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TOWNSHIP OF
PUSLINCH
EST. 1850

Conceptual Urban Design Brief

Townline
2809 Townline Road, Puslinch, Ontario
Site Plan Application

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Introduction

This Urban Design Brief has been prepared in support of a proposed development at 2809 Townline Road, Puslinch, Ontario. Although the site is located within the Township of Puslinch, the design principles and layout follow the Township of Puslinch's Design Guidelines to ensure compatibility with adjacent rural and employment lands. The proposal includes two potential development schemes: Plan A, which consists of three industrial buildings, three industrial condominiums, and one big box retail store; and Plan B, which consists of five industrial buildings and three industrial condominiums. Emphasis on high-quality design while integrating natural landscape and sustainable development will enhance economic development within this region.

Site Context Analysis

The site is located on the east side of Townline Road, adjacent to Highway 401, offering excellent regional connectivity. Surrounding land uses include agricultural lands, rural residential properties, and emerging employment areas. Currently, the site is being proposed to be rezoned from Secondary Agricultural (A) to Industrial (IND). The topography is generally flat with minor undulations, and the vegetation consists of sparse trees with open fields. Opportunities for development include proximity to Highway 401, a large site area of 84 acres, and potential for employment and commercial uses. Constraints include the need for rezoning and Official Plan amendment.

Design Principles

The design principles guiding the development are rooted in the Township of Puslinch's commitment to thoughtful, context-sensitive growth.

Compatibility is a key priority, ensuring that the built form, scale, and massing of new structures harmonize with the surrounding rural and employment landscapes. This includes maintaining appropriate setbacks (existing service buffers and MTO setbacks), using materials and architectural styles that reflect the local character, and minimizing visual impacts through strategic building placement and landscaping.

Connectivity focuses on creating a well-integrated circulation network that supports both vehicular and pedestrian movement. Internal roads will be designed to accommodate industrial traffic while ensuring safe access for employees and visitors. Pedestrian pathways will link buildings, parking areas, and public spaces, promoting walkability and accessibility throughout the entirety of the site.

Sustainability is addressed through the incorporation of green infrastructure, such as bioswales, permeable paving, and native landscaping. Buildings will be designed with energy efficiency in mind, high-performance materials and design strategies will be integrated to reduce environmental impact of these structures.

Flexibility is embedded in the site planning and building design to allow for phased development and adaptability to future market needs. Modular building layouts, shared amenities, and scalable infrastructure will support a range of industrial and commercial tenants, from small businesses to large-scale operations.

Proposed Development Schemes

The proposed development includes two distinct schemes, each tailored to meet different market and land use objectives while maintaining alignment with the Township of Puslinch's Design Guidelines. These schemes offer flexibility in terms of tenant mix, building typology, and site circulation, allowing for phased implementation and responsiveness to future economic conditions.

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Figure 1: Plan A Concept Design

Plan A proposes three large-format industrial buildings for logistics and light manufacturing, three industrial condominiums for small businesses and trades, and one large retail anchor to serve regional needs. The site circulation includes an internal road network with dedicated truck routes and employee parking, and landscaping features buffer planting along Townline Road and internal green spaces. In total, Plan A has a total gross floor area of 94,358 SM or 1,015,662 SF.



Figure 2: Plan B Concept Design

Plan B proposes five industrial buildings with flexible layouts for various industrial tenants and three industrial condominiums for small-scale operations. The site circulation in this scheme emphasizes enhanced internal connectivity with looped access and loading zones, and landscaping focuses on native species and stormwater management features. In total, Plan B has a total gross floor area of 118,287 SM or 1,273,234 SF.

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Built Form and Massing

The built form and massing of both schemes include clear heights ranging from 8 to 12 metres. Massing is broken into smaller volumes to reduce visual impact, and buildings will use high-quality materials and architectural articulation. The industrial buildings are envisioned with a modern precast concrete design, complemented by aluminum composite material (ACM) paneling and glass features at the corners to enhance visual interest and provide natural light to interior spaces. These architectural elements contribute to a contemporary aesthetic while maintaining durability and functionality.



Figure 3: Typical Feature corner for new industrial build.

The industrial condominiums are designed with a storefront-style façade to support small business visibility and customer access. These units will feature prominent glazing, storefront doors, and protective canopies that define individual entrances and provide weather protection. The use of varied materials and articulated façades will create a pedestrian-friendly environment and reinforce the development's commitment to high-quality design standards.



Figure 4: Typical storefront features for industrial condos.

Streetscape and Public Realm

Streetscape and public realm elements are designed to create a welcoming, functional, and visually cohesive environment that enhances the user experience and supports the development's identity. Defined entry points will feature coordinated signage including the feature community entrance signage, decorative paving, and landscaped gateways that establish a clear sense of arrival and orientation.

Pedestrian pathways will be integrated throughout the site, connecting building entrances, parking areas, and shared amenities. These walkways will be framed by planting beds, seating areas, and lighting fixtures that promote safety, comfort, and accessibility. The use of durable, high-quality materials such as concrete pavers and bollards will reinforce the industrial character while ensuring long-term performance.

Public realm enhancements will include outdoor gathering spaces, such as small plazas or seating nodes, particularly near the industrial condominiums and retail anchor. These areas will be shaded with tree planting and canopies, and furnished with benches, waste receptacles, and bicycle racks to encourage active transportation and informal interaction.

Lighting will be strategically placed to ensure visibility and security during evening hours, with fixtures selected to minimize light pollution and complement the architectural style of the buildings. Overall, the streetscape and public realm strategy will contribute to a cohesive and attractive environment that supports both functional circulation and placemaking goals.

Policy Compliance

The proposed development aligns with the Township of Puslinch Urban Design Guidelines and complies with the Township of Puslinch Comprehensive Zoning By-law No. 023-18. The site is being rezoned from Agricultural (A) to an appropriate industrial zoning designation, enabling the proposed mix of industrial buildings, industrial condominiums, and commercial uses.

The development supports the Township's goals for employment growth, economic diversification, and the creation of high-quality industrial and commercial spaces. It reflects the principles outlined in the Puslinch Design Guidelines (PDG), including context-sensitive design, compatibility with surrounding land uses, and the integration of sustainable development practices. The proposed schemes are consistent with the intent of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) by promoting efficient land use, supporting employment areas near major transportation corridors, and minimizing land use conflicts. The development also considers the Region of Waterloo's planning framework, particularly policies related to infrastructure capacity, stormwater management, and transportation connectivity.

Conformity with Puslinch Design Guidelines (PDG)

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the Township of Puslinch Design Guidelines (PDG). The following summary outlines how relevant guideline sections have been addressed through the site planning and design process.

B1- Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Uses

The site layout promotes a high-quality built form and functional organization consistent with PDG expectations. Building placement supports an efficient circulation network, logical access points, and professional industrial/commercial appearance. The design incorporates appropriate building setbacks, well-defined entrances, and an overall layout that contributes positively to the surrounding context.

B2 – Corner Sites and Gateways

Where the site occupies a prominent corner or gateway location (as indicated on the site plan), the building massing, landscaping, and architectural treatments have been enhanced to reinforce visual prominence. Key frontages are activated through strategic façade treatments, and the landscaping establishes a strong streetscape presence and being a Gateway (to the Township and County) location, conceptual "Gateway" signage has been shown at the south-west corner of the property.

B3 – Pedestrians and Cyclists

The design provides a safe and accessible environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Defined walkways connect building entrances to parking areas and municipal sidewalks. Where feasible, bicycle parking is incorporated, and pedestrian routes are designed to minimize conflict with vehicular circulation.

B4 – Vehicles, Parking and Service Areas

The parking layout supports efficient movement while minimizing visual and functional impacts. Service and loading areas are screened from public view through fencing, building placement, or landscaping. Traffic circulation is organized to ensure safe site entry/exit and clear separation between public and operational functions such as the gas station in scheme A.

B5 – Signs

Proposed signage is designed to be compatible with the building architecture and surrounding streetscape. Pylon signage will be appropriately scaled, positioned to avoid visual clutter, and coordinated with the landscaping and building façade to maintain an orderly appearance.

C4- Development Near Residential Uses

Where the development interfaces with residential properties, the site design incorporates measures to mitigate potential impacts. This includes increased setbacks, landscape buffers, lighting controls, and thoughtful placement of service areas to reduce noise, light, and visibility concerns.

C5 – Site Landscaping

Landscaping will be carefully integrated into the site design to enhance visual quality, provide buffering, and contribute to environmental performance. Planting is used to frame entrances, soften building edges, screen service areas, and improve the overall aesthetics of the development. Native and low-maintenance species will be prioritized where appropriate.

The inclusion of sustainable design elements, such as green infrastructure and energy-efficient buildings, further aligns the proposal with regional and municipal environmental goals. Overall, the project demonstrates a strong alignment with applicable planning policies and design guidelines, and it represents a strategic opportunity to transform underutilized land into a vibrant employment hub that contributes to the economic vitality of the region, which emphasize context-sensitive design, compatibility with surrounding land uses, and the integration of sustainable development practices. The project supports the Township's goals for employment growth, economic diversification, and the creation of high-quality industrial and commercial spaces.

To proceed, the development is undergoing amendments to the current zoning designation of Agricultural (A) to permit industrial and commercial uses. This will also necessitate an Official Plan amendment to reflect the proposed land use change and ensure consistency with long-term planning objectives. The proposed schemes are designed to meet the intent of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) by promoting efficient land use, supporting employment areas near major transportation corridors, and minimizing land use conflicts.

The development also considers the County of Wellington planning framework. The inclusion of sustainable design elements, such as green infrastructure and energy-efficient buildings, further aligns the proposal with the County and Township's environmental goals. Overall, the project demonstrates a strong alignment with applicable planning policies and design guidelines, and it represents a strategic opportunity to transform underutilized land into a vibrant employment hub that contributes to the economic vitality of the county. The development supports employment growth and contributes to county economic development.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, this Urban Design Brief demonstrates that the proposed development at 2809 Townline Road is consistent with the Township of Puslinch's design principles and contributes positively to the regional employment and commercial landscape. Both schemes offer viable options for phased development and long-term flexibility.