

**Thamescrest Farms – Phase 2 Draft Plan
Planning Justification Report**



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1.0 Introduction:

Thamescrest Farms Ltd, located in the “North Ward” of St. Marys owns nearly 200 acres of land, most of which is currently used for agricultural purposes. Much of this land is within the Settlement Boundary of St. Marys and is identified as “residential” or “recreational” in the St. Marys Official Plan Schedule ‘A’ Land use Plan.

The draft plan area is 20.9 hectares (51.6 acres), and contains a variety of residential housing forms, ranging from street fronting townhomes to single family lots up to 20 metres in width.

A zoning by-law amendment (ZBA) application is also being filed concurrently with the application for draft plan approval. The ZBA will assist the draft plan application process as it will provide clarity and detail with respect to all forms of residential housing proposed.

At this time, no Official Plan Amendment (OPA) is being filed, as the Town of St. Marys has initiated their own OP review, and as part of that process will be amending the land use designations to ensure consistency with this draft plan. Changes to existing land use designations will be relatively minor in nature, as the application generally conforms to the current recreational and residential land uses shown in the Official Plan.

2.0 The Subject Lands:

The subject lands are primarily used for agricultural purposes, as the land is cash-cropped as it has been for many years. The west side of the subject lands (generally the area of Block 185 SWMF) are not agricultural, as that area was the location of the previously existing house and barns related to the agricultural uses. The buildings have long since been removed, and there only remains a gravel driveway and some trees.

The existing topography is gently rolling with elevation falling generally from the north to the south. A gentle knoll is present on the west side of the subject lands. The new development minimizes the amount of earthwork required to adequately service the area and results in the SWMF's in the south and south west areas, along with adjacent parks to enhance the GTT, and attempt to preserve as many trees as possible.

3.0 Surrounding Land Uses:

The subject lands are bounded in the north west by the Settlement Area Boundary which identify lands outside of the boundary to be designated as agricultural in the OP and are currently farmed. Lands in the north east of this plan are bound by farm land inside the settlement boundary and are identified as recreational in the current OP.

To the east lies James Street North, which is identified as an arterial road in Schedule 'B' of the Official Plan (Road Classifications). To the immediate east of James Street are numerous existing residential homes (single family and semi-detached in form), some fronting onto James Street itself, while other homes back onto James Street. There is also one commercial property at the north east corner of Glass Street and James Street north.

Along the south side of the subject lands lies the Grand Trunk Trail (GTT). The GTT is a recreational trail that runs from Glass Street (near Millson Crescent) westerly across the Thames River and terminates at Thames Road. The GTT will be addressed in more detail in a subsequent section.

To the west of the subject lands are single family homes that front onto Emily Street. Four of the houses along this section of Emily Street are older homes (pre-dating the reconstruction of Emily Street), while the remaining houses were recently constructed as part of the first phase of development by Thames Crest Development Corp. There are some vacant lots remaining at this time.

4.0 Draft Plan Details:

The draft plan is effectively divided into two halves, connected by a linear storm water management facility (SWMF) which runs parallel to the Grand Trunk Trail (GTT). The westerly half sees Wellington Street connected from the existing north limit (at the GTT) to Glass Street which is consistent with the Town of St. Marys Official Plan, Schedule 'B' (Road Classifications). It is also consistent with a staff report to Council in June 2018 which provided Council and members of the public with clear justification for the northerly extension of Wellington Street.

The easterly half of the draft plan extends from the GTT northerly to Glass Street and provides for one additional road connection to James Street North at Trailside Court.

One hundred and seventy (170) single family lots are contemplated and range from 10.7 to 20 metres in width (35 – 66 feet). Three medium density blocks are also shown in the south east section of the plan and can accommodate approximately 50 multi-story townhomes. Also proposed are two storm water management facilities and three park blocks.

The largest single family lots are located in the south-west corner of the draft plan. As you move north easterly, we see the lot sizes gradually decrease in size. The differentiation in lot sizes provides a wide range of housing options for people. This is very important to ensure St. Marys is accommodating a wide variety of new housing forms which makes St. Marys an attractive place to call home.

In the south east corner of the draft plan, we have proposed street fronting multi-story townhomes and thirty-five-foot-wide single family detached lots. The provision for lots smaller than what has previously existed in St. Marys is part of a long-term strategy to provide new housing forms at a more affordable price point. It is generally felt by the local home builders that a small lot single family home would be a popular choice for those families who want a single-family home but are finding the larger 40+ foot wide lots out of their price range. In addition to the small lot single family homes, the smaller multi-story townhome units provide a lower cost alternative for families. It is anticipated that these units would be ultimately sold for prices close to what is calculated to be "affordable" as defined in the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) (PPS).

There are two SWMF's servicing the plan. The first is shown as Block 177 and is in the far south west corner of the subject lands. Its location provides for an enhancement to the GTT by ensuring no residential development is immediately adjacent to the GTT, and effectively allows for the natural environment to have a larger buffer to new development. Block 179 is a long linear SWMF servicing the easterly half of the subject lands. This linear facility was designed with the primary objective of separating the residential land uses from the GTT, again also providing a buffer for the existing trees along the GTT to the residential development.

5.0 Parkland Conceptual Plan Discussion

A total of three park blocks are also shown on the draft plan. Block 176 is located just north of the GTT on the east side of Wellington Street and is approximately 0.65 hectares in size. The seemingly odd shape to this park block is designed to accommodate the existing tree line and provides a natural entrance feature to the development for those travelling northerly on Wellington Street. This block is also large enough to accommodate a small playground structure, should the Town of St. Marys decide to incorporate an active use at this location. This park can also be extended into a future phase of development to enhance pedestrian connectivity.

The second park block shown on the plan is Block 175, located at the far south east corner of the subject lands and is 0.29 hectares in size. The Town of St. Marys indicated a small park block was required at this location to accommodate a small parking lot to serve as the “head of trails” for the GTT. The draft plan shows a conceptual parking lot layout. Additionally, it is thought the most logical vehicular access to the SWMF located on Block 179 is through this park block rather than through the local street network.

The third park block is in the north east section of the subject lands. Block 174 is approximately 0.64 hectares in size. This size of park block is such that it is considered a “neighbourhood” park providing an active use park for the surrounding residents, typically within 500 metres. This block will have an asphalt pathway connecting Glass Street to Street ‘D’. This will enhance pedestrian connectivity and serve as a maintenance access as sewers and a watermain will have to run through this block.

6.0 Residential Market Discussion:

Section 1.4.3 of the PPS requires that planning authorities provide an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet requirements of current and future residents by establishing minimum targets for provision of housing which is affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

In Discussion Paper #4 of the Town of St. Marys presented to the Town of St. Marys PAC on March 19, 2018, it was calculated that the price of an affordable house is approximately \$265,000. It was also noted that the average residential sale price was approximately \$280,000 between 2015 and 2017. By the time this draft plan of subdivision is approved, and residential units are actually available for sale or rent, it is assumed that the affordability calculation would result in a higher value than what is noted above.

When talking about “affordability” we must consider all of the existing housing stock and its “value” along with the projected values of housing being contemplated in any application. It should be noted that recent searches (October 2018, January 2019) of real estate listings in St. Marys reveal there are typically several single-family homes for sale in the range of \$280,000 to \$325,000, and some semi-detached homes many of which are listing for less than \$300,000. These re-sale homes must also be factored into the discussion around affordability. Also, to be factored into this discussion is the availability of rental units and smaller condominium apartment units that may be for sale.

Given that new homes are constructed to higher standards than homes of the past (higher insulation values, new building codes etc.), it is increasingly more difficult to construct new residential units which meet the standard of “affordability”, regardless of form (i.e. single family, apartment building, townhome). However, by providing for a range of housing, we meet a wide variety of potential purchasers wishes, from the starter home (townhome and 35-foot-wide lot single) to the move-up home (think 40 – 46-foot-wide lot) to the larger lots accommodating larger well-established families and those seeking their retirement dream homes.

Within the context of new development, I would consider the two story townhomes and the thirty-five-foot-wide lots to generally meet the criteria set for “affordability”, as I would estimate the sale prices for a 1,200 square foot two story townhome to be less than \$300,000, and the price of a single family home on a 35 foot wide lot to be in the mid \$300,000 range. Out of a total of approximately 220 new homes proposed in this application, more than 70 of them (+30%) are “affordable”.

It should be noted also that 34 of the houses constructed here would be on lots larger than 50 feet in width. These homes would be in the highest price range (over \$550,000), and only comprise approximately 15% of the total residential homes in the proposed plan.

The remaining 55% of the homes in this plan are “mid-market” in terms of value with an estimated range in value of \$375,000 to \$550,000. Additionally, the future draft plan connecting the two halves of this plan can accommodate a wide variety of housing forms. We have ensured the road design provides for good connectivity and will ultimately work well in terms of grading and sewer designs.

Housing Market Summary:

- 30% “affordable”
- 55% “mid-range”
- 15% “high-end”

The “mid-range” price of housing in St. Marys appears to be \$375,000 - \$450,000, while what I consider to be the “high-end” of the St. Marys market is typically over \$550,000. From the summary above, we can see that the majority of our proposed housing units will be in the affordable and mid-range price points.

7.0 Zoning By-Law:

As noted previously, a concurrent zoning by-law amendment (ZBA) is required to ensure what is being contemplated in terms of housing forms can be constructed. Currently, the subject lands are zoned RD (Residential Development) and OS (Open Space).

The Official Plan of the Town of St. Marys provides a general guide for land uses and what forms of development are permitted in certain areas. Zoning By-Laws provide a higher level of detail than can be contemplated in an Official Plan and are much more prescriptive in nature. Detailed information such as building setbacks, maximum building coverage, minimum landscaped area, and maximum heights are all stipulated in the Zoning By-Law.

The current RD zoning "...indicates that some form of residential development is contemplated in the future for the lands...". The OS zone permits a wide variety of uses, including (but not limited to) dog parks, hiking trails, public park, passive recreation and multi-use trails.

Now that a draft plan is created, we can more definitively determine the exact delineation between OS and specific residential zones. It should be noted that the phase 1 development on Emily Street (lots in 44M-64) have the R3 zone, which permits single detached dwellings on a lot no less than 15 metres in width and 37 metres in depth. We are proposing to utilize the R3 zone provision for approximately 42 lots, albeit with reductions in the minimum rear yard depth, lot area and lot coverage. These lots are generally located on the westerly side of the subject lands and apply to our largest lots.

The R4 zone provision will be utilized for 108 lots ranging in width from 40 feet to 50 feet. These lots are generally located in the westerly half of the proposed draft plan, and the lots on Glass Street adjacent to James Street North.

Currently, the Zoning By-Law in St. Marys does not contemplate any single-family lot to be less than 12 metres (39 feet) in width. As noted in the Residential Market Discussion section of this report, requirements to accommodate more affordable housing forms dictate a move towards smaller single-family homes on lots as narrow as 32 feet. It is contemplated that we can utilize the R4 zone framework, albeit with changes to minimum lot widths (10 metres), setbacks (6 metres rear, 1.2 metres interior side yard for both 1 and 2 story homes) and coverage (45%). This new R4 zone would apply to the all 20 of the single-family home lots on the easterly side of the proposed draft plan, except the 40-foot-wide lots on Glass Street.

There are three medium density blocks shown on the proposed draft plan. In anticipation of modest two-story townhomes being constructed, the existing R5 framework is proposed to be utilized. Reductions to lot depth, setbacks are requested, along with increases to maximum lot coverage.

The modifications and additions to the existing Zoning By-Law framework are vital to facilitate creation of housing forms new to St. Marys.

8.0 Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA):

The UTRCA mapping for the Town of St. Marys indicates the subject lands are not within the regulated area, except for a very small area in the south west limit of the subject lands, where the Block 185 SWMF is located. The UTRCA regulation limit is consistent with the drainage feature located on the south side of the GTT, west of Wellington Street.

Currently, the subject lands do drain through this drainage feature via a series of farm tile drains leading to twin CSP's (corrugated steel pipe) which convey storm water flow under the GTT. The post development condition contemplates diverting this uncontrolled pre-development flow to the SWMF's. Detailed engineering designs will determine what (if any) flow will continue to the existing drainage feature on the south side of the GTT. It may be that some portion of base water flow should continue to outlet to the south side of the GTT to maintain any ecological functions that exist there. In general, the post development storm water flows to this feature will be more regulated and will not contribute to an accelerated rate of erosion.

While there may be virtually no UTRCA regulated lands within most of the subject lands, we do however have a duty to consult with the UTRCA pertaining to the ecological functions of the wooded areas surrounding the GTT. To that end, we did convene a site meeting with a UTRCA planner (Spencer McDonald, Land Use Planner), and an appropriate course of action was followed to provide an inventory of the existing conditions in the area to ensure existing ecological functions are maintained in the post development condition.

We have supplied a Stage One Information Request to the MNRF (in Alymer) related to the UTRCA consultation process as part of the draft plan application submission requirements. Numerous site visits were undertaken to make note of man-made structures, natural vegetation, wildlife features and aquatic features. Environmental Land Classifications were applied based upon the field visits. In short, there are no suitable habitats for Species At Risk (SAR).

9.0 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The PPS provides the policy foundation that guides land use and development in Ontario. All municipal planning documentation (such as the Official Plan) must be consistent with the PPS, and all development applications must be consistent with both Official Plans and the PPS. The following provides a brief example of how this application is consistent with the PPS.

Section 1.1.1

- a) Promotes efficient development and land use patterns by creating lots which are reasonable in size for a green field development that allows gross densities to be at a level which is sustainable over the longer term.
- b) Provides a range and mix of housing ranging from entry level street fronting townhomes to larger single-family lots.
- c) The draft plan does not cause environmental or public health concerns
- d) Proposed draft plan allows for and contemplates expansion of settlement boundary
- e) The proposed draft plan makes good use of available lands by creating smaller lots and ensuring overall density is acceptable
- f) Connection to and celebration of the Grand Trunk Trail provides active recreational opportunities for everyone in the community
- g) All infrastructure is designed to accommodate current and future needs
- h) Biodiversity is conserved and enhanced by the strategic location of park blocks and storm water management facilities that are also designed to accommodate changing climate.

Section 1.1.3.6

The proposed draft plan is adjacent to existing built up areas and provides for a variety of housing forms promoting the efficient use of land and existing infrastructure.

Section 1.5

The proposed draft plan supports healthy active communities by ensuring pedestrian access to public spaces and existing active transportation activities are viable and numerous.

Section 2.0

Natural Heritage features are identified and protected and enhanced along the Grand Trunk Trail. Development is not contemplated in (or adjacent to) any significant wetland, woodland, wildlife habitat and is not in general a detriment to any ecological functions of the area.

10.0 Summary

This draft plan represents one of the largest development applications in the Town of St. Marys. Typically, development plans are smaller in nature primarily because land parcels are smaller, and previous applications likely did not have the wide variety of housing forms contemplated. We strongly feel this draft plan will provide for much-needed new forms of housing which has currently not been constructed – that being single family lots smaller than 40 feet in width, and street fronting entry-level two-story townhomes.

The Grand Trunk Trail (GTT) is a wonderful east west pedestrian corridor through the North Ward which is celebrated and strengthened by this draft plan. No residential development is planned to be immediately adjacent to the GTT. We have located the Storm Water Management Facilities (SWMF's) and two of the three park blocks adjacent to the GTT, which will not only enhance the natural state of the GTT, but provide for more passive recreational opportunities adjacent to the GTT.

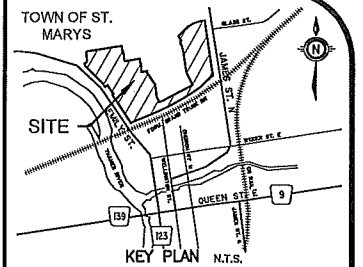
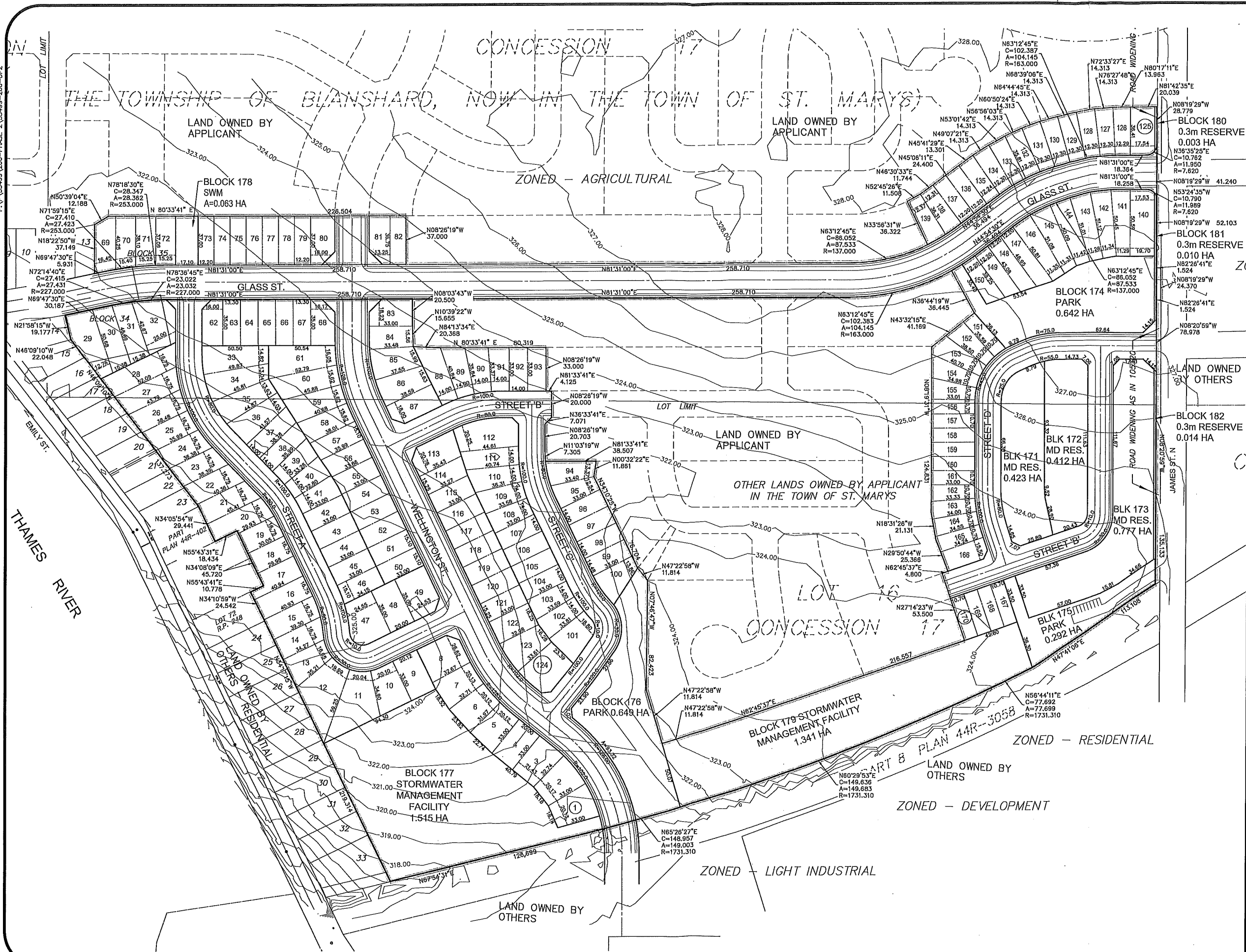
The northerly extension of Wellington Street where it crosses the GTT will have enhanced design features (pedestrian island, extra street lights, reduced pavement width and pavement markings) to ensure users of the GTT will have a safe Wellington Street crossing.

From an engineering perspective, this development makes use of existing sanitary sewer capacity on James Street North, and on Emily Street. Storm water management has been thoughtfully considered and designed to act as a natural heritage enhancement to the existing vegetation on the north side of the GTT. Modern standards require both quality and quantity control for all development related storm run-off, so the storm water flowing into the Thames River will mimic the pre-development condition.

Water servicing to this site will also provide additional benefits to the Town of St. Marys, primarily by connecting the existing watermains on both Glass Street and Wellington Street. This provides a “looped” system which is more resilient to failures. Water can be routed more effectively in the event of required maintenance and minimizes disturbances to existing users.

Appendices:

- **Proposed Draft Plan**
- **Proposed Phasing/Master Concept Plan**
- **Proposed Zoning By-Law Amendment Details**
- **Proposed Zoning Map**
- **Thames Crest Preliminary Storm Water Management and Servicing Report (MTE)**
- **Stage 1 Information Request (Biologic Incorporated)**



OWNER'S CERTIFICATE
I HEREBY AUTHORIZE:
MTE CONSULTANTS INC.
TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT THIS DRAFT PLAN
OF SUBDIVISION TO THE CITY OF STRATFORD

THAMESCREST DEVELOPMENTS DATE
LLOYD DAVENPORT

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE
I CERTIFY THAT THE BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDS
TO BE SUBDIVIDED, AS SHOWN ON THIS PLAN, AND
THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ADJACENT LANDS ARE
ACCURATELY AND CORRECTLY SHOWN.

GAVIN P.T. SEAMAN DATE
ONTARIO LAND SURVEYOR

REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 51(17) OF THE PLANNING ACT

(A) SEE PLAN	(E) SEE PLAN	(I) SEE PLAN
(B) SEE PLAN	(F) SEE PLAN	(J) SEE PLAN
(C) SEE PLAN	(G) SEE PLAN	(K) SEE PLAN
(D) SEE PLAN	(H) SEE PLAN	(L) SEE PLAN

LOTS 1-170 - SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL 9.863 ha
BLOCKS 171-173 - MED. DENSITY RESIDENTIAL 1.612 ha
BLOCKS 174-176 - PARK AREAS 1.583 ha
BLOCKS 177-179 - SWM BLOCKS 2.919 ha
BLOCKS 180-182 - 0.3m RESERVES 0.027 ha

ROADS	3.830 ha
TOTAL	19.835 ha

1. ISSUED FOR REVIEW	SGS 7/MAR/19
2. REVISION	BY DATE

TOWN of ST. MARYS



519-204-6510 www.mte85.com

OWNER
THAMES CREST
DEVELOPMENTS INC.

PROJECT
THAMES CREST
SUBDIVISION PHASE 1
SAINT MARYS ONT.

DRAWING
DRAFT PLAN
OF SUBDIVISION

Project Manager	WHV	Project No.	35499-200
Design By	SGS	Checked By	
Drawn By	SGS	Checked By	
Surveyed By	MTE	Drawing No.	DP1
Date	Dec.03/18	Scale	1:1250
Sheet	1 of 1		

Zoning By-Law Amendment Details

Zone parameters for lots where frontage is 9.7m - 12.0m:

Permitted Uses, Buildings, Structures

- One single detached dwelling on one lot
- Accessory uses, buildings and structures

Requirements for single detached dwelling on one lot:

- Lot area (interior lot) 290m² (9.7 by 30)
- Lot area (corner lot) 390m² (13.0 by 30)
- Lot Frontage (interior lot) 9.7m
- Lot Frontage (corner lot) 13.0m
- Lot depth 30 m
- Front Yard 6.0m to garage, 4.5m to main house/front porch
- Interior side yard 1.2m for 1 and 2 stories, both sides
- Exterior side yard 4.5m
- Rear yard 6m
- Building height 10.5m
- Lot coverage 45%
- GFAR 80%
- GFA 65m²
- Landscaped open space 25%
- Parking as per 5.21 (2 per unit)

R3-18 (as per R3, except for the following)

Permitted Uses, Buildings, Structures

- One single detached dwelling on one lot
- Accessory uses, buildings and structures

Requirements for single detached dwelling on one lot:

- Front Yard setback (to garage) 6.0m
- Front Yard setback (to main house) 4.5m
- Exterior Side Yard setback 4.5m
- Interior Side Yard setback 1.2m for one story, 1.8m for two story
- Rear Yard setback 6.0m
- Lot coverage 45%

R4-11 (as per R4, except for the following)

Permitted Uses, Buildings, Structures

- One single detached dwelling on one lot
- Accessory uses, buildings and structures

Requirements for single detached dwelling on one lot:

- Front Yard setback (to garage) 6.0m
- Front Yard setback (to main house) 6.0m
- Exterior Side Yard setback 4.5m
- Interior Side Yard setback 1.2m for one and two story
- Rear Yard setback 6.0m
- Lot coverage 43%

R5 per 12.4, except for the following:

Requirements for street fronting row or townhouse dwellings:

- Front Yard setback (to garage) 6.0m
- Front Yard setback (to main house) 4.5m
- Exterior Side Yard setback 3.5m
- Interior Side Yard setback 2.5m
- Rear Yard setback 6.0m
- Lot coverage 45%
- Height 12.0m
- Lot Depth Minimum 30.0m
- Lot Coverage Maximum 45%



Scale: 1:4000 Date: MAR 2018

THAMES CREST DEVELOPMENTS INC.

London ON

THAMES CREST SUBDIVISION

St. Marys ON

ZONING SCHEDULE



Engineers | Scientists | Surveyors

Project No.: 35499-200