

# Urban Design Brief

<b>Address</b>	Block 6, Plan 16M75, Owen Sound
<b>Client</b>	Andpet Realty Limited.
<b>Date</b>	April.08.2026
<b>Project No.</b>	26410

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# Introduction.





The Biglieri Group Ltd. was retained by Andpet Realty Limited to prepare an Urban Design Brief (“UDB”) in support of a proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application for the development of an 8-storey residential apartment building, intended to operate as a retirement residence, municipally known as Block 6, Plan 16M-75 in the City of Owen Sound (the “Subject Site” or “Site”). The Subject Site forms part of the broader East Court Residences subdivision and is located at the southeast terminus of 15th Avenue East within the Sydenham Heights Planning Area.

The Proposal is being called the “East Court Retirement Residences”.

The purpose of this Urban Design Brief is to evaluate the Proposal from an urban design perspective and to demonstrate how the development has been thoughtfully designed to respond to its physical context, surrounding land uses, and applicable policy framework. This includes an assessment of built form, massing, height, site organization, landscape design, pedestrian connectivity, and the interface with adjacent uses. The UDB also provides a comprehensive review of the relevant urban design policies and guidelines, including those contained within the Planning Act, the Grey County Official Plan, and the City of Owen Sound Official Plan, among others.

The Proposal represents an opportunity to introduce a high-quality mid-rise built form within an evolving area characterized by a mix of residential, institutional, and commercial uses, including existing and planned retirement residences and supportive services. In this context, the design has been developed to achieve appropriate transition to adjacent low-rise residential uses, while reinforcing the emerging mid-rise character of the surrounding area. Particular attention has been given to mitigating potential impacts related to massing, shadowing, overlook, and compatibility through building siting, setbacks, articulation, and landscape buffering.

This Urban Design Brief demonstrates that the Proposal is consistent with, and supportive of, the broader planning and urban design objectives for the City of Owen Sound, including the creation of compact, walkable, and transit-supportive communities, and the delivery of a high standard of built form and public realm design. Overall, the Proposal represents a contextually appropriate and well-integrated development that contributes positively to the existing and planned character of the area.

# Site Description & Location.



2.1 **Subject Site**

2.2 **Surrounding Context**

2.3 **Transportation Network**



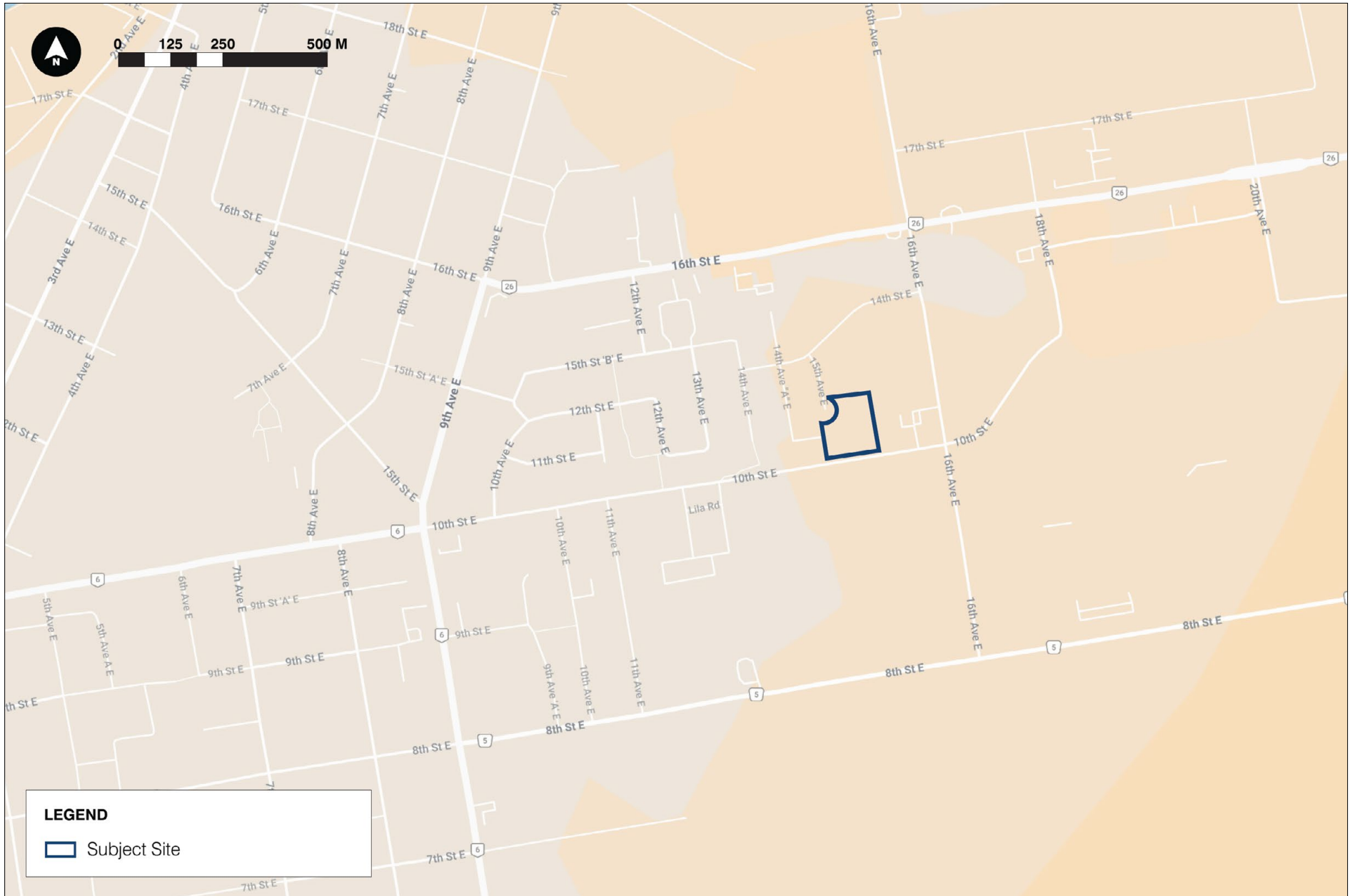
## 2.1 Subject Site

The Subject Site is located within the Sydenham Heights Planning Area of the City and is at the southeast terminus of 15th Avenue East in the City of Owen Sound and is legally described as Block 6, Plan 16M-75, subject to an easement in gross as in GY211952, City of Owen Sound (see **Figure 1** below).

The Site forms Block 6 within Draft Plan of Subdivision 42T-185010, known as East Court Residences, and is located at the southern limit of this subdivision. The site has an approximate area of 1.0 hectare (2.5 acres) and is irregular in shape, with frontage along the southeast terminus of a cul-de-sac along 15th Avenue East. The western boundary abuts existing townhouse development, while the northern and eastern boundaries interface with parcels fronting onto 14 Street East and 16th Avenue East, respectively.

The site is currently vacant and has been subject to prior grading and servicing works associated with the broader subdivision. A notable physical characteristic of the site is the presence of a significant grade differential along its southern edge, where a retaining wall separates the site from 10th Street East. This grade change is approximately equivalent to 3 to 4 storeys in height, resulting in the Site being visually and functionally depressed below the lands to the south.

Figure 1. **Location Map**





## 2.2 Surrounding Context

The surrounding area is characterized by a mix of residential, institutional, and commercial uses, reflecting a transition between lower-density neighbourhoods and more intensive mid-rise forms of development.

**North:** Immediately north of the site are recently developed and emerging residential uses within the East Court Residences subdivision, as well as existing mid-rise and retirement-type residential buildings. Notably, the Owen Sound Gardens Retirement Residence (4 storeys) and Southbridge Owen Sound (3 storeys) are located in close proximity. Further north along 16th Street East is a concentration of large-format commercial uses, including retail plazas and service commercial uses. Heritage Heights Park is located approximately a 4-minute walk to the northwest from the Site. At 1750 16th Avenue East (north of the Subject Site), a 6-storey, 120-room Hampton Inn hotel was approved via ZBA No. 54 (By-law 2025-018), permitting a maximum height of approximately 19.2 m, again slightly above the base zoning; this application was formally approved by Council in February 2025, with subsequent approvals (e.g., site plan, severance) still required prior to construction.

**East:** To the east of the site are additional retirement residential uses, including retirement living facilities and vacant or under construction parcels. 16th Avenue East functions as a north-south minor arterial connection linking the area to the broader commercial corridor to the north. Further east still is Seasons Retirement Community in Owen Sound at 1389 16th Ave E, a 4 to 5-storey mid-rise structure. At 1200 16th Avenue East (adjacent to Subject Site) a six-storey, 100-room hotel with ancillary commercial uses was approved through ZBA No. 28 (By-law 2019-163), with a permitted height of approximately 18.5 m to 23.3 m (parapet) or 6 to 7 storeys, reflecting site-specific relief above the standard 18 m limit; this project has received Council approval but construction status is unclear.

**West:** To the west are established low-rise residential neighbourhoods consisting primarily of detached and townhouse dwellings. These lands form part of a stable residential area with a fine-grain street network and local park space, including Ed Taylor Park located approximately a 10-minute walk to the west from the Site.

**South:** To the south of the site, beyond 10th Street East, is the Georgian College - Owen Sound Campus. Due to the significant grade separation created by the retaining wall along the southern edge of the subject site, the lands to the south are

located substantially above the elevation of the Site. As a result, the subject Site is not directly perceived as part of the same neighbourhood context as those lands to the south.

This condition establishes 10th Street East as a definitive edge condition, with the subject site more tightly integrated with the East Court Residences subdivision and the emerging mid-rise residential and institutional context to the north, east, and west (see **Figure 2** and **3** below).

Overall, the Subject Site is located outside of and at the edge of the nearest established neighbourhood, is surrounded by other retirement residences and / or long-term care facilities and mid-rise structures, supportive institutional uses (e.g., Brightshores Health System - Owen Sound's hospital), and supportive commercial uses.

**Note:** The above height context map is not comprehensive in terms of identifying the heights of all existing buildings, approved but not yet constructed height permissions, or existing height permissions under current zoning. It is intended to demonstrate how the Subject Site existing within an evolving neighbourhood of emerging mid-rise built forms amongst existing low-rise uses.

Figure 2. **Aerial Context Map**

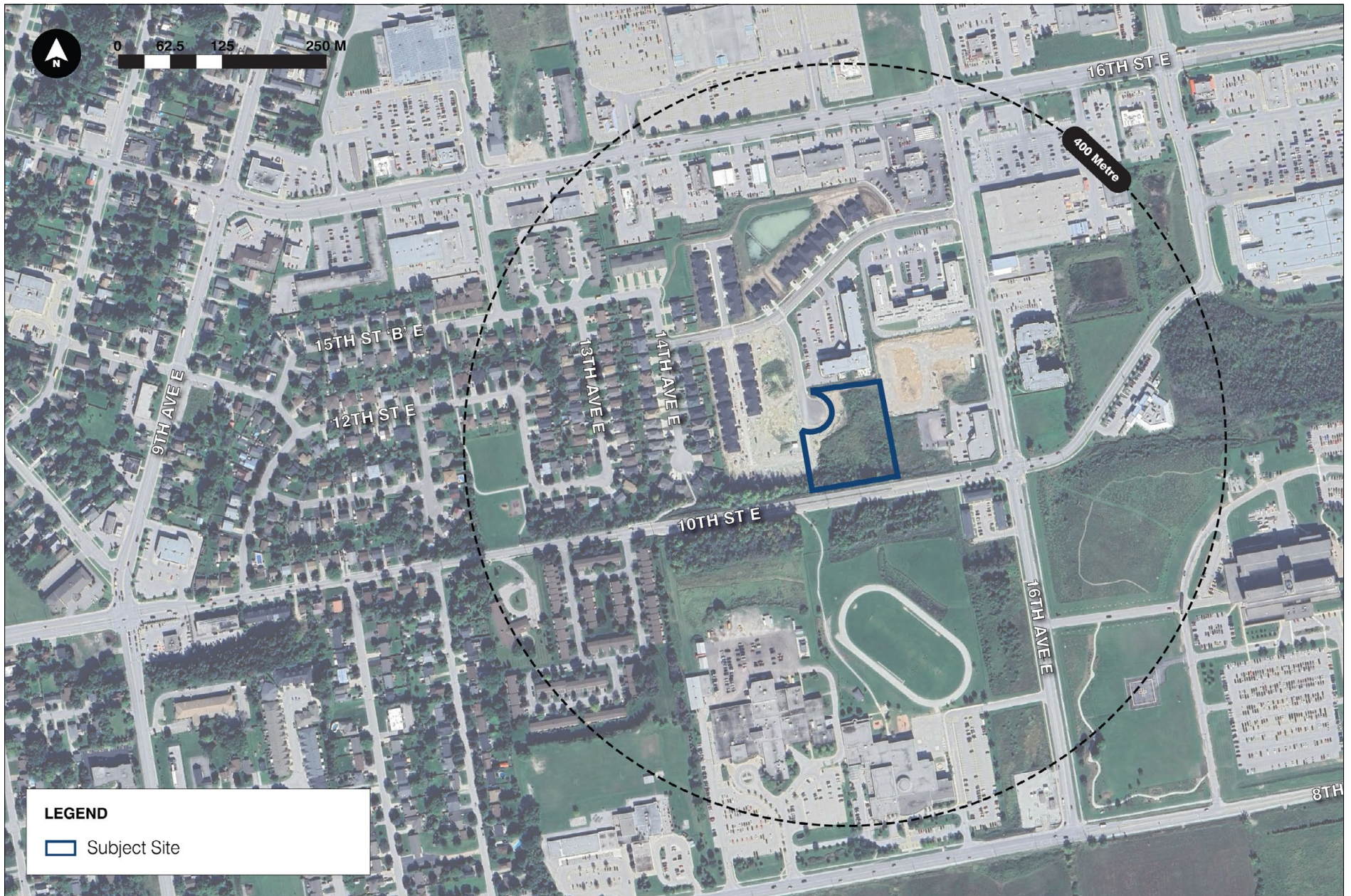




Figure 3. **Height Context Map**



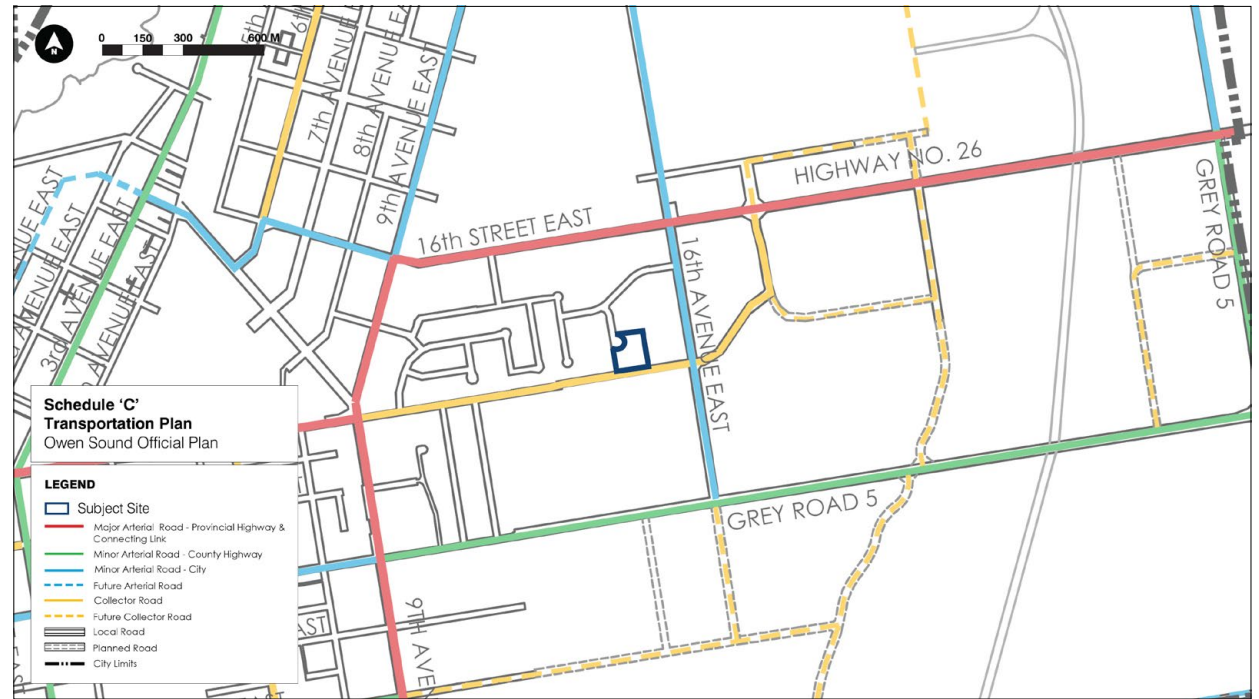
## 2.3 Transportation Network

### 2.3.1 Road Network

The Subject Site is situated within a well-defined road network that provides connectivity at the local, collector, and arterial levels. Immediately adjacent to the site, 15 Avenue East is identified as a local road. To the south, 10th Street East, which is grade separated by about 3 to 4 storeys, is identified as a collector road, running east-west along the southern boundary of the Site. This corridor functions as an important local connector, linking residential neighbourhoods to the west with the broader arterial network to the east. Access to the site is also facilitated via 15th Avenue East, a north-south local road that connects indirectly to 16th Street East via 14 Street East. 16th Street East is classified as a minor arterial road. This arterial corridor represents a primary north-south transportation route through Owen Sound, providing local connectivity north-south across the City.

Overall, the subject site is well integrated within the City's transportation system, with direct access to a collector road and close proximity to both municipal and regional arterial corridors.

Figure 4. **Official Plan - Schedule C - Transportation**





### 2.3.2 Active Transportation Network

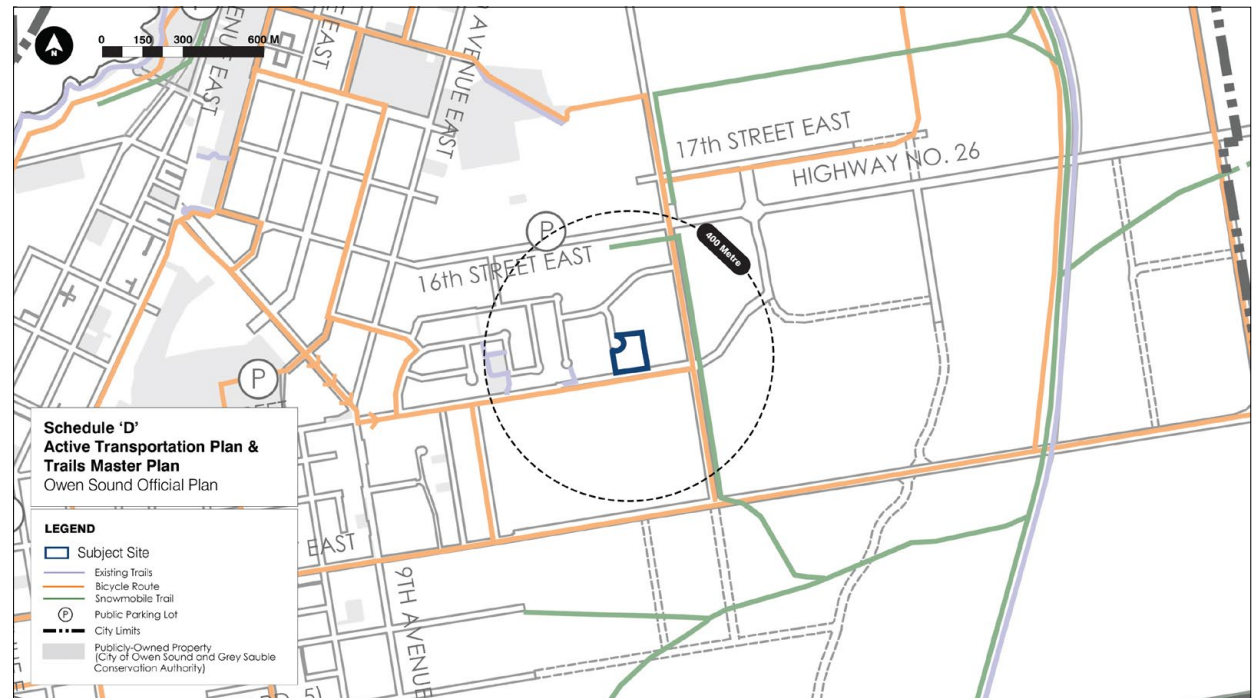
The subject site is located within an established and evolving active transportation network that includes on-street bicycle routes, sidewalks, and multi-use trail connections throughout the surrounding area. As illustrated on the Schedule D (Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan Model) of the City's Official Plan as amended, designated bicycle routes are provided along 10th Street East, 8th Street East, and connecting north-south corridors along 16 Street East, offering east-west and north-south cycling connectivity through the broader neighbourhood. In addition, several existing trails existing within the East Court Residences subdivision that provide further opportunities for recreational and longer-distance active transportation.

Complementing these facilities, sidewalks are provided on all streets connecting to the site, including 15th Avenue East, with many surrounding streets containing sidewalks on both sides, supporting continuous pedestrian circulation throughout the area.

While the proposed development is intended as a retirement residence and some future residents may have reduced mobility or rely more heavily on vehicular or assisted transportation, the surrounding network nonetheless provides opportunities for those residents who remain active and mobile. The design of the site has also incorporated internal and external pedestrian connectivity, including an easement located at the western portion of the site, which is intended to facilitate a future pedestrian walkway connection between

the Subject Site, 15th Avenue East, and the townhouse development to the west. This connection has been considered in the site design and will enhance permeability and walkability between adjacent residential areas. Together, the existing sidewalks, bicycle routes, trail systems, and planned internal connections establish a network that supports a range of mobility options for residents and visitors.

Figure 5. **Official Plan - Schedule D - Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan Model**



### 2.3.3 Public Transit Network

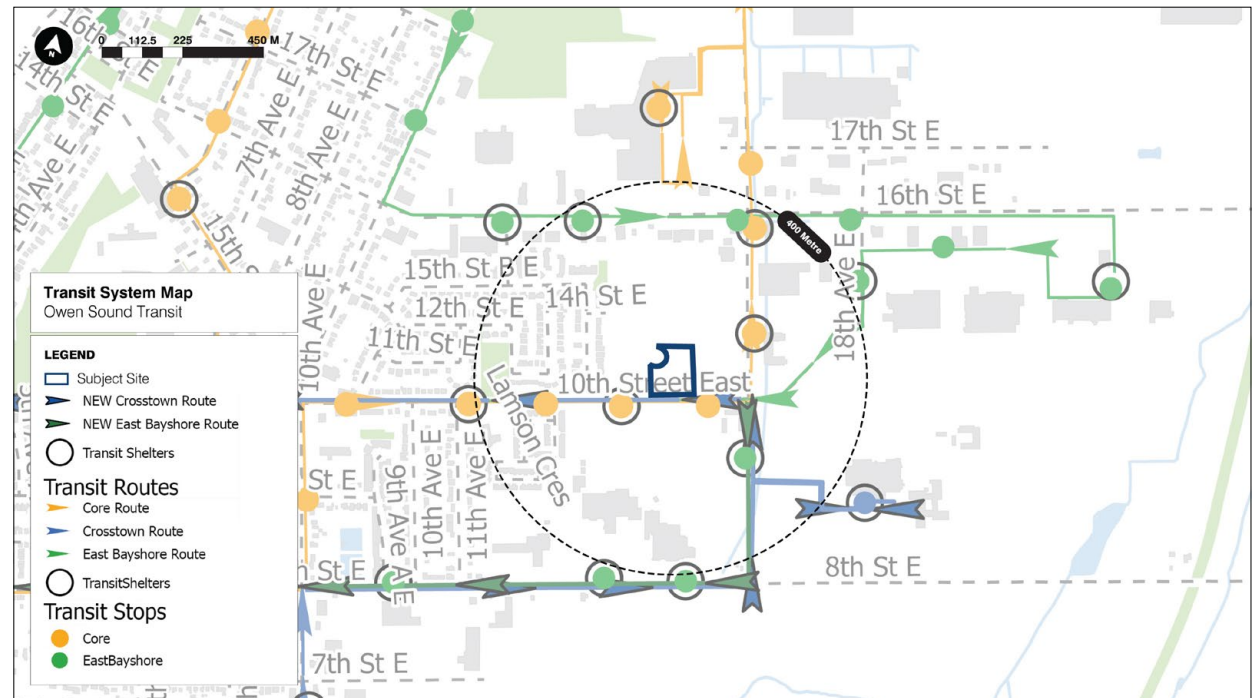
Residents of Owen Sound are served by a compact but effective transit system consisting of four conventional bus routes operating at 30-minute intervals Monday to Saturday, providing consistent local service across the city, complemented by the Guelph Owen Sound Transportation (GOST) service offering daily regional connections to Guelph and surrounding communities, as well as Mobility Transit for door-to-door accessible service and real-time trip planning through the Transit App.

Existing transit is available to future residents of the retirement residence within a 5 to 10-minute walk via the Core (Route 2) and East Bayshore (Route 4) routes along 16th Street East and 16th Avenue East, with the Crosstown (Route 3) accessible within approximately an 11-minute walk along 10th Street East or via transfer from Route 2. Each route operates as a loop connecting to the Transit Terminal and key destinations across the city with consistent 30-minute headways (generally 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturdays), and while the combined service results in improved effective frequencies of approximately 15 minutes in areas where routes overlap near the Transit Terminal, service remains at 30-minute intervals across most of the system.

The proposed East Court Retirement Residences is, in our opinion, transit-supportive as it introduces a compact, mid-rise residential form with 128 units within walking distance of existing transit routes, thereby contributing to increased residential density that supports transit viability and usage. Its integrated pedestrian connections, proximity to multiple bus routes, and coordinated site design further enhance accessibility and the overall transit user experience.

**\*Transit-supportive:** in regard to land use patterns, means development that makes transit viable, optimizes investments in transit infrastructure, and improves the quality of the experience of using transit. It often refers to compact, mixed-use development that has a high level of employment and residential densities, including air rights development, in proximity to transit stations, corridors and associated elements within the transportation system. Approaches may be recommended in guidelines developed by the Province or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives.

Figure 6. Transit Map





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# Proposal.



- 3.1 **Built Form & Massing**
- 3.2 **Height**
- 3.3 **Site Layout**
- 3.4 **Site Lighting**
- 3.5 **Amenities & Outdoor Living Areas**
- 3.6 **Streetscape**
- 3.7 **Safety**
- 3.8 **Landscaping**
- 3.9 **Sun & Shadows**



The proposed development, herein referred to as the “East Court Retirement Residences” of the “Proposal”, consists of an 8-storey residential apartment building comprising 128 dwelling units on the Subject Site at the southeast terminus of 15th Avenue East in the City of Owen Sound. The Proposal is to be facilitated through a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) application.

The Proposal forms part of the broader East Court Residences subdivision and is intended to introduce a mid-rise built form within an emerging residential and institutional context at about 128 units per hectare or a floor space index (FSI) of about 1.4.

While the building is physically designed as a residential apartment building, with 13,880 square metres of gross floor area (GFA), it is intended to function as a retirement residence, which differs from a standard apartment building in Ontario in that it provides accommodation primarily for seniors, together with optional services such as meals, housekeeping, personal support services, and recreational programming. Retirement residences are regulated under the Retirement Homes Act, 2010 and typically include shared amenity spaces, centralized dining facilities, and enhanced accessibility and life-safety features to support aging-in-place.

Unlike long-term care facilities, residents live independently within private units but may access varying levels of support services.

The development includes a mix of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces, surface and underground parking, and a landscaped site design, with primary access provided from 15th Avenue East. The following section describes the key components of the Proposal, including built form, site layout, and design features, among other design considerations.

Figure 7. **Rendering – Northwest Façade**





## 3.1 Built Form & Massing

The Proposal consists of a single residential apartment building containing 128 dwelling units within an 8-storey built form with a total building height of approximately 27.36 metres . The building has a rectangular footprint and is oriented generally north-south across the east end of the Site, with vehicular access, parking, and servicing located to the west of the building.

### 3.1.1 Verticality

The building façade is organized into multiple vertical bays defined by continuous vertical elements, including window groupings, balcony stacks, and material transitions extending from the base to the roofline. Vertical elements are expressed through aligned balcony projections and façade panels that extend uninterrupted across several storeys.

Figure 8. **Vertical Design Elements**





### 3.1.2 Horizontal Banding

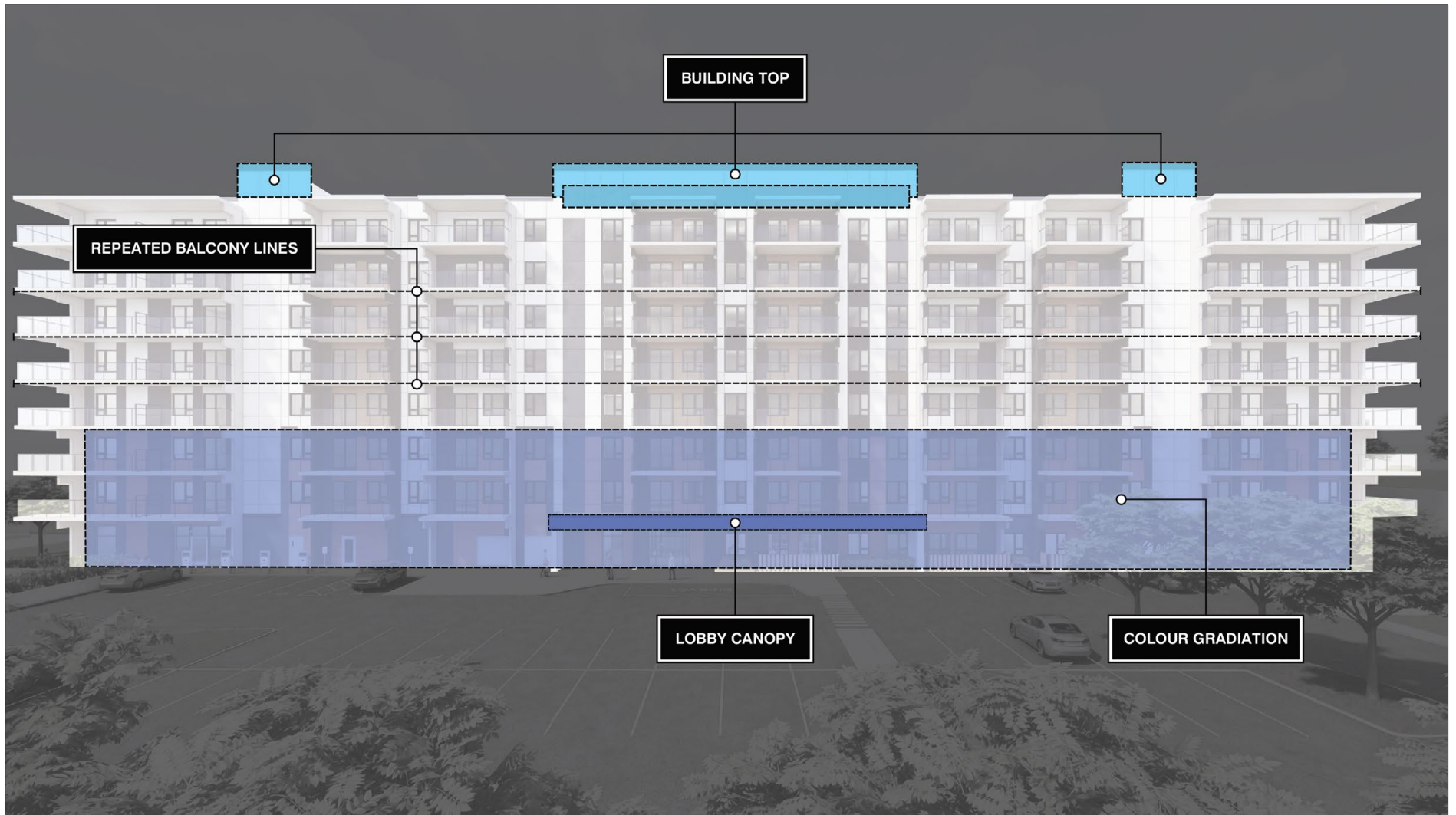
Horizontal expression is established through the alignment of floor plates and the continuous projection of balcony slabs across each storey, which create consistent horizontal datum lines along the building façades. These slab edges are expressed as continuous bands that extend across the length of the building and are reinforced by aligned window heads and spandrel panels.

The building base is defined at the ground floor through a combination of architectural and functional elements. This includes a clearly articulated main entrance with a projecting entrance canopy/overhang, a clearly delineated centralized lobby space, and direct access points to grade-related features / units. The ground floor façade up to and including the third floor are visually distinguished through colour changes and the presence of entrance features, including the covered drop-off area and pedestrian connection.

The middle portion of the building, comprising the primary residential floors, is expressed through a consistent pattern of balconies and window openings. Continuous balcony bands and consistent floor-to-floor spacing establish a strong horizontal rhythm across these levels.

The upper portion of the building is differentiated through a change in material treatment, colour, and reduced balcony expression at the top storey. This creates a visual termination to the building mass and distinguishes the roofline from the floors below. Mechanical penthouse elements are integrated within this upper level, contributing to the definition of the building's top without extending beyond the overall massing envelope.

Figure 9. **Horizontal Design Elements**





### 3.1.3 Colour Palette

The building employs a layered neutral palette with contrasting light and dark tones, supplemented by warmer accent materials, as illustrated in the elevation.

- **Primary cladding (main façade field):** a light off-white to light grey panel system, which forms the dominant background across the upper storeys and outer portions of the building.
- **Vertical accent panels:** dark charcoal to near-black panels used to define strong vertical bays, particularly concentrated in the middle portion of the building and at regular intervals across the façade.
- **Base and mid-level accent material:** a warm brown wood-tone or wood-look panel, applied primarily at the lower levels (ground to floor 3) and within balconies to introduce contrast and depth.
- **Window systems and frames:** black or dark anodized aluminium, providing a consistent, crisp outline to all openings.

- **Balcony guards:** a combination of transparent glazing panels with black metal framing, maintaining visual permeability while reinforcing the darker façade accents.
- **Canopies, railings, and metal trim elements:** dark grey to black finishes, consistent with window framing and vertical accent panels.

Overall, the palette is composed of three primary tones: light (off-white), dark charcoal, and an anchor or warmer brown accent elements, which are used selectively to articulate the base and other portions of the façade. This combination reinforces both the vertical and horizontal organization of the building while providing contrast between projecting and recessed elements.

Figure 10. **Colour Palette**





## 3.2 Height

The proposed building has a height of approximately 27.36 metres, corresponding to 8 storeys. The building is positioned toward the eastern portion of the site, increasing the separation distance from existing low-rise residential dwellings located to the west.

A 45-degree angular plane has been applied from the western property boundary, where the site is in closest proximity to the existing low-rise residential context. The building massing is contained within this angular plane, such that the upper portions of the building do not extend beyond the established plane when measured from the western edge of the site.

A review of the City of Owen Sound Official Plan and Zoning By-law confirms that there are no explicit requirements for the application of angular planes (45-degree or otherwise) to regulate building massing or transition. Instead, the planning framework relies on a combination of performance-based policy direction in the Official Plan, focused on compatibility, transition, and mitigation of impacts, and quantitative zoning standards such as setbacks, height limits, and lot coverage.

The Zoning By-law does not define or reference angular planes, nor does it impose any geometric built form controls of this nature, meaning their use is not a prescribed requirement.

However, applying a 45-degree angular plane from the adjacent low-rise residential property line to the west provides one clear and measurable method of demonstrating an appropriate transition in scale between differing built forms. It helps ensure that, if needed, upper storeys are stepped back in a manner that reduces perceived massing, overlook, and shadow impacts on neighbouring properties. Even though not required, this approach offers a widely recognized and defensible urban design test that aligns with the intent of compatibility policies in the Official Plan.

The site is characterized by a significant grade differential between the Subject Site and 10th Street East to the south, reinforced by an existing retaining wall. This elevation change is approximately equivalent to 3 to 4 storeys in height. As a result, when viewed from 10th Street East, the apparent height of the building is reduced, and the building presents as approximately 4 to 5 storeys from that vantage point.

From 15th Avenue East, where the site frontage and primary access are located, the building is viewed at its full height and presents as an 8-storey structure. In this context, the building is situated among other mid-rise built forms, including the existing 4-storey Owen Sound Gardens Retirement Residence at 1545 14th Street East and the 3-storey Southbridge Owen Sound nursing home at 1300 16th Avenue East nearby.

Figure 11. **Site Section**





Figure 12. **Angular Plane Sketch**

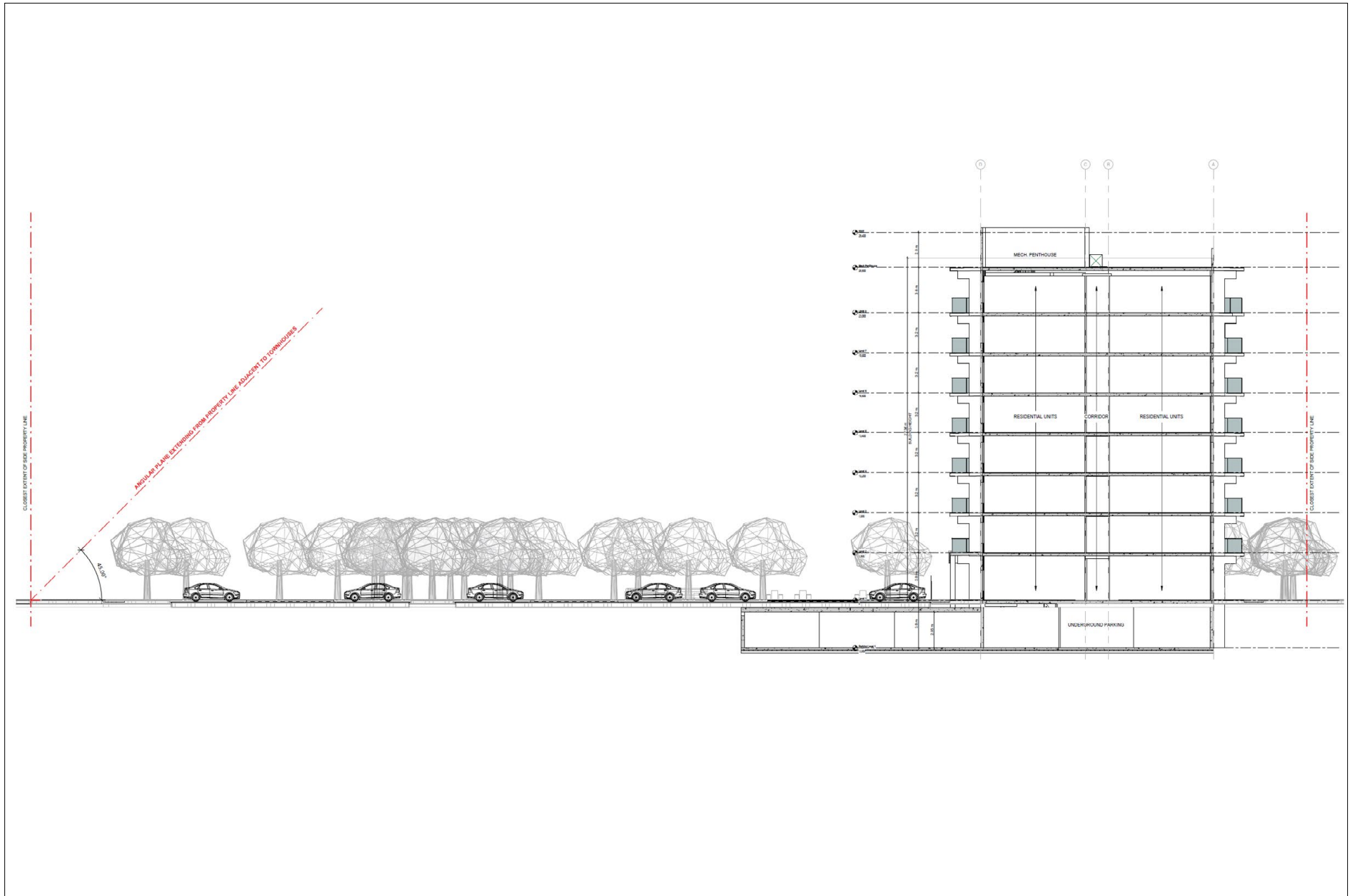


Figure 13. **Rendering – View from 10 St E**





Figure 14. **Rendering – West Façade**



### 3.3 Site Layout

The proposed building is located toward the eastern portion of the Site, with surface parking and internal drive aisles located to the west. The greatest setback is from the western property lines where the Site interfaces with low-rise residential dwellings. At this interface, the building is set back about 75 metres, which can be considered the front yard setback. The building is then also set back 7.5 metres from the eastern (rear) lot line, 7.35 metres to the north interior side lot line (with a balcony projection creating an aerial separation of 4.95 metres), and 14.18 metres to the southern interior side lot line (or 11.71 metres to the aerial balcony projection). The intent is to place the building as far from the low-rise residential uses to the west as possible.

Vehicular access is provided from 15th Avenue East via a single entrance/exit. A circular internal driveway is provided in front of the building entrance.

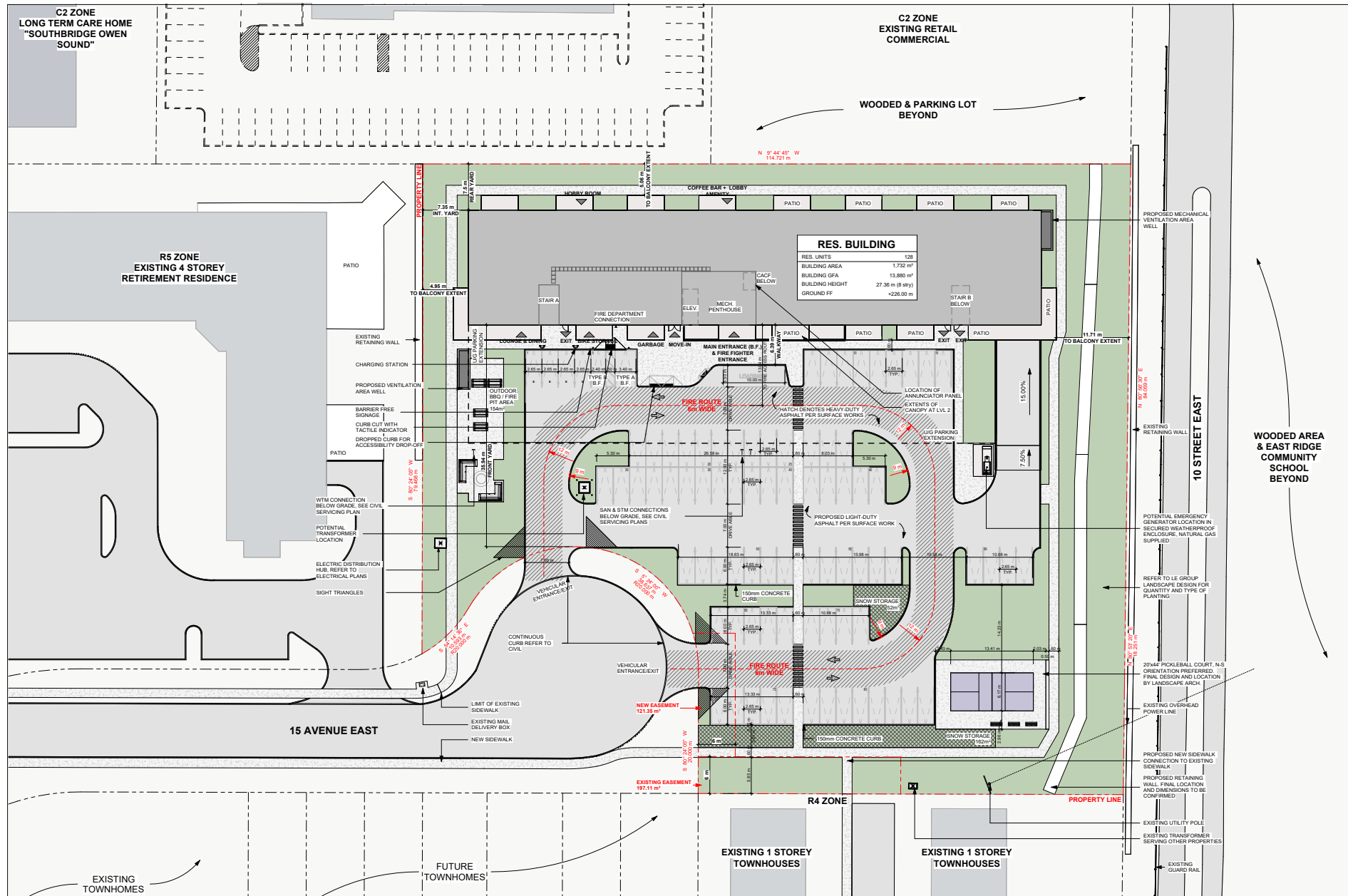
A below-grade parking structure extends beneath the building and a portion of the site. Surface parking provides a total of 169 spaces, including accessible and EV charging spaces closest to the building in the northeast corner.

Pedestrian connections are provided from the public sidewalk to the building entrance via internal walkways. Loading, private garbage, and servicing areas are located along the front façade adjacent to the parking area.

Landscaped areas are distributed along the site perimeter, within parking islands, and adjacent to the building.



Figure 15. Proposed Site Plan



### 3.4 Site Lighting

Lighting elements will be finalized as part of a future Site Plan application (SPA), including lighting associated with parking areas, pedestrian routes, and building entrances. The intent is to integrate lighting within the parking and circulation areas and coordinated with the site layout and access routes without light spill onto adjacent lands.

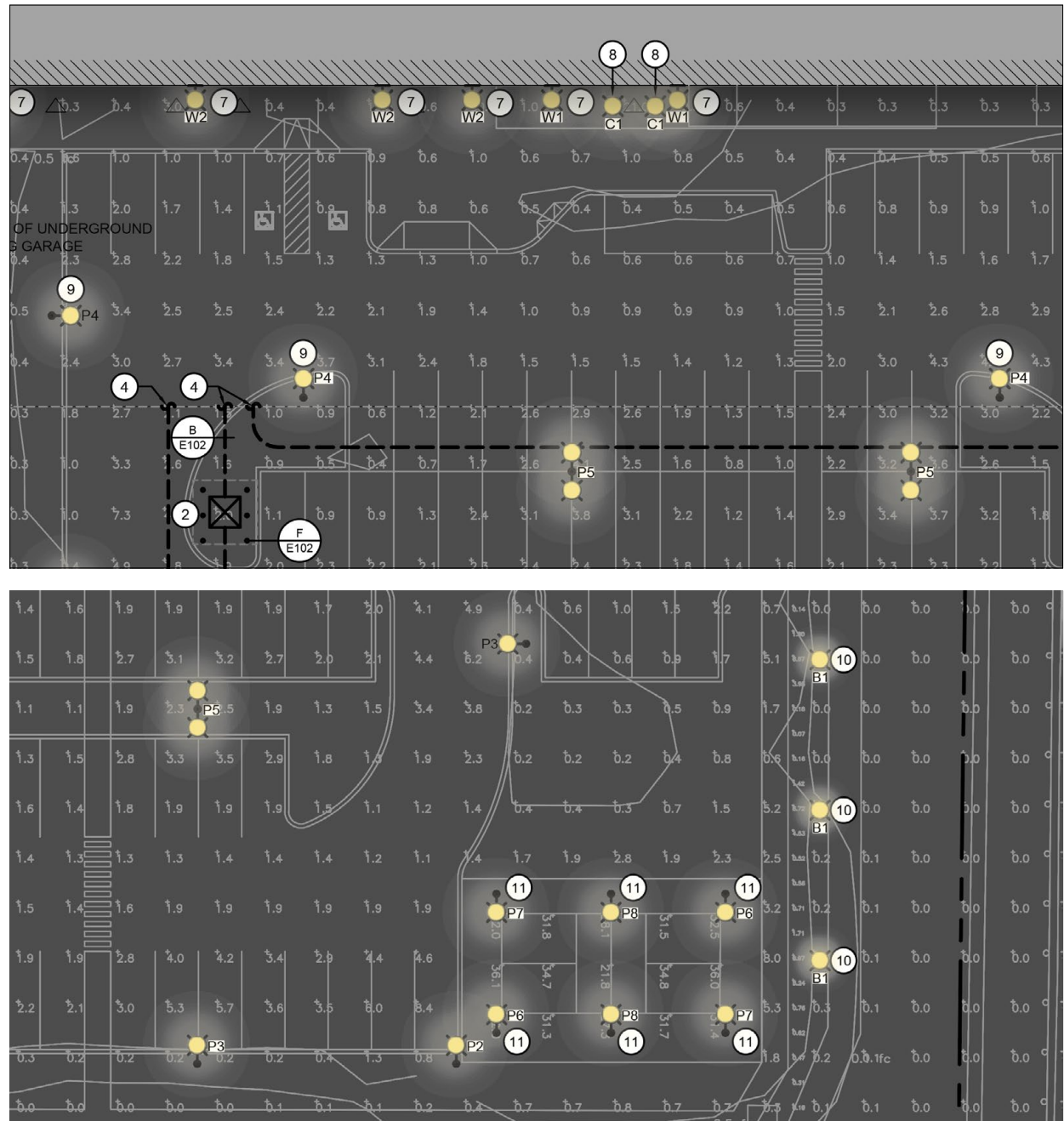
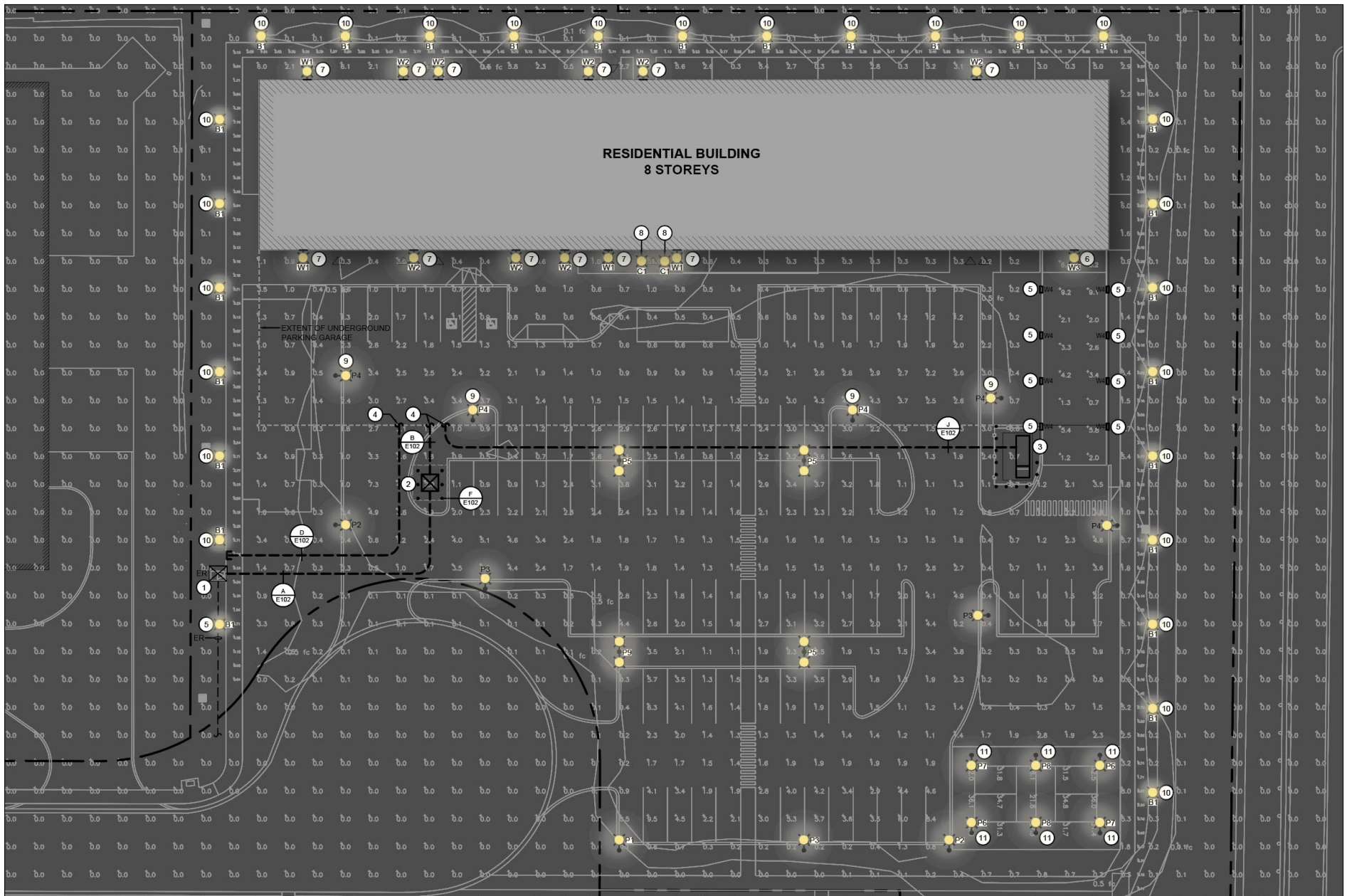




Figure 16. Site Lighting



### 3.5 Amenities & Outdoor Living Areas

Indoor amenity space is provided within the ground floor, including a lobby, gym, lounge and dining area, games and co-working space, and hobby room.

Outdoor amenity is provided through a combination of private and shared exterior spaces distributed around the building and across the site. Private outdoor areas are provided in the form of balconies on the upper floors and patios at grade along portions of the building perimeter, allowing residents direct access to outdoor space from individual units.

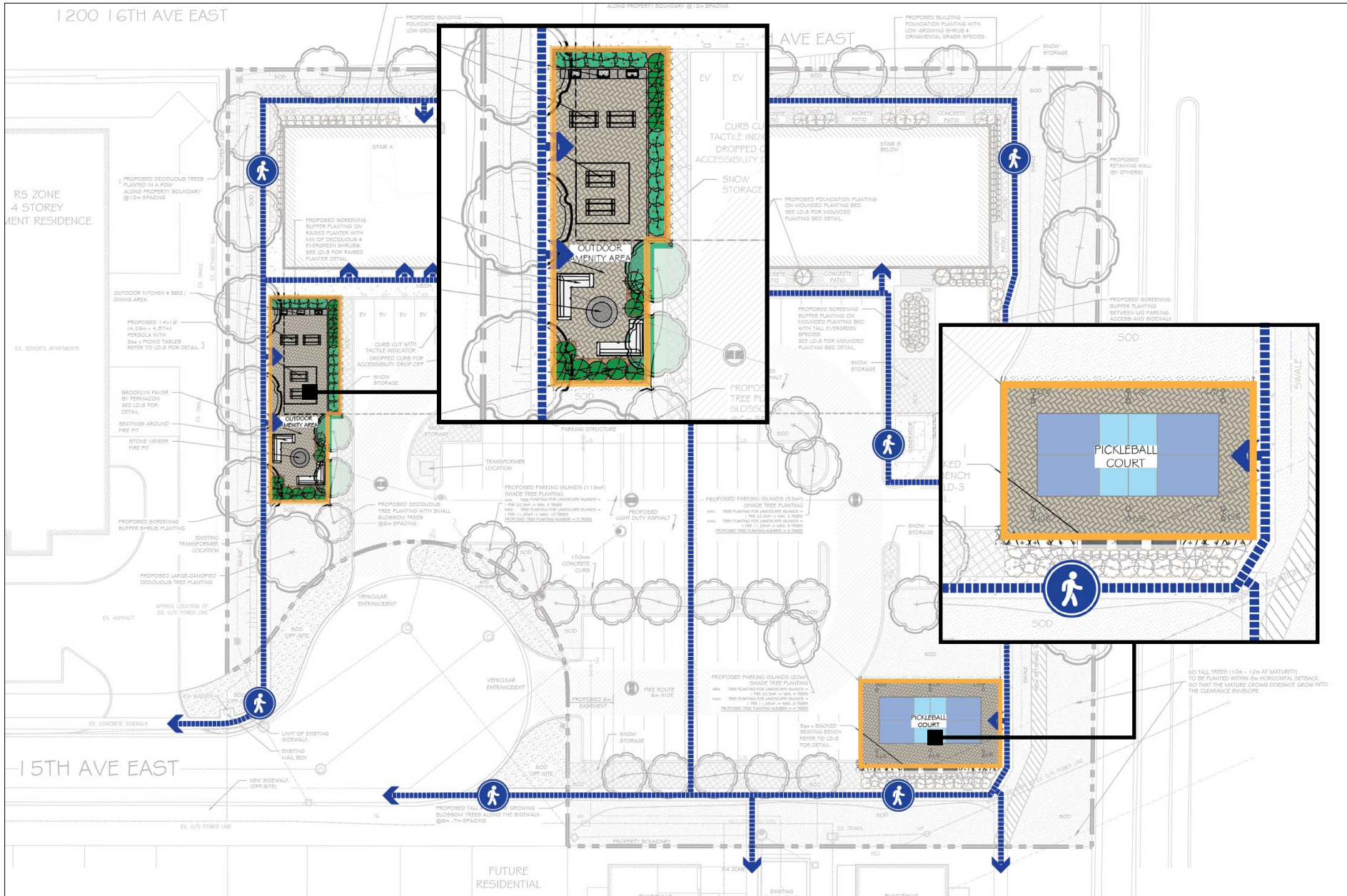
In addition to these private areas, the Proposal includes a series of shared outdoor amenity spaces intended to support passive and active recreation. A principal outdoor amenity area of approximately 210 square metres is located adjacent to the building and includes an outdoor kitchen / BBQ area, fire pit seating, a pergola, and associated seating and gathering spaces integrated with the landscape design . These spaces are directly connected to the building and are positioned to function as common amenity areas for residents.

A pickleball court is also proposed as part of the outdoor amenity program. The architectural and landscaping drawings identify this feature as a 20-foot by 44-foot court, which corresponds to a regulation pickleball playing area, and is oriented in a north-south direction. This orientation is intended to assist in minimizing direct sun exposure in players' eyes during morning and evening periods by avoiding east-west play alignment. The court is located toward the southeast portion of the site within the broader amenity and landscaped open space system and is designed as a distinct recreational feature integrated into the site plan and landscape concept. Site lighting will also be proposed as part of the overall site design (SPA stage), which would support visibility and use of amenity areas, including the pickleball court and pedestrian circulation network .

The shared outdoor amenity areas are further framed by landscape treatments including foundation planting, screening buffers, deciduous and coniferous tree planting, seating benches, sod areas, and hardscaped walkways and patios. Together, these elements create a range of outdoor living opportunities that support both individual use and communal activity.



Figure 17. Proposed Amenities



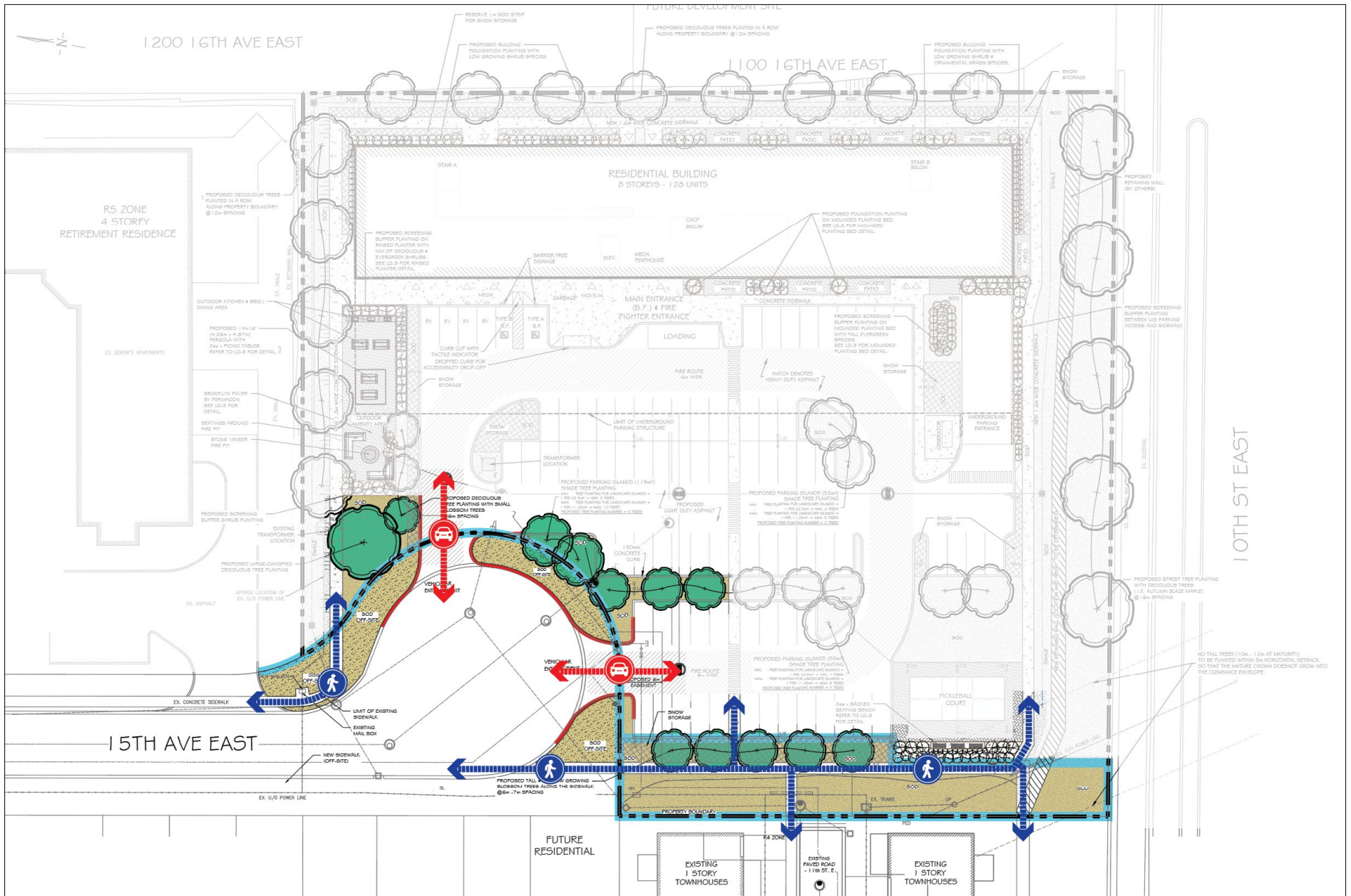
### **3.6 Streetscape**

The Proposal includes new sidewalk connections along 15th Avenue East, with internal walkways connecting to the building entrance. Street tree planting is proposed along the frontage, including deciduous trees at regular spacing.

Landscape treatments along the street edge include sod, planting beds, and trees, as well as a defined vehicular entrance with curb cuts and tactile indicators. Screening and buffer planting are provided along property edges and adjacent uses.



Figure 18. **Proposed Streetscape Treatments**



### 3.7 Safety

The site incorporates designated fire routes with a minimum width of 6 metres and direct access to the building. A dedicated fire department connection and firefighter entrance are provided at the building frontage.

Barrier-free access is provided through designated parking spaces, accessible routes, and a drop-off area near the main entrance. Pedestrian pathways are separated from vehicular circulation through defined walkways and curb treatments.

Tree protection measures, construction hoarding, and preservation zones are identified within the landscape plan to protect retained vegetation during construction.

The proposed development also incorporates key principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) through its site layout and building design. The main entrance is clearly defined and oriented toward the internal driveway and pedestrian routes, allowing for natural surveillance from both residents and visitors. Windows, balconies, and ground floor amenity spaces overlook parking areas, walkways, and outdoor amenity spaces, increasing visibility across the site.

Pedestrian pathways are direct, and well-defined, minimizing concealed areas, while site lighting will be provided throughout circulation routes, entrances, and amenity areas to support visibility during evening, overnight, or early morning hours. Landscaping is designed to maintain clear sightlines, with low plantings near walkways and entrances and taller screening elements located along property edges, contributing to a site that is legible, observable, and accessible.

### 3.8 Landscaping

The proposed landscape design establishes a coordinated system of planting, hardscaping, and amenity features distributed throughout the site, including along the street edge, building perimeter, and within internal parking areas. A combination of deciduous street trees is proposed along the 15th Avenue East frontage at regular spacing to define the public realm and reinforce the streetscape. Additional large-canopy deciduous trees and coniferous plantings are located along the site boundaries to provide screening, particularly adjacent to neighbouring properties and along the edges of the parking areas. Internal to the site, landscaped islands are incorporated within the surface parking areas and are designed to include shade trees in accordance with municipal standards, contributing to canopy coverage and visual relief within the parking field. Foundation planting consisting of low-growing shrubs, ornamental grasses, and perennial species is provided around the building to soften the base condition and define pedestrian edges, while sod areas are distributed throughout the site to provide continuous green space.



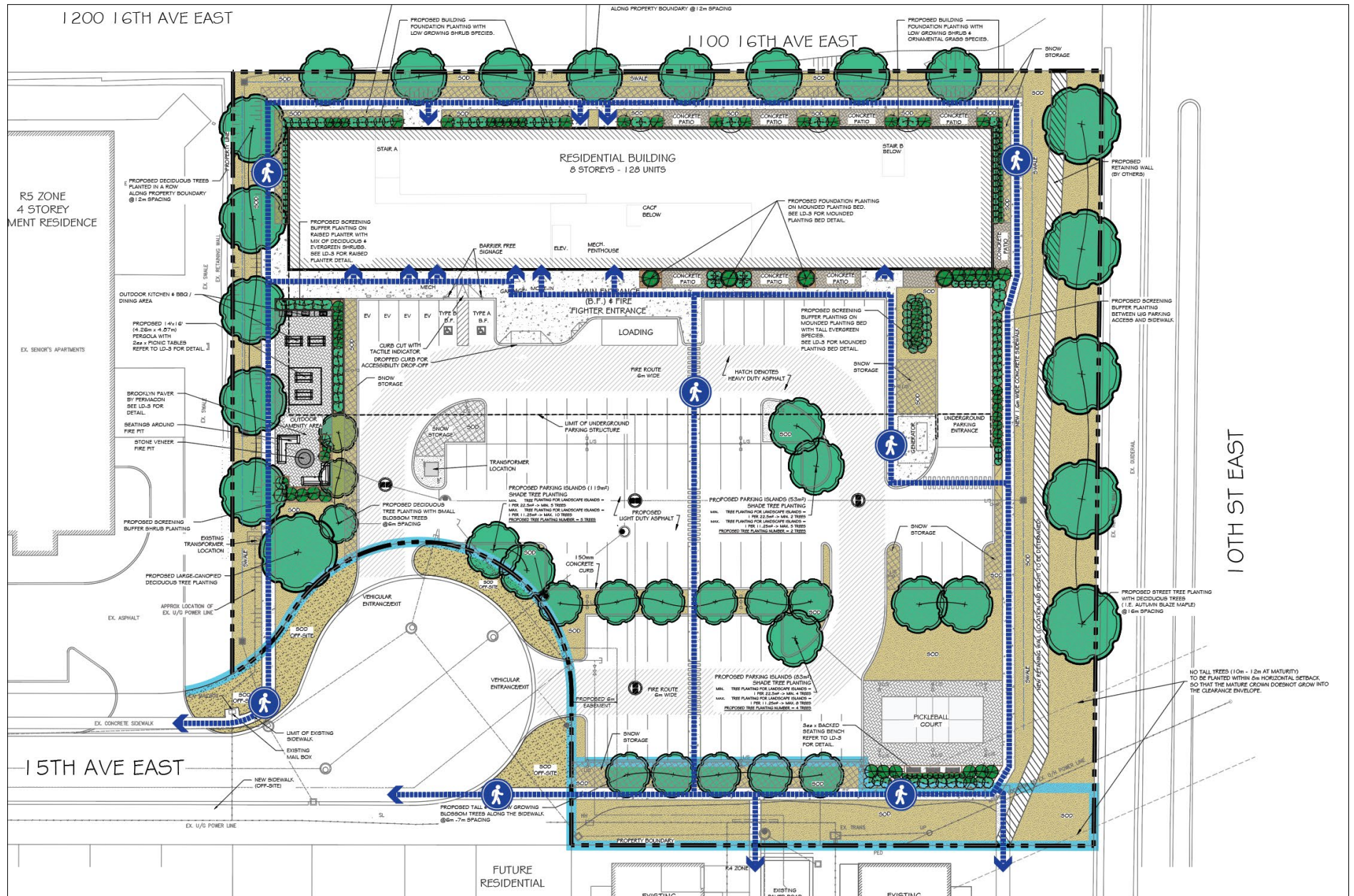
Based on the arborist inventory and landscape plans, a total of 30 trees has been identified for removal on the Subject Site, some (20) of which are noted to be in poor or declining condition (including multiple specimens affected by Emerald Ash Borer).

In compensation for the 20 healthy and mature trees, the landscape plan proposes a comprehensive replanting strategy that includes street trees, parking lot shade trees, boundary plantings, and foundation landscaping distributed across the site. While an exact total number of replacement trees is not explicitly summarized in a single figure, the plans clearly demonstrates that over 40 trees will be planted to exceed the number of removals, with multiple planting areas (including parking islands, perimeter buffers, and streetscape plantings) contributing to a net increase in overall tree count and canopy coverage across the site.

The landscape plan also integrates a range of programmed outdoor amenity features within a cohesive open space network. A central outdoor amenity area includes seating, a pergola structure, BBQ facilities, and a fire pit, organized on unit paver and hardscaped surfaces to support gathering and passive recreation.

Additional elements such as bench seating, concrete walkways, and patio areas are provided to facilitate pedestrian movement and informal use of the space. A pickleball court is incorporated as an active recreational feature, located within a landscaped setting, and integrated with surrounding planting and open space areas. The design also includes screening buffer plantings, raised planters, and mounded planting beds to define edges, provide separation from adjacent uses, and enhance the visual quality of the site. Snow storage areas are accommodated within designated sod and landscaped zones, ensuring functionality is maintained alongside the overall landscape design.

Figure 19. Proposed Landscaping Plan





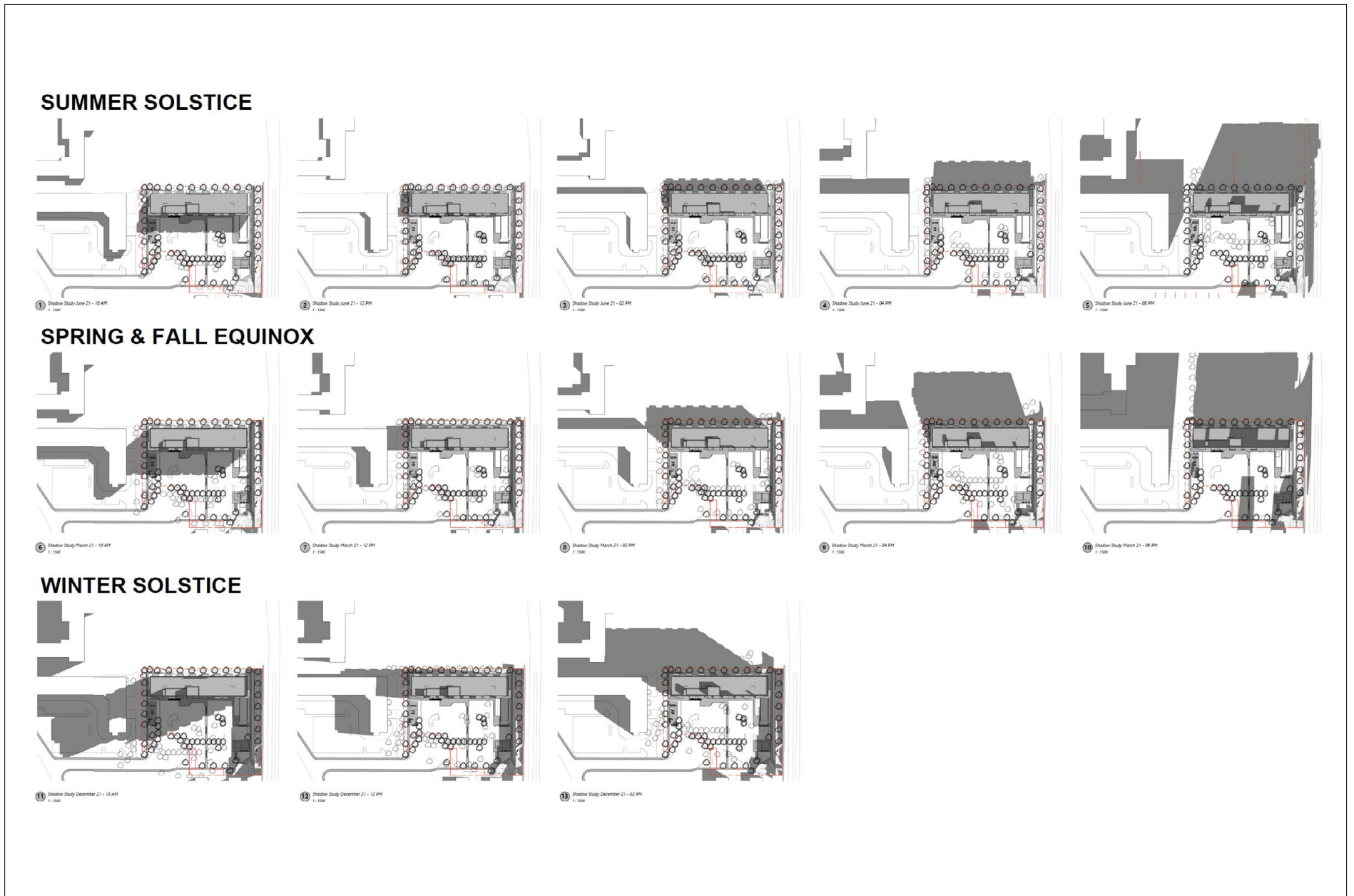
### 3.9 Sun & Shadows

A Shadow Study was prepared by Bim Studio, which demonstrates that shadowing generated by the proposed 8-storey building is primarily directed toward public road rights-of-ways and the neutralized area to the south of the Subject Site, where a significant 3 to 4 storey retaining wall and grade differential exist. This condition effectively absorbs and mitigates shadow impacts, as these areas are not considered sensitive land uses and are already characterized by infrastructure and elevation change. The building's siting toward the eastern portion of the Site further reinforces this outcome, limiting the extent of shadow projection beyond the property and ensuring that the majority of shadowing occurs within the Site or over adjacent streets and non-sensitive areas.

Importantly, the study confirms that no shadow is cast onto the existing low-rise residential uses to the west, which represent the most sensitive adjacent land use. While some incremental and transitional shadowing occurs during early morning and late afternoon periods to the existing mid-rise building to the northeast (another retirement home with no balconies), these impacts are limited in duration and do not result in prolonged loss of sunlight on surrounding properties.

In our opinion, the Shadow Study demonstrates that the Proposal maintains appropriate sun/shadow conditions, avoids adverse impacts on neighbouring residential uses and the public realm, and achieves a compatible built form relationship within its existing context.

Figure 20. **Shadow Study**





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# **Policy/Guideline Context & Responses.**



4.1 **Planning Act**

4.2 **Grey County Official Plan**

4.3 **City of Owen Sound Official Plan**

4.4 **Owen Sound Residential Tree Preservation  
Policy**

4.5 **City of Owen Sound Urban Design  
Directions**



The following section identifies and evaluates the applicable urban design policies and guidelines relevant to the Proposal, including those contained within the Provincial, County, and City planning framework, as well as those specifically referenced by City staff through the formal pre-application consultation process. Where applicable, staff comments have been incorporated and addressed directly to ensure a comprehensive and responsive evaluation. For each policy or guideline, an urban design rationale is provided to demonstrate how the Proposal has had regard for, conforms with, or is consistent with the applicable direction, as appropriate, based on the policy framework and level of review.

## 4.1 Planning Act

The Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13 establishes the legislative framework for land use planning in Ontario, with the purpose of promoting sustainable development, coordinating provincial and municipal interests, and ensuring a fair, efficient, and policy-led planning system that guides decisions on land use, growth, and development . The Act was originally enacted in its current consolidated form in 1990, though it builds on earlier planning legislation, and has since been amended numerous times; the current iteration reflects ongoing updates, most recently consolidated to November 27, 2025, incorporating significant reforms related to housing supply, provincial oversight, and streamlining of planning processes.

### 4.1.1 Provincial Interest

Section 2 of the Planning Act sets out the matters of provincial interest that must be considered in all land use planning decisions in Ontario. It requires decision-makers, including municipalities, approval authorities, and the Ontario Land Tribunal, to “have regard to” a broad range of interests such as the protection of natural resources, public health and safety, housing supply, infrastructure, economic well-being, and the orderly development of

communities, as well as more contemporary priorities like accessibility, sustainable and transit-oriented development, high-quality built form, and climate change mitigation . In practice, Section 2 functions as a foundational policy lens that guides and justifies planning decisions, ensuring they align with overarching provincial priorities. Accordingly, the following applicable matters of provincial interest have been identified relative to urban design considerations:

- (h.1) the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;
- (q) the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians;
- (r) the promotion of built form that,
  - (i) is well-designed,
  - (ii) encourages a sense of place, and
  - (iii) provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant; [...]

The proposed development has been designed with full regard to the matters of provincial interest set out in Section 2 of the Planning Act, particularly subsections (h.1), (q), and (r), which collectively emphasize accessibility, sustainable and pedestrian-oriented development, and high-quality built form.

### **Accessibility**

The Subject Site has been designed to provide a fully accessible environment that integrates both building and site-level accessibility in a cohesive manner. The architectural and landscape plans demonstrate the provision of barrier-free access throughout the site, including clearly defined accessible routes from the public sidewalk to building entrances, internal pedestrian connections, and outdoor amenity areas. These include features such as dropped curbs, tactile indicators, and barrier-free pathways integrated into the site circulation system, ensuring that all residents and visitors, regardless of mobility, can safely and comfortably navigate the site.

The Proposal further reinforces accessibility through the incorporation of continuous pedestrian connections, including new sidewalks along the frontage and internal walkways linking parking areas, amenity spaces, and building entrances.

These elements directly respond to staff comments regarding the need for clear, barrier-free pedestrian circulation and demonstrate that accessibility has been treated as a foundational design principle rather than a secondary consideration.

### **Sustainable and Pedestrian-Oriented Development**

From a site design perspective, the Proposal establishes a coherent pedestrian network, including continuous sidewalks along 15th Avenue East and internal pedestrian routes that connect all major functions of the Site. Importantly, the design integrates a future pedestrian easement connection at the western edge of the property, which will enhance connectivity to adjacent lands and contribute to the broader neighbourhood pedestrian network. This directly addresses staff direction to improve site permeability and connectivity.

The landscape design further supports sustainability objectives through the incorporation of extensive tree planting, landscaped buffers, and green space areas distributed throughout the site. As shown in the Landscape Concept Plan, the Proposal includes a combination of street trees, parking lot shade trees, and perimeter plantings, which will contribute to urban heat island mitigation, and improved microclimatic conditions.

In addition, the provision of defined snow storage areas, and landscaped islands within parking areas demonstrate an integrated approach to site design that balances operational functionality with environmental performance.

### **Well-Designed Built Form**

The proposed building has been designed as a mid-rise form that is appropriate for its context at the edge of an established neighbourhood and within an emerging cluster of mid-rise residential and institutional uses. The building's orientation, massing, and relationship to grade have been carefully considered, particularly in response to the significant grade differential and retaining wall conditions along 10th Street East. This results in a building that reads as a reduced height from certain vantage points, mitigating perceived massing and reinforcing compatibility with the surrounding built form.

The site layout positions the building to define the internal courtyard and amenity areas while maintaining appropriate setbacks and transitions to adjacent uses, placing the building as far away from existing low-rise uses as possible and falling within a 45-degree angular plane. This approach responds directly to staff concerns regarding scale, massing, and compatibility, demonstrating that the Proposal has been designed with sensitivity to its context.



## **Sense of Place**

The Proposal contributes to a strong sense of place through the integration of high-quality landscape design and programmed outdoor amenity spaces. The Landscape Concept Plan illustrates a series of intentional outdoor spaces, including a central amenity area featuring a pergola, seating areas, fire pit, and outdoor dining space, which are designed to foster social interaction and community building among residents.

Additional features such as the pickleball court, landscaped seating areas, and defined pedestrian pathways create a layered and active outdoor environment that supports a range of user needs. The use of varied planting typologies, including deciduous street trees, evergreen screening, ornamental plantings, and landscaped buffers, further enhances the visual quality of the site and establishes a cohesive landscape identity.

Importantly, the Proposal responds to staff comments regarding amenity space by providing meaningful, usable, and well-distributed outdoor amenity areas that are integrated into the overall site design rather than treated as residual space.

## **High-Quality, Safe, Accessible, and Attractive Public Spaces**

The design of the Site prioritizes safety, comfort, and visual quality. Pedestrian routes are clearly defined and (as much as possible) separated from vehicular circulation, minimizing conflict points and improving overall site safety. The introduction of landscaped buffers between parking areas and pedestrian spaces further reinforces this separation and enhances the user experience.

Parking areas have been designed to be subordinate to the overall site design, incorporating landscaped islands and perimeter planting to reduce visual impact and contribute to a more attractive environment. Screening elements, including mounded planting beds and evergreen buffers, are strategically located to mitigate impacts on adjacent properties, directly addressing staff concerns regarding buffering and compatibility.

The Proposal will also incorporate site lighting (SPA stage) and design features intended to enhance visibility and safety, while minimizing light spill and glare onto neighbouring properties, consistent with best practices in urban design and CPTED principles.

Finally, the retention and replacement of trees, combined with a comprehensive planting strategy, ensures that the Site will evolve into a mature, green landscape that enhances both the immediate development and the broader streetscape. The tree preservation strategy and planting program demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and enhancing the urban forest canopy, consistent with both municipal expectations and provincial interests.

### **4.1.2 Conclusions**

In our opinion, the Proposal has had appropriate regard for the applicable matters of provincial interest set out in Section 2 of the Planning Act. The design demonstrates a high standard of accessibility, promotes sustainable and pedestrian-oriented development, and delivers a well-designed built form supported by high-quality private spaces.

The Proposal also responds directly to staff comments through refinements to pedestrian connectivity, landscape integration, amenity provision, and overall site organization. Accordingly, it represents a comprehensive and contextually appropriate urban design solution that contributes positively to the existing and planned character of the surrounding area.

## 4.2 Grey County Official Plan

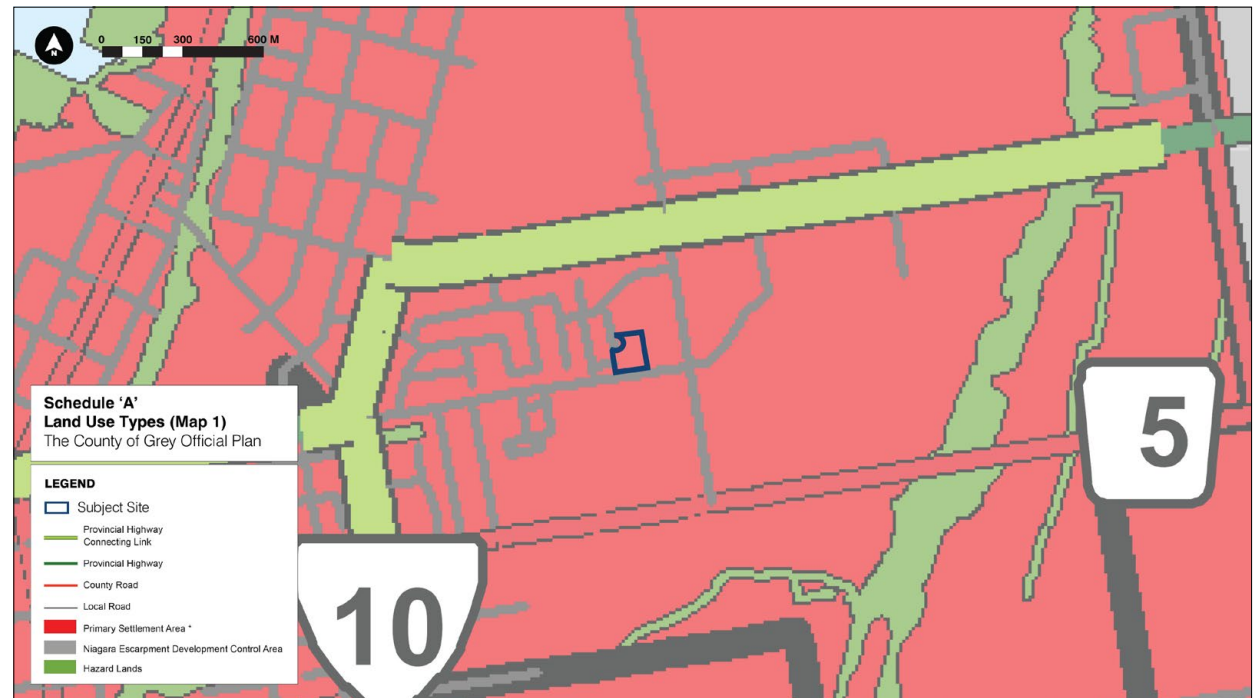
The Grey County Official Plan (“GCOP”) is the upper-tier land use planning document prepared under the Planning Act that establishes the goals, objectives, and policies to guide and manage growth, development, and land use change across Grey County, where Owen Sound is the seat. It was adopted by Grey County Council on October 25, 2018, approved by the Province on June 6, 2019, and came into force and effect on June 7, 2019, with the latest consolidated version dated May 6, 2025, incorporating several Official Plan Amendments. All planning decisions must conform with the policies of the GCOP, meaning lower-tier official plans, zoning by-laws, and development approvals must implement its policy direction. As the GCOP applies to all nine lower-tier municipalities within Grey County, its policies apply to the City of Owen Sound, and local planning decisions within the City must conform with the GCOP.

In the GCOP, the City of Owen Sound and the Subject Site is located within the City’s Settlement Boundary and is designated Primary Settlement Area on Schedule A (Map 1 - Land Use Types).

Section 3.5 of the GCOP establishes Primary Settlement Areas as the County’s main locations for growth, intensification, and development on full municipal services. These areas are intended to support compact, transit-supportive, and walkable communities, with an emphasis on high-quality urban form, attractive public spaces, and site design that encourages walking and cycling.

Development is expected to achieve minimum residential densities of 25 units per net hectare, ensuring efficient use of land and infrastructure while supporting a mix of housing types and compact built form. The policies strongly encourage intensification, mixed-use development, apartment buildings, and redevelopment of underutilized sites. Overall, the section promotes vibrant, complete communities with diverse land uses, higher densities, and urban design standards that create attractive and transit-supportive environments.

Figure 21. **GCOP Schedule A (Map 1 - Land Use Types)**





In general, the GCOP contains very limited county-wide urban design policy, and it does not include a dedicated, comprehensive urban design section that applies across the entire County. Instead, design-related direction is primarily addressed through broader policy statements related to settlement form, public realm, and community character.

The closest County-wide design direction appears in Section 3.4 (General Policies Affecting Settlement Area Land Use Types), which includes policies encouraging compact settlement form, mixed-use development, walkable communities, integration of natural heritage features, and street and building layouts that support pedestrian and active transportation networks. These policies guide the general design and form of development across settlement areas in the County.

Additional related direction appears in Section 4.5 (Our Culture), which encourages the design of public spaces, adaptive reuse of buildings, and the enhancement of cultural character within communities.

More detailed urban design guidelines do appear in the GCOP, but these are site-specific and limited to secondary plans, such as Section 10.5.9 (Urban Design Guidelines for the Georgian Villas Secondary Plan).

These guidelines address pedestrian-scale streetscapes, building design, and the treatment of parking and garages, but they apply only within that specific secondary plan area rather than across the County as a whole.

#### **4.2.1 Conclusions**

In our opinion, the proposed development conforms with the policy direction of the Grey County Official Plan with respect to settlement area structure, density, and the creation of compact, walkable communities. The Subject Site is located within a Primary Settlement Area where intensification and higher-density built form are encouraged, and the proposed density of approximately 128 units per hectare (FSI of about 1.4) represents an efficient use of land and existing municipal infrastructure that significantly exceeds the minimum density target of 25 units per hectare.

From an urban design perspective, the Proposal supports the County's objectives for compact, transit-supportive, and pedestrian-oriented development through the provision of a coordinated site layout, integrated pedestrian connections, and a landscape framework that enhances walkability and contributes to a cohesive public realm.

The development is also situated within an evolving cluster of residential, institutional, and supportive uses at low to mid-rise heights, which reinforces its transit-supportive and complete community context, even in the absence of higher-order transit infrastructure. Overall, the Proposal advances the GCOP's broad policy direction for intensification and settlement area design without conflicting with its limited, high-level urban design guidance.

### 4.3 City of Owen Sound Official Plan

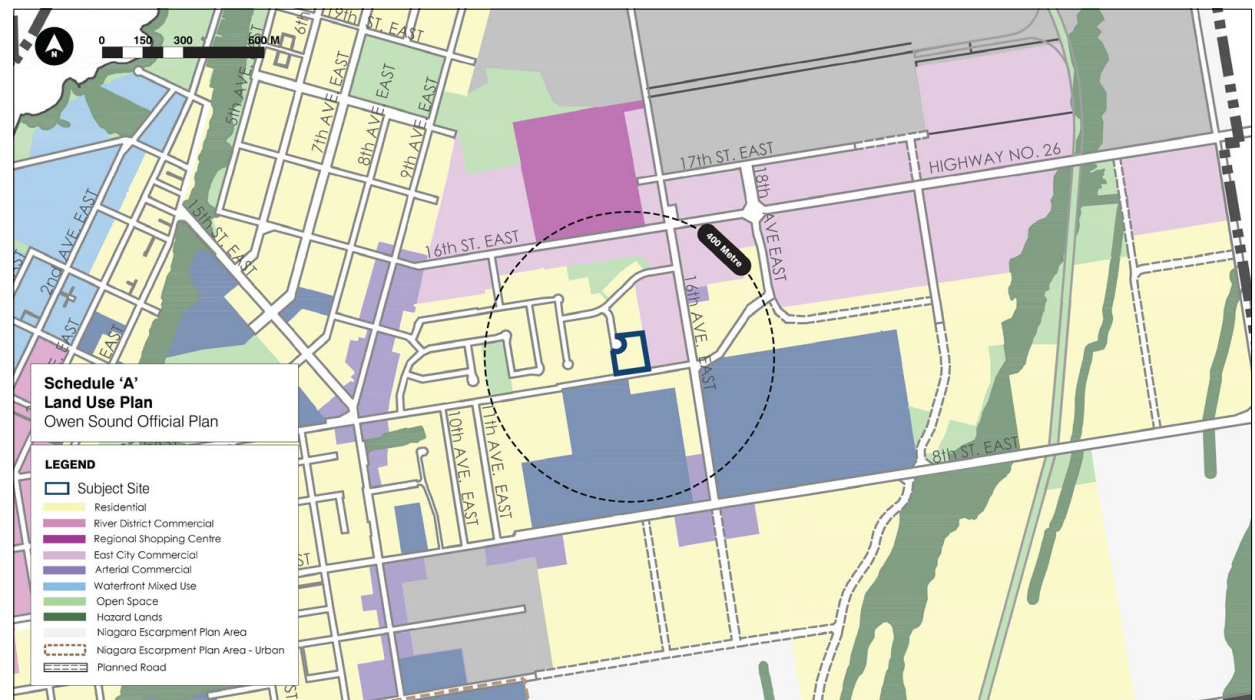
The City of Owen Sound Official Plan (“OP”) establishes the long-term land use planning framework for all lands within the City, setting out the vision, goals, objectives, land use designations, and policies that guide growth, development, infrastructure planning, environmental protection, and urban design. The current OP was adopted by the City of Owen Sound on June 28, 2021, and approved by the County of Grey on February 15, 2022, following a comprehensive review initiated in 2019 of the earlier plans originally adopted in 1984 and amended in 2006 and 2012. The 2021 OP provides the policy direction for managing physical change and its social, economic, built, and natural environmental impacts, and carries legal status under the Planning Act, meaning that municipal decisions, public works, and planning instruments such as zoning by-laws must conform with the policies of the Official Plan, while also remaining consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement and in conformity with the Grey County Official Plan.

The Subject Site is designated Residential on Schedule A (Land Use Plan) of the OP (see **Figure 22**), and more specifically, High Density Residential on Schedule A2 (Sydenham Heights Phase One and Phase Two Planning Areas Land Use Plan) (see **Figure 23**).

According to the OP, the Residential designation is intended to be the City’s primary area for housing, accommodating a full range of dwelling types, from single-detached homes to apartments (where retirement homes are captured as a permitted use), across low, medium, and high densities.

It permits not only residential uses but also complementary uses that support daily living, including accessory residential units, home businesses, neighbourhood-scale commercial uses (e.g., small retail and services), and local institutional uses such as schools, parks, places of worship, community facilities, and long-term care homes, provided they are compatible in scale and impact.

Figure 22. **OP Schedule A (Land Use Plan)**





Development is required to support intensification and ensure compatibility with surrounding uses, among other things. General density permissions range from a minimum of 25 units per net hectare in new areas to a maximum of 125 units per net hectare overall, with higher densities directed to locations with appropriate servicing and access to arterial or collector roads.

Within this framework, High Density Residential specifically permits more intensive forms of housing, primarily apartments and other multiple-unit dwellings, at general densities of 61 to 125 units per net residential hectare.

Notwithstanding, Policy 4.2.9.1 of the OP permits a site-specific increase in maximum residential density to 130 units per hectare for the Subject Site (west side of 16th Avenue East between 10th Street East and 16th Street East), meaning that the proposed density of 128 units per net hectare conforms with the OP.

Figure 23. **Schedule A2 (Sydenham Heights Phase One and Phase Two Planning Areas Land Use Plan)**



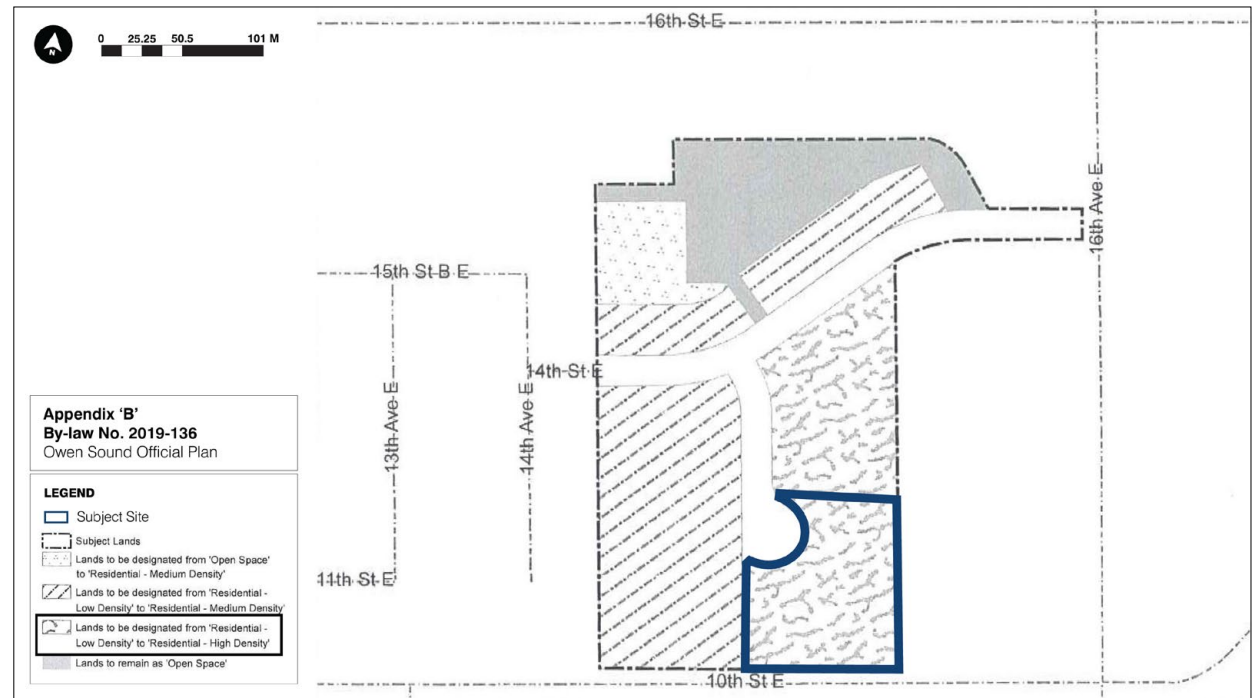
While no explicit height limits are prescribed in the OP, height and massing must be appropriate and transition sensitively to adjacent lower-density areas. High-density development must demonstrate a high standard of urban and architectural design, minimize surface parking, address impacts such as shadowing, overlook, and traffic, and ensure adequate servicing and infrastructure capacity. It is generally directed to locations with strong access to transportation networks and supportive amenities, reinforcing its role in delivering compact, transit-supportive, and efficient urban form within the City.

In this regard, the urban design policies of the OP are primarily contained in Section 8 (Urban Design) of the OP. This section establishes the City’s overarching urban design framework and includes policies addressing the scope of urban design (Section 8.1), the integration and protection of natural features (Section 8.2), how people experience the City through gateways, nodes, and visual character (Section 8.3), pedestrian-oriented environments (Section 8.4), the design and function of public spaces (Section 8.5), streetscape and site design elements such as building placement, parking, landscaping, lighting and signage (Section 8.6), and safety and security within the built form (Section 8.7).

Together, these policies are intended to guide the design quality of development and redevelopment across the City to ensure attractive streetscapes, walkable environments, compatible built form, and high-quality public spaces.

Only the applicable urban design policies have been included below.

Figure 24. **OPA 9, Policy 4.2.9.1 (Map)**





### 4.3.1 General Policies

*8.1.1.2 The City shall promote a high standard of design in its public works and in the design of private and public development to achieve an appealing, comfortable, accessible, safe living and work environment for the residents and visitors of Owen Sound. Particular attention will be given to development within the River District Commercial area, the harbour area, new residential areas, major commercial areas and gateways to the City.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.1.1.2, as it demonstrates a high standard of urban design that contributes to an appealing, comfortable, accessible, and safe living environment. The development integrates building design, site organization, and landscape architecture into a cohesive and functional plan that prioritizes user experience and long-term livability. Pedestrian circulation is clearly defined through continuous, barrier-free walkways connecting the public street, building entrances, parking areas, and amenity spaces, directly addressing staff comments regarding pedestrian connectivity and accessibility.

The Proposal establishes a comfortable and human-scaled environment through the provision of well-designed outdoor amenity areas, including seating spaces, landscaped gathering areas, and recreational facilities, which are integrated into a comprehensive landscape framework. The design of parking areas, servicing functions, and access points has been carefully considered to ensure safety and minimize conflicts with pedestrian movement, while landscape buffering and planting contribute to visual quality and environmental comfort.

Although the Subject Site is not located within a designated gateway, harbour area, or River District, it represents development within a new and evolving residential area where a high standard of design is expected. In this regard, the Proposal contributes positively to the emerging character of the area by delivering a coordinated built form and site design that is both functional and visually cohesive. Accordingly, the development achieves the intent of the policy by providing a high-quality living environment for residents and visitors.

*8.1.1.5 Design guidelines may, among other matters, deal with issues such as building siting, massing, heights; architectural features; building materials; points of access; location and design of site features such as parking areas, service uses, pedestrian walkways; tree management and landscaping; and elements of street furniture, signage, fencing and lighting.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.1.1.5, as it comprehensively addresses the range of design considerations identified in the policy through an integrated and coordinated site and building design. The development demonstrates appropriate building siting, massing, and height through its placement on the site, its relationship to grade, and its transition to adjacent uses, responding directly to staff comments regarding compatibility and built form. Points of access are clearly defined and organized to minimize conflicts, while pedestrian walkways are continuous, barrier-free, and well-connected across the site and to the public realm.

The location and design of site features, including parking areas, servicing functions (e.g., gas metre, transformers, etc.), and amenity spaces, have been carefully considered to ensure functionality while minimizing visual and operational impacts.

Surface and underground parking is appropriately integrated and softened through landscape treatment, including internal planting islands and perimeter buffers. A comprehensive landscape strategy, supported by a Tree Preservation Plan and Landscape Concept Plan, addresses tree management, replacement planting, and the overall enhancement of the site's green character.

Additional design elements such as site lighting (SPA stage) and street-related features (e.g., sidewalks) will be and are incorporated to support safety, visibility, and user experience, contributing to a cohesive and high-quality built environment. Collectively, these elements demonstrate that the Proposal has addressed the full scope of design matters contemplated by the policy in a manner that is coordinated, functional, and responsive to both its context and staff feedback.

#### **4.3.2 Natural Features – Access and Protection**

*8.2.1.3 New development should be designed so as to protect and enhance this natural setting. Significant natural features such as river valleys, ravines, wetlands escarpments and woodlands within or adjacent to any development should be protected with suitable setbacks, access points and visibility.*

*8.2.1.4 Parks, streets, playgrounds and public spaces should be designed to reflect this natural setting with appropriate landscaping, providing a suitable balance between the human-made and the natural world.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.2.1.3 and 8.2.1.4. While the Subject Site does not contain mapped natural heritage features, the development has been designed to enhance the natural character of the site through a comprehensive landscape strategy. The Proposal establishes a balanced relationship between built form and landscaped open space, with approximately 48% of the site dedicated to landscaped open space, including tree planting, planting beds, and amenity areas. The landscape design incorporates a variety of planting typologies, including street trees, shade trees within parking areas, and perimeter

buffer planting, contributing to an enhanced green setting and improved microclimate conditions. Outdoor amenity spaces are designed with integrated landscaping, seating, and programming elements, ensuring that the site reflects a high-quality balance between the built and natural environments.

*8.2.1.5 The protection and replacement of mature trees throughout the City is encouraged, particularly on the slopes of the escarpment and along the streets.*

*8.2.1.6 Where new development is proposed, locations of existing mature trees should be considered in the preparation of a site plan. Through the implementation of the Tree Preservation Policy, the City will ensure tree protection in maintaining healthy trees. The City will require the planting of street trees in new development areas through a tree survey planting plan.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.2.1.5 and 8.2.1.6. The design has been informed by a Tree Preservation Plan and Landscape Concept Plan, which identify existing trees, establish protection measures, and provide a comprehensive planting strategy. Where removal is necessary, replacement planting is provided to ensure no net loss of tree canopy over time. The Proposal includes significant new tree planting, including street



trees along 15th Avenue East, perimeter planting, and internal shade trees within parking areas, consistent with City standards. These measures directly respond to staff comments regarding tree preservation and landscape enhancement and ensure that the development contributes positively to the urban forest and streetscape.

### 4.3.3 Experiencing the City – Objectives

*8.3.1.1 It is the City's intention to strengthen the positive image of Owen Sound as an attractive and liveable City by making the impression on entering and the experience of passing through the main streets enjoyable and easily understood.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.3.1.1, as it contributes to the creation of an attractive and legible urban environment through a well-organized site layout and coordinated design approach. The Proposal presents a clear and understandable site structure, with defined building entrances, legible pedestrian routes, and organized vehicular access points. The integration of landscaping, amenity spaces, and built form creates a cohesive and visually appealing environment that enhances the experience of the site and its surroundings.

*8.3.1.2 The City intends to maintain a simple and easily understood plan structure based on nodes of intensive commercial, industrial and service activity joined together by an arterial road system. Secondary service uses should primarily be located along these arterial routes.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.3.1.2. The Subject Site is located within an established and emerging cluster of residential, institutional, and supportive uses connected by the City's road network. The proposed high-density residential form contributes to this structure by reinforcing the role of the area as a location for more intensive residential development. The Site is appropriately integrated into the existing road network, with direct access to 15th Avenue East and proximity to arterial connections, supporting the broader planning structure envisioned by the City.

*8.3.1.3 The City will consider higher standards for permitted uses and the design of buildings and streetscapes along the main arterial streets. Design guidelines should be developed for uses fronting on these arterial streets, with appropriate building setbacks and points of access.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.3.1.3. The development demonstrates a high standard of site and streetscape design along 15th Avenue East through appropriate building setbacks, coordinated access points, and the provision of street trees and sidewalks. Vehicular access is clearly defined and designed to minimize conflicts utilizing the designed bulb put in place when the subdivision was created, while pedestrian connections along the frontage contribute to an improved streetscape condition. The Proposal responds to staff comments by clarifying access, improving pedestrian connectivity, and reinforcing the relationship between the building and the street.

#### 4.3.4 Gateways and Nodes

Section 8.3.2 of the OP provides urban design direction for lands within Gateways and Nodes. On Schedule B (Planning Areas & Study Areas) the Subject Site is located within the Sydenham Heights Planning Area Phase 1. Accordingly, Schedule A2 (Sydenham Heights Phase One and Phase 2 Planning Areas Land Use Plan) establishes the land use designation for the area along with the location of Gateways and Nodes.

The Subject Site is not located within an identified Gateway or Node, and therefore, the OP policies of Section 8.3.2 do not apply to the Proposal.

#### 4.3.5 Pedestrian Environment - Living Streets

*8.4.1.1 The City will seek to secure a safe and accessible pedestrian environment in public and private development through the development and use of design guidelines which provide standards for clear visibility in public places, appropriate lighting, safe movement around vehicles, barrier free sidewalks and building entrances and such other measures as may be appropriate.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.4.1.1, as it provides a safe, accessible, and clearly defined pedestrian environment. The design incorporates barrier-free access throughout the site, including continuous sidewalks, accessible building entrances, and clearly delineated pedestrian routes separated from vehicular circulation. Features such as dropped curbs, tactile indicators, and internal walkways ensure accessibility and safety for all users, directly addressing staff comments regarding pedestrian connectivity and accessibility.

*8.4.2.2 The City will promote the principles of "Living Streets" by:*

- a. Encouraging walking throughout the City.*
- b. Providing continuous safe and comfortable walking routes.*
- c. Reducing potential pedestrian conflict with vehicles and separating pedestrian paths from roadways where possible.*
- d. Reducing vehicular speeds on local roads.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.4.2.2 and supports the principles of "Living Streets." The development encourages walking through the provision of continuous pedestrian routes across the site and along the street frontage, connects key site elements such as parking areas, entrances, and amenity spaces, and minimizes conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles through clear separation of circulation systems. The internal site layout prioritizes pedestrian movement, while vehicular access is organized to reduce conflict points and improve safety.

*8.4.2.4 The City will promote public and private development that provides a comfortable, human scale environment, supports social interaction and which addresses the issues of year-round use.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.4.2.4 by creating a comfortable, human-scale environment that supports social interaction and year-round use. The Site includes well-defined outdoor amenity areas, including seating areas, a pergola, and recreational spaces such as a pickleball court, which provide opportunities for both active and passive use. These spaces are integrated with the landscape design to create comfortable and usable environments for residents throughout the year.



*8.4.2.5 In developing design guidelines and in public works, the City will promote an interesting and inspiring public environment through a high standard of building and landscape design, the inclusion of public art in accessible and visible locations and the preservation of heritage features.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.4.2.5 by delivering a high-quality public and private realm through coordinated building and landscape design. The inclusion of structured amenity areas, new plantings, and site furnishings contributes to an engaging and visually appealing environment. While public art and heritage features are not a defining component or requirement of / for the Site, the overall design achieves an interesting and thoughtfully designed landscape and built form that enhances the user experience.

*8.4.2.7 The City will promote public and private development that achieves the optimum conditions of sun, shade and wind conditions throughout the seasons in all outdoor pedestrian areas. Conditions should be suitable for the expected activities, whether active, such as walking or passive, such as sitting. Optimum conditions may be achieved through the appropriate siting of buildings and open spaces, the shape of taller buildings, the use of building elements such as awnings and walls and*

*the use of landscaping elements to provide windbreaks and shade. In areas where taller buildings may be built or where there is direct exposure to open water, the City may require wind testing and shadow studies of proposed development and the adjacent pedestrian areas and public spaces.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.4.2.7. The siting (east end) and orientation of the building (north-south), combined with the design of outdoor amenity spaces and landscape elements, have been considered to optimize sun, shade, and wind conditions. This is previously demonstrated above in Section 3.9 of this report. Landscaped areas, tree planting, and built form elements provide opportunities for sun and wind relief, while the inclusion of outdoor amenity areas ensures that these spaces are usable and comfortable. The submission of a shadow study and the consideration of building massing in Section 3.0 above further demonstrate that microclimatic conditions have been appropriately evaluated and addressed.

#### **4.3.6 Streetscapes**

*8.6.1.1 The City will seek to achieve well-coordinated and designed streetscapes throughout the City, particularly in the commercial areas and along arterial roads. They should provide comfortable pedestrian environments, safe vehicular movement, reinforce the desired or established character of the area and, where appropriate, incorporate trees for shade.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.1.1, as it establishes a well-coordinated and high-quality streetscape along 15th Avenue East that supports both pedestrian comfort and safe vehicular movement. The Proposal provides a continuous sidewalk network along the frontage, supplemented by street tree planting and landscaped boulevards that contribute to shade, microclimate comfort, and visual continuity. The building is oriented to address the street, with clearly identifiable entrances and pedestrian connections that reinforce an active and legible street edge. Vehicular access is consolidated and clearly defined to minimize conflict points, directly responding to staff comments regarding access clarity and safety. The coordinated integration of built form, landscaping, and pedestrian infrastructure contributes positively to the evolving residential character of the area.

*8.6.1.3 The City may define, within any development area, building heights and setbacks or, in some cases, 'build to' lines that are consistent with the intended form of development and relevant guidelines. Within a residential area, such heights and setbacks should be consistent with the general form of existing development. Increased setbacks may be required where high buildings are proposed.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.1.3. The building setback and siting have been carefully considered in relation to both the street and adjacent uses, balancing the need to define the street edge while accommodating site constraints such as grade changes and the existing retaining wall condition. The Proposal maintains a consistent and appropriate relationship to the street. For example, an increased setback has been utilized from the front yard to accommodate the greatest possible separation between low- and mid-rise built forms east to west but not precluding the importance of street interface treatments. In this case, landscaping, pedestrian circulation through the use of internal walkways connected to sidewalks along 15<sup>th</sup> Av East, and buffering have been designed to ensure the site creates a functional and aesthetic balance in the front yard.

The building massing and placement respond to staff concerns regarding scale and transition, ensuring compatibility with surrounding development while supporting the intended mid-rise built form.

*8.6.1.4 The City may provide, or may require of new development, enhancement of the public right of way consistent with the character of the neighbourhood and applicable urban design guidelines, using streetscaping elements such as special lighting, landscaping, paving stones, street furniture, public art and other complimentary features and fixtures.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.1.4, as it enhances the public right-of-way through coordinated streetscape elements, including new sidewalks, street tree planting, landscaped buffers, and pedestrian-scaled design features. The inclusion of planting, seating opportunities, and clearly defined pedestrian routes contributes to a comfortable and visually appealing public realm. These elements collectively elevate the quality of the streetscape and reinforce the pedestrian-oriented design of the development.

#### **4.3.7 Side or Rear Yard Parking**

*8.6.3.1 In an area where existing development is less than 10 m from the sidewalk or where a higher level of landscaping is desired to present a more attractive street edge, non-residential buildings should be kept at a fairly uniform distance from the street, with parking located behind the line of the front of the building.*

*8.6.3.2 The area between the building and street should be landscaped in accordance with applicable design guidelines.*

*8.6.3.3 Sidewalks may be set back from the road with landscaped boulevards where appropriate.*

*8.6.3.4 A barrier-free path of travel shall connect City sidewalks to main, accessible entrances.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.6.3.1 through 8.6.3.4. While the development is residential in nature, the site design reflects the intent of these policies by ensuring that parking areas are not the dominant feature along the street edge. Parking is primarily located internal to the site and is visually buffered from the street through landscaping, including planting strips, street trees, and low-height vegetation.



The area between the building and the street is landscaped and designed to provide an attractive interface, rather than being dominated by parking.

Sidewalks are provided along the frontage and connected to internal pedestrian routes, creating a continuous and accessible pedestrian network. A clearly defined, barrier-free path of travel connects the public sidewalk to the main building entrance, incorporating features such as dropped curbs and accessible pathways, directly addressing staff comments regarding pedestrian connectivity and accessibility.

#### **4.3.8 Front Yard Parking**

*8.6.4.1 In this form of development, parking shall be separated from the sidewalk by a landscaped buffer. Sidewalks may also be set back from the road with landscaped boulevards where appropriate. These areas should be landscaped in accordance with any applicable design guidelines.*

*8.6.4.2 Parking with this form of development should be aggregated into larger units in order to address issues of access as set out in Section 8.6.6.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.6.4.1 through 8.6.4.3. Where parking is visible from the street, it is appropriately separated from the sidewalk through landscaped buffers, including planting strips and street trees, ensuring that the visual impact of parking is minimized. Parking areas are consolidated into organized internal blocks rather than fragmented spaces, improving circulation and reducing the number of access points.

The design maintains continuous pedestrian movement along the frontage and into the site, with safe and clearly defined access points at regular intervals.

#### **4.3.9 Large Lots**

The term 'large lots' as referenced in Section 8.6.5 of the Official Plan is not defined within the OP or the City's Zoning By-law. It is therefore interpreted as a qualitative, context-based term referring generally to parcels of sufficient size and depth to accommodate internal circulation and site design flexibility, rather than a specific numerical threshold.

*8.6.5.2 Buildings close to the street could be developed in a form similar to that described in Section 8.6.3.*

*8.6.5.3 Consideration should be given to continuous pedestrian access along the building fronts near the street and connecting to adjacent development. Safe, comfortable, accessible and barrier-free pedestrian points of access from the street should be provided at regular intervals to all buildings on the lot.*

*8.6.5.4 A connect City sidewalks to main, accessible entrances.*

*8.6.5.5 In this form of development, parking shall be separated from sidewalks by a landscaped buffer. Sidewalks may also be set back from the road with landscaped boulevards where appropriate. These areas should be landscaped in accordance with applicable design guidelines.*

In our opinion, the Proposal meets the general purpose and intent of Policies 8.6.5.2 through 8.6.5.5. The building is sited to maintain a strong transition from the existing low rise uses to the west while organizing the remainder of the site around internal circulation and amenity spaces. Continuous pedestrian access is provided along the frontage and throughout the Site, connecting to building entrances, amenity areas, and adjacent lands, including the planned easement connection to the west.

Barrier-free access is ensured through the provision of accessible routes from the public sidewalk to the main building entrance. Parking areas are generally separated from pedestrian areas and sidewalks through landscaped buffers, including planting beds and tree planting, and other means such as delineated and painted walkway when cutting through the parking lot, ensuring both visual and functional separation. These elements collectively create a coherent and accessible Site design appropriate for a large-format residential development.

#### **4.3.10 Parking and Access**

*8.6.6.1 Where off-street parking is required, the City may develop and enforce design criteria and guidelines to provide for:*

- a. Safe vehicular access.*
- b. Pedestrian safety, convenience and accessibility.*
- c. Adequate lighting, signage and landscaping.*
- d. Controlled visual impact by appropriate location on the site.*

*8.6.6.2 Parking should be located in a manner appropriate to the size of the site, the optimum relationship of the building to the street and convenient access for users as described in Section 8.6.*

*8.6.6.3 Access points should be clearly visible and distinguishable, limited in number and designed in a manner that will minimize hazards to pedestrian and motor traffic in the immediate area. The City may require consolidation of adjacent parking areas to provide appropriate spacing of access points on arterial roads.*

*8.6.6.4 Pedestrians should have a safe, well-lit, clear route from vehicle to building at all times of the year. Safe, comfortable, accessible and barrier-free pedestrian points of access should be frequent and easily identified with clear directional signage. Larger developments should provide sitting areas for pedestrians awaiting pick-up.*

*8.6.6.5 Parking areas are to be adequately landscaped in accordance with urban design guidelines. Parking areas should maintain distinct street edges through appropriate landscaping or structures.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.6.6.1 through 8.6.6.5. The Site design provides safe and clearly defined vehicular access, with strategically located drive aisles and access points that minimize conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles, directly addressing staff comments regarding access design. Primarily, this is created through thoughtful internal circulation, which is logical and efficient, with clearly delineated routes for vehicles and pedestrians.

Pedestrian safety and accessibility are prioritized through the provision of continuous, well-defined, and barrier-free pathways connecting parking areas to building entrances and amenity spaces. These routes are designed to remain functional year-round and will be supported by appropriate lighting (SPA stage) and visibility.

Parking areas are landscaped with internal planting islands, perimeter buffers, and tree planting, reducing their visual impact and contributing to a more attractive environment. The design maintains a distinct and landscaped street edge, ensuring that parking does not dominate the public realm.



### 4.3.11 Adjacent Uses

*8.6.7.1 The City shall consider matters of potential impact on adjacent uses when considering any application for a change of use.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.7.1, as the site layout and built form have been explicitly designed to respond to and mitigate potential impacts on adjacent uses, and especially on the adjacent low-rise uses to the west. The building is strategically located toward the eastern portion of the Subject Site, achieving a substantial separation distance of approximately 75 metres from the existing low-rise residential dwellings to the west, which represent the most sensitive adjacent use. This siting decision minimizes potential impacts related to overlook and visual dominance and allows the building to be situated underneath a 45-degree angular plane.

Additionally, vehicular access, parking areas, and servicing functions are organized internal to the site and away from these low-rise residential interfaces, reducing potential conflicts and operational impacts. The integration of landscaped buffers, tree planting, and screening elements along property edges further mitigates visual and aural impacts.

These measures directly respond to staff comments regarding compatibility and adjacency, demonstrating a deliberate and context-sensitive design approach.

*8.6.7.2 The City shall consider the potential impact of abrupt changes in building height and scale on surrounding uses and protected views when considering zoning by-laws and site plan approvals. Generally, the City will seek compatible building forms.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.7.2, as it achieves a compatible built form transition in terms of height and scale relative to surrounding uses. While the building is proposed at 8 storeys, several design strategies are employed to mitigate the perception of height and ensure compatibility.

The building has been pushed as far east as possible to create the largest separation possible between the low- and mid-rise built forms. A 45-degree angular plane has been applied from the western property boundary, and because of the eastern oriented building placement, the building falls well below this angular plane ensuring that the upper portions of the building remain contained within a controlled massing envelope relative to the adjacent low-rise dwellings.

Although not required by the planning framework, this provides a clear and defensible method of demonstrating appropriate transition.

Further, the building incorporates articulated massing, including vertical façade breaks, projecting balconies, and variation in materials, which reduce perceived bulk. As well, the significant grade differential along 10th Street East, equivalent to approximately 3 to 4 storeys, results in the building presenting as approximately 4 to 5 storeys from that vantage point, further reducing perceived height from the southern interface.

In the broader context, the Proposal is situated at the edge of a low-rise neighbourhood in a pocket of other mid-rise built forms, including retirement residences and long-term care facilities, reinforcing its compatibility within an emerging mid-rise built form cluster.

*8.6.7.3 Where the height or mass of a proposed building may significantly shadow or cause increased wind conditions on an adjacent open space or solar collector, the City may require a study be undertaken to assess the impact and may develop and enforce setback requirements, site plan requirements and design guidelines to ameliorate the problem.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.7.3, as potential shadow and microclimatic impacts have been appropriately assessed and mitigated through both design and supporting technical analysis. The Shadow Study demonstrates that shadowing is primarily directed toward public rights-of-way and the area to the south characterized by significant grade change and a retaining wall, which are not sensitive receptors.

Importantly, the study confirms that no shadow is cast onto the existing low-rise residential uses to the west, thereby avoiding adverse impacts on the most sensitive adjacent land use. Limited and transitional shadowing occurs on adjacent mid-rise buildings, but these impacts are minimal in duration and do not affect key amenity areas for long durations.

The siting of the building toward the eastern portion of the site, combined with its orientation and separation distances, is a primary design response to minimize shadow and wind-related impacts. Landscaping and building articulation further contribute to mitigating microclimatic conditions at grade, consistent with staff direction.

*8.6.7.4 Wherever a residential type of use abuts an industrial use, a commercial use, an institutional use, a parking area, a loading area or any other incompatible use, the City may develop and enforce setback requirements, site plan requirements and design guidelines to provide adequate visual and aural separation and privacy for the residential use in accordance with MECC.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.7.4, as it provides appropriate visual and functional separation between sensitive residential uses and adjacent land uses. The only area where a reduced separation occurs is along the eastern interface with the planned commercial (hotel) use at 1200 16th Avenue East, where a rear yard setback of 7.5 metres is provided (5.06 metres to the elevated balcony edge). The Subject Site is zoned R5, which requires a minimum rear yard setback of 7.5 metres for apartment dwellings, and the building complies with this requirement. While balconies are not explicitly addressed in the Zoning By-law, they are reasonably interpreted as architectural features and therefore permitted to encroach up to 1.0 metre into any required yard as per Section 5.8 (Table 5.8.1) of the City of Owen Sound Zoning By-law 2010-078, as amended.

The Proposal provides interior side yard setbacks of 7.35 metres (north) and 14.18 metres (south), which, even with balcony encroachments, result in setbacks of approximately 4.91 metres and 11.74 metres, both exceeding the minimum requirements of 1.2 metres and 4.0 metres. As such, the Proposal complies with the required interior side yard setbacks. However, Section 5.8 (Table 5.8.1) limits projections for architectural features to 1.0 metre, and the proposed 2.44 metres balcony projections along the eastern rear yard exceed this permission. Accordingly, while the Proposal meets the intent and numeric setback requirements, it does not strictly comply with the permitted encroachment provisions for this eastern interface. In this regard, the proposed rezoning requests a site-specific exception to this projection exceedance.

In our opinion, the proposed eastern rear yard balcony projection exceedance is appropriate and acceptable when considered in the context of the proposed master site plan for the lands at 1200 16th Avenue East, which establishes a substantial and layered separation between the two developments. As shown on the neighbouring plan, the proposed hotel building is set back approximately 23.5 metres from the shared property line, which, when combined with the 5.06 metre setback from the Subject Site's rear lot line to the balcony edge, results in a total building-to-building separation of over 28 metres (see **Figure 25**).



This separation is further reinforced by the site design of the adjacent lands, which incorporates a 3.0 metre landscape buffer, as well as internal drive aisles and surface parking areas between the two buildings, creating a layered transition consisting of landscaping, circulation space, and open area rather than a direct interface. As such, the proposed balconies do not result in adverse privacy, overlook, or massing impacts, as they are oriented toward a commercial context characterized by parking and site circulation rather than sensitive residential amenity space. In this regard, the relationship between the two sites provides a high degree of physical and visual separation, and the minor projection exceedance does not undermine the intent of the zoning or the broader urban design objective of achieving compatible and appropriately buffered adjacent uses.

Overall, Site incorporates setbacks, landscaped buffers, and screening elements along property boundaries to create separation and enhance privacy. Perimeter planting includes new trees, as well as shrubs and mounded planting beds, which provide year-round screening and soften the interface between uses.

These measures collectively ensure that the residential use is protected from potential impacts associated with adjacent uses, consistent with the intent of the policy and staff comments regarding buffering and separation.

8.6.7.6 Protection of adjacent uses may require support of compatibility studies in accordance with Schedule 'E'.

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policy 8.6.7.6, as it is supported by the appropriate technical studies and design responses necessary to assess and mitigate compatibility impacts.

The submission includes a Shadow Study, for example, which evaluates potential impacts on adjacent properties and demonstrates that adverse effects are avoided. In addition, the overall site design, through building siting, setbacks, landscape buffering, and internal organization, functions as a primary mitigation strategy, addressing potential compatibility concerns at the design level.

Collectively, these measures demonstrate that the Proposal has been thoroughly evaluated and designed to protect adjacent uses, consistent with the intent of the policy.





### 4.3.12 New Residential Development

*8.6.8.1 New residential development should be planned in neighbourhoods through Planning Areas, creating identifiable areas of the City with simple street patterns, a coherent built form, a well-connected and safe pedestrian system and accessible local amenities such as a neighbourhood park, convenience shopping and institutional uses.*

*8.6.8.2 Buildings should be sited to provide relatively consistent streetscapes within an area, with similar setbacks, defining the visual width of the streets. Street trees should be planted in accordance with an appropriate plan.*

*8.6.8.3 In new comprehensively designed residential development, the City may permit building setbacks and lot sizes which vary from surrounding development where these are determined to be appropriate to the proposed form of development in accordance with accepted design guidelines.*

*8.6.8.4 New development should support the maintenance of a continuous open space system and provide appropriate pedestrian access.*

The Proposal conforms with Policies 8.6.8.1 through 8.6.8.4. The development contributes to a coherent and identifiable residential area through a coordinated site layout, organized building form, and integrated pedestrian network. The design establishes clear circulation patterns, both vehicular and pedestrian, and connects to the broader neighbourhood through existing and planned linkages.

The building is sited to maintain a consistent relationship with the nearby low-rise residential uses, while the inclusion of street trees landscaping, and sidewalks reinforces a unified streetscape with permeability. The Proposal also supports a continuous open space system through the provision of landscaped areas and amenity spaces that are connected throughout the site and to adjacent lands.

Variation in setbacks and site design reflects the unique context and constraints of the site, including grade changes, while remaining consistent with the intended built form and design objectives.

### 4.3.13 Outdoor Lighting

*8.6.9.1 New development and redevelopment shall be designed with responsible lighting practices that create safe outdoor environments and minimize glare and impact to night sky, public view and surrounding properties.*

*8.6.9.2 The City may regulate public and private site lighting types through a regulatory by-law or design guidelines.*

In our opinion, the Proposal will conform with Policies 8.6.9.1 and 8.6.9.2. The development is planned to incorporate a lighting design that supports safety and visibility while minimizing glare and light spill. The lighting plan will be provided at the SPA stage, but it is intended for lighting to be focused on pedestrian routes, building entrances, parking areas, and amenity spaces, ensuring safe and comfortable use of the site during evening, overnight, and early morning hours. The design approach will align with best practices for responsible lighting and will be further refined through detailed design to meet City standards.

#### 4.3.14 Landscape Design

*8.6.10.1 Landscaping shall be designed to enhance the presence of each building and used as a major visual element to unify the proposed building, streetscape and surrounding environment.*

*8.6.10.2 Landscaping design shall utilize a diversity of plant material that are appropriate for the site conditions in all seasons, including a focus on native plant material where appropriate, and avoid the use of invasive species in accordance with City policies and guidelines.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.6.10.1 and 8.6.10.2. Landscaping is a defining element of the Site design, used to unify the building, streetscape, and surrounding environment. The Landscape Concept Plan includes a diverse range of plant material, including deciduous and coniferous trees, shrubs, and ornamental plantings, selected to provide year-round visual interest and respond to Site conditions.

The design incorporates street trees, parking lot shade trees, perimeter buffers, and amenity planting, creating a layered and cohesive landscape framework.

The use of varied planting typologies and species diversity contributes to ecological resilience and enhances the overall character of the site.

#### 4.3.15 Safety and Security - Public Safety in the Built Form

*8.7.1.1 New development and redevelopment shall be designed to promote safe, comfortable and accessible environments for all users.*

*8.7.1.2 Public spaces will be designed using materials and tactics that invite diverse users, foster feelings of safety, and facilitate social networking.*

*8.7.1.3 Physical design measures such as adequate lighting and clear sightlines should be used as basic design elements.*

*8.7.1.4 The unintended consequences of erecting physical barriers, which may cause to inhibit the use of public space, or altering existing spaces to displace specific users must be considered in every decision.*

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with Policies 8.7.1.1 through 8.7.1.4. The Site has been designed to promote safety, comfort, and accessibility through clear sightlines, well-defined circulation routes, and appropriate lighting (to be finalized at the SPA stage). Pedestrian and vehicular movements are clearly separated, reducing potential conflicts and enhancing user safety.

Outdoor amenity spaces are designed to be visible, accessible, and well-integrated into the site, encouraging social interaction and passive surveillance. The design avoids the use of unnecessary barriers that would limit access or usability, ensuring that spaces remain open and inviting to residents and visitors.

Collectively, these design measures create a safe and inclusive environment that aligns with the City's objectives for public safety in the built form.



### 4.3.16 Conclusions

In our opinion, the Proposal conforms with the urban design policies of the City of Owen Sound Official Plan, particularly Section 8, as it demonstrates a comprehensive and integrated approach to Site and built form design that prioritizes accessibility, pedestrian connectivity, landscape integration, and compatibility with surrounding uses. The development achieves a high standard of design through the coordinated arrangement of building massing, streetscape treatment, parking organization, and amenity spaces, resulting in a comfortable, safe, and visually cohesive environment. The Proposal responds directly to staff comments through refinements to access, pedestrian circulation, buffering, and landscape design, ensuring that key urban design objectives related to walkability, safety, and public realm quality are met. Overall, the development represents a contextually appropriate and well-designed addition to the City's built form, advancing the Official Plan's vision for compact, attractive, and liveable residential environments.

## 4.4 Owen Sound Residential Tree Preservation Policy

The City of Owen Sound Residential Tree Preservation Policy (May 2004) is a municipal policy document that came into effect through adoption as a City planning/operational policy under the City's Official Plan framework, intended to guide development review rather than function as a standalone by-law. Its purpose is to protect and retain existing trees and natural features within residential development areas while ensuring appropriate replacement planting and landscaping where removal is necessary. The policy establishes requirements such as tree survey plans, restrictions on pre-approval tree removal, replacement ratios (typically two-for-one), and detailed landscaping standards to ensure ecological integrity, visual amenity, and consistency across developments. It is also important in assessing the urban design of a development, as it directly influences streetscape character, landscape continuity, and how built form integrates with existing natural features.

3. *Trees within a proposed residential development that can be retained without negatively impacting the overall efficiency of the development shall be retained where:*

- a. *The tree species is consistent with the guidelines and will enhance the project;*
  - b. *The tree is unique in terms of its age, size or historical importance.*
4. *Where a tree would normally be retained under part (3) is found to impact on the efficiency of the overall development, removal shall be permitted provided a minimum of two trees are planted for each tree lost. This would not apply to nuisance or scrub type trees.*

There are thirty trees proposed to be removed, but only 20 of those trees being removed are mature and healthy and warrant compensation. This means that, theoretically, based on the above policy, 40 trees would be required to be planted for each tree lost.

In this regard, the Proposal has had appropriate regard for the City of Owen Sound Residential Tree Preservation Policy, as demonstrated through the preparation and integration of a Tree Preservation Plan and Landscape Concept Plan that have directly informed the Site layout and overall urban design approach. Existing trees on and adjacent to the Subject Site have been inventoried and assessed, with compensation proposed at a rate of two trees for each tree lost, in keeping with the above policy.

Where tree removal is required to facilitate the development, particularly in areas associated with the building footprint, underground parking structure, fire routes, and internal circulation, the Proposal provides a comprehensive replacement planting strategy that meets and, in practice, exceeds the intent of the policy with more than 40 new trees for the loss of 20. The Landscape Concept Plan includes a substantial number of new plantings, including street trees along 15th Avenue East, internal parking lot shade trees, perimeter buffer planting, and amenity area landscaping. This approach ensures that tree replacement is not only quantitative but also qualitative, contributing to canopy continuity, streetscape definition, and long-term environmental performance.

Importantly, the planting strategy is coordinated with the overall urban design of the Site, using trees and landscaping as primary structuring elements to define pedestrian routes, frame amenity spaces, and buffer adjacent uses. This directly addresses staff comments regarding the need for enhanced landscape integration, tree preservation, and buffering. Through this integrated approach, the Proposal maintains the intent of the policy by balancing efficient site development with meaningful tree retention and replacement, while enhancing the visual quality, ecological function, and character of the site within its broader context.

## **4.5 City of Owen Sound Urban Design Directions**

The City of Owen Sound has prepared a March 2026 “Urban Design Directions” document as a draft, city-wide guidance framework intended to implement and expand upon the urban design policies of the Official Plan.

The document establishes a set of detailed, context-sensitive design directions to assist staff, Council, and applicants in evaluating development Proposals and achieving a high-quality built environment across the municipality, while also serving as a reference for best practices in site and building design. As a draft document, it is not yet in force and effect; however, it signals the City’s intent to formalize a consistent urban design framework through future Council adoption, at which time it is expected to be used in the review of development applications and broader city-building initiatives.

On March 23, 2026, Council considered Report CS-26-023 regarding the Draft OPA, ZBA, and these new Urban Design Directions, endorsing them in principle with revisions. Implementing by-laws are being prepared and are expected to be considered in April 2026.

As the City’s March 2026 Urban Design Directions remain in draft form and have not been formally adopted by Council, they have not been applied in the evaluation of the Proposal.



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# Conclusions.





This Urban Design Brief has evaluated the proposed “East Court Retirement Residences” from a comprehensive urban design perspective, having regard for the applicable provincial, county, and municipal policy framework, as well as the existing and planned physical context surrounding the Subject Site. In our opinion, the Proposal represents a well-considered and contextually appropriate form of development that achieves a high standard of design and appropriately responds to its surroundings.

A defining strength of the Proposal is its deliberate building siting and overall site organization. The building has been positioned toward the eastern portion of the Subject Site, thereby maximizing separation, approximately 75 metres, from the existing low-rise residential neighbourhood to the west, which represents the most sensitive interface. This strategic placement ensures that the Proposal functions as a transitional built form, situated at the edge of a stable neighbourhood while aligning more closely within an existing and emerging cluster of mid-rise retirement living, and similar uses located to the north and east. In this regard, the development does not introduce an abrupt or incompatible form but rather reinforces an evolving pattern of intensification already present within the area.

The surrounding context further supports this positioning. The Subject Site is not located within the interior of a low-rise neighbourhood, but rather at its periphery, where land uses transition toward more intensive forms. The presence of existing mid-rise buildings, including nearby retirement residences and long-term care facilities, as well as approved hotel developments along 16th Avenue East, establishes a built form context in which an 8-storey building is both reasonable and appropriate. The Proposal contributes to this emerging node of higher-density development, consistent with broader planning objectives for intensification within settlement areas.

Importantly, the site’s unique topographic condition significantly mitigates the perceived height and massing of the building from the southern interface. The substantial grade differential along the southern edge of the Site, defined by a retaining wall equivalent to approximately 3 to 4 storeys in height, creates a condition whereby the building presents as approximately 4 to 5 storeys when viewed from 10th Street East. This grade separation establishes a strong physical and visual edge, effectively reducing the building’s apparent scale along this interface and minimizing potential visual impacts on the lands to the south, which are further separated by the 10th Street East right-of-way.

As a result, the building’s full height is primarily experienced from 15th Avenue East and the internal subdivision context, where mid-rise forms are anticipated and appropriate in accordance with the in force and effect land use designations and zoning.

Additional design measures further reinforce compatibility. The application of a 45-degree angular plane from the western property boundary, which the proposed building falls well under, while not required by policy, provides a clear and defensible demonstration of appropriate massing transition. The building’s articulation, including vertical and horizontal design elements, balconies, and material variation, reduces perceived bulk and contributes to a visually refined built form. The comprehensive landscape strategy, including buffering, tree planting, and amenity integration, further enhances the relationship between the development and its surroundings.

From a functional and public realm perspective, the Proposal successfully integrates pedestrian connectivity, accessible design, and high-quality amenity spaces. The Site layout prioritizes safety and legibility, with clear separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation, while contributing to an enhanced streetscape along 15th Avenue East. The inclusion of both private and shared amenity spaces, supported by a cohesive landscape framework, creates a comfortable and engaging environment for residents.

Overall, the Proposal achieves the intent of the applicable urban design policies by delivering a development that is compatible, well-integrated, and responsive to its context. It supports intensification within a Primary Settlement Area, contributes to a growing cluster of mid-rise and retirement-oriented uses, and does so in a manner that carefully mitigates impacts on adjacent lands.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is our professional opinion that the Proposal represents appropriate urban design. Accordingly, we recommend that the requested Zoning By-law Amendment be approved in order to facilitate the development of the East Court Retirement Residences.

Respectfully prepared,

**The Biglieri Group Ltd.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Sugden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Evan Sugden**, HBASc, MA, CAHP, RPP, MCIP  
Senior Associate



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