

# 372

GREY ROAD 21 - WEST

## LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

Envision-Tatham is retained by Rhemm Properties Ltd. to prepare a Landscape Analysis in support of the proposed development at 372 Grey Road 21 - West in the Town of The Blue Mountains. The following report addresses the suitability of the site for development, the visual and physical complexities of the site, preservation and enhancement measures, and mitigation to protect the landscape character of the site, in accordance with B3.7.4.3 of the Official Plan.

## 1.2 Site Context

372 Grey Road 21 is a large property located south of Highway 26 and Timmons Street in Craigmileith (**Figure 1**). The property has two separate parcels of land that are divided by the Georgian Trail. The following report will focus primarily on the west parcel of land, herein referred to as ‘the site’.

The site is triangular in shape and is currently landlocked on all sides. The Georgian Trail runs the length of the north side and separates any access to the site from the east parcel and Grey

Road 21. The lands to the south-east are vacant, however, along the west boundary is an existing regional stormwater management pond for the future Eden Oak development and surrounding lands.

## 1.3 Existing Conditions

372 Grey Road 21 has a combined area of 20.58 hectares, with the west parcel constituting 6.96 hectares. The site is currently Zoned Development and Wetland by the Town of the Blue Mountains Zoning By-Law. The Town Official Plan land designation for the site is Residential Recreational Area, Hazard, and Wetlands. The site is also located in the Escarpment Recreation Area of the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Being landlocked, the site is currently vacant. The only built feature is an existing utility easement that intersects the site as it connects from Timmons Street to the property to the south (**Figure 2**). The easement is for water and sanitary service lines. Several maintenance holes are located along the easement (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 1.** 372 Grey Road 21 East and West Parcels (Grey County Mapping, 2023)



According to as-built drawings by Ainley & Associates Ltd., the services were constructed in 1985, however since installation, the easement has been maintained relatively clear of trees and shrubs (**Figure 4**). An informal trail runs the length of the easement and continues onto neighbouring lands.



**Figure 2.** Approximate location of existing easement.



**Figure 3.** Existing maintenance holes.



**Figure 4.** Clearing in vegetation and informal trail along existing easement.

In addition to the easement, several other informal trails exist on the property that have evidence of equine trail riding.

In general, the vegetation on site is largely European Buckthorn, Green Ash, Staghorn Sumac, Dogwood, Birch, Balsam Poplar, Trembling Aspen, Willow, and Eastern White Cedar. The majority of trees are dead Ash that have presumably succumbed to the Emerald Ash Borer. Invasive European Buckthorn is widespread on the site and dominates edges of the easement and trails. (**Figure 5**).

According to the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) Update by Birks Natural Heritage Consulting (2025), the western area of forest is part of a more expansive Significant Woodland that continues onto neighboring properties. The proportion of Significant Woodland that exists on the site is relatively small compared to the distinct vegetation communities on the site, and in context of the larger Significant Woodlands area (**Figure 6**). The species within this area consist of mature Manitoba Maple (invasive), Green and White Ash (dead or dying), and American Elm with a thick understory of Buckthorn.



**Figure 5.** Highly prominent invasive Buckthorn.

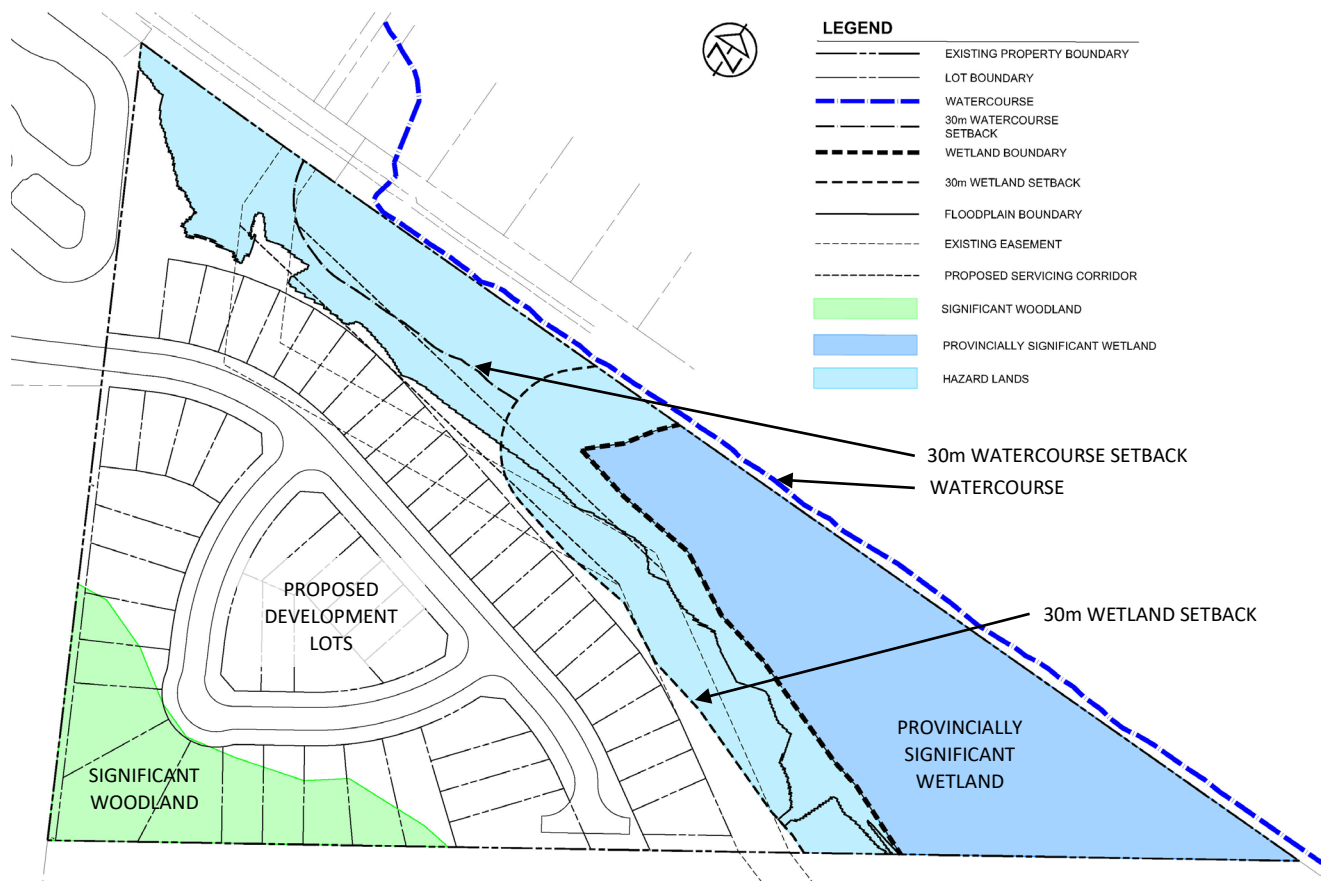
The site has an existing watercourse that runs along the Georgian Trail before crossing and heading north towards Timmons Street. The vegetation communities along the watercourse vary greatly but generally consists of the following species; European Buckthorn, Manitoba Maple,



Green Ash, Balsam Poplar, Trembling Aspen, Willow, Paper Birch, American Elm, and Eastern White Cedar.

Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) are located between the existing easement and the Georgian Trail, in the most eastern corner of the site. The species within the PSW primarily consist of Green Ash, Balsam Poplar, Basswood and American Elm. The PSW also exists on the east parcel of 372 Grey Road 21, forming a larger network of wetlands.

The Environmental Impact Study Update by Birks (2025), states that there were no observed Butternuts or trees species of provincial significance located on the property. Black Ash (endangered species) was observed on the site in 2021, however a follow up survey in 2025, completed by Birks NHC, identified that there were no live Black Ash trees on site.



**Figure 6.** Natural Heritage Development Constraints (NTS)

## 2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Development Proposal

The proposed development has 47 single detached lots and 6 semi-detached lots on two public rights-of-way. The primary site access is proposed via the Eden Oak development, connecting to Lakewood Drive and Highway 26. This road would also offer an opportunity to connect the property to the south, allowing for future development. The second road is crescent-shaped connecting to the primary roadway.

Of the total site area (+/- 6.96 hectares), 3.59 ha of the site is being used for development, while 3.36 ha has been dedicated to open space, including wetland and environmental protection lands. In total, 48% of the property has been preserved as open space and parkland.

The proposed development includes the following features, as demonstrated in the landscape concept (**Figure 8**) and further described in section 3.0.

- Park & Trail Connections
- Open Space
- Compensation Planting

The proposed development provides a 30m setback from the provincially significant wetland and watercourse.

To facilitate construction of this development, trees and vegetation would be cleared for the residential lots and municipal rights of way. Minimal vegetation clearing may also occur within the open space block to provide a trail connection to the Georgian Trail. However, trail alignments will be selected to minimize the removal of vegetation. The details of the trail will be finalized in consultation with the Town during detailed design.

Forested areas along the 30m watercourse setback and 30m wetland setback would remain

undisturbed, other than what is required to re-route the sewers. The existing municipal sewer and water service connections in the easement would be re-routed to be within the open space block. Stormwater would be collected and treated through the existing regional stormwater management facility located at the Eden Oak development.

#### 2.1.1 Park & Trail Connections

In consideration of the Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan, section D6.3.1 Parkland Siting and Design, the park block was located with the following criteria in mind:

- Be connected to trail systems, cycling routes, walkways, natural heritage corridors, utility corridors, and drainage systems
- Be accessible for all ages and abilities
- Minimize tree and vegetation removal
- Be integrated within the fabric of the adjacent neighbourhoods and promote walkway linkages
- Incorporate natural heritage features into the design of the parkland and include consideration of existing vegetation in the function of the park.

The proposed development has a park located adjacent to the regional stormwater facility with frontage along the primary roadway entering the development. A trail is provided within the park which connects the development to the Georgian Trail (**Figure 7**). The trail utilizes a section of the existing easement to minimize clearing of existing vegetation. Located along the park trail and close to the Georgian Trail, is a shade pavilion and seating opportunities.

A 3.0m walkway block has also been provided along the west property boundary. The walkway block is intended to provide future trail connections to the Georgian Trail through the future development of adjacent properties.



**Figure 7:** Forest trail.

### **2.1.2 Compensation Planting**

As recommended in the Environmental Impact Study Update by Birks NHC (2025), compensation planting is proposed in several locations on the site, including within the environmental protection lands along the Georgian Trail and along the wetland boundary. Compensation planting is generally recommended in areas where management of invasive species (Common Buckthorn) is proposed. Additional information regarding compensation planting can be found in the EIS Update by Birks NHC (2025).





Artistic rendering is intended to illustrate the preliminary concept design and may not represent the final conditions.

372 Grey Road 21

# LANDSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN

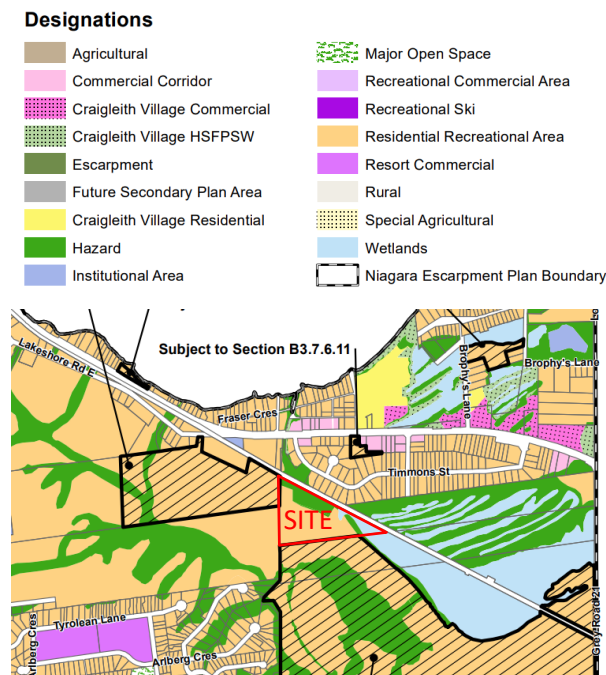


## 3.0 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Suitability of Site for Development

The site is currently Zoned Development and Wetland by the Town of the Blue Mountains Zoning By-Law. The Town Official Plan land designation for the site is Residential Recreational Area, Hazard, and Wetlands (**Figure 9**). The property is also located in the Escarpment Recreation Area of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP).

Other developments in the area, such as those along Grand Cypress Lane, Augusta Crescent, Tyrolean Lane, and Alberg Crescent have the same official plan designation, which is intended to build upon residential access to recreational amenities in the area.



**Figure 9:** Recreation Resort Area, Wetlands, and Hazard Lands (Official Plan Schedule A-4 Craigleith and Swiss Meadows, 2016).

The NEP designation of Escarpment Recreation Lakeshore allows for residential development and recognizes the importance of providing concentrated development for seasonal and permanent residences to access recreational

activities. In addition, the Escarpment Recreation Area designation puts an emphasis on protecting natural heritage features and the ‘scenic resources’ of the escarpment. The layout of the proposed development protects the Provincially Significant Wetlands and the existing watercourse, while providing residents with views of the natural heritage features and views of the Niagara Escarpment to the west (**Figure 10**). The development also has a strong recreational component with direct access to the Georgian Trail, as well as the site’s proximity to local ski-hills and other recreational activities.



**Figure 10:** Views towards the Niagara Escarpment from the Georgian Trail (west of the proposed development).

Given the existing utility easement through the site, the proposed development has access to water and sanitary without extensive disruption for a landlocked site.

The Eden Oak Stormwater Management Pond (**Figure 11**) was designed as a regional stormwater facility with capacity to accept stormwater from surrounding developments, including the site. The Functional Stormwater Management Report by Crozier Consulting Engineers (2014) makes reference to this through the ‘Becker’ property located to the east of the Eden Oak development, thus, providing a historical intention for the site

and surrounding properties to be considered for development.



**Figure 11:** Regional Stormwater Management facility at the Eden Oak development.

Based on the EIS Update prepared by Birks (2025), proposed development of the property is in conformity with the Provincial Policy Statement regarding natural heritage and hydrogeological features. The report also identifies that compensation planting is proposed to demonstrate no negative impacts from the removal of Significant Woodlands within the site.

Based on the above, the site is suitable for development.

### 3.2 Visual and Physical Complexities of the Site

The site itself is vacant and therefore has few visual complexities. The most prominent feature is the clearing in vegetation along the existing servicing easement. Several other trails exist within the site but are narrow and do not greatly impact the visual characteristic.

With respect to physical complexities, the site has a provincially significant wetland located in the eastern corner between the Georgian Trail and the servicing easement. The provincially significant wetland and watercourse along the Georgian Trail both require a 30m setback.

The landlocked nature of the site creates a unique situation where the property is not visually prominent from surrounding municipal rights-of-way, such as Highway 26, Timmons Street, or Grey Road 21. The site is only visible from the Georgian

Trail, through the existing vegetation, however, the watercourse setback and wetland setback will remain largely undisturbed and therefore will continue to provide visual screening towards the development. Proposed compensation planting along the north boundary of the site will also provide additional screening to the development from the Georgian Trail. Properties along Timmons Street are unlikely to see a significant change in visibility into the site from their rear lots as existing vegetation will be maintained along the Georgian Trail and enhanced with compensation planting on site.

### 3.3 Protection the Landscape Character of the Site

The following preservation, enhancement, and mitigation measures are proposed as opportunities to protect the landscape character of the site:

#### 3.3.1 *Preservation Measures*

The Provincially Significant Wetland will be preserved in its entirety, with an additional 30m setback that will be left to naturalize. A 30m watercourse setback has also been established to prevent any adverse effects of development along the watercourse (**Figure 12**).



**Figure 12.** Vegetation to remain at the north boundary and along existing watercourse.



### 3.3.2 Mitigation Measures

As noted above, the wetland and watercourse will be protected from development through establishment of the 30m development setbacks. Realignment of the sewers, however, will disturb part of the wetland buffer and remove a section of the informal trail corridor along the existing easement. To mitigate these impacts, we recommend that the new sewer easement and any other disturbed areas within the park block be seeded with native species to enhance the meadow community and provide a new corridor to allow for re-establishment of the informal trail.

Several mitigation measures can be implemented during construction to prevent negative impacts of the development on the natural heritage system. Tree protection fencing and siltation control measures will help to protect the natural heritage features from the disturbance of construction activities. Additionally, in accordance with the Migratory Birds Convention Act, tree removals should occur outside of the migratory bird breeding season, to protect migratory birds that may be present on the site. The Tree Inventory and Protection Plan report and Environmental Impact Study Update (EIS) by Birks NHC (2025) elaborates further on the mitigation measures that can be implemented during construction.

Additional mitigation measures include compensation planting in the open space block as identified in the EIS Update by Birks NHC (2025). Planting in the open space block will mitigate views towards the development from the Georgian Trail, as well as help re-establish the natural character of the site with native species.

### 3.3.3 Enhancement Measures

Enhancement measures for this development may include boulevard tree planting, park & trail connections, and compensation planting.

#### *Boulevard Trees*

Interior to the site, boulevard trees could be planted along the proposed private roadway

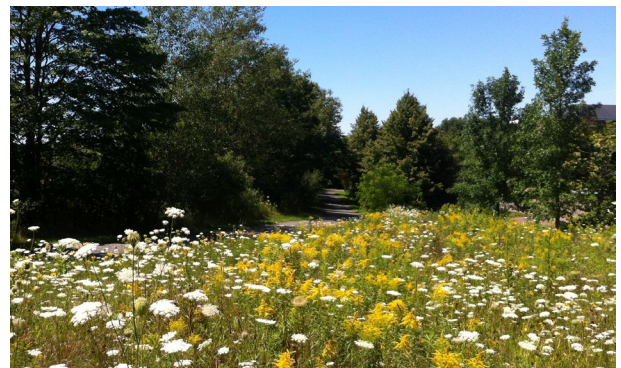
(Figure 13) to enclose the streetscape, control the microclimate of the street, provide traffic calming, and increase urban forest diversity. Tree species should be selected for their tolerance of urban conditions, salt, and the local climate.



**Figure 13.** Boulevard trees enhance the streetscape.

#### *Park & Trail Connections*

The proposed trail connection from the development to the Georgian Trail will help enhance residents' connection to the natural character of the site. The shade structure and seating opportunities along the park trail provide areas of designated activity with minimal disturbance on the overall natural heritage of the site. In addition, seeding disturbed areas of the park block with a native seed mix will enhance species diversity and support pollinator species (Figure 14).



**Figure 14.** Meadow community along a forest trail.

#### *Compensation Planting*

As noted in the EIS Update by Birks NHC (2025), it is recommended that compensation planting be provided in the open space block to increase

species diversity and provide native tree planting in areas of invasive species management.

Planting in these locations provides several opportunities and benefits including:

- enhancement of local plant biodiversity
- a physical barrier to residents entering the wetland and watercourse setbacks.
- forest cover and diversified habitat for fauna

Should significant disruption occur within the wetland or watercourse setbacks as part of the sewer realignment, pockets of native trees or shrubs could be planted, but care should be taken to maintain the open corridor over the easement.

## 4.0 CLOSING

Based on our assessment, the site is suitable for development. We have proposed preservation, enhancement, and mitigation measures to protect the landscape character of the site which should be considered during detailed design.

Respectfully submitted,

**ENVISION-TATHAM**



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