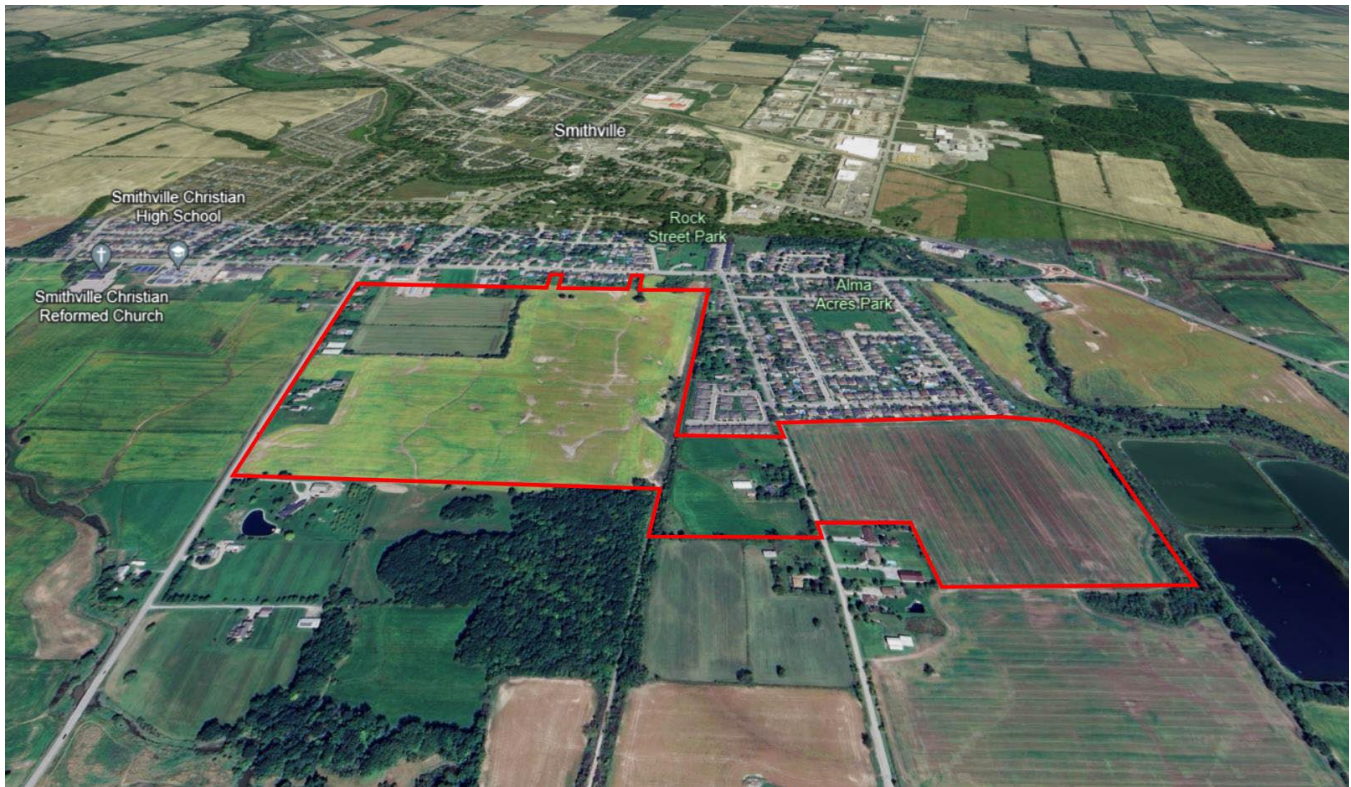


# Smithville Master Community Plan Block Plan Area 9

## Urban Design Report

August 16, 2024



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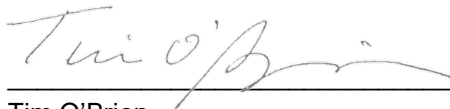
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# 1 Introduction

This Urban Design Report (“UDR”) has been prepared as a stand-alone document to analyze a proposed block plan concept in Smithville, ON (herein referred to as the “subject lands” or “site”). The purpose of this report is to provide a focused review and discussion considering urban design-related items of the proposal including interaction with the existing and planned context, details of the proposed block plan composition, and a review of key applicable policies and requirements. Reference should be made to the complete application submission for further detail outside the scope of urban design.

This report provides an analysis at a planning level, in direct response to the development stage of the proposal; there are items related to urban design that are not yet developed, such as detailed design of built form and streets, and as a result, cannot be commented on at this time.

## 2 Context

### 2.1 Existing Context

The subject lands are located on the southeast side of Smithville, ON in the vicinity of Townline Road and Port Davidson Road. They are an irregularly shaped formation of existing lands east of Port Davidson Road, extending past Alma Drive. The lands have a total area of approximately 151.17 acres / 61ha (Figure 2-1).



Figure 2-1: Aerial image of Site and surrounding context





**Figure 2-2:** Existing Conditions, Google Streetview

As seen in the street view images A through D, the existing site primarily features agricultural land, with some residential properties located along the street frontages. There is direct frontage on Port Davidson Road, but the lands are set back from Townline Road beyond these residential properties.

There is an existing gas line easement running east-west through the site, as well as a decommissioned rail line running north-south near Shurie Road.



The lands are located to the south of the existing developed area of Smithville and are bordered by existing residential lands to the north, opposite Townline Road. To the south, west and east, the context changes to predominantly agricultural and scattered rural residential properties which are typical along the fringes of the Town.



Figure 2-3: Surrounding context

## 2.2 Planning Context

The proposed block plan comprises part 9 of 13 total future expanded development areas which form the OPA 63 expansion area (Figure 2-4). The plan design puts forth a conceptual arrangement of subdivided blocks and streets, which are aimed at complementing both the existing and planned urban fabric among other feasibility considerations.

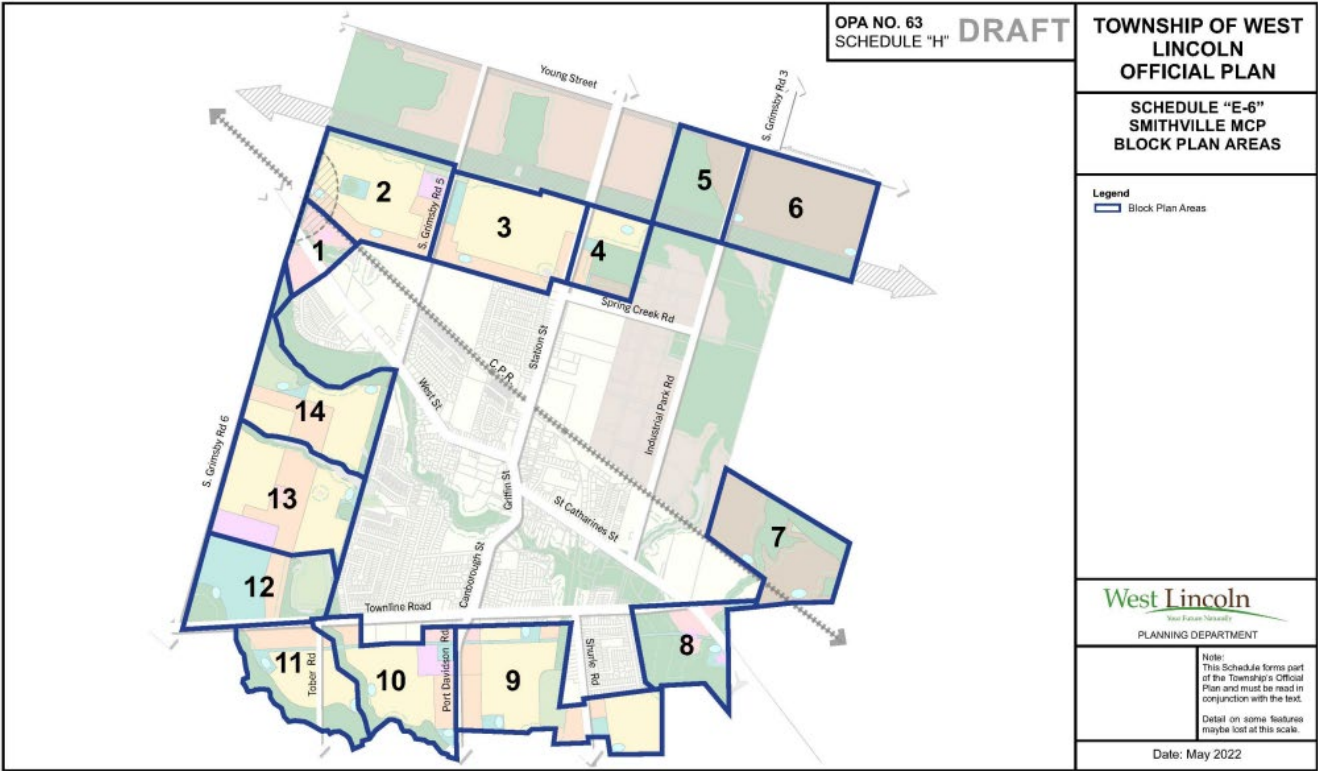


Figure 2-4: OPA 63 Expansion Area, Block 9 Site Location

Figure 2-4 illustrates the OPA 63 expansion area and highlights the location of the subject site at Block 9. The site interacts with the existing built-up area, future expansion areas, and lands beyond. This has a great impact on the design and configuration of the block plan requirements from an urban design perspective so that connections, transitions, and relationships are both either supported and/or appropriately formed. Figure 2-5 below illustrates the Community Design Framework as described within the Town Urban Design Guidelines. The subject site interacts with neighbourhood lands, and one of four total community gateway nodes at Port Davidson Road. Such nodes aim to incorporate enhanced urban design elements such as articulated buildings, landscape, and public art to demarcate and welcome residents and visitors to Smithville.



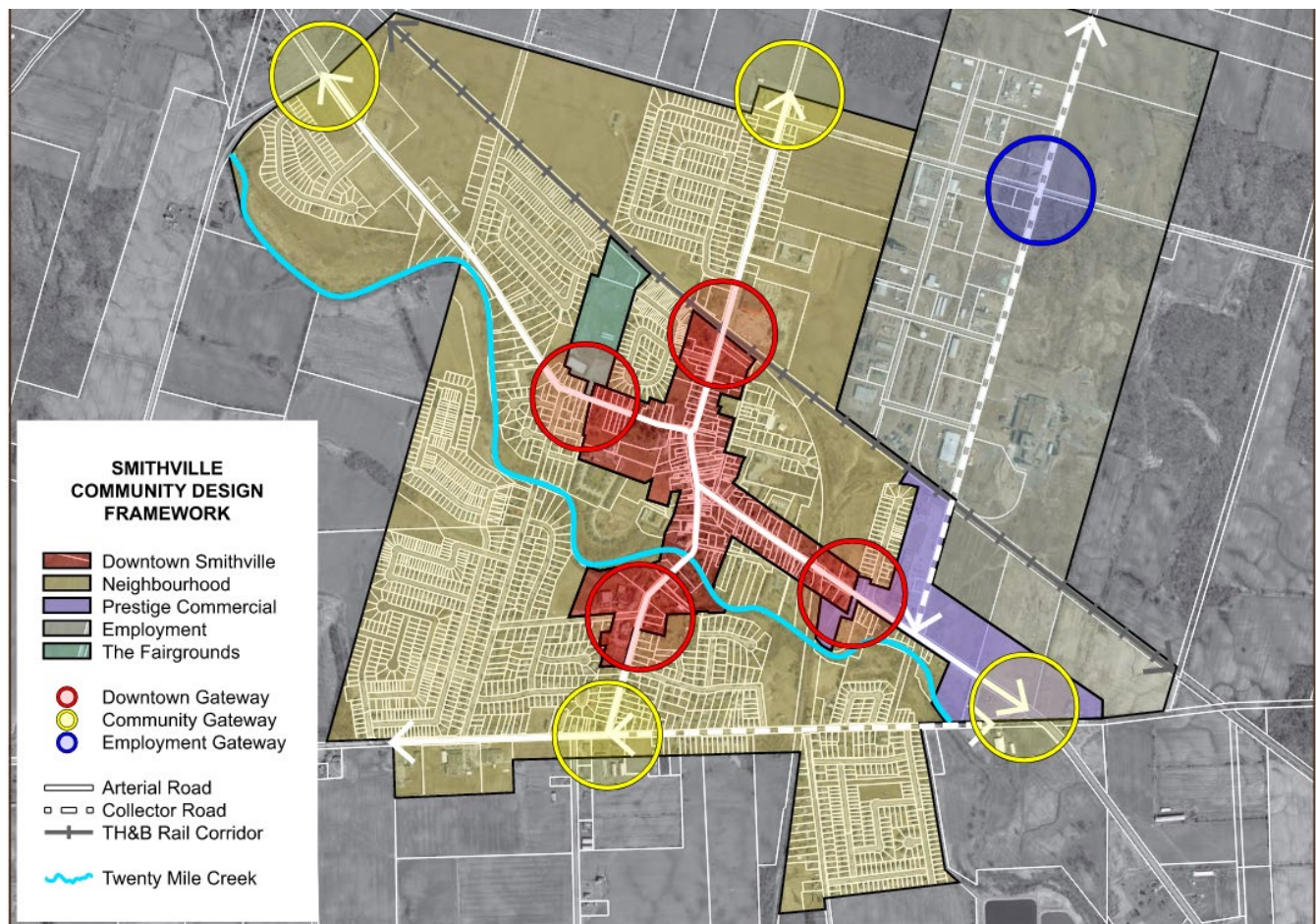


Figure 2-4: Smithville Community Design Framework – Identified Gateways

## 3 Applicable Policies and Guides

### 3.1 Town of West Lincoln Official Plan (“OP”)

Within the OP, the subject lands are subject to OPA 63. This amendment was based upon the Smithville Master Community Plan (“MCP”), which details the proposed expansion area surrounding the existing community. With respect to urban design, section 6.11.7.5 of OPA 63 deals with Community Design and Sustainability and references the MCP’s “Urban Design Guidelines”. Relevant sections are highlighted for consideration:

#### 6.11.7.5

The urban design guidelines have identified distinct “character areas” within the community, including Residential Neighbourhood Areas; Commercial Areas; Mixed-Use Neighbourhood Nodes; and, Urban Employment Areas. As per MCP Figure 9-1: Preliminary Preferred Concept Option, all but the latter two designations apply to the subject



lands concept. Items within the design guidelines pertain to a range of design scenarios; for this report, those that are applicable to the block plan at this stage are acknowledged.

## **1. General Design Policies**

- b) Any development proposed in a Block Plan shall be designed according to the guidelines for “Public Realm Design” set out in Section 3 of the Design Guidelines.
- c) All development in the Smithville MCP Area, except for the development of one low-density dwelling, shall be designed according to the guidelines for “Private Realm Design” set out in Section 4 of the Design Guidelines.
- f) All development in the Smithville MCP Area shall be designed according to the applicable specific guidelines set out in Section 5 of the Design Guidelines.
- g) Where it is necessary to determine which specific guidelines in Section 5 of the Design Guidelines will apply to different uses in a proposed development, such determination shall be made during the Block Plan process or during pre-submission consultation for a development application.
- h) All future development in the Smithville MCP Area will be encouraged to incorporate sustainable design practices and to incorporate elements that promote water conservation, energy conservation, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

## **2. Residential Neighbourhood Areas**

- a) The “Residential Neighbourhood” character area shall comprise the following areas, as designated on the Land Use Schedules:
  - i. “Residential” areas.
  - ii. “Medium Density” areas, where such areas are located outside the “Mixed Use Node” overlay designation; and
  - iii. “Open Space” areas.
- b) Development in the “Residential Neighbourhood” character area shall be designed according to the following general principles:
  - i. Encourage variety and compatible alternatives in the form and design of the built environment.
  - ii. Ensure that the built environment is designed to create a consistent and attractive edge to the street.
  - iii. Establish block and street network patterns that are conducive to pedestrian movement.
  - iv. Ensure that buildings are sited in a way that defines and reinforces the public realm.
- c) Development in the “Residential” designation shall be designed with a street-facing orientation in a manner that provides and supports an attractive and animated streetscape.
- d) Development in the “Medium Density” designation shall be designed:
  - i. to have a street-facing orientation that provides and supports an attractive, animated, and pedestrian-oriented streetscape; and
  - ii. to provide an appropriate transition in building heights and density from any adjacent “Residential” areas.
- f) Development and land uses in the “Open Space” designation shall be designed:
  - i. to meet the various recreational and social needs of the community.
  - ii. to enhance the character and aesthetic appeal of the area in which they are located.
  - iii. to promote and facilitate public safety; and
  - iv. to contribute to a well-connected system of parks and open spaces that is accessible to all residents.

- g) Reverse lotting of development shall be discouraged and may only be permitted in circumstances where:
  - i. the road onto which the rear lot lines abut runs along the Smithville Urban Boundary; and
  - ii. there is no alternative that will achieve the same overall objectives of the proposed development.

### **3. Commercial Areas**

- a) The “Commercial” character area shall comprise all “Commercial” areas that are located outside the “Mixed Use Node” overlay designation, as shown on the Land Use Schedules.
- b) Development in “Commercial” areas shall be designed according to the following general principles:
  - i. Ensure that the built environment is designed to create a consistent and attractive street edge that is pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented.
  - ii. Provide high-quality public amenity spaces and landscaping, with features and facilities that support walking and cycling.
  - iii. Design spaces and streetscapes that provide for the future integration of transit stops and transit connections.
  - iv. Minimize the presence and prominence of parking areas along street frontages and ensure that such areas are not located between the fronts of buildings located near the front lot line and the street.
  - v. Design areas that feature attractive interfaces with adjacent land uses.
- c) Where necessary, development in “Commercial” areas shall be designed to ensure compatibility with any adjacent low-density residential uses.

#### **6.11.7.6**

##### **1. Block Plans (Implementation)**

###### **p) Block Plans should:**

- i. Illustrate the detailed land uses including the location, type, area, and approximate dimensions of each land use proposed, to appropriately implement and as a refinement to the land use designations (and without amendment to this Plan) shown on the applicable Land Use Plan in Schedules “E-8” through “E-11”;
- ii. identify the location, distribution, and land areas for required community facilities, parks, and open spaces, to appropriately implement and as a refinement to the land use designations (without amendment to this Plan) intended to accommodate such uses shown on the applicable Land Use Plan in Schedules “E-8” to “E-11” and based upon any applicable Township Master Plans;
- iii. be accompanied and supported by, and based upon, a Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) that has been prepared to appropriately implement Subsection 6.11.7.6.2 below, the SWS, and the MSP and TMP;
- iv. include a description of the Block Plan Area and information to demonstrate how the Block Plan appropriately implements the applicable policies in Section 6.11.7.5 above and in keeping with the applicable Township Design Guidelines.

## **3.2 Staff Report**

In addition to the relevant policy documents, a staff report (PD-29-2023) received from early consultation forms an additional guide with which the proposed Block Plan’s urban design contributions are subject to. The staff report details the process for Block Plan submissions and points to expectations of designs and submissions.

The Staff report notes that proposed block plans should be designed in accordance with the Township's OP and Smithville Urban Design Manual, as applicable. It should be designed to foster a distinct community identity and purpose for each area, illustrating urban design and development considerations for elements within the private and public realm. Written descriptions and images/graphics should provide a basis for the vision of the community and provide rationale for the design intent.

Appendix 5 of the staff report indicates design and development considerations that should influence the development of a block plan. These include but are not limited to the design and layout of proposed streets and blocks; the public realm generated by the street and block arrangement, including a hierarchy of typologies; an appropriate mix and distribution of land uses; consideration for built form typologies; integration of natural heritage systems, open spaces, and community uses; and transportation.

The following section provides a summary of the Block Plan proposal and comments on the response to both physical and planning contexts. A copy of the draft Block Plan is appended to this report.

## 4 Block Plan Proposal

A comprehensive block plan for the subject lands has been developed which would see a portion of the Town's rural periphery converted into an expanded urban area supplying a mix of residential, commercial and park lands featuring a network of streets and trails (Figure 4-1).

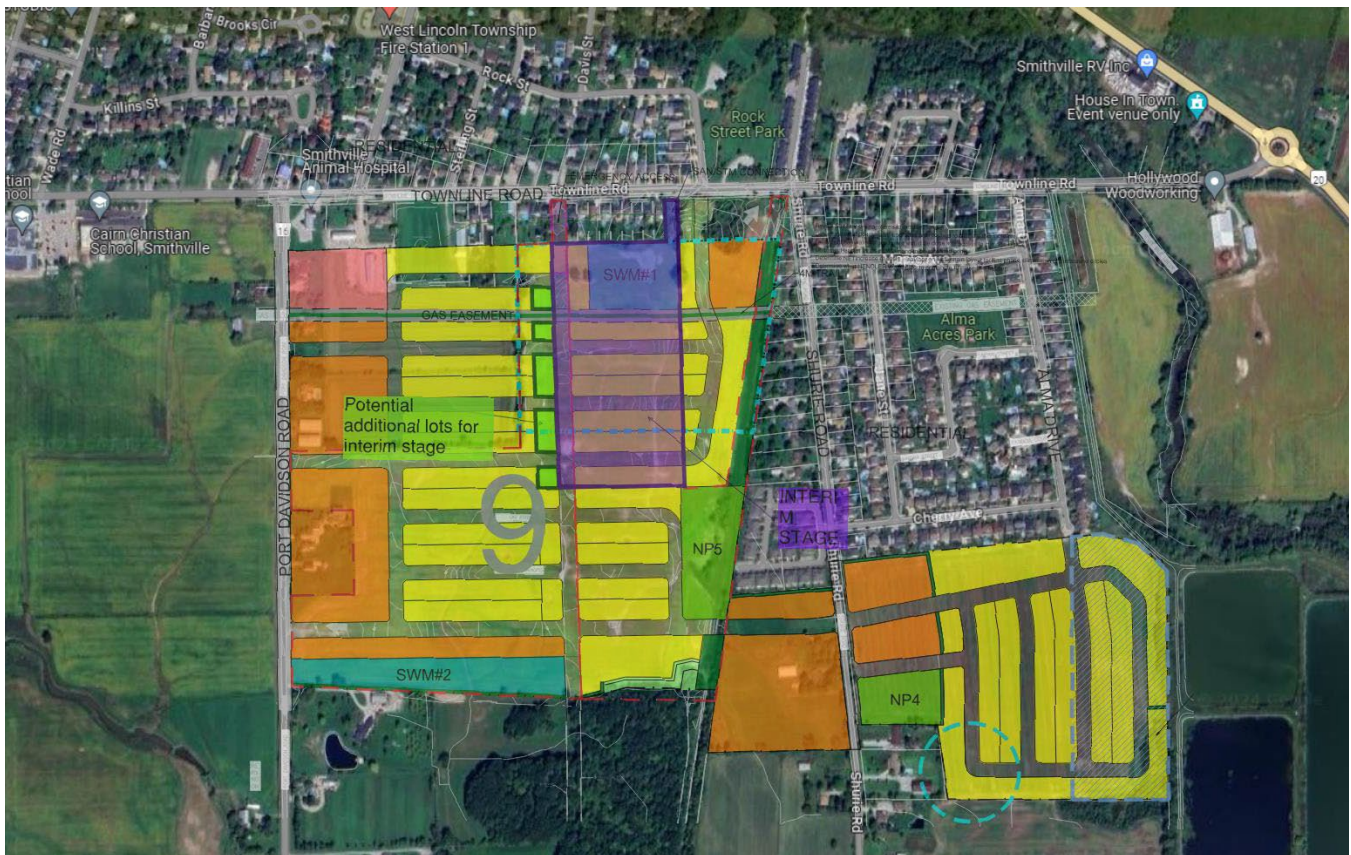


Figure 4-1: Block Plan Concept Overlay on Existing Conditions



Using a percentage basis, the proposed development area will be comprised of roughly 60% low density residential (LDR), 30% medium density residential (MDR), 3% commercial, and the balance between park and open spaces including natural heritage features. The proposed number of units are split between 498 LDR and 459 MDR, respectively.

## **4.1 Configuration**

### **4.1.1 Streets and Blocks**

The proposed block plan includes an array of streets, connecting with the existing network at strategic locations and facilitating internal circulations. The block patterns formed by the streets generally reflect the existing urban context and optimize spatial configuration and connectivity and are sized appropriately for their intended uses. Primary access to the internal site is provided via Port Davidson Road, Townline Road, Shurie Road and Alma Drive, while potential trail connections offer access for multi-modal transportation.

### **4.1.2 Public Realm – Streetscape Design**

Subsequent design development would see the design of individual streetscapes – the public realm, planting, parking, etc. – however at this block plan stage, the proposal is limited to providing the general alignment and right-of-way widths for the streetscapes. At a high level, the future streetscape condition can be envisioned based on the land use patterns, where, for example, active streetscapes may front key connections and nodes associated with MDR and commercial blocks, and streetscapes of low-density residential blocks are quieter and more reserved. Where lower density blocks oppose higher density blocks, it can be envisioned that streetscape activity - enhanced pedestrian environment, on street parking, cycling infrastructure, etc. - would be more integrated with the latter.

### **4.1.3 Land Use Mix & Distribution**

The proposed block plan includes low and medium-density residential, commercial, and various park and open spaces ranging from neighbourhood parks to stormwater management facility blocks. The mix is responsive to the surrounding community at the adjoining interfaces and follows the Master Community Plan for general arrangement. Higher-density designations are focused along Port Davidson Road and Shurie Road to respond to the higher level of profile and access points while the low density residential is directed internal to the site where it is buffered and more connected to the park and open spaces.

### **4.1.4 Built Form Design and Site Planning**

Subsequent design development would see specific built form patterns, however at this block plan stage, the proposal is limited to designation-level site planning and unit typologies.

### **4.1.5 Natural Heritage System**

The existing natural heritage system is supported by corridor connections bisecting the site. Use of the gas easement and rail corridor provides opportunity to support both existing ecological communities and provide

recreational opportunities and outdoor enjoyment for users. These corridors connect the site to the broader community, allowing users potential access to an expanded network of parks and trails.

#### **4.1.6 Parks, Open Spaces, and Community Uses**

Two new park blocks (NP4 & NP5) totaling 2.33 ha (5.75ac) are proposed for the final build-out condition, with smaller park blocks proposed for the interim stage. Blocks NP4 & NP5 are situated to serve the residential community separately but situated strategically to enhance connections with each other and the broader network of trails and streets.

The design and programming of the parkland blocks will occur at future stages of development, but the size and proposed context of these spaces are conducive to providing passive and active recreational activities with ideal interfaces to adjacent lands.

Two stormwater management facility blocks are proposed at the north and south of the site. There may be potential for further recreational opportunities if these blocks are designed in such a way, however in any case, their location serves to further support the natural connections made throughout and beyond the site.

#### **4.1.7 Transportation Network and Servicing**

As per the Transportation Impact Study prepared by Stantec (July 12, 2024), there do not appear to be any significant traffic impact concerns based on the current block plan.

Moreover, the functional servicing investigations for the block plan (August 2024) conclude that “The proposed Stage 1 Draft Plan and Block Plan Area 9 can be adequately serviced by municipal sewage, storm drainage, water services and utilities.”

#### **4.1.8 Other**

A noise impact study was prepared by Stantec (July 19, 2024) and provided mitigation recommendations to the proposed block plan because of findings that indicate MECP exceeding levels of road traffic noise for the indoor living areas of the first two rows of lots facing Townline Road (R2 and R6) and the first row of lots along Port Davidson Road. The report recommends appropriate measures be taken, including notifying potential residents of these units, as well as incorporating appropriate design measures from a building, and landscape architectural perspective which may have implications on urban design. Such considerations can be addressed during future stages of design development.

## **5 Discussion & Recommendation**

The proposed concept for Block Plan Area 9 exhibits many positive design markers which are outlined in the Official Plan, Smithville Master Community Plan, Urban Design Guidelines, and highlighted by the Staff Report. The concept proposes an appropriate mix of land uses in a logical arrangement which respond to existing and future contexts.

Require materials - landscape plan, etc.

With specific reference to the policies highlighted in section 3 of this report:

## **OPA63 General Design Policies**

### **Residential Neighbourhood Areas**

The bulk of the proposed development is residential, supported by block and streetscape patterns which facilitate this type of development; they are designed with street-facing orientation that has opportunity to provide attractive and animated streetscapes, and that have positive interfaces and connections with open spaces. The arrangement of blocks supports appropriate transitions in density, and therefore can be assumed to extend to the eventual built form.

The open spaces are sized and situated such that they have the potential to offer a balanced injection of recreational space for the community, connected easily by streets and trails.

### **Commercial Areas**

The proposed commercial area is purposefully located at the northwest corner of the block, close to the intersection and on Port Davidson Road. The intent is to support a defined and activated street edge that is transit oriented. The location also serves to buffer the residential lands internal to the site.

### **MCP Urban Design Guidelines**

The referenced document could not be sourced at the time of preparing this report. As such, the references made under section 6.11.7.5 could not be addressed. In lieu of this, the Smithville Urban Design Manual was reviewed.

### **Smithville Urban Design Manual**

The Smithville Urban Design Manual is a document used to guide the design standards in the area from a policy and best practices perspective. It uses reference from regional resources such as the Niagara Region Official Plan and Model Urban Design Guidelines, as well as finer grained reference from such things as the existing and historic character of the Town and surrounding landscape.

The Guidelines apply to the area within the current urban boundary, which would exclude the OPA 63 amendment expansion area inclusive of Block 9, however they should still be considered applicable and a guide to ensure continuity and connectivity. From a planned perspective at this early stage, the proposed block plan arrangement positions a development that supports many of the best practices listed in the Urban Design Manual for mixed and residential subdivision lands.

Respectfully submitted,

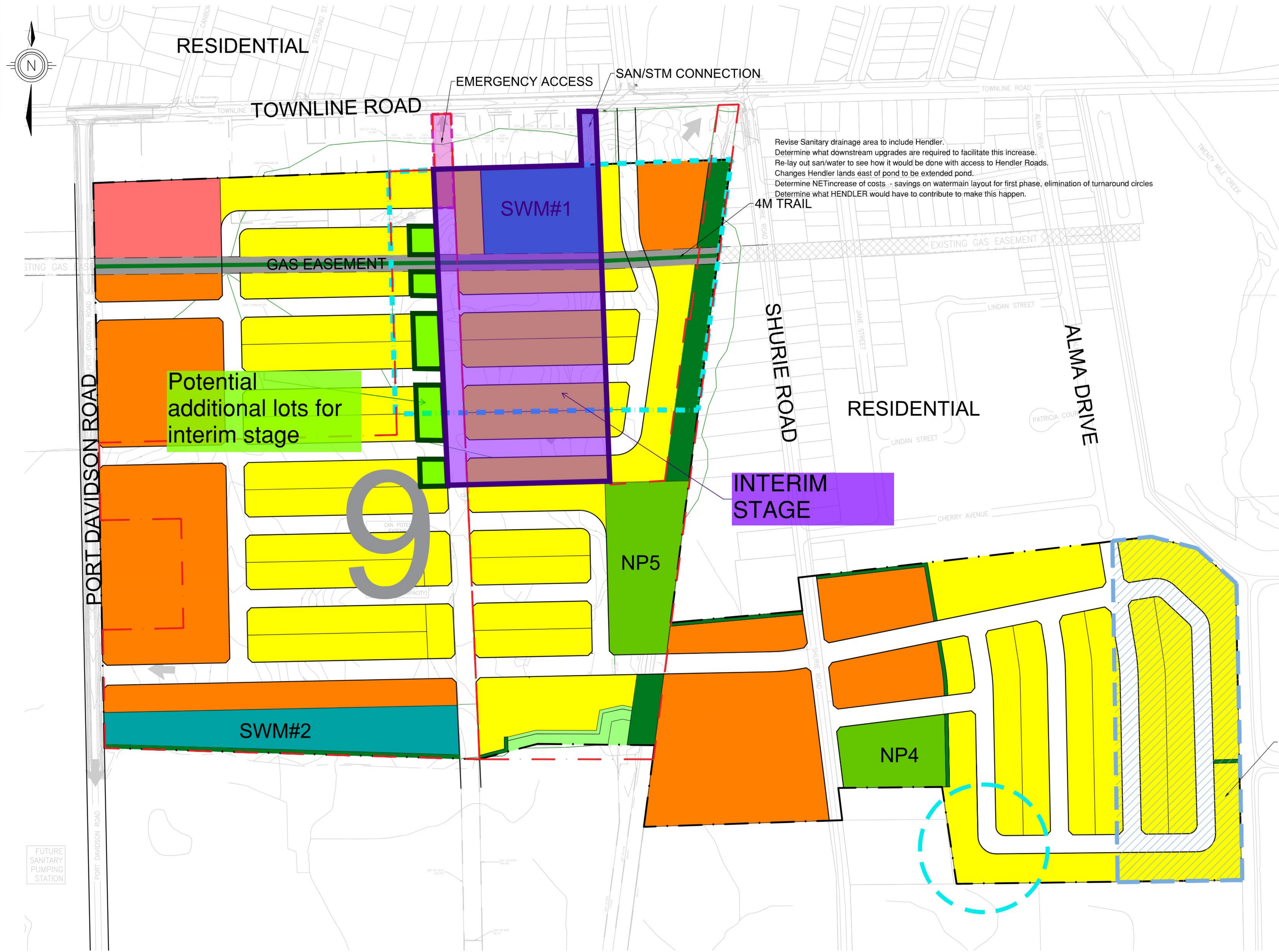


**Tim O'Brien** OALA, CSLA

Senior Associate - Landscape Architect

Arcadis Professional Services (Canada) Inc.





DEVELOPMENT DETAILS		
LAND USE	AREA	PERCENTAGE
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)	±25.20ha (62.24 acres)	±58.82%
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR)	±12.36ha (30.64 acres)	±28.86%
COMMERCIAL	±1.18ha (2.92 acres)	±2.75%
NATURAL HERITAGE	±1.46ha (3.63 acres)	±3.41%
NATURAL FEATURES AND 15M BUFFER	±0.29 ha (0.74acres)	±0.70%
PARK [NP4 - NP5]	±2.33 ha (5.75 acres)	±5.44%
NET DEVELOPABLE AREA TOTAL	±42.81ha (105.81 acres)	±100%
GAS EASEMENT	±1.25ha (3.11 acres)	
SWM	±3.10ha (7.66 acres)	
R.O.W	±13.83ha (34.19 acres)	
TOTAL LAND AREA (including lands in arc, karst and railway setback area - noted below)	±61.00ha (151.17 acres)	

NET LAND USE DENSITIES	UNITS
±62.24 acres of LDR @ 8 upa	498 units
±30.64 acres of MDR @ 15 upa	459 units
TOTAL UNITS	957 units
POPULATION 957 units @ 2.7ppu	2,584 persons

DEVELOPMENT DETAILS - PHASE 1		
LAND USE	AREA	PERCENTAGE
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)	±4.31ha (10.65 acres)	±58.82%
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR)	±0.68ha (1.68 acres)	±28.86%
NATURAL HERITAGE	±0.64ha (1.58 acres)	±3.41%
NET DEVELOPABLE AREA TOTAL	±5.63ha (13.91 acres)	±100%
GAS EASEMENT	±0.66ha (1.63 acres)	
SWM	±1.23ha (3.03 acres)	
R.O.W	±2.08ha (5.13 acres)	
TOTAL LAND AREA (including lands in arc, karst and railway setback area - noted below)	±9.60ha (23.72 acres)	

NET LAND USE DENSITIES - PHASE 1	UNITS
±10.65 acres of LDR @ 8 upa	85 units
±0.68 acres of MDR @ 15 upa	10 units
TOTAL UNITS	95 units
POPULATION 95 units @ 2.7ppu	256 persons

- LEGEND
- BLOCK PLAN AREA 9
  - LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
  - MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
  - COMMERCIAL
  - PARK LAND / OPEN SPACE/ NP4 - NP5
  - NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM (NHS)-TRAILS
  - NATURAL FEATURES AND 15M BUFFER
  - PROPOSED S.W.M. FACILITY
  - PHASE 1 - 9.61ha (23.74 acres)
  - S.W.M. LOCATION
  - LAGOON BUFFER