

SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY REPORT**
Minto Communities, York Region and Unionville Home Society
4300 Highway 7
North side of Highway 7 between the GO Transit rail line and Sciberras Road, Ward 3
Applications for Official Plan and zoning by-law amendments to permit residential and institutional developments
Files: OP/ZA 17 178335

PREPARED BY: Scott Heaslip
Senior Project Coordinator, Central District

REVIEWED BY: Richard Kendall
Manager, Central District

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report dated June 26, 2017 titled “PRELIMINARY REPORT, Minto Communities, York Region and Unionville Home Society; 4300 Highway 7, North side of Highway 7 between the GO Transit rail line and Sciberras Road, Ward 3, Applications for Official Plan and zoning by-law amendments to permit residential and institutional developments; Files OP/ZA 17 178335;” be received.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Not applicable.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary information on the applications. This report contains general information regarding applicable Official Plan or other policies and issues identified during a preliminary review of the proposed development, and should not be taken as Staff’s opinion or recommendation on the applications. The required statutory Public Meeting is being scheduled for fall, 2017.

BACKGROUND:

Subject property and area context (see Figures 1 and 3)

The subject lands have an area of approximately 7.29 ha (18.01 acres) and are located on the north side of Highway 7 between the GO Transit rail line and Sciberras Road. The lands are currently occupied by the following:

- The south portion is occupied by Union Villa, a 3-storey, 160 bed charitable long-term care facility owned and operated by the Unionville Home Society.

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- The north-east portion is occupied by the Wyndham Gardens retirement apartments, a 3-storey “life lease” apartment building affiliated with the Unionville Home Society.
 - The north portion is occupied by Heritage Village, comprising 91 rental bungalows owned and operated by the Unionville Home Society.
 - A 0.24 ha (0.59 acre) open space feature (Anna Russell parkette), associated with Heritage Village, owned by the Unionville Home Society.

Surrounding uses include:

- To the north, single detached dwellings fronting on Fred Varley Drive and backing onto the subject property. There is an existing road stub (Aldona Drive) between Fred Varley Drive and the north boundary of the subject property.
- To the east, a GO Rail line, Eureka Street, and three existing homes fronting on Eureka Street north of Anna Russell Way and backing onto the subject property. The northerly two houses are heritage houses. The southerly house is not a heritage house.
- To the west, condominium townhouses fronting on Ashglen Way and backing onto the subject property and single detached dwellings fronting on Greentree Road and backing onto the subject property.
- To the south across Highway 7, an existing retail plaza.

PROPOSAL (Figure 4):

The Unionville Home Society has an agreement to sell the north portion of the subject lands to Minto Communities and the middle portion to York Region. Unionville Home Society will retain ownership/control of the lands occupied by the Union Villa long term care facility and the Wyndham Gardens apartment building.

Minto Communities, York Region and Unionville Home Society are jointly requesting amendments to the City’s Official Plan(s) and zoning by-laws to permit the following:

- Minto Communities – the redevelopment of the north 2.85 ha (7.03 acres), currently occupied by Heritage Village bungalows, with 41 townhouses and 111 back-to-back townhouses.
- York Region - an 11-storey, 260 unit “affordable rental apartment” in the middle 1.0 ha (2.48 acres) of the lands, which are currently vacant. The building is proposed to be targeted for seniors, including the relocation of the tenants of the existing Heritage Village, and include a senior-friendly community hub.
- Unionville Home Society – provision for a future expansion of the existing Union Villa long term care facility.

Applications deemed complete

The subject applications were received on March 31, 2017 and deemed complete on April 24, 2017.

It is anticipated that a Public Meeting will be scheduled in the fall, with a recommendation report following the Public Meeting. Site plan applications will be required for the proposed developments.

It should be noted that in November 2015, Development Services Committee endorsed the work program for a design charrette to engage the community in the planning for the Unionville Home Society property. In January, 2016, the applicants and their consulting team conducted a 3-day design charrette. They also formed a Community Liaison Committee to engage the community on an ongoing basis on the proposed development. City staff were not active participants in the charrette sessions and have not been invited to attend the Community Liaison Committee meetings.

Official Plan and Zoning (Figure 2)

The subject lands are designated “Residential Mid Rise” in the 2014 Official Plan as partially approved on October 30, 2015, May 26, 2016, March 10, 2017 and April 21, 2017. The uses proposed by Minto, York Region and Unionville Home Society are permitted under the “Residential Mid Rise” designation. The York Region building is proposed to have a height of 11 storeys, whereas the Residential Mid Rise designation permits a maximum height of 6 storeys. The applicant has submitted an application to amend the Official Plan to address this item.

The Official Plan requires “Comprehensive Block Plans” to be prepared for sites that are generally greater than 1 hectare (2.47 acres) in area. These plans address street and block layout, traffic and transportation issues, urban design, deployment of height and density, contextual issues, land use patterns, open space and local services. Staff’s review of the proposed development will address the requirements of a “Comprehensive Block Plan.”

A small area in the north-east portion of the property is identified as “Special Policy Area.” Special Policy Areas are lands within the community that have historically existed within the floodplain. The policies of the Official Plan discourage residential intensification in Special Policy Areas. Minto may be required relocate their proposed dwellings outside the Special Policy Area. The subject applications have been circulated to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for review, including issues related to the Special Policy Area.

The “Residential Mixed Use” and “Special Policy Area” policies of the 2014 Official Plan have come into force.

The subject lands are zoned “Open Space Special Use” (O2), “Hold Open Space Special Use” (O2H) and “Second Density – High Density Residential (Special) (RHD2S) by By-law 122-72, as amended. This is site-specific zoning reflecting the existing developments. The applicants have submitted an application to amend the City’s zoning by-laws to reflect the proposed developments.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

From a preliminary review of the proposed development, staff have identified a number of issues/concerns, including:

Transportation impact: The applicants have submitted a Transportation Impact Assessment which is currently being reviewed by City of Markham and York Region transportation staff.

Staff note that the future grade separation of the Highway 7 and the GO Rail line may impact turning movements at Eureka Street and Highway 7. It is also possible that the Eureka Street crossing of the GO Rail line may be impacted in the future due to potential conflicts with increased train frequencies with the Regional Express Rail initiative. These potential future changes to the local road network could redirect vehicles from the proposed development to Station Lane, which is a local road with a narrow pavement width.

Internal driveway connections: The applicants are not proposing any new public roads. All vehicular and pedestrian access is proposed to be over shared private driveways.

The proposed development comprises two distinct components. Union Villa, the York Region building and Wyndham Gardens are older adult/seniors focused, whereas the Minto development is primarily non-seniors focused, and will likely primarily accommodate working age adults and their children.

Staff note that the Transportation Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant indicates that many of the residents of the Minto development will use the internal driveway serving Wyndham Gardens, the York Region seniors building and Union Villa to access Highway 7. Otherwise, they would be forced to “backtrack” through the community to the north and east. This driveway is circuitous and passes through the visitor parking area for Union Villa. To address this, staff have suggested to the applicants that they protect a corridor for a future driveway extending straight north from the existing signalized driveway onto Highway 7 to the Minto development to provide a more direct connection between the Minto development and the York Region seniors building and Highway 7 (see Figure 4). This would require York Region to set its building further back from the west lot line and require the eventual removal of the westerly portion of the existing Union Villa building. This driveway could be implemented in the future when the Union Villa facility is expanded.

Staff also note that the plan submitted by the applicants does not include a cul-de-sac at the terminus of Aldona Drive (the existing road stub between Fred Varley Drive and the north boundary of the subject property). City standards require all dead end streets to terminate in a cul-de-sac to allow snow plows and garbage trucks to turn around without having to back up.

Built form relationship to the surrounding residential community: Staff are currently reviewing the built form relationship, including overlook and shadow impact, particularly for the 11 storey component.

Tree preservation: There are a significant number of trees on the property, particularly in the Heritage Village portion of the site. The majority of these trees would need to be removed for the Minto development. Staff will explore opportunities to retain as many trees as possible. Tree compensation will be addressed through future site plan applications.

Parkland: The proposed development will generate a requirement for parkland dedication, which at the discretion of the City can be satisfied by dedicating land, paying cash-in-lieu of land dedication, or a combination of the two. The applicant is proposing to dedicate the existing “Anna Russell Parkette” to the City as parkland and pay cash-in-lieu for the remainder of their parkland requirement. On its own, Anna Russell parkette, which has an area of 0.24 ha (0.59 acre) and only a very small frontage on a public road (Eureka Street), is not large enough to be programed. Given that the residents of the Minto development will include families, likely including young children, City parks design staff are suggesting that a larger park block having an appropriate location/area/configuration to accommodate a junior play facility be provided.

CONCLUSION

Staff will work with the applicants and their consulting team to address the issues outlined above, and will schedule a public meeting to consider the applications in the fall.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposed zoning by-law amendment would support a number of the City’s Strategic Priorities, including:

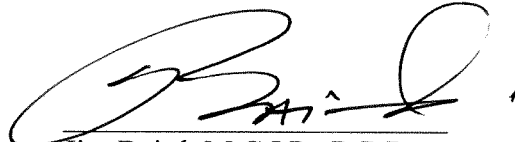
Growth Management – intensification along a transit corridor, consistent with the Region’s transit objectives.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The proposed development has been circulated to internal City departments and external agencies for review and comment.



Ron Blake, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Senior Development Manager

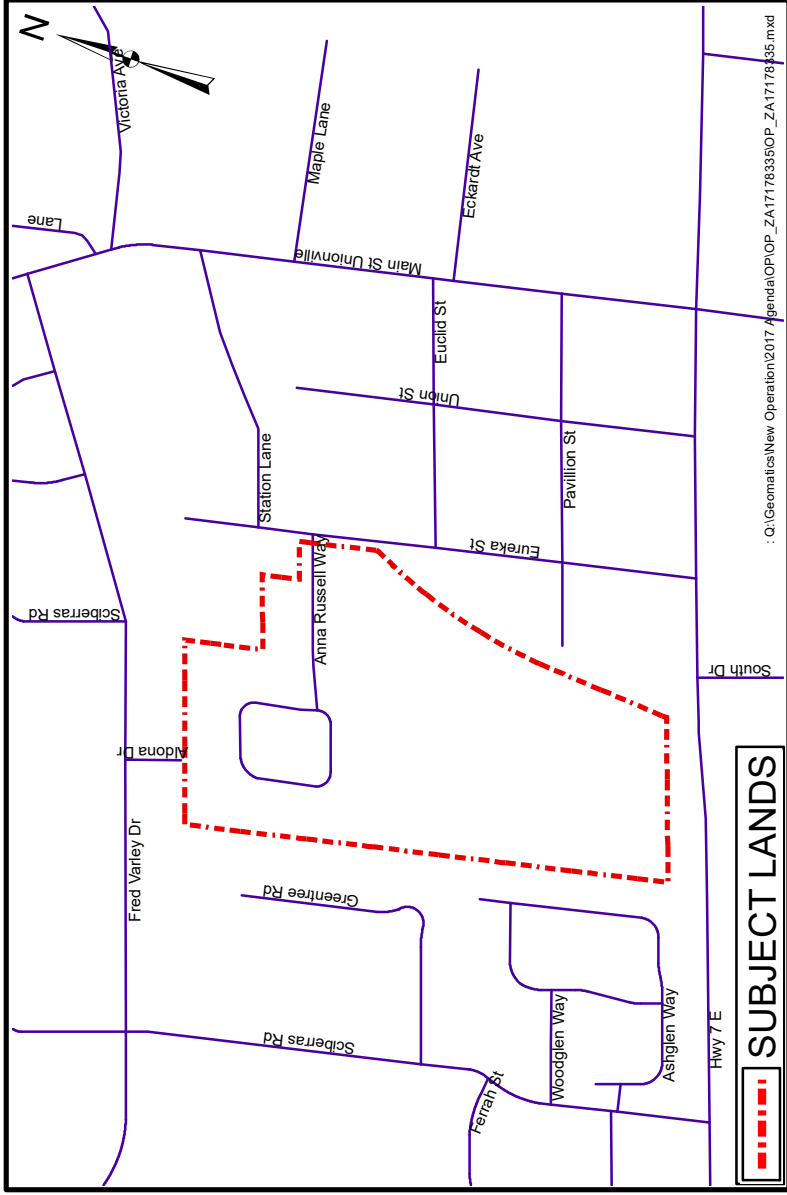


Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner, Development Services

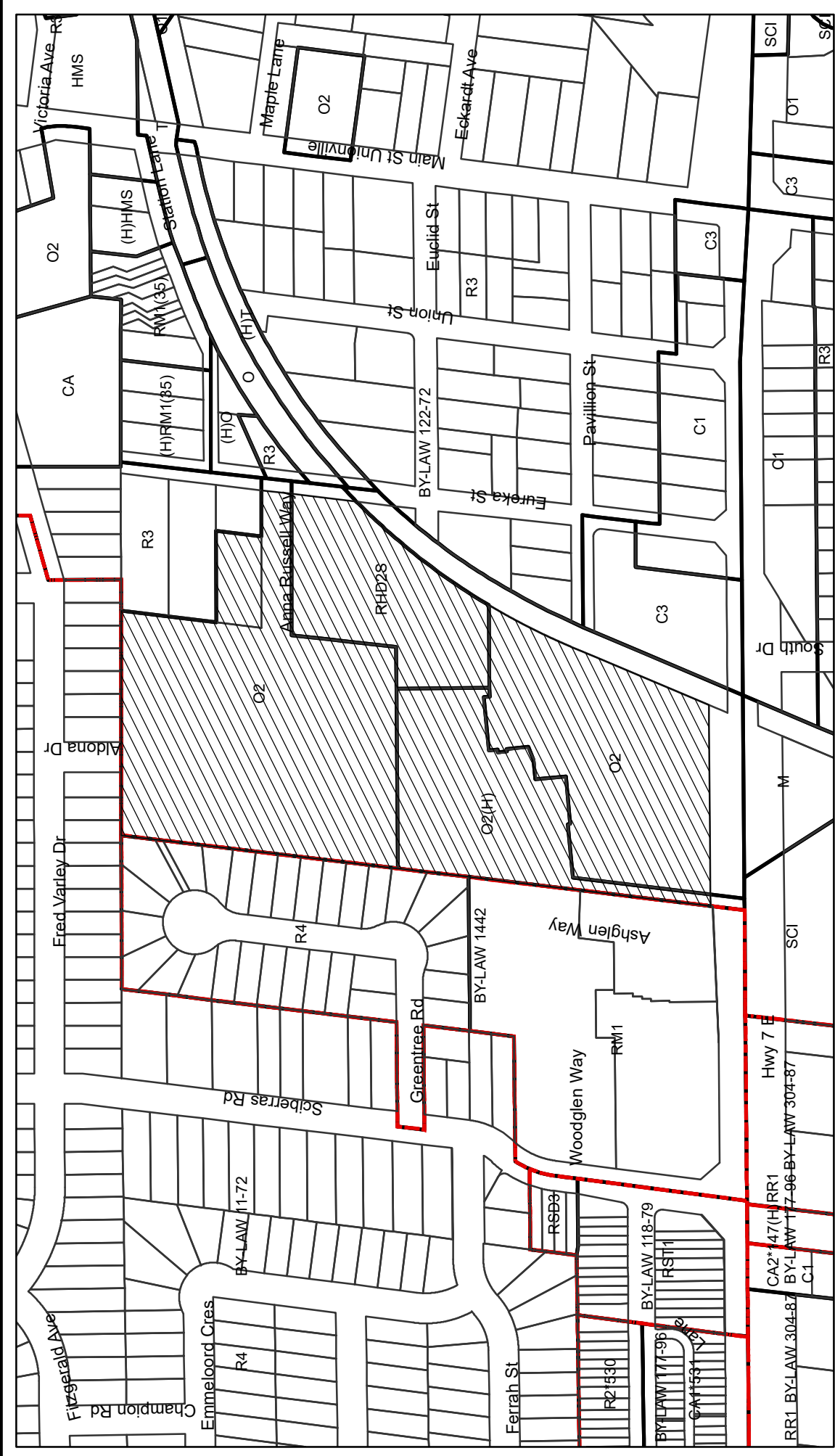
- Figure 1 – Property Location Map
- Figure 2 – Area Context / Zoning
- Figure 3 – Air Photo
- Figure 4 - Concept plan submitted with applications

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File path: Amanda\File 17 178335\Documents\Recommendation Report



 **SUBJECT LANDS**



AREA CONTEXT/ZONING

APPLICANT: MINTO COMMUNITIES
 YORK REGION AND UNIONVILLE HOME SOCIETY
 4300 HIGHWAY 7



SUBJECT LANDS

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FIGURE No. 2

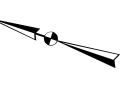


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AIR PHOTO 2016

APPLICANT: MINTO COMMUNITIES
 YORK REGION AND UNIONVILLE HOME SOCIETY
 4300 HIGHWAY 7

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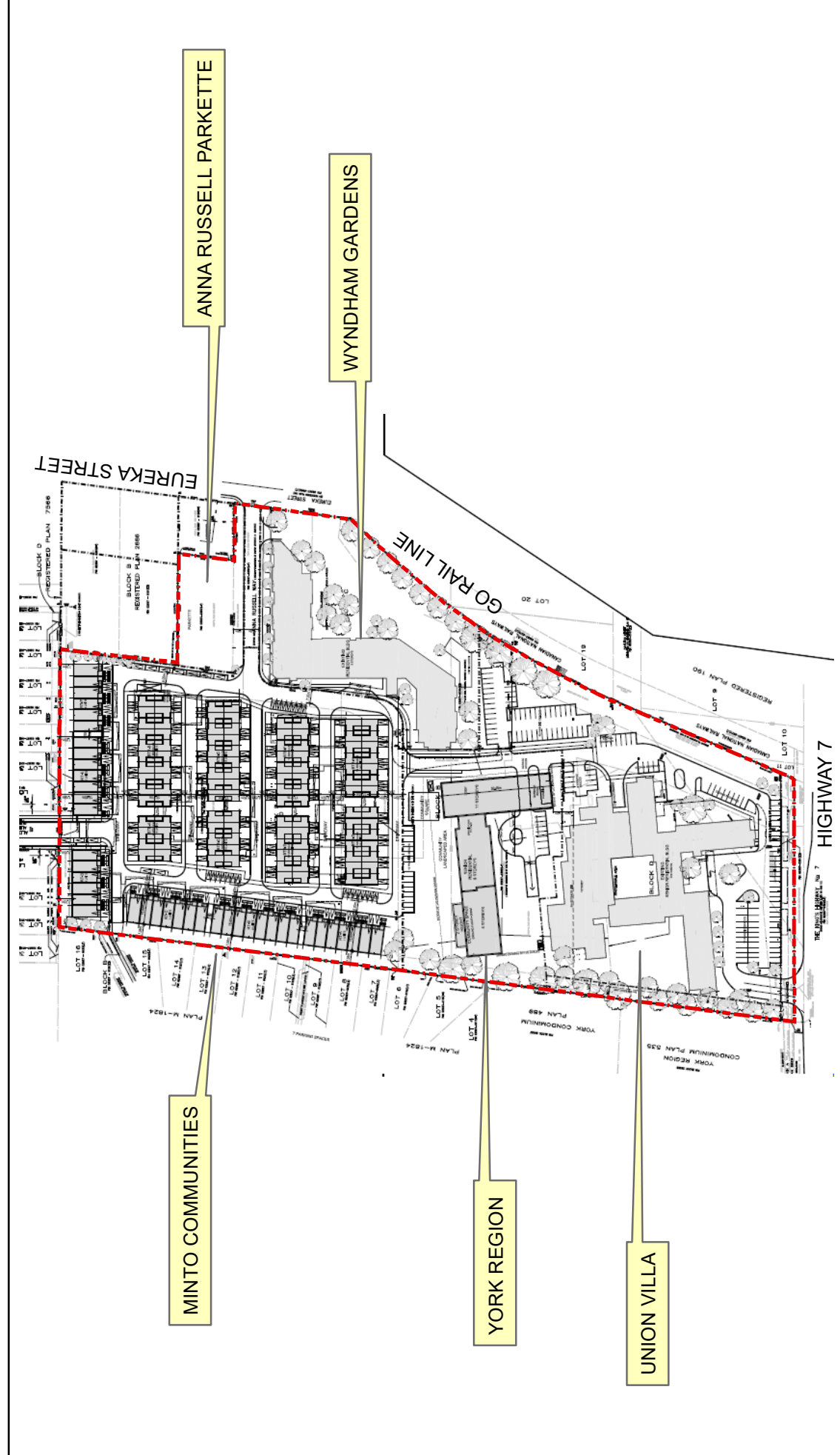
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FIGURE No. 3



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CONCEPT PLAN SUBMITTED WITH APPLICATION

APPLICANT: MINTO COMMUNITIES
 YORK REGION AND UNIONVILLE HOME SOCIETY
 4300 HIGHWAY 7

 SUBJECT LANDS

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FIGURE No. 4