

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 18, 2001

**AMENDMENT TO OFFICIAL PLAN
AMENDMENT TO ZONING BY-LAW
REPORT #P.2001.27
CITY OF VAUGHAN (CONCORD-THORNHILL REGIONAL PARK)
FILES: OP.01.007 AND Z.01.019**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT Official Plan Amendment Application OP.01.007 (City of Vaughan) BE APPROVED, subject to the following:
 - a) that prior to the adoption of the Official Plan Amendment, the subject lands shall have been removed from the Parkway Belt West Plan by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing;
 - b) that the Region of York be requested to exempt the approval of the Official Plan Amendment, with the approval authority to be delegated to the City; and,
 - c) that the Official Plan Amendment redesignate the Concord -Thornhill Regional Park to "Institutional Use - City Wide Park" under the provisions of OPA #600 and permit open space and indoor and outdoor recreational uses, including accessory office, commercial and institutional uses.
2. THAT Zoning By-law Amendment Application Z.01.019 (City of Vaughan) BE APPROVED, and that the implementing by-law include the following provisions:
 - a) rezone Concord-Thornhill Regional Park to OS2 Open Space Park Zone; and,
 - b) in addition to the OS2 Zone uses, permit the uses of community centre and all-season sports facility, having a minimum distance separation of 235m from a Residential Zone, together with the accessory uses of office, club and healthcare centre, childcare centre, tavern, eating establishment, concession facilities, retail sports shop and pro shop.

Purpose

On March 19, 2001, Council adopted a resolution that Staff consider amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit additional uses within Concord-Thornhill Regional Park, such as: indoor recreational and athletic centre; office building; club and healthcare centre; childcare centre; bar or restaurant; retail sports shop or pro shop; dormitory residence for visiting athletes; and, concession and restroom facilities.

Staff was also directed to review the above-noted uses with regard to land use, and the economic and legal feasibility of facilitating privately-run and publicly-run and joint public/private partnership arrangements) uses within the park, given the construction status and sports groups committed to using the facilities. This facet will be addressed in a separate report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Background - Analysis and Options

Location

- Southeast of Dufferin Street and Highway No. 407, and north of the hydro corridor, with access from Racco Parkway
- Lots 8, 9 and 10, Concession 2, City of Vaughan

Site Description

- a triangular-shaped, 20 ha City-owned park
- the construction of the regional sports park is almost complete
- access will be from Dufferin Street, through the adjacent streets (Racco Parkway and Caraway Drive) in Subdivision Plan 19T-98V12
- the surrounding land uses are:

North - Highway #407 (PB1S Zone)

South - MTO transitway corridor and hydro corridor (PB1S Zone)

East - Parkway Belt and Hydro Corridor (PB1S Zone)

West - vacant/prestige employment subdivision 19T-98V12 (EM1 Zone)

Public Hearing

On March 15, 2001, a notice of public hearing appeared in The Liberal newspaper, and was also circulated to all Concord and Thornhill ratepayer associations. To date, comments have been received from the Concord West Ratepayers Association, who support the proposed applications. The recommendation of the Committee of the Whole at the Public Hearing on April 10, 2001, to receive the public hearing and forward a comprehensive report to a future Committee meeting was ratified by Council on April 17, 2001.

Current Park Development

The Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Concord-Thornhill Regional Park was approved by Council in September, 1999. Consultation with sports groups and the community resulted in a design that included multiple senior-level sports facilities with supporting infrastructure, including a small concession/washroom building and other amenities. Park use was directed towards the seasonal nature of a sports park, with passive recreational use during the winter months.

The construction tender for the development of the Regional Park was awarded in April, 2000 and the following has been completed: site servicing (water, sanitary and storm), grading, roads, walkways, parking, curbing, lighting, fencing, two senior soccer fields, two senior baseball fields, two senior softball fields, and a cricket pitch. Asphaltting and seeding of the park, including a passive green space, is to be undertaken in Spring 2001.

Future works would consist of a small building for concession, washrooms and storage, a play structure, a possible water play and a small shelter with washrooms. A future phase provides for a picnic area and additional play structures.

Official Plan

The subject lands are designated "General Complementary Use Area" by the Provincial Parkway Belt West Plan. This designation permits low density, low intensity outdoor recreational uses and associated buildings and structures that maintain the open space character of the area, and preserve and enhance natural features.

The approved park development would conform to the provisions of the Parkway Belt West Plan. However, an indoor athletic or community centre-type building that includes accessory commercial, eating establishment, office and dormitory uses may not conform to the Parkway Belt West Plan. Through discussion with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH), Through the Ministry has not yet confirmed whether there would be conformity of the additional uses.

The park is located within an urban setting, immediately north of an established residential community in Thornhill, and directly east of a prestige employment subdivision (Trullwrook Subdivision) which lands were deleted from the Parkway Belt on May 6, 1999. The lands are also bounded by Highway #407 to the north and a Hydro Corridor to the south. The Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) has secured a 30 m wide transitway corridor along the north boundary of the Hydro Corridor for a future light rapid transit line with a station to be located to the west. Upon construction of the roads in the Trullwrook subdivision, the park will have access by way of Racco Parkway and Caraway Drive to Dufferin Street (a Region of York arterial road).

In light of the surrounding land uses, and completion of the Province's transportation requirements in this corridor, it is considered appropriate to remove the subject lands from the Parkway Belt West Plan and to redesignate the site to an urban land use designation through an Official Plan Amendment. On May 14, 2001, Council resolved that "Staff be directed to file an amendment application with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to remove the Concord-Thornhill Regional Park site from the Parkway Belt West Plan". An application was filed with the MMAH on May 28, 2001.

Zoning

The subject lands are zoned PB2 Parkway Belt Complementary Use Zone by By-law 1-88, which permits the outdoor recreational uses developed within the park and future phases. An indoor recreational or community centre-type building on City-owned lands that includes accessory commercial, eating establishment, dormitory and office uses, would be permitted by Subsection 3.10 "Public Uses", subject to complying with the lot coverage and yard requirements of the PB2 Zone. However, a privately-run facility that is not open to the public, or is on lands that have been severed from the City-owned lands, would require an amendment to the zoning by-law. The zoning amendment will consider development options for public, private and public/private facilities within the park.

Servicing

The site has access to municipal services, including water, sanitary and storm sewers. The services were sized to accommodate a seasonal sports park, with passive recreational use during the winter months. The Engineering Department has reviewed the servicing for the park, and provides the following comments:

a) Water Supply

A 300mm diameter watermain is available to the Concord -Thornhill Regional Park site from the Trullwrook Industrial subdivision. This watermain is available to supply water to future proposals, however, a detailed analysis will be required at the site plan stage to determine if system upgrades are required.

b) Sanitary Sewer Servicing

A 375mm diameter sanitary trunk sewer crosses the Concord -Thornhill Regional Park site. This sewer is available for servicing future proposals. Detailed analysis for connection to this sewer will be required at the site plan stage.

c) Stormwater Management

The Concord -Thornhill Regional Park site currently drains to Pond "B", located in the Hydro Corridor. Excess capacity is available in Pond "B". Future proposals would require a stormwater management report to be submitted at the site plan stage.

A review of the site servicing, grading and stormwater management will need to be undertaken by the Engineering Department and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, upon submission of a detailed site plan.

Hydro Vaughan Distribution Inc. has advised that an underground distribution system would need to be constructed to accommodate any future buildings.

Parking & Traffic

The existing and future phases of the park are currently served by 338 parking spaces plus 7 spaces for the physically challenged, within 5 lots located throughout the park. Additional development not contemplated in the initial design of the park would need to be evaluated separately.

The Engineering Department provides the following comments:

"The Transportation Impact Assessment conducted in support of the Trullwrook draft plan of subdivision (19T-98V12, RGP Transtech, June 2000) assumed the park would be developed for "passive" uses. The study looked at traffic volumes during the evening peak period, in this case 4:45 pm to 5:45 pm, and determined that, since most games would start at 6:30 pm, and people would begin to arrive a half hour beforehand, park traffic would have negligible impacts on the weekday evening peak period traffic volumes.

If a large-scale facility such as a stadium is proposed for the park, the Engineering Department would require further analysis to determine the traffic impacts that would result. The analysis would have to include weekday, evening and Saturday peak traffic periods."

The traffic and parking impact assessment report would need to be reviewed and approved by the Engineering Department, the Region of York Transportation and Works Department and the Ministry of Transportation Ontario. The analysis would review the parking needs for the park and indoor facility, and determine if the additional traffic generated by the more intensive uses can operate at safe and efficient levels in conjunction with the employment subdivision to the west, including Racco Parkway and Caraway Drive, and with Dufferin Street and Highway #407 traffic, and can be served by emergency vehicles.

The Fire Prevention Division advises that all development must be designed to meet the Ontario Building Code, including clear delineation of fire routes of a minimum 6 m width and minimum 5 m overhead clearance.

The Region of York has advised that they have no objection to the proposed applications.

Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO)

The MTO provides the following comments:

1. The MTO has no objection in principal to the proposed amendments and revised land use to be facilitated within the park.

2. With the new land uses, the park will not operate seasonally with mostly evening and weekend peak hours. The MTO will require a fencing/berm to be provided along the entire park frontage.
3. The additional traffic will increase the volume of traffic using Caraway Drive and Racco Parkway.
4. The MTO is concerned that added traffic will create additional safety and geometric concerns on Caraway Drive. In the interest of public safety, it will be necessary to ensure that Caraway Drive is designed to arterial standards.
5. A stormwater management report will be required for MTO review and approval, as well as, a traffic report, addressing the impacts on the Highway #407 and Dufferin Street intersection.
6. The MTO will require that any new buildings and structures, above and below ground, be set back a minimum distance of 13.7 m from the Highway #407 property line.
7. MTO permits are required for all buildings located within 46 m from the Highway #407 property line and the radius of 396 m from the centre-point of the intersection of Highway #407/Dufferin Street and Highway #407/Bathurst Street, prior to any construction being undertaken.

Recreation & Park Design

The Recreation & Culture Department is concerned with the potential impact of the need for additional parking on the existing ball diamonds. Several Concord -Thornhill Clubs who have committed to play at the Regional Park, would need to pursue alternative locations if they are affected.

The Urban Design Department provides the following comments:

1. The Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for the park, approved by Council in September of 1999, contemplated a senior sports park of a seasonal nature. The design did not include the facilities proposed under this amendment and would require the restructuring of one or more of the approved sports facilities and changes to the servicing to facilitate the construction of the proposed uses.
2. Park construction has progressed under Tender T00-10 such that the works undertaken under that contract will be complete early this summer. Servicing infrastructure, roads, parking, lit sports fields, and planting are all largely implemented at this time. Fine grading and seeding will be proceeding shortly with some deletions to the contract undertaken in response to this application. This included not proceeding with the cricket field pitch as the cricket field is the largest land use in the park.

A second tender to provide for a concession building and park amenities has been held pending the outcome of this application. Should the application proceed, it is assumed the services to be provided in the concession building would easily be accommodated within any building and be expanded to serve additional facilities. Adjustments to other park amenities could then be undertaken and a tender issued for these elements.

3. The present parking count is 338 spaces plus 7 handicapped spaces. This quantity was determined to be sufficient for the original seven planned sports facilities but would need to be increased to serve any one or combination of the proposed uses. Accommodating any additional parking could impact on the existing facilities if it cannot be provided within any remaining area of the cricket field or the far eastern section of the park. Accessibility to parking, given the linear nature of the park, would need to be assessed should the eastern section of the park be utilized for parking.
4. Soil testing for any structures proposed on the site is recommended before design commences. Soft landscape areas, like the cricket field, would have been compacted to an average of 85% SPD (Standard Proctor Density), at the sub-grade level, with approximately 200mm + of topsoil placed over the sub-grade.
5. A land use permit will be required from the MTO. Through the course of the park development to date, there have been lengthy negotiations with the MTO regarding the land use permit for the park site. Under the present design, the MTO have indicated they have concerns with the visibility of the sports fields and consider the uses a visual distraction with additional concerns for light glare along Highway #407. Their final requirements have been provided to the City and a significant visual barrier will be required along the highway made up of berming and fencing. The proposed uses under this amendment, could result in additional requirements.

Land Use

a) Official Plan

Should the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH) delete the regional park from the Parkway Belt West Plan, it will be necessary to redesignate the site to an urban land use designation under OPA #600. The appropriate designation would be "City Wide Park", which has the following characteristics:

- large-scale City-wide recreational development;
- sites should provide day-use opportunities largely for City residents;
- tableland required and away from major residential development;
- sites should be on or easily accessible to the main transportation system for the City; and,
- may include regional or city wide facilities and/or specialized cultural and recreational facilities.

An indoor athletic or community centre-type building that includes accessory commercial, eating establishment and office uses, can be supported within the park. These uses are considered to be compatible with the existing and future phases of recreational and open space development within the 20 ha regional park. The main use of an indoor facility would be for recreational purposes, and the supporting uses of office, club and healthcare centre, childcare centre, tavern, eating establishment, concession facilities, retail sports shop and pro shop, would accessory to the main recreational use. This site is located within an urban area and the uses are compatible with the prestige employment uses in the adjacent Trullwrook subdivision to the west, and should not impact upon the residential community in Thornhill, which is located 235m south of the park.

Staff is recommending the exclusion of a dormitory use, as there is no mechanism to control occupancy or management/maintenance, and it could essentially be a residential apartment use. If the intent is overnight accommodation for users and visitors, hotels are available in the area.

b) Zoning

By-law 1-88 defines two uses, which would address the types of indoor recreational facilities proposed for the park, as follows:

Community Centre - Means one (1) or more buildings to be used for community activities, including recreational and institutional uses and may include private or public commercial uses incidental thereto.

All Season Sports Facility - Means a structure with a hemispherical roof or ceiling which is constructed of fabric type material and supported by an air pressure system in which sporting activities such as golf driving ranges, miniature golf, baseball, batting cages, roller blading/skating, bocce, soccer, racquet sports, etc. are carried out. Accessory uses such as an eating establishment, office facilities, and related retail sales are permitted. An all season sports facility shall not be located closer than 350m to a residential zone.

The proposed zoning category for the park is OS2 Open Space Park Zone, which will replace the PB2 Parkway Belt Zone on the site. Exceptions to permit the "Community Centre" and "All Season Sports Facility" uses, should be included in an implementing zoning by-law.

The residential lots in the southerly Westmount-Wiltshire community are approximately 235m away from the southern boundary of the park. Given the considerable distance of the park from the residential lots, and the intervening hydro line and the planned, partially-elevated transitway line, Staff can support an exception to the minimum distance separation requirement of 350m to 235m for an All Season Sports Facility use.

The maximum permitted height of buildings in the OS2 Zone is 11m. This height limit is less than the 15 m maximum for the industrial buildings within the adjacent Trullwrook subdivision. An all-season sports facility would require a greater height and given the required distance to the residential community, Staff could support an increase in height to 15m.

The parking requirement for a Community Centre and an All Season Sports Facility is consistent, at 1 parking space for each 3 persons comprised in the designed maximum capacity. Indoor facilities should meet this parking requirement, and minimize impact to the other sports fields in the park. Although the site is accessible to bus service on Dufferin Street and will be served by the MTO transitway in the future, the park will be dependant on people driving to the site from the surrounding arterial road and highway system, and will require sufficient on-site parking for the clientele. A parking and traffic impact assessment report would be required in support of a development submission, and any proposal to reduce the parking requirement.

Economic & Legal Feasibility

Any proposal for a private, public or joint public/private partnership for a Community Centre or All Season Sports Facility would be subject to a comprehensive review by the City. In general terms, introducing additional uses within the park will create new opportunities for development that would generate employment, lease and event/concession revenue, and spin-off economic and social opportunities that will benefit the surrounding community and the City as a whole.

The specific financial costs and legal implications of facilitating a building and possible servicing upgrades, and the costs to undertake consultant studies would be measured upon receiving a submission.

This staff report focuses on the uses that could be supported within the park, from a land use compatibility perspective. The economic and legal feasibility of a proposal would be examined in depth upon its submission to the City by private interests, or when the City decides to proceed with its own public or joint public/private partnership facility. This would then be addressed in a separate support to Committee of the Whole.

Conclusion

Staff has reviewed the subject applications to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law in accordance with the policies in the Parkway Belt West Plan and OPA #600 and the requirements in By-law 1-88. Staff is satisfied that the proposed uses for a private, public or joint public/private partnership for an indoor athletic or community centre-type building, that includes the supporting uses of office, club and healthcare centre, childcare centre, tavern, eating establishment, concession facilities, retail sports shop and pro shop, but not a dormitory facility, can be supported within the 20 ha regional-sized park. These uses are considered to be compatible with the existing and future phases of recreational and open space development within the park, and are appropriate for inclusion within the "City Wide Park" designation under OPA #600. The proposed uses are located within an urban area of the City, and are also compatible with the prestige employment uses in the adjacent Trullwrook subdivision to the west, and should not impact upon the residential community in Thornhill, which is located 235m south of the park.

In accordance with Council direction, Staff filed an application with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing on May 28, 2001, to delete the City park from the Parkway Belt West Plan. Prior to the adoption of the Official Plan Amendment, the Ministry shall have removed the park from the Parkway Belt West Plan. Also, through the recommendation in this report, the Region of York will be requested to exempt the approval of the Official Plan Amendment, with the approval authority to be delegated to the City.

The proposed zoning category for the park is OS2 Open Space Park Zone, and will replace the PB2 Parkway Belt Zone on the property. Exceptions to permit a "Community Centre" and "All Season Sports Facility" uses, and a minimum distance separation of 235 m from a Residential Zone should be included in the implementing zoning by-law.

Any future proposal for an indoor recreational facility would likely be sited in the location of the existing cricket pitch, in the west-end of the park, and would occupy a very small area of the overall park. The various sports fields for soccer, baseball and softball, walking paths and passive green space area, would continue to dominate the park landscape, thereby ensuring that the park maintains a low density, low intensity outdoor recreational environment with uses and associated buildings and structures that maintain the open space character of the area, and which preserves and enhances the natural features of the park.

A review of the site servicing, grading and stormwater management will need to be undertaken for review and approval by the Engineering Department and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, when a formal proposal for an indoor facility is submitted. Also, a traffic and parking impact assessment report would be reviewed and approved by the Engineering Department, the Region of York Transportation and Works Department and the Ministry of Transportation Ontario.

For these reasons, Staff recommends approval of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications, subject to conditions. Should the Committee concur, the recommendation in this report can be adopted.

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Current Approved Plan for Concord-Thornhill Regional Park

Report prepared by:

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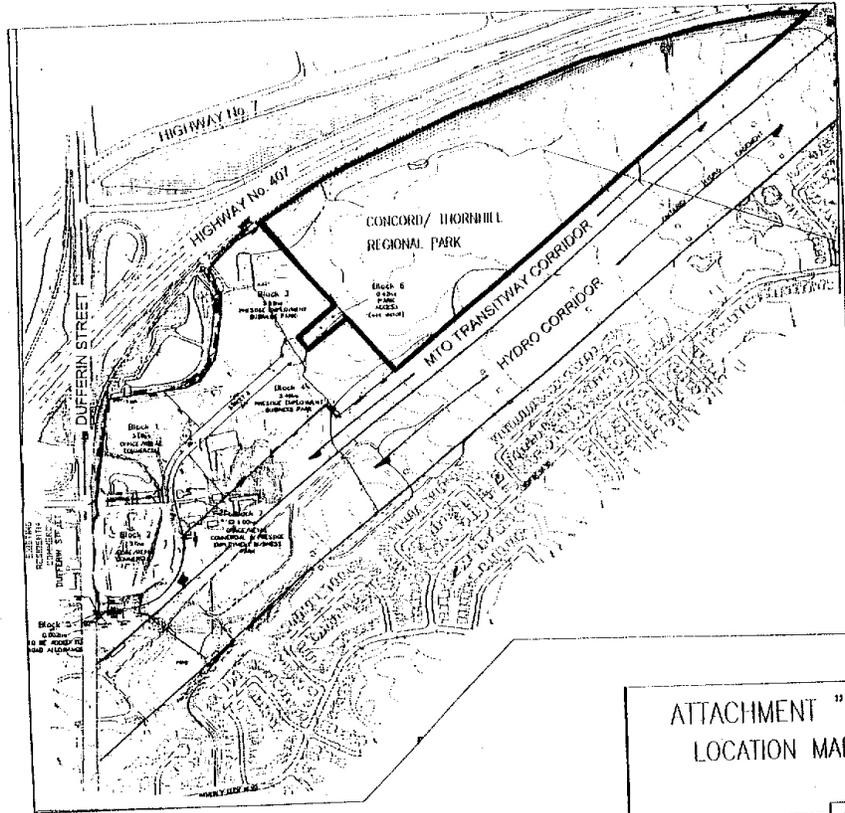
Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL DeANGELIS
Commissioner of Planning

JOANNE R. ARBOUR
Director of Community Planning

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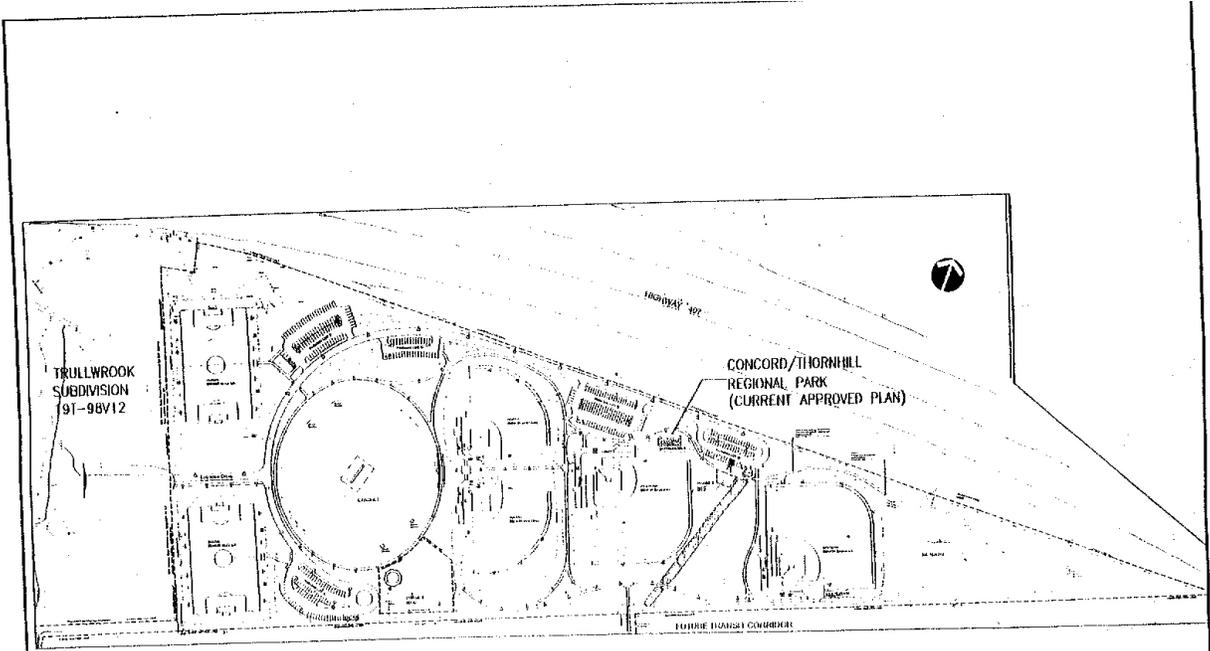
SUBJECT LANDS

ATTACHMENT "1"
LOCATION MAP

FILE #:	REPORT #:
OP.01.007 Z.01.019	LOCATION: LOTS 9,10 CONC 2
DATE: 01/03/08	
SCALE: NOT TO SCALE	

CITY OF VAUGHAN
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

APPLICANT:
CITY OF VAUGHAN CONCORD/THORNHILL REGIONAL PARK



ATTACHMENT '2' CONCORD/THORNHILL REGIONAL PARK (CURRENT APPROVED PLAN)	FILE #: Z.01.019 05-01-007	REPORT #: LOCATION: PART 101 9,10 CONC 2	DATE: 01/03/27 SCALE: NOT TO SCALE
	CITY OF VAUGHAN PLANNING DEPARTMENT		APPLICANT: CITY OF VAUGHAN (Concord/Thornhill Regional Park)