

December 22, 2022

Julianna Zhuo
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sent via email

Dear Ms. Zhuo,

**ERO – 019-5530 (APPROVAL OF A MUNICIPALITY’S OFFICIAL PLAN, CITY OF BARRIE)
664, 674 AND 692 ESSA ROAD, AND 320 MAPLEVIEW DRIVE WEST, BARRIE**

Arcadis IBI Group is providing this comment letter upon the Environmental Registry of Ontario posting (019-5530) regarding the new City of Barrie Official Plan, on behalf of Pearl Builders, the owner of the lands municipally known as 664, 674 and 692 Essa Road, and 320 Mapleview Drive West (the “subject site”).

The purpose of this letter is to request a Minister’s modification and approval of a current application for an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) filed with the City of Barrie (City File #: D30-002-2020) for the subject site. Specifically, the following are provisions in our OPA that we are respectfully seeking Minister’s approval:

- Changing the land use designation of the subject site from *General Commercial and General Industrial* to **Residential, Open Space, and Environmental Protection**;
- Approving increased residential density permissions to facilitates a proposed mixed-use residential development with a total of **1217 dwelling units**, and a residential density of **162 units per hectare**; and
- Approving non-residential uses to be located on lands designated Residential such as commercial, retail, institutional and community-related uses to allow for **3,476 square metres of non-residential GFA**.

The proposed OPA brings the proposed development into conformity with the *Medium Density* land use policies of the new Official Plan. Ministerial approval for our OPA will save us from potential delays that may occur during the development approvals process and allow us to proceed with our site-specific rezoning application in a timely manner. As this letter will briefly outline below, the OPA application represents good planning, and are in the public interest. We recommend approval of our OPA for expediting the development approvals process and building more homes faster.

The Province’s More Homes Built Faster Action Plan has highlighted the need to address the present housing crisis. We believe our proposed development can contribute to this effort, bringing online a diversified housing supply in a growing area of one of the fastest-growing parts of the Province and major urban centres within the outer ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth area. Particularly given the Province’s stated goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next decade, there is an acute need to approve the City of Barrie Official Plan so their vision for promoting intensification and guiding Barrie’s development as a unified, resilient, and vibrant mid-sized city can be implemented and new housing brought online as soon as possible. We offer our

full support for the approval of the City of Barrie new Official Plan within the context of our development proposal for the subject site.



Figure 1 – Aerial Map of Subject Site

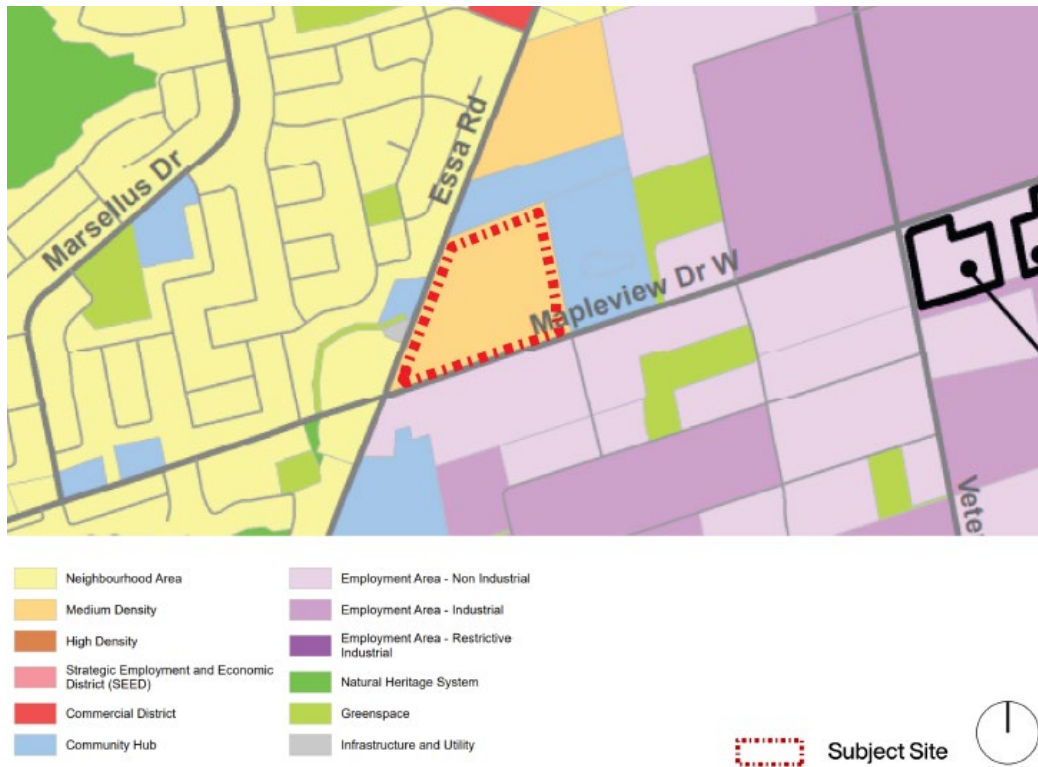


Figure 2 – City of Barrie new Official Plan – Map 2 Land Use Designations

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As shown in the new Official Plan Map 2 – Land Use Designations, the new Official Plan designates the subject site as *Medium Density* (Figure 2). Section 2.6.2 of the new Official Plan states that lands designated as *Medium Density* are intended to facilitate an increase of densities and built form in the city. Section 2.6.2.2 continues to state that developments in the *Medium Density* designation are encouraged to be mixed use, should be between 6-12 storeys in height, and have a density of 125 to 300 units per hectare. It also notes that if the minimum density can be met, building heights less than 6-storeys may be permitted. Given the subject site's net lot area of 7.546 hectares, the number of dwelling units allowed would be between a minimum of 943 units and a maximum of 2,264 units.

On December 20, 2022, Arcadis IBI Group made a resubmission on a development proposal for the subject site. The resubmission updated prior applications for Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment submitted in October 2020. The resubmission included all required background studies and drawings in response to comments received from the City of Barrie, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA), and public stakeholders. We received positive feedback from preliminary consultations with the City, NVCA, and public stakeholders on the new proposed development plan (Figure 3).



Figure 3 – Proposed Development Plan

In addition to preserving and enhancing the Bear Creek channel corridor that bisects the subject site, the updated proposal would add a total of 1217 new dwelling units consisting of 464 townhouse units, 753 apartment units and 3,476 square metres of non-residential GFA. The proposed development density is 162 units per hectare which is within the range of densities for lands designated *Medium Density* in the new Official Plan. Given that a higher density of up to 300 units per hectare is allowed on site, there are opportunities for and flexibility in adding more dwelling units while still conforming with the new Official Plan land use policies. The current proposal reflects the intent of the City's new Official Plan and the needs of the community, providing a medium density, mixed-use development that conforms with the proposed land use designation of *Medium Density* as set out in the new Official Plan. The proposed development will create attainable missing middle housing in the form of townhouses and multi-unit housing that

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will help increase the housing supply in an urbanized part of the city that has existing and planned municipal and transit infrastructure.

Pending approval of the new Official Plan, the subject lands are designated *General Commercial and General Industrial* under the current in-effect City of Barrie Official Plan (2010). As such, the proposed development of the subject site requires an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to redesignate the site from *General Commercial and General Industrial* to *Residential, Open Space, and Environmental Protection*. As mentioned, the new Official Plan designates the subject site as *Medium Density*, a newly created land use designation that would bring the proposed development into conformity with the policies in the City's new Official Plan.



Figure 4 – Illustrative Bird's Eye View Looking Southeast

The city of Barrie is experiencing substantial growth and Provincial projections have the city growing to a population of 298,000 by 2051, more than double Barrie's current population. The proposed development aims to transform the subject site by creating a complete community with a mix of uses and providing the housing required to contribute to the city's housing supply to accommodate this growth. The subject site's optimal location and size allows for a great opportunity to create a vibrant, mixed-use community comprised of a wide range and mix of residential units, new retail and community facilities, and new landscaped open spaces that will serve the current and future community.

The proposed development is consistent with policies contained in the Provincial Policy Statement, and conform with the policies of the Growth Plan and City of Barrie Official Plan. It is our opinion that the proposed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are appropriate, desirable and effectively optimize the utilization of the lands in relation to municipal and transit infrastructure. Accordingly, we recommend approval of the Official Plan amendment and rezoning applications to expedite the development approvals process to proceed with applications for site plan approval and building permits.



Figure 5 – Illustrative Views

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the City of Barrie new Official Plan. We welcome a meeting to discuss the contents of our letter. Should you require any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

ARCADIS IBI GROUP

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