

**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**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That the final IBI Thornhill Centre Street Study Report BE APPROVED as the basis of the policy framework for the proposed Thornhill Centre Street Official Plans;
2. That Official Plan Amendments #671 and #672, as attached to this report, BE ADOPTED.

Purpose

This report addresses concerns raised at the Public Hearing of September 20, 2004, respecting the Draft Official Plan Amendments #671 and #672, and presents modified Official Plan Amendments for Council consideration and approval.

Location

The lands subject to OPA #671 and #672 include properties on both sides of Centre Street from Bathurst Street on the east to Highway 7 on the west, as well as some property north and south of Centre Street fronting onto Dufferin Street – see Centre Street Study Area (Attachment #1).

Background

Thornhill Centre Street Study

On June 23, 2003, Council directed Staff to 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(Attachment 2) for a period of one year to provide time to complete the Study. On August 25, 2003, Council approved the Study Terms of Reference. Subsequently, 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.

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.

On September 20, 2004, a Public Hearing was held. The final IBI Thornhill Centre Street Study and draft OPA's #671 and #672 were received by Thornhill residents at the meeting. On September 27, 2004, Council received the Thornhill Centre Street Study, and draft Official Plan Amendments OPA's #671 and #672. Staff were directed to address the issues raised at the Public Hearing in a subsequent report to Committee of the Whole. The identified issues, and Staff's response to each, are summarized later in this report, and are included in their entirety as Attachment #3 to this report.

Land Use Status

Official Plan/Zoning

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

The balance of the lands are currently 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.

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 have been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by several parties owning lands within the Centre Street 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 anticipated Council's consideration of amendments to the Official Plan by October 2004, York Region review of such amendments by December 2004, and the scheduled OMB hearing beginning on February 28, 2005. However, due to consideration of a proposal from one of the appellants, the October 18/04 consideration of the OPA's by Vaughan Council has been delayed. The parties to the OMB hearing will review the schedule leading to the hearing in a conference call on Dec. 16/04.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

OPA #671 (Thornhill Town Centre)

Draft OPA #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" south of Centre Street).

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. This is anticipated to be the site for a future WalMart store.

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. The specific parkland area and locational requirements within the lands north of Centre Street should be addressed in detail in a planning exercise prior to further planning approvals.

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 25,000 – 30,000 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 1,200 to 1,800 persons. This new resident population will still leave the Thornhill Community 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. Development is required to proceed via approval of draft plans of subdivision which will ensure that the City will secure ownership of the road network as development proceeds.

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 Thornhill 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. 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 plays the key role in providing access to the lands north of Centre Street. This phasing policy ensures that development of the priority area along "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 #671 requires that provision 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 level of 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's #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.

Summary of Modifications Introduced to OPA #671

Staff have introduced a number of modifications to OPA #671 and #672, to address issues identified at the Public Hearing on September 20, 2004, and to improve the clarity of the documents. The complete list of comments and Staff responses are included on Attachment 3.

Regarding OPA #671, the following modifications have been made and are reflected in the revised document:

1. In Part 2, Section 3.1.6 has been modified by clarifying the requirement for a Comprehensive Study if redevelopment within the 'Special Policy Area' of the Town Centre South is proposed, as follows:

- “b) Any development requiring a zoning by-law amendment, and which entails a change to the form or function of the existing mall (ie. change in design of building, change to internal road structure, etc.) or any development requiring an Official Plan Amendment, shall be developed in accordance with a Comprehensive Development Plan (or Plans) including a transportation component and a comprehensive design scheme (or schemes), which is to be adopted by Council prior to any redevelopment proceeding.”
2. In Part 1, Sections 2.3 and 3.0, Staff have deleted reference to the 2001 Canada Census population and housing figures for the Town Centre as they appear to be inaccurate, based on Staff review of existing development approvals prior to the Census date.
 3. In Part 1, Section 4.1, Staff have revised the Town Centre’s estimated housing stock and population resulting from the development proposed by OPA #671 and the Liberty application, together with other existing and approved development. A Town Centre population of 9,800 residents, and a total housing stock of 4,900 units are forecast, when and if permitted maximum densities are eventually achieved. OPA #210 estimates the Town Centre’s maximum housing stock at 3,300 units, and the resident population at 7,260. Such development would bring the Thornhill community’s total population to approximately 68,000 as originally estimated in OPA #210.
 4. In Part 2, Section 3.1.1, Staff have introduced a definition of residential density to clarify the basis on which permitted density will be calculated, as follows:

“The area included in the calculation of residential density shall include the land for the buildings, private roads and driveways, parking areas and landscaping, and amenity areas related to the specific development, but shall exclude all other lands.”
 5. In Part 2, Section 3.1.1, to clarify references to mixed use development (which appear in a number of places throughout the document), Staff have introduced a definition for “mixed-use”, which is defined as:

“retail uses located at-grade, with residential or commercial uses located above-grade in the same building ie. above the retail uses”.
 6. In Part 2, Sections 3.1.2, 3.1.3, and 3.1.4 (and elsewhere in the document), Staff have clarified the language in the text, consistent with the recommendations of the IBI Study, to prohibit retail uses in buildings having ground floor area of more than 2500 square metres, with the sole exception of one building in the Mixed Use 3 designation.
 7. In Part 2, Section 3.1.4 (and elsewhere in the document), Staff have modified a policy within the Mixed Use 3 designation, as follows:

“2. b), i) Individual retail uses in buildings with a ground floor area in excess of 2,500 sq.m are prohibited, with the exception of a maximum of one retail use in a free-standing building with a maximum gross floor area of 12,635 sq.m, provided the ground floor area of the building does not exceed 50% of the permitted maximum gross floor area of the building”

This modification is introduced in order to ensure that the required parking for the subject building can be accommodated on-site rather than off-site. Establishing a multi-storey building on this site will also make more efficient use of the property, and enable neighbouring properties to become sites for development rather than parking lots.

8. In Part 2, Section 3.1.5, respecting the High Density Residential designation, Staff have introduced a limitation on local convenience commercial centers within such developments as follows:

“Such uses shall be limited in size to a maximum of 30% of the ground floor area of the building.”

Staff support the policy framework articulated in OPA #671 with the modifications noted above.

However, it is noted that the proponent (FirstPro Shopping Centres) of a major development application on most of the property subject to OPA #671 north of Centre Street expressed a number of concerns with respect to the draft document. Staff have subsequently engaged in discussions with the proponent to address these concerns which are ongoing.

OPA #672 (Centre Street Spine)

Official Plan Amendment #672 amends OPA's #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 “Special Policy Area”.
- Redesignates a portion of the Amendment Area as “Mixed Use Residential/Office” (MURO), as described in Part 2 of OPA #672, and as shown on Attachment #9;
- Deletes two “Service Station” designations and replaces them with “General Commercial” designations; 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;
- 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 encouraging comprehensive development of the entire quadrant; 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 excess 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. A provision has also been added that any site-specific rezoning application must be based on a Council-approved Comprehensive Plan for the entire northwest quadrant. The Comprehensive Plan should address the location of local roads, street access points, pedestrian connections, buildings, urban design policies, etc.

Since OPA #450 permits "Service Nodes" at the intersections of arterial roads, 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 Council approved Comprehensive Plan for the entire northwest quadrant as described above. The comprehensive plan will ensure the "Service Node" is complementary to and appropriately integrated with the priority uses and that development 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 has been redesignated to "General Commercial". 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. 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, and to ensure that there will be no conflict with surrounding low density residential, this Amendment applies a "Special Policy Area" designation. The "Special Policy Area" designation requires that any proposal for development 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 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 Residential/Office". This designation permits residential, office, and mixed-use residential/office buildings of up to two-storeys in height with an additional half-storey achievable in the roof (Note: this reflects a reduction from the 3-storeys proposed in the earlier draft of OPA #672). 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. The two-kilometre length of Centre Street between Dufferin Street and Bathurst Street is already well served by two existing service stations, and a third is located at the northwest corner of Highway #7 and North Rivermede Road. Therefore, this Amendment deletes the Service Station designations from the property at 1102 Centre Street and the vacant site at the northeast corner of Centre and Dufferin Streets (1500 Centre Street) and replaces them with "General Commercial". 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 York Region Official Plan and Provincial Policy Statement by promoting compact development, and increasing residential and employment growth, supporting public transit service.

Summary of Modifications Introduced to OPA #672

Staff have introduced a number of modifications to OPA #671 and #672, to address issues identified at the Public Hearing on September 20, 2004, and to improve the clarity of the documents. The complete list of comments and Staff responses are included on Attachment #3.

Regarding OPA #672, the following modifications have been made and are reflected in the revised document:

1. Part 1, Section 3.3 has been modified to recognize the appropriateness of broadening the definitions, and the range of permitted retail and service commercial uses via an implementing bylaw.
2. Part 2, has been modified by the addition of subsection 6 to recognize the importance of maintaining full turns access to existing commercial centers on the north side of Centre Street.
3. Part 2, Section 4, Subsection 2.2.3.8 has been modified by reducing the permitted height of buildings in the Mixed Use Residential/Office designation from 3-storeys to 2-storeys, with an additional half-storey located in the roof, in keeping with the residential character of adjacent properties.
4. Part 2, Section 3, Subsection 2.2.6 has been modified to require all proposals for development to submit a comprehensive planning analysis and supporting documentation, prior to any redesignation of the lands in the Special Policy Area.
5. Part 2, Section 4.g) has been modified to require that any residential development application within the Mixed Use Residential/Office designation be required to proceed via a site-specific zoning amendment in conjunction with site plan approval to address operational issues such as parking, visitor parking, amenity space, loading and service areas.
6. Schedule A has been modified to delete the Service Station designation at the northeast corner of Centre Street and Dufferin Street, and replace it with a General Commercial designation.
7. Part 2, Section 8.b) has been modified to require that any Service Node planned for the northwest quadrant of Dufferin Street and Centre Street must be integrated within a comprehensive site plan to ensure appropriate planning, and must complement and support the priority Prestige Office designation.

Implementing Zoning By-laws

OPA #671

To implement OPA #671, a draft zoning bylaw has been prepared by staff, for Council's consideration at the Public Hearing scheduled on November 29, 2004. The lands shown on Schedule "B1, are proposed to be rezoned in accordance with OPA #671. Most of the lands subject to OPA #671 and located north of Centre Street are currently vacant and zoned C2 General Commercial, subject to Exceptions 9(1132A), and 9(1132B). The proposed rezoning will permit mixed-use and residential development, and thereby implement the Official Plan policies of OPA #671.

The new zoning bylaw excludes the lands on the northeast corner of Centre Street and New Westminster Drive, which have already received their Official Plan, zoning and site plan

approvals. This property is being developed as a seniors housing project, and therefore is not subject to the proposed zoning bylaw at tonight's public hearing.

Staff have drafted the zoning by-law for the Town Centre North lands to ensure the policies of the new Official Plan will be followed as development proceeds. Once a site development application is prepared for these lands, the zoning by-law may be refined to include any necessary changes resulting from the site development application process. The final version of the zoning bylaw and the approved site plan can then receive final approval together.

OPA #672

Respecting the feasibility of a site-specific by-law for the Spine and Western Gateway portion of the Study Area (OPA #672), 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 amendment. 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.

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 concerns raised by area residents, stakeholders, and Council members, have been considered by Staff and addressed in this report. Discussions are still continuing between the major landowner and staff to try to resolve outstanding concerns. The Official Plan documents have been modified accordingly where changes were considered appropriate and the final OPA's are included as Attachments #11 and #12 to this report.

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

Attachments

1. Figure 1: Centre Street Study Area
2. Interim Control By-law Schedule (By-law #255-2003)
3. Summary of Public Hearing Issues and Modifications to OPA #671 & OPA #672
4. OPA #671, Schedule A: The Amendment Area
5. OPA #671, Schedule B2: Land Use (Amendment Area south of Centre Street)
6. OPA #671, Schedule B1: Land Use (Amendment Area north of Centre Street)
7. OPA #671, Schedule C: Road Network (North of Centre Street)
8. OPA #671, Appendix A: Development Blocks (North of Centre Street)
9. OPA #672, Schedule A: Land Use
10. Final IBI Thornhill Centre Street Study Report (COUNCILLORS ONLY)
11. OPA #671 (COUNCILLORS ONLY)
12. OPA #672 (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

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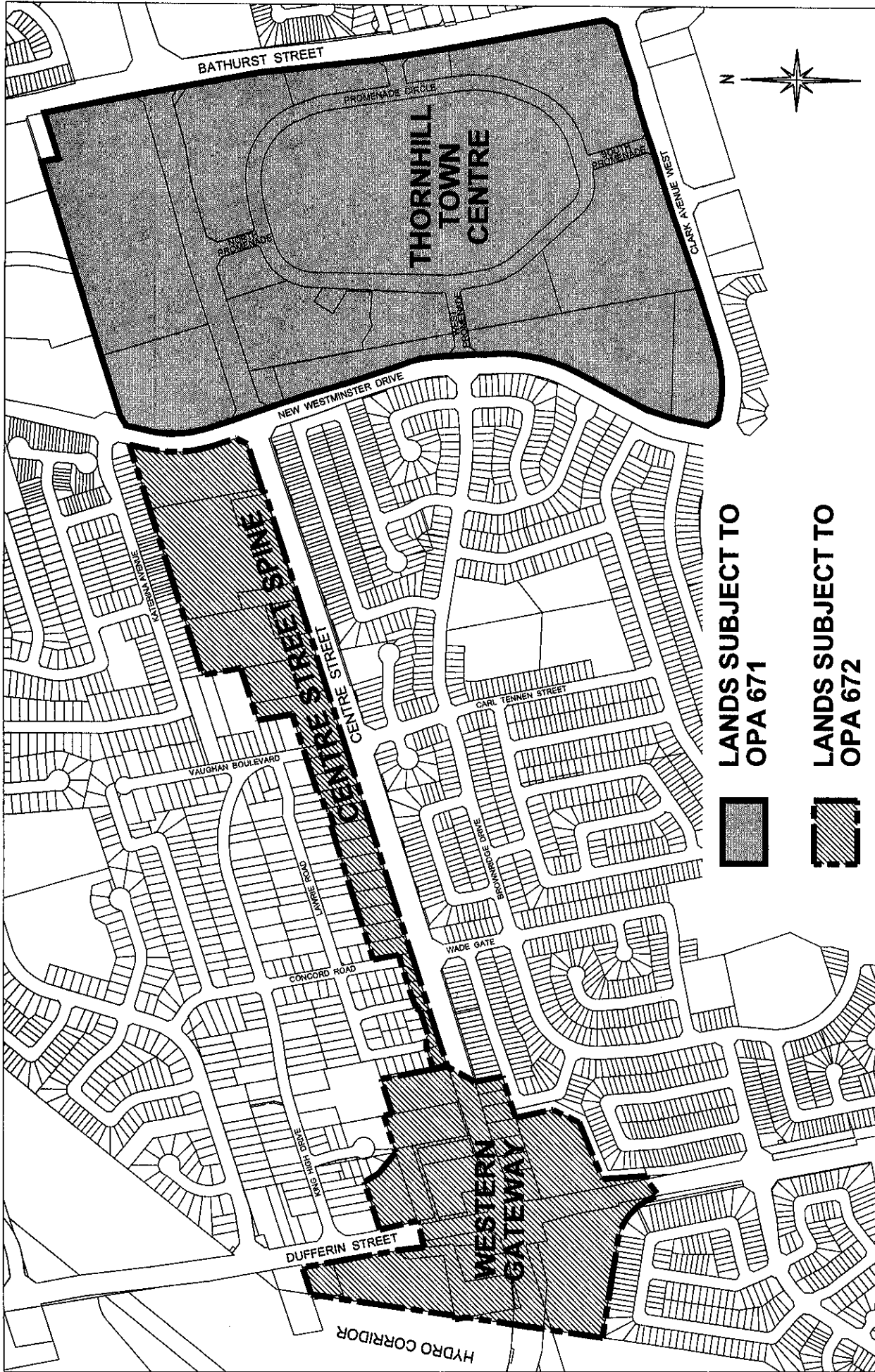
Respectfully submitted,

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LANDS SUBJECT TO
OPA 671



LANDS SUBJECT TO
OPA 672



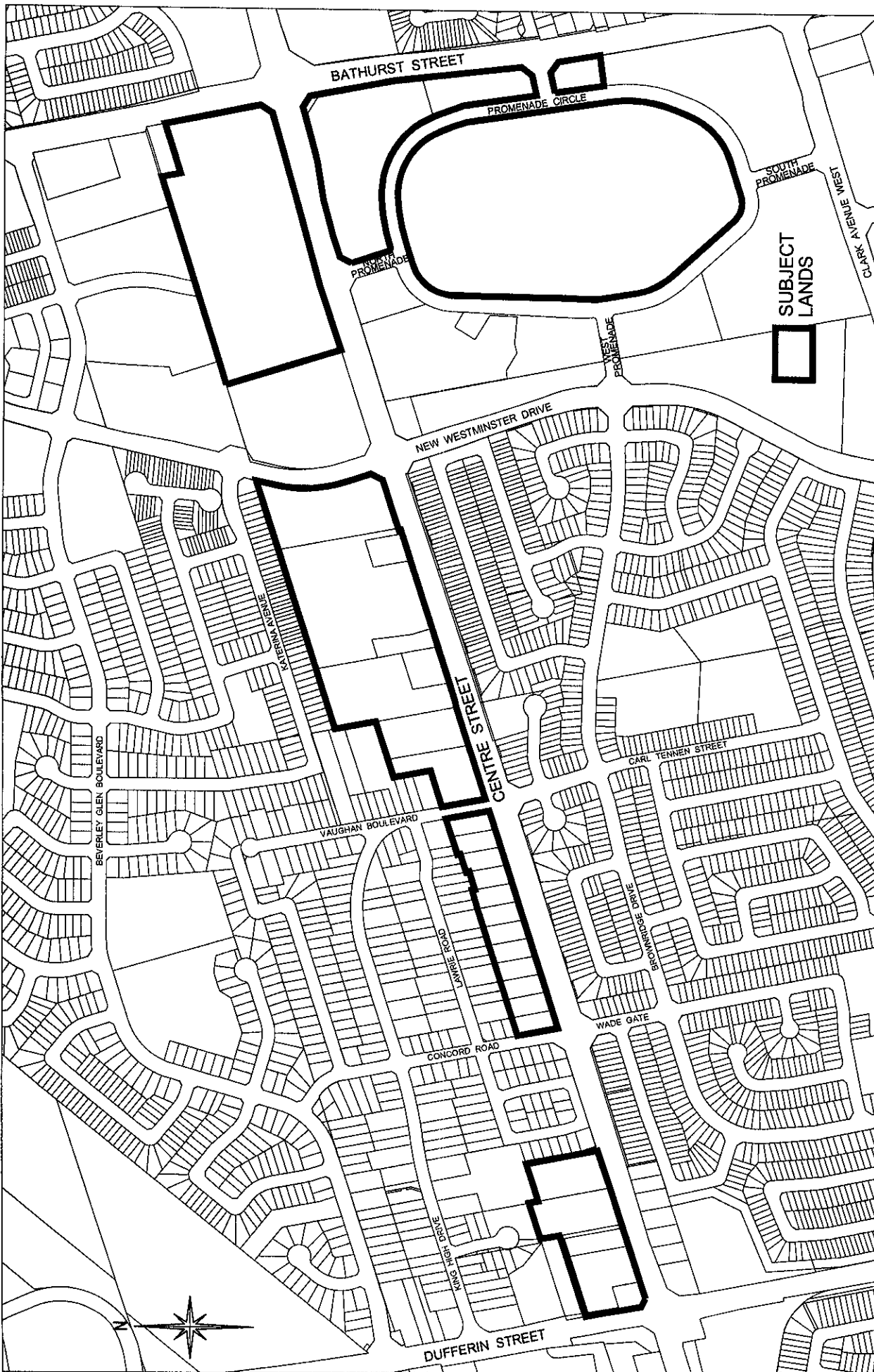
Figure 1 : Centre Street Study Area



Development Planning Department

Attachment 1

Part Lots 4, 5, 6,
Concession 2
September 17, 2004
Not to Scale



Attachment 2



Community Planning Department

Not to Scale

Lands Subject to Interim Control By-Law 255-2003

Part Lots 4, 5, 6,
Concession 2

ATTACHMENT NO. 3

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING ISSUES AND MODIFICATIONS TO OPA #671 & OPA #672

1. OPA #671

Resident Concern – Proposed Wal-Mart

- i) It was suggested by a Thornhill resident that the by-laws applicable to the First Pro/Metrontario lands do not permit the Wal-Mart store on the site, as they are tied to a site plan which does not include a large enough building envelope for a typical Wal-Mart building.

Staff Response

IBI Group reviewed the by-laws applicable to the subject lands in the preliminary stages of the Centre Street Study. IBI found that although By-law 14-2002 (approved in January 2002), was reviewed in conjunction with a site plan application DA.99.061, which included a number of smaller buildings on the subject site, the zoning by-law did not include specific references to this site plan. The number of buildings permitted on the subject site, the location of the buildings, and the specific GFA per building, were not detailed in the by-law. On this basis, IBI Group concluded the property owner has an “as of right” permission for retail uses up to the maximum gross floor area (GFA) set out in the by-law which is 13,000 sq.m on the east side, and 7,000 sq.m on the west side.

The existing site plan approval does not restrict the landowner from submitting further site plan amendment applications, and in fact the City received an application for a new layout of the site on June 25, 2003. All subsequent site plan applications are subject to the conditions outlined in the Zoning By-law for the lands, and other more specific considerations such as fencing, parking layout, design criteria, lighting, specific landscaping requirements, etc., typical of the site plan review process.

No change to OPA #671 is required.

Resident Concern – Proposed Wal-Mart

- ii) A big box commercial store is not appropriate for this area and will be detrimental to the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

Staff Response

The Thornhill Centre Street Study concluded that a certain level of commercial is already permitted as of right and that the location of a larger establishment at a major intersection across from the Regional Centre (Promenade Mall), could be accommodated, provided appropriate design policies could be introduced. With respect to traffic, the study concluded that the impact of the larger retail store would not be significantly different in comparison with locating several smaller retail establishments at that location with similar retail GFA.

No change to OPA #671 is required.

Stakeholder Concern – Town Centre South "Special Policy Area"

- iii) A letter was received from the Planning Consultant for the Promenade Shopping Centre expressing their concerns with the requirement in OPA #671 to undertake a Comprehensive Study if any major redevelopment was proposed for the Town Centre South (designated "Special Policy Area"). The concern was the generality of the term "major redevelopment". It was unclear whether an application for a change to the mall that would be in keeping with the Regional Mall format as it exists today, might imply a requirement to undertake this study.

Staff Response

Staff met with the proponent and it was agreed that the language within the OPA #671 document (Section 3.1.6) would be modified to a more specific statement respecting the triggers which would necessitate the Comprehensive Study. This requirement has been modified to read:

"Any development requiring a zoning by-law amendment, and which entails a change to the form or function of the existing mall (ie. change in design of building, change to internal road structure, etc.) or any development requiring an Official Plan Amendment; shall be developed in accordance with a Comprehensive Development Plan (or plans) including a transportation component and a comprehensive design scheme (or schemes), which is to be adopted by Council prior to any redevelopment proceeding."

Accordingly, OPA #671 has been modified.

Resident Concern – Bathurst Street Widening

- iv) The widening of Bathurst Street at Centre should take place in the next five years rather than in the next ten-year term as planned by the Region.

Staff Response

The above suggestion is recognized in the Study Report, Section 7.3, Transportation Recommendations. It should also be noted that the recommendation has been included in OPA #671- Part 2, Transportation Improvements 3.5.6, as follows:

"Bathurst Street to be widened from four lanes to six lanes from Highway #407 in the 2011 to 2021 time period, or sooner if warranted based on monitoring of local traffic conditions."

Therefore, no action is required.

Stakeholder Concern

- v) The legal counsel for the landowner at the northwest corner of Bathurst and Centre expressed concerns with urban design policies, phasing policies, "Mixed Use 1" policies and the road pattern contained in OPA #671. He stated that these policies do not coincide with the objectives of the landowner to develop service commercial on his lands and further, that the policies are impractical.

Staff Response

Staff have met with the landowner and his representatives to understand and try to reach agreement on the many differences between OPA #671 and the landowner's development proposal. As no agreement has been reached, no change to OPA #671 is supported by Staff.

2. OPA #672

Stakeholder Concern – Broaden Permitted Commercial Uses

- vi) Add the provisions of Section 7.1.2 (1) of the Centre Street Study to OPA #672 for the Centre Street Spine which states as follows:

"It is recommended that favourable consideration should be given to broadening the permitted retail and service commercial uses within an implementing Zoning By-law and definitions to allow a greater range of commercial uses, which reflect evolving consumer needs without imposing negative impacts on neighbouring residential areas."

Staff Response

After further review of the IBI Final Study Report, Staff agree that Clause a) above should be included in Section 3.3 of OPA #672 "Recommendations of the Study."

Accordingly OPA #672 has been modified.

Stakeholder Concern – Full Movement Access between Vaughan Blvd. and New Westminister Drive

- vii) "Add a policy to OPA #672 which recognizes the importance of maintaining full movement access to the existing commercial centers on the north side of Centre Street between Vaughan Boulevard and New Westminister Drive, and further that the Region of York and YRTP planners be requested to reflect this in the planning for any transit facilities in the Centre Street corridor between Bathurst Street and Dufferin Street."

Staff Response

Staff have reviewed the Transportation Report in consultation with members of the Consulting team and concluded that it is appropriate to include a further amendment to OPA #210. The following paragraph has been added as Section 2.3.6.F in OPA #672 (Part 2, 6.):

"That the Region of York recognize the importance of maintaining full movement access to the existing commercial centres on the north side of Centre Street between Vaughan Boulevard and New Westminister Drive, and reflect this in the planning for any transit facilities in the Centre Street corridor between Bathurst and Dufferin Streets."

Accordingly, OPA #672 has been modified.

It should also be noted that the existing intersections at Vaughan Boulevard and New Westminister Drive will provide signal-protected "U"- turns as part of the Rapid Transitway Plan, should the Transitway proceed on a centre median route.

Resident Concern – Height Maximum for MURO Designation

- viii) That staff be directed to review and report back on amending the phrase "a maximum of 3 storeys in height" under Section 3, Subsection 2.2.3.8 Mixed Use 1 (MURO) in OPA #672 to "a maximum of 2-storeys in height" and further provide a report on the height maximums for 2-storey developments.

Staff Response

After conducting a site visit and reviewing the zoning provisions for the residential lots on Lawrie Road (backing onto the MURO designated Lands), Staff consider the proposed height maximum of 11m, to be appropriate, but are proposing that the maximum height be limited to 2½-storeys and that the design of the buildings be residential in nature.

The subject area is in transition. A number of recently built homes on Lawrie Rd. are the maximum height permitted by Zoning By-law 1-88 of 11m, and significantly larger in mass than the existing homes on the street. Also, the lots on the north side of Centre Street designated MURO, have an average depth of 65 m. The substantial depth of these lots, coupled with the urban design policy to site buildings close to Centre Street, offer further assurance that the height maximum of 11m will not negatively impact the adjacent residential uses. However, to permit an appropriate transition to the surrounding residential, a limit of 2½-storeys, with peaked roof is recommended. This design will blend well with the surrounding residential and retain the residential character of the subject lands.

Accordingly, OPA #672 has been modified to reflect a change in height maximum from 3-storeys to 2½-storeys, with a half storey located in the roof.

Resident Concern – Special Policy Area Designation at south quadrant of Western Gateway

- ix) That Staff be directed to review and report back on amending the first sentence in Section 3, Subsection 2.2.6 Special Policy Area in OPA #672 as follows:

The "Special Policy Area" designation requires that all proposals for development including those 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.

Staff Response

Staff concur that a comprehensive planning analysis prior to any redesignation of the lands, will be beneficial in optimizing the land use, and avoiding any negative impacts on abutting residential.

Therefore, OPA #672 has been modified to reflect the above policy.

Member of Council Concern – Zoning/Site Plan Review for Residential Applications In Mixed Use Residential/Office Designation

- x) "That staff be directed to review policies related to residential development within the Centre Street Spine given the proximity to the stable residential area to the north. Specifically, that staff develop a policy that would require any development for residential, including seniors-oriented development, to proceed by way of site-specific zoning by-law amendment in conjunction with site plan approval applications. Further, that the zoning by-law amendment and site plan approval have specific regard to operational matters, to include but not limited to parking, visitor parking, amenity space, loading and service areas."

Staff Response

Staff have included this additional provision in Part 2, Section 3 g), of OPA #672, to ensure that the noted operational concerns will be properly addressed, within the "Mixed Use Residential/Office" designation.

Accordingly, OPA #672 has been modified.

Resident Concern – Frequent Vehicle Turns on Centre Street to Commercial Plazas on north side

- xi) "That staff be directed to conduct a transportation study and bring forward a recommendation, specifically dealing with the commercial plazas to the north of Centre Street, between Vaughan Boulevard and New Westminster Drive."

Staff Response

Upon reviewing the Transportation Study, the IBI Group Consulting team has advised that Appendix E, Section 6.2- Road Network, contains a key recommendation related to the commercial plazas on this portion of the study corridor advising as follows:

"The provision of a signalized intersection on Centre Street west of New Westminster Drive to facilitate left turn movements in/out of the numerous commercial establishments, will concentrate much of the turning movement traffic at one location. This will result in less turning movements across the pedestrian corridor at other private drives. The additional signalized intersection also provides an additional crossing opportunity for pedestrians."

This recommendation addresses concerns related to frequent turns from Centre Street to the noted commercial plazas.

Therefore, no action is required as the noted concern has been addressed in the IBI Transportation Study.

Stakeholder Concern – Interim Control By-law

- xii) The Interim Control By-law should be lifted where there is no change to the proposed designation of certain sections of the OPA #672 amendment area.

Staff Response

With respect to the above suggestion, it should be noted that the urban design and parking policies apply to all lands within the OPA #672 amendment area, and therefore the Official Plan should be approved by the Region of York prior to lifting the Interim Control By-law. If the time lines for the study continue to be met, this approval could be effective at the beginning of 2005.

Therefore, no action is required at this time; provided expected time lines are met, some properties may be removed from the Interim Control By-law early in 2005.

Resident Concern – Service Station Designation at northeast corner of Centre Street and Dufferin Street

- xiii) Consideration should be given to deleting the "Service Station" designation at the northeast corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets, as the parcel is limited in size and the use is inappropriate at this important intersection.

Staff Response

Staff in consultation with the Study Consultant have reviewed the issue of whether the existing "Service Station" designation should be deleted at this particular location and have concluded that the area is already well served with existing service stations at the southeast corner of Dufferin Street and Centre Streets, and at the northwest corner of Highway #7 and North Rivermede Road. Also, given the existing commercial plaza at this prominent corner of the Western Gateway, it would be difficult to integrate a service station use in accordance with the new urban design policies of OPA #672. Therefore the "Service Station" designation has been deleted and replaced with "General Commercial".

OPA #672 is thus modified.

Stakeholder Concern – Service Node Policies

- xiv) The Consultant for the landowner at the northwest corner of Centre Street and Dufferin, expressed concern respecting the implied restrictions of the "Service Nodes" policy contained in OPA #672.

Staff Response

The policy has been reviewed to provide greater clarification and the wording of Part 2, Section 7 b) has been modified, providing that the integration of the "Service Node" should be reflected in a comprehensive site plan for the entire northwest quadrant to ensure appropriate planning of internal roadways, walkways, access points, and location of buildings. This provision does not imply that the service node uses must be integrated in the same building or lot as the priority uses.

OPA #672 has thus been modified.

Resident Concern – Vacant Lot at northeast corner of Vaughan Blvd. and Centre Street

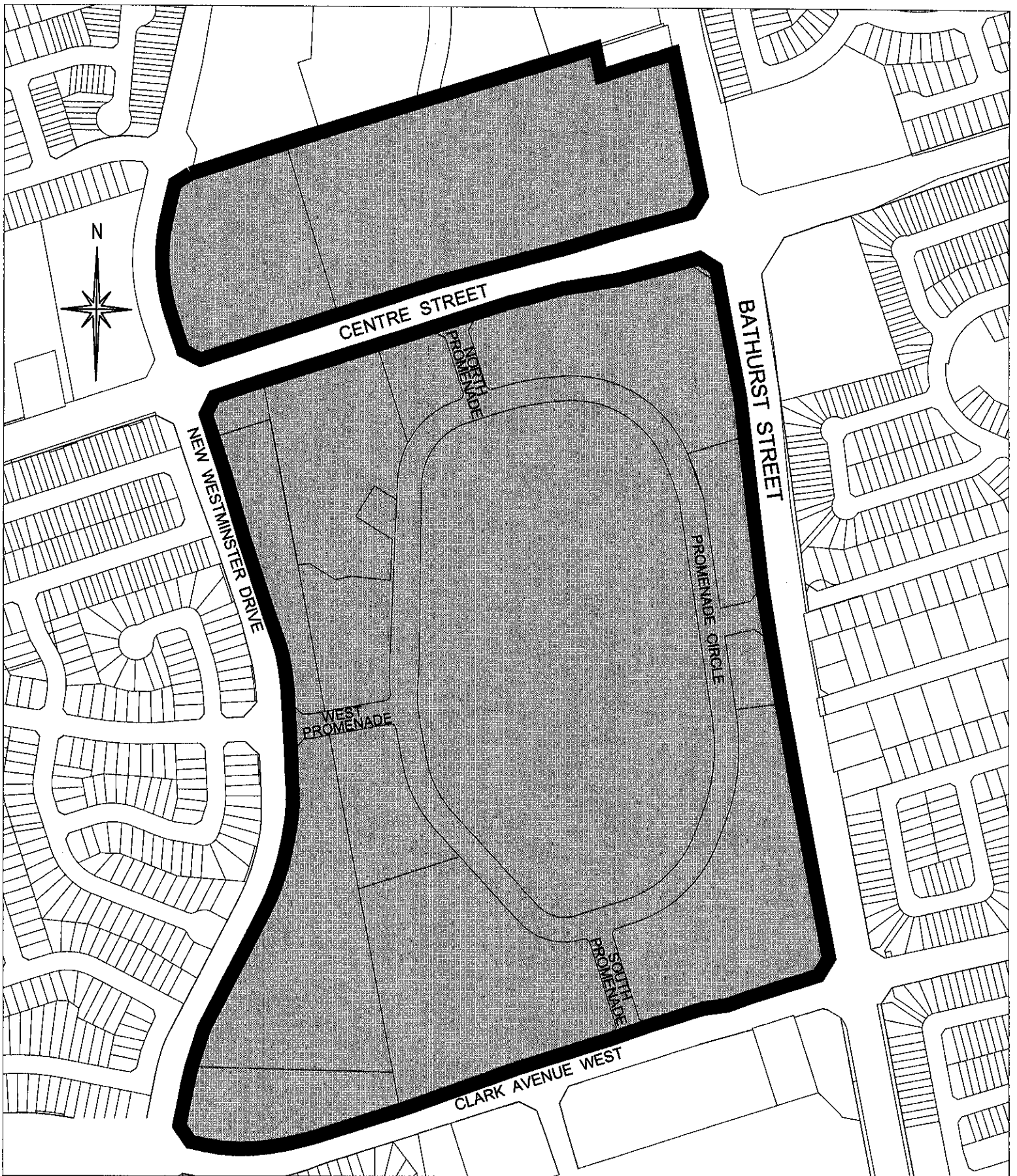
- xv) A concern was raised respecting the commercial parcel located at the vacant northeast corner of Vaughan Boulevard and Centre Street. The area resident stated that only

professional buildings sited such that no conflict would result with the residential to the north, would be appropriate for this parcel.

Staff Response

Staff reviewed the site specific zoning by-law for this parcel and learned that the site is zoned C1-Restricted Commercial, and subject to Exception 9(826). This is a "site-plan by-law" and as such provides the building envelope locations on the subject lot. The uses are also specified in the by-law, and include a number of commercial uses common to the C1-Restricted Commercial Zone. It should be noted however, that at the site plan development stage, fencing, landscaping, parking, lighting, and signage will all be considered with the intent to avoid conflict with the adjacent residential.

Therefore, no action is required at this time.



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

Part of Lots 5 & 6,
Concession 2

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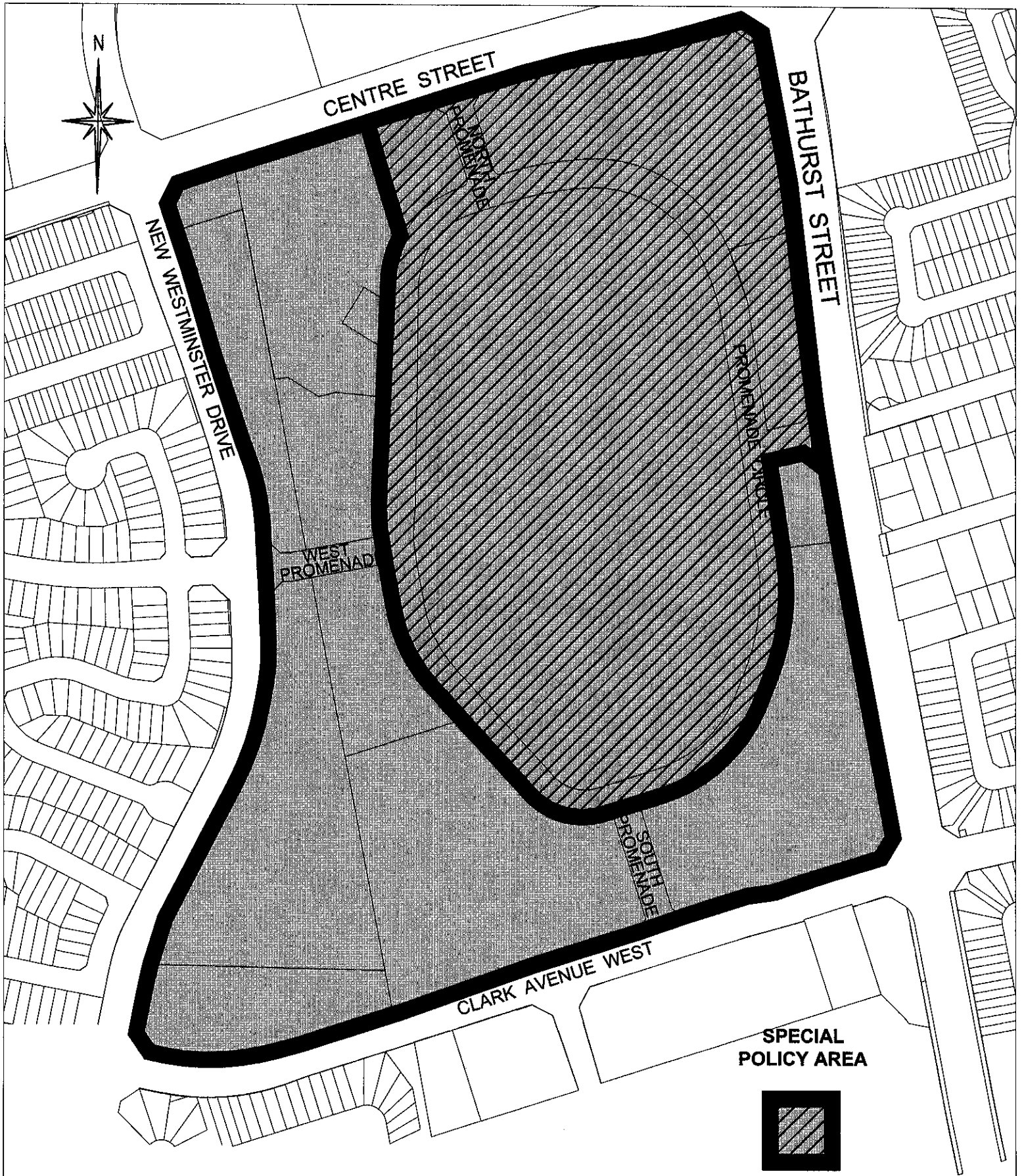
Development Planning Department

Attachment

September 17, 2004

Not to Scale

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**Schedule 'B2' :
Land Use**

Part of Lot 5,
Concession 2

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Development Planning Department

Attachment

September 17, 2004

Not to Scale

5

BATHURST STREET

MU3

MU3

MU1

MU3

MU1

MAIN STREET

MU1

MU2

MU1

MU2

CENTRE STREET

NORTH PROMENADE

SUBJECT LANDS

HDR

HDR

- MU1 MIXED USE 1
- MU2 MIXED USE 2
- MU3 MIXED USE 3
- HDR HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL



NEW WESTMINSTER DRIVE



Development Planning Department

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

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BATHURST STREET

6 metre Landscape Buffer

DISERA DRIVE




6 metre Landscape Buffer



NEW WESTMINSTER DRIVE

CENTRE STREET

NORTH PROMENADE

-  15 metre Road Width Allowance
-  20 metre Road Width Allowance
-  26 metre Road Width Allowance

SUBJECT LANDS

Schedule 'C'
Road Network -
North of Centre Street



Development Planning Department

Attachment
7

Part of Lot 6,
 Concession 2
 September 17, 2004
 Not to Scale

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BATHURST STREET

BLOCK 11
22,975 m²

BLOCK 9
5,200 m²

BLOCK 10
4,700 m²

BLOCK 8
4,800 m²

BLOCK 7
4,900 m²

NORTH
PROMENADE

MAIN STREET

BLOCK 5
4,300 m²

BLOCK 6
4,500 m²

CENTRE STREET

BLOCK 3
4,000 m²

BLOCK 4
4,700 m²

SUBJECT LANDS



BLOCK 1
9,025 m²

BLOCK 2
13,270 m²

NEW WESTMINSTER DRIVE

Attachment
8
Part of Lot 6,
Concession 2
September 17, 2004
Not to Scale

City of
Vaughan

Development Planning Department

Appendix 'A'
Development Blocks -
North of Centre Street

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