

PROPOSED PLAN OF SUBDIVISION SUBMISSION

Application No. 37-T-21004

Location: A 20.7 hectare (51.3 acre) parcel of land described as Part Lot 11, Concession 8 and situated on the northeast corner of the North Talbot Road/8th Concession Oldcastle, On.

Applicant: Oldcastle Heights Inc

Proposal: Residential Subdivision

Submitter: Judy Wellwood-Robson

5370 Oldcastle Rd.

Oldcastle, On.

NOR 1L0

Support Statement

I am an inexorable proponent of residential development in the historical primary settlement of Oldcastle and therefore, **I am a fervent supporter of plans for the proposed subdivision pertaining to the 20.7 hectare parcel of land described as Part Lot 11 that, I will refer to as the Oldcastle Heights Plan of Subdivision.**

Oldcastle was once an agricultural hub, and the location for the municipal office of the Sandwich South Township. It is historically significant as Essex County's early Irish settlement, first settled in the mid 1820's. Many of those living here, are descendants of the first pioneers and therefore very passionate about providing housing for future generations who wish to remain in the community they feel connected too. I see the Oldcastle Hamlet as having the potential of being a complete compact settlement where people live, work, play, shop and worship as an attainable goal, as described in provincial policies, with this residential development.

With the loss of homes to industrial growth, the Herb Grey Parkway and Windsor annexation, the need for residential development in Oldcastle is great in order for us to sustain our community of people. The slow implementation of the necessary sanitary removal system in our urban centre has delayed new housing construction and as a result encouraged a strong industrial growth over the years creating an imbalance in the settlement and the lack of housing in the southern portion of the Municipality of Tecumseh.

Therefore, I strongly support, with some concerns, the Oldcastle Heights plan of subdivision.

Positive Attributes

Incorporation of Green Space

Today's urban life style is associated with stress, insufficient physical activity and exposure to other environmental hazards. Urban green space, such as parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery, can promote mental and physical health in urban residents by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise and excessive heat.

The recent Covid-19 lockdown period and associated social distancing measures has highlighted how much more difficult it can be for those with limited access to green space to cope mentally.

The nearby Weston Park, The Chrysler Greenway, The green buffer along the 8th Concession and the proposed multi use trail as well as, the long term development of a trail, on the abandoned tracks, north of Oldcastle Heights, provides ample green space now and for future expansion.

Multi Use Trail

The multi use trail provides a safe means of travel for bikers and pedestrians, the design provides an alternative to vehicular travel that is emission and cost-free.

The trail design provides a free means of healthy exercise for those in the urban and rural area alike.

The houses adjacent to the trail will offer homeowners a significant increase in property value.

The bridge crossing the back portion of the pond will be visually appealing.

Storm Water Management Pond

Incorporating a storm water management pond into the plan is a huge vista plus. In addition to providing storm water retention, it will provide an opportunity for those living in the area to experience aquatic native plants and animals.

Diversified Housing

Diversified Housing for both moderate and high income families resulting in economic empowerment and a strengthened community.

The variety of housing type will accommodate different age groups.

*Research shows, that there are major **health benefits of socialization**, and not surprisingly, it is also showing that there are huge health benefits to intergenerational interaction – for both the old and young alike. The mental, emotional and psychological benefits of this cross- socialization can actually have a positive impact on physical well-being. The different housing styles in the Oldcastle Height’s plan have the potential to meet these criteria.*

Concerns

Traffic Load on North Talbot Road

This section of North Talbot road plays an important role in regional mobility, to and from the industrial park, and carries significant traffic volumes from the north and east parts of the county. While it is classified as a local road, it functions as a key east-west spine for all modes of travel; passenger, commercial, farm and school bus traffic, as well as cyclists and pedestrians, all on a narrow country road without sidewalks or bike lanes at the present. The blind turn from North Talbot onto the 9th concession is of poor design and a known safety hazard for children getting on and off their school buses. I strongly feel that this road running through a residential neighbourhood with the increase traffic load from the proposed subdivision, to function safely, **will need in accordance with sound engineering principles, extensive upgrading.**

Multiple Interior Roads that do not support the concept of livable neighbourhoods

Five roads appear to exit onto North Talbot. Not only does this place the entire traffic load from this subdivision onto this already well used road, but creates too many points of conflict. *Any location having merging, diverging or crossing maneuvers of two vehicles is a potential conflict point. The main objective of the road design should be to minimize the number and severity of potential conflicts between cars, buses, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians whenever possible.*

The number of intersections and minimal distance between each seems greater than is necessary to allow for safe emergence onto the main road, North Talbot.

An interior road exit onto the 8th concession would help alleviate the traffic load moving along North Talbot Road.

Will large vehicles (school bus, fire trucks, garbage trucks etc.) be able to negotiate these intersections easily and safely?

Drivers of vehicles approaching an intersection along a minor road should have unobstructed views to the left and right along the major road for a distance (at least equal to the safe stopping sight distance) which is dependent upon the speed of traffic on the main road, so that they may judge when it is safe to merge with the traffic in the major road. The number of minor roads with vehicles merging onto the major road (possibly at the same time), and pedestrians on the multi use trail, may hinder the drivers judgment and create major safety issues.

The number of roads crossing the multiple trail puts the pedestrian, cyclists and those using other vulnerable means of transportation at serious risk.

9.3 Road Classification System x) c. *The roadway classification and function should be used as a guide to determine the number, frequency and location of permitted driveway and street intersections, in accordance with sound traffic engineering principles that maximize safety and protect the capacity and operational characteristics of the overall road network.*

Parking on the subdivision's narrow streets will hinder safe vehicle movement and reduces clear lines of visibility.

9.3 xi) Council will require that all developments incorporate sufficient off street parking spaces to meet the anticipated needs of the proposed land use, in order to maintain safe and convenient transportation corridors Town-Wide.

The absence of sidewalks: Safety and the need for active living, demands good sidewalks on each side of every residential street. Vehicular traffic and pedestrians should be segregated. It is unsafe, unreasonable and often disagreeable to pedestrians to be forced to walk on the paved roadway. Parents do not want children playing in the roadway — yet if they have roller skates, scooters or other wheeled toys, they will use the roadway unless a smooth sidewalk is available. Mothers with baby carriages and elderly persons should have sidewalks. Nearly three-fifths of the persons killed in traffic are killed at night, and walking on the roadway is a major night hazard.

9.3 Road Classification System x) d. – *Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of all new streets built in the Town of Tecumseh;*

Density not Crowding *“crowding, much more than density has created public health challenges during the pandemic.”*

In order to curb urban sprawl and preserve primary agriculture land, there is a need to create high-density and mixed-use communities.

At the same time, *new developments must design attractive communities with the dignity and safety of people in mind in order to foster a sense of place, belonging to, and pride in ownership.* The current residents of Oldcastle, in general, have this relationship with community but are aware that they live in an area of Oldcastle with low density (1 acre and ½ acre lots).

I am concerned that the compact nature of the Oldcastle Height's plan with the combination of narrow lots, streets and no sidewalks will produce a crowded neighbourhood, with little space for privacy, backyard pools or family gatherings.

A basic lot size is 60' x 102' – Forest Trail Estates in Lasalle has an average lot size of 75' x 116' and North Wood Lakes (a very dense compact crowded neighbourhood off of North Talbot in Windsor) has an average lot size of 46.26' x 108.7'. The average lot size for single dwellings in Oldcastle Heights appears to be 50' x 114.8.' (Smaller than the avg. size)

It seems developers have different concepts of density and have design methods to create high densities without creating a claustrophobic neighbourhood. A sense of community has been positively related to space and by widening the lots and creating wider landscaped street allowances, the sense of space may be achieved while finding alternative designs to increase density.

Our experience with the Covid pandemic taught us, one way to avoid this disease, was to keep people apart.

This perspective is shared by Toronto consultant Ken Greenberg. Speaking with the Daily Commercial News, he argued in favour of "bringing public health experts to the urban design table... to offer a fresh perspective on neighbourhood design features that promote physical and mental well-being. The solution is not density at any cost, but density done right."

Questions:

1. Will the front row houses be designed facing North Talbot Road for the sake of conformity to the already existing houses and if not why not?
2. Why is there not an interior road exiting onto the 8th Concession?
3. Why are there so many interior roads exiting onto North Talbot?
4. Why are there no sidewalks within the plan of subdivision?
5. Why are the lots so narrow?
6. Are the streets too narrow to allow for ample safe road parking?
7. Are there plans for visual attractive streetscapes?
8. Why is the multi use trail not a complete loop along the Washbrook Drain and pond into Weston Park?
(I feel this would better tie in with a long term multi use trail plan for a Little River Trail starting at the source (Downing Drain) to the mouth in the north.)
9. Is the entire multi use trail inside the Oldcastle Height's plan of subdivision or does it runs beside the roads of North Talbot and the 8th Concession?
10. Will pedestrians and bikers from the area have easy access to the bike path from the Oldcastle and North Talbot Road?
11. Has a specified amount of land for the purpose of widening North Talbot Road been acquired?
12. Will the drain on the north side of the plan for Oldcastle Heights, along the abandoned tracks be reconstructed in order to contain the rainwater runoff from the high embankment during the flood season?
13. What type of lights will be used to light up the trail?

Suggestions:

1. For the purpose of increasing density consider putting apartments above the commercial buildings designated for the corner of the 8th Concession. This was tastefully done in Amherstburg on Dalhousie Street.
2. A good location for a roundabout would be at the intersection of North Talbot, the 8th Concession and the Oldcastle Road (an existing bottleneck and road safety hazard).
(Roundabouts are increasingly becoming more popular due to the benefits that they provide. These benefits include dramatic reductions in serious injury and fatality crashes as well as reductions in delay for road users. Benefits of modern roundabouts have been shown to occur in both urban and rural areas under a wide range of traffic conditions.)
3. Create compatible housing to existing residence in size and lots facing and on North Talbot.
4. Install rest point and benches along the Multi Use Trail.
5. An attractive signage displaying the name Oldcastle Heights (The historical spelling of Oldcastle is one word.)

Great neighbourhoods don't happen by accident. They are the result of careful planning and thoughtful design that creates places that are sustainable, walkable, vibrant, social, and livable which increase the quality of life for residents of all ages and incomes. Great neighbourhoods contribute to the prosperity of our community, attracting new people, new business and creating vitality while allowing the settlement of Oldcastle to respond to change over time. Great neighbourhoods are the foundation of a great Municipality of Tecumseh.



****Please see attachment submitted to show a compact plan of subdivision without the appearance of overcrowding and with interior streets that exit onto various main roads.***

FOREST TRAIL ESTATES

PHASE 2

LASALLE



Essex County Road 7



LOT STATUS

-  Available Lots
-  Sold Lots

Site plan is an artist's concept. Lot dimensions are approximate and depend on final survey.
Landscape areas and plantings are concepts and may vary from finished landscape.
See sales representative for more information.