URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

PREPARED FOR:

Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment & Draft Plan of Subdivision

Guelph Innovation District Blocks 1&2

File no. 1405G

December 2025

Your Vision

Designed | Planned | Realized

MHBC PLANNING URBAN DESIGN & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Guelph Innovation District (GID) is a proposed compact, mixed-use community located in the City's east end. The GID is intended to function as an urban village and sustainable employment hub that supports the University of Guelph and Downtown Guelph. The GID is designed as a pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood community with a street-related built form that accommodates residential, commercial, and employment uses in low, medium, and high-density formats. The GID is bisected by the Eramosa River and the proposed development will protect this natural heritage resource while integrating it into the community.

The GID is broken up into four Block Plan areas, each with a unique identity. The Block Plan for Block 1 & 2 was approved by Council in September 2025.

Blocks 1 and 2 are located in the northwestern quadrant of the GID. Bounded roughly by Victoria Road South, Stone Road East, and the Eramosa River. The Block Plan envisions a vibrant, mixed-use development featuring a range of residential, commercial, and employment uses, complemented by a network of integrated open spaces and a fine-grained pedestrian and active transportation circulation network.

This report provides a series of Urban Design Guidelines for Blocks 1 and 2 (the "Site" see figure 1.1) and includes the following topics:

- Overview of the existing Site conditions and surrounding context;
- Development of a community vision, principles, and strategies;
- Overview of the proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision, including the land uses, height distribution, public realm and open spaces, ground floor activation, and transportation network;
- Design guidelines for the built form, various streets, and open spaces; and,
- Review of the implementation process.

This report is prepared as part of a complete application for Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, and Draft Plan of Subdivision, and must be read in conjunction with the following studies and drawings:

- Planning Justification Report, prepared by MHBC Planning Ltd.
- Sustainability Report, prepared by MHBC Planning Ltd.
- Environmental Impact Study, prepared by Natural Resources Solutions Inc.
- Functional Servicing Report, prepared by MTE
- Stormwater Management Report, prepared by MTE
- Transportation Impact Study, prepared by GHD

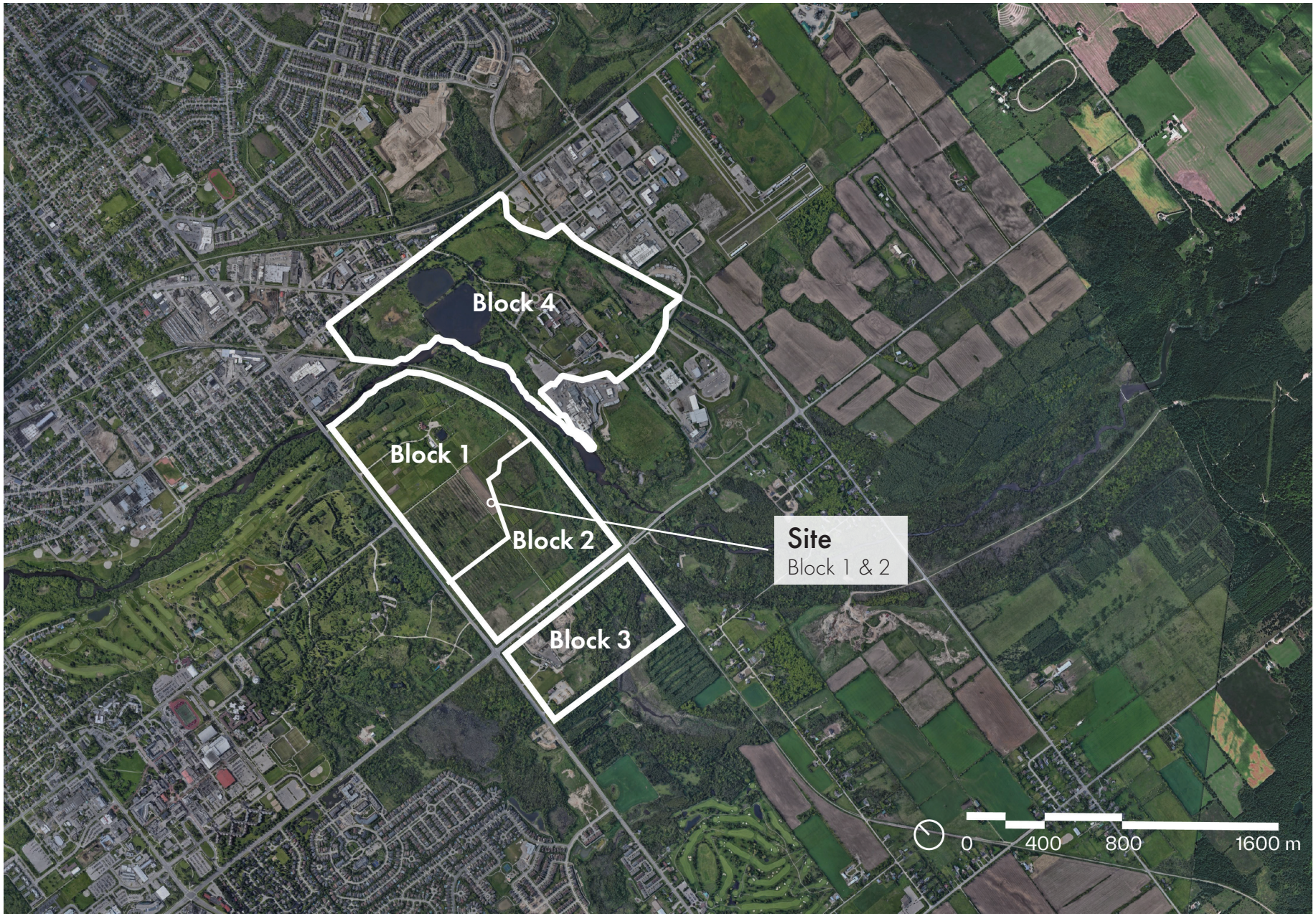


Figure 1.1 - Block 1&2 location and surrounding context (prepared by BIG)

1.2 VISION STATEMENT

The GID Block 1 and 2 subdivision is a Master Plan community planned for innovative, sustainable employment uses, integrated with residential neighbourhoods and an urban village mixed-use centre (see figure 1.2).

The goals of the subdivision are to:

- Create a landmark community in Guelph that will act as a hub for innovation, urban design, and sustainable mixed-use development. The GID Block 1 and 2 Block Plan envisioned the lands to be planned as a home for innovative, sustainable employment uses adjacent to an urban village composed of a mixed-use heart and residential uses.
- Create a healthy community, which will allow future residents to live, work and play in their community with access to innovative jobs, sustainable transportation, and housing options (see figure 1.3). Buildings in the GID Block 1 and 2 plan area will be oriented towards the street with sustainable building design and high-quality urban design elements and are planned to take various forms with a range of densities. The GID Block 1 and 2 lands have been designed to include a range of housing options to provide a variety of levels of affordability and unit sizes for future residents. The Draft Plan of Subdivision provides opportunities for individuals and families to call GID their home at various life stages. The subdivision provides employment opportunities for GID residents and residents of Guelph at large, drawing in talent from beyond the City limits and increasing the range of employment opportunities in the City.
- Protect the natural and cultural heritage environment. The development will integrate urban living and preservation of the natural environment by creating strong visual and physical links to the woodlands and Eramosa River Valley to the east. Views of the surrounding cultural heritage environment will also be maintained and showcased to anchor the innovative GID community within the broader City context.
- Transportation connections are envisioned between the proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision and other areas of the City through active transportation connections, transit connections, and road connections. The GID Block 1 and 2 lands are anchored by four nodes which act as gathering spaces and important aspects of the public realm, creating a clear identity for the subdivision through innovative urban design.

The vision and goals support the Secondary Plan vision, which is a compact, mixed-use community that serves as a hub for innovative, sustainable employment uses.

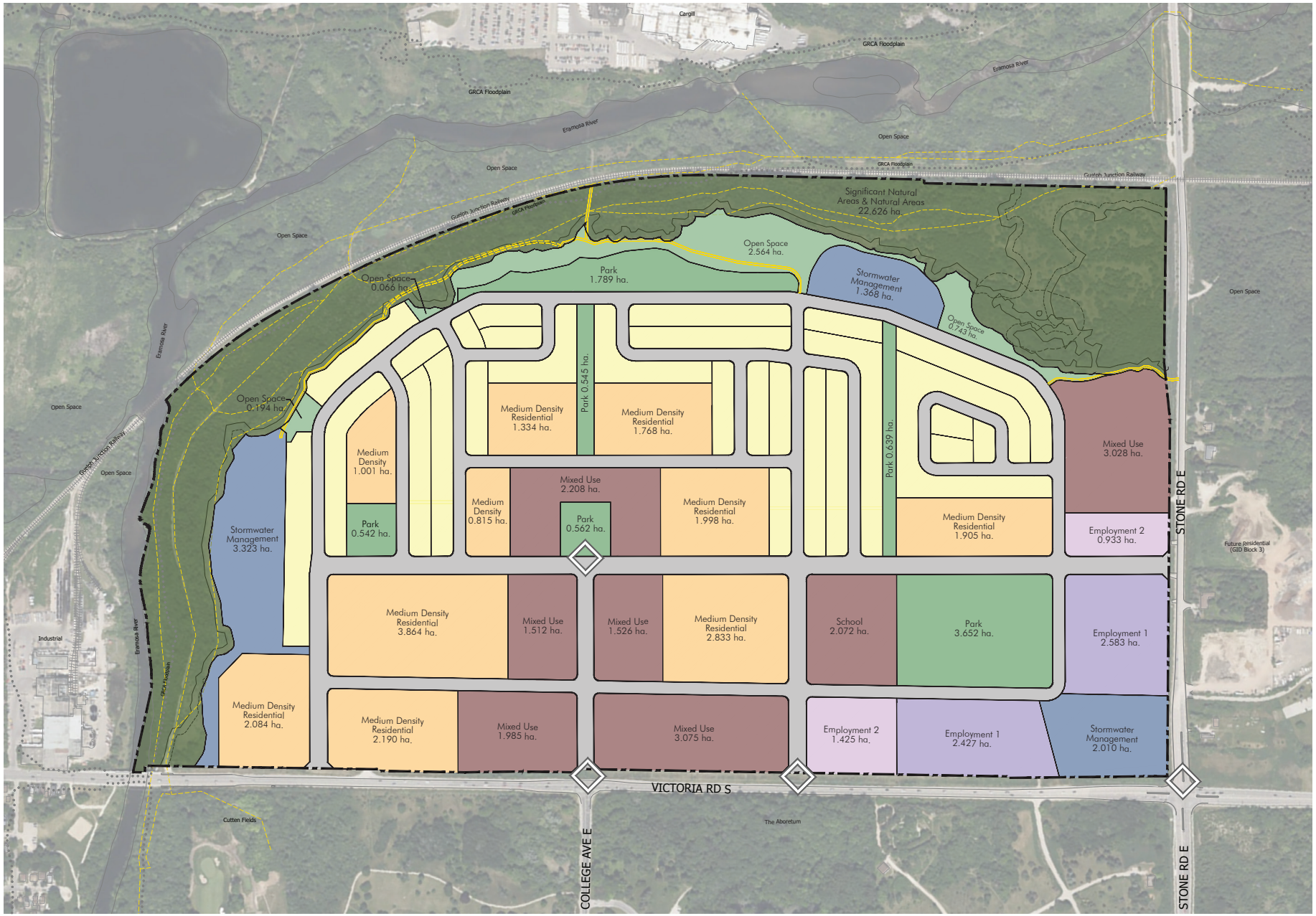


Figure 1.2 - The approved Block Plan

Figure 1.3 - Conceptual Urban Square (prepared by BIG)

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The Site is approximately 116 hectares in area and is bordered by Victoria Road South, Stone Road East, and the Guelph Junction Railway (see Figure 2.1-2.3).

Historically, the Site housed part of the University of Guelph's Agroforestry Research Centre. The Site currently supports low-impact agricultural uses including planting rows, open fields, and administration and storage buildings in the northern sector. The northern and eastern edges of the Site include the Eramosa River corridor and naturalized valley lands.

The Site is surrounded by a mix of residential, employment, and open space uses. The lands immediately surrounding the Site are rural and open space in character, including the Eramosa River valley to the east and north, Guelph Arboretum lands to the west, and existing rural residential and commercial uses to the south.

Topographically, the Site has an elevation change of approximately 40 metres, falling from 345 metres from the central high point to 318 metres to the Eramosa River and rail corridor. The upland areas slope approximately 15m from Victoria Road and 10m from Stone Road East to high points at the Site's center that provide views of Downtown, the University, and surrounding natural heritage lands. Surface water generally drains downslope toward Victoria Road South, the Eramosa River and adjacent rural properties.

The existing landscapes include primarily agricultural and woodland areas, owing to its previous use as the University of Guelph's experimental planting grounds.

Figure 2.1 - View of the Site from Victoria Road South showing existing agricultural uses

Figure 2.2 - View of the Site from Stone Road East showing the transition to the Eramosa River valley lands

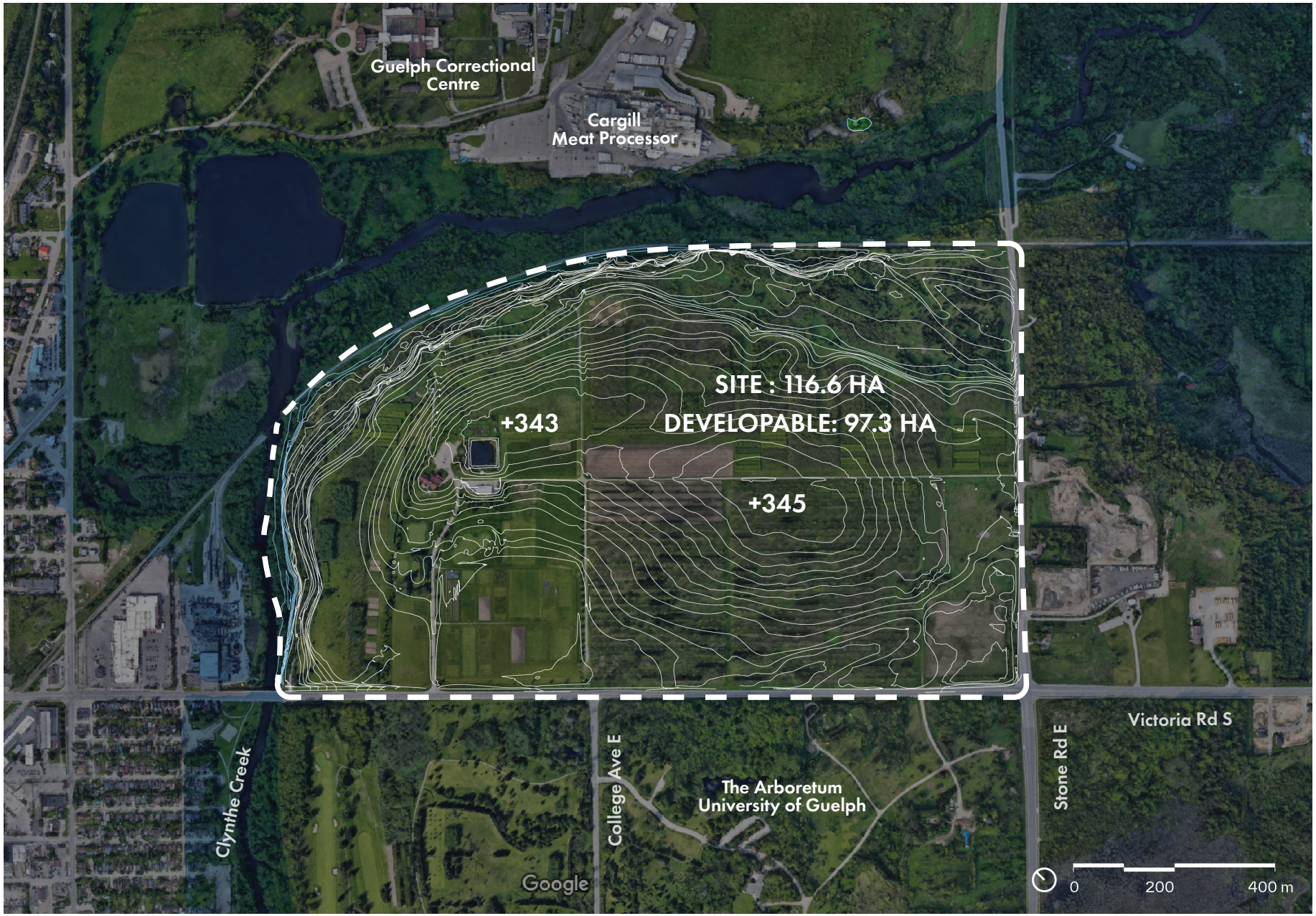


Figure 2.3 - Existing Site conditions (prepared by BIG)

2.2 SURROUNDING CONTEXT

Built Form

The Site is situated near the edge of the City of Guelph Urban Boundary and is largely surrounded by rural uses and environmental lands (see Figure 2.4). To the north lies the Guelph Junction Railway corridor and Eramosa River valley. Further north is designated Significant Natural Areas & Natural Areas and lands subject to approved Secondary Plans, forming the future site of GID Block 4. To the east, the landscape continues to be defined by the railway corridor and river valley, with institutional and industrial uses beyond. Immediately south of the Site are the lands planned for GID Block 3. The lands further to the south lie beyond the urban boundary (east of Victoria Road South) and are primary environmental, with small patches of agricultural land. To the west, across Victoria Road South, is the University of Guelph's Arboretum nature reserve, beyond which are the University of Guelph and low-rise residential areas.

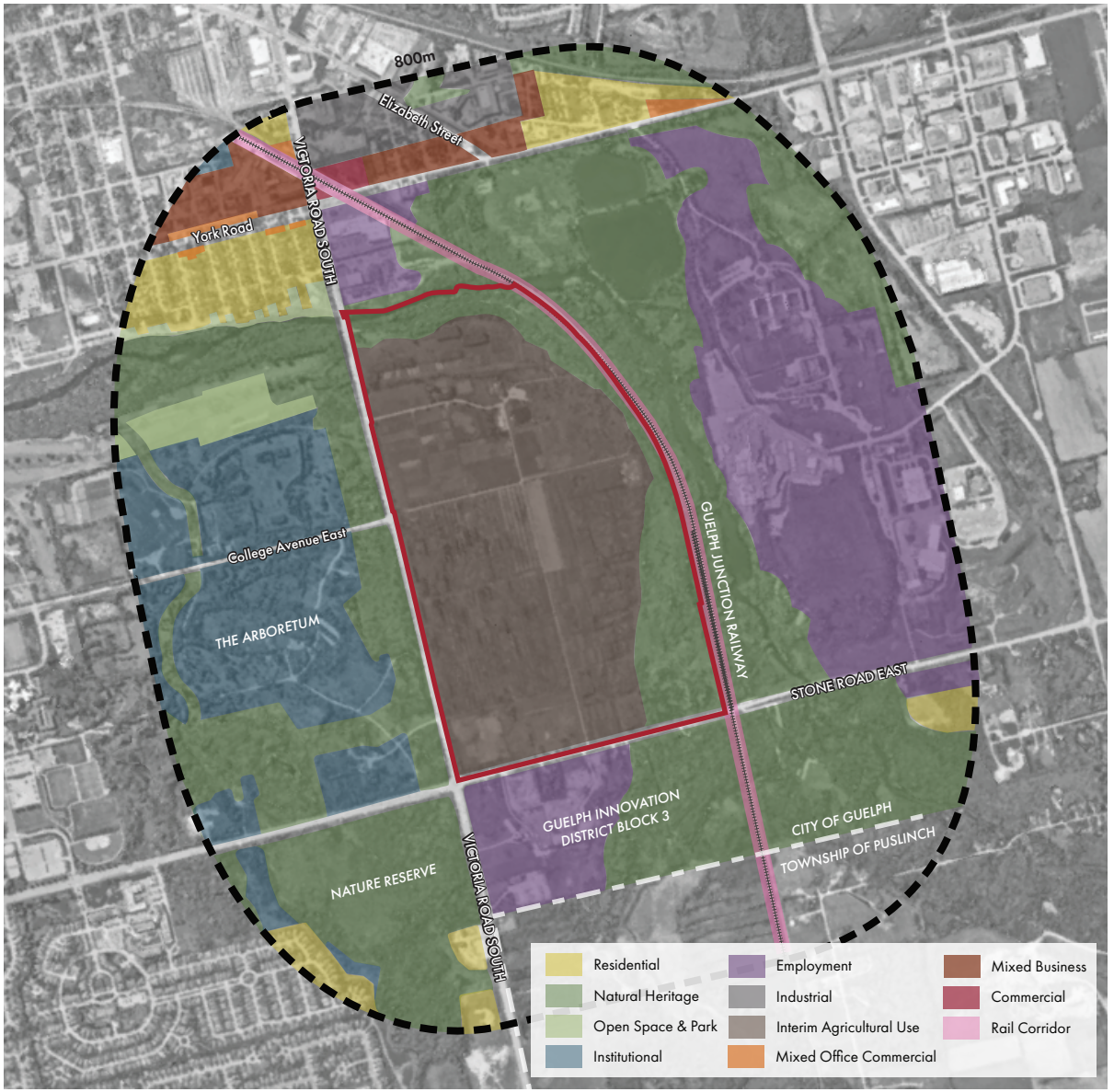


Figure 2.4 - Surrounding land uses

Circulation

The surrounding road network and block structure reflect the pattern of the city's historic concession lots (see Figure 2.5). Victoria Road South and Stone Road East form the primary circulation framework for the area, functioning as arterial roads with two-lane cross sections and on-street bicycle lanes. Within this framework, the GID Secondary Plan introduces a more connected internal street network that will link Blocks 1 through 3 directly to Victoria Road South, Stone Road East, and proposed College Avenue East.

Transit service to the Site is currently provided by Guelph Transit routes operating along Victoria Road South and Stone Road East, offering direct connections to the University of Guelph and surrounding neighbourhoods. Regional transit is provided from GO Transit's Kitchener Line at Guelph Central Station, approximately 2 kilometres west of the Site, providing connections to Kitchener and Toronto. The GID Secondary Plan envisions additional transit stops along Victoria Road South, Stone Road East, and internal to the Site, enhancing transit coverage and supporting increased ridership.

Active transportation options in the area are influenced by the Site's location at the City's edge and the absence of a fine-grained street grid. Victoria Road South and Stone Road East feature painted bicycle lanes with buffered sections. Sidewalks are also provided to the west and south, with no current connections to the Site beyond the intersection of Victoria Road South and Stone Road East. Recreational trails, including the Guelph Radial Line Trail, intersect nearby, offering walking and cycling routes.

Figure 2.5 - Surrounding circulation networks (prepared by BIG)

Open Spaces & Natural Heritage

The Site is seamlessly connected to Guelph's Natural Heritage System, which spans the Eramosa River Valley and its tributaries (see Figure 2.6). This corridor, defined by its valley edge, is home to woodlands, wetlands, and diverse wildlife habitats. Running through the valley, the Guelph Radial Line Trail follows the historic rail line, offering opportunities for passive and active recreation and nature appreciation.

Across the River Valley to the north lies two municipal parks, Eramosa River Park, and Royal City Jacees Park. Eramosa River Park is accessible from Victoria Road South and Florence Lane and features a large open space and shade structure for seating. Royal City Jacees Park sits along the Eramosa River and is a large open space that offers views of the river.

Directly west of the Site, across Victoria Road South, lies the University of Guelph Arboretum – a publicly accessible green space spanning over 160 hectares. It features gardens, walking trails, woodlands, wetlands, and meadows, providing a natural retreat within the city.

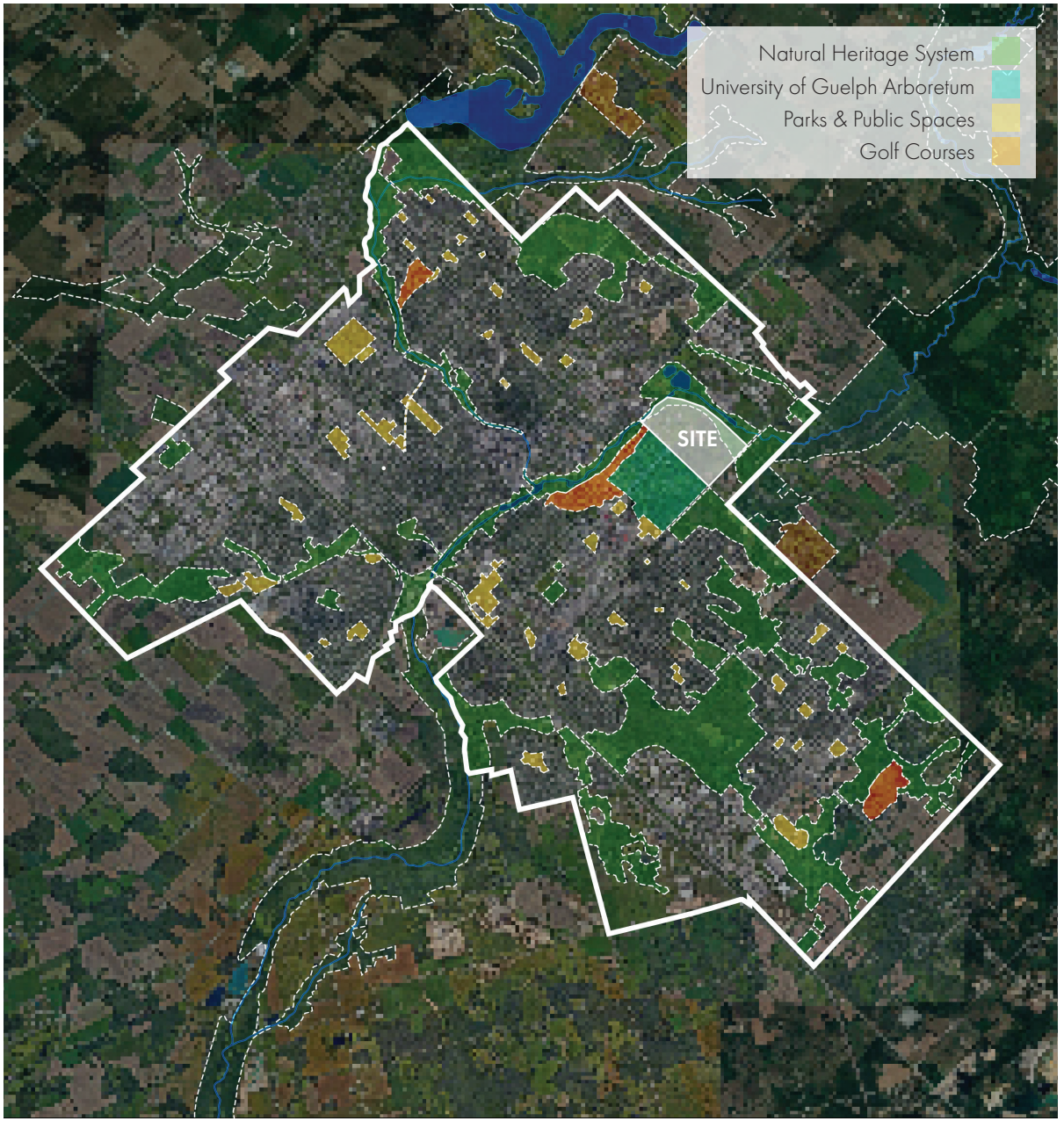


Figure 2.6 - Surrounding open spaces and natural heritage lands (prepared by BIG)

Local Future Plans

The Site is nested within an area of Guelph that is set to experience long-term growth and development (see Figure 2.7). Surrounding it are three key corridors and a community node, fostering economic and residential expansion. Several major projects will shape the area's future:

York/Elizabeth Project: Supports business, commercial, and industrial employment while promoting residential intensification.

Downtown Guelph Central Business District: Strengthens the historic downtown's economic vitality, cultural attractions, and transit connections.

Community Focused Area: Prioritizes high-density housing, transit access, trail networks, and essential services.

The University of Guelph: Plans include increasing student housing options near campus to accommodate future growth.

Figure 2.7 - Local future plans surrounding the Site

2.3 POLICY CONTEXT

Development within the Guelph Innovation District is regulated by the Official Plan, Secondary Plan, and Urban Design Manual. The Block Plan has taken into consideration the following policies and guidelines:

Official Plan

Chapter 8 of the City of Guelph Official Plan contains urban design policies to guide the development of complete communities. Specific policies relate to sustainable urban design, public realm, landmarks and public views, gateways, built form, transition, parking, circulation, signage, lighting, landscaping, safety, accessibility, urban squares, and public art. Specific direction surrounding land use, road networks, and open space systems are deferred to the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan.

Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan

The Secondary Plan (Official Plan Amendment 54&80) establishes a detailed planning framework for the GID, including a vision, principles, objectives, policies, and schedules. Blocks 1 and 2 are located within the northwest quadrant of the GID. The six principles cover a range of topics that enable the vision of the GID as a compact, mixed-use community that protects natural heritage resources. The principles are:

Principle 1: Protect What is Valuable - Creating a place that respects the Natural Heritage System and cultural heritage resources, making citizens stewards of the resources for current and future generations.

Principle 2: Create Sustainable and Energy Efficient Infrastructure - Building infrastructure that is efficient, focuses on renewable energy sources, and supports an integrated energy distribution system that enables a carbon free lifestyle.

Principle 3: Establish a Multi-modal Pedestrian-focused Mobility System - Making connections that serve the community, allow current and future generations to walk or cycle to daily needs, and provide convenient transit services to access broader activities.

Principle 4: Create an Attractive and Memorable Place – Creating meaningful places to bring people, activities, environment(s) and ideas together, creating a sense of arrival and inclusion.

Principle 5: Promote a Diversity of Land Uses and Densities - Mixing it up to create vibrant, resilient, and efficient spaces that make it possible, practicable, and beneficial to reduce our ecological footprint.

Principle 6: Grow Innovative Employment Opportunities – Grow innovative employment opportunities that support the knowledge-based innovation sector, within a compact, mixed-use community. In addition, Section 11.2 of the Secondary Plan provides a number of specific policies related to natural heritage, cultural heritage, energy, servicing, stormwater, mobility, the public realm, land use, and built form.

Urban Design Manual

The Guelph Urban Design Manual implements the policy direction of the Guelph Official Plan by providing a set of specific urban design guidelines. Volume 2, Part 3 of the guidelines contains policy directions to be applied to developments city-wide, as well as specific policy direction for residential, mixed use, and commercial developments. Further, Volume 3C establishes standards for mid-rise and townhouse forms, including site design, mid-rise buildings, and townhouses.

3.0 COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

3.1 COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES & DESIGN STRATEGIES

The community vision is grounded in the Secondary Plans six guiding principles, each addressing a core element of the Block Plan, ranging from vibrant spaces and connectivity to employment and environmental sustainability.

The Guelph Innovation District (GID) is a compact, mixed-use community that straddles the Eramosa River in the City's east end. The GID will serve predominately as the home of innovative, sustainable employment uses integrated with residential neighbourhoods and an urban village connecting residential and compatible employment uses.

The area is designed to be an identifiable, pedestrian oriented space, with street-related built form that supports a mix of medium and high density commercial, residential and employment uses. Strong land-use and economic connections are planned among the GID as an innovation centre; the University of Guelph as a research and knowledge hub; and the Downtown as the civic and cultural heart of the City, together forming a University-Downtown-GID innovation network. The GID is both dynamic and familiar, as it pioneers a new model for planning and urban development, while celebrating Guelphs heritage through its river valley, scenic views, and the historic Reformatory Complex.

The GID is envisioned as an attractive, human-scaled, pedestrian-focused community. It delivers a mix of uses at transit-supportive densities and offers meaningful opportunities to live, work, shop, play and learn. It safeguards and integrates natural and cultural heritage features, as well as incorporates sustainable buildings and infrastructure, where possible. It creates essential transportation connections while prioritizing pedestrians, cyclists and transit users, and seamlessly integrates into the broader fabric of the city.

3.2 OPPORTUNITIES

The Draft Plan of Subdivision leverages key opportunities presented by the Site's location, connectivity, landscape, and topography to create a dynamic and well-integrated community.

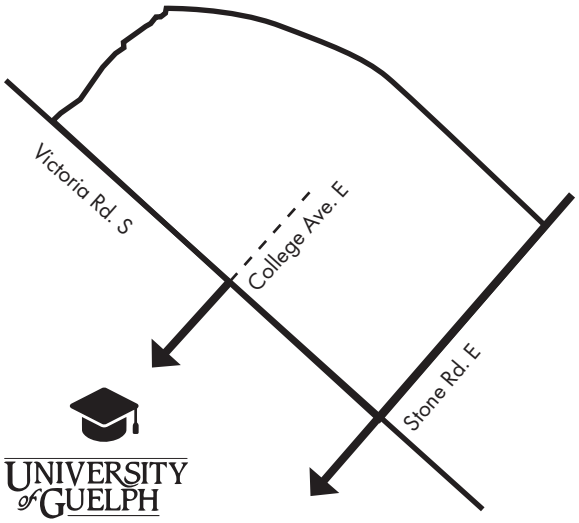
University Connection – The extension of College Avenue East into the Site serves as a gateway, strengthening connections to the University of Guelph to the east.

Permeable Urban Edge – A network of small blocks and new buildings will establish a pedestrian-friendly urban edge along Victoria Road South and Stone Road East.

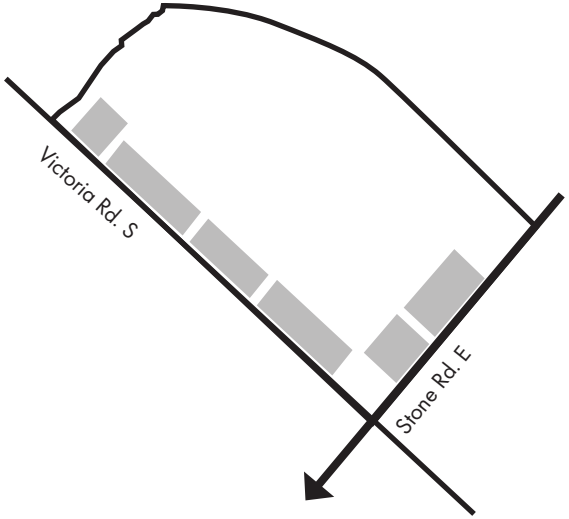
Nature Preservation – The valley lands on the eastern edge of the Site are designated for conservation, with lower-density development along the perimeter to maintain ecological integrity.

Trail Connectivity – New connections to the existing trail network will enhance recreational opportunities and active transportation options.

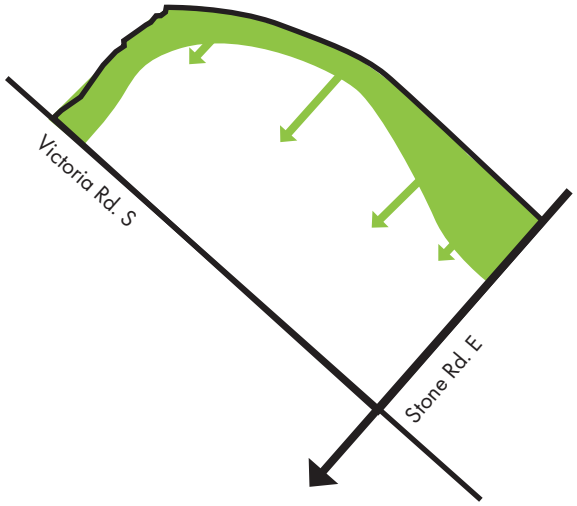
Stormwater Management – Strategically placed stormwater management areas will accommodate the Site's natural topography while creating open space linkages. These opportunities form the foundation of the Draft Plan of Subdivision, shaping a vibrant, mixed-use community inclusive of a mixed-use heart, innovation zone, neighbourhoods, a variety of open spaces, and a fine-grained circulation network.



UNIVERSITY CONNECTION
Guelph University Connection through College Ave.

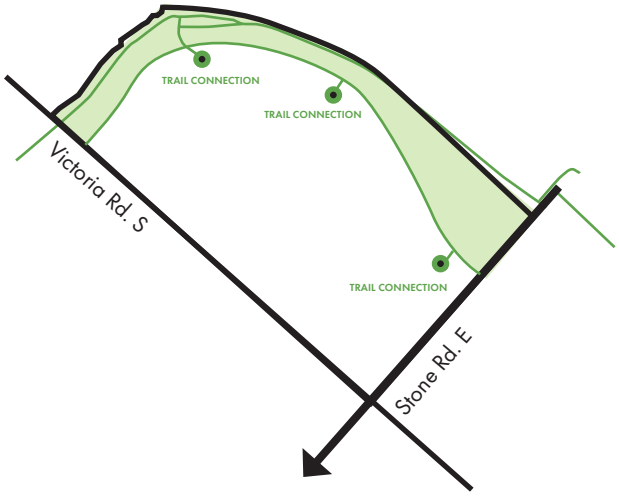


PERMEABLE URBAN EDGE
With small blocks and New buildings along Victoria Rd. South and Stone Rd



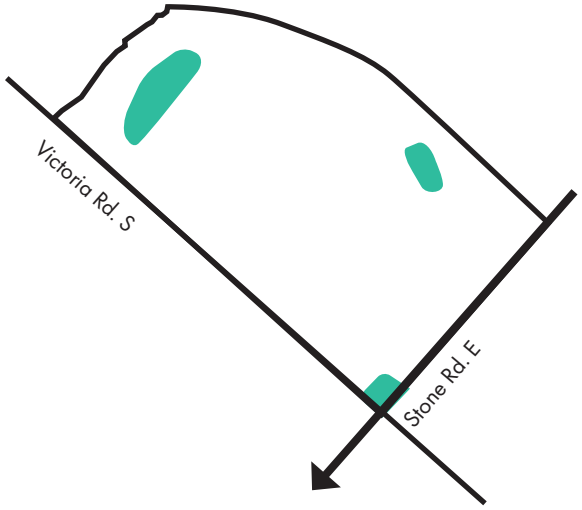
NATURE PRESERVATION

The valley lands at the eastern edge of the Site are reserved for conservation purposes, with lower density development along the periphery.



TRAIL CONNECTION

Connections to the existing trail network provide opportunities for recreation.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater locations accommodate the existing topography and provide open space linkages.

3.3 LAND USE

The Block Plan and implementing Draft Plan of Subdivision is composed of four land use categories, each with a distinct purpose and function (see Figure 3.1). The land use categories will ensure that surrounding land uses are compatible, and distinct neighbourhoods are created to allow co-location of supportive uses.

Mixed-Use

The Mixed-Use lands are designed to support a dynamic blend of uses that are safe, coherent, vibrant and comfortable. Permitted uses include medium and high density residential, office and administrative spaces, cultural and community uses, educational institutions, entertainment and recreational uses, and service uses.

A new school for the Upper Grand District School Board is also proposed in the Mixed-Use area. The school could potentially take the form of a mixed-use office and education building and has been co-located with the proposed community park. The school has been centrally located near the Site's low, medium and high-density residential areas.

Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential designation primarily accommodates multi-unit housing forms, including townhomes, stacked townhouses and apartments.

Low Density Residential

The Low-Density Residential Blocks offer a variety of housing types, including single-detached, semi-detached, and townhouse dwellings. A fine-grained road network will enhance connectivity while creating view corridors to the surrounding natural and cultural heritage features. Building heights will gradually decrease away from key nodes and collector roads, with the lowest heights positioned adjacent to the natural heritage system to maximize opportunity for views across the Site.

Innovation Employment

The Innovation Employment area, primarily located within Block 2 of the Block Plan, is designed to support knowledge-based industries and innovative employment uses. Permitted uses include office and administrative facilities, research and development centres, hotel and convention facilities, entertainment and recreational commercial spaces, and the assembly and manufacturing of products requiring ongoing research and development. Ancillary retail and complementary uses such as restaurants, financial institutions, medical services, fitness centers, open space and recreation facilities, and childcare centers - are also permitted. Development can support a combination of street-related and campus-style formats to foster a dynamic work environment.

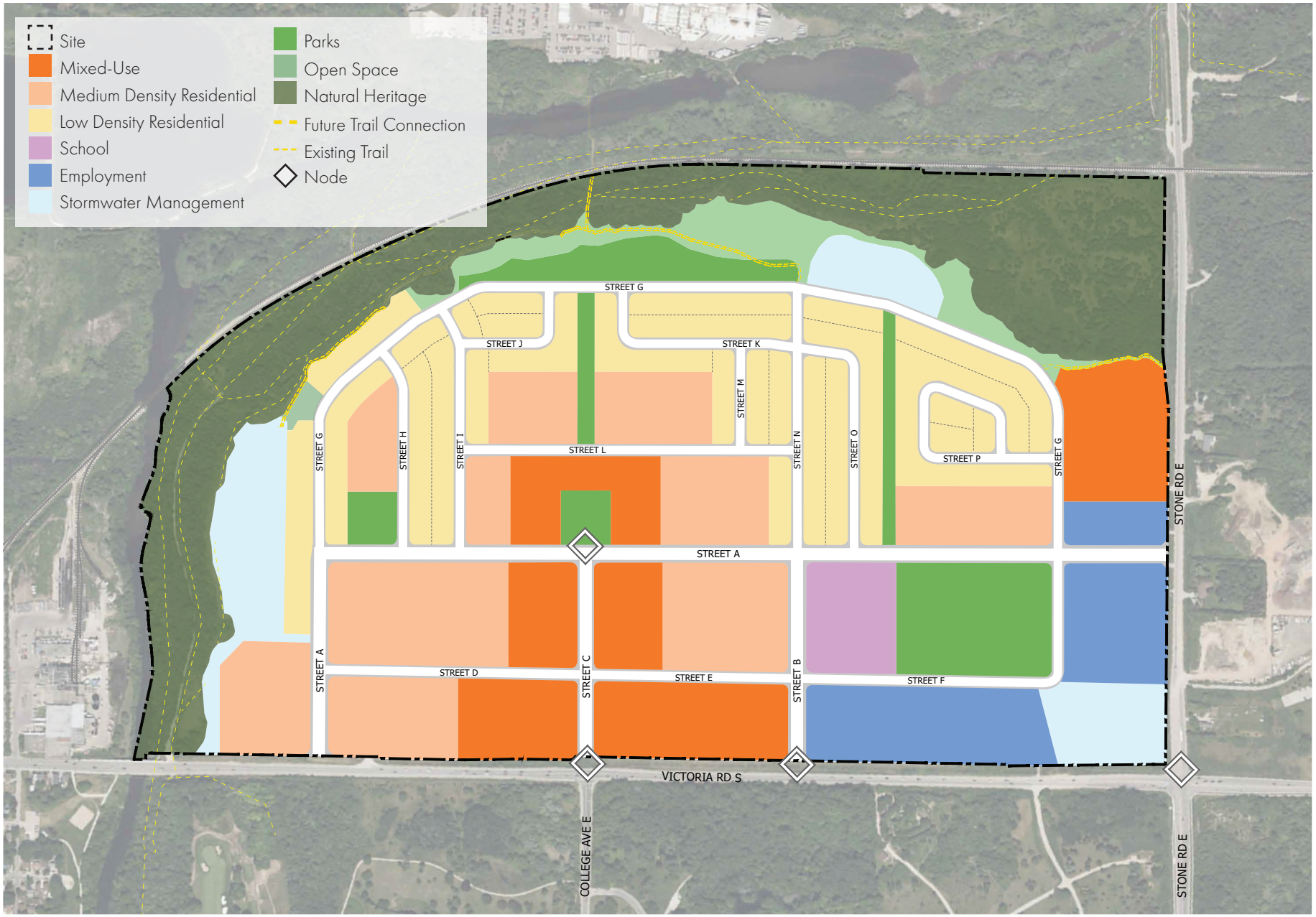


Figure 3.1 - Proposed Land Uses

3.4 BUILT FORM

The subdivisions tallest buildings are in the mixed-use neighbourhood, with building heights transitioning down towards the edge of the abutting natural heritage lands (see Figure 3.2). The proposed building height transition creates a landmark entrance to the community from Victoria Road South and the lower densities around the edge of the Site maintain views of the natural heritage system to the north and east.

2-6 Storeys
6 storey built forms are located in the employment areas at the intersection of Victoria Road South and Stone Road East. Buildings will be designed in accordance with their planned user. Ground floors will feature a high degree of transparency to create interaction with the public realm where attainable.

2-6 storey residential buildings vary from single detached dwellings to low rise apartment buildings. The lowest building heights will generally be located along the natural heritage lands to maintain views of the natural heritage system.

2-10 Storeys
2-10 storey building areas will provide a transition between the highest and lowest building heights in Block Plan. This will allow a range of built forms from cluster townhouse units to apartment buildings.

Residential uses, along with the school, are envisioned for these areas, but these areas are directly adjacent to mixed-use areas where future residents will be able to access facilities and services for their daily needs. The 2-10 storey height areas will allow for development blocks to include a range of residential built forms to accommodate a range of end user needs and lifestyles. Higher building heights will generally be adjacent to the 3-12 and 3-18 storey areas, with buildings in the lower end of the height class oriented towards the 2-6 storey areas.

3-12 Storeys
3-12 storey buildings will be located along Victoria Road South and Stone Road East. The primary built form will be apartment and mixed-use buildings, but medium density residential built forms including various types of townhouses and live-work units are also permitted. Where buildings front a public street, the ground floor will be designed with a high degree of transparency and prominent building entrances.

The 3-12 storey built form will provide a range of building heights and densities, to act as a transition from the tallest building heights in the mixed-use core, and the lower building heights along the edge of the natural heritage system.

The higher densities are proposed on arterial and collector roads to provide enhanced access to transportation facilities including transit and active transportation routes. Uses in these areas will be primarily residential with supporting commercial and community uses. The upper stories of buildings will be stepped back from the public street to create a pleasant public realm.

3-18 Storeys
The block plans tallest buildings will be 3-18 storeys. These buildings will be in the mixed-use core of the Site along the extension of College Avenue East. Most buildings will be apartments and mixed-use, but medium density residential built forms including various types of townhouses and live-work units are also permitted. The first storey of buildings along College Avenue East will include commercial, incorporating high transparency and frequent entrances where possible. The upper stories of buildings will be stepped back from the street where appropriate to create a human scale pedestrian realm.

Ground Floor Activation

Ground floor activation in the GID includes primary and secondary activation. Primary activation frontages occur along the College Avenue East extension and within the mixed-use core. These areas will feature high transparency, enhanced design, and predominately commercial, public facing uses to support strong pedestrian activity. Patios, display areas, and weather-protective elements will extend commercial activity into the public realm. Secondary activation frontages, located along collector roads and key-public-private edges, also emphasise transparency and strong design but allow a more varied mix of ground floor uses. While commercial uses are encouraged, employment and residential uses will also be present. Prominent entrances and large windows will help maintain an active and visually engaging streetscape.

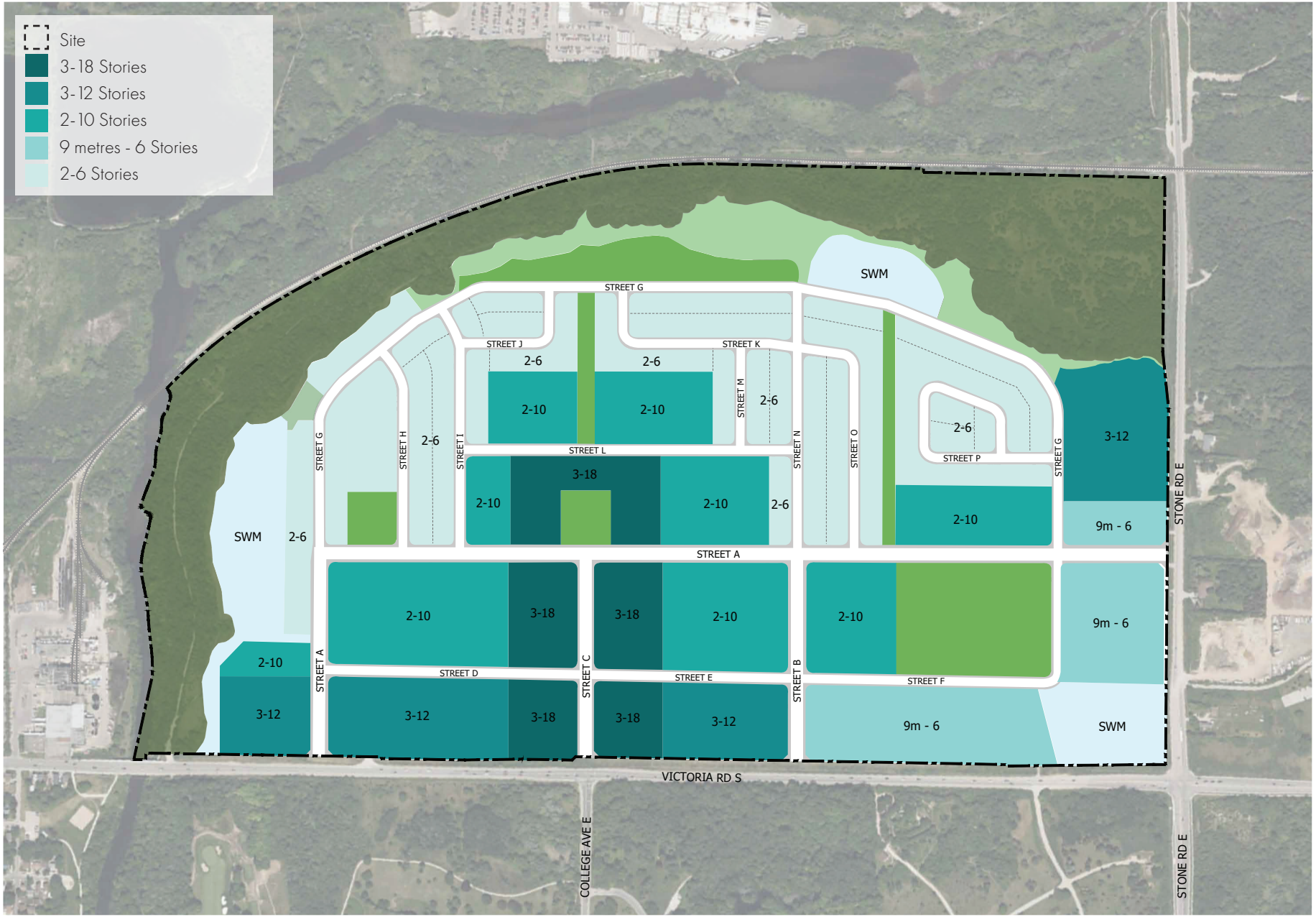


Figure 3.2 - Proposed building height hierarchy, showing the tallest buildings in the mixed-use district, with building heights transitioning down towards the edge of the abutting natural heritage lands

3.5 STREETSCAPE & CIRCULATION

The Draft Plan of Subdivision includes three street types: arterial, collector, and local streets (see Figure 3.3). Existing arterials, Victoria Road South and Stone Road East, will be transformed into urban boulevards, while new collectors will link College Avenue East with Block 3 to enhance internal circulation. A fine-grained network of local streets will create pedestrian-oriented blocks that support a walkable and integrated community.

The design of the circulation network follows the pedestrian-focused complete streets vision established in the GID Secondary Plan. The two arterial roads will be reimagined as complete streets that balance mobility, active transportation, and environmental integrity. Victoria Road South will feature a four-lane cross section, dedicated bicycle lanes and sidewalks, and landscape buffering to create a natural transition from the Arboretum to the future community. Stone Road East will adopt a similar four-lane cross-section, pedestrian-focused profile, with opportunities for cycling infrastructure to be refined during detailed design.

Proposed collector roads will use a 24-metre and 26-metre right-of-way to create complete streets with three vehicular lanes, on-street parking, buffered bike lanes, planting strips, and wide sidewalks. Where retail is proposed along these boulevards, the buildings will feature minimal setbacks to encourage an active and engaging streetscape.

The local roads through the Block have a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, employment, and park frontages and should be designed to reflect the adjacent land uses and facilities. These streets follow an 18-meter right-of-way with two vehicle lanes, on-street parking, planting strips, and sidewalks, fostering a walkable and connected neighbourhood.

Together, these street types will establish a clear hierarchy that balances mobility, public realm quality, and environmental performance.

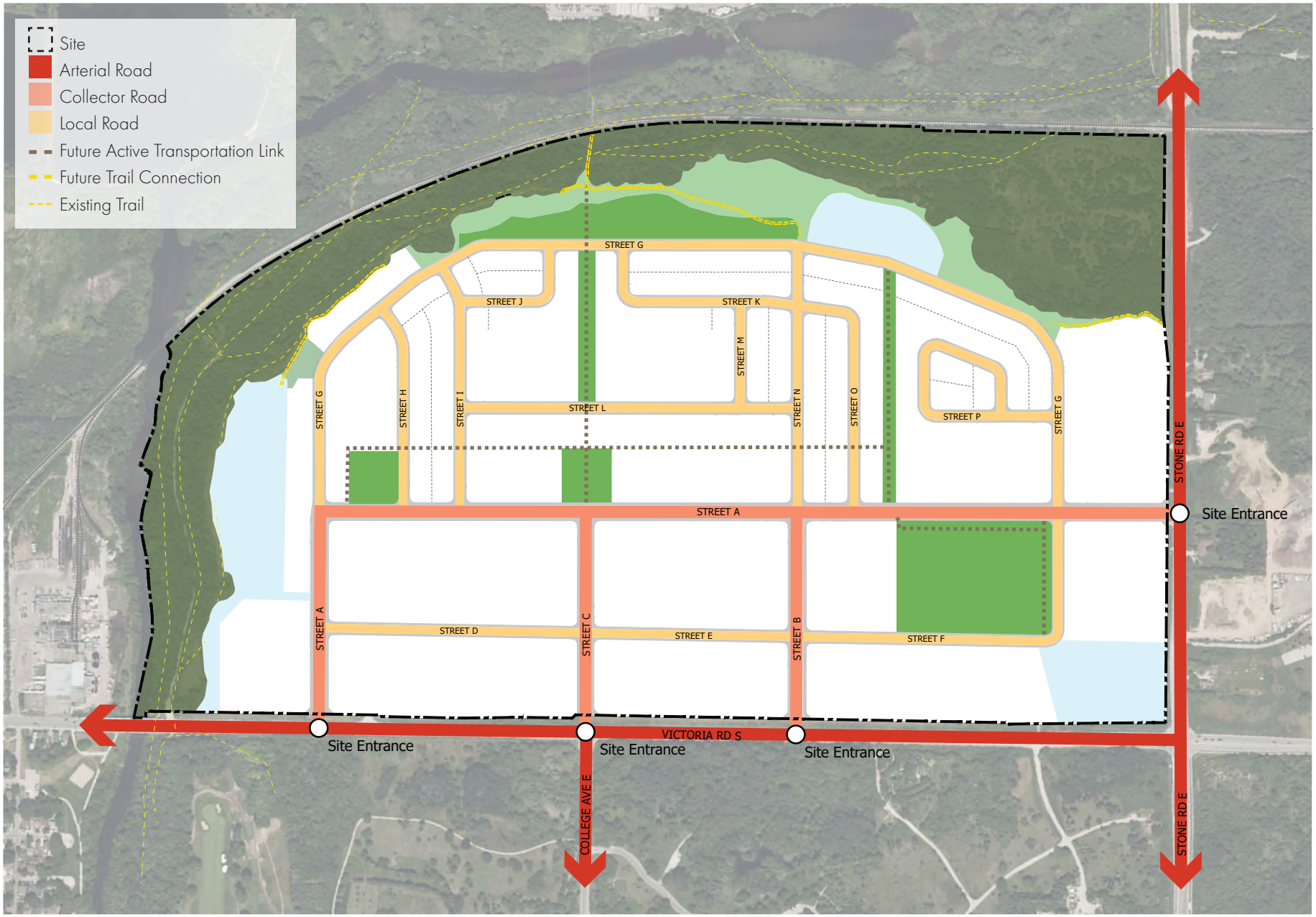


Figure 3.3 - Streetscape and circulation hierarchy

3.6 TRANSIT NETWORK

The Draft Plan of Subdivision has been designed to accommodate the extension of transit service throughout the Site (see Figure 3.4). A conceptual network is illustrated to identify the potential future bus route and stops on the proposed collector roads. The proposed transit network will link the subdivision to Downtown, the University of Guelph, and the city at large.

Transit service is proposed as a north-south bus route along Victoria Road South, with an internal connection to the Site via New Street A. Stops are proposed at the collector road intersections, ensuring all residents are within a 5–10-minute walk to transit. The route is also positioned to allow a future southward extension along New Street A to serve the GID Block 3 lands.

Transit stops are concentrated in higher-density areas to support ridership and efficient service. All stops will meet Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements and incorporate lighting, seating, and landscaping to enhance safety and comfort. Where appropriate, tactile and visual materials will clearly delineate the transit stops in the public realm. Bicycle parking and storage facilities will be provided at transit stops to enable multi-modal trips.

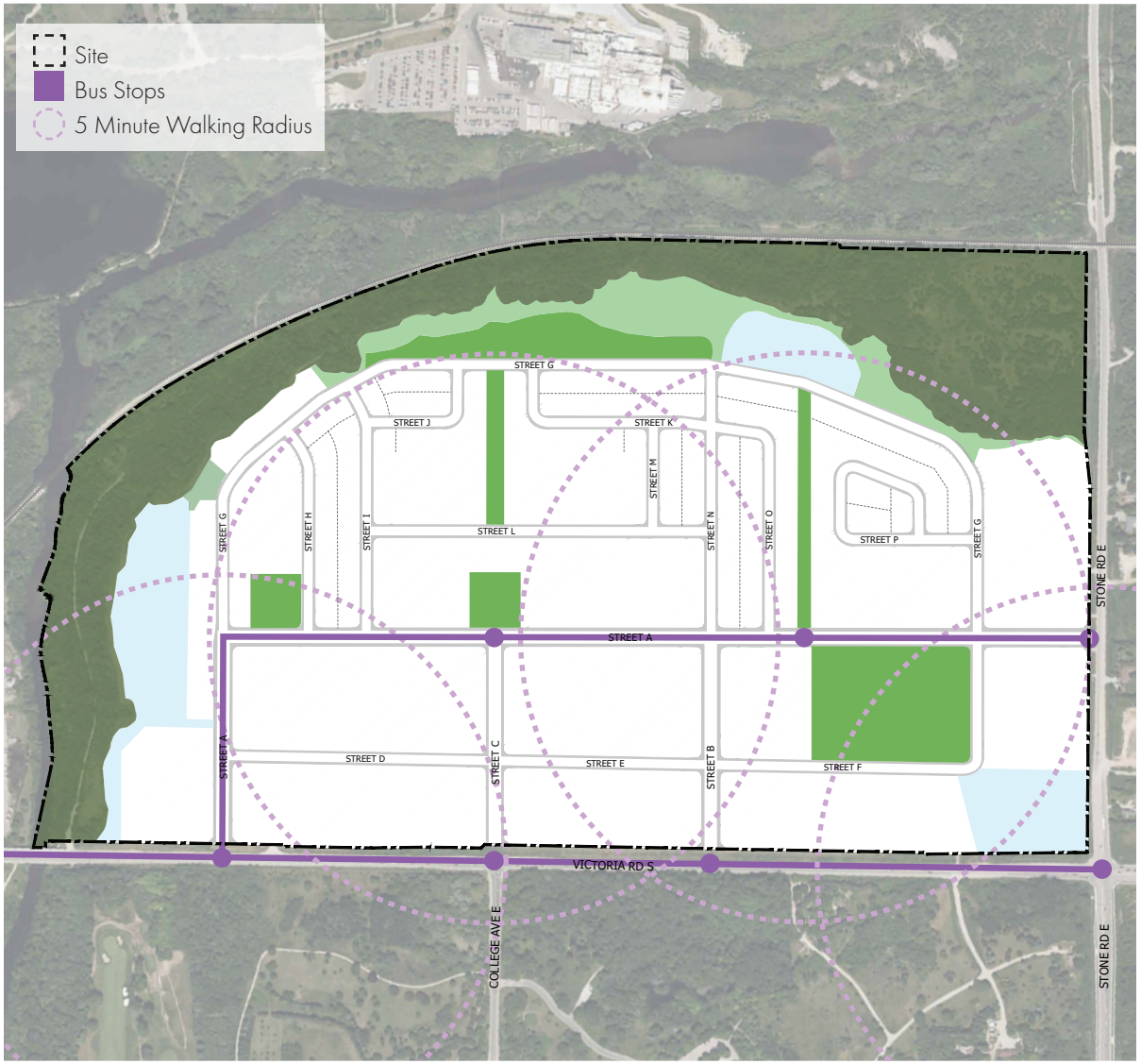


Figure 3.4 - Proposed transit network for the Draft Plan of Subdivision, including bus stop locations

3.7 PUBLIC REALM & OPEN SPACE

The Draft Plan of Subdivision establishes a connected public realm structured around a hierarchy of parks and open spaces (see Figure 3.5). The eastern portion of the Site has been reserved for natural heritage protection, preserving the valley lands, woodlands, and wetlands associated with the Eramosa River. Across the community, six parks, three stormwater management facilities, five walkway blocks, and three designated open space areas create a diverse and integrated open space network.

Parks are positioned centrally and along the valley edge, offering opportunities for both active and passive recreation. The community park, Urban Square, and neighbourhood parks will vary in size and are programed to support a wide range of recreational and cultural needs while establishing a shared sense of place.

Pedestrian-friendly streets with bike lanes and a continuous tree canopy will form the foundation of the connecting network between the open spaces. Further, connected pathways throughout the walkway blocks ensure a pedestrian-friendly scale, providing porosity and creating opportunities for shortcuts and exploration.

Stormwater management facilities are located at the Sites low points of the valley edge and the intersection of Victoria Road South and Stone Road East, taking advantage of the natural grades. The design of the GID open space network will have regard for retention of mature trees and hedgerows.

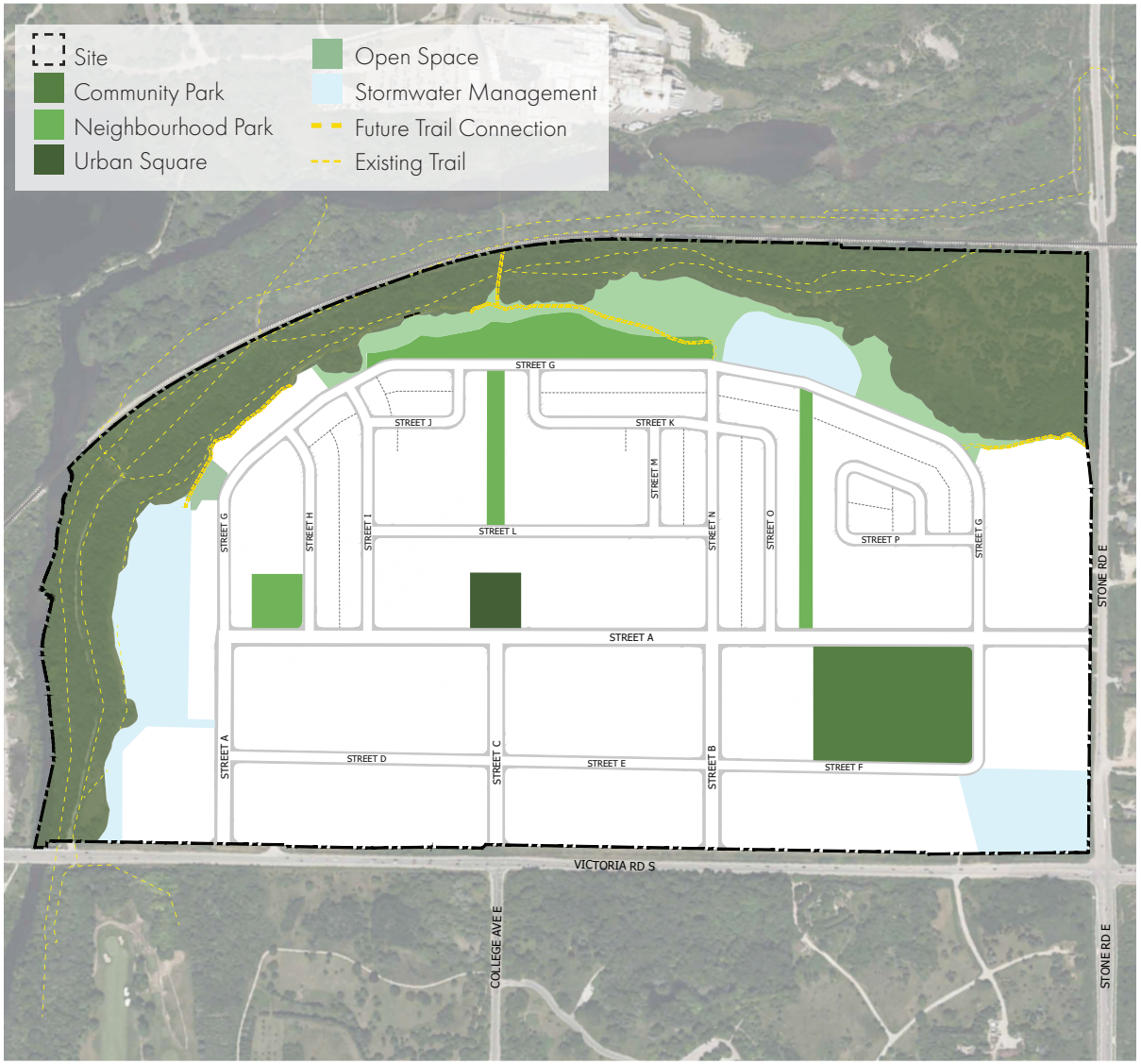


Figure 3.5 - Hierarchy of parks and open spaces within the Draft Plan of Subdivision

3.8 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The draft of subdivision emphasizes sustainable practices across the Site design, building design, and landscape design, ensuring that future development within the Blocks create a sustainable, resource-efficient, and human-centred community.

Sustainable Site Design

The subdivision's fine-grained street network and street-oriented built form promotes walkability and pedestrian circulation. A connected system of mid-block walkways further enhances a pedestrian-scaled environment that encourages exploration and social interaction.

Active transportation is prioritized through safe, attractive, and well-lit walkways and bike lanes that link the Site to surrounding neighbourhoods. Secure bicycle storage, rider amenities, and dedicated cycling infrastructure will further support cycling as a convenient and preferred mode of travel.

Sustainable Building Design

Buildings are encouraged to incorporate a high-percentage of energy-efficient strategies, reducing energy loss and improving year-round comfort.

Sustainable building strategies including green roofs, sustainably sourced materials, and energy efficient building systems will be evaluated during the detailed design process. These features will contribute to improved stormwater management, reduced urban heat island effects, and an overall lower environmental footprint.

Sustainable Landscape Design

The Site is framed by the natural heritage system of the Eramosa River, where woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitats form a biodiverse landscape enriched by an established network of scenic recreational trails. This environment offers residents immersive access to nature, reinforcing connections between the community, the river valley, and the broader ecological systems.

Landscape design throughout the parks, streetscapes, and open spaces will prioritize climate comfort and year-round usability. Parks, streetscapes, and other landscape design elements will also include native plantings that are tolerant of urban conditions.

3.9 PHASING

The Draft Plan of Subdivision is proposed as a single, comprehensive plan, with development proposed to be implemented in five phases, progressing from the northern edge of the Site toward the south (see Figure 3.6). This holistic approach provides the flexibility to advance employment and institutional uses as needed.

The first phase will focus on establishing the central community node and the northern surrounding residential neighbourhoods, forming the foundational public space and setting a tone for the overall character of the development. This central node will guide the design direction for subsequent phases. As the project progresses, additional phases will introduce further parks, streetscapes, and privately managed spaces, gradually expanding the network and enhancing the overall urban experience.

The initial residential neighbourhoods will establish a population base in the Block Plan area to support future commercial, institutional and employment uses in later phases. The school is proposed as its own phase and will be developed at an appropriate time based on the School Board's requirements.

The Site's phasing will be refined through collaboration with servicing and utility providers and is subject to change throughout the approval process.

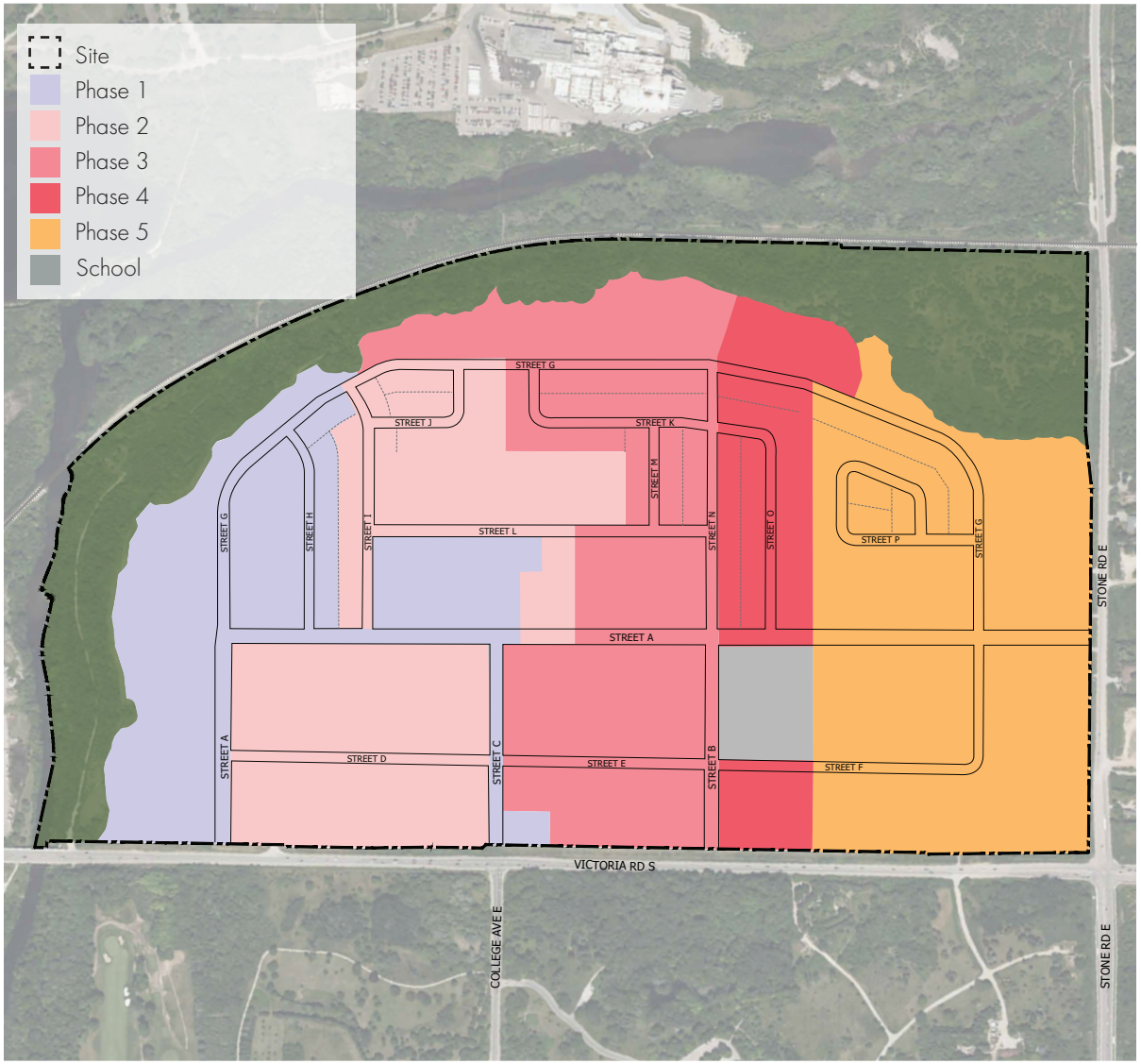


Figure 3.6 - Draft Plan of Subdivision phasing

4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

4.1 LAND USE & BUILT FORM

The proposed mix of urban typologies in the Draft Plan of Subdivision provides a range of uses and densities to meet the needs of future residents across a range of lifestyles and stages (see Figure 4.1). Commercial and employment uses will attract visitors and will provide essential services to the subdivision's residents.

Mixed-Use

The Mixed-Use Blocks form the core of the subdivision, accommodating a blend of retail, commercial, office, and residential uses. These areas emphasize mid- and high-rise building typologies, incorporating podium and tower forms to support an active and engaging streetscape. Building heights will transition downward from the central height peak toward the north, south, and east. To maintain a human-scaled environment, tower podiums and mid-rise buildings must be a minimum of three stories along the street edge, with step-backs above the base to reinforce a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. An urban street wall condition will be created through strategic building orientation, articulation, and minimal setbacks, enhancing street-level activity and visual appeal.

Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential Blocks may encompass a blend of housing types including mid-rise residential apartments, stacked, back-to-back, cluster townhouses, and live-work units.

Low Density Residential

Low- Density Residential development will use varied roof forms and heights to break up massing and add visual interest. Creating architectural interest through a variety of distinctive façade elements, using contemporary styles to enrich the street view. Utilize visible front doors, porches, and strategically designed front-facing rooms to promote a vibrant streetscape and provide natural surveillance where possible. Garages should be designed as a cohesive part of the façade and reinforce the pedestrian-friendly character of the street.

Innovation Employment

The Innovation Blocks represent a vibrant technological hub within the GID. These blocks are characterized by low to mid-rise buildings with a minimum height of 2 storeys.

Education

The school has been located central to Blocks 1, 2 and 3 and is anticipated to be within the school catchment area. The school has also been located adjacent to the higher density residential to accommodate convenient and direct access to the school for the highest number of households. This Block will act as a transition between the Mixed-Use, Residential and Employment Mixed-Use 1 lands to amplify the opportunities for collaboration.

The school is located directly adjacent to the community park to provide opportunities for interaction and shared facilities between the two uses.

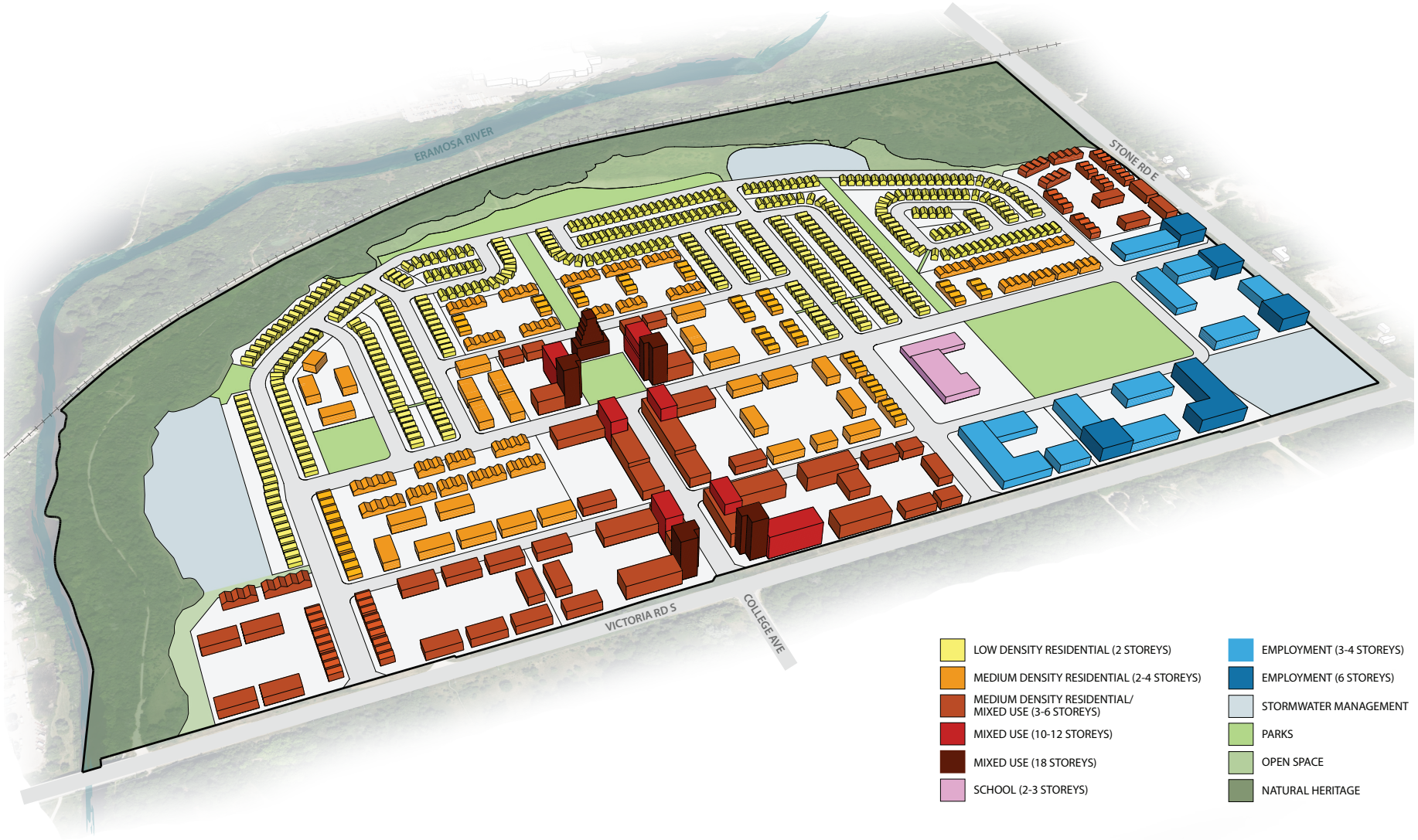


Figure 4.1 - Conceptual massing diagram showing the relationship between building typologies, open spaces, and natural heritage areas (built form and building heights are subject to change)

Mixed-Use Guidelines

The mixed-use typology forms the core of the Master Plan. These blocks are intended for varied uses such as retail, commercial, office, and residential with a focus on mid and high-rise building typologies comprised of base and tower forms (see Figure 4.2). The Mixed-Use blocks are located within and adjacent to the Mixed-Use Heart and along Stone Road East.

Site Design & Massing

Locate the tallest buildings in the blocks along the extension of College Avenue East to form a height peak at the Site's centre. Building heights should transition down from the height peak to the north, south, and east.

Tower podiums and mid-rise buildings should have a base of a minimum three storeys along the street edge. Buildings should be stepped-back above the base to reinforce a pedestrian scale along the street edges.

An urban street wall condition should be created through building orientation, articulation, and minimal setbacks.

Tower footprints should be limited to minimize impacts on adjacent lands, including shadows and wind.

Elevations

Employ high-quality design, well-articulated façade treatments, contemporary materials that reflect the innovative design vision for GID, with a particular emphasis on terminating vistas, corners, gateways, and street-facing facades.

Include active uses along street and park frontages, such as ground oriented residential units and common amenity spaces. Avoid blank walls facing the public realm, where possible. Utilize high levels of transparency and prominent building entrances to provide visual interest and natural surveillance.

Circulation

Locate building entrances and bicycle parking areas along the street to encourage active transportation.

Locate vehicle parking underground or within building podiums whenever feasible. Podium parking is to be wrapped with active uses and screened from view of the public realm.

Locate vehicle access points on local roads and limit the number of driveway entrances from the street. Access driveways are not to cross linear parks or green boulevards to maintain the continuity of the open space network.

Loading, servicing, and garbage areas should be located inside building footprints and screened from view wherever possible, with entrances integrated into the building façade design.

Landscape & Servicing

Encourage well-landscaped outdoor amenity spaces that enhance the functionality and visual appeal of development blocks.

Utility and servicing elements should be located and screened to be hidden from the public realm wherever possible.

Figure 4.2 - Conceptual rendering of the mixed-use area (prepared by BIG)

Medium-Density Residential Guidelines

The medium density residential typology encompasses a blend of housing types including mid-rise residential apartments, stacked, back-to-back and cluster townhouses, and live-work units (see Figure 4.3). These uses surround the Mixed-Use Heart and provide a transition in form between the highest and lowest densities.

Site Design & Massing

Utilize a perimeter block design for all blocks with central courtyard spaces and street-oriented buildings. Varied building heights and configurations are encouraged within and between blocks to create a dynamic massing.

Elevations

Employ high-quality designs, well-articulated façade treatments, contemporary materials that reflect the innovative design vision for GID, with a particular emphasis on landmark buildings, corners, gateways, and streetfacing facades. Avoid blank walls facing the public realm where possible. Utilizing high levels of transparency and prominent building entrances to provide visual interest and natural surveillance is encouraged.

Circulation

Locate building entrances and bicycle parking areas along the street to encourage active transportation.

Locate vehicle parking away from the street or within covered parking or podiums where possible. Podium parking is to be wrapped with active uses and screened from view of the public realm whenever feasible.

Locate vehicle access points on local roads and limit the number of driveway entrances from the street.

Loading, servicing, and garbage areas should be located within blocks and screened from view wherever possible, with any internal collection entrances integrated into the building façade design.

Landscape & Servicing

Encourage well-landscaped outdoor amenity spaces that enhance the functionality and visual appeal of development blocks.

Utility and servicing elements should be located and screened to be hidden from the public realm wherever possible.

Figure 4.3 - Conceptual rendering of the medium-density residential area (prepared by BIG)

Low-Density Residential Guidelines

The low-density residential Blocks feature a mix of housing types including single-detached, semi-detached, and townhouse forms. The diversity in housing types is intended to accommodate various lifestyles and family sizes within the community (see Figure 4.4). These forms are located around the periphery of the Block Plan, adjacent to the natural heritage areas.

Site Design & Massing

Design built form adjacent to natural areas to include gradual transitions, employing strategies that reduce ecological disruption and preserve the natural heritage system.

Minimize front and exterior side yard setbacks to create a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Elevations

Ensure high-quality material and visually appealing design on priority frontages, such as corner lots, view termini, and park-facing locations. Buildings on corners or with multiple priority frontages should address all frontages through items such as entrance placement, articulation, and materiality.

Use varied roof forms and heights to break up massing and add visual interest. Create architectural variety with distinctive façade elements, using contemporary styles to enrich the street view.

Utilize visible front doors, porches, and strategically designed front-facing rooms to promote a vibrant streetscape and provide natural surveillance. Garages should be designed as a cohesive part of the façade and reinforce the pedestrian-friendly character of the street.

Circulation

Provide direct access from unit entrances to the public realm to encourage active transportation. Surface parking areas are to be located away from the street wherever possible.

Landscape & Servicing

Encourage well-landscaped outdoor amenity spaces that enhance the functionality and visual appeal of development blocks.

Utility and servicing elements should be located and screened to be hidden from the public realm wherever possible.

Figure 4.4 - Conceptual rendering of the low-density residential area (prepared by BIG)

Innovation Employment Guidelines

The innovation Blocks represent a vibrant technological hub within the GID. These blocks are characterized by low to mid-rise buildings with a minimum height of 2 storeys. The blocks will include a variety of traditional and innovative employment uses, including research facilities, startups, and collaborative workspaces (see Figure 4.5).

Site Design & Massing

Utilize the perimeter block designs to create an urban form and integrate with the surrounding building typologies. Varied building heights and configurations are encouraged within and between blocks to create a dynamic massing. Encourage flexible spaces that can adapt to a variety of tenants and needs over time.

Create an urban street wall condition through building orientation, articulation, and minimal setbacks. Buildings should be stepped-back above the base to reinforce a pedestrian scale along the street edges where possible.

Elevations

Employ high-quality designs, well-articulated façade treatments, and contemporary materials that reflect the innovative design vision for GID, with a particular emphasis on landmark buildings, corners, gateways, and street-facing facades.

Include active uses along street and park frontages, such as ground floor commercial, building lobbies, meeting rooms, and communal spaces. Avoid blank walls facing the public realm where possible.

Utilize high levels of transparency and prominent building entrances where feasible to provide visual interest and natural surveillance.

Circulation

Locate building entrances and bicycle parking areas along the street to encourage active transportation where possible.

Where surface parking is present, parking should be appropriately screened with landscaping. Vehicle parking is encouraged to be located underground or within building podiums when feasible. Podium parking is to be wrapped with active uses and screened from view of the public realm. Locate vehicle access points on local roads and limit the number of driveway entrances from the street.

Loading, servicing, and garbage areas should be located inside buildings and screened from view wherever possible, with entrances integrated into the building façade design.

Landscape & Servicing

Encourage well-landscaped outdoor amenity spaces that enhance the functionality and visual appeal of development blocks.

Utility and servicing elements should be located and screened to be hidden from the public realm wherever possible.

Figure 4.5 - Conceptual rendering of the innovation employment area (prepared by BIG)

4.2 STREETSCAPE & CIRCULATION

Streets Guidelines

The Draft Plan of Subdivision is designed around a framework of fine-grained streets with a hierarchy of arterial, collector, and local roads. The grid facilitates easy access throughout the Site and is supported by pedestrian-friendly features such as wide sidewalks, walkway blocks, and bicycle lanes to achieve a "complete street" concept.

Complete Streets

Streets should be designed for all modes of travel, with priority given to pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Provide continuous pedestrian routes, sidewalks, highly visible crosswalk treatments, barrier-free paths of travel, and amenities such as benches, bicycle racks, and pedestrian scale lighting.

Streets with retail and employment uses should adopt an urban main street character with minimal setbacks, active street frontages, and marketing zones to encourage retail spill out, particularly adjacent to green connectors. Buildings and street trees should create a sense of enclosure within the pedestrian realm.

Local streets should be designed with an urban residential character with street trees, landscape boulevards, and direct unit access to public sidewalks. On multi-residential blocks, garages and driveways on public roads should be avoided in favor of internal driveways.

Areas with high levels of pedestrian and bicycle trips, such as the Mixed-Use Heart, should treat the entire right of way as a part of the public realm. Measures to prioritize pedestrian movement are highly encouraged, including raised intersections, bump outs, material changes, and special event closures.

Unique gateway treatments are encouraged along Victoria Road South and Stone Road East to enhance the community identity and create a sense of arrival.

Street Ends & Single Loaded Road

These locations can serve as key design focal points, offering opportunities for public amenities, landscape features, and passive community spaces, such as scenic viewpoints or trail connections, enriching the public realm and encouraging social interaction. These spaces create moments of respite and exploration and integrate with the surrounding environment.

Landscape & Furniture

Street trees should be spaced to encourage a continuous tree canopy with adequate soil volume to enable full canopy growth. Species should be chosen for tolerance of urban conditions.

Low-impact development measures and naturalized boulevards are encouraged, including rain gardens and pollinator gardens.

Low-height plantings and pedestrian-scaled lighting should be used along walkways and sidewalks to ensure clear lines of sight and safe paths of travel. Barrier-free paths of travel should be included between sidewalks, building entrances, and accessible parking spaces with tactile cues to aid in navigation.

Street furniture must be coordinated between all subdivision Blocks to create a cohesive identity. Furniture should employ a modern design to reflect an innovative character, including lighting, signage, seating, and waste receptacles.

Trails & Pathways

Mid-block connections serve as discreet yet essential links between different parts of the neighbourhood, facilitating pedestrian movement and access to key spaces. These narrow pathways enhance connectivity, offering convenient shortcuts, encouraging exploration, and creating more direct routes between residential, commercial, and public areas. By integrating seamlessly into the street network, they contribute to a more walkable and interconnected community.

Main Street

The main street serves as the vibrant heart of the community, lined with an engaging mix of shops, cafés, and public spaces that foster social interaction, commerce, and cultural expression. Designed for seamless integration of pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular movement, the street prioritizes safety and accessibility (see Figure 4.6). Also designed to provide a dynamic urban experience, it encourages activity throughout the day and serves as a central gathering place. A protected public realm offers protection from the summer sun and winter winds, ensuring comfort for pedestrians year-round.

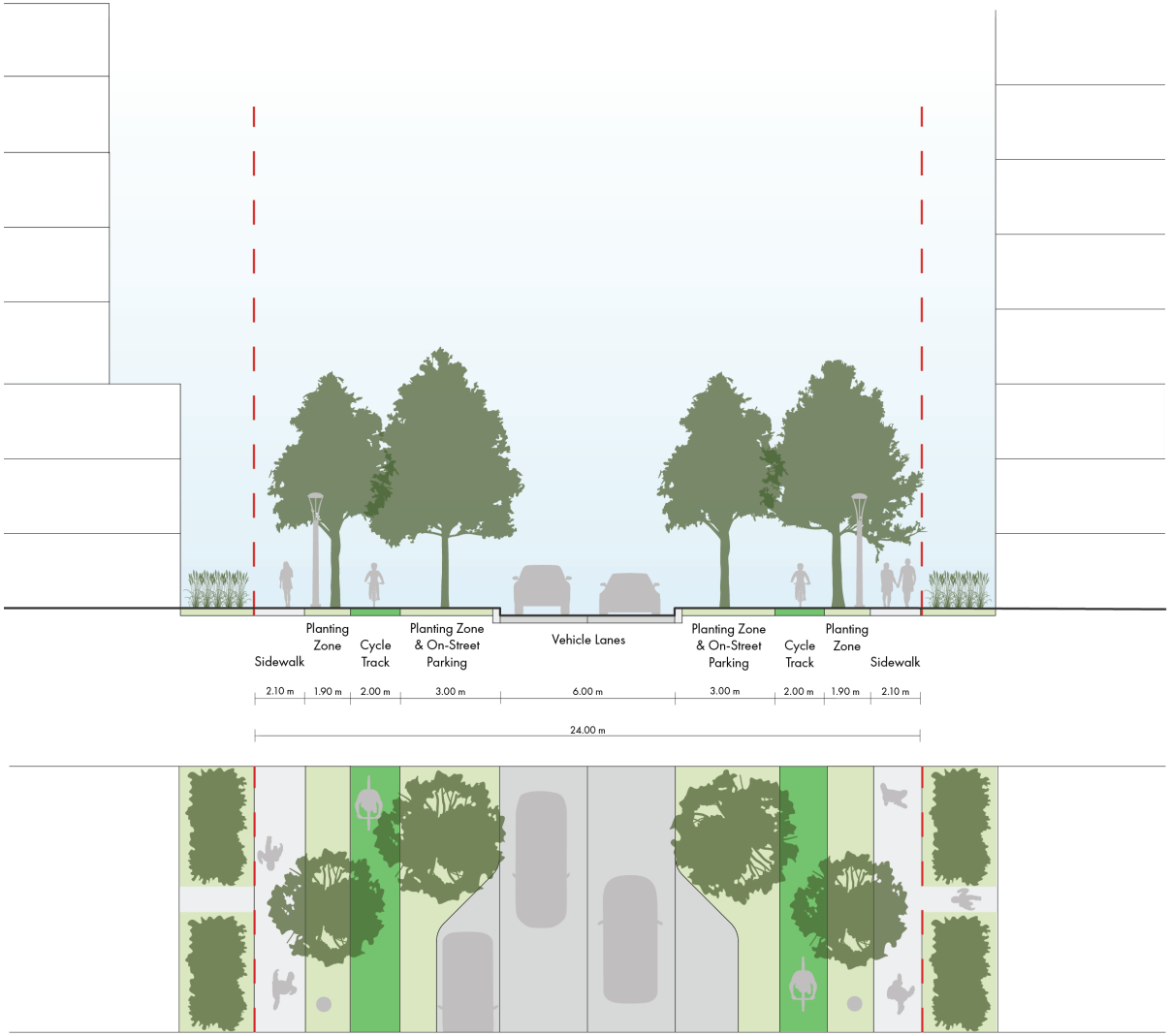


Figure 4.6 - Proposed Main Street cross section in accordance with Secondary Plan requirements and City of Guelphs Complete Street Guidelines

Collector Street

The collector road plays a key role in the subdivision, seamlessly linking local streets to major arterial routes while maintaining a smooth flow of vehicular traffic. Designed to prioritize both pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, it supports a safe and efficient circulation network that integrates harmoniously into the broader urban framework (see Figure 4.7).

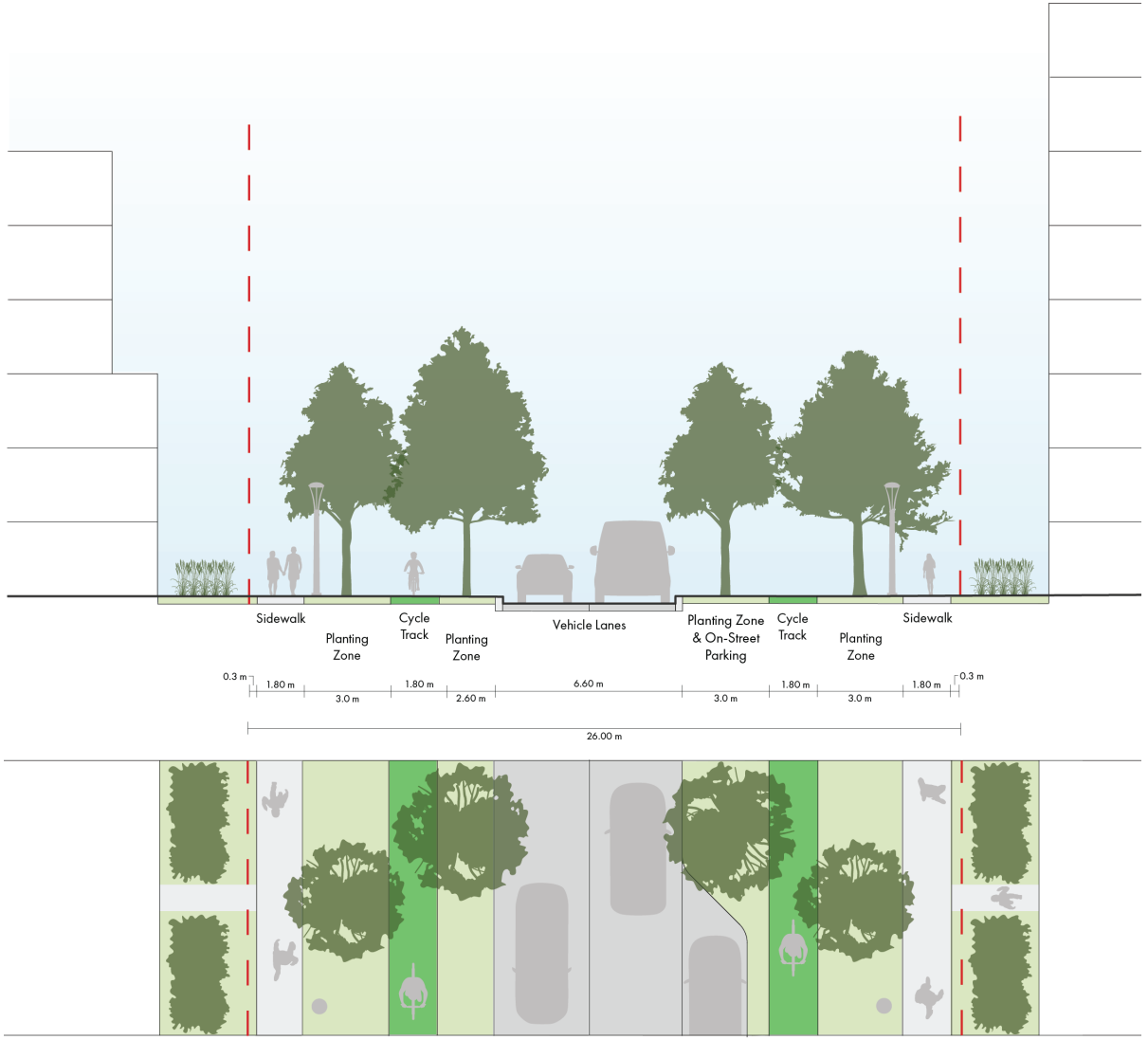


Figure 4.7 - Proposed Collector Street cross section in accordance with Secondary Plan requirements and City of Guelphs Complete Street Guidelines

Local Street

Local streets form the intimate, pedestrian-friendly backbone of the community, providing direct access to residences and neighbourhood amenities. Designed for slower traffic speeds, they enhance walkability and foster a strong sense of identity. Tree-lined sidewalks, inviting streetscapes, and easy connections to parks and public spaces create a welcoming and accessible environment that supports everyday life (see Figure 4.8).

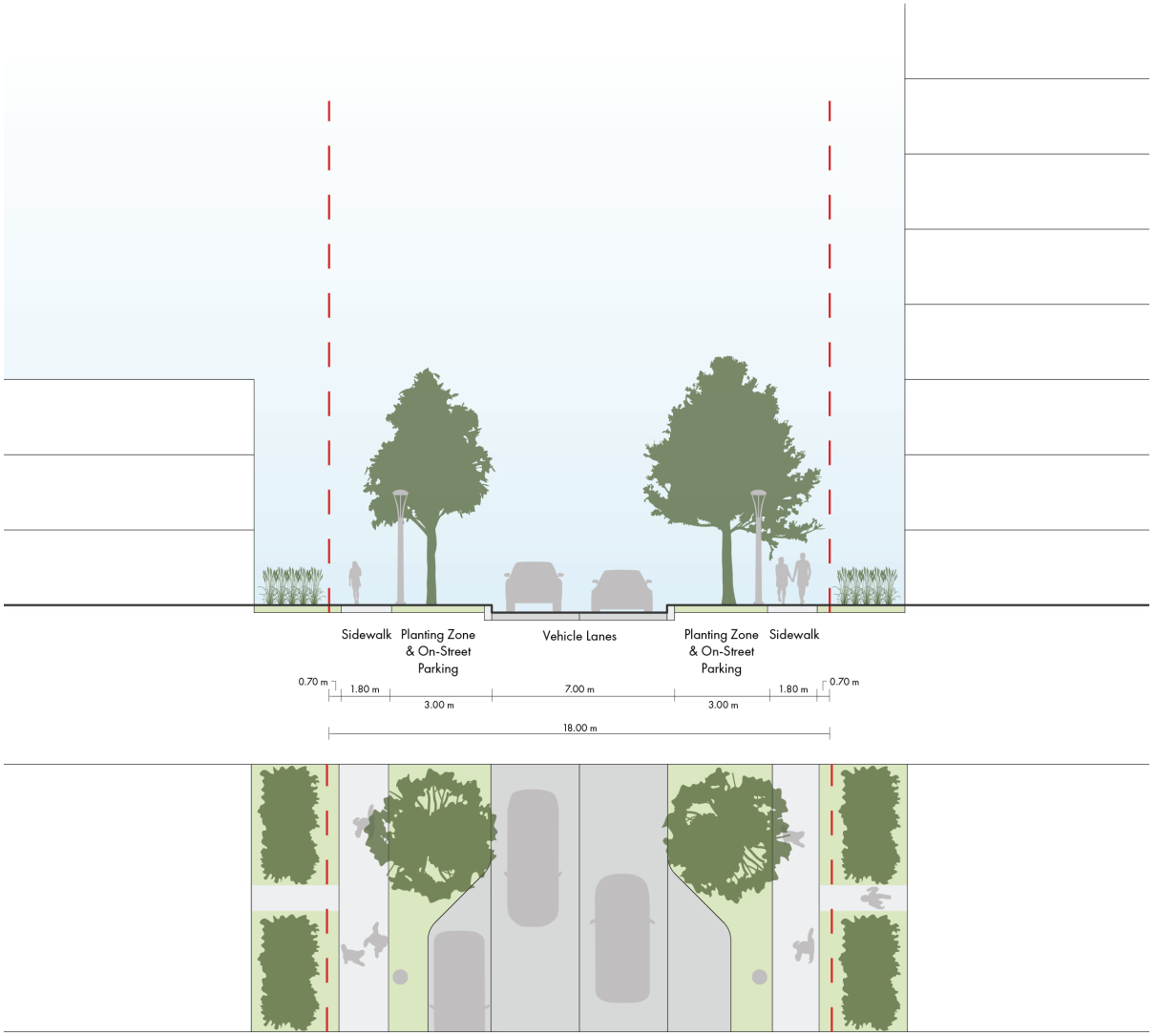


Figure 4.8 - Proposed Local Street cross section in accordance with Secondary Plan requirements and City of Guelphs Complete Street Guidelines

4.3 PUBLIC REALM & LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Public Realm & Open Space Network

The Draft Plan of Subdivision consists of several distinct open spaces, each with different sizes, characters, and programming, all connected by a pedestrian-friendly network.

The open space network is composed of a variety of parks and street typologies, creating a dynamic blend of public and privately managed spaces (see Figure 4.9).

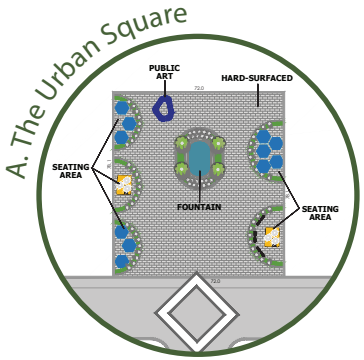


Figure 4.9 - Proposed parks hierarchy

Parks & Plazas Guidelines

The Draft Plan of Subdivision establishes a cohesive network of open spaces that enhances connectivity, preserves natural heritage, and promotes a vibrant public realm. Key urban gathering spaces, including community and neighbourhood parks, will support both active and passive recreation, providing inclusive and accessible environments for all users. The Eramosa River valley lands are protected and enhanced through conservation-focused strategies and sensitive development, ensuring the long-term sustainability of this ecological corridor. These natural areas are seamlessly connected by a system of parks, walkways, and trails, improving accessibility while reinforcing the Site's environmental integrity.

Landscape Design

The landscape strategy will work with the Site's existing grading to create smooth, natural transitions between different elevations while preserving key terrain features that contribute to sightlines and view corridors. A balanced integration of plantings, hardscapes, and green spaces will enhance the public realm. The planting palette will prioritize native, drought-resistant, and salt-tolerant species to ensure year-round visual interest and ecological resilience, while adequate soil volumes will support full canopy development and long-term tree health.

Natural Heritage

Parks and open space designs will align with the general intent of the Official Plan and the Site's Environmental Impact Study to protect, restore, and improve the Site's natural heritage system and enhance the original parks plan for the Site. Efforts will focus on increasing biodiversity and expanding the urban tree canopy where ecologically appropriate. To minimize disruption to sensitive habitats, controlled access measures - such as strategic trail design, wayfinding, and educational signage – will be implemented to guide visitors while safeguarding local flora and fauna. Public views and vistas of the Eramosa River corridor will be carefully preserved and enhanced, reinforcing the Site's ecological and scenic value. Where possible, mature trees and hedgerows will be retained and integrated into the Site's open space network.

Programming

A diverse range of active and passive programming will be incorporated into parks and open spaces to serve users of all ages and abilities. These spaces can feature playgrounds, splash pads, community gardens, naturalized areas, trails, seating areas, and public art installations, fostering engagement and community interaction. Stormwater ponds will be designed as integrated landscape elements, using native vegetation and topographical features to create aesthetically and ecologically valuable spaces. To encourage active transportation, park designs will include seamless connections to the Guelph Radial Line Trail and future developments within Block 3, strengthening the overall walkability and connectivity of the neighbourhood.

Community Park

The community park is designed to accommodate a diverse range of activities, fostering recreation, social interaction, and a strong sense of community. Thoughtfully programmed to support year-round engagement, the park can feature water elements, sports fields, picnic areas, and washroom facilities. The park will be able to accommodate local and regional sporting events (see Figure 4.10).

Neighbourhood Parks

The neighbourhood parks are more compact, yet welcoming spaces designed for intimate, community-focused activities and passive recreation. These parks offer residents a place to gather, unwind, and engage in smaller-scale events, fostering a strong sense of connection and belonging within the neighbourhood (see Figure 4.11). The neighbourhood park can be programed with playgrounds, small sports facilities, trails, and seating areas.

Urban Square

The main function of the Urban Square is to provide opportunities for passive recreation, special events, and social interaction. The space is anticipated to be predominantly hardscaped with seating areas and shade provided from trees (see Figure 4.12). The Urban Square will be framed by the mixed-use built form of the surrounding node. Hard and soft landscaping elements will be used to define and articulate the activity areas, Site circulation, and gathering areas.

Figure 4.10 - Conceptual community park - consolidated parking

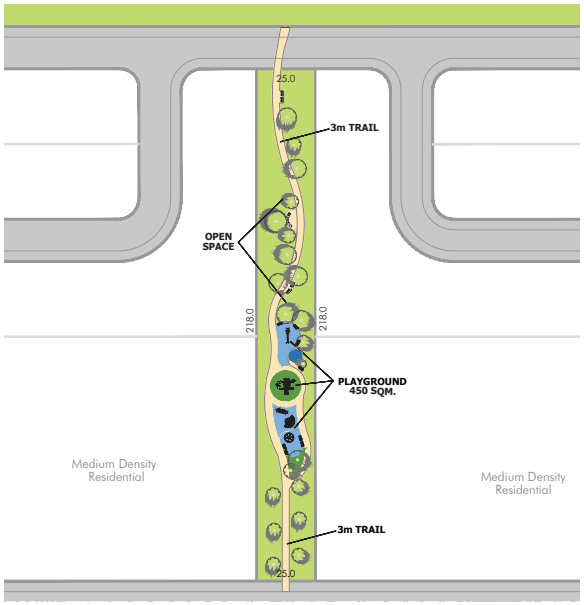


Figure 4.11 - Conceptual neighbourhood park

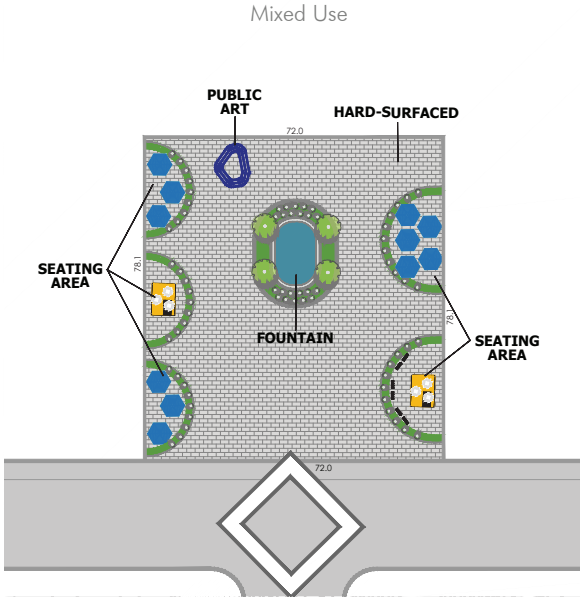


Figure 4.12 - Conceptual Urban Square

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The approved Block 1&2 Urban Design Guidelines established the basis for the developments urban design review.

These guidelines have been prepared according to the City's Terms of Reference and submitted as part of a complete Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, and Draft Plan of Subdivision application. These guidelines provide a framework to ensure the proposed neighbourhood meets the high standard of urban design required by the City of Guelph Official Plan, Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan, and approved Block Plan Urban Design Guidelines. Subsequent applications to the City for Site Plan Approval will be required to demonstrate conformity with these guidelines, as well as the applicable urban design policies mentioned above.

These guidelines are intended to be flexible and encourage best practices for the subdivision's implementation. Future applications may deviate from these guidelines so long as the vision and general intent of the guidelines and a high standard of urban design is maintained. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the Site-specific conditions that may warrant deviation from these guidelines and/or consideration of alternative interpretations.

Review Process

Through the preparation of this report, MHBC has reviewed the proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision and concluded that the proposed development conforms with the approved GID Block 1&2 Urban Design Guidelines. For the remaining applications subject to Site Plan Approval, MHBC will review the submitted documents and advise the municipality on the submission's conformity with the approved guidelines.

For Site Plan Applications, drawings required to demonstrate conformity may include site plan applications, landscape plans, and others as deemed necessary by the municipality and MHBC.

Any disputes regarding guideline interpretation, required plans, or certification may be escalated to the municipality for resolution. The municipality will work with the affected parties to provide a fair and timely settlement that maintains the vision and intent of the approved guidelines.

The municipality may periodically review documents submitted to and certified by MHBC. Where inadequate compliance is evident, the municipality may cease to accept certification by MHBC, and the applicant shall retain an alternative consultant satisfactory to the municipality.

MHBC

PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE