

1. **THORNHILL CENTRE STREET STUDY
CITY OF VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS
DRAFT OPA #671 (THORNHILL TOWN CENTRE)
DRAFT OPA #672 (CENTRE STREET SPINE)
RELATED FILE: 15.92**

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Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That the final IBI Thornhill Centre Street Study Report BE RECEIVED;
2. That draft Official Plan Amendments 671 and 672 BE RECEIVED; and
3. That any issues identified by the public and Council, be addressed by Staff in a comprehensive report to the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 18, 2004.

Purpose

To present the final IBI Thornhill Centre Street Study Report and two draft Official Plan Amendments, for consideration at a statutory public hearing.

Background

Location

The Thornhill Centre Street Study Report and two draft documents apply to the lands fronting on Centre Street from Bathurst Street in the east to the intersection of Centre Street with Highway 7 to the west – see Attachment 1, Location Map. Also included are some lands fronting Dufferin Street north and south of the Dufferin/Centre intersection. The draft documents apply to all of the lands subject to Interim Control By-law 255-2003, as well as additional properties.

Land Use Status

Official Plan/Zoning

The properties at the northwest corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets are designated 'Prestige Office' under OPA 450, and zoned EM1 (H), subject to Exception 9(1186).

The balance of the lands are designated under OPA 210 (Thornhill/Vaughan Community Plan) as "Town Centre", "High Density Residential", "General Commercial", "Medium Density Residential" and "Low Density Residential". The lands are zoned R1 Residential (Single Detached), R3 Residential (Single Detached), RM1 Multiple Residential, RA3 Apartment Residential, C1 Restricted Commercial, C2 General Commercial, C5 Community Commercial, C6 Highway Commercial, and A Agricultural.

Description of the Study Area

The subject lands are developed for the most part, with vacant parcels located on the north side at the intersection of Centre Street and Bathurst Street, and in the northwest and southwest quadrants of the Dufferin and Centre Street intersection. The area at the east end of the corridor, north and south of Centre Street between New Westminster Drive to the west and Bathurst Street to the east, is identified in OPA 210 (Thornhill Community Plan) as the Thornhill Town Centre. This area is comprised of the following land uses:

- Regional Retail Shopping Centre (Promenade Mall)
- General Retail Commercial
- High Density Residential
- Institutional and community facilities

West of New Westminster Drive, there is a varied mix of land uses, building heights and massing along the corridor. The south side of Centre Street is an established, stable, low density residential area with two-storey dwellings rear-lotted along the street. The north side of Centre Street is a mix of commercial, professional office and residential development. The corridor is designed mainly to enable efficient vehicular movement, with little attention given to creating an attractive pedestrian environment. The following uses are located on Centre Street between New Westminster Drive and the commercial uses on the east side of Dufferin at Centre Street:

- Low Density Residential, single-detached houses
- Medium Density Residential, townhouses
- Business Office Commercial
- Retail Centres
- Highway Commercial, a service station

West of Dufferin Street are large undeveloped parcels of land that frame the Dufferin/Centre Street intersection and extend west to the hydro corridor and Centre Street underpass at Highway 7. The Parkway Belt West Plan and a potential Highway #407 interchange have historically influenced this gateway to Thornhill, preventing development of most of these lands. The intersection of Dufferin and Centre Streets includes the following land uses:

- Low Density Residential, older single-detached homes
- Highway Commercial, service station
- Retail Centre
- Highway commercial, motel
- Vacant lands, zoned A Agricultural

The northeast quadrant of Centre/Dufferin Streets is the site of a single-storey retail commercial plaza surrounding a vacant site where a gas station was formerly located. The northwest quadrant is vacant at the corner and includes an older, established motel further to the west. On the southeast corner is a new service station with a row of older residential buildings to the east. On the southwest corner are two substantial undeveloped landholdings under provincial ownership. On the east side of Dufferin further north and south of the corners are some additional vacant properties.

Thornhill Centre Street Study

On June 23, 2003, Council directed that Staff prepare a Terms of Reference for a study of Centre Street in Thornhill-Vaughan, between Dufferin and Bathurst Streets, and enacted Interim Control

By-law 255-2003 for a period of one year to provide time to complete the Study. The parcels impacted by the Interim Control By-law are shown as Attachment #10. The Terms of Reference provided for the consulting team to define the limits of the Study Area appropriately to address planning matters in a comprehensive fashion. The Study Area was ultimately extended further west along Centre Street to include the vacant properties between Dufferin and Highway 407 – see Attachment 2, Figure 1: Centre Street Study Area.

The components to be examined by the Study, as outlined in the Terms of Reference approved by Council on August 25, 2003, were Land Use Planning, Urban Design, Market and Development Analysis, and Transportation. IBI Group was retained to undertake the Study.

The Thornhill Centre Street Study was initiated to provide an up-to-date planning and urban design policy framework to guide development in the Study Area. There have been several applications for zoning and Official Plan Amendments within the corridor since the approval of the Thornhill Community Plan 17 years ago. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to review the vision and update the policies governing development in the corridor, considering the changes that have occurred, and the major transit initiatives now being contemplated by York Region.

OMB Appeals to the Individual Applications and the Interim Control By-law

A number of individual applications as well as the Interim Control By-law has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by several parties owning lands within the Study Area. On May 21, 2004, a Preconference OMB Hearing was held and it was agreed the progress of the study would be monitored and regular reporting made to the OMB regarding whether the Study was staying on schedule. To date the schedule has been respected. The parties have agreed to a schedule which anticipates Council's consideration of amendments to the Official Plan by October/04, York Region review of such amendments by December/04, and the scheduling of an OMB hearing early in 2005. On June 14, 2004, Council approved an extension of the Interim Control By-law for a second year, to permit completion of legal documents pursuant to the findings and recommendations of the Study.

Study Recommendations

The Centre Street Study concluded with a number of key recommendations including:

- The Town Centre South should be identified as a “Special Policy Area” and be subject to further review and consideration should major redevelopment or intensification be considered in this area;
- A broad range of uses are considered appropriate for the Town Centre North, including a mix of medium and high-density residential, mixed-use, commercial and institutional uses, and would be consistent with and support achievement of the overall vision for the Thornhill Town Centre;
- Mixed-Use (residential/retail, retail/office or residential/office) development shall be encouraged along the “Main Street” of the Town Centre and the City should consider mechanisms to best implement this policy and achieve it at the earliest opportunity;
- Introduction of a “Main Street” into the Town Centre to establish a central, pedestrian-scaled shopping focus, and an attractive and walkable connection between the Town Centre North and the Town Centre South;
- Development of “Main Street” be concurrent with or in advance of any other retail development within the Town Centre North;

- Protect stable residential areas in their current form;
- Concentration of development at "Gateway" locations in proximity to proposed transit stations will promote transit ridership;
- Key development sites should be used to reclaim portions of the street including the introduction of low-scale mixed office/residential land uses along the development block between Vaughan Boulevard and Concord Road;
- The northern half of the Western Gateway is recommended to remain relatively unchanged from the present "Prestige Area" designation. Urban Design and Built Form policies for these lands will aid in achieving a better relationship to the street during future development or re-development;
- Built form policies should be established to address the preferred relationship of buildings to the street;
- Streetscape and public realm policies should be established to reinforce pedestrian connections, and urban design principles;
- Built form policies addressing the preferred relationship of buildings to the street; and
- Streetscape and public realm policies, including establishment of a structural framework of streets and development blocks in order to reinforce pedestrian and vehicular connections through the Town Centre.

Public Consultation

An important component of the Study was the establishment of a Stakeholder Consultation Group (SCG), to ensure full community awareness and participation in the process. The SCG is composed of representatives from each of the following groups: Thornhill residents, the Beverley Glen Ratepayers Association, landowners/landowner representatives, York Region representatives, and City Staff.

The Study's recommended land use option is the result of an extensive public consultation process. Between January and June, 2004, two Public Open Houses and eight Stakeholder Consultation Group (SCG) meetings were held. A group of approximately 25 SCG members regularly attended the meetings. The meetings focused on the following tasks:

- reviewing existing land use and transportation conditions and identifying issues concerning the Study Area;
- an overview of the YRTP and an overview of current development applications in the corridor;
- reviewing the current state of the Centre Street corridor and participation in a visioning exercise;
- developing a set of urban design principles derived from the corridor-visioning exercise considering the existing transportation system, and the implications of current development applications on the transportation system;
- discussing future land use options for the corridor;
- presentation of estimated traffic impacts associated with land use options;
- reviewing a revised set of urban design principles, discussion of the urban design structure and urban design concepts for various sections of the corridor, and discussion of a revised set of land use options; and,
- discussion of a preferred land use option, and its planning basis.

Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 21, 2004

At the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 21, 2004, the draft Thornhill Centre Street Study Report, prepared by IBI Group, was presented for Council's consideration. At the following Council meeting of June 28, 2004, Council resolved that the draft report be received and directed that the Study proceed to a Public Hearing in September 2004. Council further resolved that Staff should meet with York Region Transit to discuss concerns identified by the public with respect to the Class Environmental Assessment of Highway 7 transit alternatives currently being conducted as part of the York Region Transit Project (YRTP) as it relates to Centre Street. Council further resolved that Staff should investigate the feasibility of a site-specific by-law for the Study Area.

Meeting with York Region transit

On July 22, 2004 City Staff, and some of the Thornhill Centre Street SCG members met with Staff from York Region Transit and YRTP. Stakeholder concerns generally focused on anticipated traffic concerns, and particularly the impact of a dedicated Centre Street transit facility (ie. a raised center median) and the opportunity to make left turn movements into and out of commercial establishments located on the north side of Centre Street.

At the meeting, YRT and YRTP Staff indicated their willingness to work with affected landowners on Centre Street to identify practical design solutions for the transit facility. At the meeting participants were advised by Planning Staff that the design of the rapid transit facility is not the subject of the Centre Street Study which assumes that Centre Street will continue to be an important corridor for transit services regardless of the outcome of the ongoing EA process. There will be further opportunity for public participation in the consultation component of the YRTP Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process beginning in September/04. The comments received from residents and stakeholders are addressed and summarized on Attachment 3 to this report.

Site Specific By-law

Respecting the feasibility of a site-specific by-law for the Study Area, Staff are of the opinion that to introduce a site-specific zoning by-law amendment at this time would be pre-mature and overly restrictive. Such a by-law could not anticipate the full range of potential development scenarios permissible under the draft Official Plan amendments. Furthermore, without the benefit of site plans for the individual sites, any site-specific by-law would likely require subsequent amendment in the future. Therefore, it is the view of Staff that the zoning for each development should be prepared in coordination with the site plan for each site as it redevelops. Larger sites will be the subject of comprehensive development proposals including site plan and zoning provisions. Individual landowners also have the option of applying for variances to permit uses not permitted under existing zoning provisions.

Publication of Study

IBI's draft Thornhill Centre Street Study Report was put onto the City's web site, and the public were encouraged to provide comments until August 10, 2004. The proposed Official Plan Amendments were put onto the City web-site on August 31, 2004, 20 days prior to the scheduled Public Hearing. The comments received from residents and stakeholders are included on Attachment 3 to this report, together with IBI's response to each concern, prepared in consultation with the City Planning staff. The final Thornhill Centre Street Study Report was posted on the City's web-site on September 7, 2004.

PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

Policy Context

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) supports efficient land use, a range and mix of housing densities, residential intensification, and public transit ridership. Each of these objectives were considered important in the formulation of the vision for the Thornhill Centre Street Study Area. The draft Official Plan amendments address each of these objectives.

York Region Official Plan (ROP)

The York Region Official Plan (ROP) is the upper tier planning document, to which the City of Vaughan's planning documents must conform with respect to goals, objectives and policies. The ROP provides the framework for the overall planning structure for the Region, including specific guidance and policies for the urban structure and regionally significant areas, such as centres and corridors. The ROP provided overall guidance to the planning policy framework being recommended within the Centre Street corridor. Policies 5.3 and 5.4 of the ROP require that local municipal official plans identify urban centres; and, identify Centre Street as an "Urban Corridor" with the potential to become a "Regional Corridor". The improved transit service proposed by YRTP for Centre Street would effectively upgrade its status to that of a Regional Corridor. Local Centres are generally intended to have the highest density and broadest mix of uses within the urban area, including residential, community, institutional, retail, office and human services uses. Intensification targets are expected to be identified for centers, which are to be planned with a minimum target resident-to-employee ratio of 1:1. Corridors are intended to have increased potential for new residential and employment growth at densities that would make frequent transit service possible. A policy framework is provided within the ROP for urban centres and corridors. The Thornhill Centre Street Study has addressed the ROP policy framework in formulating the planning objectives for the Study Area.

City of Vaughan OPA 210-The Thornhill Community Plan

Official Plan Amendment 210 identifies the Thornhill Town Centre north and south of Centre Street between New Westminster Drive and Bathurst Street. The Official Plan identifies a number of planning goals for the Town Centre that include providing:

- a variety of housing while protecting existing residential areas;
- a broad range of commercial facilities to meet the needs of the present and future residents of the community;
- a pedestrian system linking residential areas to shopping malls, transit routes and the Town Centre;
- an efficient system of roads including the provision of rights-of-way for major and minor arterials, residential collectors and local streets to facilitate public and private vehicular movement; and
- to ensure that provision is made in the initial stages of development for servicing and road requirements needed in subsequent phases.

The Official Plan also articulates the role of the Thornhill Town Centre within Thornhill-Vaughan as the focal point for the Thornhill-Vaughan community. The Centre is intended to provide services primarily for the residents of the Thornhill-Vaughan community, and is to be well served by both local and regional transit routes. The Town Centre is proposed as a mixed-use area,

including a major shopping centre, a hotel, offices, community recreation facilities, a civic park and high density apartment uses.

In 1991, Council approved the Town Centre North Neighbourhood Plan, providing for a “High Density Residential” designation on the west portion of the property abutting New Westminster Drive, and most of the balance of the property to remain designated Town Centre Commercial. However, OPA 210 also has considerable flexibility to establish new uses provided they conform with the intent of OPA 210. The Neighbourhood Plan also provides for a north/south road to bisect the property connecting North Promenade through the Liberty property to the north to intersect with Beverly Glen Boulevard.

City of Vaughan OPA 450-Employment Area Growth and Management Plan

OPA 450 applies to the City’s designated employment lands, including those within the Amendment Area, north of Centre Street and west of Dufferin Street, but south of the Ontario Hydro corridor. This area is subject to a separate amendment, OPA 555, approved in November 2000, which deleted the land from OPA 210, and added them to OPA 450, applying a “Prestige Area” designation. This designation provides for a range of prestige employment uses. OPA 450 also includes policies related to “Service Nodes”, which state that “Service Nodes” are to be located at the intersections of arterial and/ or collector roads.

Description of Draft Official Plan Amendments

Draft OPA 671 (Thornhill Town Centre)

Draft Official Plan Amendment 671 applies to a portion of the Town Centre North, specifically the property fronting on the north side of Centre Street between New Westminster Drive and Bathurst Street, and all of the lands within the Town Centre South, including the Promenade Mall – see Attachment 4, The Amendment Area.

The land use policies proposed by OPA 671 are summarized as follows:

- redesignates a portion of the Amendment Area south of Centre Street as “Special Policy Area”, as shown on Attachment 5, and requires future development there to consider the overall urban structure and urban design policies outlined within the OPA. All other applicable policies and land use designations currently in place under OPA 210 remain in effect.
- Redesignates the Amendment Area north of Centre Street as “Mixed Use 1”, “Mixed Use 2”, “Mixed Use 3”, and “High Density Residential”, as shown on Attachment 6.
- Requires development to occur based on a structure of streets and development blocks within the Amendment Area north of Centre Street, as shown on Attachments 7 and 8.
- Introduces phasing policies that require construction of the “Main Street” and the buildings abutting it to begin prior to approval of development of the remaining portion of the lands north of Centre Street; and,
- Articulates a planning and development policy framework.

Land Use Designations

The land use designations established by OPA 671 strongly emphasize mixed-use development. Mixed-use development implies retail uses located at-grade, with residential or commercial uses located above-grade in the same building. In terms of land use distribution, mixed-use development will be established on a new, north/south ‘Main Street’ bisecting the Amendment

Area north of Centre Street, and connecting Centre Street from its intersection with North Promenade, to the Liberty lands to the north where it will continue, to terminate at Beverley Glen Boulevard. Properties fronting along “Main Street” are designated “Mixed Use 1” in anticipation of a typical, pedestrian-oriented, human-scale shopping precinct, with shops and other retail uses lining the street, and on-street parking. The key to the long-term vision of the Town Centre is the establishment of the underlying structure of streets and development blocks, and the introduction of the “Main Street”. Through the Centre Street Study process, it became evident that the most logical and achievable place to introduce a pedestrian friendly “Main Street” concept is along a new north/south road within the Town Centre, as Centre Street itself is so wide that it presents a significant challenge to create the appropriate scale for such a street. The “Main Street” is to link the north and south components of the Town Centre with one another and the surrounding community. It will link the various land uses within the Centre and become the focus of the community.

Off “Main Street” to the west, the Plan also provides for mixed-use, together with additional residential development. Lands are designated “Mixed Use 2”, permitting both stand-alone residential uses and buildings with retail at grade and residential or offices above. This area is a transitional area between the prime shopping area on “Main Street” and the “High Density Residential” designation at the west end of the Amendment Area. OPA 210 encourages seniors’ housing to be established in the Town Centre, as already approved on one property within this designation. Housing for seniors is encouraged to be developed in each of the land use designations established in the Amendment Area, including the “Special Policy Area”.

East of the properties on “Main Street”, mixed-use development is also encouraged in the “Mixed Use 3” designation, but stand-alone residential, office and retail commercial buildings are also permitted. Provision has been made for one free-standing retail use with a maximum Gross Floor Area (GFA) of 12,635.0 sq.m. within the “Mixed Use 3” designation. Staff note that this is a correction to the maximum stated in the draft OPA #671 document which incorrectly stated a maximum ground floor area of 12,778.0 sq.m.

Each of the new land use designations also permits a park/urban square, pursuant to the passive recreational needs of the resident and working population of the Amendment Area, and the parkland dedication provisions of the Planning Act. In particular, the intersection of “Main Street” and the east/west secondary street will be developed as a “Town Square”, with buildings framing the intersection, and specialty paving and plantings which define it as a readily recognizable and important place at the centre of “Main Street”. It will be designed with the capacity and amenities to accommodate street events on special “pedestrianized” occasions.

South of Centre Street, OPA 671 designates a portion of the Amendment Area as “Special Policy Area” as an overlay to the current land use designations, which remain fully in effect there. The designation applies to the commercial properties in the Town Centre South, including the Promenade Mall, as well as the York Region Transit Hub. The balance of the properties in the Town Centre South, including the existing and planned residential development sites and institutional sites, are not subject to the “Special Policy Area” designation. It requires that future redevelopment and/or intensification consider the overall urban structure and design requirements being established for the Amendment Area north of Centre Street. The intention is to guide the long-term redevelopment within the designated “Special Policy Area”, integrate and improve the connections between the Town Centre North and Town Centre South, and encourage the “Main Street” form of development to be extended south of Centre Street along North Promenade toward the existing mall.

Official Plan Amendment 671’s land use designations provide the Amendment Area north of Centre Street with the potential for approximately 25000 - 30000 square metres GFA of retail and office commercial space, and 600 to 900 residential units, resulting in an estimated working population of about 500 - 600 employees, and a resident population of approximately 1200 to 1800 persons. This new resident population will still leave the Thornhill Community and Town

Centre well below the population maximums identified in OPA 210. The addition of a significant amount of new housing to the Town Centre will help to enable it to satisfy the Region's target resident-to-employee ratio of at least 1:1 for urban centres. Placing residential and office uses in close proximity to retail uses will also create a resident and working population base of support to help new retail business become viable and flourish. Within Vaughan, the success of this approach to developing a healthy urban centre has been demonstrated in the core area of Woodbridge, where the introduction of additional housing and mixed use development in the mid-1990's has contributed to the economic vitality of businesses there.

It is recognized that it will take time for development of the Amendment Area north of Centre Street to fully build out in keeping with the Plan's vision. OPA 210 anticipates the need to protect the necessary transportation infrastructure to accommodate future development, noting among its goals: "To ensure that provision is made in the initial stages of development for servicing and road requirements needed in subsequent phases" (Section 2.1 I). In keeping with this objective, OPA 671 establishes the required road network within the Amendment Area north of Centre Street, and requires public ownership of the roads.

The Plan establishes a grid network of public roads and development blocks to structure future development within the Amendment Area north of Centre Street. The blocks fronting "Main Street" have a depth of at least 100 metres, sufficient to accommodate buildings facing onto both "Main Street" and the parallel north/south local roads. The sizing of the development blocks, generally at about one-half hectare each, together with a limitation on the size of retail uses (with the exception of one major retailer), are specifically intended to discourage 'big box' retail uses and encourage retailing which is oriented to the needs of the surrounding community.

Summary of OPA #671

OPA #671 is based on the Study's recommendations as well as more specific policies intended to achieve/implement them, including:

1. Achieving Mixed Use Development

The study encourages mixed use development along the Main Street of the Town Centre, and also provides that the City should consider mechanisms to best implement mixed-use on Main Street at the earliest opportunity. OPA #671 requires mixed use development on Main Street, and west of Main Street, with the exception of stand-alone residential buildings. Staff note that, notwithstanding the merits of mixed use development, there has been considerable difficulty in establishing it within the City's urban areas. Mixed use is critical to the achievement of the planning vision for the Town Centre.

2. Phasing Policies

OPA #671 requires construction of Main Street and the initiation of construction of buildings abutting it, in the First Phase of development, prior to any other development approvals. Main Street provides the key role in providing access to the lands north of Centre Street. This phasing policy ensures that priority development area "Main Street" will occur at an early stage rather than at some indeterminate date in the future.

3. Dedication of Local Roads

OPA #671 requires that the local road network be dedicated to the City at the time of draft plan approval. The local road network must provide adequately for vehicular and pedestrian access, porosity, and circulation. OPA #210 requires provisions be made in the initial stages of development for service and road requirements needed in subsequent phases. Public ownership of the network is the most effective means of ensuring that

concerns respecting maintenance, fire and public safety, and on street parking, are addressed to the City's satisfaction.

4. Development Blocks and Grid Street Pattern

OPA #671 provides for the land north of Centre Street to become the most intensively developed part of the Thornhill Town Centre. Excellent access and circulation for pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout this area is critical, given the expected commercial activity and resulting traffic generation.

The development blocks are sized and configured to establish the desired urban condition providing for buildings fronting along Main Street and the parallel north/south local roads, and discouraging the introduction of big box retail uses.

OPA 671 is consistent with and supportive of Provincial and Regional policies. OPA 671 also builds on and strengthens the Thornhill Town Centre as originally envisioned in OPA 70 and 210. OPA 671 fully accommodates the commercial development permitted under existing provisions, and enhances the opportunity for the Town Centre to fully achieve its envisioned role as the focus of the Thornhill community. The introduction of a broadened range of land use permissions emphasizing mixed-use development and greater opportunity for residential development north and south of Centre Street, including creation of a centrally-located 'Main Street', is consistent with and strongly supportive of the intent of OPA 210 and the York Region Official Plan. OPA 671's contemporary policy framework will guide future development and thereby create the desired urban environment based on the highest standards of urban design. OPA 671 also satisfies OPA 210's requirement for preparation and Council adoption of a comprehensive development plan for the Town Centre, prior to development proceeding.

Draft OPA 672 (Centre Street Spine)

Official Plan Amendment 672 amends OPA 210 and OPA 450. OPA 672 applies to the lands on the north side of Centre Street between Highway 7 and New Westminster Drive, as well as the southwest and southeast corners of Centre Street and Dufferin Street – see Attachment 9, showing the land use designations of OPA 672. The proposed Amendment is summarized as follows:

- Redesignates the lands at the southwest and southeast quadrants of Centre Street and Dufferin Street as "Medium Density Residential" with an overlay designation of "Special Policy Area".
- Redesignates a portion of the Amendment Area as "Mixed Use 1", as described in Part 2 of OPA 672, and as shown on Attachment 9;
- Deletes a "Service Station" designation and replaces it with a "General Commercial" designation; and, updates the Service Station policies to reflect relevant compatibility criteria;
- Deletes Section 2.2.3.6 d) of OPA 210 respecting the General Commercial designation;
- Introduces urban design, parkland dedication, and parking policies, as set forth in Part 2 of OPA 672;
- Amends OPA 450, as amended by OPA 555, by adding an exception to the "Prestige Area" designation for the lands located at the northwest quadrant of Centre Street and Dufferin Street to permit recreational and institutional uses; by placing a density cap of 1.0

Floor Space Index (FSI) on future development there, and by introducing new policy provisions applicable to development of a Service Node; and

- Introduces urban design, parkland dedication, and parking policies as set forth in Part 2 of OPA 672.

Land Use Designations

A. The Western Gateway

The “Western Gateway” refers to the lands at the western intersection of the Study Area (Centre and Dufferin Streets), including the large undeveloped parcels of land that frame the Dufferin/Centre Street intersection and extend west to the hydro corridor and Centre Street underpass at Highway 7. The Western Gateway is a focus and entry point to the Thornhill community from the west and north. The Centre Street Study concluded that office uses are the best land use and built form to anchor the Western Gateway, and give it a recognizable identity. Office uses will support daytime activity in this area and provide the built form necessary to establish an architecturally, significant presence at this intersection. Therefore under OPA 672, the current “Prestige Area” designation remains in effect for the northwest quadrant of Centre Street and Dufferin Street. The transportation analysis associated with the Centre Street Study determined that there is limited traffic capacity at the Dufferin Street and Centre Street intersection, which constrains the development potential of the surrounding lands. Given that the current Official Plan and Zoning By-law provisions do not place any restriction on development density, a cap of 1.0 Floor Space Index (FSI) is introduced to limit the scale of future development and thereby address traffic concerns. Also, to broaden the range of potential development options, recreational and institutional uses have been included in the list of permitted uses within the Prestige Area designation.

Since OPA 450 permits “Service Nodes” at the intersections of arterial roads, the OPA 672 includes policies to ensure that such development will be permitted on the northwest corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets only if the site-specific rezoning application is based on a comprehensive site plan complementing and integrating such development with the priority uses (ie prestige office uses), and appropriately addresses the urban design provisions of OPA 672.

The northeast quadrant of the Western Gateway is predominantly developed with stable retail commercial land uses. The vacant site at the northeast corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets, formerly a gas station, retains its Service Station designation, and may be redeveloped for such use in the future. No change to the range of permitted uses in this quadrant is considered necessary. However, the Amendment applies new urban design guidelines, parking policies, and other planning policies to the Amendment Area, consistent with the conclusions of the Centre Street Study.

The two southern quadrants, under Provincial ownership, are essentially left over from the planning of Highway 407, with the exception of the newly built gas station on the southeast corner. Commercial and higher density residential land uses were considered for these two quadrants. Given the prime location of the lands at the Western Gateway and on an important transit corridor, and given Regional corridor policies, higher density residential is an option worthy of consideration. On the other hand, the built form of the adjacent neighbourhoods, and compatibility objectives argue for a less intense development solution. The location of these lands abutting a prime intersection well served by public transit supports the case for medium density residential development and, therefore, the property is redesignated “Medium Density Residential” by OPA 672. However, the landowners have indicated a desire to examine a variety of development options for the lands. Therefore, to provide flexibility to examine other options for these lands, this Amendment also applies a “Special Policy Area” designation, as an overlay to the new designation. The “Special Policy Area” designation requires that any proposal for development other than permitted by the “Medium Density Residential” designation will be

required to submit a comprehensive planning analysis, supported by a traffic study, public participation component, rationale for proposed density and land use, a noise study, and a height and massing study. An amendment to the Official Plan would also be required. Any new development, whether it entails medium density residential uses or otherwise, will be required to follow the urban design policies established by this Amendment.

B. The Centre Street Spine

From east of the commercial properties at the northeast corner of Centre Street and Dufferin Street to the west side of Concord Road, the current land use designations will remain in effect, as this is a stable, and relatively recently developed residential area. However, the urban design, parking, and other general policies of OPA 672 will apply. The objective is to have an up-to-date policy framework which provides consistent treatment to the streetscape and public realm throughout the Centre Street corridor, and gradually improve its appearance and attractiveness.

Between Concord Road and Vaughan Boulevard on the north side of Centre Street, OPA 672 introduces a new land use designation, "Mixed Use 1". This designation permits residential, office, and mixed-use residential/office buildings of up to three storeys in height. The existing, older single-family residential character and larger parcel sizes combine to create conditions conducive to redevelopment. This area is also under the greatest degree of redevelopment pressure. The modest scale of redevelopment permitted by this new designation will be undertaken in a manner consistent with this Amendment's urban design guidelines which will ensure that new development will be sensitive to and compatible with neighbouring residential uses. The establishment of mixed use development will help to transform the character of Centre Street from strictly an auto-oriented, major transportation corridor to an urban space which is more attractive, more pedestrian-friendly, more transit-supportive, and better connected to the surrounding community.

The land use designations currently in place under the policies of OPA 210 are retained in the portion of the Spine located between Vaughan Boulevard and New Westminster Drive. However, a number of uses that are permitted under the current General Commercial designation (e.g. automotive, garden sales and similar uses which require outside storage and display of merchandise) are not permitted under OPA 672. Such uses are considered incompatible with the principles of urban street-related and pedestrian-oriented development, and are inconsistent with the urban design policies of OPA 672.

The rationale to maintain the General Commercial designation in this portion of the Center Street Spine recognizes the stability and relatively recent development of existing retail uses. Discussions with landowners suggested there are no immediate plans for intensification or redevelopment of these commercial lands. The existing retail does not generate sufficient conflict with the surrounding land uses to warrant introducing radical land use changes and, in fact, provides a range of services to the adjacent community. However, improvements can be made to this area. OPA 672 introduces new urban design and parking standards which will be implemented as infill and redevelopment proceeds over time. These policies will help to improve the attractiveness of the retail area and its adjacent streetscape, one that will gradually become less dominated by vehicles and more pedestrian-oriented.

Between Vaughan Boulevard and New Westminster Drive, there are two properties with "Service Station" designations in OPA 210, although only one has a service station located on it, at 1030 Centre Street. OPA 672 aims to encourage development which is street-related, pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive, qualities which are generally not consistent with service stations. Also, Centre Street is an important corridor for public transit service now, and this role is proposed to become more important in future. However, the low density form of development now established along most of Centre Street is not very supportive of public transit, and there is limited opportunity, in terms of parcels which are vacant or prime for redevelopment, to establish land uses which are more transit-supportive. Given that the two-kilometre length of Centre Street

between Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street is already well served by two existing service stations, in addition to the vacant site at the northeast corner of Dufferin and Centre Street, which retains its Service Station designation, a fourth service station site is considered unnecessary and inconsistent with this Plan. Therefore, this Amendment deletes the Service Station designation from the property at 1102 Centre Street. The property is already fully developed with other commercial uses based on the "General Commercial" designation on the adjoining property, as permitted under OPA 210. This Amendment also updates the definition and permitted accessory uses for the "Service Station" designation, and sets out relevant compatibility criteria for such uses.

OPA 672 conforms to the policies of OPA 210 by protecting existing residential and general commercial areas. OPA 672 also conforms to the requirements of the ROP and PPS by promoting compact development, and increasing residential and employment growth, making frequent transit service possible.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

The proposed Official Plan Amendments are consistent with the priorities set by Council in Section 3.2.2 of the Vaughan Vision, to "Encourage land use designations and urban form to support transit usage".

Conclusion

The policies of the proposed Amendments are based on the findings of the Thornhill Centre Street Study carried out by IBI Group, and will serve to update the policy framework for Centre Street according to the current vision developed through the Study. This vision is a more urban mixed-use form of development that is both pedestrian friendly and transit supportive, by encouraging a concentration of development at the Western Gateway to Thornhill, and reinforcing the Thornhill Town Centre as the focal point of the community. The draft amendments also provide for the protection of stable residential areas. The urban design policies in both OPA 671 and OPA 672 will help to create a more compact urban form, at a comfortable scale, promoting pedestrian and public transit usage.

Staff are satisfied that the proposed Official Plan Amendments will implement the preferred vision for the Study Area. Should Committee concur, the recommendations in this Staff report should be adopted.

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Figure 1: Centre Street Study Area
3. IBI Group Letter dated September 2, 2004 (Addressing Issues Raised)
4. The Amendment Area (Schedule "A" of OPA 671)
5. Amendment Area south of Centre Street (Land Use, Schedule "B2" of OPA 671)
6. Amendment Area north of Centre Street (Land Use, Schedule "B1" of OPA 671)
7. Amendment Area north of Centre Street (Road Network, Schedule "C" of OPA 671)
8. Amendment Area north of Centre Street (Development Blocks, Appendix A of OPA 671)
9. Land Use (Schedule "A" of OPA 672)
10. Interim Control By-law Schedule (By-law #255-2003)
11. Final IBI Thornhill Centre Street Study Report (COUNCILLORS ONLY)
12. Draft OPA #671(COUNCILLORS ONLY)
13. Draft OPA #672(COUNCILLORS ONLY)

Report prepared by:

Anna Sicilia, Planner, ext. 8063
Paul Robinson, Senior Planner, Policy, ext. 8410

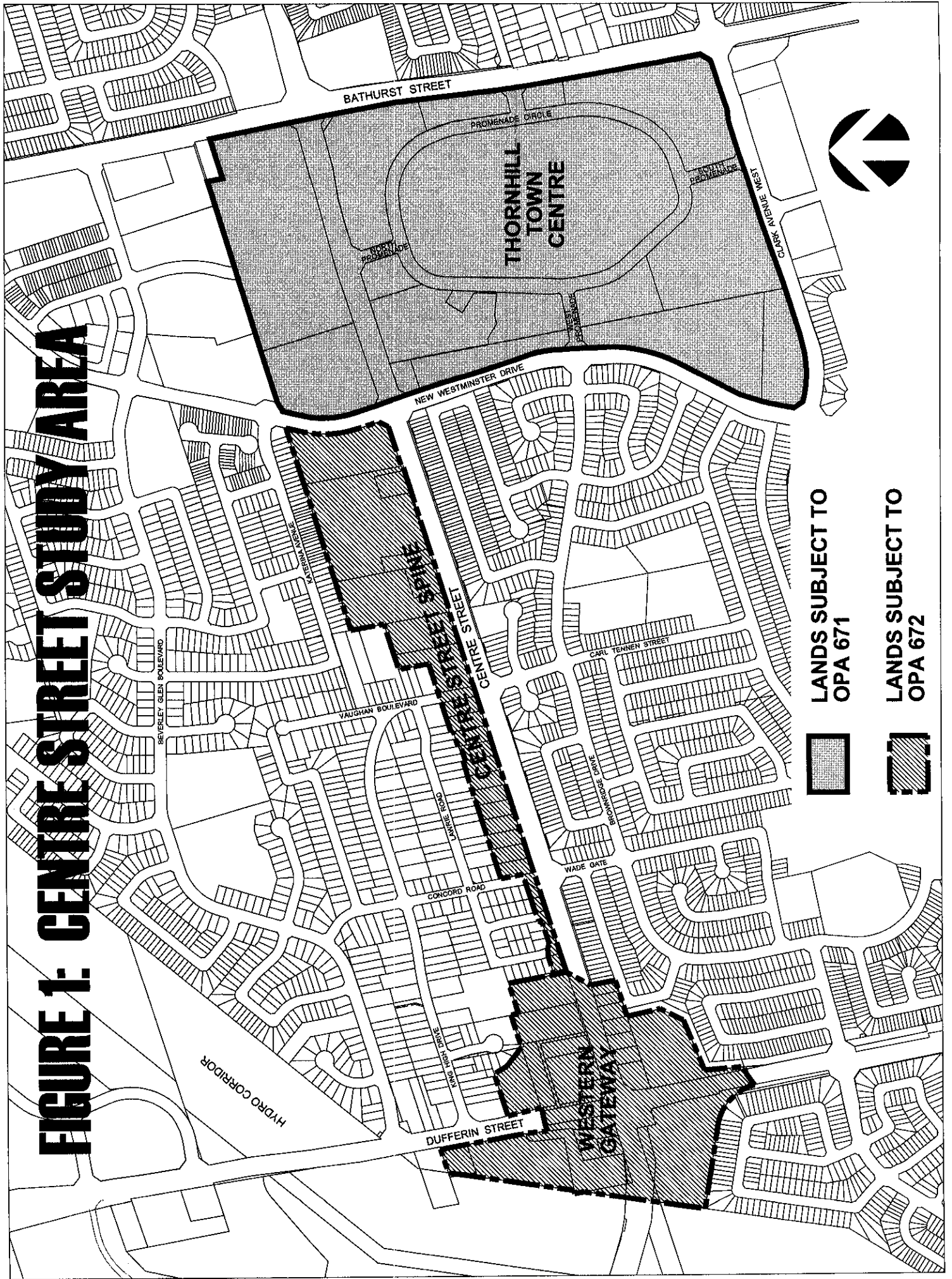
Respectfully submitted,

JOHN ZIPAY
Commissioner of Planning

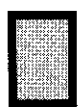
WAYNE McEACHERN
Manager of Policy

/CM

FIGURE 1: CENTRE STREET STUDY AREA



LANDS SUBJECT TO
OPA 671



LANDS SUBJECT TO
OPA 672



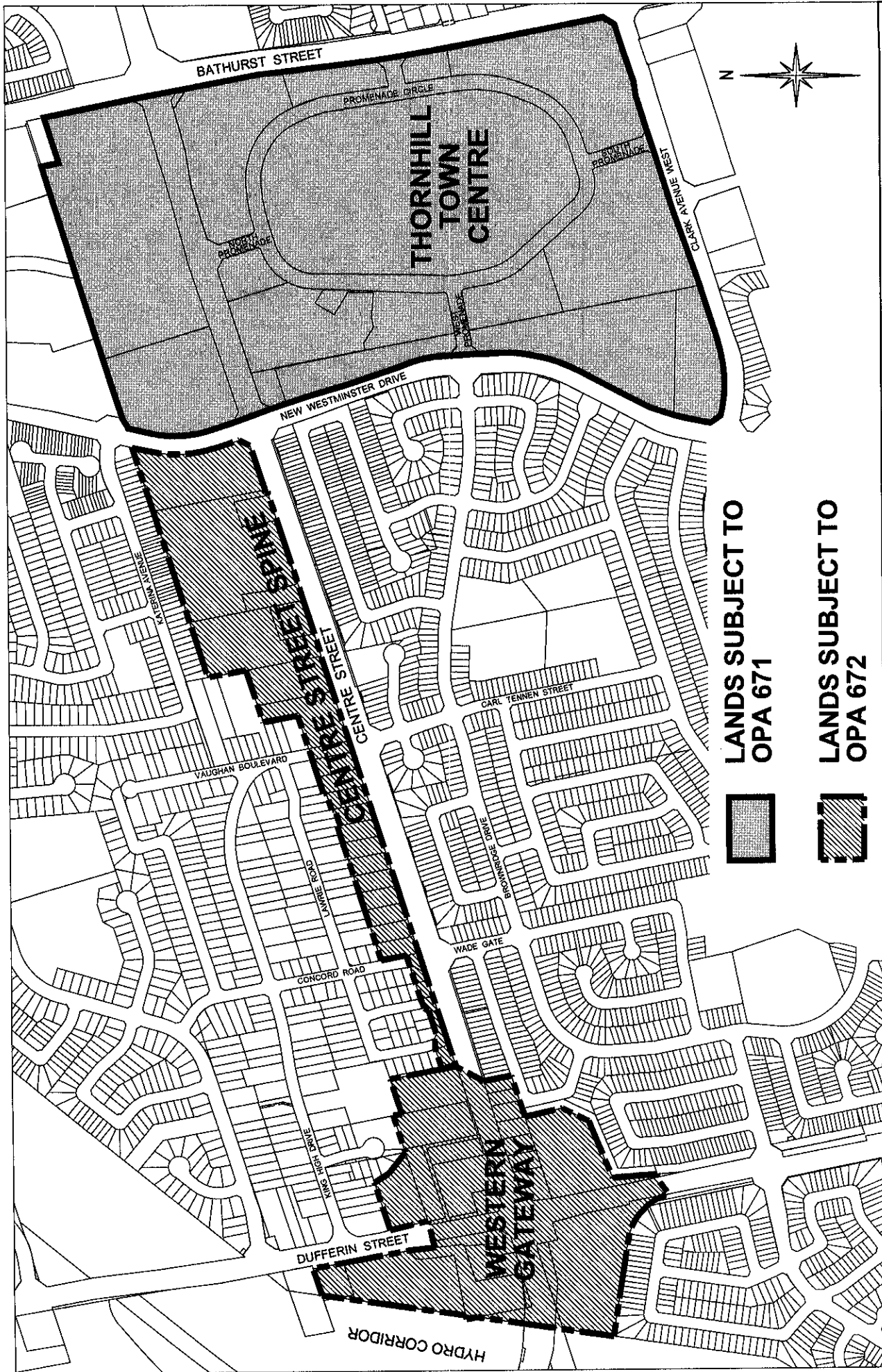
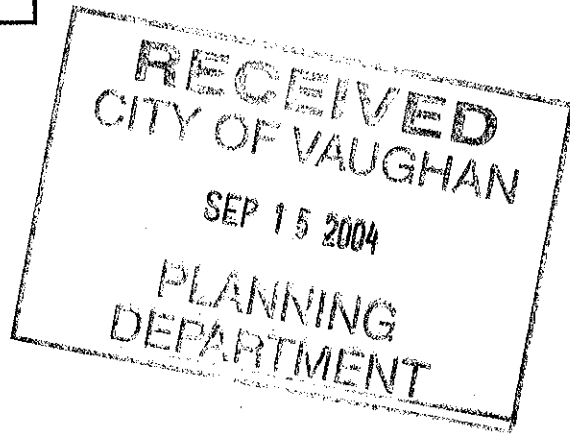


Figure 1 : Centre Street Study Area



September 2, 2004

Mr. Paul Robinson
Senior Planner
Community Planning Department
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1



Dear Paul:

Thornhill – Centre Street Study, Final Report and Final Transportation Appendix

Please find enclosed IBI Group's Final Report for the Thornhill-Centre Street Study. The following outlines the key changes/refinements made to the Draft Report submitted on June 18, 2004. These changes/refinements have been made in response to comments received and the development of the Official Plan Amendments.

- Addition of Section 2.4 Public Comments Received on the Draft Report:
 - Overview of commenting process; and
 - Reference to new Appendix C that contains all comments received by the City;
- Addition to Section 3.1.1 Region of York (Official Plan Policies):
 - Brief overview of York Region's Transportation Master Plan and acknowledgement that the York Region Transportation Master Plan identifies Centre Street as a Transit Corridor.
- Change to Section 4.0 Study Area Description:
 - A note has been added to reflect that the emphasis given to certain tasks in the Terms of Reference was refined during the course of the Study.
- Changes to Section 5.0 Transportation Conditions:
 - 5.1.4 Existing Transit Service - Correction of description of Transit Routes in Exhibit 13 (corrections also made to Exhibit 3.2 in the Transportation Appendix);
 - 5.2 Future Conditions – acknowledgement of Regional Rapid Transit Initiatives added; and
 - Clarification to transportation information – in response to SCG comments and questions.
- Changes to Section 7.0 Recommendations:
 - 7.1.1 Town Centre - The size of the proposed single largest building to be permitted in the Town Centre North was corrected to read 12,635 sq. m versus 10,500 sq. m. as noted in the Draft; and

- Reference to Building heights ranging between 2 to 4 storeys in Section 7. 2.1.2 corrected – should be 2 to 3 storeys.
- Changes to Section 7.2.1.1 Built Form Recommendations:
 - New recommendation (k) pertaining to grade changes;
 - Urban Design Guidelines split into Public Realm Guidelines and Site Access, Parking, Service and Utility Locations and Attributes;
 - New Urban Design Guidelines introduced; and
 - Architectural Control Guidelines introduced.
- Modifications to the legibility of the supporting graphic material (i.e. size and quality).
- General corrections to typos and editing.

The following outlines the key changes made to the Draft Transportation Report, submitted on July 12, 2004:

- Clarification to the existing YRT routes and planned transit service (YRTP) in the Study Area (Various sections);
- Highlights of York Region's Transportation Master Plan and its objective added to Section 3.1.1; and
- Clarification of trip generation potential of the various scenarios in the 10 and 20 year horizons, including as-of-right development potential in Section 5.0.

In addition, please note that the number of condominium units in the Liberty development used as the basis of the Liberty Transportation Assessment was 1,598 high-density condominium units as opposed the 1,505 high-density condominium units in the current development application. This 93-unit difference overstates the number of trips by approximately 58 two-way trips in the PM peak hour. As such, the worst-case total number of trips is marginally overstated by 1.7%. This level of additional traffic generation does not significantly affect our analysis of the critical intersections in the Study Area and thus does not alter the overall findings of our assessment.

Yours truly

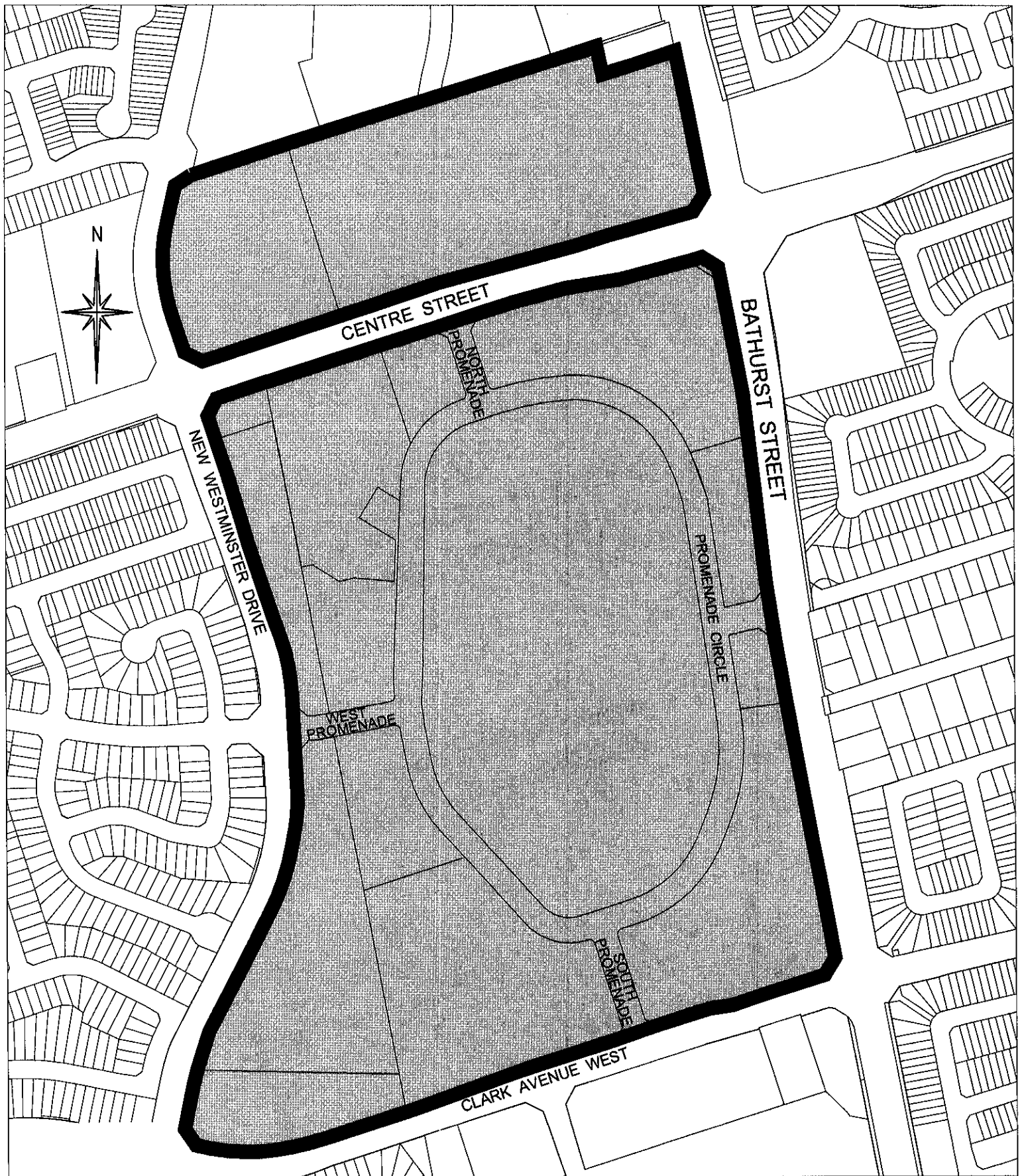
IBI GROUP



Amy Shepherd
Associate

AKS:as

cc: Wayne McEachern
Anna Sicilia



**Schedule 'A' :
The Amendment Area**

Part of Lots 5 & 6,
Concession 2

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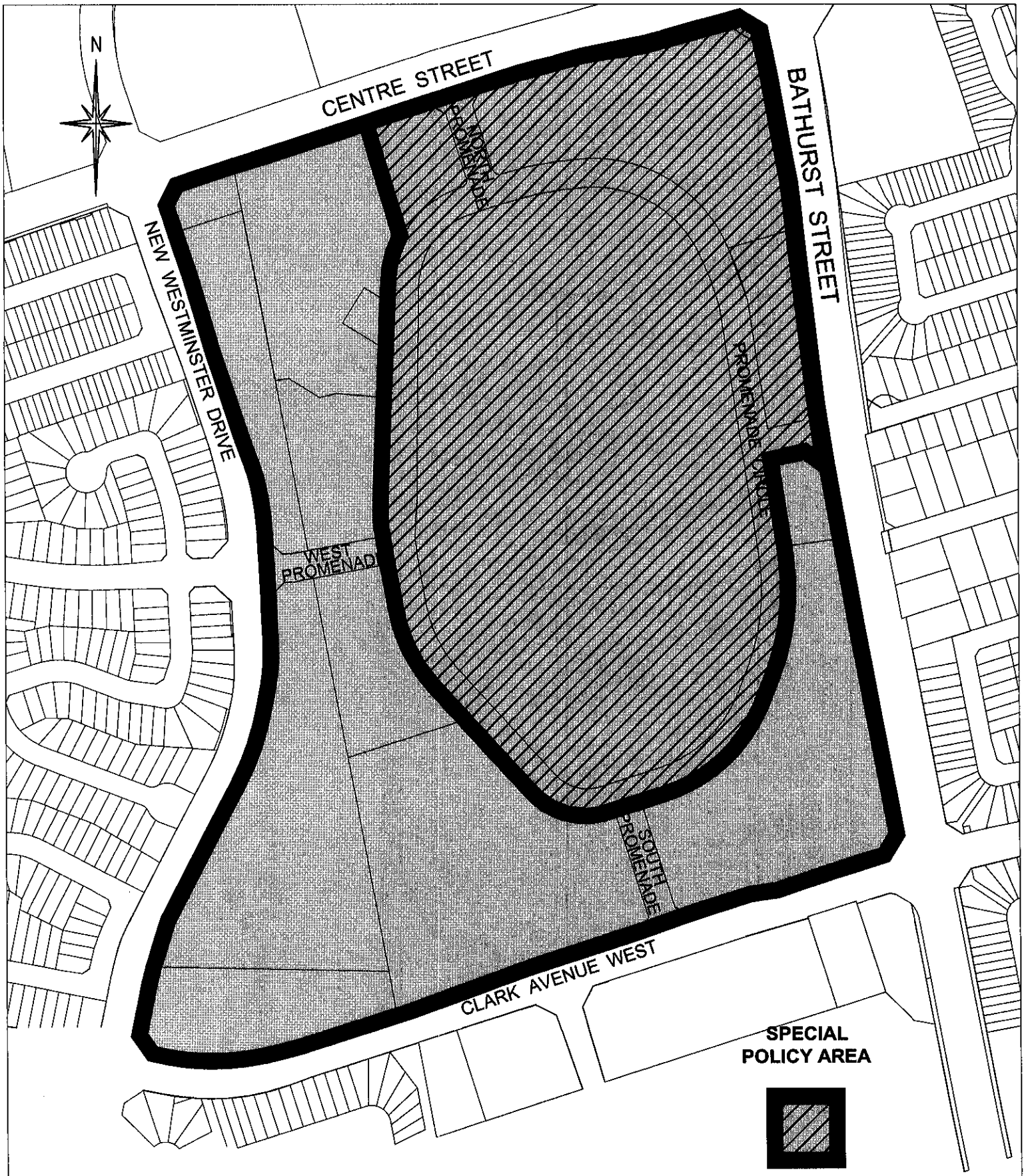
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Attachment

September 17, 2004

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**Schedule 'B2' :
Land Use**

Part of Lot 5,
Concession 2



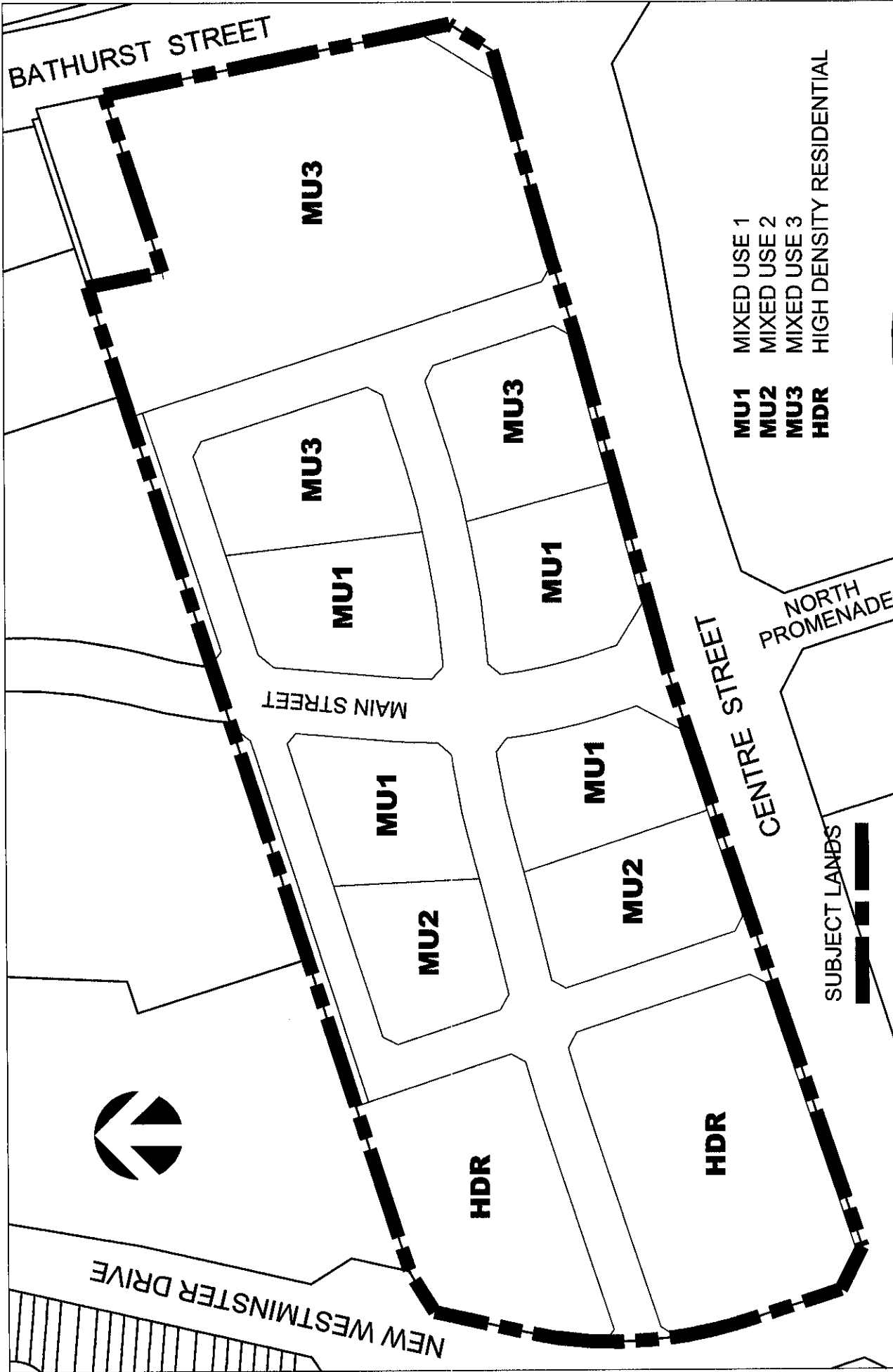
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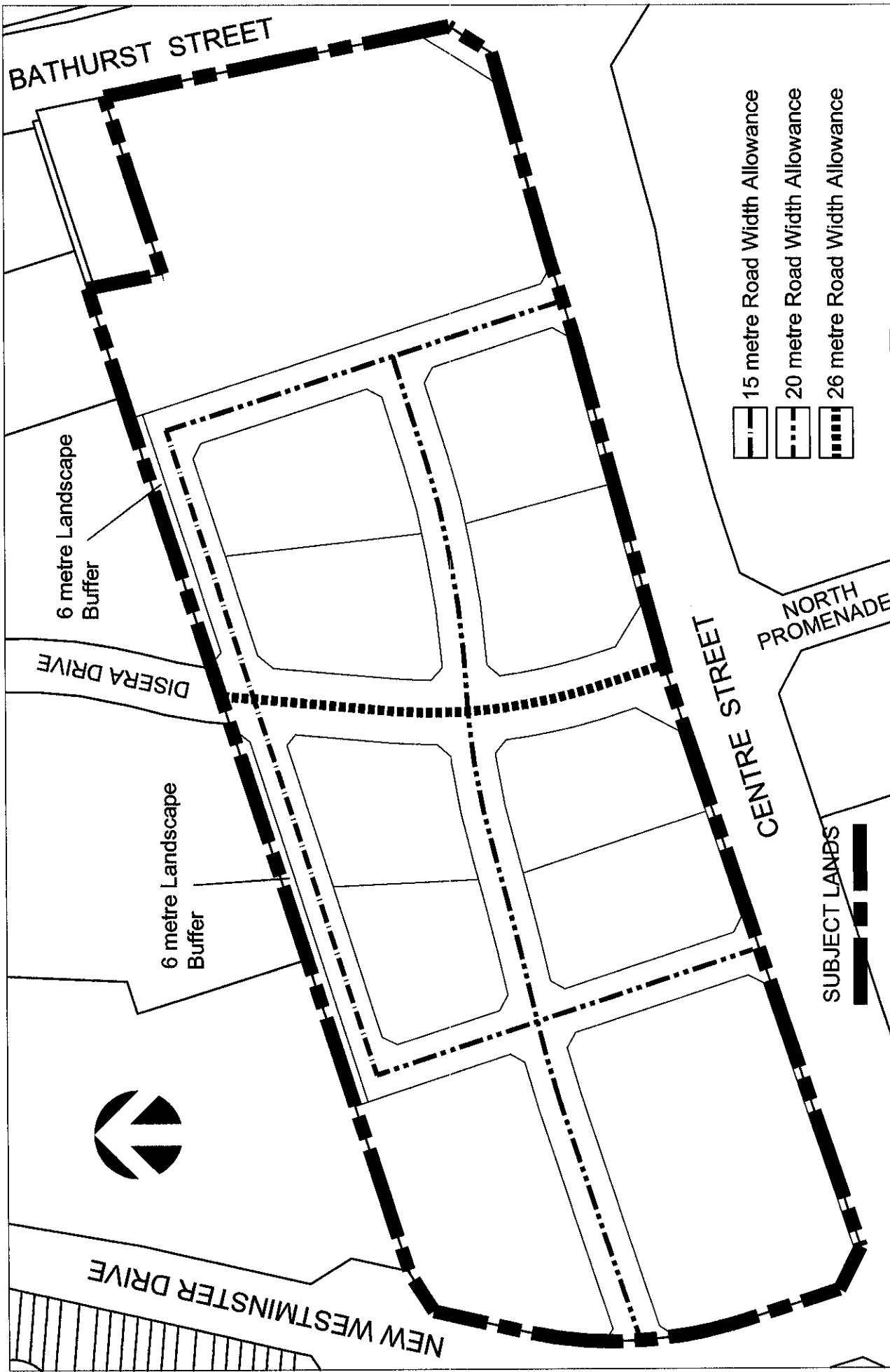
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Schedule 'B1'
Land Use Designations -
North of Centre Street

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Attachment 7

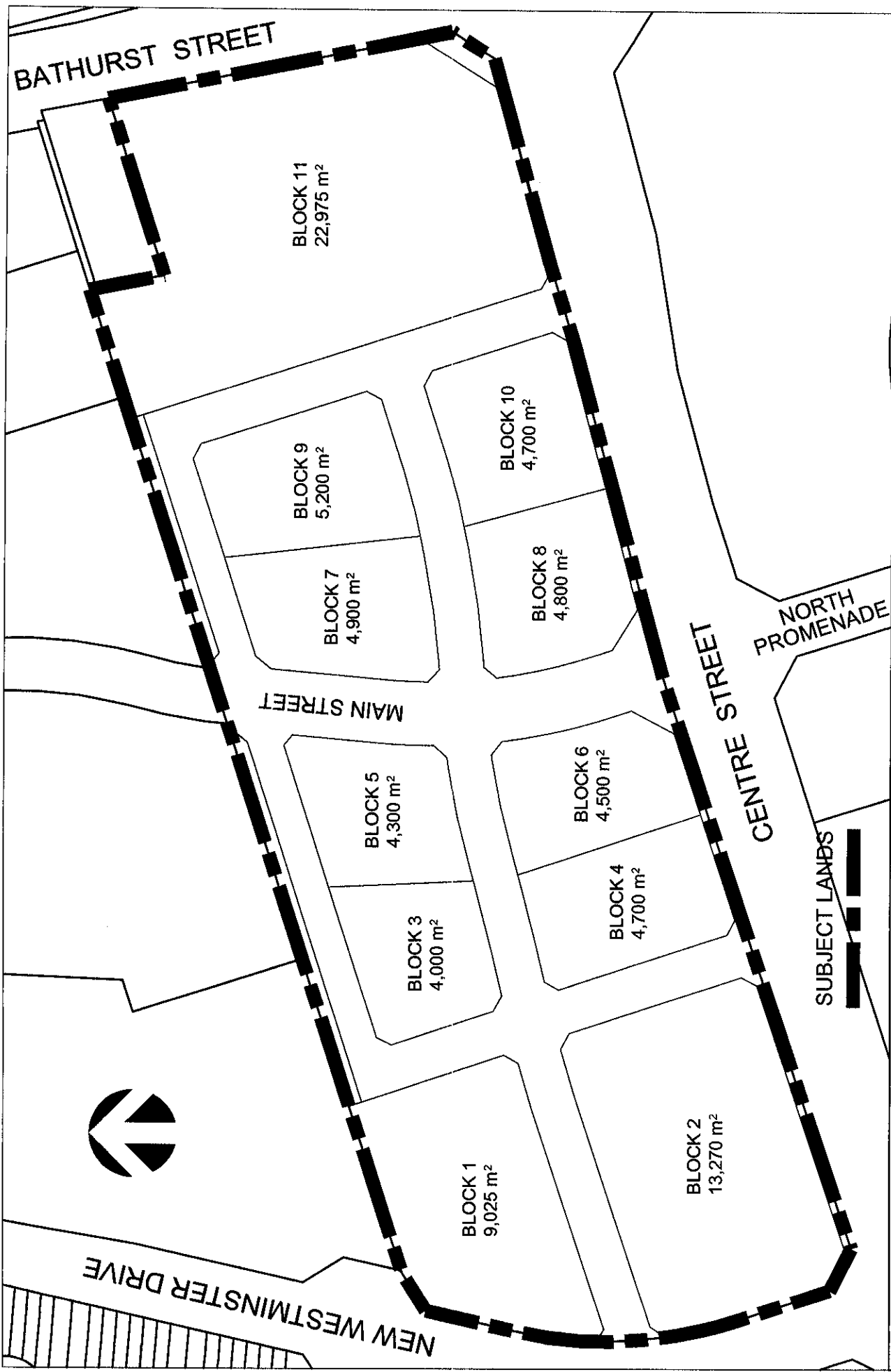
Part of Lot 6,
Concession 2
September 17, 2004
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Schedule 'C' Road Network - North of Centre Street

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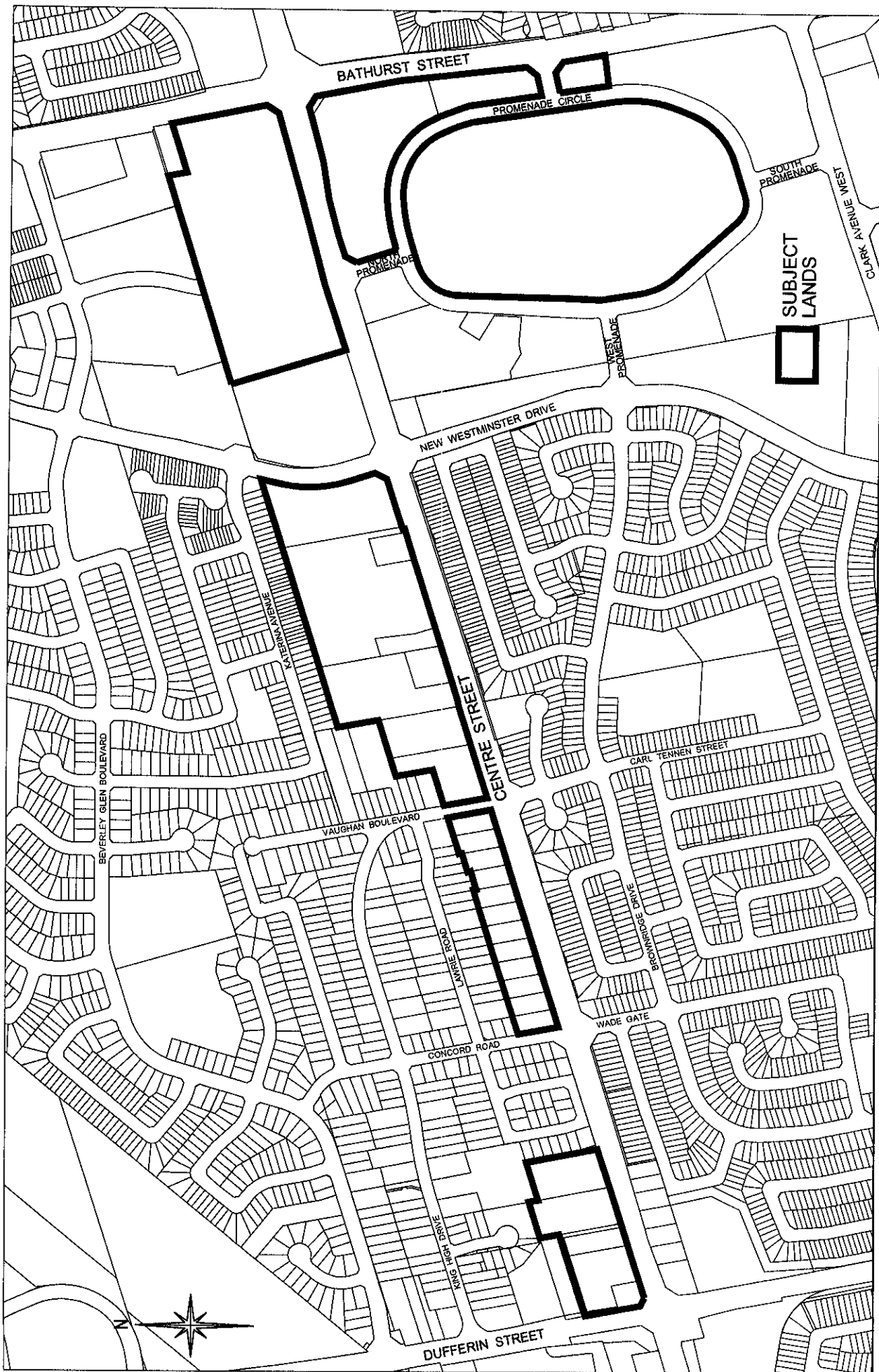
Appendix 'A'
Development Blocks -
North of Centre Street



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**Lands Subject to Interim
Control By-Law 255-2003**

Part Lots 4, 5, 6,
Concession 2

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Community Planning Department

Attachment

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