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Planner III – Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Planning & Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
40 Alderney Drive
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

Re: Proposal for Multi-Unit Residential Development – Twin Oaks Road

Dear Leah,

zzap Consulting Inc., on behalf of Pinehaven Development Ltd., is pleased to submit this request to the municipality to review and consider a multi-unit residential development proposal on Twin Oaks Road (PIDs: 00314856 & 00314500). The subject properties are located at the corner of Twin Oaks Road and Circle Drive, within the urban service boundary. They have a combined area of 42,059 square feet (~3,907 square meters) and just over 80 meters of road frontage.

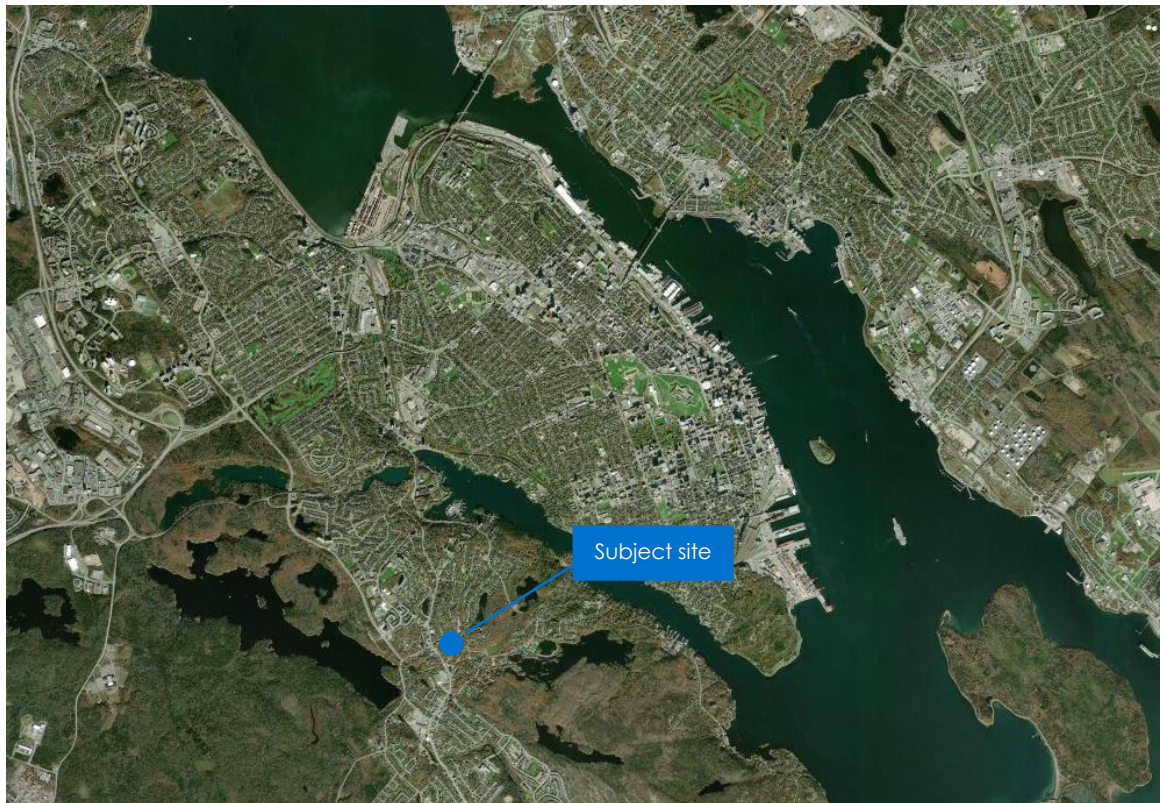


Figure 1: Proposed development location

1.0 Site Context

The site is located approximately 70 meters off Herring Cove Road, a major arterial road with a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. The area is otherwise residential, containing a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, and 2-3 storey multi-unit buildings.



Figure 2: Mix of residential and commercial on Herring Cove Road



Figure 3: Residential context

The property is located close to many amenities, including a grocery store and pharmacy (5-minute walk), fire station (2-minute drive), restaurants (2-10 minute walk), as well as a variety of other commercial and institutional services. The site is also suitable

for family housing, located within a 30-minute walk or 10-minute bike ride of schools ranging from K-12.

1.1 Market Analysis:

The Statistics Canada census tract (CT) where the site is located contains 2000 dwellings¹. 55% of residents own their own home, while the remaining 45% rent. While single-family homes are still the most common dwelling type, there is a good mix of housing options, as shown in Figure 4.

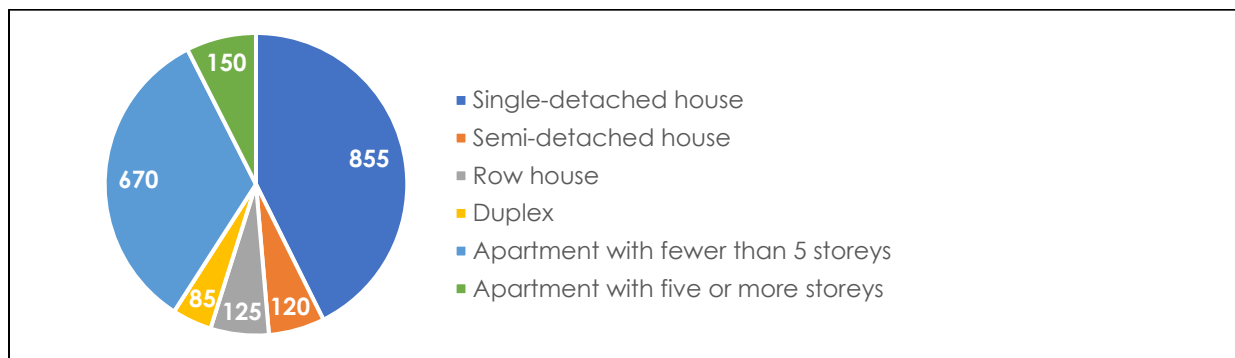


Figure 4: Housing types in CT, 2021

CMHC reports that the combined Spryfield/Herring Cove neighbourhood had a population of 18,625 as of 2016². Housing demand in the neighbourhood is high, with CMHC data indicating:

- A vacancy rate of **0.6%** in October 2022 (down from 1.0% in 2021 and 1.8% in 2020)
- An average 1-bedroom rent of **\$894** in October 2022 (up from \$831 in 2021 and \$735 in 2020)
- An average 2-bedroom rent of **\$1,144** in October 2022 (up from \$1,067 in 2021 and \$1,010 in 2020)
- **103** housing completions in 2022, of which 80 were semi-detached homes
- **294** housing units under construction in 2022, of which 242 were in apartments
- **118** new housing starts in 2022, of which 72 were in apartments
- **23.2%** of households are in core housing need (as of 2016)

There is a clear trend towards density already apparent in the area, with apartments already representing approximately 40% of existing housing stock. Existing housing challenges include low vacancy rates, increasing rental prices, and high rates of housing needs are all challenges faced in the area. In addition, Halifax's overall

¹ 2021 Census of the Population, Statistics Canada, Census tract 2050014.00

² CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal, Spryfield/Herring Cove

vacancy rate in 2022 was 1.0%, the second lowest rate in Canada. There is need for new housing units to address both local challenges, as well as increasing housing pressure across HRM.

2.0 Development Request

The proposed redevelopment includes a 6-storey, multi-family development that would bring 110 new units to the area. This development addresses several core housing challenges that we face in Halifax:

1. Bringing more housing, at affordable rents, within 400m of a future Rapid Transit Station;
2. Building new housing that is energy efficient; and
3. Providing housing that offers greater accessibility (through inclusion of elevators, barrier free units, and other features) to improve equity in housing access.

This proposal does not conform with existing zoning bylaws as it exceeds the maximum height (4-storeys, up to a maximum height of 50 feet) and the maximum residential density (75 persons per acre). However, housing need has increased significantly since the adoption of these policies, as illustrating above. Existing limits on density in the R-3 zone artificially restrict housing in areas that are well suited to accommodating higher densities.

We are requested that through the Regional Plan review, HRM remove or modify these density restrictions. This would create immediate additional capacity for housing and help address urgent housing need in the Spryfield neighbourhood. While we recognize that this issue may be resolved through the coming Suburban Plan, this will not address the current housing challenges. Maintaining the existing density restrictions, even in the short term, will mean that projects are delivering less housing than they could otherwise and that some projects may not be viable to construct. The need for change is now, not years down the line.

Attached are draft renderings prepared assuming the above noted changes are included as a part of the Regional Plan review.

3.0 Supporting Regional Plan Policies

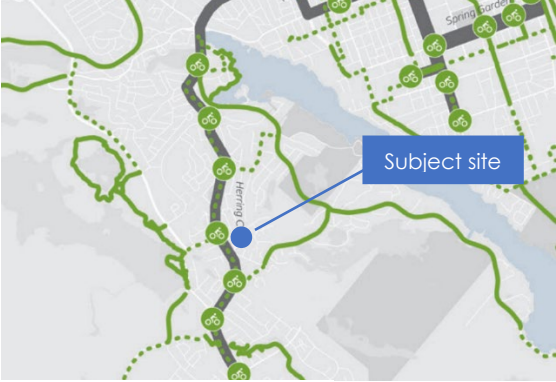
The site is located in the Urban Settlement designation under the HRM's Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. The Municipality establishes several goals related to housing including focusing new growth where supporting services and infrastructure are already available, creating communities that are accessible to all mobility needs, and supporting housing affordability (p. 35). This project addresses all three of these goals, densifying an area with access to many existing services and amenities, providing

accessible housing units, and increasing housing affordability by adding significant new supply to a very limited market.

The policy table below outlines specific Regional Plan policies relevant to the proposed development.

Table 1: Regional Municipal Planning Strategy policies related to the proposed development

POLICY	RELATION TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
<u>Policy S-30:</u> When preparing new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies to allow new developments, means of furthering housing affordability and social inclusion shall be considered including: • Creating opportunities for a mix of housing types within designated growth centres and <i>encouraging growth in locations where transit is or will be available.</i> • Allowing <i>infill development and housing densification in areas seeking revitalization.</i>	Our site is located approximately 125 meters (a 2-minute walk) to the nearest transit stop on Herring Cove Road. This stop is serviced by route #9, which extends from Downtown Halifax to Herring Cove and runs every 10 minutes during peak hours. The site is also located within 240 meters (a 4-minute walk) to the nearest planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station, located at the corner of Herring Cove Road and Old Sambro Road. This station will be a part of the Yellow Line, which connects Spryfield with downtown Halifax. Figure 5 shows existing and proposed transit and cycle infrastructure near the proposed site. The site is approximately 300 meters away from Williams Lake Road, which has a painted bike lane as well as a variety of planned future cycle connections.

	 Bicycle Network Connections - Existing Bikeway - Planned Bikeway - Proposed Rapid Transit - Proposed Stations or Terminals - Proposed Station or Terminal on the Bicycle Network Figure 5: Excerpt from Rapid Transit Strategy, p. 15, existing and proposed transportation near subject site (notation added) Herring Cove Road has also been recognized by the municipality as an area in need of revitalization. In 2005 HRM completed the <i>Herring Cove Road: Community Development & Streetscape Planning Project</i>. In 2019, they completed the <i>Herring Cove Road Functional Plan</i>. Both reports acknowledge that the current design and development along this key corridor remains car-centric and does not align with community or municipal goals for the area. Development that supports high-density, more walkable communities is key to shifting the current character of the area and supporting future services such as BRT.
<u>Policy T-9:</u> HRM shall require <i>mixed use residential and commercial areas designed to maximize access to public transit (Transit Oriented Development) within the Urban Transit Service Boundary through secondary planning strategies</i> and shall strive to achieve the intent of this policy through land use by-law	The property is within the Urban Transit Service Boundary. Maximizing access to transit relies on attaining the densities needed to sustain regular, consistent transit service.

amendments, development agreements and capital investments.	DENSITY There is an obvious relationship between density and transit ridership. The more people live, work, or do activities around a transit stop, the more potential transit riders there are. This is because when more people live in dense neighbourhoods, they are also more likely to take transit, due to lower car ownership, increased traffic, or lifestyle choices. To achieve high ridership, transit needs to travel through dense neighbourhoods. <i>Figure 6: Excerpt from HRM's Rapid Transit Strategy, p. 36 (highlight added)</i> The existing Halifax Mainland LUB restricts density in this area to 75 persons per acre. This directly conflicts with this Regional Plan policy and restricts Transit Oriented Development on properties in close proximity to future BRT stations.
<u>Policy G-9A:</u> Given the strategic importance of regional objectives in mitigating climate change and protecting the future health of the municipality, new secondary planning strategies or amendments to existing secondary planning strategies, shall organize land use or management of land in a manner, including the scale, location, density and form of development, so that: (e) <i>the future rapid transit corridors are considered as key locations for residential and mixed-use intensification, particularly within 500m of the corridor</i>	The proposed development would bring intensification within 270 meters of a rapid transit corridor, well within the 500m range identified in this policy. Furthermore, the Rapid Transit Strategy specifically directs that the highest densities should be focused within 400 meters of Rapid Transit Stations, as shown in Figure 7.

1. PLAN FOR HIGHER-DENSITY MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AROUND RAPID TRANSIT

To support walkable, affordable, transit-oriented communities, land use policy should designate areas for high residential and employment density along frequent transit corridors and around transit stations and terminals.

The highest mixed-use densities should be directed to areas within 400 metres of Rapid Transit stations, with moderate densities up to 800 metres. This approach will support the Rapid Transit Network by encouraging the development of compact, complete communities served by frequent transit, allowing people to work, shop, and play close to where they live.

Figure 7: Excerpt from the Rapid Transit Strategy, p. 41 (highlight added)

4.0 Closing

In closing, in addition to being located within 70 meters of a major collector road and multi modal transportation corridor and within 400 m of the Old Sambro Rapid Transit Station. This site location offers easy access to various amenities such as grocery stores, coffee shops, pharmacies, dental and medical clinics, restaurants, and local bank branches – enabling residents to work, shop, and play close to where they live. We feel this proposal is a perfect fit for the community and will offer more housing choice in an area where it is deeply needed. Furthermore, it closely aligns with directions established in Regional Planning Policy to encourage transit-oriented development and affordable and accessible housing.

We ask that this proposal be considered under the current Regional Plan review process. Should you have any questions, clarifications, or comments regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to collaborating with the Municipality on this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

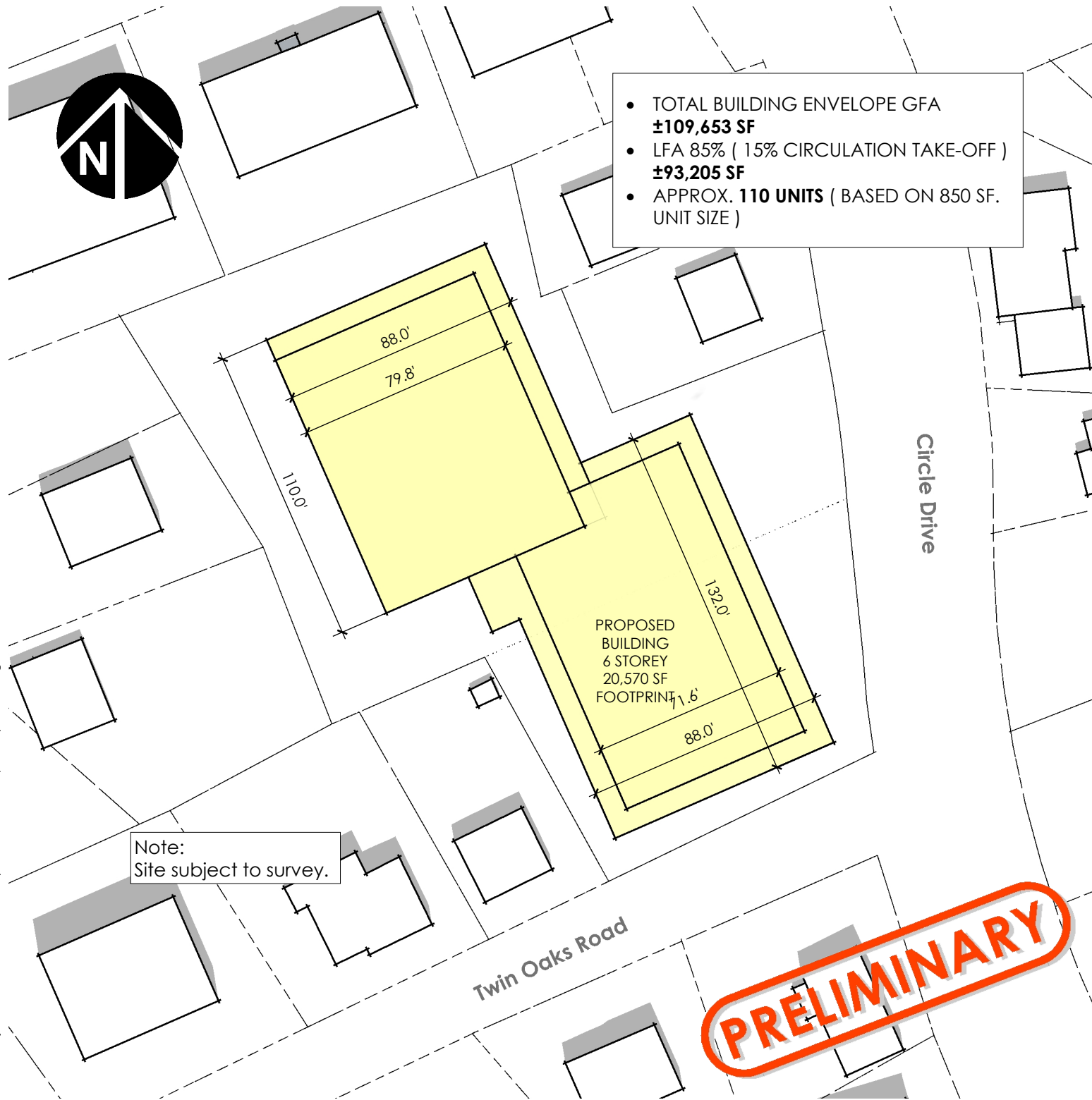
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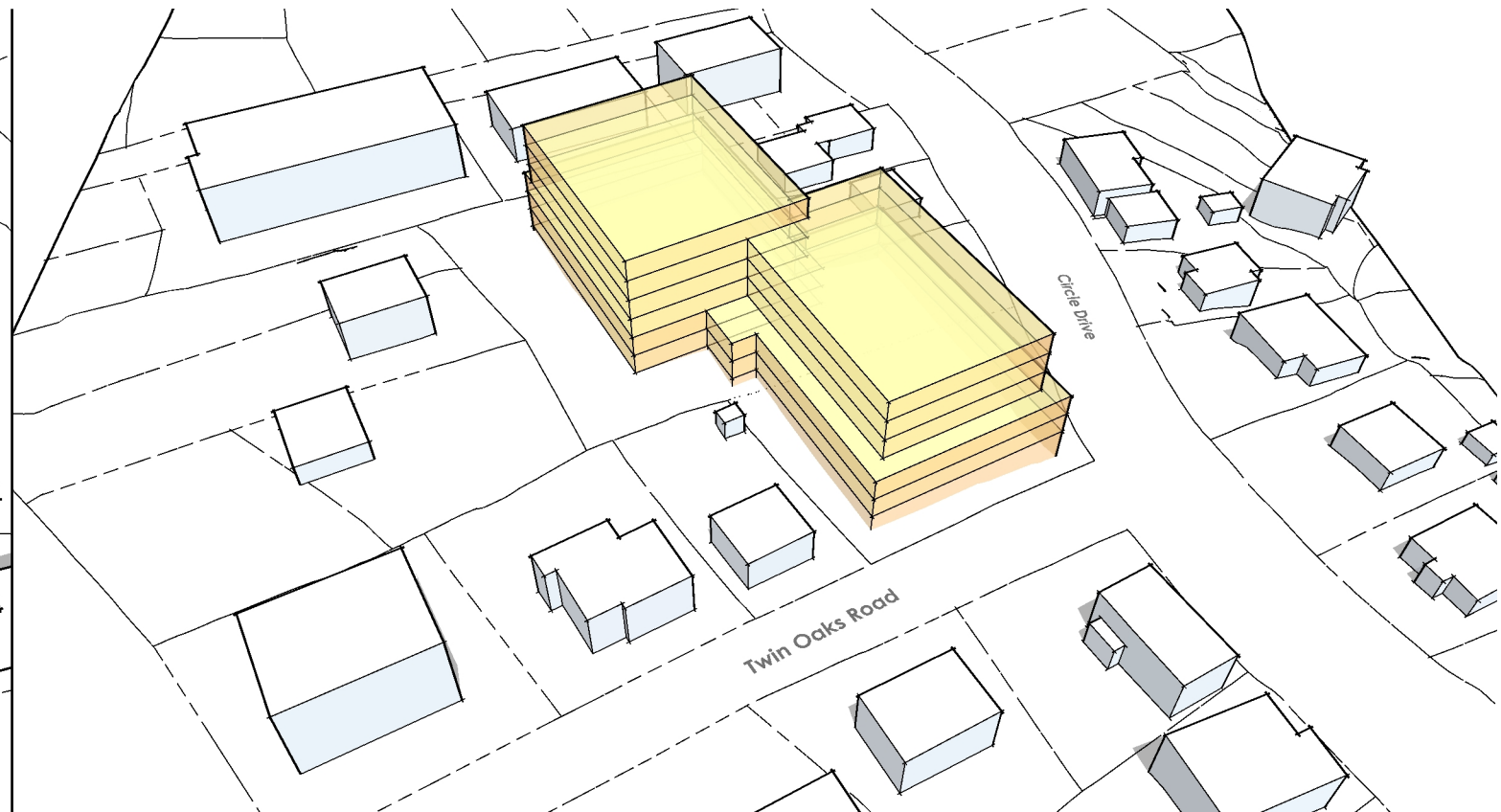
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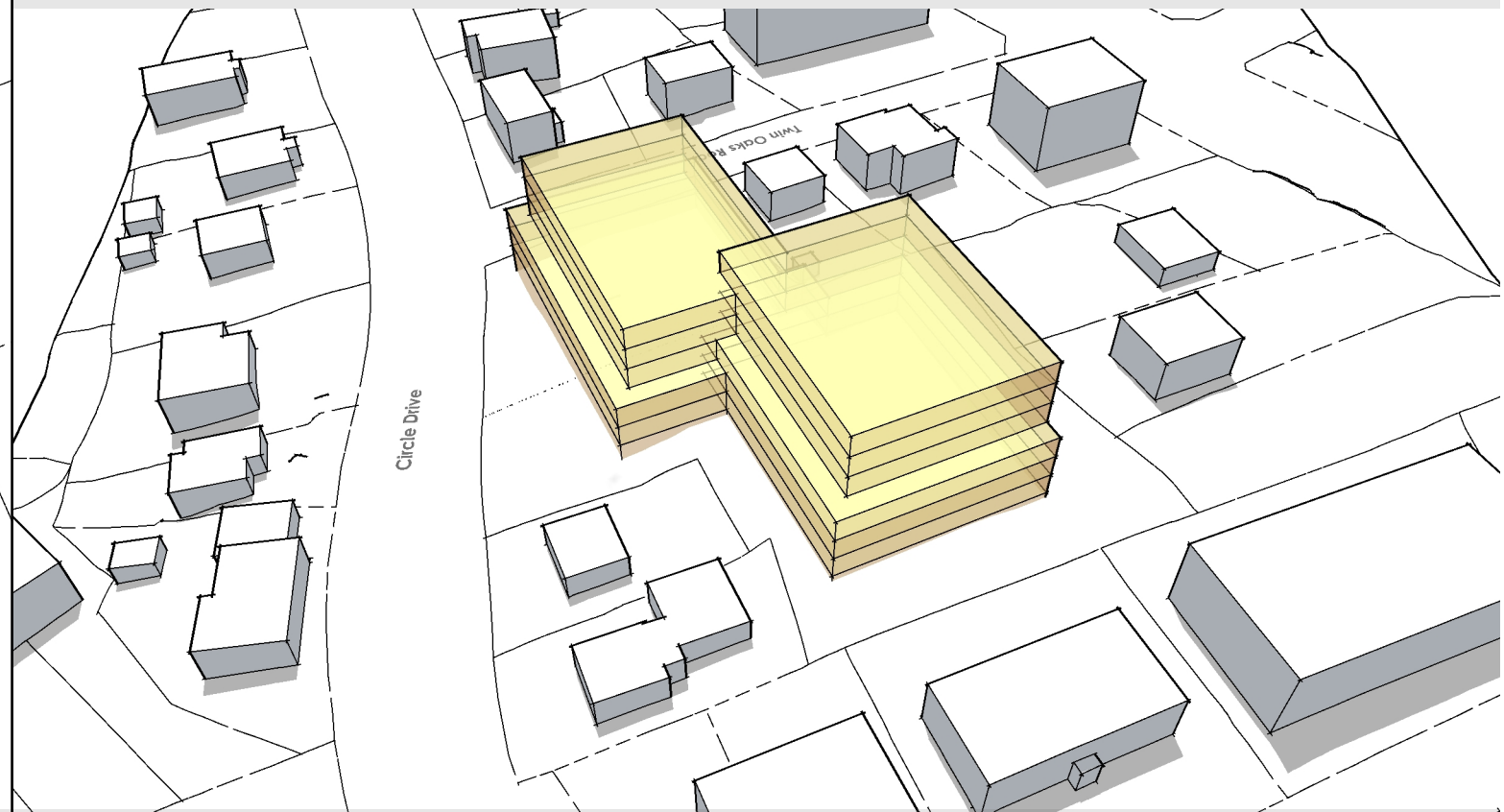


- THE ENCLOSED IS A PRELIMINARY SITE ASSESSMENT INTENDED TO DETERMINE THE GENERAL BUILDING YIELD AS PER POTENTIAL LAND USE BYLAW REGULATIONS.
- TO CONFIRM PROJECT YIELDS, LEGAL AND TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEYS, DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING AND HRM DEVELOPMENT PERMIT ARE REQUIRED.
- THE ANALYSIS IS FOR THE SOLE BENEFIT OF THE CLIENT AND SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON BY ANY OTHER PARTY.
- THIS ASSESSMENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY UP TO 25% DUE TO ALTERNATE PROGRAMING AND DETAILED DESIGN.

Plan View scale 1"=40'



Perspective View (southern)



Perspective View (northern)