ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

12100 CREDITVIEW ROAD

TOWN OF CALEDON REGION OF PEEL

PREPARED FOR:

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C/O FIELDGATE COMMERCIAL

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C.F. Crozier & Associates Inc.

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1.0 Introduction

C.F. Crozier & Associates Inc. was retained by 12100 Creditview Developments Limited c/o Fieldgate Commercial (the "Proponent") to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to support the Site Plan Approval (SPA) application for a proposed commercial development at 12100 Creditview Road in the Town of Caledon.

The analysis contained within this report was prepared using the most recent Site Plan (Turner Fleischer, September 11, 2024) and the Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report prepared by KWA (September 2024). Any minor revisions to the development concept post submission of this report are not expected to affect the conclusions contained within this report.

1.1 Report Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description and background review of the physical and ecological characteristics of the natural heritage features from the subject lands including the functions, significance, and sensitivity. Additionally, the report addresses potential impacts to the natural heritage features and outlines how impacts can be minimized or mitigated. In consideration of this information, recommended protection and/or mitigation measures will ensure that the proposed development conforms to the requisite policies as outlined herein.

The policies and technical requirements of the Official Plans for the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel as well as the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) have been considered as part of this report.

The goal of this report is to:

- a) Ensure that the proposed development can proceed in a manner that will not result in negative impacts to significant ecological features and functions
- b) Demonstrate conformity to the Provincial Policy Statement, the Region of Peel Official Plan, the Town of Caledon Official Plan and the Conservation Authorities Act.

The specific objectives that will be completed as part of this report include the following:

- a) Confirm the existing regulatory framework and current and proposed natural heritage policies that will apply to the subject lands;
- b) Complete 2024 significant species data search (Natural Heritage Information Centre, Federal and Provincial Species at Risk (SAR), etc.);
- c) Review 2022 and 2023 in-season field data completed on the subject lands as a part of the Alloa Secondary Plan area characterization of existing conditions;
- d) Review and provide comment on Headwater Drainage Features within and adjacent to the subject lands;
- e) Address potential impacts from development in order to identify appropriate mitigation and design measures related to preservation of the natural heritage features and functions (per Provincial Policy Statement) found within the subject lands;

f) Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and associated mapping for submission to the Town of Caledon.

2.0 Natural Heritage Policy

Provincial and municipal planning policies guided the preparation of natural heritage constraints and opportunities for the proposed development on the subject lands. Existing background policy information sources were reviewed to identify any mapped natural heritage features that may occur on or within 1km to the subject lands. In addition, a review of background data from various sources relating to the subject and adjacent lands was also completed. These policies and background information sources include:

- a) Ontario Provincial Policy Statement (2024)
- b) Region of Peel Official Plan (2022)
- c) Town of Caledon Official Plan (2018)
- d) Future Caledon, Town of Caledon Draft Official Plan (2024)
- e) Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Regulation Mapping (2024)
- f) Credit Valley Conservation Authority Regulation Mapping (2024)
- g) Natural Heritage Information Centre database (2024)
- h) Species At Risk Ontario, Species Lists (2024)
- i) Aerial photographs

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2024

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development.

The PPS states that the "provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic, health and social factors in land use planning."

Section 4.1 Natural Heritage, of the PPS (2024) states that:

- 1. Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.
- 2. The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.
- 3. Natural heritage systems shall be identified in Ecoregions 6E & 7E1, recognizing that natural heritage systems will vary in size and form in settlement areas, rural areas, and prime agricultural areas.
- 4. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
 - a. significant wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E, and

- b. significant coastal wetlands
- 5. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
 - a. significant wetlands in the Canadian Shield north of Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E;
 - b. significant woodlands in Ecoregions 6E and 7E (excluding islands in Lake Huron and the St. Mary's River);
 - c. significant valleylands in Ecoregions 6E and 7E (excluding islands in Lake Huron and the St. Mary's River);
 - d. significant wildlife habitat;
 - e. significant areas of natural and scientific interest; and
 - f. coastal wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E that are not subject to policy 4.1.4(b)

unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or the ecological functions.

- 6. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in fish habitat except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
- 7. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
- 8. Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas identified in policies 4.1.4, 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.
- 9. Nothing in policy 4.1 is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.

2.1.1 Relevance to the Development Proposal

This development proposal shall be consistent with policy statements made under the Planning Act.

2.2 Region of Peel Official Plan

The Region of Peel Official Plan (2022) protects natural heritage and water resource features though policies and designations of the Region's Greenlands System. Section 2.14 of the Official Plan (OP) defines the Greenlands system as a natural heritage system that protects, restores, and enhances natural heritage features and areas as well as the linkages between them. Schedule C-1 of the OP identifies the Region's Greenlands System. Figure 7 of the OP further defines the Regional Greenland System by core areas, natural areas and corridors, and potential natural areas and corridors.

The OP also includes a conceptual figure (Figure 8 in the OP) which is a Natural Heritage System based on studies from the Conservation Authorities. The figure depicts areas that have the potential to be restored or enhanced. While the figure is conceptual, the Official Plan notes that the local municipalities may include the lands and features identified within their own local Natural Heritage Systems. These proposed enhancement areas are outside of the Greenlands Systems corridors and as such may provide a greater constraint to the developable portion of the subject lands if ever implemented by the Town of Caledon. To date, the Enhancement Areas are not included in either the Town of Caledon's current or draft Official Plan.

2.2.1 Relevance to the Development Proposal

As illustrated on Figure 7 and Schedule C-1 of the Region of Peel Official Plan, the subject lands are not included within the Region of Peel's Greenland System. Figure 8 also illustrates that the lands are not include in the Natural Heritage System based on studies from the Conservation Authorities.

2.3 Town of Caledon Official Plan

The Town of Caledon's Ecosystem Planning Strategy (Town of Caledon Official Plan, Consolidated March 2024), in Section 3.2.3 organizes the ecosystem framework into four categories which form the Environmental Policy Area designation. These include:

- Natural Core Areas
- Natural Corridors
- Supportive Natural Systems
- Natural Linkages

Schedule A, Land Use Plan, in the current Town of Caledon Official Plan provides the land use plan including the Environmental Policy Areas (EPA) for the subject and adjacent lands. EPAs contain all ecosystem components noted above, including:

- Woodlands
- Wetlands
- Wildlife Habitat
- Fisheries
- Valley and Stream Corridors

New development is prohibited in EPA designated lands and any new development adjacent to EPA is subject to an Environmental Impact Study and Management Plan (EIS and MP) per Section 5.7.3.7 of the OP.

2.3.1 Relevance to the Development Proposal

The subject lands are not designated as an Environmental Policy Area.

2.4 Future Caledon, Draft Town of Caledon Official Plan

The Town is currently updating its OP and a draft document, Future Caledon, was reviewed to determine any impacts from proposed natural heritage policies on the subject lands. Future Caledon provides a land use strategy that will guide the Town's development, housing, transportation, employment, and community facilities to the year 2051. Although Future Caledon has been adopted by Town of Caledon Council, final approval is required from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Future Caledon includes community planning structure comprised of the Urban System, Rural System, and a Natural Environment System.

The Natural Environment System is comprised of:

a) Core Areas of the Greenlands System as identified and protected in the Region of Peel Official Plan, and which are designated Natural Features and Areas by this Plan;

- b) Natural Areas and Corridors and Potential Natural Areas and Corridors of the Greenlands System as identified and protected in the Region of Peel Official Plan, and which are designated Supporting Features and Areas by this Plan;
- c) the Greenbelt Plan Natural Heritage System;
- d) the Greenbelt Plan Urban River Valleys;
- e) the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan;
- f) the Natural Core Area and Natural Linkage Area designations within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan;
- g) the Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area designations within the Niagara Escarpment Plan;
- h) Provincially significant Earth Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest
- i) regionally significant Earth Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest; and,
- j) The water resource system which includes permanent and intermittent streams, wetlands, seepage areas and springs, kettle lakes, highly vulnerable aquifers and significant groundwater recharge areas and Areas of High and Low Aquifer Vulnerability within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area.

Objectives and policies related to the Natural Environment System are further described in Section 13 of the Future Caledon OP. The Natural Heritage System is illustrated on Schedules D1 and D2a of the Future Caledon OP.

2.4.1 Relevance to the Development Proposal

As noted on both Schedules D1 and D2a, no portion of the subject lands are designated as Natural Environment System.

2.5 Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

The subject lands occur within the watersheds of both the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC) and hence Ontario Regulations 166/06 (TRCA) and 160/06 (CVC). Ontario Regulations 166/06 and 160/06 are the Generic Regulations of the Conservation Authorities Act, which came into effect in May 2006, specific to the regulation of development, interference with wetlands and alterations to shorelines and watercourses. Under this regulation, hazardous lands, wetlands, shorelines and areas susceptible to flooding, and associated allowances within the Authority are delineated by the "Regulation Limit" shown on maps that are filed by the Authority. Under Regulations 166/06 and 160/06, the Toronto and Region and Credit Valley Conservation Authorities require that approvals be obtained for any proposed development within areas regulated under their jurisdiction.

The intent of the permit process is to ensure that activities in these areas will not result in a risk to public safety or property damage, and that the natural features are protected through the conservation of land.

Under Ontario Regulations 166/06 and 160/06 Section 2, development is prohibited in or on the areas within TRCA and CVC jurisdictions that are prone to flooding, meander hazards and wetlands amongst the many development prohibitions listed. The flood hazard line of the Regulation Limit is typically associated with the stable top of bank or regulatory floodplain plus a setback to facilitate

access to the top of bank. The Regulation Limit follows the maximum extent of the combined floodplain and meander belt limits. Under this regulation, permission is required from the conservation authority to develop within prohibited areas including wetlands or to alter a watercourse. Acquisition of this permission requires the completion of an Application for Permission to be filed with the Authority. It should therefore be assumed that an authorization would be required for any fill or alterations within the Regulation Limit area. If the extent of the fill or alterations identified in the Development Plan were deemed significant, an Environmental Impact Study may be triggered.

2.5.1 Relevance to the Development Proposal

A review of the regulated areas mapping for both CVC and TRCA has determined that no portion of the subject lands is located within either the CVC or TRCA regulated area.

2.6 Endangered Species Act

The Provincial Endangered Species Act (2007) protects the endangered species that are listed on the regulations under the Act. It specifically prohibits willful harm to endangered species that are listed in regulations under the Act and the willful destruction of, or interference with, their habitats.

The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) assesses any Ontario species that might be experiencing declines based on research conducted by government staff or reports from other sources. COSSARO is an independent body that reviews species based on the best available science, including community knowledge, and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. There are several components of species at risk protection that, under the new Act are now legal regulations.

- the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) list,
- general regulations to provide greater flexibility, and
- habitat regulations to describe the habitat of a species.

Species are classified into categories based on the degree of risk that they face which include Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern. Only those species that are categorized as either Extirpated, Endangered or Threatened are afforded protection under the Endangered Species Act. A searchable online database of the species assessment reports is available at www.cossaroagency.ca/species.

The Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) tracks and maintains data on Ontario's endangered species and was consulted as to the listed species on or within a one kilometre grid surrounding the subject lands.

2.6.1 Relevance to the Development Proposal

The proposed development will have to conform to the requirements of Ontario's *Endangered Species Act* with respect to avoidance of impact to species and habitat of Threatened and Endangered species as listed on Ontario's Species At Risk in Ontario list. If avoidance is not possible, some form of authorization issued by the province would be required to advance development as proposed.

A search of the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) database was conducted on September 16, 2024. The subject lands are located within two 1km x 1km squares, 17NJ9139 and 17NJ9239. The search revealed the presence of four (4) bird species recorded within the three 1km x 1km squares that include the subject lands, including:

- Eastern Wood-pewee (Contopus virens) Special Concern. It should be noted that species listed as Special Concern. Only those species that are categorized as Endangered or Threatened are afforded protection under the Endangered Species Act.
- Bank Swallow (Ripaira ripaira) Threatened
- Bobolink (Dolichonyx oryzivorus) Threatened
- Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna) Threatened

3.0 Study Area Evaluation

3.1 Existing Conditions

The subject lands are approximately 35.93 acres (14.54ha) in size. The majority of the subject lands contains an actively farmed corn crop and are designated as Class 1 Soil Capability for Agriculture by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The subject lands also contains a portion of a residential lot and farm related outbuildings. The surrounding land use to the north and east are also actively farmed land while lands to the south have been developed as residential subdivisions with some land set aside for future commercial development. Land uses to the west include an elementary school and the Alloa Reservoir and Pumping Station.

3.2 Field Reconnaissance and Inventory

On September 28, 2021, a reconnaissance level site inspection was completed on the subject lands by a qualified Terrestrial Ecologist. The subject lands were walked to complete a vegetation survey and to search for evidence of Species at Risk habitat potential and Species at Risk sightings. As a part of the field inventories/assessments for the Alloa Secondary Plan area, of which the subject lands are a part of, more detailed field inventories were also completed in 2022 and 2023 for vegetation, breeding birds, breeding amphibians, fisheries, and Headwater Drainage Features.

3.3 Site Vegetation

A botanical (flora) in-season site inventory was completed in 2021 and updated in 2022, 2023, and 2024 to include the vegetation cover on the subject lands and adjacent lands. The delineation and classification of vegetation communities (cover) was characterized following the protocols and terminology of the Ecological Land Classification (ELC) system of the MNDMNRF, entitled "Southern Ontario Ecological Land Classification – Vegetation Type List" (Lee 2008). The subject lands are covered by two vegetation communities. The largest community contains annual row crops of wheat (OAGM1a), while the second vegetation community the portion of lands that are a part of a rural residential property with farm related outbuildings (CVR_4) (See Figure 2).

3.4 Breeding Birds

Breeding bird surveys were completed as part of the field inventories for the Alloa Secondary Plan area, which includes the subject lands. In addition to the field inventories for breeding birds collected in 2022 and 2023, three dawn breeding bird surveys were conducted at 40 point count

stations on May 24, June 3 and June 14, 2024 guided by point count methodology presented in Appendix D of the OBBA Guide for Participants (2001). All surveys were conducted no earlier than one half hour before sunrise and were completed prior to 10:00am. Surveys were completed under suitable weather conditions [i.e. no precipitation and light winds (Beaufort wind scale ≤3), see Tables 4a-e], with an observation period of 10min carried out at each point count station. Nocturnal breeding bird surveys were conducted

While there were 54 bird species noted during the field investigations for the Alloa Development, there were no SAR species or area sensitive species recorded on the subject lands.

3.5 Breeding Amphibians

Breeding amphibian surveys were conducted as a part of the Alloa Secondary Plan area field surveys in 2022, 2023, and 2024. Survey locations were placed in proximity to wetland habitats that may support breeding amphibians and followed the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring protocols. Surveys consisted of auditory surveys undertaken during the prime breeding period to record calling males that are present, spread throughout the breeding season to include the short temporal peak for each species of interest. The surveys involved visiting the site after dusk when minimum night-time air temperatures of at least 5°C during the first visit, 10°C during the second visit and 17°C during the third visit. Calling amphibians, if present, were identified to species and chorus activity was assigned a code from the following options:

- 0 No calls;
- 1 Individuals of one species can be counted, calls not simultaneous;
- 2 Some calls of one species simultaneous, numbers can be reliably estimated and shown in brackets; and
- 3 Full chorus calls continuous and overlapping.

One calling station was located in the southwest corner of the subject lands along Mayfield Road (See Figure 2). No species were noted as present on any of the 2022, 2023, or 2024 visits to the calling station.

3.6 Headwater Drainage Feature Assessment

A Headwater Drainage Feature (HDF) assessment within the proposed Alloa Secondary Plan area was completed in accordance with the Evaluation, Classification and Management of Headwater Drainage Features Guidelines (CVC and TRCA, 2014). The first HDF surveys were conducted in late March 2024 and second HDF surveys were completed in mid-May 2024. Drainage features were characterized based on flow regime, form, riparian vegetation, fish and fish habitat, and terrestrial habitat. Drainage feature reaches were evaluated individually based on each of the parameters noted above and then assigned a rating of important, valued, contributing, or limited based on functional significance. These ratings were then used to determine an overall management recommendation for each reach based on the following categories:

Protection – Important Functions: i.e., swamps with amphibian breeding habitat; perennial
headwater drainage features; seeps and springs; Species at Risk (SAR) habitat; permanent
fish habitat with woody riparian cover;

- Conservation Valued Functions: i.e., seasonal fish habitat; with woody riparian cover; marshes with amphibian breeding habitat; or general amphibian habitat with woody riparian cover;
- Mitigation Contributing Functions: i.e., contributing fish habitat with meadow vegetation or limited cover;
- Recharge Protection Recharge Functions: i.e., features with no flow with sandy or gravelly soils:
- Maintain or Replicate Terrestrial Linkage Terrestrial Functions: i.e., features with no flow with woody riparian vegetation and connects two other natural features identified for protection; and,
- **No Management Required** Limited Functions: i.e., features with no or minimal flow; cropped land or no riparian vegetation; no fish or fish habitat; and no amphibian habitat.

All three HDFs are located in the agricultural field (See Figure 2) and field observations noted that while there was flowing water during the first assessment in late March, they were dry at the second assessment date in mid-May. It was also observed that all three HDFs have limited habitat and channel definition with the riparian areas dominate by agricultural fields on both sides.

As such, using the parameters noted above, the three HDFs on the subject lands have been ranked as No Management (See Figure 2). A ranking of No Management requires that the feature can be moved or modified and the function of the feature does not need to be maintained.

3.7 Species At Risk Screening

For the purposes of this report, Species at Risk (SAR) are considered to be those species formally designated provincially by the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO). The Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) files were accessed to review relevant observational data records for the property and abutting lands. The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Bird Studies Canada et al. 2006) records for Region 10 – Halton-Peel-Dufferin; Breeding Bird Squares 17NK93 was also reviewed to provide a perspective of potential birds breeding on the property and abutting lands. Results for square 17NK93 included two records for confirmed evidence of breeding activity for bird species listed as Threatened and two records for probable breeding evidence – one for a species listed as Threatened and one listed as Special Concern. It should be noted that no SAR bird species were observed on the subject lands during the 2022, 2023, and 2024 field surveys.

During the site visit it was observed that there currently two farm related structures on the subject lands which include a large aluminum barn structure and a smaller aluminum barn structure. While both structures contain capped chimneys which may limit potential for Chimney Swift, further study will be required to confirm presence/absence of the species. The structures also provide potential habitat for Barn Swallow nesting however, no nests were observed on either of the structures, and there is adequate habitat in the surrounding areas. The aluminum structures are unlikely to provide habitat to bats due to there being no entry points and no roosting potential as the roof is also aluminum.

The property was searched for presence of Butternut, and none were found. No wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, watercourses, or other areas of natural significance were identified within the property boundaries.

4.0 Significant Natural Heritage Features

The following is an assessment of significant natural heritage features that must be included in the environmental assessment of proposed developments. Under the Provincial Policy Statement, it is the responsibility of the planning authorities to identify significant natural heritage features, including significant valleylands, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitat. The following sections provide an evaluation of the subject property's existing features in context with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNRF) criteria for the identification of significance under the Provincial Policy Statement and the related potential impacts associated with the development proposal. These criteria are then compared to the actual site conditions to determine if the potential for significance exists. These criteria are detailed in the Natural Heritage Reference Manual for Natural Heritage Policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (April 2010).

4.1 Significant Valleylands

There are no significant valleylands on the subject lands.

4.2 Significant Woodlands

The PPS states that development and site alteration may be permitted in significant woodlands provided that there will be no negative impacts to the identified natural features and functions that lend significance to the woodland. Woodlands as defined by the PPS are:

"treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas and vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels."

Significant, with regards to woodlands is defined in the PPS as:

"an area which is ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history".

The Natural Heritage Reference Manual outlines the recommended Significant Woodland Evaluation Criteria and Standards using woodland size, ecological function, possession of uncommon characteristics and economic and social values to determine the woodland's significance. Those criteria are explained and weighed against the characteristics of the subject property below.

4.2.1 Woodland Size

- Woodland areas are considered to be generally continuous even if intersected by narrow gaps 20 m or less in width between crown edges.
- Size value is related to the scarcity of woodland in the landscape derived on a municipal basis
 with consideration of differences in woodland coverage among physical sub-units (e.g.,
 watersheds, biophysical regions).

• Size criteria should also account for differences in landscape-level physiography (e.g., moraines, clay plains) and community vegetation types.

There are no significant woodlands on the subject lands.

4.2.2 Ecological Function

a) Woodland Interior

Interior habitat more than 100 m from the edge (as measured from the limits of a continuous woodland as defined above) is important for some species. For purposes of this criterion, a maintained public road would create an edge even if the opening was not wider than 20 m and did not create a separate woodland.

b) Proximity to other woodlands or other habitats

- Woodlands that overlap, abut or are close to other significant natural heritage features or areas could be considered more valuable or significant than those that are not.
- Patches close to each other are of greater mutual benefit and value to wildlife.

The subject lands are actively farmed for crops and do not contain any woodlands.

c) Linkages

- Linkages are important connections providing for movement between habitats.
- Woodlands that are located between other significant features or areas can be considered
 to perform an important linkage function as "stepping stones" for movement between
 habitats.

The subject and surrounding lands are open because of the active agricultural uses and as a result do not provide a corridor function for the movement of animals (see 4.5.2).

d) Water Protection

- Source water protection is important.
- Natural hydrological processes should be maintained.

The subject lands are not located within a sensitive or threatened watershed.

e) Woodland Diversity

- Certain woodland species have had major reductions in representation on the landscape and may need special consideration.
- More native diversity is more valuable than less diversity.

There are no woodlands on the subject lands.

4.2.3 Uncommon Characteristics

 Woodlands that are uncommon in terms of composition, cover type, quality, age and age structure should be protected. Older woodlands (i.e., woodlands greater than 100 years old) are particularly valuable for several reasons including their contributions to genetic, species and ecosystem diversity.

There are no woodlands on the subject lands.

4.2.4 Economic and Social Values

• Woodlands that have high economic or social values through particular site characteristics or deliberate management should be protected.

There are no managed woodlands on the subject lands.

4.3 Significant Wetlands

There are no significant wetlands on or adjacent to the subject lands.

4.4 Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest

There are no areas of Natural and Scientific Interest located on or adjacent to the subject lands.

4.5 Significant Wildlife Habitat

The Natural Heritage Policies of the PPS (Section 2.3.1) identify four principal components of Significant Wildlife Habitat. These are:

- 1. Seasonal Concentrations of Animals
- 2. Animal Movement Corridors
- 3. Rare Vegetation Communities or Specialized Habitats
- 4. Habitats of Species of Conservation Concern

Significant Wildlife Habitat can be difficult to appropriately determine at the site-specific level, as in many cases the assessment must incorporate information from a wide geographic area and consider other factors such as regional resource patterns and landscape effects. Under the Provincial Policy Statement, the planning authorities have the responsibility to identify Significant Wildlife Habitat. The following sections include the four component parts of Significant Wildlife Habitat under the Provincial Policy Statement (OMNR, 1999).

4.5.1 Seasonal Concentrations of Animals

Some species of animals gather from geographically wide areas at certain times of year. This could be to hibernate or to bask (e.g., some reptiles), over-winter (e.g., deer yards) or to breed (e.g., Bullfrog breeding and nursery areas). Maintenance of the habitat features that result in these concentrations can be critical in sustaining local or even regional populations of wildlife.

No seasonal concentrations of animals as defined in the Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide (OMNR, 2000) were identified on the subject lands during the field investigations.

4.5.2 Animal Movement Corridors

Landscape connectivity (often referred to as "wildlife corridors") has become recognized as an important part of natural heritage planning and a wide range of benefits have been attributed to the maintenance or re-connection of the undisturbed landscape. In essence, corridors are relatively protected passageways for animals to move between areas of high habitat importance.

Conservation of distinct habitat types to protect species is not effective unless the corridors between them are also protected.

The subject lands are unlikely to provide an animal movement corridor because of the open nature of and active agricultural uses on the subject and adjacent lands. Land use activities to the south (residential subdivision) also preclude any existing habitat connectivity/linkage or a potential for same.

4.5.3 Rare Vegetation Communities or Specialized Habitats

Rare vegetation communities apply to the maintenance of biodiversity and of rare plant communities (rather than individual rare species).

Specialized habitat conditions can include species of breeding birds that are associated with large blocks of wetland (generally >25 ha) that also include interior habitat (i.e., that which is more than 100 m from an edge).

Specialized habitats for wildlife can include habitat for species of breeding birds that are associated with large blocks of habitat (i.e., area-sensitive birds), old-growth forests, calving areas for moose, cliffs and a variety of other specialized habitats.

No rare vegetation communities occur on the subject lands.

There are no specialized habitats for wildlife found within the subject lands.

4.5.4 Species of Conservation Concern

This category is quite complex and includes species that may be locally rare or in decline but have not yet reached the level of rarity that is normally associated with Endangered or Threatened designations. The Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide (MNR, 2000) suggests that the highest priority for protection be provided to habitats of the rarest species (on a scale of global through to local municipality) and that habitats that support large populations of a species of concern should be considered significant. The determination of Significant Wildlife Habitat under the Species of Concern category (and under other categories) is a comparative process that must extend across the jurisdiction of the planning authority to be considered definitive.

No areas within the subject lands qualified as significant habitat for any species of conservation concern.

4.6 Natural Heritage Information Centre

A search of the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) database was conducted on September 16, 2024, of the three 1km x 1km squares that include the subject lands (17NJ9139, 17NJ9140, 17NJ9239). The search revealed the presence of three (3) Species At Risk that are listed Provincially as Threatened.

- Bird Species Bobolink (Dolichonyx oryzivorus)
- Bird Species Bank Swallow (Riparia riparia)
- Bird Species Eastern Meadowlark (Sturnella magna)

No observations were made of the three bird species during the breeding bird field investigations. With the exception of the portion of the residential lot and the area around the farm-related outbuildings, the subject lands are actively farmed with wheat crops which do not provide suitable cover for the Bobolink or the Eastern Meadowlark. There is no suitable habitat on the subject lands for the Bank Swallow. It should also be noted that no SAR bird species identified in the NHIC search were observed on the subject lands during the 2022, 2023, or 2024 field surveys.

5.0 Proposed Development Concept

The proposed development includes a large, 35.93 acre (14.54 ha) commercial block, including a large Retail (big box) unit, a medium sized retail unit, and several smaller retail units, associated parking and internal road network (See Figure 3). Stormwater management is addressed in the Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report (KWA, September 2024). Stormwater management is based on the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) 2003 Stormwater Management Planning & Design Manual, The Town of Caledon 2019 Development Standards Manual, and the 2012 TRCA Stormwater Management Criteria. The proposed design will include the capture and conveyance of stormwater from the subject lands by a series of catchbasins with the design to achieve quality controls per the MOE manual (2003) and quantity controls based on the drainage allocation for the subject lands as described in the Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report (KWA, September 2024).

6.0 Impacts Assessment

Potential impacts to the existing natural heritage systems located on the subject and adjacent lands which would result from the proposed development plan, were compiled based on field study, onsite analysis, and second source data. A summary of the anticipated impacts from development and proposed mitigation is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Potential Impacts to Natural Heritage Features

Category	Function of Feature	Potential Impact	Anticipated Impacts/Proposed Mitigation
Hydrology	Groundwater Recharge	Surface run-off will increase due to the creation of hard surfaces. Water quality will be impacted by the addition of suspended sediments and/or chemicals.	With implementation of best management practises as a part of the SWM plan, post development runoff will be managed such that off-site flows will not exceed pre-development rates. Water quality objectives will be achieved per the requirements of the MOE Stormwater Management Planning & Design Manual (2003).
Vegetation	Upland Communities	The subject lands are covered by two vegetation communities. The largest community contains annual row crops of wheat (OAGM1a), while the second vegetation community is a rural residential property with a single-family dwelling (CVR_4). The proposed development will result in the clearing of all vegetation from the subject lands.	The vegetation found within the subject lands is not significant. The removal of vegetation on the subject lands will be partially mitigated by proposed landscape plantings.
Wildlife	Bird Habitat	There is very limited habitat located on the subject lands. With the exception of the area surrounding the farm related outbuildings, the subject lands are actively farmed with wheat crops which do not provide preferred cover for grassland birds and no forest cover is present on the subject lands. Potential for Chimney Swift and Barn Swallow may exist in the residential and agricultural dwellings, but no birds were observed during field surveys.	Site alterations should occur outside prime bird breeding season (preferably occurring from October to mid-March, and not during April 15 to July 30). Prior to demolition of the residential and agricultural buildings, a site visit by a qualified biologist should occur to determine presence/absence of SAR species.
	Mammals	There is very limited habitat located on the subject lands. Except for the dwelling site, the subject lands are actively farmed with corn crops which do not provide suitable wildlife habitat and no forest cover is present on the subject lands.	Removal of the existing open areas on the subject lands will reduce available habitat for mammals. No mitigation is proposed.
Significant Natural Habitat	Landscape Connectivity	There are no corridor functions provided by the subject lands due to the existing conditions of the subject lands.	The proposed development plan will not provide the opportunity to improve or establish any potential corridor function of natural heritage features within or adjacent to the subject lands.
Significant Natural Habitat	Woodlands	There are no significant woodlands located within the subject lands. The existing successional vegetation will be removed within the proposed development area.	There is no compensation or mitigation proposed other than landscaping within the proposed development area as a part of the future site plans.

7.0 Recommendations and Mitigations

The general recommendations and mitigations described herein are provided to further ensure that future development of the subject lands proceed in an environmentally and socially responsible manner with the aim of reducing impacts on the functions and integrity of the study area's natural heritage features, during the construction process.

- A temporary construction work zone shall be delineated by construction fencing designed to impede access by equipment and the storage of construction materials. Once the proposed development has been constructed and the soils in and around the newly constructed areas have been stabilized and vegetated, the temporary fencing can be removed.
- 2. Erosion and sediment controls must be installed and approved by Crozier in advance of any construction related activities on the development area that may affect onsite and adjacent lands (i.e., granular fill placement).
- The Grading/Drainage Plan must designate specific locations for stockpiling of soils and other materials including snow (for both during and after construction) to reduce runoff potential.
- 4. A spill-prevention program should be developed, as well as ensuring that vehicle re-fueling occurs off-site.
- 5. Sediment fencing should be erected on the down slope of all fill material to prevent sediment transport, until full vegetation cover has been achieved on all disturbed areas. The fences should subsequently be monitored on a scheduled basis during construction and checked both before and after all precipitation events to ensure stability.
- 6. Areas that are to later undergo landscape plantings should implement plans that include native seed/planting materials wherever appropriate.
- 7. Organic landscaping methods should be used to minimize impacts to the plant community and reduce the chance of non-native or invasive species from establishing.
- 8. Vegetation clearing must occur outside of the breeding bird season (April 15 to August 31) in accordance with the Federal Migratory Bird Convention Act. This timing window is the peak calling and breeding period for the majority of Ontario's breeding birds; a bird's ability to sing and be heard by potential mates and defend against rivals is imperative to their reproductive health and success. The Federal Migratory Bird Convention Act and its regulations prohibit the damage or destruction of a migratory bird, its nest, and eggs.
- 9. Prior to demolition of the residential and agricultural buildings, a site visit by a qualified biologist should occur to determine presence/absence of SAR species (Chimney Swift and Barn Swallow).
- 10. When possible, in order to reduce the potential for negative impacts on the surrounding area's breeding birds, it is recommended that construction and its associated noises be minimized between 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. from late May to late July.

8.0 Conclusions

The proposed development area will not require removal of any significant vegetation or significant wildlife habitat. Based on the applicable natural heritage policies as well as the information gathered from the site, we conclude that the proposed development is feasible on the portion of the subject lands identified in this report so long as the recommendations and mitigations noted above are implemented.

If you require additional information regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully submitted,

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FIGURES

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Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Natural Heritage Existing Conditions

Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan





