

**September 28, 2020**

**Response to Site Plan Control Application for 681 Mikinak Road**

**Attention:** Jennifer Fluke, Planner, City of Ottawa

**cc:** Kevin Murphy and Conor Sutherland, Mattamy Homes  
Tara Dinsmore and Mary Jarvis, Canada Lands Corporation  
Councillor Rawlson King  
MPP Lucille Collard  
MP and Minister the Honourable Mona Fortier

The neighbourhood of Wateridge Village provides a unique opportunity within the City of Ottawa to create a vibrant, modern mixed-use community. The planning process for this development spanned a decade and promised to deliver a walkable community where residents could live, work and play. This vision has attracted a diverse group of homeowners who have invested in this novel community, based on the concepts and regulations set out in the Community Design Plan, Secondary Plan and Zoning By-law.

The development of the first block in the mid-rise mixed-use core is a critical opportunity to establish the direction of our central commercial area. In keeping with the 15 minute community strategy, we wish to live in a healthy neighbourhood where we can walk or bike to local shops, restaurants, services, and employment, and do our part to reduce traffic and environmental impact in our city.

We have three major areas of concern with the 2020 – 09-01 Site Plan Control proposal for this property that we ask be addressed so that this vision can be realized.

1. The limited amount of commercial space on the ground floor level (35% of the total)
2. The street level facade treatment along two of the streets designated for active retail type frontages, Hemlock Core Street and Mikinak Road.
3. The extent of parking at grade at the expense of landscaping and communal space in the courtyard.

Our comments and suggestions for each of these areas are provided below, based on the requirements set out in the Ottawa Zoning By-law and Former CFB Rockcliffe Secondary Plan. We believe our suggestions respect the most basic requirements set out in these documents, and are essential if we hope to create a viable commercial core for this community.

### **Commercial Space Requirements**

According to the Former CFB Rockcliffe Secondary Plan, the intent of the mixed use designation governing this property is –

“to establish a vibrant, compact and pedestrian focussed urban environment”

“to permit the development of mid-rise mixed-use buildings that allow for higher heights and greater residential densities in the core area, and that offer a wide variety of non-residential uses, with neighbourhood-serving convenience and retail type uses at grade”

“Where the main/primary building facade(s) is required to face the public realm, as shown on Schedule E Building Frontages, the ground floor level will be developed to have active retail type frontages with clear windows and functional entrances across the majority of the building facade.”

The most recently submitted design proposal does not include enough commercial space for neighbourhood-serving convenience and retail type uses at grade to establish a vibrant urban environment. It does not have active retail type frontages with clear windows and functional entrances across the majority of the building facade along two of the three streets so indicated on Schedule E, Hemlock Road and Mikinak Road.

The Codd's Road frontage meets the requirements for active retail frontages across the majority of the facade, and we recommend this design approach be followed on the Hemlock Road and Mikinak Road frontages in order to meet the requirements of the Secondary Plan. We note that Hemlock Street is designated as the core street within the central commercial core, linked to other retail areas both within the community and westwards towards the existing Beechwood

/Hemlock main street. It is therefore of even greater importance that required retail requirements be met on the Hemlock street frontage.

The latest proposal indicates commercial spaces in Building D facing away from the street

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onto the courtyard. Commercial spaces in this location do not have easy access or visibility from the street and are fronted by a narrow sidewalk and utilitarian parking area that detract from their accessibility and attractiveness.

We recommend, as one option, that the commercial space in the south half of Building D be relocated to Hemlock and/or Mikinak to help meet the commercial requirements on these frontages and to improve the viability of the commercial spaces. If commercial space is to remain in this location, we recommend that the adjacent parking spaces to Building D be removed to allow a continuation of the generous amenity areas established between Building A and D at Hemlock Road and between Building C and D at Codd's Road to create a continuous public realm adjacent to the commercial spaces.

We recognize that the commercial business environment is difficult in a partially built up community, in the current disruption caused by Covid, and at all times for the small local retail and service operations that would be of most benefit to our neighbourhood. Typical rent or purchase costs for new commercial main street spaces are often affordable only to large pharmacies, banks or coffee chains that are not enough on their own to create a diverse and vibrant core. It is important therefore to develop a workable strategy for including viable community-oriented commercial development. Our community association is working with our local, provincial and federal representatives for funding of the services a new neighbourhood of 10,000 – 12,000 people will require, such as a library branch, community centre, or post office. We are working with businesses to encourage them to consider locating in our community.

We believe also that there is great potential within some of the permitted uses to improve commercial viability for small or start up businesses through live work scenarios such as home based business or storefront industry. As suggested in the next section, we ask that any residential units provided on the ground floor level be designed to facilitate current or future use as a live/work business or conversion to full commercial use. Evolving trends, such as an increase in working from home and emphasis on buying locally support the need for and viability of small local businesses.

## **Active Retail Frontages**

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Under the Ottawa Zoning By-law GM31 H(30) regulations and Secondary Plan –  
“where non-residential uses are located on the first storey of a building, the area of the wall of the first storey facing the street must have a minimum of 50 per cent of the facade consisting of transparent glazing”

“Hemlock Core Street will be developed as the core of the community and should be framed by active, street-level pedestrian-friendly uses such as retail and other street oriented commercial uses, and street related entrances to residential and mixed-use buildings.”

“In blocks 20-22,27,29,32 and 33 on either side of Hemlock Core Street, non- residential active retail type uses are required at grade.

As noted in the first section on commercial space requirements, Hemlock, Codd's and Mikinak are required to have active retail type frontages with clear windows and functional entrances across the majority of the building facade. As indicated above, these three frontages must have a minimum of 50 per cent of the facade consisting of transparent glazing. A particular emphasis is placed on Hemlock as a core street containing non-residential active retail type uses.

Hemlock and Mikinak frontages on the latest submitted site plan control application do not meet these minimum requirements for commercial frontage and glazing, and therefore need to be improved. The current design for the portion of the ground floor facade occupied by residential units is uninviting, unrelated in design to the commercial part of the facade, and well below the 50% glazing requirement. As indicated on the landscaping plan, the most private part of the unit, the bedroom, is closer to the property line than permitted for a residential use and the entry is set back and in shadow contrary to the objective of active street related entrances.

In order to bring the proposal in compliance, additional commercial space should be introduced to the Hemlock and Mikinak facades. If, or where, residential units remain on these frontages, they should be redesigned to meet minimum glazing requirements, to relate better to the street, and to be usable or convertible to commercial use.

One easy way to accomplish these objectives would be to bring the entry and living space portion to the front face of the building, with an entrance canopy matching that of the commercial portion of the facade for continuity, and a full wall of glazing which would

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bring light into the back of an otherwise long and dark space. The bedroom portion of the facade could be recessed to create an outdoor landscaped area and screening of private areas from the street. This approach would create a compliant facade treatment that would be more desirable for either residential or commercial use.

### **Parking and Landscaping**

The Zoning By-law includes a parking provision designed to both promote neighbourhood-serving convenience and retail uses and to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. "where a restaurant, retail store, or retail food store is less than 200 square metres of GFA, no parking spaces are required. Where a restaurant, retail store or retail food store is greater than 200 square metres of GFA, the minimum parking requirement is 5 spaces per 100 square metres over 200 square metres of GFA"

The current proposed design features an underground parking level which provides more than double the required resident parking spaces along with large areas devoted to storage lockers that could be converted to provide visitor or any needed commercial parking. There is also extensive street parking incorporated into the design along Hemlock, Codd's and Mikinak Road to help meet demand for visitor and commercial parking. In addition to these extensive parking provisions, the courtyard design is cluttered with 61 parking spaces arranged in a continuous loop that completely cuts off the central amenity area from the surrounding buildings and eliminates space for tree or shrub planting or generous pathways adjacent to the buildings. The original scheme submitted by Mattamy Homes for Site Plan Control in 2018 demonstrates that it is practical to design the courtyard with fewer parking spaces, more planting adjacent to buildings, and a design that provides more direct pedestrian connections to the courtyard space. The current extent of parking and courtyard design creates the very opposite of a pedestrian-focused environment.

We recommend that the provision that eliminates required parking for moderate sized retail, food and restaurant uses be used to reduce the amount of commercial parking, and that excess parking and space in the underground parking level and the provided

street parking be used to greatly reduce or eliminate parking within the courtyard space. We appreciate the inclusion of innovative landscaping treatments and themes such as the Algonquin Ethnobotanical garden, food garden, and rain gardens, and would encourage a courtyard design that gives them space to flourish and provides pedestrian

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connectivity so that they can be safely reached and enjoyed.

We appreciate the substantial residential bicycle parking included at grade and below ground. A total of 9 commercial bicycle spaces are noted at grade, which seems insufficient for a development designed to attract neighbourhood- serving businesses and clientele.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and would be happy to work with all interested parties to reach consensus on a design that supports the Wateridge Village vision and meets the needs of our residents.

**Jane Thompson**

Chair - Planning & Development  
Committee

**Roxanne Field**

President, Board of Directors Wateridge  
Village Community Association