

**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 BE ADOPTED.
3. That the lands subject to OPA #671 be acknowledged as a "Key Development Area" pursuant to the requirements of York ROPA 43.

Economic Impact

These two amendments will permit a substantial amount of new development in keeping with the vision for the Thornhill Town Centre and Centre Street corridor, and generate significant new tax assessment for the City.

Purpose

This report addresses concerns raised at the Special Committee of the Whole meeting of November 29, 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, and public comments were received on 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. These issues were addressed by Staff in a report to the Special Committee of the Whole meeting on November 29, 2004. Council deferred approval of the draft OPA documents, and Staff were directed to address the issues identified by the public and Council at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

York Region Official Plan

On December 16, 2004, York Region approved an amendment to the York Region Official Plan (ROPA 43) to further strengthen its policies respecting centres and corridors. The amendment requires local municipalities to identify as "Key Development Areas" those locations which are suitable as the focus of higher order development consistent with the planning objectives of ROPA 43. Given the prime location of the Amendment Area immediately adjacent to a proposed higher order transit corridor, and its historical recognition as the prime focus of development within the Thornhill community, it is appropriate to acknowledge the Amendment Area as a "Key Development Area" pursuant to the requirements of the ROPA 43.

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 of 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 a schedule of steps was agreed leading to an OMB hearing beginning in February, 2005. Subsequent discussions with the appellants have resulted in resolution of some of the issues. Consequently, on December 16, 2004, in a telephone conference call with the Board, the scheduled hearing was adjourned, and has been rescheduled to commence on September 6, 2005.

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 #3, 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 #4, and requires future major development or redevelopment 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”, and “High Density Residential”, as shown on Attachment #5.
- Requires development to occur based on a structure of local streets to be provided within the Amendment Area north of Centre Street, as shown on Attachment #6.
- Introduces phasing policies that provide for construction of the “Main Street” and the buildings abutting it to proceed concurrent with development of a large format retail store in the initial phase of development; and,
- Articulates a planning and development policy framework.

Summary of OPA #671

Since the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 29, 2004, discussions have been held with the major landowners within the Amendment Area north of Centre Street to address their concerns. As a result of these discussions, agreement has been reached with the major landowners, and a number of modifications have been made to OPA 671, which are outlined in detail later in this report.

The most significant changes are:

- Greater flexibility has been introduced to permit a variety of retail, office and residential uses to be developed, rather than requiring them to be located in mixed-use buildings on “Main Street” and other parts of the site; this change recognizes 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, and that flexibility is needed to respond to changing market conditions.
- The proposed large format retail store with gross floor area of 12,635 sq m will be permitted in a single storey building, rather than being required to locate 50% of its GFA on the second storey of a two-storey building.
- A reduced parking standard has been introduced, in recognition of the urban character envisioned for the development and its role as a transit node.
- The proposed road network is less extensive than originally proposed; it will be dedicated to the City, when an identified development density threshold is reached on site.
- The Plan no longer proposes the creation of development blocks via the subdivision approval process, as initial development is expected to proceed primarily via site plan approval.
- Increased density and height permissions, similar to those permitted for the Liberty Development to the north, have been added for the High Density Residential designation in the north-west part of the Amendment Area.

These modifications have addressed identified landowner concerns. A greater degree of flexibility has been introduced to the document to enable development objectives to be accomplished, while retaining the Plan’s capability to achieve the City’s planning objectives in the long term.

Following is a summary description of the modified Plan for the Amendment Area, including the modifications introduced in the current draft document.

The Long Term Development Vision

The land use designations established by OPA #671 provide for a mix of uses to be developed, including retail, office and residential uses. A new, north/south 'Main Street' will bisect the Amendment Area north of Centre Street, and connect 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. All buildings fronting onto 'Main Street' will have two or more units each, to establish a wide and varied range of retail uses and thereby create a vibrant shopping environment.

Off "Main Street" to the east and west, the Plan also provides for residential, office, and retail uses, as well as mixed-use buildings, but higher residential and office densities are permitted. Lands are designated "Mixed Use 2", and permit buildings up to a maximum of fourteen storeys for high density residential, office and mixed use buildings. The maximum permitted density is 2.0 Floor Space Index (FSI). Big box users up to a maximum Gross Floor Area of 12,635 sq m (approximately 136,000 square feet), are permitted within the "Mixed Use 2" designation, east and west of the development on "Main Street".

West of "Main Street", the 'Mixed Use 2' designation provides a transition between the prime shopping area on "Main Street" and the "High Density Residential" designation at the west end of the Amendment Area, where apartment buildings up to 18 – 22 storeys are permitted with a maximum density of 2.7 Floor Space Index (FSI). This height and density are similar to the density permitted for the Liberty lands immediately to the north. The final height of individual apartment buildings, within the specified range, will be determined through more detailed review of shadowing, massing and other built form considerations.

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 significant 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 34,000 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.

The Plan establishes a network of public roads to structure future development within the Amendment Area north of Centre 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 ultimately expected to become a key focus of shopping activity in the Thornhill community.

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 in the long term. 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.

First Stage of Development

Discussions with the two major landowners of the lands within the Amendment Area north of Centre Street have resulted in agreement respecting the form which the first stage of development will take. At the west end of this area within the "High Density Residential" designation, apartment buildings will be constructed fully utilizing the maximum height and density permissions granted by the Plan. This development is expected to support the retail commercial development to be established elsewhere on the balance of the site. The concentration of new residents in close proximity to the existing regional transit station at North Promenade/Centre Street should become a significant source of transit ridership.

The balance of the site will accommodate primarily retail uses, and some office uses, in the first stage of development. The landowner has agreed to construct "Main Street", including the buildings fronting onto it, coincident with construction of the large box retailer at the Bathurst/Centre street intersection. On "Main Street", all buildings will be a minimum of two storeys in height, with at least 60,000 square feet of Gross Floor Area to be built on the second floor. Development fronting onto "Main Street" at ground level will feature primarily smaller scale retail uses with their primary entrances generally at grade and related to the street and sidewalk. Subsequent development will establish other, mainly retail buildings east and west of the development on "Main Street".

The first stage of development permits up to approximately 34,000 sq m GFA (370,000 sq ft), including the floor space being provided on the second floor of "Main Street". Many of the policy provisions of the Plan do not apply to this first stage of development, but will apply to development beyond this total floor space when subsequent intensification or redevelopment occurs.

"Main Street" will be constructed and landscaped by the landowner in the first stage of development. Traffic circulation will otherwise rely upon the parking aisles throughout the surface parking areas on site. The Plan provides for a network of local roads to ultimately be built. These local roads will be constructed by the landowner and conveyed to the City when development on site exceeds a density of 0.5 Floor Space Index (FSI) (excluding 5,600 sq m GFA on the second

floor of buildings on “Main Street”). The maximum development density in the first stage will be approximately 0.4 FSI.

Parking is required to be provided for the development at a standard of 3.9 spaces per 100 sq m of retail GFA, and is addressed in the draft zoning bylaw (submitted in a separate Staff report to tonight’s meeting). This standard is lower than the City’s established standard (6.0 spaces/100 m²) because of the urban character of development planned for the site, and its proximity to transit services. No parking will be required for the approximately 5600 sq m GFA (60,000 sq ft) of floor space to be constructed on the second floor of “Main Street”. Any office development will be subject to the City’s current standard of 3.0 parking spaces per 100 sq m GFA.

Detailed List of Modifications Introduced to OPA #671

The modifications to OPA #671 and #672 have been introduced to address issues identified at the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 29, 2004, and to improve the clarity of the documents.

Regarding OPA #671, the following modifications have been made:

1. In Part 1, Sections 2.2, the text has been modified to reflect York Region’s approval of an amendment to its Regional Plan (ROPA #43) on Dec. 16, 2004, strengthening its nodes and corridors policies, and to acknowledge the lands subject to OPA 671 as a “Key Development Area” pursuant to the requirements of ROPA 43.
2. In Part 2, Section 2.5a, a development principle has been amended, deleting reference to ‘low-rise housing’, in keeping with the Plan’s intention to establish medium and higher density housing in this part of the Thornhill Town Centre.
3. In Part 2, Section 3.1.1, to accommodate the first stage of development, the definition for “Mixed Use Development” has been modified, to make the mixed use designations in the Plan more flexible, permitting a mix of land uses as well as buildings which include more than one use.
4. In Part 2, Section 3.1.1, the list of Prohibited Uses has been expanded to include ‘car washes’.
5. In Part 2, Section 3.1.1, the definition of “Development Density” has been modified by deleting the inclusion of “half of any abutting local road” in the calculation of permitted density (which had been included in the earlier draft of OPA 671). Also, throughout the document, density is expressed in terms of the permitted Floor Space Index (FSI). Expressions of density in terms of ‘units per hectare’ have been deleted as FSI is a superior method of regulating density and built form in the urban environment envisioned for the Town Centre.
6. In Part 2, Section 3.1.2, in the “Mixed Use 1” designation, street townhouses have been deleted as permitted uses in MU1 (and throughout the Plan). The permitted density has been increased to 2.0 FSI (from 1.5 FSI), consistent with the permitted height of 6 storeys on “Main Street”. A list of permitted retail uses has been added, including department stores, supermarkets, personal service establishments, restaurants, entertainment facilities, doctor, dental and veterinary offices, banks and financial institutions. A policy has been added providing for the MU1 designation to apply to a depth of 45 metres on both sides of Main Street.

To accommodate the first stage of development, the requirement for mixed-use development on “Main Street” has been deleted to permit buildings with retail uses only. Also, a policy has been modified, providing for the construction of “Main Street” and the

buildings fronting it to coincide with construction of the large format retail store at the east end of the property in the initial phase of development. Also, individual uses fronting onto "Main Street" are limited to a maximum ground floor area of 350 sq m, with the exception of two larger units permitted to have up to 1161 sq m, and 557 sq m, respectively.

7. In Part 2, Section 3.1.3, to accommodate the first stage of development, the former "Mixed Use 2" designation, requiring either mixed use or high density residential development west of "Main Street", has been deleted. The former "Mixed Use 3" designation has been renamed "Mixed Use 2" and now applies to the lands both west and east of the development on "Main Street" (as shown on the modified Schedule B1). This new "Mixed Use 2" designation permits retail uses, offices, stacked townhouses and apartment buildings, as well as mixed use buildings, and provides the flexibility for buildings from a single storey to 14 storeys. A policy has also been deleted limiting buildings, with the exception of a single large format retailer, to a maximum ground floor area of 2,500 sq m.
8. Also In Part 2, Section 3.1.3, to accommodate the first stage of development, a policy has been deleted which required that a single large format retail use with a maximum gross floor area of 12,635 sq.m. would have to be developed with the ground floor area of the building not exceeding 50% of the permitted maximum gross floor area of the building. This modification enables all of the permitted GFA to be provided on the ground floor of a single storey building, rather than requiring a two-storey building.
9. In Part 2, Section 3.1.4b, in the "High Density Residential" designation, the permitted height has been increased to 18 – 22 storeys, subject to resolution of matters respecting shadowing, massing and built form. This is similar to the height of buildings approved on the Liberty property to the north. Formerly the maximum height was indicated as 14 storeys.
10. In Part 2, Section 3.1.4c, in the "High Density Residential" designation, the permitted density has been increased to 2.7 FSI. This is similar to the density of development approved on the Liberty property to the north. Formerly a maximum density of 2.0 FSI was indicated. However, the increased density is considered appropriate given the urban character to be established within the Amendment Area, and the need to establish a significant resident population to support retail commercial facilities and public transit.
11. In Part 2, Section 3.1.5 has been further modified by clarifying the requirement for a Comprehensive Study if redevelopment within the 'Special Policy Area' of the Town Centre South is proposed which is 'significant in terms of form or function'.
12. In Part 2, Section 3.2, to accommodate the first stage of development, policies respecting building façades treatment, and improvements to the pedestrian environment have been clarified; the description of "Main Street" has also been refined. A policy requiring a mix of uses on "Main Street", and a policy requiring all corner buildings to be at least two storeys in height have been deleted.
13. In Part 2, Section 3.2.1f, iv), to accommodate the first stage of development, the policy has been modified providing that, on all lands adjacent to Centre Street and Bathurst Street, the minimum built frontage shall be 50 percent of the developable frontage, rather than being calculated as a percentage of the block face.
14. In Part 2, Section 3.2.2c, the policy has been modified, providing for pedestrian weather protection at the entrances to residential buildings, and along the building facades where entrances to commercial and mixed-use buildings are located.

15. In Part 2, Section 3.2.1m, to accommodate the first stage of development, the policy has been modified to provide that, “where the grade changes over the length or width of the site, accommodation for the grade changes, if required, shall be accomplished on the site in such a manner as to avoid substantial differences in the level of the primary entrances and the public sidewalk in regard to buildings constructed along the site edges”;
16. In Part 2, Section 3.2.2d, to accommodate the first stage of development, a new policy has been introduced, generally requiring provision of a 3.5-metre landscaped strip along the full length of the northern edge of the Amendment Area north of Centre Street, from New Westminster Drive to the west end of the proposed synagogue property at Bathurst, separating it from the Liberty property. This landscape strip will be significantly enhanced by high quality landscaping, and will be expanded to 6.0 m in width beyond a specified development density threshold.
17. In Part 2, Section 3.2.3, 1), a policy has been modified, respecting development on ‘Main Street’, as follows: “A break in the buildings along “Main Street” at the first floor shall be provided every 35 metres for the purpose of a pedestrian connection (either enclosed or unenclosed), in the form of sidewalks and stairs, open to the public at all times, connecting “Main Street” to the parking areas behind the “Main Street” buildings.
18. In Part 2, Section 3.3, the parks policies have been updated to reflect current City policy respecting parkland dedication, identification of parks/urban squares, and park construction.
19. In Part, 2, Section 3.5.2g, to accommodate the first stage of development, a policy has been modified, and a paragraph has been added providing that, local road rights-of-way identified on Schedule C may be used for infrastructure, parking aisles or parking spaces as long as road allowances remain in private ownership, provided that the parking area west of “Main Street” shall be designed with an aisle and sidewalk on the future east/west road allowance, providing a direct continuous connection for vehicles and pedestrians, from “Main Street” to the High Density Residential lands to the west.
20. In Part 2, Section 3.5.5d, to accommodate the first stage of development, a policy has been added providing for reduced parking standards if justified by a parking study, in recognition of the inappropriateness of suburban parking standards, given the urban character of development to be established in the Town Centre, and its growing role as a transit node. Also in Section 3.5.5, the proposed maximum parking standards have been deleted; minimum parking standards will be identified in the zoning bylaw applicable to the Amendment Area. Also, in Section 3.5.5e, a policy has been added requiring that development on each side of “Main Street” provides parking to address the City’s parking requirements as they apply to that side of the street.
21. In Part 2, Section 3.5.6c, to accommodate the first stage of development, the policy has been modified providing that Main Street’s dedication and construction will occur in the initial stage of development.
22. In Part 2, Sections 5.1a and 5.4, to accommodate the first stage of development, the policies have been modified to permit development within the Amendment Area to proceed via site plan approvals, rather than requiring the approval of draft plans of subdivision.
23. In Part 2 Section 5.2, to accommodate the first stage of development, the policies have been modified to require submission of a Development Concept Report and Phasing Plan for development applications proposing development beyond the initial stage of development proposed by FirstPro.

24. Schedule B1 has been modified to reflect the “Mixed Use 2” designation on lands both west and east of the “Main Street” development, as described in #7 above.
25. Schedules B1 and C have been modified to accommodate the first stage of development, to reflect the deletion of the northerly east/west road (and the text of Part 2, Sections 3.2.4 and 3.5.2 have been modified accordingly), and portions of two north/south roads, the realignment of the remaining east/west road and its intersection with “Main Street”, and the deletion of development blocks. Appendices A and B have also been deleted to reflect the deletion of development blocks.
26. To accommodate the first stage of development proposed within the Amendment Area north of Centre, consistent with the agreement reached with the landowners there, modifications have been introduced to the policies in Part 2 of the Plan, exempting the first stage of development from the requirements of the following policies:
 - Section 2.3h, v), establishing the principle of strong building-to-street relationships in the “Mixed Use 2” designation;
 - Section 2.7, establishing the principle of park development within the “Mixed Use 1” and “Mixed Use 2” designations;
 - Section 3.2.1, a), d), e), f), g), i), l), and o), requiring buildings to address specified built form policies;
 - Section 3.2.2i, requiring development within the “Mixed Use 2” designation to design blocks at a pedestrian scale, and design the street-related floors of buildings to enhance the quality of the pedestrian system;
 - Section 3.2.3, 5), providing for parking to be located below grade wherever possible;
 - Sections 3.5.2, requiring the Plan’s local road network (as described in subsections d), h) and i), and as identified on Schedule C);
 - Sections 3.5.2b and 5.2c i), requiring preparation of a detail traffic impact study;
 - Sections 5.2a and 5.2c iv), requiring preparation of a Development Concept Report and Phasing Plan;
 - Section 5.2b, requiring the City to consider the traffic impacts of proposed development on the operation of the Regional and local road network; and
 - Section 5.2 e) and f), requiring phasing to ensure orderly development and efficient use of infrastructure.

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 #3, showing the land use designations of OPA #672. The modifications to the proposed Amendment are summarized as follows:

- Applies a “Special Policy Area” overlay designation to the lands at the southwest and southeast quadrants of Centre Street and Dufferin Street.
- Redesignates a portion of the Amendment Area as “Mixed Use Residential/Office” (MURO), as described in Part 2 of OPA #672;
- Deletes two “Service Station” designations and replaces them with “General Commercial” designations; and, updates the Service Station policies to reflect relevant compatibility criteria;

- 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 an overall average density cap of 1.0 Floor Space Index (FSI) on future development there; by introducing new policy provisions encouraging comprehensive development of the entire quadrant, and by deleting the service station/gas bar use as a permitted use within a “Service Node”; and
- Introduces contemporary urban design, parkland dedication, and parking policies.

Land Use Designations

A. The Western Gateway

The “Western Gateway” refers to the lands in the four quadrants around the Dufferin/Centre Street intersection at the west end of the Study Area. A number of large undeveloped parcels there present the opportunity to establish a high quality focus and entry point to the Thornhill community from the west and north. These lands, and the lands in the northwest quadrant of the Bathurst/Centre Street intersection, are the only locations along the proposed higher order public transit route in Thornhill where large vacant parcels remain, and thus the opportunity to establish transit-supportive development is readily available, without necessitating redevelopment.

Improved transit service would further enhance the area’s development potential. The Class Environmental Assessment process currently underway, is examining routing options for the Highway #7 transit service. The Class EA process has already identified the Dufferin/Centre intersection as a preferred location for a transit station. The Western Gateway has the potential to accommodate development which will significantly support public transit service, provided the development is sufficient in size and scale, and appropriate in form and design.

The potential of the Western Gateway is, however, constrained somewhat by the pattern of existing development, and by traffic capacity. The northeast and southeast quadrants are already occupied by commercial uses. Existing residential neighbourhoods to the southeast and southwest also present compatibility issues and limit flexibility respecting the size and configuration of vacant parcels. The northwest quadrant is least constrained by existing development and site configuration, and thus offers the best opportunity to establish development which is transit-supportive. It is therefore imperative that the northwest quadrant attract a significant concentration of development to ensure that the Western Gateway can fully achieve its potential.

The northwest quadrant

The Centre Street Study recommended that the northwest quadrant retain its current “Prestige Employment” designation, as office commercial development there would 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.

The Centre Street Study’s transportation analysis, however, determined that there is limited traffic capacity remaining at the Dufferin Street and Centre Street intersection, which constrains the development potential of the surrounding lands. Therefore, OPA #672 establishes a overall average development density limit of 1.0 Floor Space Index (FSI) on the northwest quadrant, to limit the scale of future development and thereby address traffic concerns.

Working within this density cap, the Plan aims to concentrate development close to the Dufferin/Centre intersection and transit service, with less density anticipated in the interior of the

quadrant. In keeping with this objective, the range of permitted uses has been expanded to include recreational and institutional uses within the Prestige Area designation. Any site-specific rezoning application must be based on a Council-approved Comprehensive Plan for the entire quadrant, to address the location of local roads, street access points, pedestrian connections and buildings, and the Plan's urban design requirements.

Upon further review of the Centre Street Study recommendations and in keeping with the planning objectives for the Western Gateway, OPA #672 has been modified to include additional urban design policies specific to the northwest quadrant. The following policies have been added to OPA 210 and OPA 450 (see Part 2 of OPA #672, Subsection 1, xvi):

- The minimum height for buildings at key corner locations shall be two-storeys.
- Development density shall be concentrated close to the Dufferin/Centre intersection, and along the frontages of Dufferin Street and Centre Street.
- Pedestrian and vehicle crossings at the key intersection shall be well defined.
- Streetscape and street furniture shall be high quality and of unified design to clearly demarcate the gateway.
- Landowners should consolidate driveways and provide interconnected laneways, where appropriate, as sites develop or redevelop over time.

OPA #672 has also been modified with respect to the development of "Service Nodes". Such uses are currently permitted at the intersection of arterial roads under OPA #450. However, the establishment of a service station at the northwest corner of Dufferin/Centre is considered undesirable. Such a use would not fulfill the planning objectives of achieving development at the Western Gateway which is highly concentrated, supportive of transit, and contributes to the visibility and identity of this key location.

Furthermore, the City's existing Official Plan policies limit the development of gas bars and service stations to no more than one such site per intersection (OPA #600, Section 4.2.2.7, vi). OPA #600 policies generally reflect the direction of future land use in Vaughan as a whole. In the case of the Dufferin/Centre intersection, the presence of a service station at the southeast corner effectively eliminates the opportunity to develop a service station at any of the remaining corners. Therefore, given the objectives for the Western Gateway, its importance as a transit node, and the policies of OPA #600, the "Service Node" policies of OPA #450 have been amended. A Service Node may be established in the northwest quadrant, provided it satisfies the planning and design objectives of the Plan, and provided it does not include a service station.

The northeast quadrant

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" (in keeping with the service station policies of OPA #600 noted above). No other 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 southwest and southeast quadrants

The two southern quadrants, largely under Provincial ownership, are essentially left over from the planning of Highway #407, with the exception of the recently 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" overlay 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 one-half storey permitted in the roof must be incorporated in a pitched-roof design such that the building appears to be a residential building.

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.

Since the meeting of November 29, 2004, "senior-oriented residential uses" have been deleted from the list of permitted uses in the "Mixed-Use Residential/Office" designation. Although OPA 210, Section 2.2.2.4 makes reference to "housing suitable for senior citizens", it is now considered contrary to the "Human Rights Code" to favour any sector of the population on the basis of age. Since anyone, regardless of age, is permitted to occupy any residential unit, the deletion of "senior-oriented residential uses" represents no substantive change to the uses permitted in this designation.

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 Centre 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".

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.

Implementing Zoning By-laws

OPA #671

To implement OPA #671, a draft zoning bylaw was prepared by staff, for Council's consideration at the Public Hearing scheduled on November 29, 2004. Since then, pursuant to the discussions with major landowners, the draft zoning bylaw has been revised.

The lands shown on Schedule "B1", are proposed to be rezoned in accordance with the modified 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 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.

The draft zoning by-law for the OPA #671 lands has been drafted 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 draft 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, 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 addressed in this report. The Official Plan documents have been modified accordingly where changes were considered appropriate and the final OPA’s are included as Attachments #8 and #9 to this report.

The Official Plan Amendments will implement the vision for the Thornhill Centre Street Study Area. Should Committee concur, the recommendation in this report should be approved.

Attachments

1. Figure 1: Centre Street Study Area
2. Interim Control By-law Schedule (By-law #255-2003)
3. OPA #671, Schedule A: The Amendment Area
4. OPA #671, Schedule B2: Land Use (Amendment Area south of Centre Street)
5. OPA #671, Schedule B1: Land Use (Amendment Area north of Centre Street)
6. OPA #671, Schedule C: Road Network (North of Centre Street)
7. OPA #672, Schedule A: Land Use
8. Draft OPA #671 (COUNCILLORS ONLY)
9. Draft OPA #672 (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN ZIPAY
Commissioner of Planning

DIANA BIRCHALL
Director of Policy Planning/Urban Design

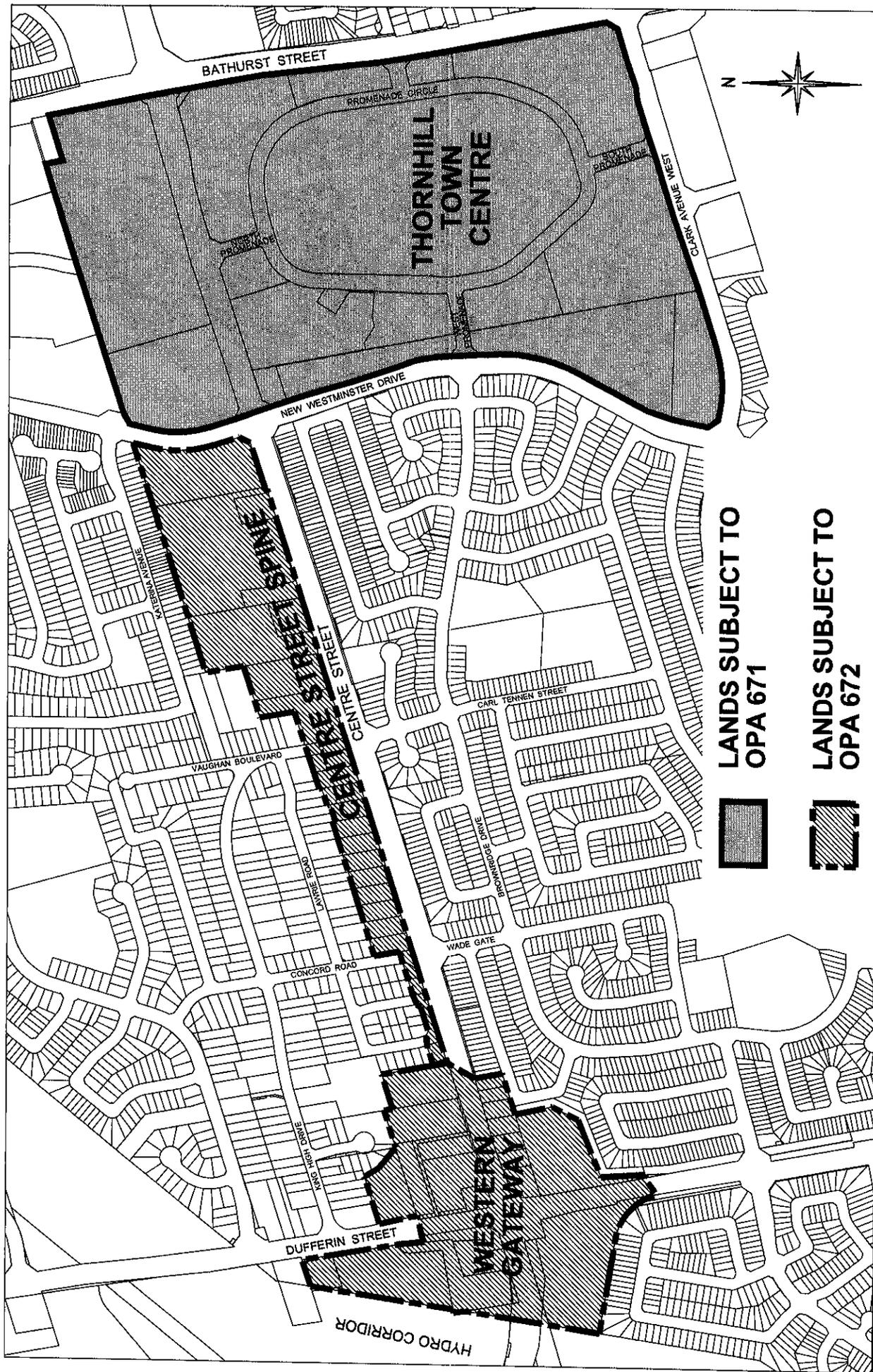
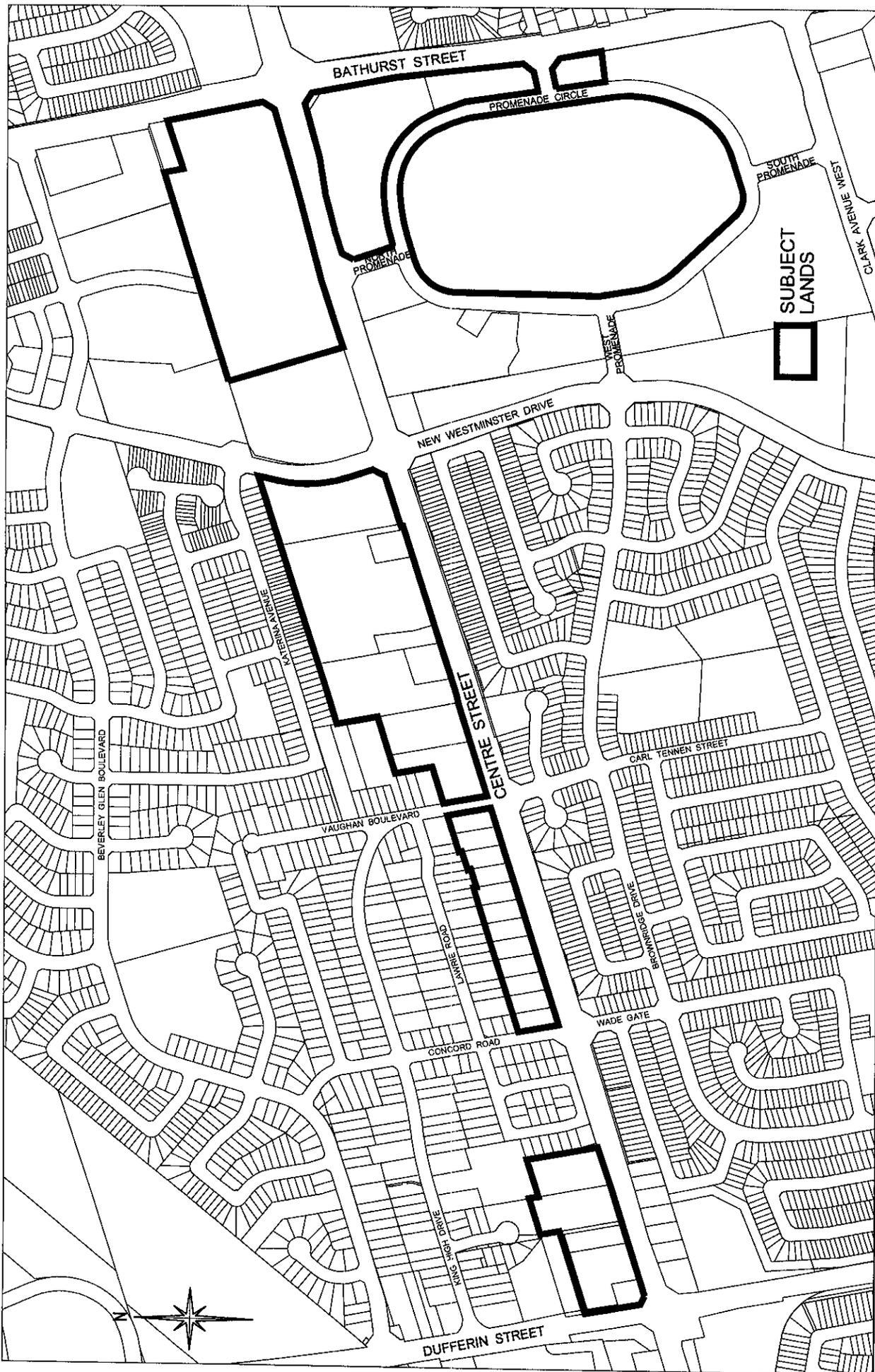


Figure 1 : Centre Street Study Area

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Attachment
2



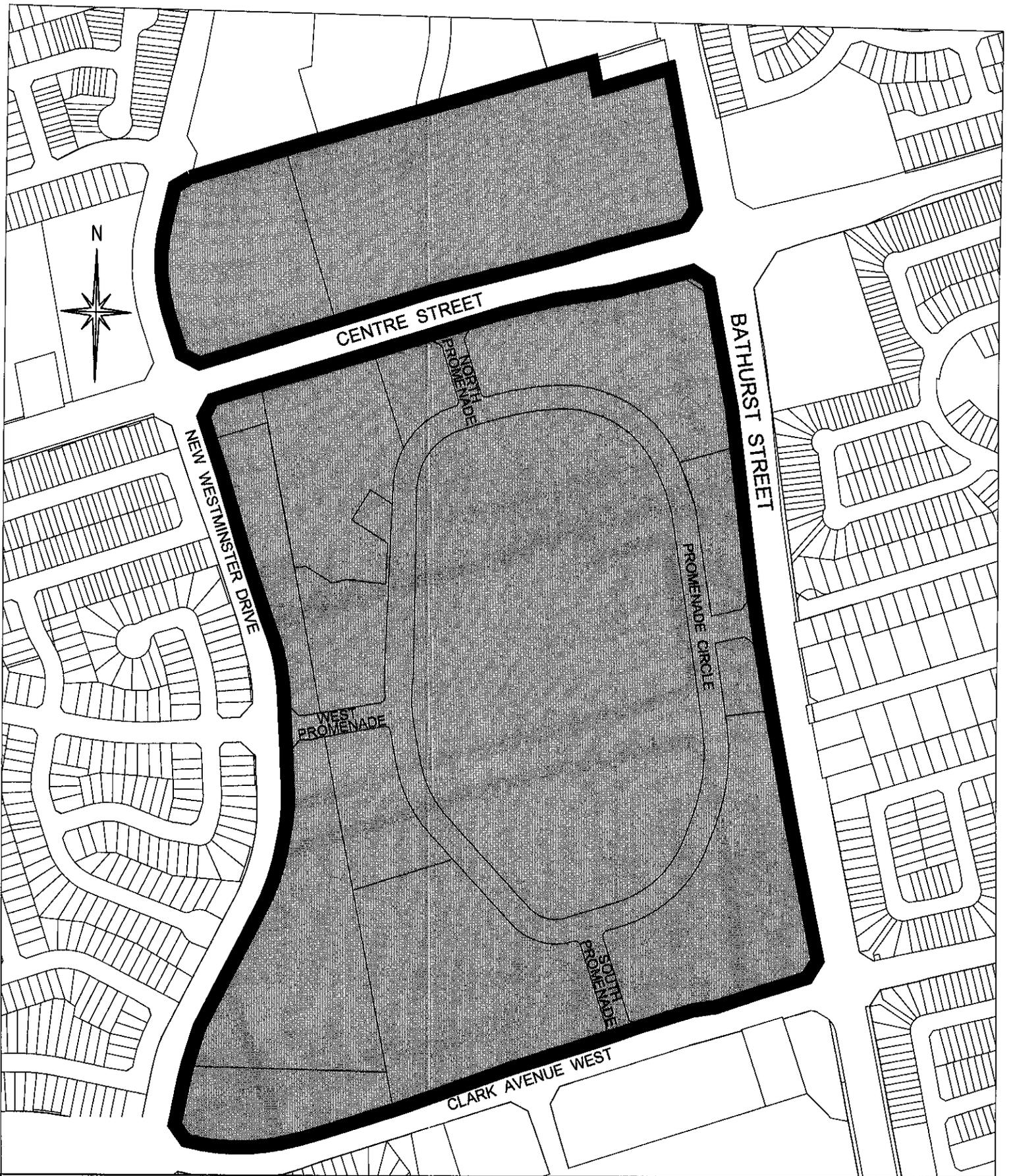
Development Planning Department

Not to Scale

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

Part Lots 4, 5, 6,
Concession 2

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OPA 671, Schedule 'A'
The Amendment Area

Part of Lots 5 & 6,
 Concession 2

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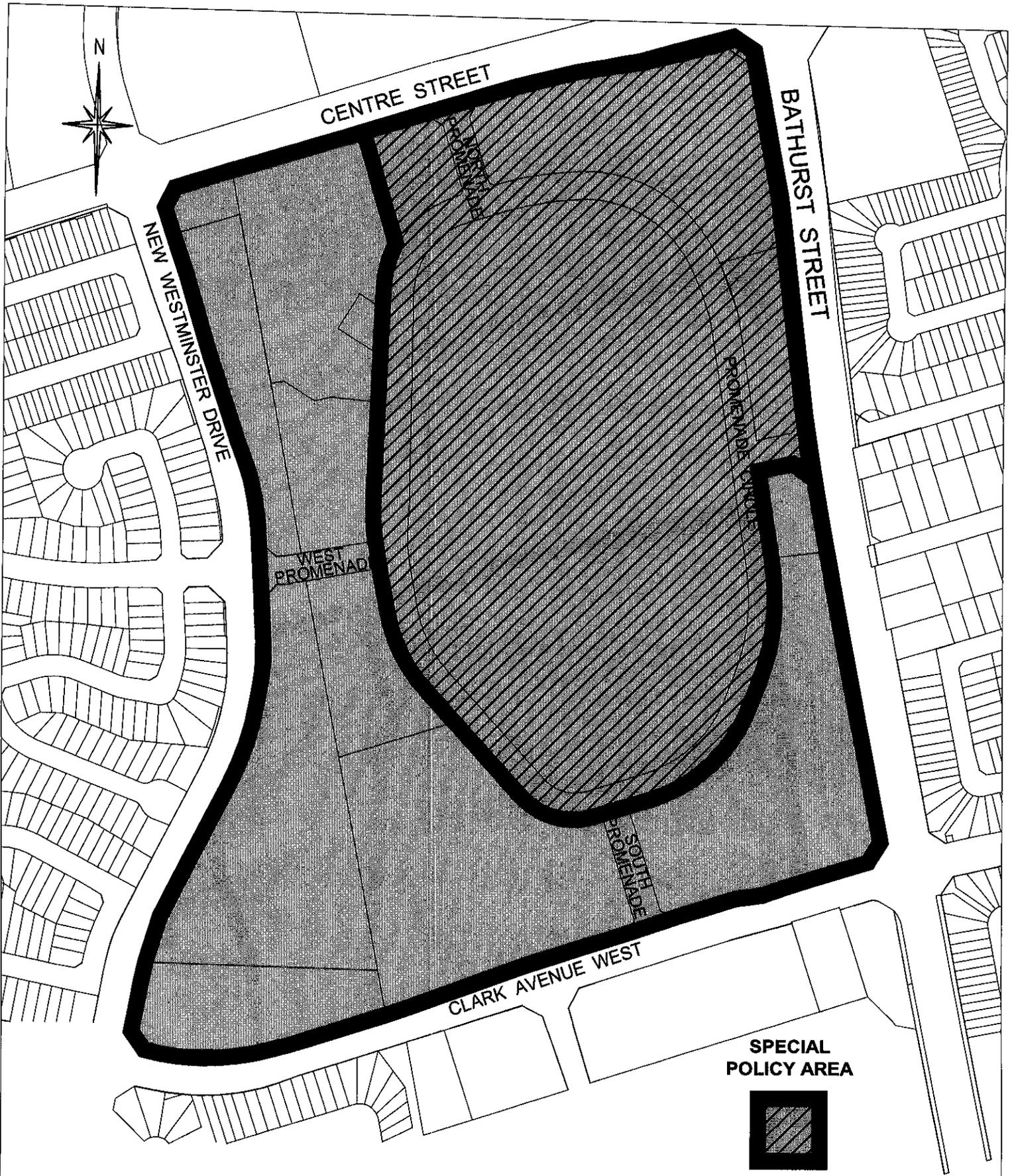
Policy Planning & Urban Design Department

Attachment

April 13, 2005

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OPA 671, Schedule 'B2'
Land Use

Part of Lot 5,
 Concession 2

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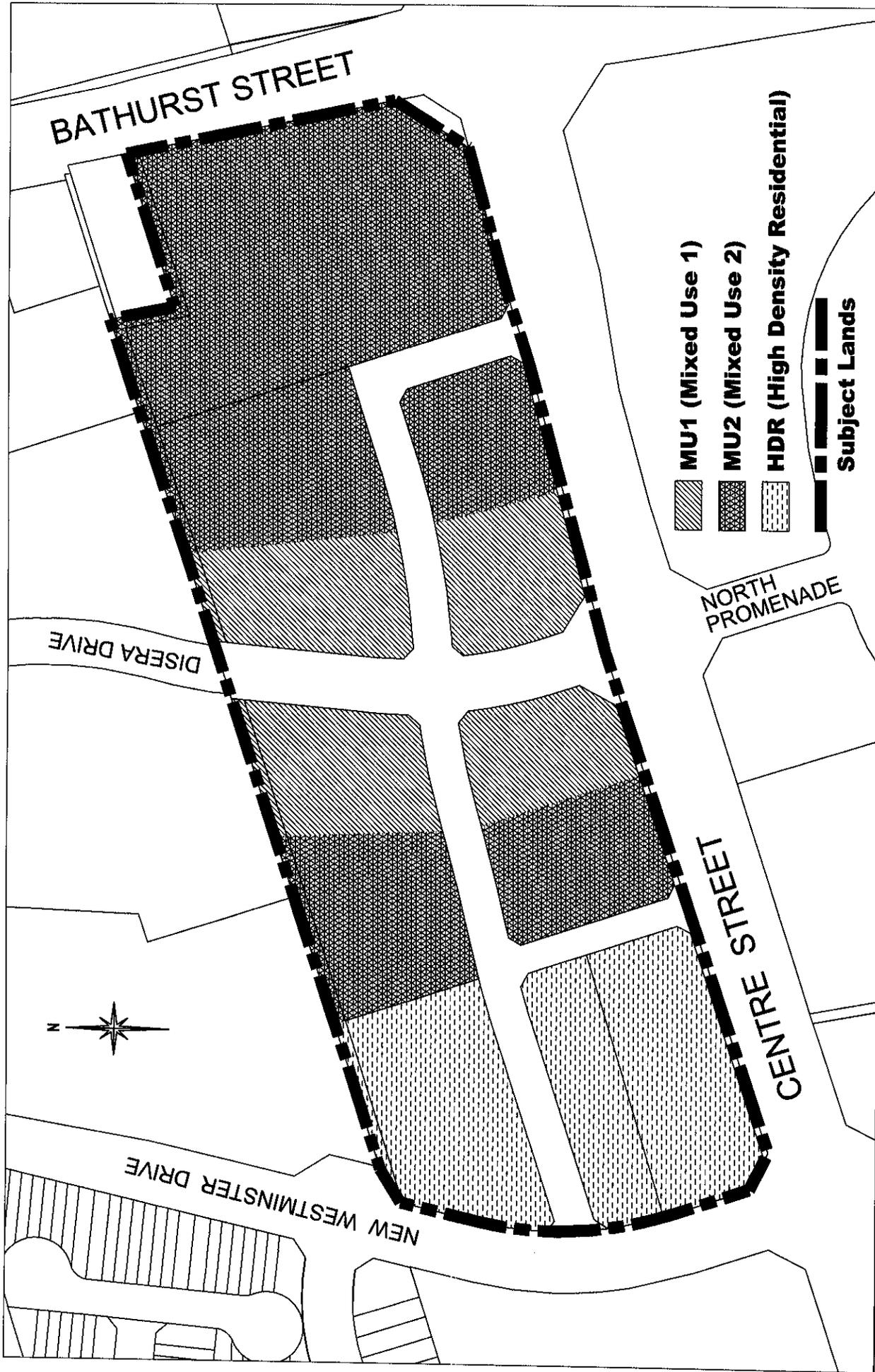
Policy Planning & Urban Design Department

Attachment

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**OPA 671, Schedule B1
Land Use Designations**

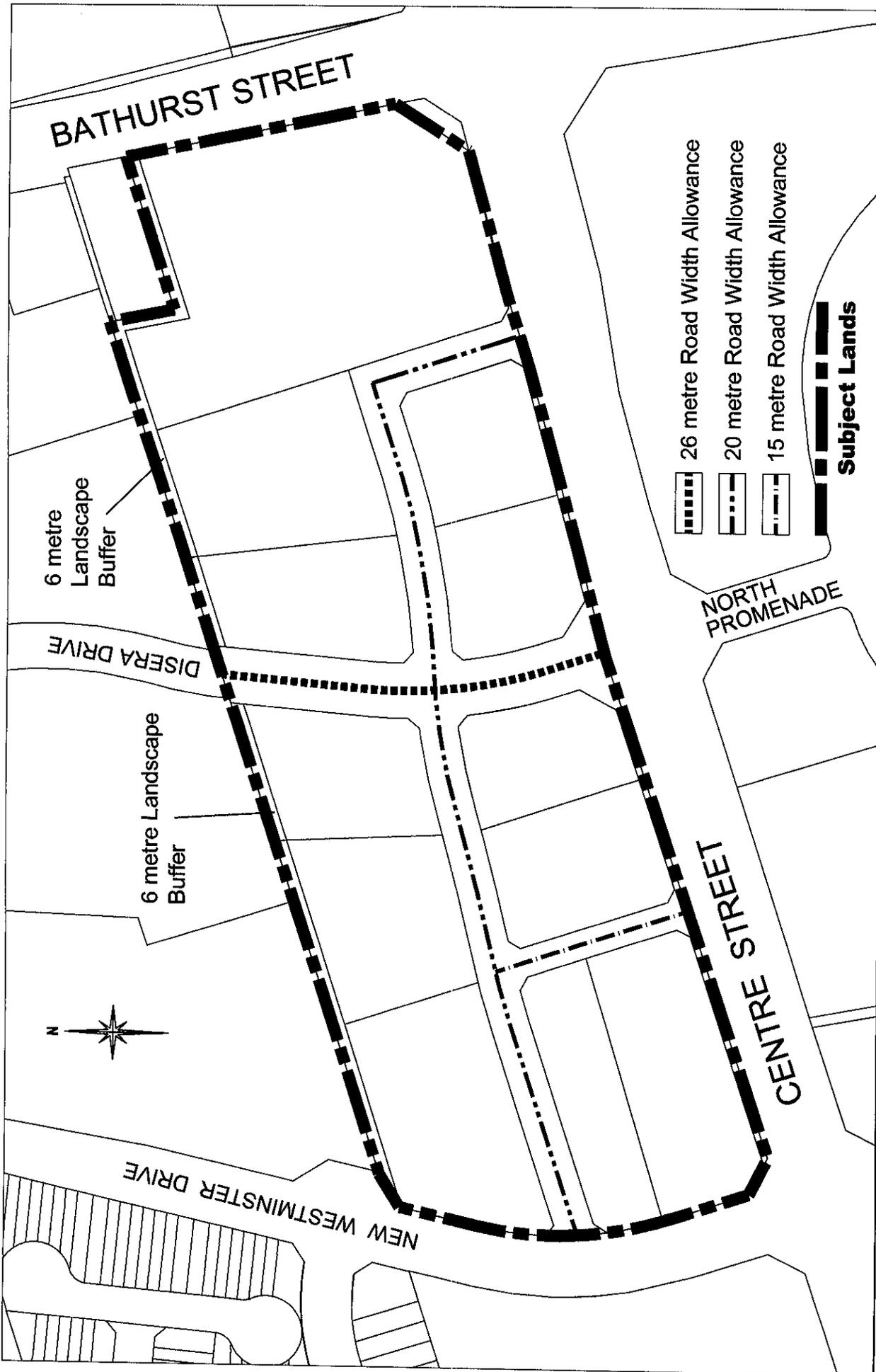
APPLICANT:
CITY OF VAUGHAN
PART 1 ATTACHMENTS ZV-04.062

Part Lot 6,
Concession 2



Policy Planning & Urban Design Department

Attachment 5
FILE No.:
Z.04.062
Not to Scale
April 13, 2005



**OPA 671, Schedule C
Road Network**

APPLICANT:
CITY OF VAUGHAN
Part Lot 6,
Concession 2
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Policy Planning & Urban Design Department

Attachment

6

FILE No.:
Z.04.062
Not to Scale
April 13, 2005

-  26 metre Road Width Allowance
-  20 metre Road Width Allowance
-  15 metre Road Width Allowance
-  **Subject Lands**



**OPA 672, Schedule 'A'
Land Use**

Part Lots 4, 5, 6,
Concession 2

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