

Urban Design Brief

Silvercreek Junction

Guelph, Ontario

For: Fieldgate Developments

November 2019 October 2020



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1.1 Physical Context

Site Definition

The subject site is bound by CN railway tracks to the north and south, Howitt Creek to the east, and the Hanlon Expressway (Highway 6) to the west. The subject site is located in the north-west area of the city, and is located north of the Speed River, east of Hanlon Expressway, south of Speedvale Avenue and west of downtown, where the major transit station is located.

Site Attributes

The site is relatively flat with the exception of some steeper areas along the north CN Railway, the south-east part of the site along Howitt Creek, north of the proposed stormwater management (SWM) pond adjacent to Hanlon Express and the south-east area along the CN Railway.

The subject site is currently vacant with some vegetation. There are no structures or heritage features on site. However, there is a significant oak tree, which is located centrally west of Silvercreek Parkway South and is to be preserved.

Site Context

The City of Guelph's Official Plan, Land Use schedule identifies a number of land uses for the subject lands, which include:

- Community Mixed-Use Centre;
- Corporate Business Park,
- High Density Residential,
- Significant Natural Areas & Natural Areas; and
- Open Space and Park.

The subject site is situated within a Community Mixed-Use Node as per Schedule 1: Growth Plan Elements. The site is surrounded by a mix of residential, institutional and commercial uses, as seen in Figure 1. October 2020

Howiit Creek is a naturalized open space directly east of the subject lands and can be considered a natural landmark. The site is also located south of the future highway interchange located at Hanlon Expressway and Woodlawn Road as well as north of Hanlon Expressway and Stone Road, both of which could act as gateways for the community.



Figure 1: Site Location and Context

part one 1.0

Surrounding Street Network

The subject site is bound by CN railways to the north and south, a significant natural area and watercourse to the east and Hanlon Expressway, a provincial highway, to the west. Silvercreek Parkway South runs northsouth through the site and divides the site into two east and west parcels. Silvercreek Parkway South is a collector road which continues south of the site and turns into Waterloo Avenue, which is an arterial road that connects to the downtown. Silvercreek Parkway South continues north of the site and becomes Silvercreek Parkway North, an arterial road, which connects to a number of nearby commercial amenities. There is currently a road barrier dividing Silvercreek Parkway North and South, an underpass is proposed beneath the active CN railway. Hanlon Expressway is a provincial highway (Highway 6) that runs adjacent to the west boundary of the site and connects south to Highway 401.

Public Views and Vistas

There are limited existing public views and vistas through the site. Limited views into and through the site can be seen along Silvercreek Parkway North and South and Hanlon Expressway. A glimpse of the north-east portion of the site can be seen from Glengarry Street, an existing local road.

Surrounding Land Uses

The subject site is surrounded by a mix of land uses, including low and medium density residential neighbourhoods to the north, south and west. In addition, the site is adjacent to industrial uses to the east and significant natural areas to the south.

Barriers and Connections

Barriers to the subject site include the existing road barrier separating Silvercreek Parkway South and North. The proposed development envisions an underpass beneath the active CN railway in order to remove the mbtw II wai barrier and accommodate continuous north-south vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian mobility on Silvercreek Parkway South. Currently there is also a barrier to the existing open space and natural areas within the eastern extent of the subject site, which appears to be a storm water manageent facility. The proposed development envisions a pedestrian connection to accommodate a green-west spine.



Image looking south at Silvercreek Parkway South and the existing railway barrier



Image looking north at Silvercreek Parkway South and the existing surface railway crossing

Surrounding Transportation, Open Space, and Natural Heritage Systems

The development of the subject site creates an opportunity to provide a continuous transportation network along Silvercreek Parkway. The proposed development can accommodate the envisioned bike lane along Silvercreek Parkway South (Cycling Master Plan, Schedule 1: Proposed Cycling Network). The continuation of Silvercreek Parkway provides access to the Downtown as well as Gordon Street, which connects the site to the University of Guelph. Gordon Street acts as a north-south arterial road, with a bike lane and is easily accessible from the site.

Public transit is also easily accessible from the subject site. The 10 Imperial bus route at Paisley Road and Glengarry Street is approximately a 450m (6 minute) walking distance from the centre of the subject site. The site is also approximately a 900m (11 minute) walking distance to the 9 Waterloo bus route at Waterloo Avenue and St. Arnaud Street. Both routes lead to the downtown core allowing for route connections to the rest of the City.

The proposed development will provide an east-west green spine, which will connect to the proposed City trails and the Natural Heritage System to the east of the subject site as per Schedule 6: Open Space System: Trail Network.



Image of Howitt Park entrance from Inkerman Street



Image of existing bus stop on Paisley Road



Heritage Elements

There are two designated heritage properties near the subject site. 646 Paisley Road is located north west of the site and comprises a stone mansion once part of a large estate just west of the original Guelph boundary. The building features elements of Italianate architectural style. The second designated heritage property is south of the site at 358 Waterloo Avenue. It is the only former water-powered mill building left in Guelph.





Heritage property located at 358 Waterloo Avenue

Heritage property located at 646 Paisley Road



WILLOW RD ALMA ST N TWOOD LONDON RD V 2 C.N.R PAISLEYRD SUFFOLK ST W $(\mathbf{1})$ MPERINI RD S YORKSHIRE STN PAISLE *VERCREEK PKY* 6 EPHANIE DR. (5) WATERLOO AVE LEGEND Subject Site Mixed Office / Commercial WATERLOO AVE Low Density Residential (4) Industrial Low Density Greenfield Residential Corporate Business Park WELLINGTON ST W Medium Density Residential nstitutional / Research Park High Density Residential Major Utility Community Mixed-Use Centre Open Space and Park Service Commercial Significant Natural Areas & Natural Areas Neighbourhood Commercial Centre

Figure 2: Site Context





1 Paisley Road Public School



2 St. Joseph Catholic School



3 Willow West Mall - mix of amenities



4 Guelph Bible Chapel







6 Noah's Ark Childcare

1.2 Response to Policy Context

1.2.1 Official Plan

The vision outlined in the Official Plan is "The integration of energy, transportation and land use planning will make a difference in the environmental sustainability, cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity and social well-being of Guelph. (Policy 2.1)

The subject site is identified as being a Community Mixed-Use Node according to Schedule 1-Growth Plan Elements. As per Schedule 2, Land Use Plan, the lands are designated High Density Residential, Community Mixed-Use Centre, Corporate Business Park and Open Space and Park. The proposed development is consistent with the City's vision and has proposed a mixed-use development that will contribute to creating a sustainable and vibrant community.

Section 2.2 Strategic Goals of the Official Plan provides the following direction with regards to Urban Design:

"6) Urban Design

- (a) Preserve, enhance and protect the distinct character of the city and the sense of a community of neighbourhoods.
- (b) Build a compact, mixed-use and transit-supportive community.
- (c) Plan and design an attractive urban landscape that reinforces and enhances Guelph's sense of place and identity while encouraging innovative design and development opportunities.
- (d) Encourage intensification and redevelopment of existing urban areas that is compatible with existing built form."

The proposed development respects the policies outlined in the Official Plan, specifically Section 8 as it relates to Urban Design. The following identifies the relevant objectives and policies for the proposed development with regards to urban design.

Objectives

- (a) To create neighbourhoods with diverse opportunities for living, working, learning and playing.
- (b) To build compact neighbourhoods that use land, energy, water and infrastructure efficiently and encourage walking.
- (c) To showcase natural attributes as defining features that are an integral component of the City's image and character by making them highly visible and accessible, especially lands along the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.
- (d) To engage in "place-making" developing infrastructure, spaces and buildings that are permanent and enduring, memorable and beautiful, adaptable and flexible, and valued.
- (e) To conserve and celebrate the City's cultural heritage resources through the reuse of built heritage and cultural heritage landscape assets and ensuring that adjacent development responds to and respects these assets.
- (h) To establish a pattern of interconnected streets and pedestrian networks in which buildings frame and address public spaces.
- (k) To improve conditions for greater personal security within publicly
- (f) accessible spaces by designing them to be attractive and comfortable to the public, increasing the potential for informal surveillance and reducing opportunities for crime.
- (m) To design for a choice of mobility including walk, cycling, transit and driving.

Section 8.2 Public Realm states:

- (1) A clearly identifiable public realm should be established in all residential areas consisting of an interconnected network of streets, parks, school sites, community trails and open spaces.
- (2) New residential developments shall be designed to be integrated and connected to surrounding existing neighbourhoods; providing full pedestrian and vehicular access including access to transit.
- (4) Block lengths shall be reasonably short especially within Community Mixed-use Nodes and Intensification Corridors and shall optimize connectivity for pedestrians and encourage walking. Longer blocks shall have adequately sized mid-block pedestrian links. (page157)
- (6) Reverse lotting and 'window roads' should be avoided. (page157)
- (7) Road design will balance the provisions for a safe, accessible, functional and attractive pedestrian-oriented environment with an acceptable level of motor vehicle traffic. (page157)
- (11) New development shall be designed to contribute to a pedestrianoriented streetscape. (page157)

Section 8.8 Built Form: Mid-rise Buildings states:

 (i) Mid-rise buildings shall be designed to frame the street they are fronting while allowing access to sunlight to adjacent properties (page162)

Section 8.12 Parking states:

(1) Building placement in combination with landscaping shall be used to screen surface parking areas. (page165)

Section 8.17 Landscaping and Development states:

(3) Where possible existing trees should be retained on-site and where appropriate suitable new trees should be planted on-site, in the street right-of-way or in other City-approved locations. (page168)

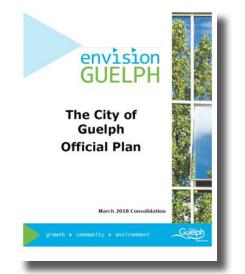
Section 8.18 Safety states:

(2) New development should be designed in a manner that:
(i) Provides opportunity for informal surveillance of outdoor spaces, including public parks, streets and parking areas. (page168)

Section 8.20 Urban Squares states:

(1) Urban Squares will be framed by buildings with ground-floor uses that provide activity throughout the day. (page170)

The development proposes high quality urban design that complies with these urban design policies as outlined in the Official Plan. The proposal focuses on conserving and celebrating existing natural heritage on the subject site. The proposed development envisions a compact, walkable, mixed-use community easily accessible by public transit, with opportunities to connect to a larger active transportation network. Low to mid-rise buildings frame the streets, park and urban square creating a clearly identifiable public realm. In addition, the urban square frames an existing oak tree that is being retained. Surface parking will be screened by adequate landscaping and appropriate placement.



1.2.2 Urban Design Manual Volume 1: Urban Design Vision

Guelph's city-wide urban design vision is "Guelph is growing and changing in response to local, regional, and demographic trends. Urban design is fundamental to building a great city and can help shape this change." (page 10)

Basic urban design principles based on Official Plan objectives are as follows:

1. Create neighbourhoods with diverse opportunities for living, working, learning and playing.

2. Build compact neighbourhoods that use land, energy, water and infrastructure efficiently and encourage alternative modes of transportation.

3. Showcase natural attributes as defining features of the City's character by making them highly visible and accessible, especially lands along the Speed and Eramosa rivers.

4. Engage in "placemaking" – developing infrastructure, spaces and buildings that are permanent and enduring, memorable and beautiful, adaptable and flexible, and valued.

5. Conserve and celebrate the City's cultural heritage resources through the reuse of built heritage and cultural heritage landscape assets and ensuring that adjacent development responds to and respects these assets.

6. Create a diversity of inviting and accessible gathering places that promote a full range of social, cultural and economic interaction.

7. Design for a choice of mobility including walking, cycling, transit and driving.

8. Establish a pattern of interconnected streets and pedestrian networks in which buildings frame and address public spaces.

9. Allow for a range of architectural styles and promote expressions that bring interest and diversity in urban form and architectural design while responding appropriately to the local context and achieving compatibility.

10. Ensure that the design of the built environment respects the character of the existing distinctive areas and neighbourhoods of the City.

11. Design space that is accessible to all, regardless of abilities.

12. Improve conditions for greater personal security within publicly accessible spaces by designing them to be attractive and comfortable to the public, increasing the potential for informal surveillance and reducing opportunities for crime.

13. Preserve and enhance protected public views and public vistas of built and natural features.

1.2.3 Urban Design Manual Volume 2: Urban Design Action Plan (2017)

The Urban Design Manual Volume 2: Urban Design Action Plan consists of three parts; part 1 identifying opportunity areas, part 2 focusing on how the City can activate and animate its public spaces and part 3 speaks to urban design policy directions.

"The purpose of the updated Urban Design Action Plan is to shape urban design in Guelph moving forward based on the City's Official Plan." (page 3)

Opportunity areas identify areas for change and include the urban growth centre/downtown, community corridors and community nodes. The subject site is identified as a community mixed-use node. The Urban Design Manual envisions to "transform Guelph's five major community mixed-use nodes into distinct urban villages with mixed-use, high-density housing, transit, cycling and pedestrian-friendly features that provide balanced live-work opportunities." (page12)

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The proposed development aligns with the principles identified in the Urban Design Manuals by developing a mixed-use, compact community with opportunities for living, working and playing within a community mixed-use node. The proposed development establishes a network of interconnected streets and pedestrian networks and provides a choice of mobility, including walking, cycling, transit and driving. In addition, the development integrates natural attributes and public views into the design of the urban square and public park, which are both inviting and accessible gathering places for the community.

1.2.4 Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses (2018)

The Built Form Standards are "informed by policy direction from the City's Official Plan, and support compact future growth, while achieving high quality, sustainable development, and a strong pedestrian realm" (page 4). The Built Form Standards also aim to ensure that the future development and design of mid-rise and townhouse forms are contextually appropriate and consider contemporary urban design practices.

The Built Form Standards include a number of key recommendations for Mid-Rise and Townhouse forms with regards to building massing, scale and transitions; ground floor and street edge design; and articulation, façade design and materials. The standards also provide guidance with regards to the public realm and speak to outdoor amenity areas, landscaped open space, tree-planting, mid-block connections and lighting. The proposed development responds to the City of Guelph's documents, by proposing townhouse, mid-rise and mixed-use typologies which contribute to providing a mix of residential and commercial uses. The proposed built form is appropriate to its context and provides animated streetscapes that contribute to the city's vision of transforming the designated major community mixed-use node into a distinct urban village. The proposed development contributes to creating an attractive, pedestrian-oriented streetscape by positioning built form to address the street and ensuring the entrance to mixed-use blocks and apartments are easily accessible from the street. In addition, the proposed development frames a distinctive urban square and a neighbourhood park, creating a green spine through the community. The proposed site layout and built form promotes walkability, active transportation connections and open space for future residents.

1.3 Urban Design Goals and Objectives for the Site

The design of the subject site has been guided by the City of Guelph's vision to create a distinct urban village and through the following urban design goals and objectives:

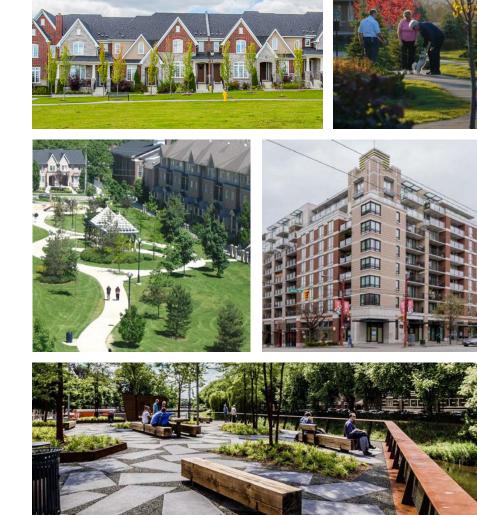
1. Introduce a mix of uses and a variety of housing typologies that provide a place to live, shop and play.

2. Create a strong green spine and connected green network that celebrates and enhances public views and access to natural features.

3. Design an urban square that is an inviting and accessible focal point and gathering place in the community that promote a full range of social, cultural and economic interaction.

4. Create a connected street network that provides mobility choice including walking, cycling, transit and driving.

5. Develop a well defined street edge and public realm through high quality architecture, landscaping and urban design that is mindful of the existing Hanlon Expressway and CN railways.





2.0 PART TWO

2.1 Development Concept

The Silvercreek Junction Urban Village Community is contemplated as a distinctive, compact, mixed-use development that surrounds green parkland and an urban square. The proposed development introduces medium to high density housing typologies and mixed-use blocks, which promotes a walkable community with places to live, shop and play. This is also achieved through the introduction of a network of interconnected streets and access to active transportation facilities.

Site Design

The proposed site consists of 163 townhouse units, 297 apartment units and 293 mixed-use units, for a total of 753 units as shown in Figure 3. The design of the development is influenced by the existing Silvercreek Parkway South, which runs north-south and splits the site into two segments. The site design is also influenced by a proposed green spine that is contemplated east-west through the centre of the site.

The proposed buildings are designed to address the streets and public open spaces by ensuring that buildings front onto the street and that there is a consistent street edge achieved through appropriate building setbacks.

The majority of the apartment and mixed-use blocks are proposed within the western segment of the site as to provide a transition from Hanlon Expressway (Highway 6). The mixed-use blocks will have commercial uses at grade and residential uses above. The mixed-use blocks frame the urban square, creating a sense of enclosure and providing active frontages that will animate both the street front and the urban square.

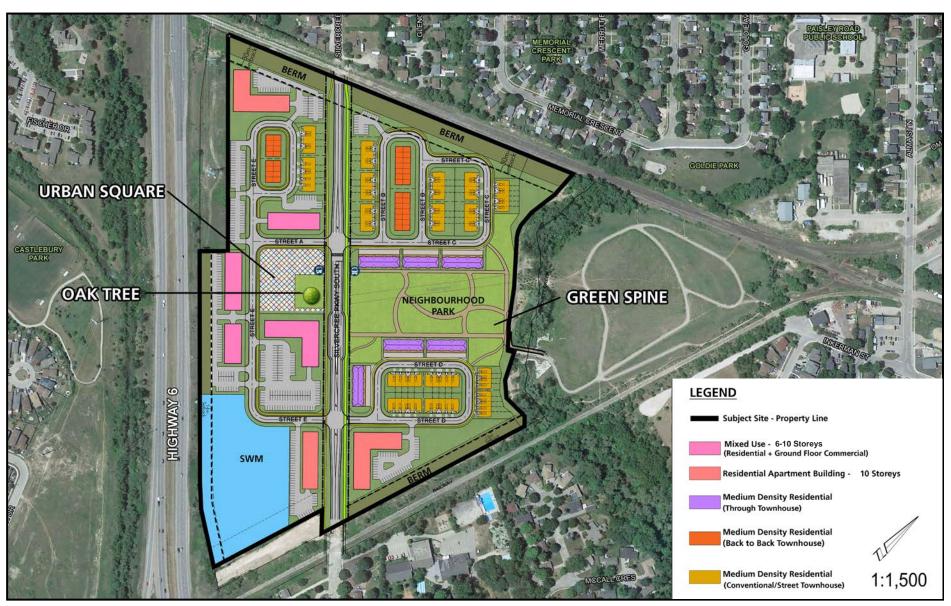
Silvercreek Parkway South is framed by apartment and mixed-use blocks to the west and apartment and townhouse blocks to the east. The proposed urban square and neighbourhood park can also be viewed and accessed from Silvercreek Parkway South. Three townhouse typologies are proposed throughout the site and include conventional townhouse units, through townhouse units and back-to-back townhouse units. Through townhouses will front onto the neighbourhood park and will provide natural surveillance. In addition to the neighbourhood park and urban square, an open space area is proposed at the south-east corner of the site and a stormwater management pond is proposed at the south-west corner of the site. This will provide residents with additional open space and natural features.

Transitions

The proposed development provides appropriate transitions between the townhouse, apartment and mixed-use blocks through the use of setbacks, separation distance and height distribution. The conventional, back to back townhouse units, which are 3 storeys in height, have a 6 metre front yard setback. The through townhouse units are also 3 storeys in height but have a 3.5 metre front yard setback. Townhouse units are predominately located within the eastern segment of the site providing a more sensitive transition to the proposed neighbourhood park and the existing open space (Howitt Park) to the east.

The proposed apartment and mixed-use blocks have a 6 metre front yard setback, which contributes to creating a consistent streetwall. The apartment and mixed-use blocks have ample separation distances to allow for solar access and privacy.

The proposed development has also accounted for appropriate transition to Hanlon Expressway (Highway 6) by providing a 14 metre setback. The site has also considers transitions to the CN railways to the north and south of the site by providing a 30 metre setback to the north and a 15 metre setback to the south, with a proposed berm on both sides.





2.0 PART TWO

Public Views and/or Public Vistas

While there are limited existing views and vistas into the proposed development, the preserved oak tree located within the proposed urban square is a significant focal point for this development. New sightlines will be introduced and will focus on the urban square, the neighbourhood park and the green connection to the existing open space (Howitt Park) to the east.

Parking

Parking for apartment and mixed-use buildings will be accommodated through surface parking lots in addition to underground parking. Where possible, surface parking lots will be located at the rear or side of the building and will be masked by built form. Surface parking lots will also be screen through landscaping.

Private parking will be provided for all townhouses. Conventional and back-to-back townhouse dwellings will have driveway access from the front of the units. Parking for through townhouses will be accessed from the rear.

Access, Accessibility Circulation, Loading, Storage

The main access to the site is from Silvercreek Parkway South. As previously mentioned, the existing barrier at the north of the site will be removed through a proposed underpass. The proposed streets are to be public as shown in Figure 4.

Pedestrian circulation will be accommodated through a series of sidewalks as well as the east-west green spine, as shown in Figure 4. Bike lanes and a 3m multi-use trail are envisioned along Silvercreek Parkway South in order to integrate with the proposed cycling network (Cycling Master Plan, Schedule 1). As previously mentioned, there are two bus stops less than a 15 minute walk from the site, which connect to the downtown core, allowing for route connections to the rest of the City. Loading and storage for the apartment and mixed-use buildings are proposed at the ground floor and will be screened from public views by situating them at the rear or side of the buildings and through appropriate landscaping.



Precedents of building entrances and public realm design for the mixed-use blocks



Precedents of landscaping and screening of surface parking lots





Figure 4: Circulation Network
mbtw III wai

2.0 PART TWO

Materials

The material and colour palettes will be determined at a later stage. The choice of materials and colours will be cohesive in design and will be sympathetic to the surrounding context.

Lighting and Signage

Street lights and signage will be provided where necessary, and locations will be determined at site plan stage.

It is envisioned that an emphasis on lighting will be provided along the main street of Silvercreek Parkway South, as well as along active frontages where through townhomes face the park and around the urban square.

Additional ground floor lighting will be provided for mixed-used buildings and surface parking lots as recommended through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

Architectural Treatment

Architectural styles and building materials will be determined at a later stage. The proposed development envisions cohesive and complementary architectural designs.

Enhanced architecture treatment will be proposed for the building façades facing the urban square, special attention will also be given to the ground floor treatment of mixed-use blocks to ensure they are easy to navigate and accessible. Tall buildings shall act as landmarks, incorporating a distinctive podium, middle and top. Architectural features will aim to create façades that will contribute to creating visual interest and a sense of place.

Additionally, the through townhouses fronting onto the park are also envisioned with enhanced architectural treatment.



Precedents of solar street lights



Precedents of enhanced architectural treatment and landscaping on the ground floor

2.2 Integration with the Public Realm

Integration with the Streetscape

The proposed development will thoughtfully design and coordinate the streetscape plans to seamlessly integrate with the proposed built form. Generally, the streetscape design along Silvercreek Parkway will be enhanced to create and emphasize the main street. Streetscape design within and surrounding the urban square and neighbourhood park will be designed to enhance the pedestrian realm while providing defined public and private spaces. Streetscaping at the ground-floor of mixed-use and apartment blocks will also consider enhancing the public realm through landscaping and street furniture.

Development Adjacent to River Corridors

The site does not contain or abut any rivers, however Howitt Creek is to the east of the proposed development and runs from north to south.

Publicly Accessible Open Space and Features

The proposed development introduces a number of publicly accessible open spaces, including a neighbourhood park and an urban square.

The urban square will act as a main focal point for the site. Situated centrally within the site, the urban square provides active uses and the space for flexible programming. The detailed design elements and materials have not yet been confirmed, however the urban square will have both soft and hard landscaping features and places for people to sit and gather. The urban square will also provide a connection to the neighbourhood park, which is located on the east side of Silvercreek Parkway South.

The neighbourhood park will feature active and passive recreational opportunities with a pedestrian path through the centre of the park. The proposed development envisions connecting the park to the existing open space to the east of the subject lands and Howitt Creek.

2.3 Sustainable Urban Design

General Environmental Sustainability

Although the project is not applying for green building certifications, it is designed with sustainability in mind. Sustainability measures for the proposed development include:

- A Walkable Complete Community
 - The Silvercreek Junction community has been planned at higher densities with mixed-uses surrounding green parkland. It is envisioned as a walkable community with places to live, shop and play.
- Low Impact Development
 - The recharge and infiltration of the rainwater on the community will be infiltrated to meet pre-development levels and create a water balance as much as is possible.
- Rehabilitation of a Gravel Pit
 - The site is a mined-out gravel pit and provides an excellent opportunity for groundwater recharge and enhancement of the urban fabric.
- Brownfield Site Rehabilitation
 - The landowner has rehabilitated this brownfield site and has a Record of Site Condition from the province.

Further low impact development (LID) measures to be discussed at Site Plan stage.



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