

 BOUSFIELDS INC.

# Urban Design Direction

**11861 & 12045 McCowan Road**

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

May 2024



**ORCA**  
COMMUNITIES



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Job Number  
23170

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# Introduction

This document has been prepared by Bousfields Inc. in response to a request by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for the development of an Urban Design Direction (“UDD”) brief for the parcels municipally addressed as 11861 and 12045 McCowan Road, and Assessment Roll Number 194400014464902 (hereafter referred to as the “Subject Lands”).

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the UDD brief is to provide Council, Town Staff, landowners, developers and the public with a clear urban design direction and guidance for new development within the Subject Lands. This includes defining the area’s character and providing built form and site design direction for private and public realm elements to achieve an agricultural inspired community aesthetic. The UDD will work to influence the composition and quality of the Subject Lands and its surrounding context to promote high standards of urban design for both public and private and realm development and spaces.

The UDD will build upon the design direction and principles established in the Town’s Official Plan policies, Residential Intensification Urban Design Guidelines, Community of Stouffville Urban Design Guidelines and the Highway 48 Study Framework Plan.

## 1.2 Area Context

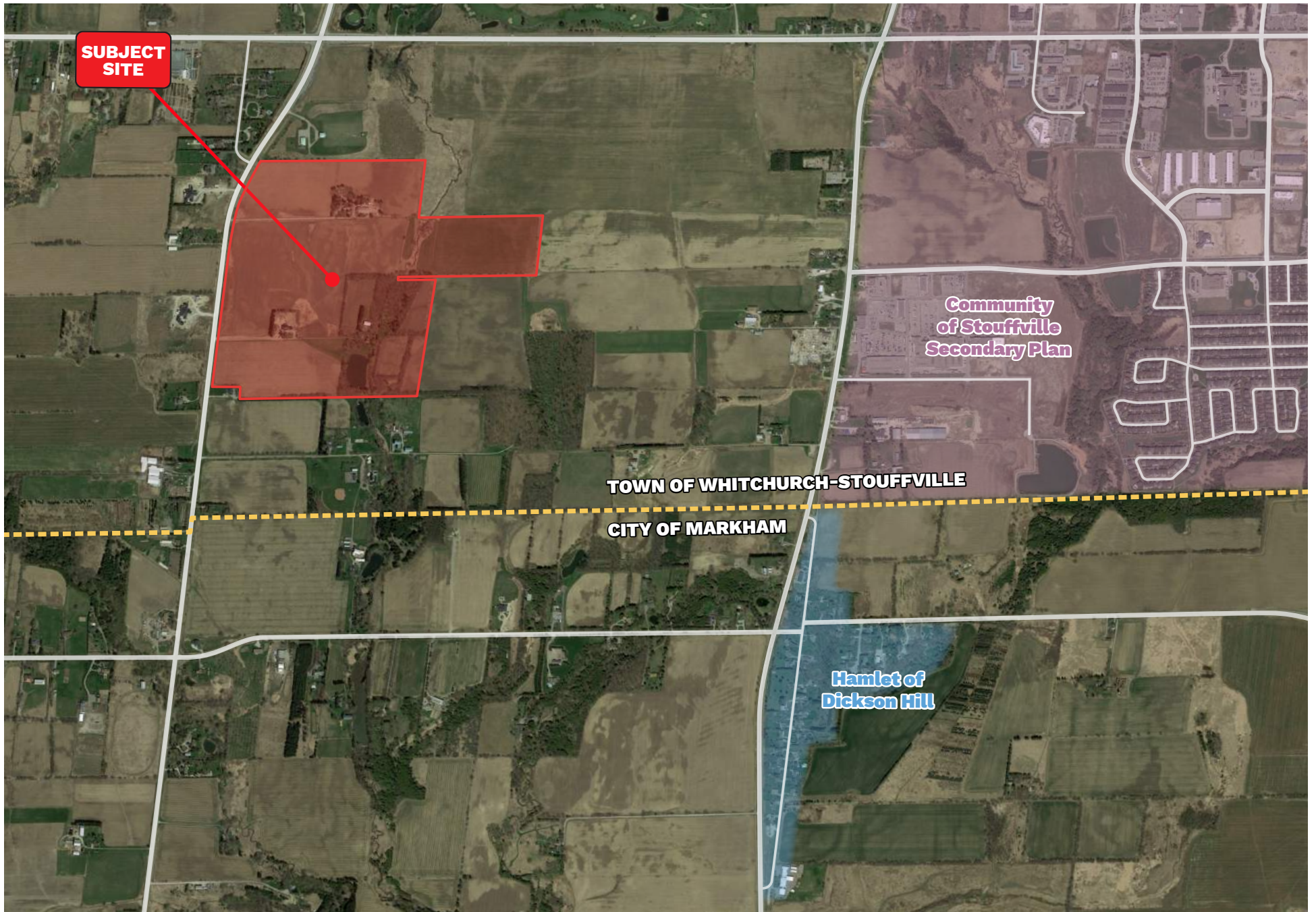
The Subject Lands are located on the east side of McCowan Road, generally south of Stouffville Road, west of Highway 48 and north of the boundary between the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the City of Markham. The Subject Lands are approximately 58.9 hectares (145.5 acres) in size and are comprised of two developable areas separated by part of the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area. Overall, the developable area of the land is approximately 30.5 hectares (75.4 acres) in size.

The Subject Lands are generally flat and are used for agricultural and rural purposes. As mentioned, portions of the properties are located within the Greenbelt Plan area and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area. A tributary of Willowgrove Creek crosses through the east portion of the Subject Lands within the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Regulated Area.

The context surrounding the Subject Lands is varied and includes rural and agricultural uses, as well as existing and planned residential and non-residential urban uses. Agricultural operations surrounding the Subject Lands generally consist of cash cropping operations.

North of the subject lands is the Markham North Reservoir, which provides municipal services to homes and businesses in the Markham area and includes both a reservoir and a pumping station. To the immediate east, three large parcels abut the Subject Lands and include approximately 95 hectares of the lands that have permission for residential and mixed-use development. To the immediate south of the subject lands, east of McCowan Road, is a mix of rural residential and residential estate lots. West of the Subject Lands is McCowan Road (York Regional Road 67), which is a Regional road serving interregional, regional and local travel demands. Lands on the west side of McCowan Road consist of large agricultural parcels with large farmhouses and related outbuildings, and rural residential estate lots.

Figure 1 - Area Context



An aerial photograph of a garden or park area. The garden is divided into several long, narrow rectangular beds, each containing different types of plants, including flowers and shrubs. A group of people is sitting on the grass in the lower right quadrant of the image. A winding path or stream is visible on the left side of the garden.

# 2

## Vision and Design Principles



“

**The Subject Lands are envisioned as a vibrant, mixed-use agricultural inspired district that will reflect the agricultural history of the Town and provide a sense of integration with the surrounding rural area. Agricultural-inspired design elements and architecture, links to the surrounding rural community and natural open space system and access to a Farmers Market will come together to offer a unique living opportunity that promotes design excellence. The area will provide opportunities for a variety of buildings and diverse uses that will combine both form, function and connectivity through an agricultural inspired lens, while providing access to, and preserving, the natural environment.**

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The directions prescribed in this UDD brief are intended to support the following design principles:

1

**Introduce** building forms that are contextually appropriate, well-articulated and treated with high-quality building materials.

2

**Utilize** agricultural inspired architectural elements in the design of buildings, streetscape elements and community facilities.

3

**Promote** a mix of uses, such as residential, commercial, parks and urban agriculture.

4

**Create** an attractive and active street edge along existing and proposed streetscapes.

5

**Establish** a central community hub that incorporates a mix of uses, active and passive recreational areas and connectivity.

6

**Provide** a mix of build-form typologies that offer a diverse range of living opportunities.

7

**Integrate** an interconnected network of new parks and open spaces that tie into the broader system and surrounding agricultural uses.

8

**Encourage** and support a Farmers Market area that is central to the community.



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# Demonstration Plan

A high-level conceptual demonstration plan was developed by Bousfields Inc. to illustrate the potential development opportunity for a portion of the Subject Lands. The demonstration plan establishes a road network that provides opportunities for vehicular, cycling and pedestrian connectivity throughout the community. A central Mixed-Use Hub Block provides a mix of built-form typologies, including Mixed-Use/Residential Apartments, Live/Work Units and On-Street Townhouses. Commercial uses, such as a restaurant, bakery or coffee shop, will encourage the use of the Mixed-Use Hub Block as a central gathering and focal point of the community. Pedestrian permeability throughout the Mixed-Use Hub Block is provided by a series of landscaped pathways from Streets D and F.

An existing farmhouse, shed and the immediate surrounding area are planned as a Farmer's Market. Here, Farmers from the community will be able to sell crops and produce directly to the community in a central location that is accessible through

multi-use trail connections to the Mixed-Use Hub Block and surrounding residential uses.

West of the Mixed-Use Hub Block is a unique living opportunity that incorporates a linear amenity space that will function as a community gathering location for surrounding residents. Passive recreational uses such as walkways, gardens and seating areas are framed by a mix of rear-lane townhouses.

Higher-density built forms extend along McCowan Road and maintain an attractive and pedestrian-friendly street edge by locating vehicle access and garage spaces internal to the blocks. Direct pedestrian connectivity to the adjacent sidewalks or multi-use pathways will be provided.

A gateway entrance at the intersection of Street D and McCowan Road is contemplated and could provide an opportunity for public art installation, or alternative welcoming design elements, into the community to provide a sense of place.



Figure 2 - Demonstration Plan (Conceptual and Subject to Future Changes)



# Public Realm Design Direction



The public realm will be designed to enhance the pedestrian environment and provide the community with attractive and accessible open spaces to interact with and enjoy. The following principles provide general design direction for the elements that formulate the public realm.

## 4.1 Streetscapes

The primary role of streets within the Subject Lands is to create new public and private streetscapes that are continuous and permeable for pedestrians and cyclists, and to support transportation and service requirements for vehicles. The new street network will help divide the Subject Lands into independent development blocks allowing for more public realm opportunities and connections. The Subject Lands will be comprised of several streetscape typologies: Collector Road, Minor Collector Road, Minor Local Road, Private Rear Laneway and Private Road.

- 1 Collector Roads should be designed as 'complete streets', accommodating both active and public transit to promote alternative methods of transportation.
- 2 Minor Local Roads should be designed to incorporate active transit opportunities and landscaped boulevards.
- 3 Public and Private Roads shall be framed by active uses, such as building entrances, private amenity spaces, retail etc., at ground level to animate the adjacent public realm.
- 4 New Collector Roads will maintain a 27-metre right-of-way as per the Community of Stouffville Urban Design Guidelines and Town Engineering cross-section drawings. These Collector Roads will include 1.8-metre sidewalks and/or 3.0-metre multi-use pathways to accommodate a range of active transit uses and a landscaped boulevard.
- 5 New Minor Collector Roads will maintain a 23-metre right-of-way as per the Community of Stouffville Urban Design Guidelines and Town Engineering cross-section drawings. These Minor Collector Roads will maintain minimum sidewalk widths of 1.8 metres and a landscaped boulevard.
- 6 New Minor Local roads will maintain an 18-metre right-of-way as per the Community of Stouffville Urban Design Guidelines and Town Engineering cross-section drawings. These Minor Local roads will include 1.8-metre sidewalk widths and a landscaped boulevard.
- 7 Rear Laneways will maintain an appropriate right-of-way width to allow for two-way vehicular access and emergency access.
- 8 Parking, servicing and loading areas should not be visible from the public realm. Where this cannot be achieved, these areas should be screened from view with landscaping or other equivalent measures. Parking, servicing and loading areas may only be accessible from Private Roads.
- 9 Provide a consistent streetscape design for elements such as planting, paving, landscaping, lighting and furnishings that is of high quality and references the agricultural inspired design and small-town tradition.
- 10 Large growing shade trees are encouraged throughout the community to reduce heat island impacts.
- 11 Given the agricultural focus within the community, one or more streetscapes may be planted with fruit bearing trees that can then be harvested by the community.





Figure 3 - 27.0 Metre Right-of-Way (Modified)

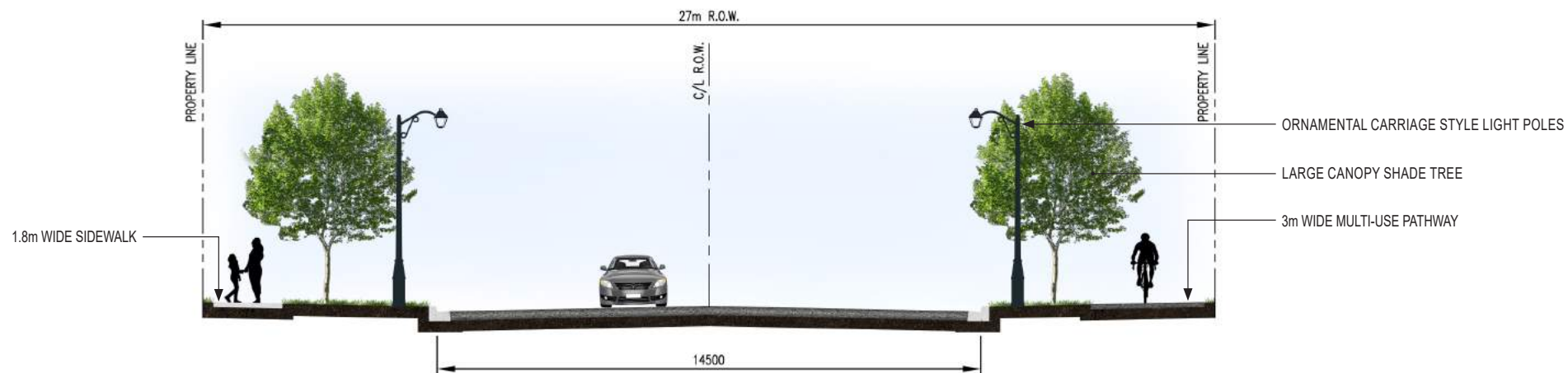
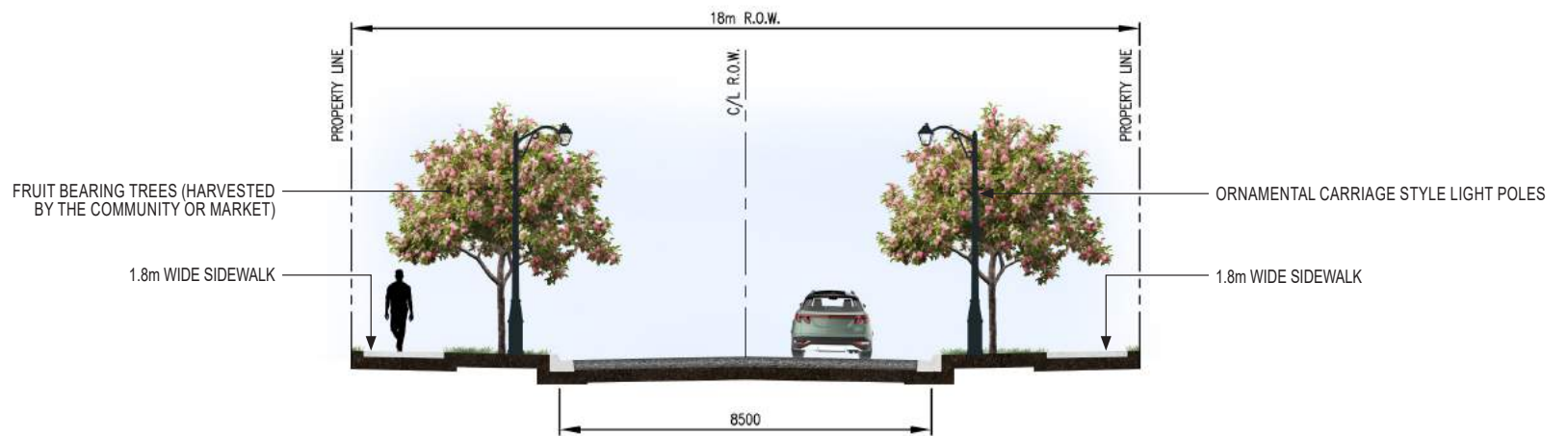


Figure 4 - 27.0 Metre Right-of-Way



**Figure 5 - 18.0 Metre Right-of-Way**

## 4.2 Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space opportunities will enhance the quality of life for new residents within the Subject Lands, as well as those in surrounding communities. They will be designed to connect with, reinforce and enhance the existing network of green spaces. Several parks and open space typologies will provide access to a mix of active and passive recreational opportunities and will serve as gateways and access points to a comprehensive trail network.

- 1** Generous setbacks shall be provided between the Greenbelt Plan area and built elements such as buildings, roads and parks to protect the natural state of these environmentally sensitive lands. This setback area should incorporate native landscaping and recreational trails that connect to the broader community trail network.
- 2** A Neighbourhood Park shall be provided adjacent to the Greenbelt Plan area, south of the Mixed-Use Hub area. The Park shall be predominantly visible and universally accessible from the public realm, specifically from the Mixed-Use Hub area and Collector Road.
- 3** The Neighbourhood Park should be designed as a flexible open space, allowing for active and passive recreational activities.
- 4** Residential and non-residential uses adjacent to the Neighbourhood Park will front onto and frame the park to provide an overlook for visual surveillance.
- 5** Private open space areas will be provided for some residents through a linear space that provides passive recreational opportunities.
- 6** Park elements should reflect the agricultural community theme incorporating playgrounds and water play with farm inspired equipment.
- 7** The neighbourhood park could be used for allotment garden expansion as the higher density build form is constructed.



**Figure 6** - Farm Themed Playground



**Figure 7** - Park Allotment Gardens

### 4.3 Trails and Connectivity

A comprehensive trail network will provide active linkages throughout the community to key points of interest and amenities. The trail network will utilize the extensive Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Areas within the Subject Lands to provide a recreational resource within a natural setting.

- 1 Trails will be designed for pedestrians and cyclists to traverse the landscape and provide links between major open spaces, commercial uses and other community areas.
- 2 Continuous trail networks will connect along streets, parks and natural spaces and offer connections between various trails and other recreation and active transportation infrastructure.
- 3 Trails will be aligned and constructed to reflect the form and function of the surrounding environment and ensure adequate separation buffers from sensitive natural features.
- 4 Wayfinding elements will provide direction throughout the trail network and reflect the agricultural-inspired theme of the community.
- 5 Community character Areas should be integrated into the natural trail network (at trailheads) and with the multi-use pathways (seating nodes).



**Figure 8** - Multi-use Pathway



**Figure 9** - Multi-Use Path with Seating Area

## 4.4 Agriculturally Inspired Community Gateways

Prominent intersections within the community will serve as key gateways and will include features that establish a sense of place and importance. Gateway entrance features will reflect the desired image and theme for the community and include components such as landscaping and art installations to reflect the agricultural-inspired aesthetic of the community.

- 1 Landscaping elements and high-quality materials will be utilized to provide a strong impression of the community to residents and visitors.
- 2 Gateways may include rolling stone fieldstone walls and pillars, community signage, and rural style farm fencing.
- 3 Gateways should be designed with four season interest, including evergreens and deciduous shrubs. Flowering Trees, such as crab apples and cherry should be integrated into to gateway further reinforce the agricultural theme.
- 4 Gateway elements will reflect the agriculturally inspired design of the community and pay homage to the small town and agricultural character of the Town.
- 5 The scale of gateway features will reflect the importance and function of the area while providing a sense of place.
- 6 Gateway entrances could combine both form and function to create spaces that serve as both welcoming elements into the community and passive recreational spaces.





Figure 10 - Features Wall



Figure 11 - Fencing Treatment

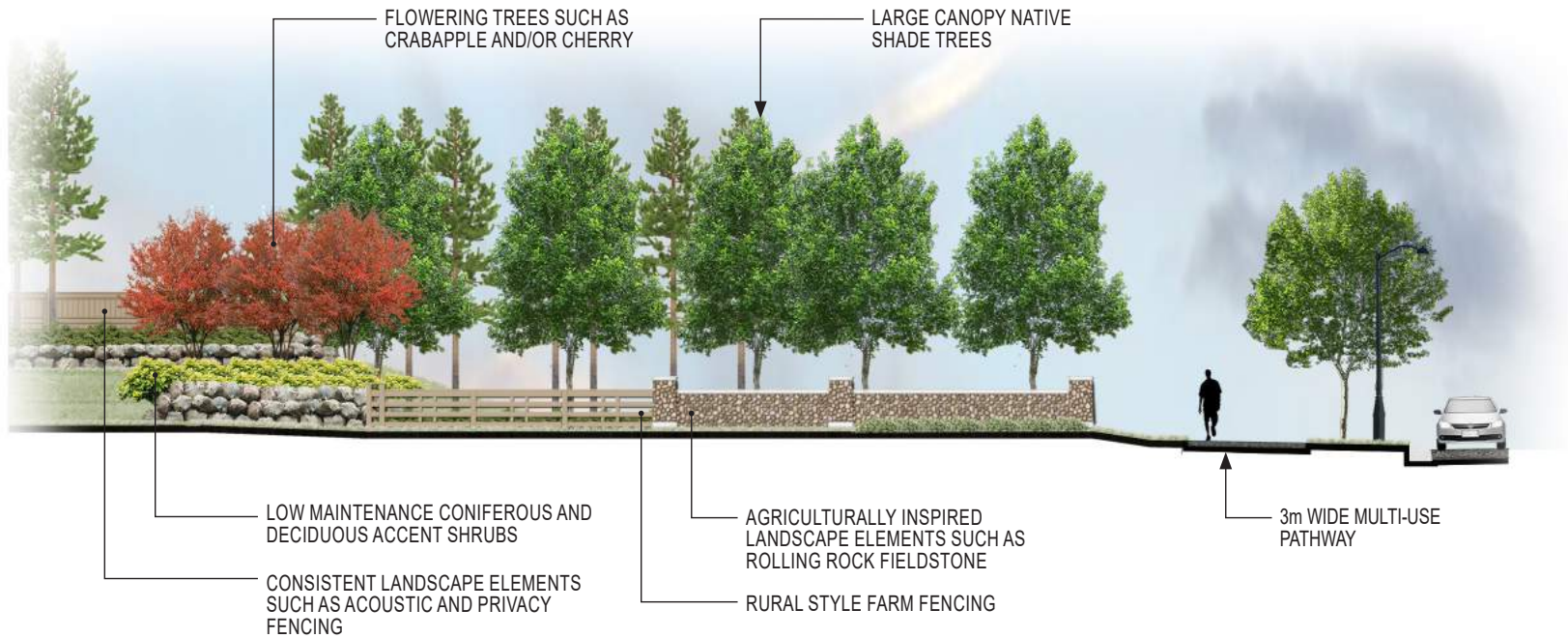


Figure 12 - Gateway Elevation Precedent

## 4.5 Community Nodes

Community Nodes will serve as important locations that offer a mix of uses that will attract residents and visitors. The Mixed-Use Hub and Farmers Market Area represent the main community nodes but could also include the surrounding park areas and community centre. Community Nodes will be located central to the community.

- 1 Nodes will provide facilities that will serve the community and integrate into the built form and design aesthetic of surrounding uses.
- 2 Landscaping elements and buffers will assist in ensuring compatibility between residential uses, mixed-uses, and park spaces.
- 3 Nodes will be located along prominent roads, including Collector Roads, to provide visual interest and prominence in the community.
- 4 A mural should be considered on the Farm House and/or Barn that is to be preserved.
- 5 Buildings within community nodes will be located along the street edge with parking provided to the rear.
- 6 Community Nodes should be implemented in coordination with multi-use pathways and intersection crossings. The character areas are to be designed to complement the gateway feature design and may also include fencing, pillars and seating.



Figure 13 - Community Node - Farmers Market

## 4.6 Signage and Lighting

Signage and lighting will enhance wayfinding elements of the community and maintain compatibility with the character of the surrounding area. The design and implementation of signage and lighting features will reflect the agricultural-inspired aesthetic of the community and will be designed of high-quality materials.

- 1 Sign and light design will complement the agriculturally inspired design of the community and will include language, fonts and other design elements that are easy to comprehend and read by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- 2 Sign lighting will generally include front-lit signs that minimize light pollution and include warm lighting hues.
- 3 Street lighting design will maintain the character of the community and reflect an agricultural-inspired character.
- 4 Hanging Baskets and banners may be considered on light poles near the Mixed-Use Hub to emphasize the importance of the farmer's market.



**Figure 14** - Light Standard with Hanging Decor



**Figure 15** - Front Lit Sign

## 4.7 Street Furniture

Street furniture will offer detail and refinement to the pedestrian realm and will be located strategically throughout the community in locations for gathering, passive recreation and around Community Nodes. The design and orientation of street furniture will offer places for a variety of viewpoints and seating opportunities with visual interest.

- 1 Street furniture will be designed to ensure a consistent and unified design that maintains the agricultural-inspired aesthetic of the community and will be made of high-quality materials.
- 2 Street furniture will be provided to enhance pedestrian comfort at strategic locations, away from vehicular traffic, parking and loading areas.



**Figure 16** - Pedestrian Seating Fronting Park



**Figure 17** - Pedestrian Seating by Gateway Entrance

## 4.8 Landmark Area

Landmark areas will serve as key focal points of the community that establish a sense of place and purpose. Landmark areas can include buildings that will be located towards major intersections of collector roads that frame the streetscape and create a visual sense of interest.

- 1** The Mixed-Use Hub will be designed as a landmark area and will include a built form that incorporates architectural features and details that emphasize the uniqueness and importance of the area as an agriculturally inspired community.
- 2** Built form design and landscaping elements within the Mixed-Use Hub area will combine form and function to create a place where people want to gather, shop and live by locating buildings close to the street edge and providing landscaping that defines the pedestrian realm.
- 3** Key intersections of Collector roads, where Community Gateways are provided, will also serve as landmark areas and include unique design elements.
- 4** Landmark areas will be clearly identified through landscape elements and/or signage and maintain visual prominence along roads, sidewalks, multi-use pathways and trails, where possible.





**Figure 18** - Agricultural-Inspired Community Gathering Space



**Figure 19** - Mixed-Use Hub Community Gathering Space



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# Private Realm Design Direction

## 5.1 General Built Form Guidelines

The Subject Lands will include varying building typologies and uses that respond to the existing context and future character of the immediate surrounding area. The overall built-form strategy is to provide densities along McCowan Road and within the Mixed-Use Hub block area that is central to the community. Heights will transition from higher density-built form typologies on Collector roads to lower density built-forms on local streets. Buildings will be massed to ensure appropriate street proportions, compatibility in scale, appropriate separation distances and suitable framing of streets.

Architectural building elements will incorporate agriculturally inspired design characteristics, including elements such as vertical board and batten siding, neutral colour palettes, and natural materials, such as stone, brick and wood.

- 1 Buildings shall be designed with high-quality materials and incorporate aspects of the Community of Stouffville that are agriculturally inspired.
- 2 The massing of buildings shall incorporate transitional building heights and adequate separation distances to create appropriate transitions between each built form typology and the surrounding context.
- 3 Building heights shall be taller along McCowan Road and in the Mixed-Use Hub area.
- 4 Buildings shall predominantly maintain their primary facades and entrances towards the public realm such as streets, parks and open spaces to create active frontages.
- 5 Parking, servicing, and loading areas should be located at the rear of the buildings and screened from public view with landscaping.
- 6 Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened from the public realm through rooftop placement, screening, or integration into the top of the building.
- 7 Agriculturally inspired design elements shall be incorporated into the design of all buildings within the community to maintain a continuous sense of place and identify.

## 5.2 Single-Detached Dwelling

Single detached dwellings provide a traditional housing style that contributes to a more rural character. This building style will be located throughout the community and provide a lower density-built form that contributes to the mix of housing choices in the community. The following are general guidelines that apply to single detached dwellings:

- 1 Single detached dwellings will generally be 2-storeys in height.
- 2 Single detached dwellings will be setback from the front property line to allow for elements such as a porch, landscaping walkway and driveway.
- 3 Building elements, such as front doors and garage doors will be designed to include agriculturally inspired design elements, such as a traditional barn door design.
- 4 Driveway widths shall generally correspond to the width of garages and include landscaped elements for the remainder of the front yard area.



Figure 20 - Single detached dwelling



Figure 21 - Single detached dwelling

### 5.3 On-Street Townhouses

On-street townhouses provide a more urban and compact type of housing. This type of housing will generally be provided along Collector Roads with some provided on Local Roads towards the north of the community, around the Mixed-Use Hub and Neighbourhood Park. The following are general guidelines that apply to on-street townhouses:

- 1 On-street townhouses shall generally be 2 storeys in height.
- 2 On-street townhouses shall generally be setback from the front property line to allow for landscaping and a walkway and driveway.
- 3 Building elements, such as front doors and garage doors will be designed to include agriculturally inspired design elements, such as a traditional barn door design.
- 4 Corner/end units should be designed to address both front and side yards with enhanced architectural articulation.



Figure 22 - On-street townhouse



Figure 23 - On-street townhouses

## 5.4 Rear-Lane Townhouses

Rear lane townhouses provide a more urban and compact type of housing that contributes to a positive public realm due to its proximity to the street. The following are general guidelines that apply to rear-lane townhouses:

- 1 Rear lane townhouses may range from 2- to 3 storeys in height.
- 2 Where mid-block connections are provided between townhouse blocks, an appropriate separation distance should be provided to accommodate a pedestrian walkway.
- 3 Townhouse blocks shall generally be setback from the front property line and comprise of a front porch, landscaping and walkway.
- 4 Front entry should directly address the street and public realm. Corner/end units should be designed to address both front and side yards with enhanced architectural articulation.
- 5 Vehicular access shall only be provided from public laneways at the rear to reduce the visual impacts of garages and driveways.





**Figure 24** - Rear lane townhouses



**Figure 25** - Rear lane townhouses fronting onto private amenity space



**Figure 26** - Rear lane townhouses

## 5.5 Live-Work Townhouses

Live-Work townhouses offer a unique opportunity within the community and allow residents to both live and work within the same townhouse building. Work areas are intended to be provided towards the front of the townhouse unit on the ground floor and strengthen the street edge with active uses while residential uses are to occur above. The following are general guidelines that apply to Live-Work units:

- 1** Where Live-Work units are incorporated, the ground floor containing non-residential use, such as retail or commercial, is encouraged to provide significant window openings to provide visibility and to animate the adjacent public realm.
- 2** The height of the ground floor for Live-Work units shall generally be greater than a typical residential height to accommodate a variety of uses.
- 3** Blocks comprising Live-Work units should be located along collector roads.
- 4** Any commercial signage for Live-Work units will be provided appropriately and maintain the character and architectural style of the Live-Work townhouse.



**Figure 27** - Live-Work townhouse units with signage and light treatment

## 5.6 Mixed-use / Residential Apartments

Mixed-use / Residential Apartments are envisioned to be located along McCowan Road and central to the community within the Mixed-Use Hub block area. These buildings provide varying unit types in a compact, medium- to high-density building form and will incorporate a variety of uses such residential, retail and commercial in a compact and highly articulated form. Mixed-use buildings within the Mixed-Use Hub block area will include commercial uses that support the agriculturally inspired design of the community and is contemplated to include ground floor uses, such as a restaurant, bakery and/or coffee shop that supports local agricultural operations.

This type of building typology establishes an active urban character where such densities are appropriate, such as along Collector Roads. The following are general guidelines that apply to mixed-use / residential apartments:

- 1** The ground floor shall predominantly incorporate transparent windows along the majority of the building facade that fronts the public street or park to promote active frontage and surveillance.
- 2** Residential entrances and non-residential entrances shall be clearly defined.
- 3** The ground floor of residential apartments should incorporate grade-related units and/or visually accessible indoor amenity space to animate the street.
- 4** The ground floor of mixed-use buildings should include opportunities for a mix of retail and commercial uses, with a focus on providing spaces that will support local agricultural operations.
- 5** Signage for mixed-use buildings shall conform with Section 4.6 of this UDD.
- 6** The design of the mechanical penthouse shall conform with Section 5.1 of this UDD.
- 7** The building should incorporate a ground floor height that can accommodate a variety of uses.



**Figure 28** - Mixed-use building with retail at grade



**Figure 29** - Mixed-use building with retail at grade



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