PLANNING JUSTIFICATION BRIEF FOR
REDLINE MODIFICATION TO DRAFT PLAN OF VACANT LAND CONDOMINIUM
APPLICATION

Subject Lands

The subject lands are located on the south east side of Niagara Stone Road in the village of Old Town, Niagara-on-the-Lake. The property has approximately 100 meters of frontage on Niagara Stone Road and a total lot area of 0.769 hectares. The property is an irregular shape that stretches back and includes a watercourse and natural area along the south. The owner has implemented some site alterations through a Town issued permit that allowed some unstable materials to be removed from the property and clean fill to be brought in and compacted in anticipation of the proposed development. The owner has also installed a dry lay stone wall along the rear of the property which was planned as part of the proposed development. Site alterations have not continued as the market has significantly changed since the previous approval and a pivot in direction is required in order to provide a more marketable product.

The surrounding lands uses include:

North: Niagara Stone Road and commercial and residential uses beyond

South: open space and conservation

East: open space and community center

West: natural areas and residential

The aerial below shows the general site context and the surrounding land uses.

Figure 1: Niagara Navigator Aerial Context of 2203 Niagara Stone Road



Source: Niagara Navigator, 2020

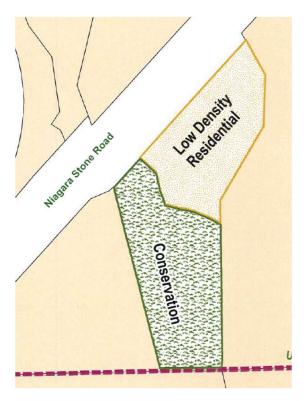
Existing Land Use Context

In September of 2020 Hummel Properties Inc. (HPI), submitted applications to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Vacant Land Condominium in support of a development plan that includes 6 high end bungalow townhouses. At the time of the application, the housing market demanded high end products, which is the reason for the proposal.

The applications were processed over a 14-month period and approved by The Council in November 2021, and there were no appeals to the applications. Since the approvals for the higher-level policy documents were approved HPI geared up and submitted the Site Plan Approval application to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in November 2021. HPI worked with staff to process the application and it was not until September 2022, that the Town issued Site Plan Approval for the 6-unit townhouse development.

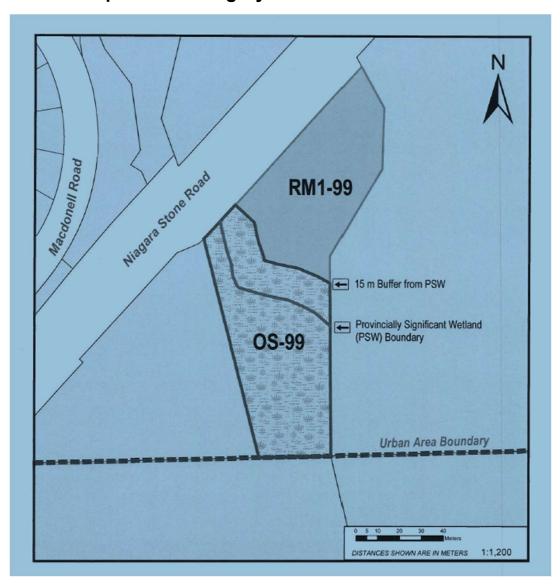
As a result of the development applications of 2020, the lands were re-designated to Low Density Residential in part and Conservation area in part to reflect the proposed development. Prior to this application the creek, slope and buffer area of the creek were not zoned conservation and lacked protection. The proposed changes to the townhouse development do not propose any changes to the existing site-specific land use designations that were approved by the Council in 2021. The current land use designation is shown in the Figure below.

Figure 1: Excerpt from By-law No. 5370-21 – Official Plan Amendment No. 79



The property was also site-specifically zoned in 2021 in significant details based on the 6-unit townhouse layout. The property was zoned Residential Multiple 1 – 99 in part and Open Space -99 in part. The site-specific setbacks of the proposed buildings were cemented into the by-law through a development plan schedule. The by-law includes multiple site-specific zoning provisions to address the irregular shape of the property and to address the constraints associated with the creek and buffers. The proposed redline revision proposes to maintain the existing site-specific zoning as it was approved in 2021. The plan has been designed in such a way as to maintain the established setbacks, maintain the buffers and setbacks along the creek so as to minimize the approvals process and to respect the established provisions. The figure below shows the existing site-specific zoning for the lands.

Figure 2 - Excerpt from Zoning By-Law No. 4316EC-21



As noted above, the property is Site Plan Approved to support the development of 6 townhouse units with access through a public road. HPI has been actively working to partner with a local builder for the development but in each instance, a deal cannot be reached with the current high-end plan. The market has changed significantly and is demanding a smaller more affordable product. To this end, HPI wishes to redline the draft approved Vacant Land Condominium Plan to support an increase in the number of townhouses from 6 units to 9 units. The proposed units have a smaller building footprint and are two-storeys, making the product more affordable and more attractive to the marketplace.

The following studies were completed as part of the 2021 approval:

Archaeological Assessment

Detritus Consulting Ltd. was commissioned in 2017 by HPI to undertake a Stage 1 & 2 Archaeological Assessment on the property at 2203 Niagara Stone Road. The assessment revealed no archaeological finds on the property and concluded that no additional work is required to address Ministry of Culture requirements. The Stage 1 & 2 Assessment was submitted to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for review. On June 1st 2017 the Ministry issued a letter of clearance for the report. Both the report and the clearance letter have been submitted with the applications.

Environmental Impact Study

In December 2013 an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was completed on the property as part of another development application by Beacon Environmental. In December 2018 Beacon prepared an Addendum to the original report to review the current 6 units townhouse development proposal. The EIS and Addendum concluded that the proposed development would not result in a negative impact to the natural heritage features on the subject lands and adjacent lands subject to implementing certain mitigation measures through the development. The mitigation measures outlined in the 2013 EIS include the following:

- Enhancing the vegetative buffer along the creek and bank. A planting plan will be prepared at the detailed development stage (Site Plan Approval stage) when the final grading and drainage design is completed.
- Installation of filter fabric and wire fencing along the staked buffer zone to define the development boundary and prevent construction activities from impacting the buffer and feature.
- Preparation of a sediment and erosion control plan be prepared to minimize impacts during the construction stage.
- Recommendation that any vegetation removal take place outside of mid-April to Mid-July to avoid impacts on migratory bird breeding.

All of the above noted mitigation measures can be implemented into the development plan through the draft plan of condo approval and designed into the site plan approval stage. The mitigation measures will be vetted with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and The Region of Niagara and inserted as draft plan conditions in order to secure the measures prior to construction proceeding.

As a result of the initial application circulation, comments were received from the Region of Niagara, who is now the environmental authority, whereas the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority was previously. Some updates to the original EIS were required in order to address the regional policies as part of the applications including the confirmation of the boundary of the provincially significant wetland on the property. The revised EIS has addressed all of the additional items outlined in the Terms of Reference provided by the Region in the fall of 2020. The letter from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, dated April 30th 2021 is also included to confirm the new psw boundary as requested.

Environmental Noise Feasibility Study

Valcoustics Canada Ltd. was commissioned to undertake an Environmental Noise Feasibility Study for the property. The results of the noise study indicate that mitigation measures are required for the future dwelling units. All units are required to have air conditioning and exterior wall and window construction meeting the minimum non-acoustical requirements stated in the OBC. These two measures are standard building designs which will be implemented through the building normal design in any event. The noise mitigation requirements will be secured in the draft plan approval as conditions of draft plan approval.

As a result of the circulation comments from the Region, the Noise Report was updated and resubmitted to the Region for review in February 2021. The revised study results and recommendations have not changed since the initial report. No additional mitigation measures are required. We have not received information on whether the revised study is acceptable from the Region as of May 2021.

Functional Servicing Study

Upper Canada Consultants was commissioned in 2018 to undertake a detailed servicing study that included a stormwater management plan for the development proposal. The servicing analysis provides an assessment of the existing sanitary sewers, stormwater management and domestic water servicing in the area of the property. Based on their high-level assessment of the existing services in the area it has been confirmed that there is adequate infrastructure in the area to service the proposed development.

Slope Study

Soil-Mat Engineers & Consultants Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a slope stability study on the property in 2013 based on an alternative development plan. The proposed development is further away and respects the stable slope area as determined in the Soil-Mat report. The development proposal has been designed to rely on the results of the study.

Transportation Brief and Sightline Study

Paradigm Transportation was commissioned to complete a sightline study for the proposed development in 2018. The scope of the report was to look at the sightline of the driveway in relation to Niagara Stone Road and the existing multi-use trail located along Niagara Stone Road. The results of the study indicate that the design and location of the proposed driveway meets the minimum sight distance requirement. A number of additional safety measures are recommended to increase the level of safety for the trail crossing and the intersection. These include additional signage, pavement painting. These requirements will be incorporated at the detailed site plan approval stage and as draft plan conditions.

Together these studies were used to establish the boundaries of the development, the areas of protection and restoration, location of driveway entrances etc. All of these design parameters are proposed to be maintained through the proposed changes.

In support of the proposed changes, the following studies were revised and form part of this submission:

Revised Application and Fees, Draft Redline Revised Plan of Vacant Land Condominium, Revised Site Plan, Functional Servicing & SWM Report, Revised Preliminary Landscape Concept, Revised Noise Report, Preliminary Conceptual Elevations.

Proposal

As noted above, the revised proposal is to shrink the building envelopes from the approved plan in order to provide a more affordable unit type to meet current market demands.

The proposal maintains all of the existing development areas, conservation boundaries and approves site-specific zoning provisions. The private road is in the same location as the existing approval; the changes are minor in nature as the only changes proposed affect the approved building envelopes.

Schedule A shows the proposed new site plan.

Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13

The Planning Act sets the foundation for land use planning in Ontario. The Act outlines how land uses are to be controlled and by which authority. The Planning Act sets out fair, open, accessible, timely, and efficient planning processes. The Planning Act requires planning authorities to make decisions that have regard to provincial interests as outlined in section 2 of the Act. Provincial interests include the protection of natural areas, efficient use of sewage and water services, accessibility, adequate provision of a range of housing, the appropriate location of growth, and promotion of development that supports public transit amongst others.

The proposed development has regard to provincial interests outlined in the Planning Act in the following manner:

- The development proposal makes efficient use of urban lands that are currently underutilized, making more efficient use of the existing municipal infrastructure system reducing long-term maintenance costs for the municipality and reducing the need for unnecessary urban boundary expansions to accommodate growth.
- The subject lands are within the Town's defined urban boundary and located within walking distance of the commercial core and a range of other existing amenities.
- There are no impacts to any natural heritage features as a result of the proposed changes as the boundaries of the environmental features are being maintained.

The Planning Act requires that planning authorities make decisions that are consistent with policy statements and make decisions that conform with applicable provincial plans. Details on how this is achieved are outlined in the next sections of this report.

Based on the review above, the development proposal has regard to provincial interests as outlined in the Planning Act.

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS)

The Province of Ontario repealed the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and replaced these two policy documents with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement. The Provincial Planning Statement is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act, which came into effect on October 2024. The Provincial Planning Statement is applicable to all planning decisions made on or after October 2024.

The PPS is a consolidation and simplification of the two previous policy documents promoting compact, transit-oriented designs, providing an appropriate range and mix of housing, supporting all types of residential intensification while optimizing existing and planning infrastructure and public service facilities.

This type of infill development will not have a negative impact on any identified natural heritage features and the proposal is consistent with the PPS 2024.

Regional Municipality of Niagara Official Plan, as adopted by By-law 2022-47

The Niagara Region Official Plan (ROP) echoes and builds upon the land-use policies set out in the Provincial Planning Statement. The subject lands are located within the Urban Area Boundary and are designated as Built-up Area according to Schedule B – Regional Structure of the ROP. Built-up Areas are to be the focus of growth and intensification over the long term throughout the region. The Niagara Region Official Plan promotes more efficient use of urban serviced lands, it promotes a mix of housing types, encourages intensification, promotes active transportation opportunities, accessibility, and attractive built form within the Built-up area. The proposed development will contribute to meeting the short-term needs of the region in terms of providing compact housing to accommodate growth by adding three additional units to an already approved plan.

The plan will result in the intensification of the Built-up Area and will add to the existing housing stock within the community. The development contributes to meeting the Town's intensification targets and it conforms with the policies of the ROP.

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan, as amended to July 17, 2017

2.4 Built-up Area Boundary and Built Boundary

Planned Function

The built-up Area is the limit of existing development within the urban areas of Virgil and the Old Town as defined by the Province of Ontario in April, 2008. All growth and development which will occur within the Built-up Areas is considered to be intensification and will count towards the achievement of the Town's intensification target.

The subject lands within the existing built-up area in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake where intensification is encouraged in order to meet the Town's intensification targets. The proposed development will contribute to meeting the Town's targets and provide needed housing options within the Town.

3.2 Growth Management Objectives

Growth Strategy Objectives

The objectives of the Town's growth strategy area to:

a) To accommodate all future urban growth within the present-day urban boundary;

The property is located within the existing urban boundary where infill development is encouraged in order to reduce the need for unnecessary urban boundary expansions in the future to accommodate future urban growth.

 Maintain the current delineation of the urban area boundary for the foreseeable future;

Infill development like the proposed should be encouraged as it makes better use of existing urban lands, which will in turn reduces the need for unnecessary urban boundary expansions in the future. Developments like the proposed will also make better use of urban services and spread the overall cost of long-term maintenance of these facilities, which takes some pressure off the existing residents and reduces the need to raise property taxes.

c) Provide a framework for revitalizing the Town's commercial areas and directing growth to appropriate locations in the Town's urban communities.

The proposed development is located in an appropriate area where it will fit into the existing neighbourhood. The new dwellings will provide more population who will use the existing commercial area and support the long-term viability of the local businesses.

d) Direct urban growth and development to the Town's existing Urban Areas.

Infill development like the proposed should be encouraged to make better use of existing urban lands, which will in turn reduce the need for unnecessary urban boundary expansions in the future.

e) Direct a minimum of 15% of the Town's future residential development to the Built-up Area located in Virgil, the Old Town, St. David's, and Queenston through appropriate intensification.

The subject lands are located within the Built-up area in Old Town. The development will assist the Town in meeting the 15% growth targets.

e) Optimize existing infrastructure to provide for efficient use of infrastructure.

Adding three additional dwelling units to the existing system will make more efficient use of the existing infrastructure reducing the overall costs to the municipality, which benefits the Town in the long term.

3.2 Population Forecast

The projected population growth for the Town is 7500 people by 2031.

3.3 Housing Forecast

The projected housing growth for the Town is 3395 households by 2031.

The proposed development will contribute to meeting the Town's overall population and housing growth targets in a sensitively planned manner.

4 Intensification

4.1 General Intensification Policy

The Town supports intensification and infilling within appropriate areas throughout the Built-up Area in accordance with Land Use Compatibility, urban design and other applicable land use compatibility criteria of this Plan. The Town also supports forms of infilling that use the existing built form, including garden suites and accessory dwelling units, where the proposed development and reuse is consistent with the land use compatibility of this Plan.

The proposed new lots are a form of appropriate intensification that has been sensitively designed to minimize undue negative impacts on the community. There are no anticipated land use compatibility issues triggered as a result of the proposed development.

4.2 Intensification Target

Intensification Target

By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter the Town shall target for a minimum of 15% of all new dwelling units occurring annually to occur within the Built-up Area identified on Schedules "I-1" and "I-2".

Development of the subject lands will contribute to the Town's intensification target.

Phasing of Target

Based on the annual housing forecasts contained within the plan, a total of 321 new dwelling units are required between 2015 and 2031 to meet the Town's 15% target within the existing built-up Area. The number of required units within the Built-up Area is calculated by multiplying the intensification target of 15% (0.15) by 2140 units, the total number of units projected by the housing forecast.

The addition of three new dwellings into the built-up area will contribute to meeting the Towns growth targets.

4.4 Intensification Objectives

Objectives

The objectives of the intensification policies of this Plan are to:

e) Direct intensification to the Built-up Areas where development will not impact designated heritage areas, adjacent heritage resources and/or heritage resources on the property, estate lots and the residential character of the property or the surrounding area.

The proposed development is a form of intensification on an oversized and underutilized lot located within the existing built-up area.

Built-up Intensification Policies

The Town will support appropriate infilling and intensification within the limits of the Built-up Area. The following policies apply:

 a) The Town plans to accommodate 15% of its forecasted intensification development within the Built-up Area between 2015 and 2031.

The proposed development will assist the Town in meeting its forecasted intensification targets.

b) The predominant built form for intensification and redevelopment within the residential areas of the Built-up Area will be single detached, semi-detached and townhomes and low-rise apartment buildings subject to the relevant development and compatibility policies of this plan.

The proposed development meets the predominant housing type within the built-up area as it is proposing and expansion to the amount of already approved townhouses.

e) The Town will update zoning standards to ensure that zoning requirements provide sufficient opportunities to support and encourage growth and intensification through redevelopment.

The property is already zoned to permit townhouses.

g) The Region and the Town will ensure that an adequate supply of sanitary and water services is made available to accommodate the unit target for the Built-up Area and for the existing potential developable lands within the urban area and that the infrastructure for the distribution of water collection of waste water can support the increased load.

It is understood that there is sufficient capacity within the existing municipal infrastructure system to accommodate the three new townhouse dwellings. Prior to final approval, the proposal will be subject to other review processes where details including servicing capacity review and detailed grading and servicing designs will be undertaken. Before final approval servicing capacities will be confirmed.

I) The Town will utilize maximum and minimum densities to ensure that intensification areas/sites are not underdeveloped. Minimum net density shall be 14 units per hectare (6 units per acre) and maximum density of 30 units per hectare (12 units per acre).

The proposed increase of three townhouse units brings the density to 26 units per hectare which is within the permitted density.

f) During the development approval process that consideration will be given with respect to the capacity of existing infrastructure including utilities and type of improvements, if any, which may be necessary to serve the Built-up Area.

It is understood that there is sufficient capacity within the existing municipal infrastructure system to accommodate the proposed development. Agencies that control infrastructure and utilities will be circulated and will have an opportunity to comment and confirm capacity prior to final approval of the plan.

Section 9: Residential

9.2 Goals and Objectives

(1) To ensure that sufficient lands have been placed in a Residential designation to accommodate the anticipated population in a suitable variety of locations, densities and unit types.

The subject lands are designated residential and can accommodate infill development that can contribute towards meeting population needs.

(5) To ensure that existing housing and existing residential areas shall be preserved and improved.

There is no impact on the existing residential areas as a result of the proposal. The existing housing stock will be increased adding more housing options within the Town.

(7) To encourage infill residential development of vacant or underutilized parcels of land in residential areas where such development will be compatible with existing uses and where it will contribute to the more efficient use of sewer and water services and community facilities.

The subject lands are oversized and currently underutilized which presents an opportunity for infill development that is consistent with the surrounding area.

(11) To encourage the development of well-designed and visually distinctive forms.

Similar to other recent projects by HPI, the intent is to provide design standards that must be adhered to by future builders in order to ensure high-quality designs and materials are used. It is intended to have attractive dwellings that fit into and become an asset to the character of the community.

The minor changes conform to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan.

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Zoning By-law 4316-09

As noted throughout this report, the intention is to work within the approved 2021 site specific zoning by-law. By-law No. 4316RC-21 was approved by Council in 2021 to permit the development of 6 vacant land townhouses with access on a private road. There is a set of site-specific zoning provisions that were approved through the by-law at that time. The proposed changes have been intentionally designed to fit within the existing approved site-specific zoning by-law in order to respect the established development envelope. The figure below shows the boundaries of the approved zoning in red and shows the proposed changes in gray. There are some minor changes but the changes proposed fit within the established zoning parameters. A larger version of this plan can be found at Schedule B of this report.

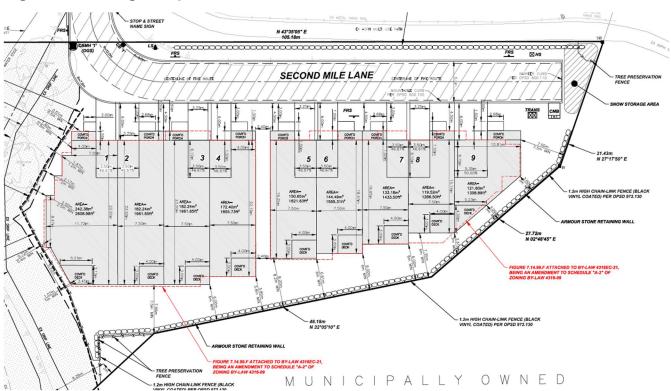


Figure 3 – Zoning Comparison Sketch

Planning Recommendation

The changes that are proposed to the development are minor in nature. The changes only apply to the building envelopes and the rest of the established development parameters are to be maintained including the established boundary of the creek, the slope and the buffers.

The changes will result in an increase of 3 housing units in the Old Town Village which is the type of sensitive intensification that will contribute towards meeting the Towns growth targets.

The development lands are isolated from sensitive neighbors so the intensification will not negatively impact adjacent properties.

Should the minor revision be approved by The Council, the proposal will be subject to another layer of approvals by amending the site plan approval working with the Town's technical staff to ensure the changes meet the Town's design specifications.

HPI hopes that the changes will make the project more viable and bring a product that will be more affordable to the market, which will expedite the development of the property.

The proposal meets all of the provincial planning policies as well as the region and Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake policies and is considered good land use planning.

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