to cater to different income and demographic groups, including mixed-use developments and secondary residential units. Objectives also promote using surplus public lands for affordable housing when compatible with surrounding areas and encourages seniors housing and alternative housing for special needs groups and supporting universal physical access in new residential structures and the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

General Housing Policies are discussed in Section E2 of the MOP. Policy E.2.A describes the imperative nature of ensuring appropriate levels of infrastructure and public service in areas which will accommodate residential intensification and redevelopment. This relationship between growth and infrastructure serves to uphold livability in growing communities. Moreover, Policy E.2.B underscores the strategic alignment of housing development with transit infrastructure, emphasizing the importance of facilitating transit-oriented communities in areas where transit already exists or is slated for development. Such an approach not only fosters sustainable urban living but also enhances accessibility and mobility for residents. Lastly, Policy E.2.F advocates for the strategic utilization of available programs and funding to foster the construction of attainable or affordable housing. This proactive stance aims to ensure the District's housing stock is diverse and inclusive, catering to a spectrum of needs and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Housing Mix Target outlined for Huntsville's new, year-round residential developments in designated growth areas comprises of 60% low-density housing, 25% medium-density housing, and 15% high-density housing, as per Table 10 of the MOP. This blend reflects a nuanced approach to urban planning, aiming to balance density with livability and ensuring the community's long-term sustainability and resilience.

The subject site stands as a prime candidate for intensified development, aligning seamlessly with the comprehensive goals outlined in Section E of the MOP. With its designation as an Urban Centre and its provision of essential services, the site embodies the District's vision for efficient growth management. Furthermore, the proposed high-density development not only optimizes land use but also caters to Huntsville's evolving needs, as highlighted in the MOP's growth projections.

The development, with a proposed density of 84.8 units per hectare and a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 0.59, aligns well with the housing policies outlined in Section E2 of the MOP, specifically regarding transit-supportive densities and sustainable urban growth. The four-story building height facilitates a compact urban form that enhances the efficient use of vacant underutilized land within the Huntsville Urban Centre, consistent with policies promoting intensification and redevelopment.

The unit mix of the development — predominantly one-bedroom units (74%), with a smaller provision of one-bedroom plus den (4%), two-bedroom (9%), two-bedroom plus den (9%), and three-bedroom (4%) units — supports a diverse residential offering that caters to a range of demographic groups, from singles and young professionals to small families. This diversity is crucial in fostering inclusive communities and providing housing that is attainable to a broad spectrum of income levels, which aligns with policy goals of encouraging a wide array of housing opportunities.

As a purpose-built rental development, the proposal directly contributes to increasing the availability of rental housing in Huntsville, addressing the critical need for more rental options as underscored by housing policies. This type of development is particularly important in areas where access to affordable and attainable housing is becoming increasingly necessary due to rising housing prices and demographic shifts.

Furthermore, the location within a fully serviced urban area with existing infrastructure — particularly transit services — ensures that the development is transit-oriented, which is a key objective of the housing policies. This enhances the accessibility of the development, reduces reliance on personal vehicles, and supports environmental sustainability and reduced urban sprawl.

Overall, the proposed development's characteristics and strategic location ensure it is in full alignment with the MOP's housing policies, supporting both the immediate and long-term housing needs of the Huntsville community while promoting efficient, sustainable urban growth.

Policy E7 focuses on attainable housing, defining it as housing that is in good condition, appropriately sized for the household, affordable as defined by the Provincial Policy Statement, CMHC, or District of Muskoka housing programs, and accessible in terms of physical layout and location near services, amenities, transport, and employment opportunities. The District of Muskoka aims for 25% of new residential units to be attainable, with this target applied across the district rather than to each individual development. Urban Centres and Community Areas are preferred for attainable housing due to their suitability in meeting these criteria.

To achieve this target, each area municipality is required to set its own targets and develop implementation plans that consider existing building stocks, including brownfield sites, and the availability of infrastructure. The policy also allows for the use of tools like Inclusionary Zoning and Community Improvement Plans to promote attainable housing. Financial and other incentives, such as the Muskoka Affordable Housing Initiatives Program, are offered to support the provision of attainable housing, with potential requirements for long-term affordability agreements.

Municipalities are encouraged to adopt creative approaches to housing provision, such as alternative development standards and innovative designs that reduce costs. Development applications that include affordable units are prioritized, especially when municipal service capacities are limited, and may receive expedited processing. Surplus municipal land is also recommended for use in housing projects that address social needs.

The proposal is considering affordable housing as a component of the project that will be contingent upon securing subsidies or grants from housing programs such as those offered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). These financial supports are typically granted only after land use permissions are approved, making early commitment to specific numbers of affordable units challenging. However, the developer is committed to exploring these funding opportunities as part of the development process. By intending to apply for such subsidies and grants once the necessary approvals are in place, the developer acknowledges the importance of including affordable housing within the project. This proactive approach aligns with the goal of creating a mixed-income community, and while the final number of affordable units will depend on the success of these funding applications, affordable housing remains a key consideration in the proposal. This strategy ensures that the development not only meets commercial objectives but also contributes to the broader social goals of increasing accessible housing options in the community.

In addition, purpose-built rental housing targeted at the lower to middle end of market rates provides an effective way to increase attainable housing, especially for families. These rentals are generally more affordable than owned housing or luxury rental units, as they require less upfront financial commitment and offer more stable pricing. By focusing on the creation of these rentals, developers can help meet the demand for affordable living options, supporting broader social goals of accessibility and economic diversity in housing. This approach not only aids those who may find homeownership out of reach but also fosters inclusive communities with a mix of income levels.

## **Urban Centre Development**

Section J of the MOP provides policy direction with respect to the settlement pattern in Muskoka, and specific to each of the land use designations in the District. Section J1 provides specific policy direction for lands designated as Urban Centre, such as the subject site.

Section J1.1 of the MOP sets out the objectives for lands designated as Urban Centres in Muskoka and includes focusing the majority of expected year-round population and employment growth in these areas where full services are available. The goals are to support efficient land and infrastructure use to meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses, ensure an adequate supply of land and diverse housing options for all demographics, and promote the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure by encouraging various forms of intensification. The MOP also aims to increase density in designated growth areas to reduce land use for new developments, promote a mix of complementary and compatible land uses including affordable housing, community facilities, and small-scale commercial spaces. Additionally, it encourages area municipalities to develop comprehensive policies to create safe, healthy, functional, and attractive development patterns, and to support the establishment and maintenance of public spaces and recreational facilities for community use.



According to the MOP, Urban Centres emerge as focal points, planned to absorb the majority of anticipated year-round population and employment growth, thereby assuming a central role in shaping the District's spatial and socioeconomic fabric.

The policies of J1.2 specify that a full range of uses is permitted within Urban Centres, provided that municipal water and sewage services are available. The majority of year-round residential uses, major employment generators, and large-scale institutions should be directed to Urban Centres unless exceptions are noted in the Plan. All new development must be suited to the existing or planned infrastructure to prevent unnecessary or uneconomical expansion. Additionally, Area Municipal Official Plans are expected to include detailed policies for development in Urban Centres, covering aspects such as the appropriate mix of uses, density limits, neighborhood character protection, urban design, and specific policies tailored to various areas like downtown cores, mixed-use areas, and employment zones.

The subject site, designated as an *Urban Centre* within the MOP, stands to play a transformative role in the local housing landscape. The proposed development, centered around purpose-built rental apartments, offers a distinctive housing typology for the area, departing from the prevalent single-detached dwellings. As highlighted earlier, the full servicing of the subject site aligns seamlessly with the prescribed policies outlined in the MOP, underscoring the strategic direction for directing intensification efforts.

Moreover, the proposed development embodies a compact form while also holding potential for future options in attainable / affordable housing, bolstered by support from housing programs such as CMHC, if approved. This strategic alignment not only reflects the overarching objectives of the MOP but also reinforces the subject site's pivotal role in fostering inclusive, vibrant Urban Centres within the District of Muskoka.

## **Hazards and Other Constraints**

Section I of the MOP provides broad policy direction with respect to natural hazards and other constraints in the District.

As previously mentioned, there are now natural hazards identified on the subject site. The site is however within a 1,000-metre buffer (near the southwestern edge) of an abandoned mine. Section I3 identifies this as a human-made hazard. Policy I3.1(b) provides that the District of Muskoka is required to consult with and circulate relevant Provincial Ministries for development applications within one kilometer of former mineral mining operations, as indicated on Schedule E1. The district will also use information from the Province and other sources to assess if human-made hazards exist on or adjacent to these development sites.

It is acknowledged that the CPP application will be circulated to relevant Provincial Ministries for review and comment.

## Conclusions

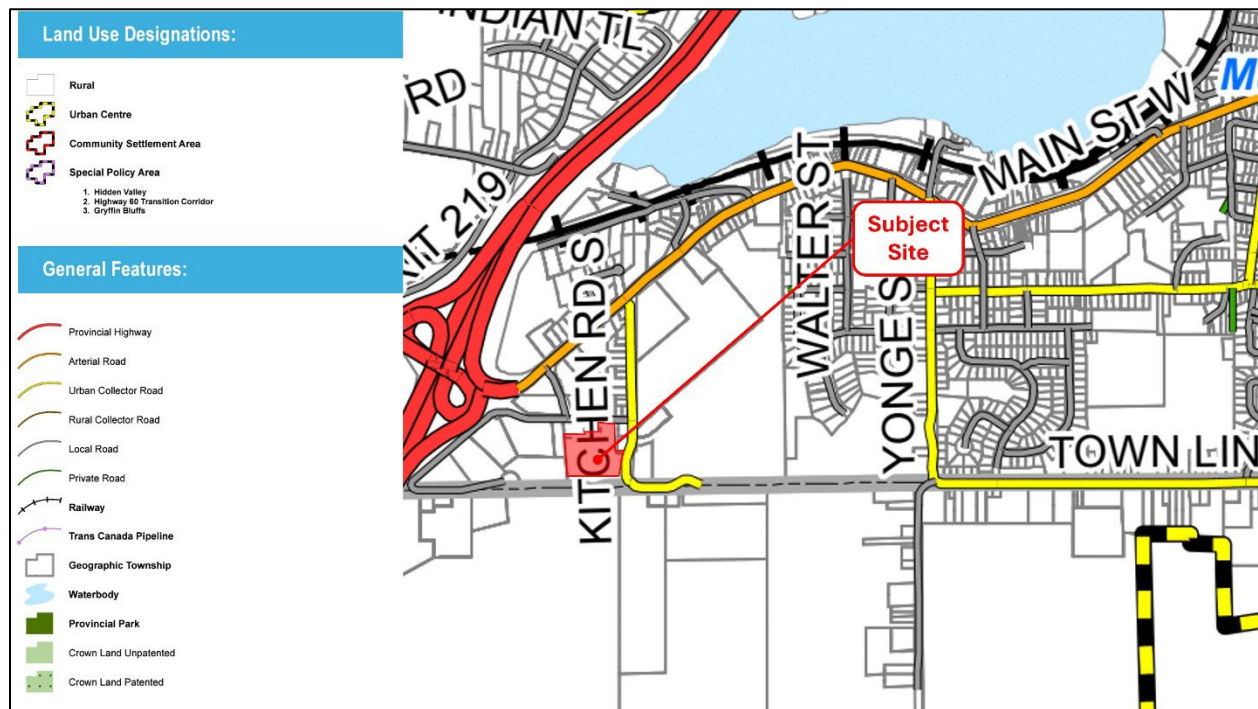
In our opinion, the proposed development conforms with the Muskoka Official Plan by facilitating the provision of new housing within the Huntsville Urban Centre, utilizing full municipal services to support growth. This proposal preserves natural heritage features by avoiding impacts on significant habitats and ensures efficient land use in designated growth and intensification areas. The development, if approved, will help meet projected permanent population growth targets by adding needed rental housing options while adhering to policies that promote sustainable urban development and environmental stewardship. By balancing housing needs with ecological considerations, the proposal supports the district's goals of creating vibrant, resilient communities and using urban, serviced land more efficiently.

## 4.4 Town of Huntsville Official Plan

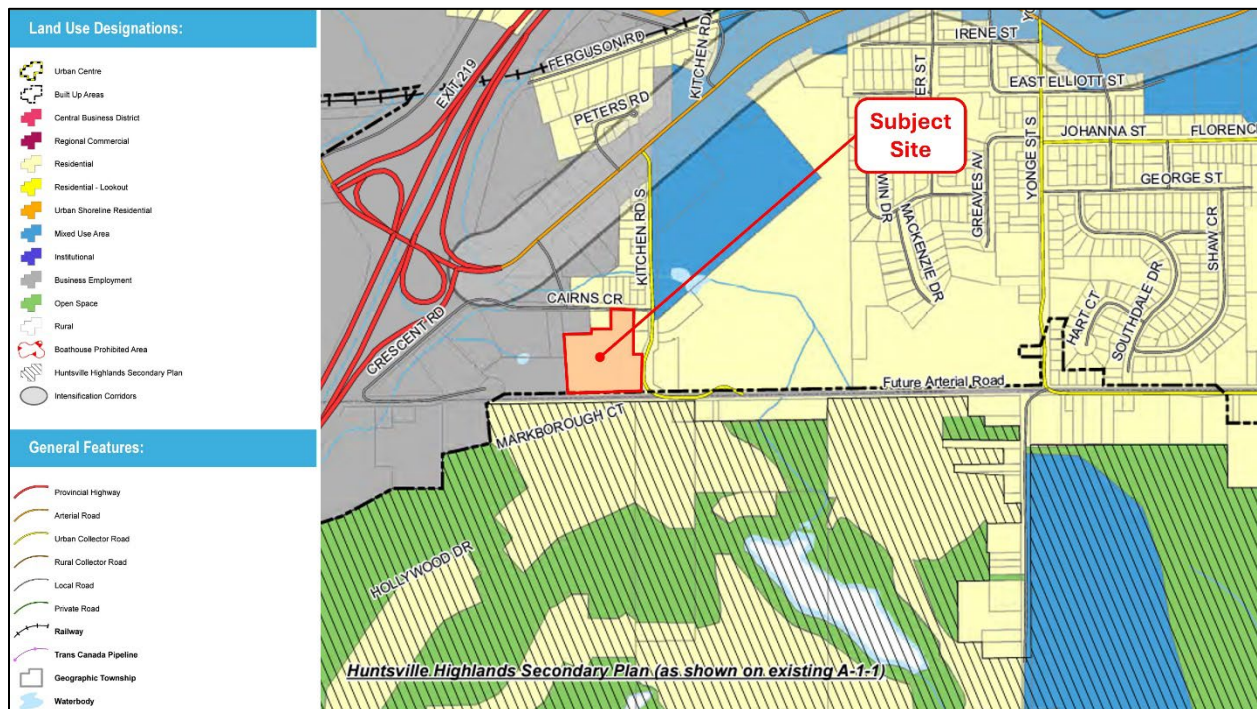
The Town of Huntsville Official Plan, as amended (“OP”), is a policy tool for managing growth and development. It assists Town Council in implementing the vision, addressing climate change, promoting wise stewardship of natural and cultural heritage, and protecting community character. The plan ensures orderly, environmentally, and economically sustainable growth, protects natural resources, and preserves the quality of life. It fosters healthy, active, and safe communities and provides a consistent approach to reviewing development applications for predictable and transparent decision-making. The plan also helps interpret Provincial and District of Muskoka policies in the town's context and encourages public involvement in land use planning. The Official Plan consists of text and four schedules, organized into six parts: introduction, natural Huntsville, business-friendly Huntsville, a caring Huntsville, servicing our residents, and implementation.

In the OP, the subject site is located within the Town’s *Urban Centre*, outside of any Special Policy Areas, and abutting Kitchen Road South which is classified as an *Urban Collector Road* on Schedule A: Land Use (Municipal Wide). The subject site is designated *Urban Residential* and is within the delineated *Built-Up Area* on Schedule B-1: Land Use (Huntsville Urban Settlement Area), and similar to the MOP, the site is identified within a *Deer Wintering Area (Stratum 2)*, as per Schedule C: Natural Constraints. The site is not located within Wildland Fire Hazard Risk area as per Appendix 1. The following figures illustrate the site on these schedules of the OP.

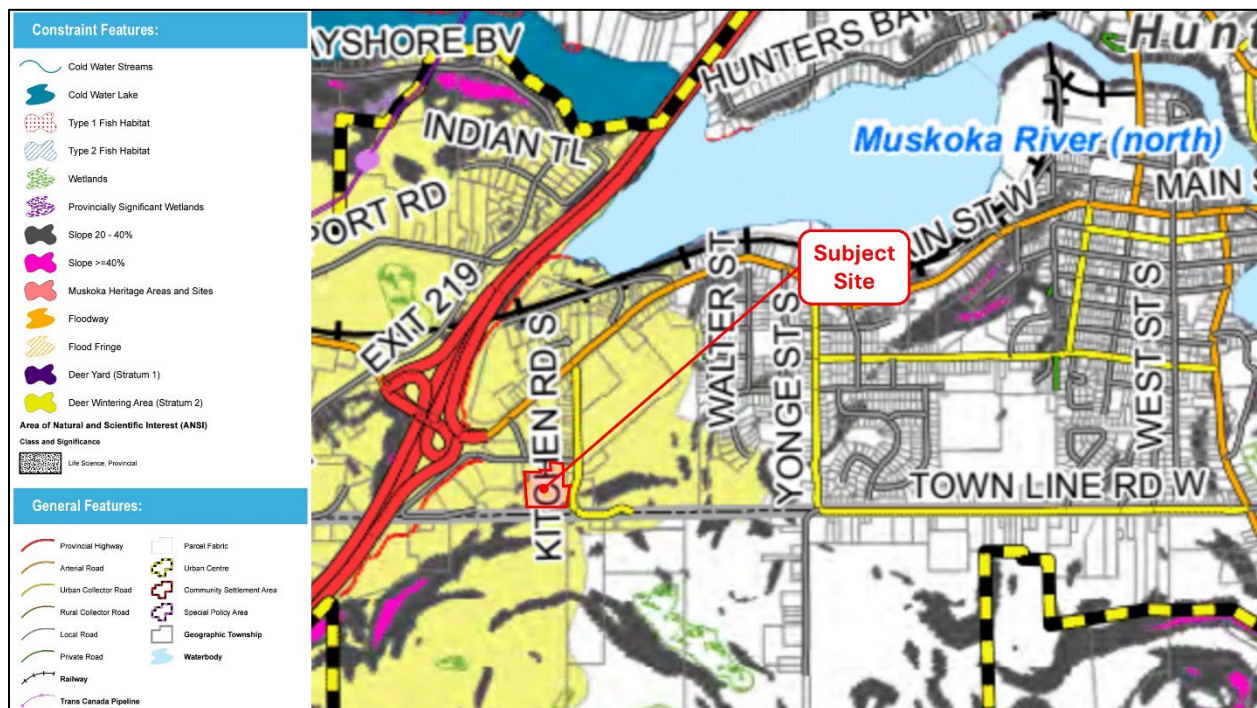
**Figure 24 - Huntsville OP Schedule A: Land Use (Municipal Wide)**



**Figure 25 – Huntsville OP Schedule B-1: Land Use (Huntsville Urban Settlement Area)**

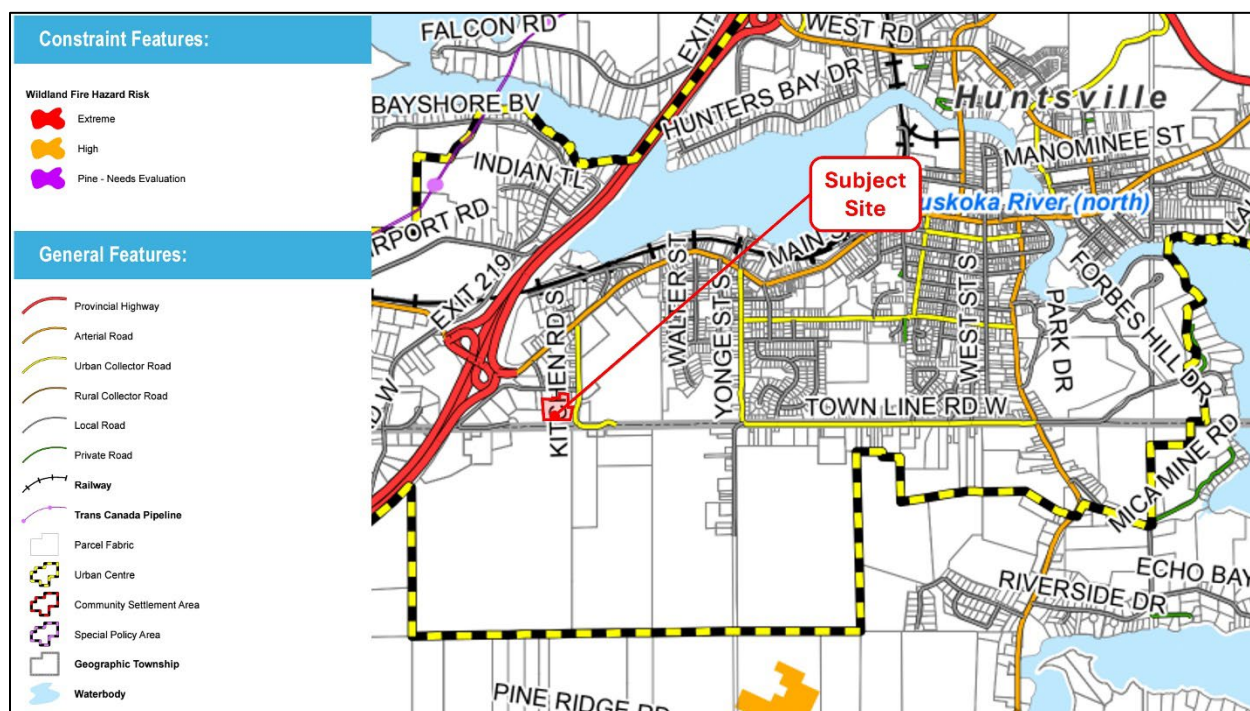


**Figure 26 - Huntsville OP Schedule C: Natural Constraints**





**Figure 27 - OP Appendix 1: Wildland Fire Hazard Risk**



## Natural Heritage

Part B of the OP provide policy direction with respect to Huntsville's natural heritage and achieving environmental resiliency. The Town's goals with respect to natural heritage include protecting the health and integrity of the Town's natural heritage system, which includes water resources, shorelines, forests and natural features; and directing development away from hazard lands that are unsafe for development such as flood prone and wildland fire areas.

As previously mentioned, the subject site is not within a wildland fire hazard risk area, nor does the site contain any significant natural heritage resources. The site is however, mapped as being within a *Deer Wintering Area (Stratum 2)* which is one of the Town's significant wildlife habitats. The protection of wildlife habitat is important to the survival of a species.

Policy B.2.5.1 emphasizes the Town of Huntsville's commitment to protecting significant wildlife habitats. These habitats include areas with seasonal concentrations of animals like deer wintering areas and heronries, rare vegetation communities, specialized habitats for wildlife, habitats for species of "Special Concern" such as provincially rare plants and animals, and animal movement corridors. Policy B.2.5.3 states that additional significant wildlife habitats, such as deer wintering areas and waterfowl nesting or feeding areas, may be identified as more information becomes available. This can occur through site inspections of properties or documentation submitted with development applications.

Policies B.2.5.4 to B.2.5.10 outline guidelines for development and conservation in significant wildlife habitats within Huntsville. Development in these areas is only permitted if it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the habitat or its ecological functions. For adjacent lands,



identified as those within 120 meters of the habitat, development is allowed only after evaluating their ecological function and ensuring no negative impacts.

Conservation measures include using development controls to protect stick nests identified during technical reporting. In Stratum 2 deer habitats, development is permitted if conifer stands, feeding areas, and movement corridors are conserved, with a technical report possibly required.

New lot creation in Stratum 2 habitats should be limited to single-detached dwellings with specific minimum dimensions, ensuring vegetation cover conservation near conifer thermal cover. Alternate lot sizes are only allowed if a technical report shows no deer winter habitat exists. Planning tools, such as increased lot sizes, building setbacks, and specific siting of buildings, driveways, and vegetation retention, will be employed to protect wildlife habitat integrity and implement technical report recommendations.

As previously discussed, Palmer conducted an EIS for the proposed development, including a Deer Wintering Habitat Assessment. During their site visit, the entire property was surveyed for deer activity, focusing on the Stratum 2 deer wintering yard identified by the MNRF, the Town, and the District. Although the site is mapped as a Stratum 2 Deer Wintering Area, the assessment found only occasional tracks and no direct evidence of deer.

Palmer concluded that the site is unlikely to function as a true Stratum 2 habitat. It lacks the conifer thermal cover and feeding areas needed for deer and does not have provincially designated features like significant wetlands. Therefore, the proposed development, which includes removing the mapped Stratum 2 habitat, is not expected to significantly impact deer winter cover, as more suitable habitats exist off-site. The proposal also preserves a 23-meter tract at the rear of the site to retain as many existing trees as possible.

## **Growth Management**

Part C of the OP sets out the policy elements that contribute to the community structure of the Town and includes strategic growth policies for the Settlement Areas, the Hidden Valley Recreational Lifestyle and Resort Area, as well as the Waterfront and Rural areas, and population projections.

The community structure of the Town of Huntsville includes the original Town site, the Hidden Valley area, and the communities of Novar, Port Sydney, and Utterson, as well as waterfront and rural areas. These areas are recognized under the following designations: Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, three Community Settlement Areas (Novar, Port Sydney, and Utterson), Hidden Valley Recreational Lifestyle and Resort Area, the Waterfront, and the Rural Area.

The subject site is located within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, mapped as Urban Centre on Schedule A.

Policy C.2.1.3 states that the unique character and values of each area designation in the Town of Huntsville will be protected and enhanced. The character of an area, which provides its identity, is shaped by various factors including the physical setting and landscape features, historic development patterns, cultural heritage, the extent and form of development (such as density and height), architecture and design, the safety and health of the community, the level of services and infrastructure, and the availability of open spaces, natural areas, and recreational facilities.

The OP provides comprehensive projections regarding population and employment growth, extending up to the year 2041. As outlined in Table 1 of the OP, it is anticipated that the year-round population will experience a significant increase, from 19,600 in 2016 to 26,400 by 2041, representing a population increase of 6,800 or an increase of 34.7%. Identical growth is also projected for new year-round dwellings between 2016 and 2041.

Accordingly, Policy C.2.2.3 states that “the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area and the Novar, Port Sydney and Utterson Community Settlement Areas will be the focus of year-round population and employment growth and development.” This strategic direction is further reinforced by Policy C.2.2.4, which directs 60% of new year-round dwelling units to the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, as a minimum target, amounting to a projected requirement of 1,740 new units by 2041, as per Table 3 of the OP.

Policy C.2.2.5 highlights the imperative for development within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area to adhere to principles of efficient land use, while concurrently supporting existing infrastructure, public services, and the established Regional and Municipal transit systems. This policy represents a commitment to sustainable development practices that prioritize the optimization of resources and the preservation of community well-being, aligning with broader objectives outlined in the Town OP. Furthermore, Policy C.2.2.6 states that a variety of intensification and redevelopment opportunities will be supported within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, following the intensification strategy detailed in Chapter C3 of the plan.

The proposed development presents a significant contribution to the growth management strategies outlined in the OP. With plans to introduce 184 units, the proposal will help contribute to meeting the Town’s population forecasts detailed in the Town OP. By offering these new units, the development directly supports the Town’s objectives of achieving its population projections and job forecasts. Furthermore, the proposed development adheres steadfastly to Policy C.2.2.5 by embracing a compact built-form and situating itself within a fully serviced urban area. This approach is built on a commitment to sustainable development practices, ensuring efficient land use while upholding the integrity of existing infrastructure and public services as prescribed in the Town OP.

## **Huntsville Urban Settlement Area**

Section C.3 of the OP provides policy direction for land within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, such as the subject site. As the largest settlement area within the Town of Huntsville, the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area boasts a comprehensive range of community services and facilities conducive to future intensification efforts.

The Huntsville Urban Settlement Area serves as the primary regional commercial, business, tourism, and residential hub for the surrounding communities and areas. It functions as a complete community where people live, work, learn, and play. Being fully serviced by municipal water and sewage, this area is expected to concentrate most of the town’s year-round residential and employment growth, supporting various urban developments. The area’s character is shaped by its natural setting on the shores of Lake Vernon’s Hunter’s Bay, the Muskoka River, and Fairy Lake, as well as its varied terrain featuring prominent heights of land. This setting has historically influenced the area’s development in travel, logging, lumber, tanning, and tourism.

Policy C.3.2.4 states that land in the built-up area of the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area (such as the subject site), is compact and characterized by a distinct grid street pattern with established residential neighbourhoods.

The relevant policies for protecting the character of the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area are set out in C.3.2.7 – C.3.2.10 and focus on ensuring that new developments are compact and respectful of the area's unique physical, environmental, and cultural qualities. Policy C.3.2.8 provides that new developments adjacent to existing structures will be designed in a manner that reflects existing built form, including such matters as height, building mass and character. In cases where new developments involve increased densities, they should either provide a gradual transition in height, density, massing, and setbacks from existing development, or incorporate design features that mitigate potential impacts. Additionally, the policies emphasize preserving existing views and vistas and creating new ones where possible. To maintain the natural appearance of prominent heights of land, efforts will be made to preserve as much vegetation as possible on skylines, ridgelines, or near the tops of rock cliffs.

Policy C.3.2.15 provides height and massing policies for new development in the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area focus on ensuring that new buildings integrate smoothly into the existing community context. This policy mandates that the height, massing, and architectural features of new developments respect the character of the immediate area, considering effects like overlooking and shadowing, and maintaining compatibility with existing buildings through appropriate transitions in height and density. Additionally, new buildings must fit into the local topography and not extend above the tree line.

The proposal will result in a change for the neighbourhood, and a transformation of the subject site. In our opinion, the introduction of a 4-storey apartment building into a low-rise residential neighbourhood is in keeping with the best practices in Ontario, where most low-rise neighbourhoods are not intended to be static, but rather accommodate a variety of low-rise built forms up to and including 4-storey apartment buildings. Furthermore, we have completed a Visual Impact Study ("VIS") to understand the proposal's impact on the character of the area. The VIS assessed the visual impact of the proposed residential development and found that the development does not create a negative visual impact on the surrounding area. The VIS also found that while the proposal is visible from many selected viewpoints, especially along Cairns Crescent it remains unseen from several others due to existing vegetation, buildings, or geographic features. Compatibility between the new and existing development will be accomplished through careful building placement on site, through the building's shape, and through appropriate building setbacks, helping to accommodate the mild transition in height and density. Importantly, the proposal does not extend beyond the ridgeline of the nearby escarpment, preserving the sightline of the area's highpoint. Additionally, the site and area's substantial vegetation acts as a natural screen, helping to integrate the project into its environment. From various viewpoints, the massing and height of the proposed development align with those of nearby and foreground buildings, further supporting its visual compatibility with the surrounding context.

With respect to shadows, Sun/Shadow Studies are typically only requested for developments that are over 6 storeys / 20 metres in height. This requirement stems from the potential for taller buildings to cast significant shadows, which can, if unmitigated, impact the surrounding environment, including adjacent properties and public spaces. A Sun/Shadow Study are sometimes requested

for developments that are less than 20 metres, in particular for development applications where additional height is applied for near shadow sensitive areas (such as parks and open spaces, schoolyards, cemeteries, etc.). The site is not within a shadow sensitive area, in our opinion.

The following is a breakdown of specific (relevant) development policies and criteria for new developments on land within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area.

**Table 2 - Development Criteria Within Huntsville Urban Settlement Area**

| Policy  | Response   |
|---|--|
| C. 3.2.16 Development within the Urban Centre will proceed on the basis of piped municipal sewer and water services. Where such service is not available, development will be conditional upon the applicant providing such municipal services to the proposed development except as outlined in Chapter E2 of this Plan. | The proposal is located on fully serviced land within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, ensuring that municipal sewer and water services are readily available, thereby meeting infrastructure requirements without additional service extensions.   |
| C.3.2.17 Unless specified elsewhere in the Plan, new lots shall have frontage on a publicly year-round maintained road.   | The proposed development has frontage on both Cairns Crescent and Kitchen Road South, publicly maintained roads, ensuring year-round access and integration into the existing road network.  |
| C.3.2.19 Development shall occur as a logical and orderly extension of the existing built-up areas and at a scale that is appropriate based on the availability of infrastructure and recreational services.  | The proposal represents a logical infill development within the existing urban area, leveraging available infrastructure and services while providing a density that complements surrounding residential and commercial uses.  |
| C.3.2.20 New development and redevelopment will be designed to provide connectivity for pedestrian and vehicular traffic.   | The site plan includes well-defined entry and exit points, sidewalks, and crosswalks, enhancing connectivity for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic within and beyond the site. The site is also well positioned near to a major street and highway providing convenient access to the Downtown and other municipalities.   |
| C.3.2.21 The Town will ensure that adequate parking facilities are provided to meet the parking demands generated by various land uses.   | In the Urban Settlement Area, the Community Planning Permit By-law 2022-97 requires 1.25 parking spaces for each dwelling unit plus 1 space for every 5 units. At 184 units, this results in a requirement of 267 spaces. The development provides 231 parking spaces overall (a ratio of 1.26 spaces per unit), which is deficient the required parking by 36 spaces or a decrease 13.5% as per the CPP By-law. However, Trans-Plan was retained to complete a transportation study, which include a parking assessment. Trans-Plan evaluated the proposed parking supply for the development by comparing the Town's parking rates with those of Gravenhurst, Parry Sound, and |

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|  | Collingwood. The comparison indicated that the proposed parking supply would meet the by-law requirements of these municipalities, suggesting that the Town's parking rates are more conservative. A proxy site survey conducted at a similar apartment building within the town observed a parking demand rate of 1.13 spaces per unit. Based on this survey data and the by-law comparison, Trans-Plan found that the proposed supply of 231 parking spaces is sufficient to accommodate residents and visitors, thus meeting expected parking demands. |
| C.3.2.23 Off-street parking areas and facilities shall be provided through zoning and site plan, or community planning permits requirements.   | Parking is integrated into the site plan with a combination of surface and below-grade parking, aligning with the demand to minimize on-street parking pressure.  |
| C.3.2.24 Cash-in-lieu of required parking may be considered in accordance with the Planning Act.   | The proposal does not rely on cash-in-lieu options as the proposed parking has been determined to be sufficient by the developer's transportation consultant.   |
| C. 3.2.25 Reduced parking requirements may be considered where justified in a technical report that is prepared to the satisfaction of the Town, particularly for smart value housing proposals, or where high levels of public transit exist or are planned.  | Given the site's transit-supportive location, the parking provision aligns with transit usage and parking requirements. Trans-Plan was retained to study this metric. See response above.   |
| C.3.2.26 Intensification and residential intensification within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area will be focused in the Urban Residential, Mixed Use and Commercial designations within the built-up area and along the intensification corridors identified on Schedule B-1 of this Plan. The Town may undertake further detailed study to refine existing or identify new intensification and residential intensification areas. The built-up area has been delineated based on the limits of the developed areas within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area. | The project supports residential intensification within the designated built-up area, contributing to efficient land use and aligning with urban growth strategies.   |
| 3.2.27 Intensification and residential intensification will generally be encouraged throughout the built-up area but may also be directed to areas where suitable existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities are available in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner.  | The proposal utilizes existing infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently, minimizing fiscal impacts while maximizing residential density within the urban, and built-up settlement area.   |



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| 3.2.28 Intensification and residential intensification will be discouraged in areas where there are significant servicing and/or topographical constraints.  | The development site does not present significant servicing or topographical constraints, making it an ideal candidate for intensification within the urban area.  |
| 3.2.29 Annually, the Town will plan to achieve a minimum residential intensification target of 25% of all new residential units within the Town being developed within the built-up area.                | This project supports the Town's intensification target by contributing 184 new residential units within the built-up area, aligning with strategic growth objectives.   |
| 3.2.30 Within the built-up area and in intensification corridors, the following general intensification policies shall apply:  |  |
| a) development will be compact in form;  | The proposed building's design, site utilization, and density make it compact, optimizing land use and enhancing urban density.  |
| b) the scale and location of the proposed development is appropriate in the context of its surroundings;   | The 4-storey height is compatible with surrounding low-rise residential areas, maintaining the neighbourhood's character while increasing housing options. See earlier discussion on VIS.  |
| c) the infrastructure and community facilities required to service the new development area are available or can be provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner;                                  | Existing municipal services support the development, ensuring efficient delivery of necessary infrastructure and community amenities.  |
| d) a range of housing choices will be provided, subject to servicing constraints and taking into account smart value housing needs and encouraging the creation of secondary residential dwelling units; | The development offers a mix of unit sizes, from one-bedroom to three-bedroom, catering to diverse housing needs and supporting smart value housing.   |
| e) a diverse and compatible mix of land uses will be provided, including residential and employment uses to support vibrant communities;   | The primarily residential use complements the existing neighborhood mix, enhancing community vibrancy without conflicting with employment or commercial activities.  |
| f) the development supports transit and active transportation for everyday activities;   | Proximity to transit and an existing trail, plus the inclusion of pedestrian sidewalks to the edge of the site promotes active transportation and future investment towards the urbanization of Cairns Crescent and Kitchen Road South. The transit-supportive density proposed helps to reduce reliance on personal vehicles. |
| g) development will contain high quality public open space with design standards that create attractive and vibrant spaces; and  | The outdoor amenity areas, landscaped with seating and pathways, provide high-quality public space for residents to enjoy.   |
| h) development is encouraged to generally achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas while achieving an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas.                                 | The project achieves higher density while maintaining a respectful transition to surrounding residential areas through site topography, existing tree retention, careful design, and building placement and setbacks.  |

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| 3.2.31 When considering new development within mature neighbourhoods, consideration must be given to:   |  |
| a) the massing, scale and height of development such that it is compatible with and fits into the existing built form within the neighbourhood;   | The building's scale and height are consistent with the neighbourhood's built form, ensuring visual harmony and integration. A more detailed description of these transitional measures is provided below in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of this report.  |
| b) the topography of the land on which it is proposed;  | The site has a gradual slope from south to north with the frontage along Cairns Crescent and the northwest corner being the lowest points, and the south, southeast corner being the highest. This grade change provides a topographic advantage in that it allows for some parking below the first floor without requiring blasting, provides natural drainage patterns for stormwater management, and allows for straightforward development without significant alterations to existing topography. |
| c) providing a transition of heights and density through setbacks, and the stepping down of buildings towards those uses of lesser intensity; and | Strategic setbacks and building design provide a smooth transition in height and density to adjacent, less intensive uses.   |
| d) maintaining adequate sunlight and privacy for adjacent residents and minimizing overlook and shadowing of adjacent residents.                  | Design features, such as strategic orientation and setbacks, ensure sunlight access and privacy for neighbors, minimizing any potential impact from overlooking. Shadows are generally not an issue for buildings below 6-storeys, unless in a shadow-sensitive area, which the site is not.   |

## Urban Residential Designation

The subject site is designated *Urban Residential*. The Urban Residential land use designation are the places where people spend most of their time and socialize. The design of residential areas should enhance the public realm, including streets, parks, and trails, to contribute to the area's identity.

The primary use of land within the Urban Residential Area should be for residential dwelling units. Permitted uses include low-density residential (such as single detached units and duplexes), medium-density residential (such as triplexes and townhouses), and high-density residential (such as low and mid-rise apartments). Convenience commercial uses are also allowed.

Accordingly, the proposed 4-storey apartment building is permitted as-of-right by the OP and is considered high-density residential.

Emphasizing the importance of adhering to established housing mix targets, the Town OP outlines Huntsville's commitment to fostering a balanced distribution of residential densities across

designated growth areas. As articulated in the OP, the desired housing mix comprises 60% low density, 25% medium density, and 15% high density, reflective of a nuanced approach to urban planning aimed at promoting diversity in housing options.

The policies for lot and density requirements are set out in C.3.3.5 to C.3.3.10 and aim to promote efficient land use and infrastructure in residential development. Residential projects should minimize land consumption and make effective use of community facilities by developing at appropriate densities and locations. In the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, the density target for new residential developments is an average of 17 units per gross hectare. High-density residential developments should have a minimum density of 25 units per gross hectare and should not exceed 60 units per gross hectare. Gross density includes the density of residential development, local roads, and parks within the area of a development application.

The proposed density for the development, at 84.8 units per hectare, is more than is permitted as-of-right in Policy C.3.3.9. However, the OP provides an exception to the height and density when community benefits are provided, known as bonusing. Accordingly, Policy C.3.3.12 states that:

*The residential density provisions may be exceeded for medium and high-density residential development where community benefits are provided by the developer to the satisfaction of the Town and are legally secured by appropriate agreements with the Town. Such community benefits may include, amongst other matters, underground parking, provision of attainable housing, increased or specialized activity areas, recreational facilities, community facilities, cultural heritage preservation, public easements or conveyances of shoreline areas, or other public benefits.*

This policy is reiterated and expanded upon through Part F, Policies F.1.4.13 to F.1.4.14.

Jumping forward, Policy F.1.4.13 provides that the Town may approve increases in height and density for development proposals if they meet certain criteria. The proposal must align with the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan, be compatible with the surrounding area, and offer community benefits beyond what is typically required by existing laws or regulations. Additionally, these community benefits should have a reasonable planning relationship to the increased height or density, either geographically related to the development or addressing specific planning issues associated with it. Accordingly, community benefits that may be considered by the Town may include but are not limited to:

- a) smart value housing, special needs housing or social housing;*
- b) conservation of cultural heritage resources contained within the Municipal Heritage Register;*
- c) buildings that incorporate sustainable design features;*
- d) energy and/or water conservation measures;*
- e) public art;*
- f) non-profit arts, cultural, or community or institutional facilities;*
- g) public transit infrastructure, facilities, and/or services;*

*h) public parking;*

*i) land for municipal purposes;*

*j) parkland and improvements to parks in excess of the Planning Act requirements; and k) active transportation amenities, such as signage, seating, washrooms, lighting, parking and other facilities.*

In our opinion, the proposal aligns with the density bonusing requirements, offering additional community benefits beyond standard requirements. These benefits include purpose-built rental housing, with plans to include some affordable housing if subsidies are secured (i.e., smart value housing), and sustainable building design with energy and water conservation features, such as a green roof. The proposed density at 84.8 units per hectare represents modest 41.3% increase from the maximum 60 units per hectare cap. Accordingly, the proposal's community benefits allow the density bonusing provision to be triggered without the need for an Official Plan Amendment.

Policy C.3.3.11 and C.3.3.13 highlights the key factors and design criteria to be considered in determining where to locate medium and high-density residential developments, and act as criteria. These criteria from Policy C.3.3.11 are provided and addressed in the below table:

**Table 3 - Development & Design Criteria for Locating High-Density Residential Development**

| Policy  | Response   |
|---|--|
| C.3.3.11.a) compatibility with the existing land use in the immediate area, historical significance of existing buildings, and the character of the residential area; | The proposed development's 4-storey building height, design, building placement, and the retention of as many site trees as possible, complement the surrounding low-rise residential character, maintaining visual harmony with existing land uses. Apartment buildings up to 4-storeys are generally accepted low-rise built forms within established neighbourhoods. Notwithstanding, the subject site is located on the periphery of Town, yet still within the urban, built-up area, in a location that has not yet been fully built out (i.e. not established). Accordingly, the introduction of a building of this type near the periphery of the Town's established neighbourhood is more appropriate than if it were located internally to an established neighbourhood away from major streets or highways. There will still be a change to the neighbourhood and to the site. However, these elements have helped reduce the visual impact of the building and the site's transformation on its surroundings. |
| C.3.3.11.b) where adjacent to low density residential areas, medium and high-density housing shall maintain a low or staggered  | The building's U-shape design and strategic setbacks and building placement, along with the retention of site trees plus enhanced landscaping measures help ensure a profile   |

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| building profile to conform visually to the adjacent residential areas;  | with appropriate transitions, blending with adjacent low-density areas and preserving neighborhood aesthetics.  |
| C.3.3.11.c) buffering from any adjacent low density residential use shall be provided through increased setbacks and/or significant vegetative plantings/retention, where site conditions warrant;   | Significant setbacks and retention of existing trees plus the addition of new trees and other plantings as proposed create natural buffers, enhancing privacy and maintaining a green landscape between the development and neighboring properties.   |
| C.3.3.11.d) suitable functional open space amenity area and landscaping shall be provided on-site;   | The development includes extensive landscaped areas and outdoor amenities, providing functional open spaces for residents' enjoyment and social interaction.  |
| C.3.3.11.e) close proximity to community facilities such as schools, shopping and recreation facilities;   | The site's location within a 5- to 10-minute walk of various amenities, transit stops, and community services and facilities make it an ideal location for infill, and its proximity to major street and highways create convenient access to existing transportation networks.   |
| C.3.3.11.f) municipal infrastructure can be made available to accommodate the proposed density of development;   | The development is supported by existing municipal infrastructure, ensuring efficient service delivery and accommodating the proposed residential density.  |
| C.3.3.11.g) close proximity to arterial or collector roads to minimize traffic congestion and facilitate access to commercial and institutional services; and  | The site is accessible via Cairns Crescent and Kitchen Road South, which connects quickly to the broader transportation routes and major streets / highways such as Muskoka Road 3 and Highway 11, within a 1 to 2-minute drive, helping to minimize traffic congestion and facilitating easy access to nearby commercial and institutional services. |
| C.3.3.11.h) lots may be occupied by more than one building, as authorized in an implementing zoning or community planning by-laws.   | The proposed single building effectively utilizes the lot, maximizing space efficiency.   |
| C.3.3.13.a) New residential developments, especially subdivision proposals, will be encouraged to be as visually interesting as possible. Approaches to achieving this objective include mixing housing densities, types and styles, as well as varying the location of buildings on lots and the utilization of the natural features of a site; | The development's design incorporates varied unit types, an articulated façade treatment, green roof, and is intended to utilize natural features and colours, enhancing visual interest and architectural diversity in keeping with the Muskoka aesthetic.   |
| C.3.3.13.b) Where major residential developments are proposed, the Town may impose architectural controls or design guidelines to ensure that the development includes a variety of housing styles and designs   | Noted.  |



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| while maintaining an attractive and cohesive appearance;  |  |
| C.3.3.13.c) The Town will require the retention of native species vegetation augmented with a high degree of naturalized landscaping on new lots and within the road allowances and open spaces in all developments in order to enhance the natural appearance of the Town; | The proposal incorporates the retention of native vegetation as much as possible and also includes extensive landscaping and a green roof which is intended to enhance the natural appearance, supporting ecological sustainability and the Town's aesthetic goals.  |
| C.3.3.13.d) Street and block patterns will be designed to distribute traffic throughout the subdivision and provide numerous traffic and active transportation linkages both within the subdivision and with abutting parts of the community;                               | The development plan includes well-defined traffic and pedestrian pathways, ensuring smooth connectivity and promoting active transportation. This is not a subdivision or plan of condominium, so no new streets or blocks are proposed.  |
| C.3.3.13.e) Dead end streets and cul-de-sacs are discouraged;   | The site's design avoids dead-end streets, facilitating efficient circulation and connectivity within and beyond the development. This is not a subdivision or plan of condominium, so no new dead-end streets are proposed.   |
| C.3.3.13.f) Block patterns, land use density and the orientation of a building on a site will be designed to facilitate public transit service;   | The building's orientation on site has been carefully considered to create the most efficient use of land, and to strategically create linkages for pedestrians to Cairns Crescent and Kitchen Road South. Furthermore, the density supports transit use, encouraging sustainable transportation options within the community. |
| C.3.3.13.g) Parks and school sites should be located adjacent to each other where possible;   | While the proposal doesn't directly include parks or school sites, its proximity to existing parks within a 10-minutes walk enhances outdoor recreation options for future residents.  |
| C.3.3.13.h) Proximity and accessibility to schools, parks and parkettes will be considered in the design and layout of a subdivision and should be located within a five-minute walking distance (400 metres) to residents in the neighbourhood;                            | The development's proximity to existing parks within a 10-minutes walk enhances outdoor recreation options for future residents and promotes convenience.  |
| C.3.3.13.i) Pedestrian sidewalks, walkways and trails should be designed and located to provide as direct a link as possible with schools, recreation facilities, commercial areas, parks. Parkettes and transit facilities will be part of the development;                | The site includes pedestrian pathways and sidewalks that directly connect to existing roads. There are, however, no existing sidewalks on either side of these street.   |
| C.3.3.13.j) On and /or off-road bicycle trails linking the proposed development to other facilities in the community will be provided;  | Bicycle parking is integrated into the site design, promoting cycling as a viable transportation option and enhancing community connectivity.  |

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| C.3.3.13.k) Driveways will be spaced to ensure sufficient separation distances along the street to allow for on-street parking when permitted;  | The driveways within the development will utilize existing spacing along street where trees have been cut already and are designed to optimize parking availability and maintain smooth traffic flow.  |
| C.3.3.13.l) Rear lanes should be considered to provide alternative access and parking, particularly on arterial and collector roads;  | The site design incorporates primary and secondary access points, effectively managing traffic flow and parking needs, but does not incorporate a new rear lane.   |
| C.3.3.13.m) The character of older established residential areas will be protected by the retention of older architecturally interesting or historically significant buildings and by the incorporation of new buildings that fit in and respect the established character; and | The proposal will work within the character of the area. This has been achieved through building orientation and placement on site, building design, setbacks, tree retention and enhanced landscaping, capitalizing on the site topography, and by introducing a green roof. Overall, we believe the design complements the surrounding area without compromising historical integrity. |
| C.3.3.13.n) Flexibility will be incorporated into the urban design criteria for subdivisions to allow innovation and adjustments for specific site conditions.  | The proposal is not for a plan of subdivision of condominium.  |

## Smart Value Housing & Land Use Compatibility

Part D of the OP provides policy direction with respect to broad community elements that contribute to social resiliency in Huntsville.

### Smart Value Housing

One of these elements is *Smart Value Housing*. Smart value housing is all-inclusive – not only applying to low-income populations, but also recognizing the rising costs of housing affecting all demographics.

Policy D.2.2 provides that in order to increase the supply of smart value housing, the Town will collaborate with the District of Muskoka using planning tools like policy, development approvals, financial incentives, partnerships, community education, and monitoring. The goal is to ensure that 25% of all new residential units are smart value housing. Additionally, the Town will support the District in developing social housing.

Policies D.2.3.1 to D.2.3.9 provide more the policy framework for smart value housing in the Town. Accordingly, the Town plans to increase smart value housing mainly in the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area, Community Settlement Area, and Hidden Valley Recreational Lifestyle and Resort Area, with secondary dwelling units in rural areas. This strategy leverages access to transit, shopping, parks, and community facilities, particularly in urban and mixed-use areas, to support affordable living. Residential intensification and infill development will be used in existing neighborhoods, adhering to plan policies. The Town may consider alternative standards, like smaller unit sizes or reduced parking, to lower housing costs and encourage compact urban forms.

Incentives for smart value housing could include prioritized development approvals, reduced fees, and deferred charges, linked to agreements on specific rents or prices. The zoning by-law will specify rules for secondary residential units, addressing standards for health, safety, natural hazards, and heritage, as well as parking, appearance, and amenities. The Town encourages diverse housing options in size, density, and tenure to maintain reasonable costs and aims to identify surplus municipal land for smart value housing development. Collaboration with other agencies will help create programs and opportunities for smart value housing.

The developer is considering smart value housing as a component of the development up to 25% of the one-bedroom units. The consideration is intended to complement the density bonusing requirements providing the Town with much need community benefits in the form of more attainable or even affordable housing. In order for this to succeed the developer would need to rely on funding, grant, or subsidy options from the District or CHMC or both. If the smart value housing can be accommodated within the development, then the proposal will contribute towards the Town's smart value housing target of 25%.

#### Land Use Compatibility

Another one of the broad community elements that contribute to social resiliency in Huntsville is land use compatibility.

Policies D.7.1.4 and D.7.1.5 provide that new development or land use must be compatible with the character of the area and nearby legal land uses, ensuring public investment protection and facilitating continued operation and expansion where possible. Development should ensure compatibility by considering adequate separation distances or mitigation measures to protect sensitive uses, maintaining natural buffers or landscaping to reduce conflicts, limiting vehicular access points to minimize traffic disruption, and appropriately locating outdoor storage at the rear of buildings with screening. Off-street parking and loading should minimize impacts on adjacent uses in terms of noise, traffic, emissions, and appearance. Additionally, architectural styles or materials should be used to reduce noise and vibration.

Land use compatibility is mostly a concern when introducing an unexpected or unplanned land use of a differing typology (e.g., employment beside residential). The subject site is located within an area that is comprised of a mix of uses from employment, to commercial, to residential. Most immediately, the subject site is located in an area designated Urban Residential which permits a wide variety of residential uses from single-detached homes up to and including high-density low-to mid-rise apartment buildings. Accordingly, the proposed use is permitted as-of-right and is residential in nature. Therefore, the use typology is compatible.

**Compatibility with Area Character:** The proposed development maintains a 4-storey height that aligns with the surrounding low-rise residential character, ensuring it fits within the existing architectural landscape and contributes to the neighbourhood's aesthetic appeal. Though the proposal will result in a true change, the change result in an appropriate height, and a site design that has been well calibrated to its surroundings.

**Compatibility with Legal Land Uses:** The development is consistent with the current residential designation and precinct as per the CPP By-law and complements existing legal land uses in the

vicinity, thereby supporting the ongoing operation and potential expansion of neighboring uses without introducing conflicts or disruptions.

**Adequate Separation and Mitigation Measures:** The proposal includes strategic setbacks and a U-shaped building design that provides adequate separation from adjacent properties. This design helps mitigate any potential impact on nearby sensitive land uses.

**Natural Buffers and Landscaping:** The development plan incorporates the retention of existing trees and the introduction of new landscaping using native species. These natural buffers enhance privacy and reduce potential conflicts between the new development and existing uses.

**Vehicular Access Management:** The site plan limits vehicular access points, with primary access from Cairns Crescent and a secondary access from Kitchen Road South. This design minimizes traffic flow disruptions and maintains safe and efficient circulation.

**Appropriate Outdoor Storage and Screening:** Any outdoor storage areas are located at the rear of the building and are screened from view using vegetation and fencing, maintaining the site's visual appeal and minimizing any impact on the surroundings.

**Minimized Impact of Parking and Loading:** The parking facilities are designed to be unobtrusive, with a combination of surface and below-grade parking, ensuring minimal impact on adjacent properties concerning noise, traffic, and emissions, all of which will be generally screened from view of the street.

**Architectural Styles for Noise and Vibration Attenuation:** The building design incorporates architectural elements and materials that help attenuate noise and vibration, enhancing the quality of life for residents and ensuring compatibility with the surrounding area. More on the noise attenuation is provided below in Section 5.6 of this report.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the above analysis, we believe the proposal generally conforms with the Town of Huntsville Official Plan, particularly in its contribution to expanding the range and mix of new purpose-built rental housing units within the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area at a transit-supportive density. The proposed high-density residential apartment building is allowed as-of-right, and the increase in density is balanced by the community benefits that will and may be provided, including the potential to offer smart value housing in up to 25% of the units (one-bedroom units). Issues related to natural heritage, growth management, land use compatibility, urban design, servicing, and transportation have all been thoughtfully addressed in the supporting studies.

## **4.5 Town of Huntsville Community Planning Permit By-Law**

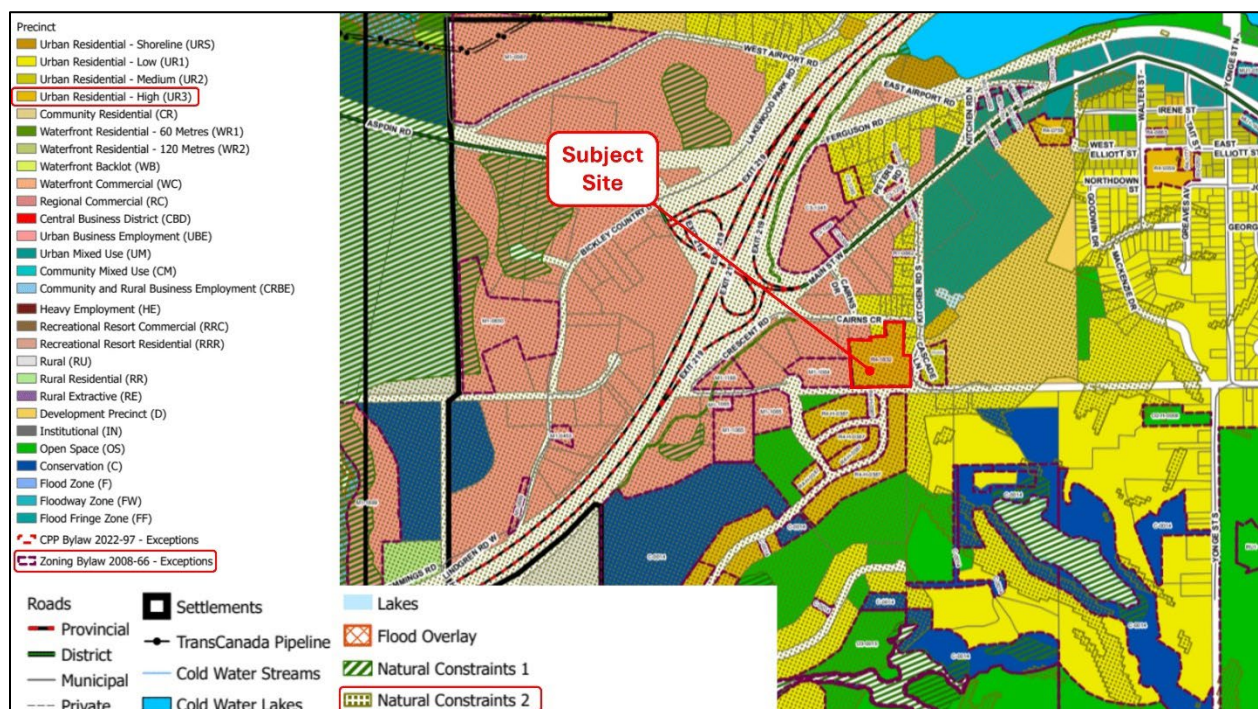
The Town of Huntsville passed the Community Planning Permit By-law (CPP By-law) on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. By-law 2022-97 replaced the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control By-law. The Community Planning Permit (CPP) process looks to combine the separate components of planning applications into one streamlined Community Planning Permit.

The subject site is located within the *Urban Residential-High (UR3)* precinct, as per Schedule G-7 of the CPP By-law, and contains a old Zoning By-law 2008-66 exception and a *Natural Constraints 2* overlay.. Note that the site is also partially present on Schedules G-7-1, G-7-2, G-7-3, and G-7-4).The UR3 receint is intended for non-shoreline, high density residential properties within the Huntsville Settlement Area.

The primary permitted use within the UR3 precinct is multiple dwellings. A multiple dwelling is a dwelling containing three or more dwelling units, including but not limited to apartments, back-to-back townhouses and stacked townhouses, but shall not include a townhouse dwelling. The UR3 precinct also permits a host of fiscretionary uses such as townhouse block dwellings, townhouse dwellings, financial establishments, food stores (to a maximum of 200 square metres per establishment), group homes, health services, markets, offices, personal service establishments, residential care facility, retail stores, service establishment, variety and convenience stores, vetrinary clinics and other similar uses. A variety of accessory uses are also permitted in the UR3 precinct including artisan's studios, boarding houses, day nurseries, home occupations, private parks, secondary residential dwelling units, and others. Accordingly, not only is the proposed apartment building permitted on site as-of-right, it is the primary intended use for the property, with other discretionary uses permitted on a case-by-case basis, and permitted secondary to multiple residential.

Notwithstanding the in-force CPP By-law the subject site also maintain an old site-specific exception from the old Zoning By-law 2008-66P through By-Law 08-119P (exception R4-1832). Exception R4-1832 states that “notwithstanding any requirements of Zoning By-law 2008-66P, the lot frontage shall be deemed to comply and the exterior yard requirements along Kitchen Road shall be 6 metres.” This means that the site's existing lot frontage is deemed in compliance regardless of its actual measurement.

**Figure 28 - CPP By-law Precincts, Schedule G-7**





The table on page 63 of the CPP By-law, Section 4.2.4 sets out the regulations for the UR3 precinct. The following table provides a simple compliance test of the precinct requirements relevant to multiple dwellings as well as other general regulations applicable to the UR3 precinct and subject site.

**Table 4 - Urban Residential – High (UR3) Regulations for Multiple Dwellings**

| Precinct  | Urban Residential - High Lot Requirements   | Proposed   | Complies (Yes / No)                       |
|---|---|--|---|
| Lot Frontage<br><i>As per Exception R4-1832</i>                                 | Existing Dimensions   | No Change to Frontage  | Yes                                       |
| Lot Coverage  | 40%   |  |   |
| Maximum Density   | 60 uph  | 84.8 uph   | No  |
| Front Yard (Minimum)<br><i>Requesting Cairns Cr as Front Yard</i>               | 7 m to attached garage<br>4 m to dwelling<br>2 m to porch   | 43.50 m  | Yes                                       |
| Interior Side Yard (Minimum)  | 6.0 m   | 3.29 m   | No  |
| Exterior Side Yard (Minimum)  | 9.0 m<br>6.0 from Kitchen Rd S  | 32.44 m  | Yes                                       |
| Rear Yard (Minimum)   | 7.5 m   | 59.74 m  | Yes                                       |
| Building Height (Maximum)   | 11 m  | 17.01 m  | No  |
| Maximum Number of Enclosed or Roofed Accessory Buildings or Structures on a Lot | 1   | None Proposed  | Yes                                       |
| Encroachment of Unenclosed Porches, Balconies or Steps                          | 3.5 m into any front or rear yard   | Within Setback   | Yes                                       |
| 2.6.1.a) Encroachments Projecting Within 1 m of Every Yard                      | a chimney, lintel, sill, ornamental projection, belt course, cornice, eave or gutter, pilaster, window canopy, or Solar panels. | No Encroachments Proposed beyond previously identified Interior Side Yard Deficiency | Yes, through Interior Side Yard Exception |
| 2.6.1.b) Encroachments Between 1 m into Side Yard and 1.5 m of Every Yard       | fire escape or open stairway, deck, bay window, dormer, or vestibule.   | No Encroachments Proposed beyond previously identified Interior Side Yard Deficiency | Yes, through Interior Side Yard Exception |

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| 2.6.1.c) Encroachments 3 m into Front Yard but not closer than 3 m to Street Line         | entrance canopy   | No Encroachments Proposed  | Yes |
| 2.6.1.d) Encroachments 3 m into Any Yard but not closer than 7 m to Residential Precinct  | loading dock  | 1.96 m encroachment into side yard   | Yes |
| 2.6.1.d) Encroachments within 1 m of any lot line   | access ramp   | No Encroachments Proposed  | Yes |
| Fence Heights in Rear, Interior Side, or Exterior Side Yards                              | 2.13 m  | 1.8 m  | Yes |
| Landscaping - Front, exterior and side yard soft landscaping requirement:                 | At least 3 meters width, except where occupied by parking, driveways, aisles, or a maximum 1.8-meter-wide walkway, or where covered by porches or vestibules. | All landscaping is at least 3 metres wide in these areas.  | Yes |
| Landscaping - All other yard areas not taken by buildings, parking, driveways, or aisles: | Must be landscaped.   | Landscaped   | Yes |
| Landscaping - Buffer  | Required around the entire perimeter of parking lots, although driveways can cross this buffer.   | Landscaping Buffer Provided Around Entire Perimeter  | Yes |
| Landscaping - Parking lots with 50 or more spaces:  | Must include interior landscaping, such as landscaped islands, medians, pedestrian pathways, or public plazas.  | Interior Landscaping Provided  | Yes |
| Landscaping - Parking Reduction:  | Up to a 10% reduction in the number of parking spaces is allowed if compensated by an equivalent or greater area of interior landscaping.                     | 27 spaces equate to a 10% reduction of the required number of spaces. A space this size has been provided on the west edge of the site as landscaped space. The proposed | N/A |

|  |   |   |     |
|--|---|---|-----|
|  |   | parking reduction represents a 13.5% decrease. This 10% trade off, would reduce the deficiency to 3.5%. |     |
| Landscaping – EV Parking   | Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations are not allowed within any required landscape buffer.   | No EV Proposed  | Yes |
| Parking – Space Requirements in Urban Settlement Area (Multiple Dwelling, Apartment) | 1.25 spaces per unit + 1 space for every 5 units (267 spaces required)  | 231 spaces  | No  |
| Parking – Space Size   | 2.6 m wide x 6.0 m long   | 2.6 m wide x 6.0 m long   | Yes |
| Minimum Drive Aisle Width  | 6.7 m for Double Traffic Lane   | 6.7 m Double Traffic Lane   | Yes |
| Parking Area   | No parking area shall be permitted within 3 m of a street line in any Urban or Community Residential Precinct.  | No parking area proposed within 3 m of street line.   | Yes |
| Accessible Parking Requirements  | 5 spaces plus 1 additional space for each 50 spaces beyond 150 spaces (9 spaces required)   | 7   | No  |
| Loading Spaces   | 1 space is for buildings with floor area between 300 m <sup>2</sup> and 2,300 m <sup>2</sup> .<br>2 spaces for buildings with a floor area between 2,300 m <sup>2</sup> and 7,360 m <sup>2</sup><br>For every additional 9,200 m <sup>2</sup> of floor area (or part of it) beyond 7,360 m <sup>2</sup> , 1 space must be added.<br>(2 – 3 loading spaces required) | 1   | No  |
| Loading Space Aisle Width  | 6.0 m   | 6.7 m   | Yes |
| Loading Space Dimensions   | 4 m wide x 15 m long  | 4.5 m wide x 15 m long  | Yes |

Based on the following table the proposal will require site-specific exceptions to the maximum permitted density, a reduced interior side yard setback at one single pinch point (whereas the balance of the interior side yard setbacks are met), an increase to the maximum building height, a reduction in the number of required parking spaces overall, a reduction in the number of accessible parking spaces on site, and a reduction in the number of loading spaces on site.

Section 2.5.1 of the CPP By-law states that the town may allow a development proposal to exceed height or density standards if it aligns with the town's planning goals, fits well with the surrounding area, offers additional community benefits beyond standard requirements, and if these benefits are reasonably related to the increase in height or density.

Community benefits that may be considered by the Town under Section 2.5.1(c) and (d) may include: a) smart value housing, special needs housing or social housing; b) conservation of cultural heritage resources contained within the Municipal Heritage Register; c) buildings that incorporate sustainable design features; d) energy and/or water conservation measures; e) public art; f) non-profit arts, cultural, or community or institutional facilities; g) public transit infrastructure, facilities, and/or services; h) public parking; i) land for municipal purposes; j) parkland and improvements to parks in excess of the Planning Act requirements; and k) active transportation amenities, such as signage, seating, washrooms, lighting, parking and other facilities.

This policy is similar in nature to that of the Town OP, and as such, the proposal is proposing community benefits through the proposal including the introduction of a green roof as a means of bringing buildings that incorporate sustainable design features and energy and/or water conservation measures, and the commitment to exploring smart value housing as a component of the development, to be secured through grants or subsidies.

In addition, Section 3.2.3 of the CPP By-law provides that the Town may accept cash-in-lieu of parking, such that it is approved as a condition of a Community Planning Permit, and the fee shall be paid in accordance with the Town's user fee by-law. Furthermore, under the landscaping provisions, the CPP By-law states that a reduction of up to 10% in the required number of parking spaces is permitted when offset by a comparable or larger area of interior landscaping. For instance, 27 spaces represent 10% from the total required parking spaces. A landscaped area of this size has been allocated along the west edge of the site. The proposed reduction in parking requested amounts to a 13.5% decrease. This trade-off of 10% would bring the shortfall down to 3.5%.

With respect to loading requirements, there is so acknowledgement that not all developments will meet the loading space requirements, in that Section 3.7.3 states that a multiple dwelling containing 25 dwelling units or more shall provide at least 1 loading space, which the proposal does.

Section 4.12 of the CPP By-law provides regulatory measures for land with the Natural Constraints Overlay, such as the subject site. Lands with the Natural Constraints Overlay are categorized into two types:

- Natural Constraints Overlay 1: This category includes areas where development and site alterations are generally prohibited. Mitigation measures, such as buffers, are required to protect sensitive natural features like Fish Habitat 1, Deer Wintering Stratum 1, Provincially Significant Wetlands, and general wetlands.

- Natural Constraints Overlay 2: This category includes areas where development may be allowed but could require buffers or other mitigation measures to minimize impact.

The Natural Constraints Overlay 2 applies to the subject site. Accordingly, an EIS was prepared by Palmer in April 2023 to assess the natural heritage features and existing environmental policies and regulations applicable to the site. The results of Palmer's EIS are addressed in more detail below in Section 5.5 of this report.

## **Conclusions**

In our opinion, the proposal meets the general purpose and intent of the CPP By-law, aligns with the Town's planning goals, fits well with the surrounding area, and offers additional community benefits beyond standard requirements. In our opinion, these benefits are reasonably related to the increase in height or density, and the balance of the site-specific exceptions required to facilitate the proposal are generally minor departures from the balance of the performance standards.

# 5.0 PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

## 5.1 Intensification

The proposed residential intensification on the subject site is supportive of numerous policy directions articulated in the Provincial Policy Statement, The District of Muskoka Official Plan and the Town of Huntsville Official Plan, all of which promote intensification on sites within built-up urban areas well serviced by municipal infrastructure, including public transit.

The proposal will intensify the subject site and utilize land more efficiently by capitalizing on its proximity to existing public and vehicular transportation networks. Larger sites, such as this one, on the periphery of neighbourhoods allow for increased density in comparison to lots located within the interior of neighbourhoods.

The subject site is served by existing municipal and District public transit. The local bus stop is within less than a 10-minutes walk. These routes provide efficient access to various points of interest across the Town including the Downtown and the shopping centre at the north end. The District transit services, through the Corridor 11 Bus, which services a stop 300 metres from the subject site: again, within a 5-minute walk. This unique service represents regional connectivity to other municipalities in Muskoka and beyond.

In our opinion, the proposal represents appropriate infill and intensification for the subject site in keeping with the Official Plan's vision of delivering housing units (specifically apartment units) to meet the projected growth expected throughout the District. Additionally, the proposal is responsive to Intensification Corridor policies which have been applied along Main Street West, less than 200 metres from the subject site. Lastly, in accordance with municipal priorities, the proposed rental tenure will make significant contribution to the Town's proportion of year-round residents, as renters may be less likely to rent spaces they will not be occupying for a significant portion of the year.

The proposed development would exist along the periphery of residential uses to the east, providing a transition from low-density uses to the diverse mix of commercial uses that operate along Main Street West. The proposed development will reinforce the existing character of the neighbourhood to the east and will fill in a vacant and underutilized site in an area not yet fully built out. The proposal will, overall, introduce new housing options and set a precedent for more compact built forms in proximity to the Main Street West Intensification Corridor and in proximity to transportation corridors such as Highway 11.

The site is also capable of supporting this infill and intensification on existing municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, capitalizing on the Town's investment of these services in this area. The proposal has also been designed to capture stormflow and improve drainage through retention on site via a stormwater management pond to the northwest, a swale along the rear of the parking lot,



and via the proposed green roof. Additionally, site servicing has the capacity to provide water and sewage services to the proposed development.

Given the subject site's location at the edge of a neighborhood, in an area characterized by mixed use and close proximity to transit and major transportation routes, along with its existing land use designation that permits low- to mid-rise apartments as-of-right and its unique physical attributes, the site is ideally suited for a high-density residential apartment building. This development will optimize the use of land and infrastructure while providing much-needed purpose-built rental units. The proposal aligns with provincial policies, conforms to local policies, and supports transit ridership by offering diverse housing options and accommodating population growth forecasts. Additionally, it will enhance livability and sustainability by reducing urban sprawl, consistent with the Official Plan vision.

## **5.2 Land Use**

In our opinion, the proposed purpose-built rental apartment building is an appropriate land use for the subject site and the proposed Major Class 3 Community Planning Permit is expected to facilitate this proposal by obtaining relief from six performance standards in the CPP By-law.

The proposed use is permitted as-of-right in both the Official Plan and the CPP By-law. In our opinion, the proposal meets the general purpose and intent of the CPP By-law, aligns with the Town's planning goals, fits well with the surrounding area, and offers additional community benefits beyond standard requirements. In our opinion, these benefits are reasonably related to the increase in height or density, and the balance of the site-specific exceptions required to facilitate the proposal are generally minor departures from the balance of the performance standards.

In our opinion, the proposed concept is largely in alignment with provincial, District and municipal planning policies and priorities. In general terms, the proposal is responsive to the CPP By-law and the subject site's assigned UR3 precinct, which plans for higher density development in the form of multiple dwellings.

With respect to adjacent land uses and building typology, the site size and the proposed site organization will allow for appropriate transition, with building heights being transitioned through the use of generous setbacks. This, combined with enhanced landscaping, buffers, building design and massing location allow for appropriate transition between residential land uses to the north and east, and commercial uses to the west.

## **5.3 Height & Density**

The subject site is a suitable location for high-density residential intensification. The proposed height of the building results from the site's depth and ability to accommodate appropriate transitions to low-rise residential areas to the northwest and west.

In our opinion, a 4-storey apartment building is an appropriate height for this neighborhood. In Ontario, neighborhoods like this one, characterized by a mix of uses and convenient access to transit and major transportation routes, particularly those that are not yet fully developed, have both the space and opportunity to accommodate such transformations. Even if the site were located within a traditional established neighbourhood, these classically low-rise areas, often include a mix of residential buildings like detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, and various

townhouses, along with interspersed walk-up apartments up to 4 storeys. These areas also host parks, schools, local institutions, and small-scale stores serving the community's needs.

The introduction of a 4-storey apartment building fits within the existing fabric of this neighbourhood by providing a reasonable increase in height and density without overwhelming the area. It also offers a transition between traditional low-rise homes and more intensive mixed-use areas, in a location near the neighbourhood's edge. Such developments are compatible with the existing residential character while supporting growth by providing more housing options and accommodating population increases.

Furthermore, neighbourhoods are not intended to remain static. They evolve to meet changing needs and demands, particularly on larger sites that can support additional height through thoughtful transitional measures. A 4-storey building can effectively balance the need for growth with maintaining the community's character, ensuring that new developments integrate seamlessly with existing structures and enhance the neighbourhood's livability and sustainability.

In our opinion, the subject site can accommodate the height as proposed. The VIA, as discussed on Section 5.8 of this report, demonstrates how the proposed development will be buffered by existing vegetation, not have negative impact on select views, will be in-line with other uses in the foreground, and will not cause visual inconsistencies. A transformation and a change to be sure, but an acceptable and appropriate change for this particular site and area.

The site size and shape offer flexibility for the design and placement of the mid-rise building. Design elements, such as appropriate setbacks, stepping and building design will help ensure built form compatibility. In addition, we believe that the proposed density at an FSI of 0.59 has minimal and acceptable impacts on the adjacent area for the reasons set out above.

Overall, the increase in height and density via the CPP process will allow the Town to meet future housing demands and support intensification objectives. Relief from the height and density provisions will allow for a well-connected part of Town to become accessible to a new and diverse set of residents, through the generation of a significant amount of new residential units, some of which may be affordable. This relief aligns with provincial and District policies that seek to pair intensification alongside existing servicing and transportation infrastructure. As requested, this relief would allow for the maximization of a unique site's potential.

## **5.4 Urban Design**

### **Building Massing and Articulation**

The proposed 4-storey mid-rise building features a thoughtful U-shaped design that optimizes the use of space on site while minimizing its impact on the surrounding area. The articulation of the building with varying façade treatments, window alignments, and balcony placements breaks up the visual mass, contributing to a scale that is compatible with the human experience rather than overwhelming. The massing of the building ensures that it does not overpower the neighbouring lower-scale residential structures, maintaining an aesthetic balance within the community. Furthermore, the developer has confirmed that they will consider the use of natural earth tone materials in the cladding of the building so as to maintain the general Muskoka aesthetic of the area.

### **Building Location and Setbacks**

The positioning of the building on the site has been carefully selected to ensure adequate setbacks from all property boundaries, creating a buffer that respects the privacy and sightlines of adjacent properties. With a generous buffers on all sides, save for one pinch point at one of the northern interior side lit lines, the building is well-distanced from neighbouring residences, mitigating any potential overshadowing and maintaining a sense of openness.

### **Landscaping, Privacy Fencing, and Tree Buffers**

Landscaping plays a crucial role in integrating the new development into its environment. The proposal includes extensive planting of deciduous and coniferous trees, shrubs, perennial gardens and a green roof that enhance the aesthetic appeal and contribute to the ecological health of the neighbourhood. Privacy is augmented by strategic placement of 1.8-meter-high wood privacy fences along the northwest and west property lines, ensuring that residents of the development and neighbouring homes enjoy personal space without intrusion. The tree buffers are particularly significant as they not only provide privacy but also aid in noise reduction and air purification. The location of the parking lot behind the U-shaped building, and the building itself function as a mechanism to shield surrounding homes from headlight glare.

### **Driveways and Vehicular Access**

The development is designed with primary vehicular access via Cairns Crescent, featuring a long driveway that supports two-way traffic, which is essential for easing potential congestion and enhancing vehicular circulation within the site. A secondary access point from Kitchen Road South further disperses traffic flow, reducing the impact on any single access point. These driveways are thoughtfully integrated with the landscaping to ensure they are not visually intrusive.

### **Light, Views, and Maintained Privacy of Neighbours**

The U-shaped configuration of the building ensures that natural light reaches its central courtyard and the interiors of most units, enhancing the quality of life for residents. This design also maintains privacy for both the inhabitants of the new development and the existing neighbours by orienting windows and balconies to minimize direct overlook into adjacent properties. Strategic placement of the building and its windows fosters good neighbourly relations by preserving views and access to sunlight.

### **Compatibility with Neighbouring Houses**

The building's height and architectural style have been chosen to reflect the character of the existing neighbourhood, which primarily consists of lower-rise residential structures. By limiting the building to 4 storeys, the project respects the prevailing scale of nearby homes and integrates smoothly without dominating the streetscape. A change to be sure, but an acceptable and appropriate change for this particular site and neighbourhood.

### **Infill Development of a Vacant Lot**

Infilling the vacant site with a residential development revitalizes and better utilizes a property that might otherwise attract neglect or misuse. The new building transforms the vacant lot into a vibrant space, contributing to the density and diversity of housing options in the neighbourhood. This infill

approach supports urban growth targets, makes better use of existing municipal services, and enhances the overall urban fabric.

## Conclusion

The proposed development not only addresses the immediate housing needs through the inclusion of potentially affordable units but also ensures that its design and execution respect and enhance the existing urban environment. It is a thoughtful synthesis of aesthetics, function, and social responsibility, poised to contribute positively to the neighbourhood's growth and livability.

## 5.5 Environmental / Natural Heritage

Palmer was retained to prepare a scoped Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that assessed natural heritage features and reviewed existing environmental policies to ensure the proposed development is environmentally viable with minimal to no adverse impacts. The development requires removing an entire meadow and part of a forest, impacting wildlife habitats and stormwater management. The meadow, primarily hosting non-native species with limited ecological functions, can be effectively mitigated. However, the forest is crucial as it potentially supports Species at Risk (SAR) such as Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, and various SAR bats.

Palmer worked with Kuntz Forestry Consulting Inc. as they prepared and later revised a Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan (TIPP). The TIPP documented 1,815 trees, proposing the removal of 1,473 to facilitate development while preserving 342 trees with supportive measures such as tree protection barriers and erosion control. New trees through a comprehensive landscaping plan will also be added back to the site.

To mitigate these impacts, Palmer has recommended:

- Scheduling vegetation and tree removal outside the critical breeding and nesting seasons for birds and bats, adhering to the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- Conducting pre-clearance nest and bat exit surveys, if necessary.
- Consulting with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) for additional measures concerning SAR bats.

Efforts to mitigate impacts on SAR species included habitat screenings and assessments, scheduling tree clearings during non-maternity periods for bats, and outside breeding seasons for SAR birds. Conservation measures during construction are necessary for Black Ash, an endangered species.

The proposed stormwater management pond, requiring minor tree removal, is designed to minimize environmental impacts, with comprehensive erosion and sediment control (ESC) measures following established guidelines.

During a site visit on March 11, 2022, Palmer also assessed deer wintering habitats and found the property unlikely to serve as significant deer habitat due to its urban proximity and alternative nearby habitats. Despite being mapped as a Deer Wintering Area, the site lacks the essential characteristics of Stratum 2 habitat. The proposed development, therefore, is not expected to significantly impact

deer winter cover as more suitable habitats exist off-site. A tract of land will be preserved and naturalized at the site's rear to retain existing trees.

Overall, Palmer concluded that the development is environmentally feasible and would not significantly impact the natural heritage features if the recommended mitigation strategies are implemented. These measures aim to minimize ecological disruptions, ensuring environmental compliance and promoting sustainability in the new residential project.

## 5.6 Noise

Aeroustics Engineering Limited conducted a Noise Impact Study for the proposed development. The study evaluated the existing and future noise environment to assess impacts on surrounding noise-sensitive receptors and to ensure compliance with Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) noise guidelines.

The review the development as a 4-storey residential building located near residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Utilizing architectural plans, road studies, and traffic information, the study identified noise sources and their impacts as follows:

1. **Transportation Noise:** No mitigation is needed for outdoor living areas as predicted sound levels are within acceptable limits. For indoor spaces, the predicted sound levels are significantly below the thresholds requiring upgraded construction, indicating that standard building code compliance will suffice.
2. **Stationary Noise Sources:** No mitigation is necessary for existing off-site noise sources, but a warning clause is recommended for agreements to inform residents about potential audible noise. The impact of on-site stationary sources will need further assessment once more details are available.
3. **Emergency Sources:** Maintenance of emergency generators should be restricted to daytime hours to minimize noise disturbances.

The study concluded that the proposed development will meet MECP noise guidelines without requiring additional exterior construction upgrades. Any future changes to the plans should be reviewed by an acoustic consultant to ensure continued compliance with noise standards. Sample warning clauses are suggested for inclusion in purchase and tenancy agreements to inform residents about possible noise from nearby industrial activities.

## 5.7 Traffic and Parking

Trans-Plan conducted a Transportation Study for the proposed residential development. This comprehensive study, adhering to the Ministry of Transportation Ontario's guidelines, covered a Traffic Impact Study, Parking Review, and Site Plan Review.

The Traffic Impact Study assessed the existing road network and future conditions, predicting a manageable increase in traffic with the development expected to generate approximately 69 and 72 two-way trips during weekday morning and evening peaks, respectively, without necessitating operational improvements.

In the Parking Review, the planned 231 parking spaces, including a shortfall of 36 spaces according to the Town's by-law, were deemed sufficient when compared to similar municipalities. Parking demand surveys at a local apartment building supported this adequacy with a usage rate of 1.13 spaces per unit.

The Site Plan Review confirmed that the site layout allows for safe entry and exit for various vehicle types, including emergency and service vehicles.

Overall, the study supports the viability of the proposed 4-storey building with 184 units and its amenities, concluding that it can proceed without major roadway improvements and with an adequate parking supply as per local standards.

## **5.8 Visual Impacts**

The Biglieri Group prepared a Visual Impact Analysis to assess the visual impacts of the proposed development on the subject site. After consulting with Town Planning staff, seven viewpoints throughout the broader area were chosen for this analysis. These viewpoints encompass a variety of scenes along both minor and major thoroughfares, with different land uses in the foreground or notable views in the background. Renderings of the proposed development were used to demonstrate its visual impact.

The analysis indicates that the proposed development is visible to varying degrees from several viewpoints. However, existing structures, geological features, and vegetation obscure it from other views, further offset by the proposed green roofs. The study notes that the proposed structure does not obstruct the sightline of the escarpment highpoint. Furthermore, in some views, the massing and height of the proposal align with nearby buildings, thus minimizing visual disruption. The findings regarding vegetation serving as a visual buffer have also shaped the site's landscaping plans.

## **5.9 Servicing and Stormwater Management**

Lithos Group Inc. was retained to prepare a Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management (FSR-SWM) Report in support of the CPP application and proposed residential development.

Their report concludes that stormwater discharge will be controlled to pre-development conditions for flows from 2-year to 100-year storm events, requiring up to 669.2 m<sup>3</sup> of on-site storage and meeting the City's Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines. The stormwater management system will provide enhanced Level 1 protection, with 80% total suspended solids removal as required by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

For sanitary sewers, the development will connect to an existing 200mm sewer on Cairns Crescent, increasing discharge from 0.61 L/s pre-development to 6.30 L/s post-development, resulting in a net increase of 5.69 L/s.

Water supply will be provided by an existing 150mm watermain on Cairns Crescent, with a total design flow of 153.82 L/s needed for the development.

Site grading will match existing drainage patterns, improving conditions to meet City and Regional requirements, with overland flow directed to adjacent rights of way.



## **5.10 Geotechnical Matters**

Toronto Inspection Ltd. submitted a peer review of a 1989 Geotechnical Investigation report on the subject site. The review involved conducting ten test pits at various depths across the site.

It concluded that there is no significant groundwater within the tested depths, and no evidence of a continuous groundwater table at the site.

The review also confirmed that the pavement designs outlined in the original report are suitable for the expected level of traffic. Additionally, the report details various strategies for bedrock excavation and proposes potential mitigation strategies to minimize impacts on surrounding structures.

# 7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The purpose of our public consultation and engagement strategy is to facilitate meaningful communication and feedback between the developer/applicant, the Town, and the community regarding the proposed 4-storey mid-rise residential development in the Huntsville Urban Settlement Area. The strategy is designed to meet the statutory requirements under the Planning Act and to incorporate additional engagement initiatives to ensure comprehensive community involvement. Some of the below will have occurred prior to CPP application submission, and some will occur following submission.

## Statutory Requirements under the Planning Act

- All statutory requirements under the Planning Act, will be followed.

## Value-Added Applicant-Led Engagement Approach

To enhance the engagement process and gather diverse perspectives, the following additional strategies will be employed:

- **One-on-One Meetings with Councillors:** The developer/applicant will attempt to attend individual meetings with local Councillors, the Mayor and Deputy who serve as conduits to public opinion. These meetings will help gather insights into community concerns and priorities and allow Councillors to share valuable feedback.
- **One-on-One Meetings with Senior Town Staff and Committee Members:** The developer/applicant will attempt to attend meetings with senior Town staff and any relevant committee members will be held to discuss the proposal in detail, address any technical concerns, and align on planning objectives.
- **Door-to-Door In-Person Discussions and Mail Drops with Immediate Neighbours:** The developer/applicant will conduct door-to-door visits to engage in direct conversations with immediate neighbours. Informational materials will be distributed through mail drops to ensure that neighbours are informed about the project and have opportunities to provide feedback.
- **Applicant-Led Public Open House (Virtual):** A virtual public open house will be organized by the developer/applicant to provide an accessible platform for a broader audience to learn about the project and participate in discussions. The open house will include a presentation of the development plans, followed by a Q&A session to address questions and concerns.

## Communication and Feedback Mechanisms

- **Email Updates:** Regular email updates can be sent to interested stakeholders who sign up for notifications, ensuring they are informed about key milestones and opportunities for involvement.

## Documentation and Reporting

- **Consultation Summary Matrix:** A comprehensive matrix summarizing all engagement activities, feedback received, and how it has been addressed in the proposal will be prepared and submitted to the Town as part of the application process.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Feedback from the engagement process will be used to refine and improve the consultation strategy for future projects.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS

The development of the subject site for a new mid-rise, high-density purpose-built rental building is supportive of numerous policy directions articulated in the Provincial Policy Statement, the District of Muskoka Official plan, and the Town of Huntsville Official Plan, all of which support and promote intensification on underutilized sites that are well served by municipal infrastructure, including municipal and regional transit options.

In our opinion, the proposed development is appropriate, considering the size, context, and connectivity of the subject site. The integration of the proposed development with existing neighbourhoods to the north and west, by means of transitional measures and building placement, are responsive to changes in density, height and context. We believe that the concept and the site-specific transitional design interventions are suitable on the subject site and meet the Town's Official Plan criteria for high-density development.

The proposed setbacks, building shape and articulation, building placement, and enhanced landscaping treatments work together to provide respectful transitions and buffers from neighbouring residential uses. The provision and organization of amenity areas are appropriate, and work to enhance the liveability of the space for the diverse range of future residents. Furthermore, the unit mix, size and provision of new rental housing units will contribute to the range and mix of new housing options for the neighbourhood and Town. Apartment units remain scarce throughout Huntsville; the proposed development fills this gap and provides housing options to residents looking for options other than single-family homes. Lastly, should the project be successful in obtaining affordable housing funding, the project will welcome users of varying socio-economic statuses through the provision of smart value housing in a proportion of the units proposed (as much as 25% of the units for a select period of time).

The proposed use is permitted in both the Town Official Plan and CPP By-law as-of-right, and the requested site-specific exceptions to the maximum permitted density, reduced interior side yard setback at one single pinch point, increase to the maximum building height, reduction in the number of required parking spaces overall, reduction in the number of accessible parking spaces on site, and reduction in the number of loading spaces on site is appropriate for this particular site and proposal type.

In our opinion, the proposal meets the general purpose and intent of the CPP By-law, aligns with the Town's planning goals, fits well with the surrounding area, and offers additional community benefits beyond standard requirements. In our opinion, these benefits are reasonably related to the increase in height or density, and the balance of the site-specific exceptions required to facilitate the proposal are generally minor departures from the balance of the performance standards.

We believe that the proposed range and mix of new rental housing units, number of bedrooms, amenity area provisions, and number of parking spaces are appropriate for the site and will result in a boost to local housing options. From a planning policy perspective, the Major Class 3 Community Planning Permit Application and resulting appropriate development of the subject site:

- is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and provincial priorities associated with the ongoing housing crisis;

- conform with the District of Muskoka and Town of Huntsville Official Plans;
- are generally in keeping with the purpose and intent of By-law 2022-97, as amended;
- will result in new purpose built, and potentially affordable housing units for the neighbourhood and Town; and
- represent good planning and efficient land use on the subject site.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is our opinion that the proposal is an appropriate and desirable development and represents good planning and urban design. Accordingly, we recommend approval of the requested Major Class 3 Community Planning Permit.

Respectfully submitted,  
**The Biglieri Group Ltd.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evan Sugden', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Evan Sugden, HBASc, MA, CAHP, RPP, MCIP  
Associate

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Federico Palacios', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Federico Palacios, BA, MPI,  
Planner





## **THE BIGLIERI GROUP LTD.**

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