

Report Overview

This report recommends that Council approve an Official Plan Amendment to incorporate the Soper Springs Secondary Plan into the Clarington Official Plan.

The Secondary Plan area is envisioned as a residential neighbourhood with opportunities for retail and service commercial uses at key intersections, parks, trails, and protected natural features like the Soper Creek valleylands. The future population for the area will be approximately 3,300 residents and approximately 1,300 residential units. There are a limited number of jobs expected in the Secondary Plan area.

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this staff report is to recommend that Council approve Clarington Official Plan Amendment 149 (OPA 149) to include the Soper Springs Secondary Plan (Secondary Plan) in the Clarington Official Plan. The recommendation follows an extensive public engagement process. OPA 149 includes the Secondary Plan and the associated Urban Design and Sustainability Guidelines (UDSG), provided as Attachment 1 to this report.
- 1.2 To facilitate the creation of the Secondary Plan, the report also recommends that Council approve Durham Region Official Plan Amendment 3 (ROPA 3), which removes two 'Future Type C Arterial' roads.
- 1.3 As of January 1, 2025, Envision Durham, the new Durham Region Official Plan, became part of the Clarington Official Plan. As a result, Clarington Council is the approval authority for OPA 149 and ROPA 3.
- 1.4 This report includes an overview of the recommended Secondary Plan and summarizes the process and feedback received since the release of the draft Official Plan Amendment, draft Secondary Plan, and draft Urban Design and Sustainability Guidelines (UDSG) as part of the Statutory Public Meeting in May 2025.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Secondary Plan is located north of Concession Road 3, east of Liberty Street North, and west of Lambs Road, and its northern boundary aligns with the Bowmanville urban boundary as shown in Figure 1. The Secondary Plan area is approximately 184 hectares and currently consists of agricultural fields, residential dwellings, the Soper Creek and other natural heritage features.

- 2.2 Following the initiation of the Soper Creek Subwatershed Study, the Municipality received a request from the Soper Springs (Bowmanville North) Landowners Group to initiate the Soper Springs Secondary Plan in accordance with the policies of the Clarington Official Plan. In April 2018, Council authorized municipal staff to initiate the Soper Springs Secondary Plan in co-ordination with the Soper Creek Subwatershed Study.
- 2.3 The Secondary Plan area is envisioned as a residential neighbourhood with opportunities for retail and service commercial uses at key intersections, parks, trails, and protected natural features like the Soper Creek valleylands.
- 2.4 Soper Springs is planned to accommodate approximately 3,300 residents and 1,300 residential units. The Secondary Plan promotes a complete and inclusive community by supporting a range and mix of housing options and encouraging affordable housing opportunities.
- 2.5 Future development will be organized around the Soper Creek valleylands, connected by an integrated trail and road network, and located within a short walk of the Neighbourhood Park or parkette. In addition, two Prominent Intersections will serve as community focal points where a mix of commercial and residential uses is encouraged.
- 2.6 The Statutory Public Meeting Report ([PDS-019-25](#)) and presentation outlined the Secondary Plan's vision, framework, and key policy directions in detail.

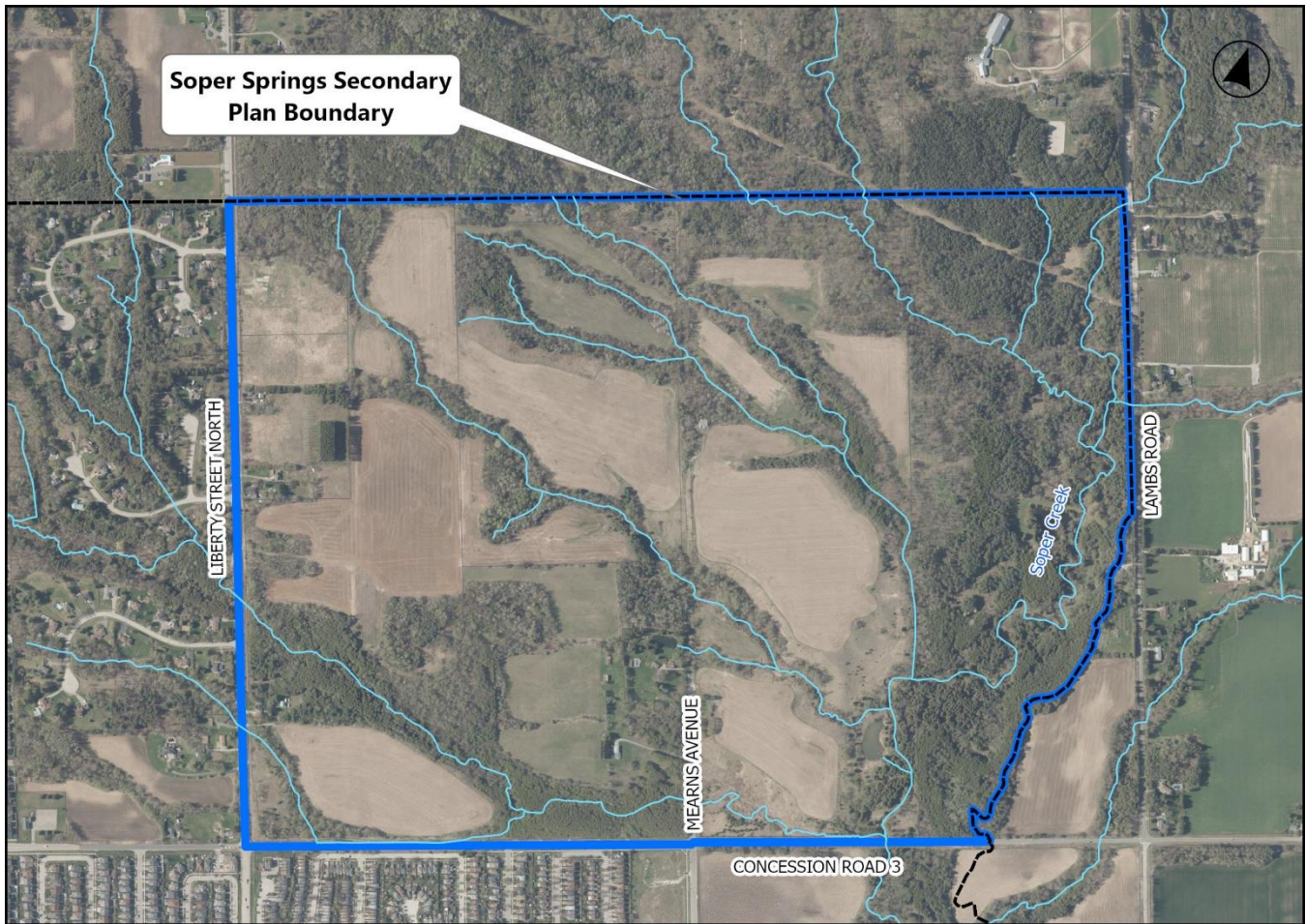


Figure 1: Soper Springs Secondary Plan Area

3. Secondary Plan Process

- 3.1 Development of the Secondary Plan was informed by an extensive public engagement and several technical background studies.
- 3.2 The Secondary Plan process for the Soper Springs Secondary Plan involved four Phases as described below. A full sequence of events is provided in Attachment 3.
 - Phase 1 (Initial Engagement and Analysis) included technical analysis through background studies and initial consultation with the community to determine the vision for the new neighbourhood. An initial Public Information Centre was held on June 4, 2019, and this phase was concluded with a presentation of the findings at a Public Information Centre held on December 15, 2021.
 - Phase 2 (Principles and Land Use Options) involved preparation of urban design and sustainability principles and three land use options illustrating different arrangements of land uses, parks and roads. On June 29, 2022, the land use options were presented to the public and agencies for comment.

- Phase 3 (Preferred Land Use Plan) resulted in the development of a preferred land use plan including environmental protection areas identified through Phase 1 of the Soper Creek Subwatershed Study. The preferred land use plan was presented at a joint Public Information Centre on December 6, 2023.
- Phase 4 (Finalize Deliverables) centered on completing the draft and final Secondary Plan and UDSG. The draft documents were presented at a Statutory Public Meeting on May 12, 2025. In addition, technical studies were prepared and circulated for review and feedback. Phase 4 will conclude with the approval of the Secondary Plan by Council.

3.3 Public engagement included four Public Information Centres between June 4, 2019, and May 12, 2025, a Statutory Public Meeting held on May 12, 2025, and landowner meetings held throughout the process. Feedback received over the last several years was used to inform the creation of this Secondary Plan. A more detailed summary of the Secondary Plan process and community engagement program is provided in the Statutory Public Meeting report ([PDS-019-25](#)).

Background Reports

3.4 The technical analysis and recommendations from several background and technical reports informed the preparation of the Secondary Plan. A summary of the following technical reports is provided in Attachment 4 to this report:

- Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment Study, 2020
- Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment, 2020
- Phase 1 Background and Analysis Summary Report, 2021
- Sustainability and Green Principles Report, 2021
- Landscape Analysis Report, 2022
- Alternative Land Use Plan Report, 2022
- Phase 2 Summary Report, 2022
- Soper Creek Subwatershed Study Phase 1 Report, May 2023
- Soper Creek Subwatershed Study Phase 2/3 Report, draft October 2024 and Interim Update Report, April 2026.

3.5 A draft Transportation Assessment Report has assessed the proposed transportation network and intersection operations within the study area and provided recommendations to inform future areas of study. Revisions are being made to the Transportation Assessment Report to address comments from the Region, Soper Springs Landowners Group and the Municipality. Revisions to this report will not impact the intent of the recommended Secondary Plan.

- 3.6 A draft Preliminary Municipal Engineering Report has been prepared as an update to the Functional Servicing Report completed in May 2025. The Preliminary Municipal Engineering Report demonstrates that the study area can be serviced in terms of water supply and distribution, wastewater, and stormwater and provides flexibility on the selection of infrastructure implementation strategies. The revised PMER will address comments from the Region, CLOCA, the Soper Springs landowners' group and Municipality. The Revisions to this report will not impact the intent of the recommended Secondary Plan.

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment

- 3.7 A Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA), which is required for all new or realigned major roads needed to service the Secondary Plan, is being completed using the 'Integrated Approach' which jointly satisfies the requirements of the Planning Act and the Environmental Assessment Act. All public notices, communications and review periods have been designed to ensure that they conform to the requirements of both the Planning Act and the Environmental Assessment Act. The final MCEA report is being prepared for submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Soper Creek Subwatershed Study

- 3.8 The Soper Creek Subwatershed Study (Subwatershed Study) was undertaken to inform the preparation of the Soper Springs and Soper Hills Secondary Plans and assesses the potential impacts of proposed land use changes on the natural features, outlines mitigation of the impacts, and establish an implementation and monitoring plan.
- 3.9 Phase 1 of the Subwatershed Study, completed in May 2023, identified environmental features, functions, and constraints to inform the development of the draft Secondary Plans. The draft Phase 2/3 Subwatershed Study was completed in October 2024 and presented at a Public Information Centre on April 10, 2025. The Phase 2/3 report evaluated earlier versions of the Soper Springs and Soper Hills land use plans.
- 3.10 As refinements to the land use plans for the two Secondary Plans have only recently concluded, there was insufficient time for revised land use plans to be fully reassessed prior to Council recess. To address timing considerations and ensure continued protection of the subwatershed, staff, in consultation with agencies and the Soper Springs and Soper Hills landowners' groups, advanced an alternative approach. The Soper Creek Phase 2/3 Subwatershed Study will be finalized utilizing earlier versions of the Secondary Plans and subsequently a Master Drainage Plan (MDP) will be prepared to update and complete the assessment.

- 3.11 The MDP, guided by the Subwatershed Study, will be prepared for the two Secondary Plans jointly, to assess land use changes, servicing strategies, and stormwater management solutions to ensure development in the two Secondary Plan areas can proceed without adverse downstream impacts. The Municipality and CLOCA, supported by the Subwatershed Study consultant, Aquafor Beech, will approve the Terms of Reference prior to the joint MDP being prepared by a consultant for the two landowner groups. Approval of the Master Drainage Plan by the Municipality and CLOCA will be required prior to the approval of the first development application in either Secondary Plan.
- 3.12 Staff recommend that the Secondary Plans be implemented in a manner consistent with the Soper Creek Subwatershed Study, and the Master Drainage Plan.

4. Public and Agency Submissions and Summaries

- 4.1 Comments on the draft Secondary Plan were received through oral and written correspondence from agencies, landowners, and members of the public. This section summarizes the comments provided since the release of the draft OPA, draft Secondary Plan, and draft UDSG at Statutory Public Meeting in May 2025. Section 6 outlines how these comments have been addressed.
- 4.2 All the comments on the draft Secondary Plan, along with staff responses, are documented in the Public and Agency Comment Summary Tables, included as Attachments 5 and 6 to this report.

General Public Comments

- 4.3 Following the Statutory Public Meeting, the Municipality received one comment through Clarington Connected raising concerns related to impacts development would have on traffic along Liberty Street North.

Landowner Group Comments

- 4.4 Following the Statutory Public Meeting, the Soper Springs Landowners Group has provided site-specific and plan-wide comments addressing a range of topics, including land use, environmental policy, urban design, transportation, servicing and implementation matters. Staff have worked closely with the Landowners Group throughout the Secondary Plan process and have incorporated revisions where appropriate.
- 4.5 The Landowners Group also provided comments on the Urban Design and Sustainability Guidelines to increase flexibility related to built-form controls, height and massing transition, parking and garage design, and retail streetscape.
- 4.6 A complete breakdown of landowner comments and staff responses is provided in Attachment 5.

Agency Comments

- 4.7 Region of Durham staff are generally supportive of the Secondary Plan and have acknowledged that servicing the Secondary Plan area is feasible, however, provided detailed comments regarding water and sanitary servicing, including the potential need for additional utility crossings of the Natural Heritage System. The Region of Durham staff also provided transportation related comments, including matters related to the proposed road network and the need for an updated transportation assessment.
- 4.8 CLOCA is generally supportive of the Secondary plan however has expressed concerns related to the potential developability of the lands designated 'Land Use to be Determined' on Schedule A. CLOCA has also provided comments related to stormwater management and has requested specific policies be included to address watercourse crossings.
- 4.9 Both the Region of Durham and CLOCA staff will continue to be engaged as the Preliminary Municipal Engineering Report and Transportation Assessment Report are finalized.
- 4.10 The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board and Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic School Board have been involved throughout the secondary plan process and have confirmed that no schools are required in this Secondary Plan area.

Indigenous Consultation

- 4.11 The following Indigenous communities were provided Secondary Plan materials throughout the process and were invited to provide comments or consult directly with Municipal Staff:
- Alderville First Nation
 - Beausoleil First Nation
 - Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
 - Curve Lake First Nation
 - Georgina Island First Nation
 - Hiawatha First Nation
 - Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation
 - Métis Nation of Ontario
 - Chippewas of Rama First Nation
 - Huron-Wendat First Nation
- 4.12 Following circulation to the above Indigenous communities, staff received three requests for funding to engage on the matter. The Municipality of Clarington is currently collaborating with the other lower-tier municipalities in Durham Region in the creation of an Indigenous Engagement Guide for Durham Region area municipalities, informed by Durham Region's Braiding Pathways framework and upcoming engagement with First Nations.

5. Key Revisions to the Secondary Plan

5.1 Following the Statutory Public Meeting, the draft Secondary Plan was revised to address feedback from agencies and area landowners. In addition, edits were made to policies and maps to improve clarity and correct typographical errors. Key revisions are detailed below.

Land Use Policies

5.2 Several policies related to density, height and permitted uses were revised including:

- Increased overall minimum density target to 60 people and jobs per gross hectare to align with the Durham Region Official Plan;
- Reduced minimum density requirements in the medium- and low-density residential designations to provide greater flexibility in built form while still maintaining overall density targets established in the Clarington Official Plan;
- Increased maximum permitted height to 6 storeys along Liberty Street North in recognition of its role as an arterial road, supporting compact, transit-supportive built form; and,
- Clarified policies regarding the location of permitted retail, service and office uses.

Urban Design and Public Realm

5.3 Revisions were made to several urban design-related policies including;

- Clarified transition requirements for mid-rise buildings to provide design flexibility;
- Removed mid-rise step-back policy requirements, building step-backs will be guided through the UDSG and the implementing zoning by-law; and
- Revised policies to clarify that privately owned publicly accessible plazas (POPs) are encouraged at Prominent Intersections, consistent with the direction of the Clarington Official Plan.

Natural Heritage Policies

5.4 Revisions were made to natural heritage policies including;

- Adjusted policies within Section 6 (Natural Environment) to clarify how the recommendations of the Soper Creek Subwatershed Study are to be implemented through development applications;
- Revised policies to clarify the role of site-specific studies in determining development limits and the extent of the Natural Heritage System; and
- Clarified the studies required to assess development feasibility within the constrained areas, including lands designated 'Land Use to be Determined'.

Transportation and Servicing Policies

5.5 Several policies related to transportation and servicing were revised including;

- Introduced policies to provide flexibility and clarity regarding transportation and servicing, including matters related to road alignments and watercourse crossings, and servicing considerations.

Modifications to Schedule A – Land Use Plan

5.6 Changes made to Schedule A – Land Use Plan are summarized below and detailed in Figure 2:

- Redesignated lands in the northwest portion of the Secondary Plan area from Low Density Residential to Medium Density Residential to reflect the planned function of the adjacent collector road in this location;
- A parkette located in the eastern portion of the Secondary Plan area was relocated to a more central location.

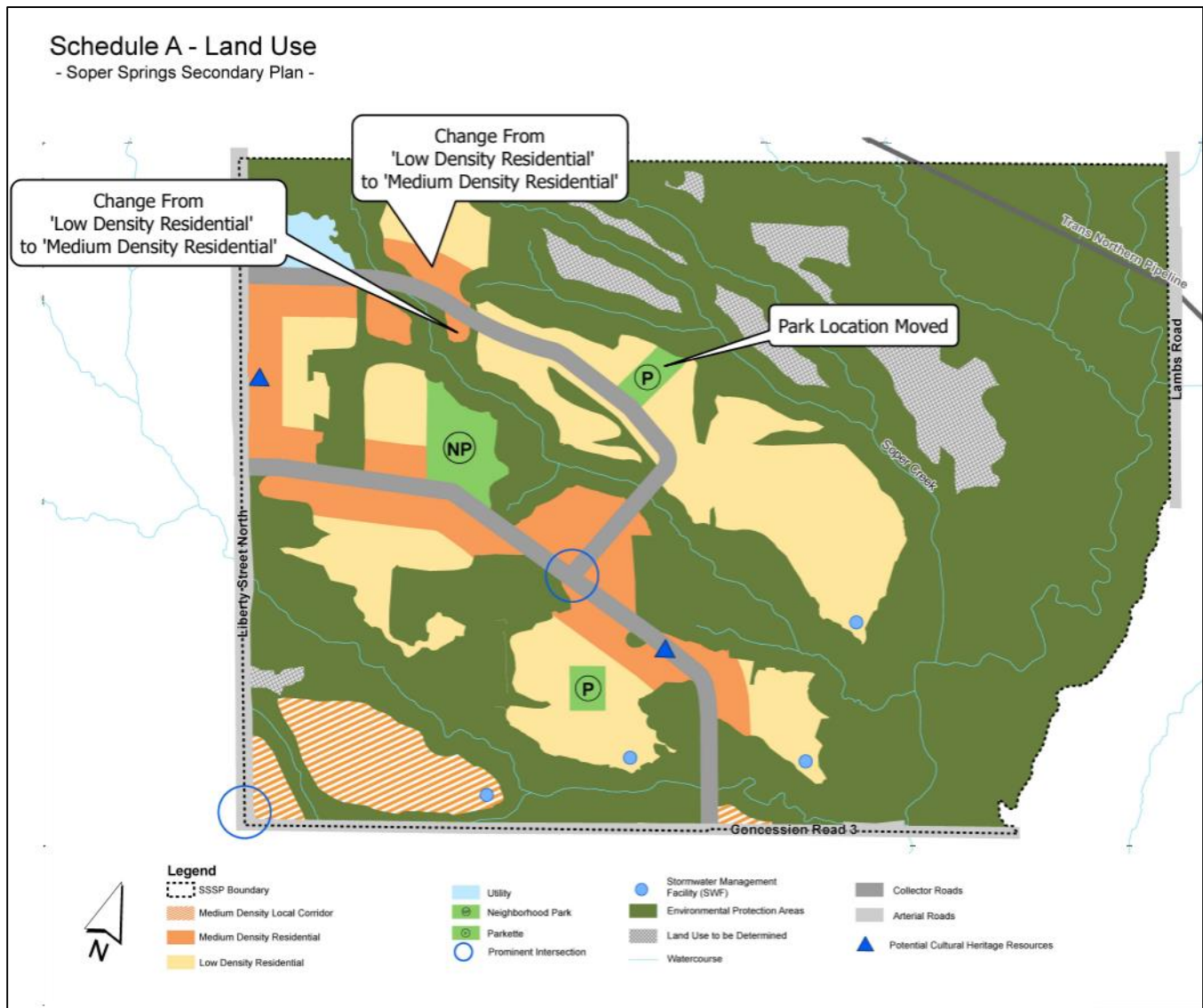


Figure 2: Changes to Schedule A – Land Use Plan

Modifications to Schedule B – Environmental Constraints and Transportation

5.7 Changes made to Schedule B – Environmental Constraints and Transportation are summarized below and detailed in Figure 3:

- The Environmental Constraint: Additional Area of Further Study Overlay was removed from lands in the southwest portion of the Secondary Plan area as works associated with the planned roundabout at the corner of Liberty Street North and Concession Road 3 as well as the installation of new Hydro poles have impacted the lands immediately adjacent the intersection.

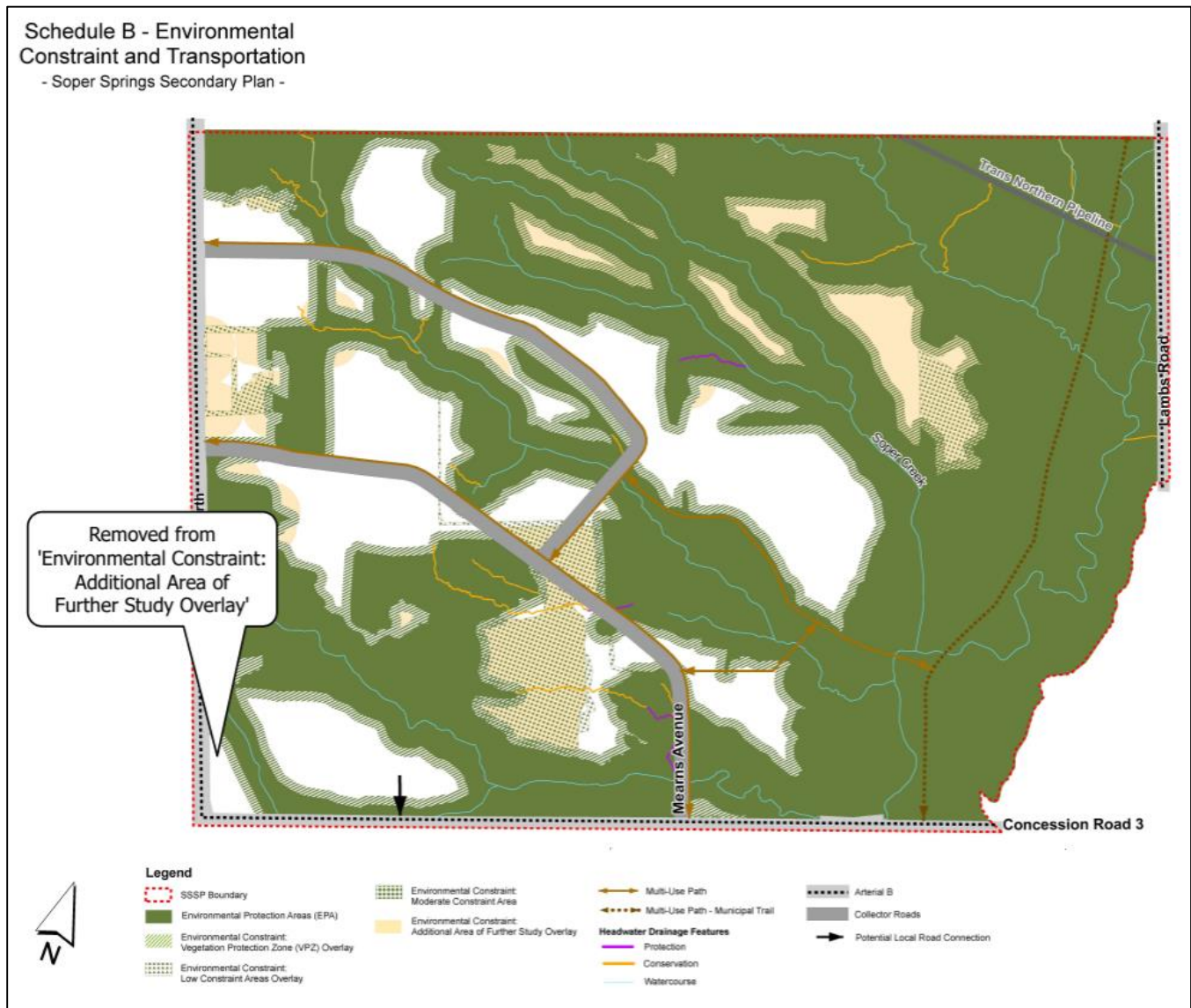


Figure 3: Changes to Schedule B – Environmental Constraints and Transportation

6. Heritage Properties

- 6.1 As part of the preparation of the Secondary Plan several properties were identified as Cultural Heritage Resources, including 3347 Liberty Street North and 3136 Mearns Avenue. The Secondary Plan requires a Heritage Impact Assessment be prepared for each property as part of a complete development application, as well as a Heritage Impact Assessment prior to development on or adjacent to properties determined to have cultural heritage value or interest.

7. Policy Conformity

- 7.1 The recommended Secondary Plan is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, and conforms to the policies of the Durham Region Official Plan and the Clarington Official Plan, as summarized below.

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

- 7.2 The Secondary Plan is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS), which directs growth to settlement areas and promotes compact urban forms that efficiently use land and existing infrastructure. The PPS, 2024 supports the planning of complete communities that provide a range and mix of land uses, housing options including affordable housing, and transportation options to support accessibility for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes.
- 7.3 The PPS, 2024 also encourages the long-term preservation and protection of natural features. The Secondary Plan establishes Environmental Protection Areas to protect natural heritage features and includes trails and parkland to support a range of activities for a diverse population. Soper Springs has been planned to support Clarington's housing target, with a variety of housing types and densities that encouraged walkability, transit use, and access to local amenities.

Durham Region Official Plan

- 7.4 The Secondary Plan generally conforms to the Durham Region Official Plan (ROP). Lands in the Secondary Plan area are designated Community Areas and Major Open Space Areas in the ROP. In addition, portions of the Secondary Plan area are within the 'Regional Natural Heritage System'.
- 7.5 The Secondary Plan conforms with Community Areas and Major Open Space policies of the ROP. Soper Springs introduces a variety of land uses which foster a complete community including residential, commercial, parks and open space, to serve the needs of future residents of the community. The Secondary Plan designates the natural heritage system as Environmental Protection Area as refined through the Soper Creek Subwatershed Study.

- 7.6 The ROP identifies two Future Type C Arterial roads in the Secondary Plan area, including a road along the northern boundary and the Mearns Avenue extension. The draft Transportation Assessment for the Secondary Plan area demonstrates that the planned transportation network can accommodate projected long-term traffic demands without the need for either Type C Arterial Road. The Mearns Avenue extension has been assessed and is reclassified to a Collector Road based on projected traffic volumes in Soper Springs. The removal of the northern arterial road is further supported by an analysis which outlines that the environmental constraints along the northern boundary limit the feasibility of constructing the arterial road, and that network connectivity and long-term function are maintained.
- 7.7 This report recommends approval of ROPA 3 to remove two Future Type C Arterial roads from the ROP.

Clarington Official Plan

- 7.8 The Clarington Official Plan directs the development of compact, well-connected communities that make efficient use of land, support a diversity of built forms and land uses, encourage active transportation and protect the natural environment. The Secondary Plan conforms to this direction by planning for a broad range of housing types and community amenities, supported by a connected street network with sidewalks and cycling facilities to accommodate multi-modal travel. In addition, the Secondary Plan prioritizes the preservation and protection of lands designated Environmental Protection and their ecological function while supporting trail connections.
- 7.9 In addition, the Secondary Plan includes a Neighbourhood Park and two parkettes to meet the recreational needs of residents, supported by a trail network that connects to the broader trail system. The Community Wide Park is proposed to be removed from the Secondary Plan, as further review determined that the size, configuration and topography of the lands would not support a recreational facility or programmed space.
- 7.10 OPA 149 proposes to add the Soper Springs Secondary Plan to the Clarington Official Plan.

8. Financial Consideration

- 8.1 The Clarington Official Plan requires that a Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) be undertaken for Secondary Plans to understand the long-term financial impacts of proposed development. Accordingly, Hemson Consulting Ltd. (Hemson) have prepared a draft FIA for the Secondary Plan, which is included as Attachment 7 to this report.

- 8.2 The draft FIA found that the Secondary Plan would likely have a small net negative financial impact to the Municipality once fully developed. The analysis estimated that there would be a deficit of approximately \$41 per person annually, or a total of \$133,574 annually. Hemson has advised that the draft FIA results should not be viewed as precise forecasts of what will occur at full build-out, given that there are many assumptions built into their modelling.
- 8.3 The fiscal projections of development charge revenue assume the use of the Municipality's development charge rates as passed in December 2025 and does not account for the anticipated passage of new DC by-laws during the build out period. The draft FIA noted that the total Soper Springs Secondary Plan DC revenue is therefore likely to exceed their estimates, resulting in a more positive financial impact overall.
- 8.4 The draft FIA concluded the Soper Springs development will likely be fiscally neutral to slightly negative overall. Additional revenues such as property taxes and development charges should generally cover the additional municipal costs generated by the development.

9. Strategic Plan

- 9.1 The preparation of the Soper Springs Secondary Plan directly addresses the following actions in the [2024-2027 Clarington Strategic Plan](#);
- C.1.1.2: Update Secondary Plan policies to include connectivity considerations and work to address gaps
 - C.2.2.1 Identify the range of housing needed
 - G.2.1.3 Update and complete identified Secondary Plans

10. Climate Change

- 10.1 The Soper Springs Secondary Plan has been planned with sustainability as a key priority. The Secondary Plan promotes a compact built form that supports transit use and active transportation, makes efficient use of land, and integrates development with the surrounding natural environment while protecting the natural heritage system. The Secondary Plan also contains policies that encourage energy efficient development, use of renewable energy and low-impact development.

11. Concurrence

- 11.1 Not Applicable.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 It is respectfully recommended that Clarington Official Plan Amendment 149 and Durham Region Official Plan Amendment 3 for the Soper Springs Secondary Plan be approved.
- 12.2 Implementation of the Secondary Plan and development will be phased to align with the delivery of required infrastructure and community facilities, including necessary roads and crossings, sanitary sewers, water services, stormwater management facilities, and other community facilities.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1a – Recommended Clarington Official Plan Amendment 149
- Attachment 1b – Soper Springs Secondary Plan
- Attachment 1c – Urban Design and Sustainability Guidelines
- Attachment 2 – Recommended Regional Official Plan Amendment 3
- Attachment 3 – Sequence of Events
- Attachment 4 – Summary of Technical Reports
- Attachment 5 – Public Comments Summary Table
- Attachment 6 – Agency Comments Summary Table
- Attachment 7 – Draft Fiscal Impact Analysis

Interested Parties:

List of Interested Parties available from Department.