



# Approaching Housing Delivery at the Ritson School Site

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Committee of the Whole

June 12, 2024

# Site and Location

300 Ritson Road South

**Site Area:** 2.1 hectares (5.3 acres)

**Contains:** a former public elementary school building 3714 m<sup>2</sup> (+/- 40,000 sq. ft.)

**Central Oshawa:** One of seven Health Neighbourhoods

An area requiring focus to build on health and well-being due to:

- A greater incidence of female lone-parent families
- A greater percentage of seniors who live alone
- A higher percentage of dwellings in need of major repairs
- A higher percentage of the population spending more than 30% of their income on shelter costs
- A higher percentage of children in low-income households
- A higher percentage of low-income households
- Higher levels of unemployment

The community has a high rate of core housing need

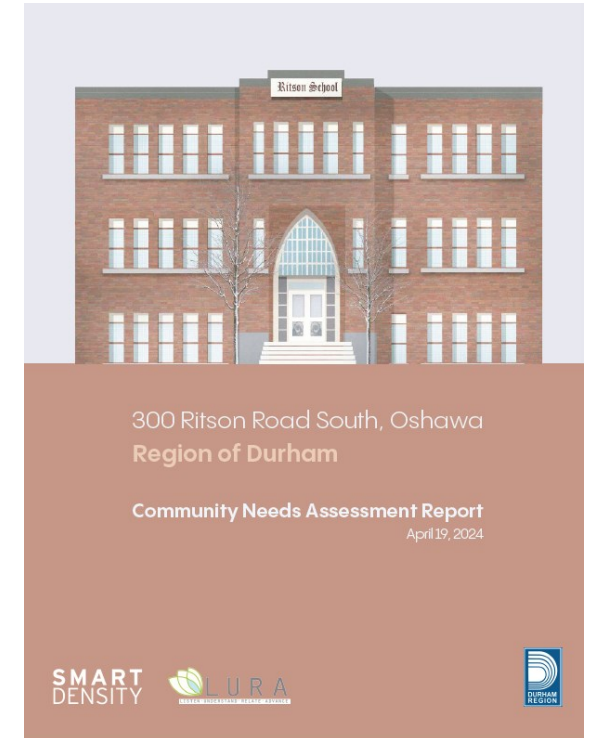
The Region purchased the site in 2022 as a strategic opportunity to provide sustainably built, mixed income, mixed-use housing with community services and supports.



# Community Needs Assessment

## Identified Current and Future Needs of Residents

- Address housing affordability and attainable housing: provide single- or two-bedroom housing units
- Provide a variety of physical and mental health supports consolidated in a single floor or building
- Offer childcare, educational or recreational programs for youth
- Improve ongoing access to community programs and services. Educational, training, or recreational programs accessible to people of different skills, abilities, and backgrounds
- Consider recreational or drop-in programs for seniors
- Support continued reconciliation in partnership with Indigenous peoples
- Consider flexible spaces for a variety of programs
- Provide opportunities for placemaking
- Protect and provide parks and open space
- A mixed-income, mixed-tenure housing model should be considered to improve financial feasibility
- Partner with the private-sector partner and one or more non-profit organizations for housing.
- Consider a recreational facility to broaden the range of programs and training that could be provided.
- Provide a balance of market housing with affordable and below market housing together with community servicing uses





# The Ritson School

Named after John Ritson, an early settler and Oshawa's first schoolteacher

Originally constructed in 1923 with six-room addition constructed in 1928.  
Additions constructed in the 1940s and 1970s

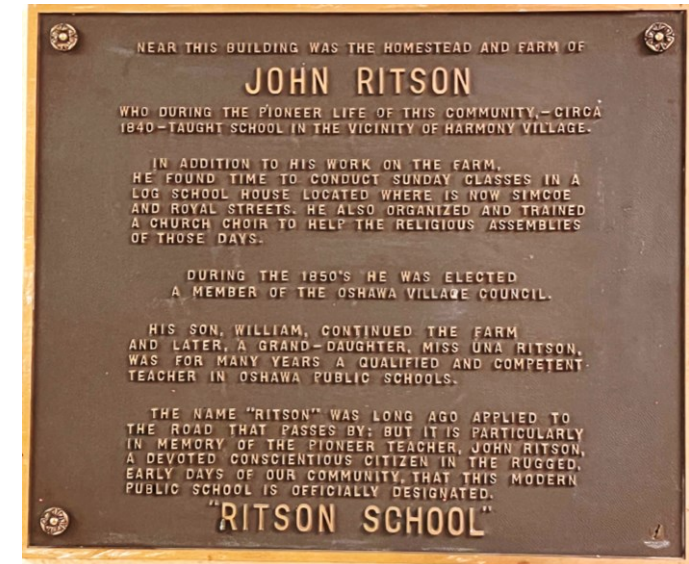
Closed by the Durham District School Board in 2012

Designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to be of cultural heritage value - the 1923 and 1928 architectural styles merited the heritage designation

Not currently suitable for re-use: architectural, engineering, structural, heritage and other design and construction work needs to be completed

Interactive community engagement: focus on public outdoor elements on the site, publicly accessible outdoor elements, placemaking approaches and heritage conservation

Placemaking potential - as a landmark and signature feature merits sensitive restoration, adaptive reuse and complementary buildings of compatible scale



# Policies Guiding Development

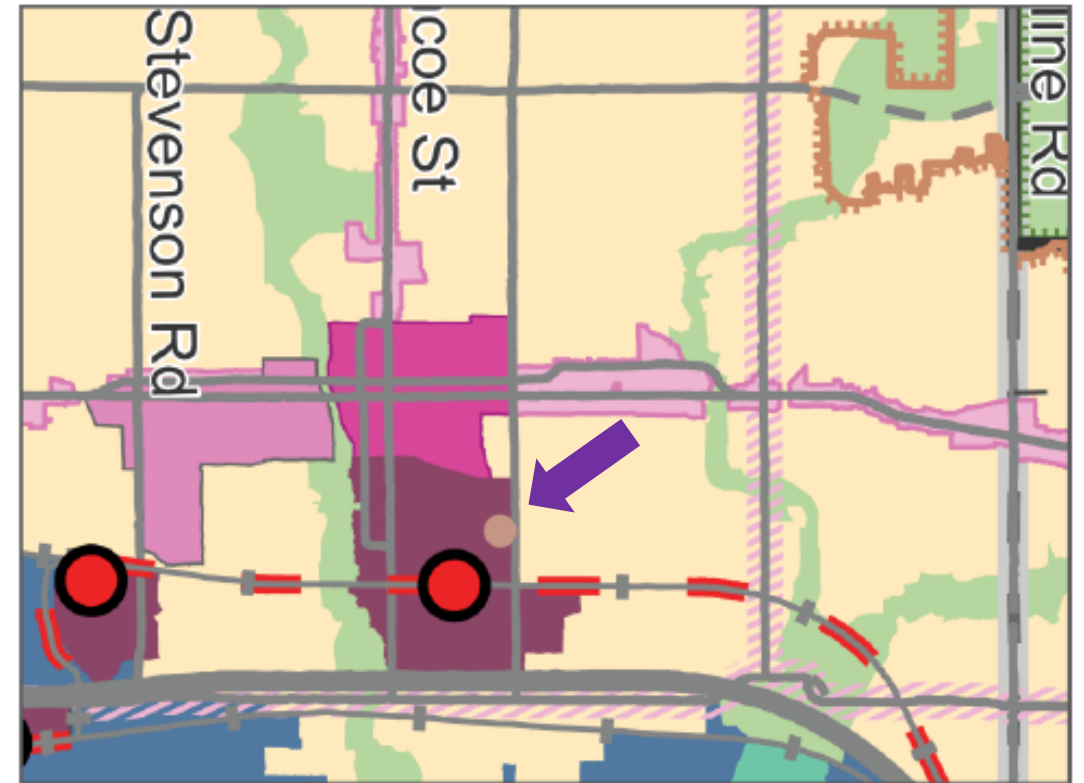
## Envision Durham – Regional Official Plan

- Adopted by Regional Council in May, 2023: awaiting provincial approval
- “Protected Major Transit Station Area” (PMTSA)
- Allows medium and high-density residential uses, mixed-use development, commercial and retail uses, recreational and community amenities such as parks, urban squares and trail systems

## City of Oshawa Official Plan

- “Residential” within the Downtown Main Central Area Boundary
- Allows medium to high density residential uses, supporting densities of between 30 to 300 units per hectare.
- Development is to support an overall long-term density target of at least 75 residential units per gross hectare and a Floor Space Index of 2.5.
- Permits a wide variety of high-rise and mid-rise development with some low-rise development (e.g., ground-related multiple attached dwellings);
- Buildings at corner locations should generally be higher than buildings in mid-block locations.

Current zoning needs to be amended to enable redevelopment in keeping with official plan policies



Regional Official Plan - Regional Structure Map

- |                       |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| ● Subject site        | ■ PMTSA               | ■ Rapid Transit Corridor |
| ■ Proposed GO Rail    | ■ Urban Growth Centre | ▨ Regional Corridor      |
| ● Proposed GO Station | ■ Regional Centre     | ■ Employment Area        |

# Integrated MTSA Study

The City of Oshawa is completing a land use and transportation study for the Oshawa Protected Major Transit Station Area. A new GO Rail Station is planned south of Cowan Park between Simcoe Street and Ritson Road.

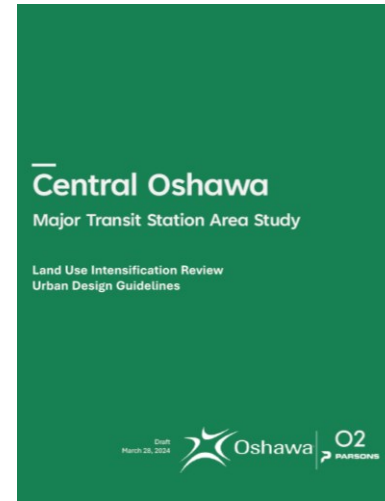
The Ritson School site is within 500 metres (9-minute walk) of the future GO station. The Ritson School site is within the Study Area and PMTSA boundary.

Land Use Plan for further evaluation projects 25,000 total homes (with 51,000 residents and 8,500 jobs) within the Study Area. The Ritson School site is identified as:

- Medium Density I Residential
- Parkland Contribution Area
- Active Non-Vehicle Linkage

City staff are considering refinements to the Land Use Plan before recommending a final alternative to Oshawa Council for endorsement. Regional staff have requested:

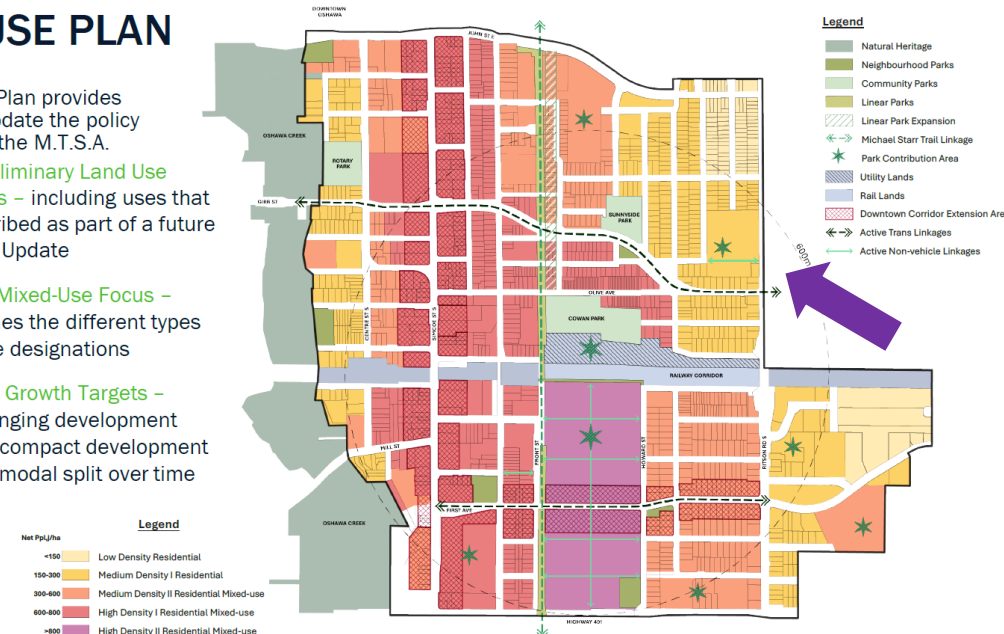
- Identifying the site as “Medium Density II Residential”
- Shifting the location of the “Parkland Contribution Area”
- Refining the “Active Non-Vehicle Linkage” to align behind the school



## LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan provides guidance to update the policy framework for the M.T.S.A.

- **Defining Preliminary Land Use Designations** – including uses that will be described as part of a future Official Plan Update
- **Residential Mixed-Use Focus** – further defines the different types of mixed-use designations
- **Establishing Growth Targets** – through changing development practices of compact development and revised modal split over time





# Development Principles



## Parcels and Phasing

- Three complementary sites
- Block 1: minimum 160 units (behind the existing school)
- The existing school building will form part of a future phase/block that will be reused to accommodate a mix of community and public uses, together new housing opportunities



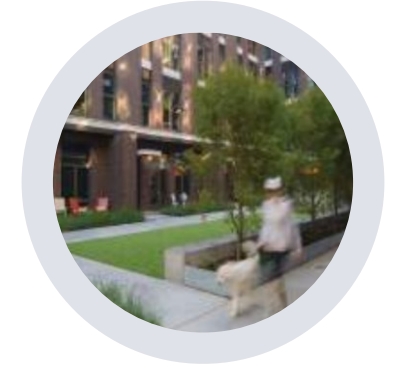
## Mix of Market and Affordable

- Minimum 30% affordable rental
- Mix of unit sizes (1, 2 and 3 bedroom units)
- Preference for quick delivery through modular construction
- Partnerships with non-profit, Indigenous, co-operative and/or other non-market providers encouraged



## Excellence in Urban Design

- Contextually sensitive designs
- Buildings will frame streets and public spaces with frequent and sheltered pedestrian entrances
- High standard of architectural excellence
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



## Pedestrian Accessibility and Circulation

- Pedestrian circulation routes, sidewalks & multi-use paths
- Public open space (plaza) behind the school building: active, visible, accessible
- Buildings surrounding the plaza will have open, transparent, accessible building faces.
- Design for accessibility

# Development Principles



## Embrace Built and Cultural Heritage

Buildings will form part of a cohesive community, centred on the renovation, protection, preservation, enhancement and adaptive reuse of the heritage Ritson School building.

Include opportunities for reconciliation and Indigenous cultural heritage.



## Provide Meaningful Connections

Promote transit use.

Ground floors of buildings provide services to the broader community will be directly accessible by local transit routes and active transportation linkages.



## Climate Resiliency

Include energy efficiency measures to reduce utility operating costs and its operational GHG emissions footprint.

Apply the Durham Standard to reduce the urban heat island effect, such as: low carbon, net-zero and/or net-zero ready building design; green and cool roofs; or other low impact development measures, including green infrastructure.



## Placemaking

Provide opportunities for placemaking and public gathering through building placement, landscaping, and streetscape design measures.

Provide a vibrant and attractive public realm incorporating art, culture and heritage to contribute to a sense of place and identity.



# Development Principles



## Traffic Connectivity

- Traffic connection: a new east-west local road
- New driveway access points
- Avoid conflicts with existing intersections.



## Open Space

- Two publicly accessible open space areas
- A courtyard in front of the Ritson School building, providing opportunities for public art, ceremonial, formal or informal gatherings.
- Pedestrian space the school to provide amenity space for future residents.



## Parking and Service Functions

- Below grade parking: may connect adjoining phases.
- Shared and/or reduced parking approaches encouraged
- Bicycle parking and end-of-trip facilities

# Demonstration Plan

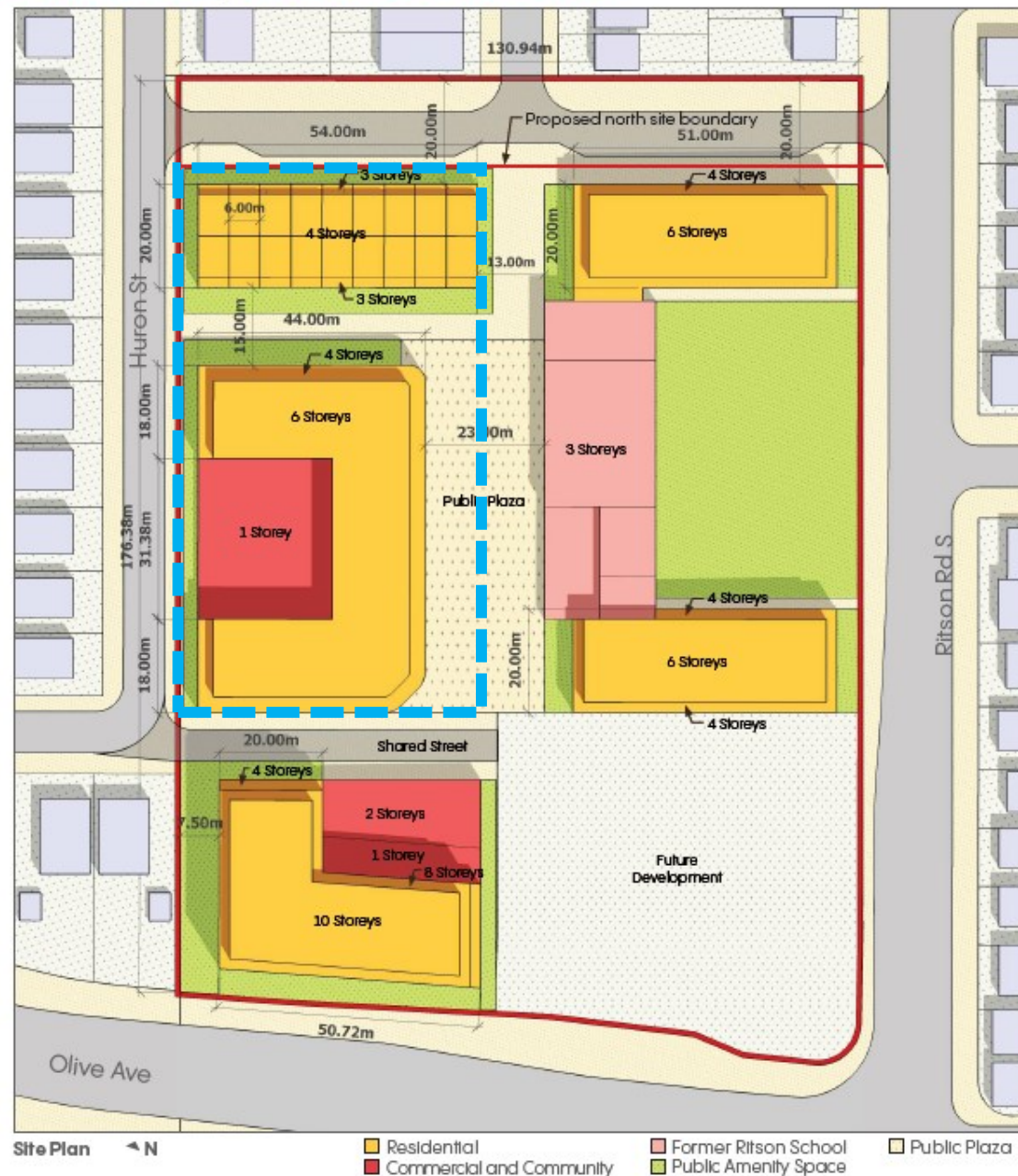
## Focus on Block 1

- A rectangular 0.6 ha (1.5 ac.) area west of (behind) the existing school building:
  - 105 metres (345 ft.) of frontage
  - 57 metres (187 ft.) in depth
- Can accommodate approximately 160 housing units, including townhouses and a low to mid-rise building ranging from four to six storeys
- A mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units, some at-grade non-residential uses, and on-site publicly accessible open space
- A single level of underground parking has been included

## Other components:

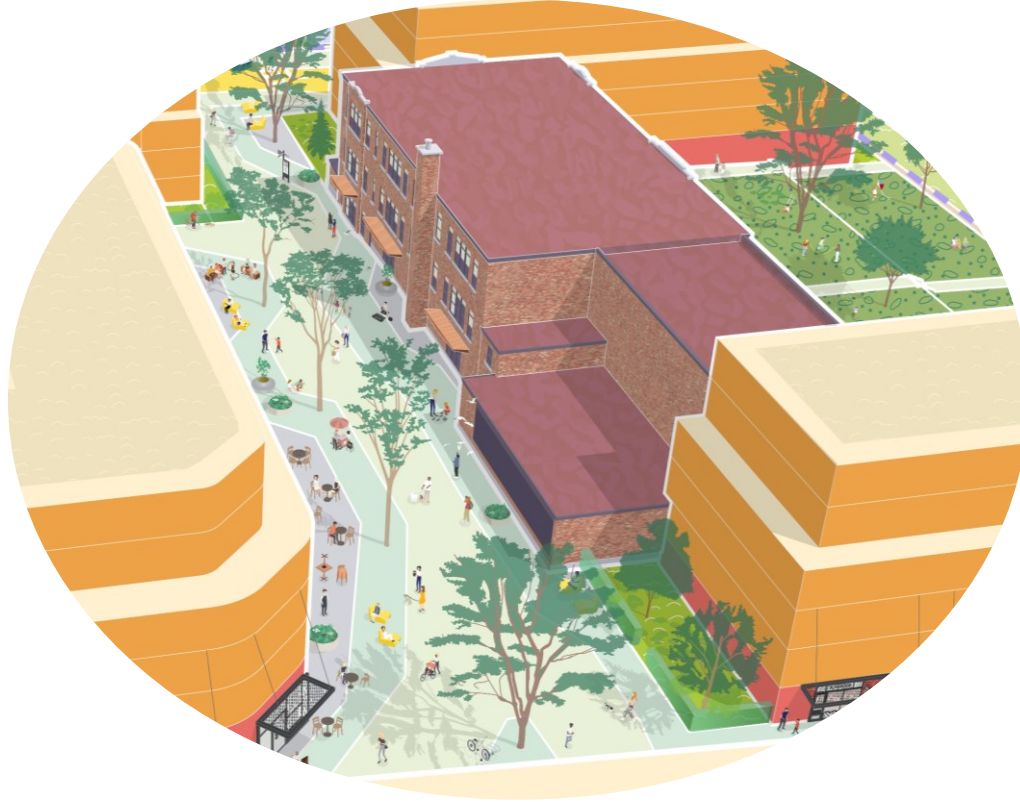
- A public sidewalk on the east side of Huron Street
- A new local road along the north side of the site connecting to Huron Street, Clarke Street and Ritson Road South
- Front facing architecture along all building faces
- Parking and servicing that does not face neighbouring residents
- Ensure all functional components of Block 1 are wholly included so that future phases can also achieve their potential (including parking and open space requirements)

## 300 Ritson | Demonstration Plan





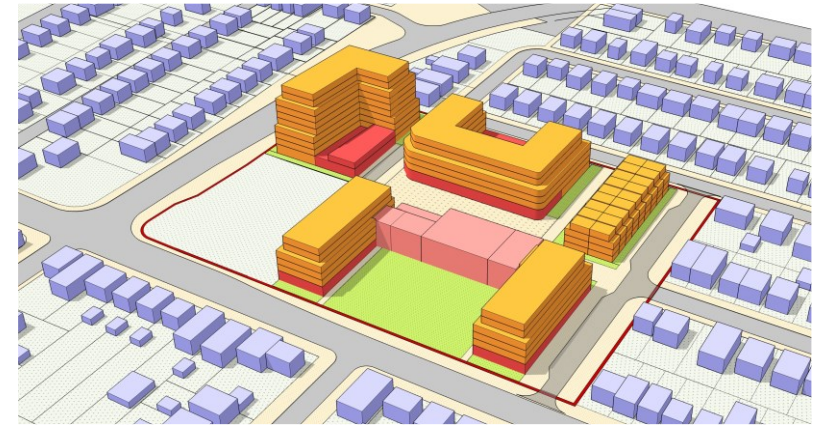
# Demonstration Plan: Images and Precedents





# Approach Housing Providers

- Positive experience with private and non-profit housing providers to optimize new affordable housing (At Home Incentive Program):
  - application led
  - open and transparent with special focus on affordable rental housing.
  - Clear and predetermined criteria: evaluation and recommendations of eligible projects considered by Regional Council.
- **Request for Expression of Interest (REI)**
  - Obtain insights and market information from builders/developers with interest in the site and program
  - Focus on Block 1
  - Publicly posted and non-binding
- **Five Key Questions:**
  - Interest in development within a long-term land lease arrangement?
  - Interest in undertaking/completing development approvals based on the Development Principles?
  - Interest from companies with expertise to undertake an affordable and mixed market development model?
  - Expertise in the planning, development and construction of modular housing?
  - Cost effective elements of the Durham Standard while enabling project feasibility? Are there design features that are prudent or appropriate that are not otherwise captured?



# Additional Steps

- **Advance Detailed Study** and additional due diligence to enable future development applications:
  - Functional servicing and stormwater management
  - On-Site Geotechnical
  - Phase 2 ESA and Reliance Letter
  - Transportation and Parking supply
  - Heritage and Archaeological
  - Urban Design and Landscape
  - Other studies as may be required by the City through Preconsultation
- **Ongoing Participation** in the City's MTSA study
- **Public Outreach** on development approach and principles
- **Report to Committee and Council** on REI results



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