

**1.      STEELES CORRIDOR - JANE TO KEELE- SECONDARY PLAN  
         FILE NO. 15.90**

**P.2004.95**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT the Public Hearing for File 15.90 (Steeles Corridor-Jane to Keele-Secondary Plan OPA 620) BE RECEIVED, and that the issues identified by the public and Council be addressed by Staff in a report to Committee of the Whole.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to summarize the key elements of the City-initiated Secondary Plan.

**Location**

The Steeles Corridor-Jane to Keele-Secondary Plan area is bounded by Steeles Avenue on the south and the CN Rail York Subdivision on the north, and by Jane Street on the west and Keele Street on the east. The boundaries of the Plan are identified on Schedule "A" to the draft amendment, which forms Attachment 1 to this report. The subject lands have an area of approximately 43 hectares (106 acres)

**Background**

**Process Followed to Prepare the OPA**

- June 24, 2002 - Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Steeles Avenue Corridor Land Use Review – Jane Street to Keele Street.
- October 15, 2002 - Council adopted the recommendation from the Commissioner of Planning that the firm 'Urban Strategies Inc.' be retained to conduct the review. In addition to being the lead land use consultant, Urban Strategies Inc. also provided the urban design services. The Study Team was joined by Marshall Macklin Monaghan Ltd. for the transportation analysis, and urbanMetrics Inc. for real estate and market analysis.
- January – February 2003: Phase I of the Study

Phase I of the study produced an "Inventory and Assessment of the Current Situation" that included:

- Analysis of previous planning studies and existing regulatory framework
- Land use analysis
- Urban design analysis
- Base mapping/modeling
- Transportation and servicing analysis
- Market opportunities
- A review of opportunities and constraints

To assist in conducting the review, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established, including staff representation from:

- Region of York
  - City of Toronto
  - York University
  - York Region Transit
  - York Consortium (YRTP)
  - Toronto Transit Commission
  - GO Transit
  - Ministry of Transportation
  - Smart Commute Association of Black Creek
  - York Region Catholic and District School Boards
  - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
  - City of Vaughan Planning, Urban Design, Engineering, Economic and Technology Development, and Real Estate departments.
- January 2003: Individual interviews were held with many of the key TAC members.
  - January 2003: Individual interviews were held with study area landowners.
  - February 2003: The first full TAC meeting was held to present the draft Phase I Working Paper.
  - February 25, 2003: A presentation of the Phase I Working Paper was made to the Committee of the Whole Working Session.
  - February 27, 2003: a Public Information Meeting was held at the Dufferin Clark Library to present the findings of the Phase I Working Paper.
  - February 2003: Individual meetings were held with study area landowners.
  - March 2003-December 2003: Phase II of the Study
  - Based on the Phase I “Issues and Opportunities” Working Paper, the objective of Phase II was to “Develop the Vision for a New Planning Framework.” This involved preparing conceptual development and urban design options, for refinement through subsequent consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, landowners, and public.
 

To determine whether lands in the hydro corridor were available to provide all or part of the critical east-west road connection, meetings were held during the summer of 2003 with staff from the Province of Ontario and Hydro One.
  - December 2003: The draft Phase II results were presented to a TAC meeting for input.
  - January 15, 2004: The draft Phase II report was presented to a Public Information Meeting at Dufferin Clark Library and to area landowners for their input.
  - February-May, 2004: The draft consultant’s report and Official Plan Amendment were prepared.
  - June 11, 2004: Staff made an informal presentation on the study to the Spadina-York Subway Extension Committee.
  - June 15, 2004: Urban Strategies presented the study recommendations to the Committee of the Whole Working Session. On June 28, 2004 Council adopted the Committee of the Whole recommendations to:

- provide a further report addressing the comments from members of Council (provided herein);
  - receive the presentation and material from Urban Strategies Inc.
  - schedule a statutory Public Hearing in the fall subsequent to receiving input from the Technical Advisory Committee and making any necessary changes to the draft report; and,
  - have Staff consult with the landowners in the amendment area to discuss the final results of the study, and provide a summary of this consultation in the Public Hearing report (provided herein).
- June 25, 2004: The draft final report and supporting Official Plan Amendment Number 620 were presented to the TAC for comment. Comments from TAC members on the draft final report were received up to the end of July, and on the draft OPA 620 up to September 3, 2004. Staff will continue to liaise with landowners and agencies to discuss outstanding issues in preparing the final Official Plan Amendment for Council adoption. In particular, formal comments have been prepared by the City of Toronto and are expected in the very near future.
  - September 9, 2004: Notice of this statutory Public Meeting was distributed to property owners in and around the study area, to attendees at previous public meetings, and the notice was also advertised in the Vaughan Weekly.
  - September 13, 2004: The attached consultant's Final Report and draft Official Plan Amendment Number 620 were made available to the public and were posted on the City's website.

### **Existing Uses**

From west to east, the Amendment area includes the following uses:

- a vacant site that is approved for a mausoleum/crematorium
- a stormwater management pond on Steeles Avenue owned by the City of Vaughan
- the United Parcel Service (UPS) distribution facility
- York Region's vacant 5 acre site acquired for a transit terminal/commuter facility
- a vacant parcel owned by the Glen Corporation
- four single storey employment buildings
- vacant lands owned by the Steeles–Keele Investments Ltd., including a 4 storey office building under construction on the northwest corner of Keele Street and Steeles Avenue West.

On the north side of these parcels is the Hydro One transmission corridor that is owned by the Province of Ontario.

### **Official Plan**

The amendment area is currently designated as "Employment Area" under OPA 450, which was approved in 1996. It is primarily aimed at providing for industrial/employment and related service uses. The Hydro One transmission corridor forms the north border of the amendment area and is subject to the policies of the Parkway Belt West Plan.

Approved in 2001, OPA 529 designates a below grade higher order transit right of way to accommodate the extension of the Spadina subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. OPA 529 also directed that a land use study be conducted in the Steeles Avenue corridor from Jane St. to Keele St. to provide for land uses that would respond to and support the transit initiatives. This study was prepared in response to this policy.

## **Regional Official Plan**

As the upper tier planning document that provides the framework for achieving the Region's urban structure, this Secondary Plan must conform to the York Region Official Plan (ROP). The ROP currently designates this amendment area as a Regional Corridor. The ROP includes policies in Section 5.4. – “Corridors” encouraging area municipalities to comprehensively examine these areas to provide opportunities for mixed use and higher densities. OPA 620 meets these goals.

The Region is now considering amendments to the ROP (draft Amendment 43). Because of its relationship to the planned north-south transit link, the draft Regional Amendment 43 would have the effect of supporting the identification OPA 620 as one of Vaughan's 'Key Development Areas'. York Region staff has indicated that the proposed policies in OPA 620 are also consistent and supportive of the draft ROP Amendment 43.

## **Zoning**

Almost the entire area is zoned Prestige Employment Area Zone - EM1 except for three properties: the northeast corner of Jane and Steeles was zoned C1 by a 1998 OMB decision permitting two (2 and 4 storey) buildings for a crematorium and columbarium; more central to the amendment area is an exception that permits eating establishments, banks and financial institutions, with or without a drive-through, and business and professional offices; on the north edge of the amendment area, the Hydro Corridor is zoned PB1S - Parkway Belt Linear Facilities Zone.

## **Development Applications**

Following Board approval, the mausoleum/crematorium site on the northeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue was draft approved for a vacant land condominium.

Steeles–Keele Investments Ltd. (SKI) is the owner of approximately 16 hectares that covers the eastern third of this Secondary Plan. The construction of the 4-storey office building on the northwest corner of Keele and Steeles is one component of the current official plan, draft plan of subdivision, zoning, and site plan applications made on this property since September of 2001. In addition to the office on the northwest corner of Keele Street and Steeles Avenue, a high-density mixed-use development with a range of office, commercial, and residential uses is proposed.

## **Planned Transit Improvements**

This portion of Steeles Avenue has the potential to be part of a development node and transportation gateway of GTA-wide significance. Construction work on the YRTP's “Quick Start” transit program that will serve this area is now underway; Environmental Assessment work is underway by the TTC and YRTP for interim Bus Rapid Transit services through the area; and, the TTC has identified the extension of the Spadina subway to York University as a priority project, should funding become available. Work has been initiated on the Environmental Assessment for the subway extension and the Terms of Reference were approved by the Ministry of the Environment on September 13, 2004. This Secondary Plan supports and takes advantage of these transit initiatives and reflects the adjacency of a rapidly growing York University.

## **Analysis and Options**

In Phase I, the Study Team conducted background research and analysis on the following issues:

- Land use context
- Market Perspective
- Transit and Roads

Based upon the background analysis and after consulting with the TAC, Council, community, and landowners, the following four (4) land use scenarios were generated:

Scenario 1	➤ Low density Office/Commercial throughout
Scenario 2	➤ Low density Office/Commercial at Keele Street ➤ High to medium density residential transitioning away from the transit station
Scenario 3	➤ Low density Office/Commercial at Keele Street ➤ High to medium density Office/Commercial transitioning east of transit station ➤ High to medium density residential transitioning west of the transit station
Scenario 4	➤ Low density Office/Commercial at Keele Street ➤ High density Office/Commercial at the transit station ➤ High to medium density residential transitioning east and west of the transit station

Based on technical analysis from the planning, urban design, transportation and market consultants, agency comments and public/landowner input, the preferred option was developed and presented to the Committee of the Whole Working Session on June 15, 2004.

The preferred option was a variation of Scenario 4, and the key elements that form the draft OPA 620 (Schedule 1 is shown as Attachment 1) include:

**i) Transit-supportive Densities**

The basis of the Secondary Plan established in OPA 529 is to provide the opportunity for densities that will take advantage of the higher order transit and supply the necessary ridership support. To achieve this, the Plan includes three levels of land use intensity that are related to their proximity to the transit station:

- **“Transit Core”**
  - within 250 metres of the transit station
  - Floor Space Index (FSI) target of 3.0
- **“Transit Transition”**
  - from 250 metres to 500 metres of the Transit Station
  - FSI target of 1.5.
- **“Corridor”**
  - beyond 500 metres from the transit station
  - FSI target of 1.0

**Level of Target Densities:**

The Committee of the Whole Working Session of June 15, 2004 included discussion about whether the densities were high enough to support the transit facilities. The densities in the plan are consistent with what has already been achieved in other areas, and with what is being provided for in other land use plans surrounding transit stations. For example, like densities have been applied in both Toronto (Downsview, Sheppard Avenue East) and Vancouver.

Secondly, the traffic capacity of the Jane/Steeles and Keele/ Steeles intersections are already constrained. The proposed level of development is dependent upon achieving the significant road network and transit improvements identified by the Plan. In addition, the level of development that may occur on the south side of Steeles in City of Toronto/York University is currently undetermined as the City of Toronto and York University will be undertaking a campus land use review that will include its Steeles Avenue frontage.

Targeting densities higher than proposed by this Plan is difficult to justify from both a land use and transportation perspective. In advance of the full transportation and road improvements, and, an understanding of the nature of the development on the south side of Steeles Avenue further increases cannot be supported.

To address the longer-term possibility for higher densities, the Plan provides for development applications to include “Development Concept and Phasing Plans” that illustrate how development could occur in later phases, and at densities beyond that permitted by this Plan. The Plan also identifies transportation-based criteria that need to be addressed before additional density is to be considered.

Full implementation of the planned road network should be a prerequisite to the consideration of any further density increases.

## ii) Transit-supportive Land Uses

The proposed OPA introduces a range of land uses that will provide the opportunity for transit riders to walk short distances between multiple activities. The range of permitted uses include:

- high density residential
- prestige office employment
- commercial uses in mixed-use development, and
- public and institutional uses.

The “Transit Core” designation provides for major office development directly on Steeles Avenue at the transit station, in conjunction with an urban square, and with high-density apartments and townhouses.

In addition to high-density residential apartments and townhouses, the “Transit Transition” designation also permits semi-detached dwellings and single use prestige office employment uses up to 0.5 FSI.

The “Corridor” designation has the same range of permitted uses at a lower scale than the “Transit Transition”, and as a transition to the employment uses to the east and south does not permit residential uses to locate on the block at the immediate corner of Keele and Steeles.

Commercial uses are permitted in all areas of the plan on the ground floor of mixed-use developments.

### **Townhouse ‘Blocks’:**

The Committee of the Whole in June discussed concerns about the potentially large expanses of townhouses in the lands adjacent to the hydro corridor. The building blocks illustrated in the consultant’s report were to conceptually identify the potential scale of a variety of uses other than just residential townhouses. To support the premise of transit-supportive mixed-use areas, these blocks also have the opportunity to be other uses such as prestige office employment and public and institutional uses. To address the potential that the blocks take on a townhouse use, policies in the plan have been included to require a range and mix of sizes and types. In addition, semi-detached housing forms have been added to the plan so to provide a greater variety of grade-related attached built forms.

The ability to provide noise sensitive residential/townhouse uses in the lands adjacent to the hydro corridor may be restricted as a result of further studies to address the issue of noise from the CN rail property to the north. Noise studies are required by the OPA to more specifically define the limits of the CN rail yard operations and as a result may limit the amount of residential/townhouse development in this portion of the plan. In this case, other uses such as parking structures, prestige office employment uses, and hotels may instead be provided. The noise studies and resulting development concept plans and plans of subdivision will be used to further refine these issues.

**Public and Institutional Uses:**

To support the potential residents and employees in the area, and to provide for an even greater range of land uses, Public and Institutional uses (schools, parks, libraries, etc.) are permitted throughout the amendment area. As the amount and rate of population and employment growth is uncertain in an area of infill and redevelopment, policies have been put in place to assist with establishing and securing the amount, character, and timing of community services. This would also permit spin-off educational activities from York University.

**Existing Uses:**

Given that the ultimate target densities provided in the plan may take time to achieve, policies are included in the plan that permit those existing uses to continue. As well, policies allow those existing uses to have extensions or expansions subject to a number of tests (e.g. protection of road network).

**Community Improvement Plan:**

Until recently, the amendment area has been viewed primarily as a place for low-density employment uses. To help make a shift towards the transit-based vision embodied by this plan, it may be necessary for the City to take a more proactive and supportive role towards transit-supportive development densities. The plan includes policies to allow the City to designate all or part of the amendment area as a Community Improvement Area under Section 28 of the Planning Act. This gives the City an opportunity to develop and provide a financial and/or land use incentive package (e.g. including development charges, parking requirements, parkland dedication, municipal fees, etc.) to development that helps to fulfill the new transit-supportive vision.

**iii) Transportation**

The Transportation Assessment conducted by Marshall Macklin Monaghan (Appendix B of Attachment 2) concluded that: “recognizing the road capacity constraints in the area and transit infrastructure which is proposed, this [Secondary Plan] presents an unprecedented opportunity to co-ordinate development in a manner which capitalizes on the transit investments.”

The study indicates that in addition to the substantial transit improvements, additional road network capacity is also needed. The two key elements of the improved road structure are:

- an east-west road running continuously from Jane Street to Keele Street utilizing as much of the Hydro One Corridor as possible;
- the north-south roadways linking the east-west road to Steeles Avenue.

In addition, OPA 620 supports the continued protection of the subway corridor to the Vaughan Corporate Centre under OPA 529.

**iv) Urban Design**

Urban design policies are proposed that will create buildings and spaces to match the very transit- and pedestrian-oriented characteristics of the permitted uses and densities. The proposed

OPA 620 includes policies regarding: built form, building heights, setbacks, street wall, building massing, pedestrian realm, and road allowance and streetscaping. The key elements of the urban design policies include: a 'build-to' line to provide building fronts on Steeles Avenue and the north-south local roads; setbacks that support the street edge, as well as enhanced streetscapes on Steeles Avenue and the north-south local roads.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

This report and the draft OPA will serve to implement priorities previously set by Council in Vaughan Vision 2007. The following sections of Vaughan Vision are applicable:

#### **Section 3 (Transportation and Transit Infrastructure):**

- 3.1.1. the TTC Spadina subway extension project to Vaughan
- 3.2. solutions to traffic gridlock
  - 3.2.1. the Region of York and other agencies to ensure higher order transit
  - 3.2.2. land use designation and urban form to support transit usage
  - 3.2.3. growth that does not outpace the road network
  - 3.2.4. regional and provincial initiatives on transportation infrastructure
  - 3.2.5. bicycle and pedestrian networks

By providing land use support for the high order transit to Steeles Avenue, the City of Vaughan is also supporting the ultimate extension of the subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre (Section 4.1.).

The necessary resources were allocated and approved by Council upon adoption of this project's initial terms of reference.

### **Conclusion**

The Steeles Avenue Corridor Land Use Review – Jane to Keele Street – provides Vaughan with perhaps the best near term opportunity to implement land use policies that will support the introduction of high order transit.

Extensive consultation with members of the Technical Advisory Committee, landowners, and the public has resulted in a land use vision and plan that can guide development in the area for many years to come.

OPA 620 establishes a policy framework that:

- introduces a range of new land uses;
- provides for increased densities;
- guides the delivery of the necessary infrastructure and community services; and
- sets out clear rules for the design of development.

The issues identified above, among others, will be considered in the technical review of the proposed amendment. Combined with the comments from the public and Council expressed at this Public Hearing, these issues will be addressed in a comprehensive report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

### **Attachments**

1. Draft Official Plan Amendment 620 (Schedule A)
2. Draft Official Plan Amendment 620 (COUNCILLORS ONLY)
3. Steeles Corridor - Jane to Keele - Secondary Plan Final Report (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

**Report prepared by:**

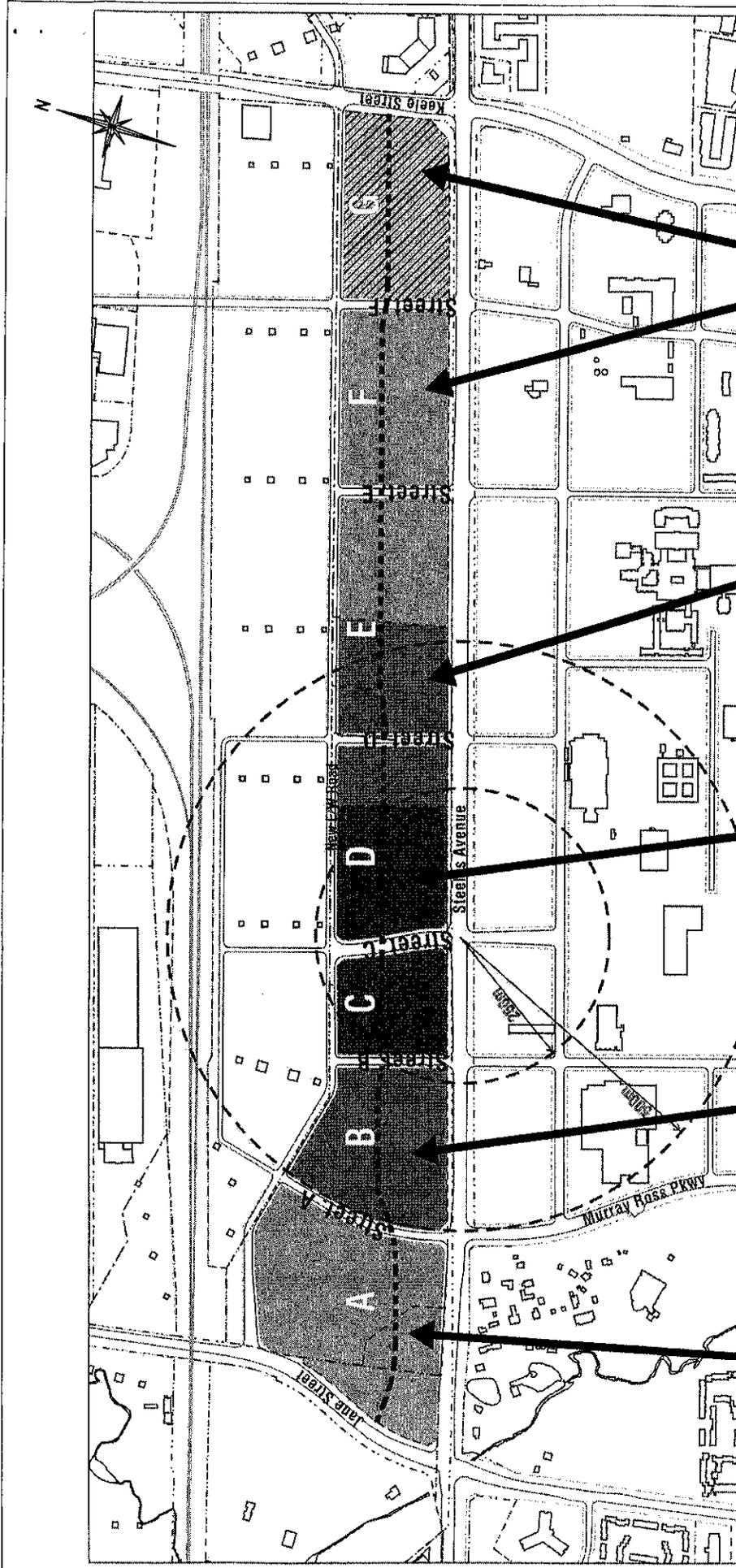
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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Planning

WAYNE McEACHERN  
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/CM



Corridor	Transit Transition	Transit Core	Transit Transition	Corridor
1.0 FSI	1.5 FSI	3.0 FSI	1.5 FSI	1.0 FSI

# Steeles Corridor Jane to Keele Secondary Plan

SCHEDULE A - OPA 620

Part Lot 1,  
Concession 4



Community Planning Department

# Attachment 1

Not to Scale  
October 4, 2004