

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 19, 2006**

### **DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 620 STEELES CORRIDOR - JANE TO KEELE- SECONDARY PLAN FILE NO. 15.90**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT OPA 620 for the Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan BE ADOPTED.

#### **Economic Impact**

Development of the lands subject to the draft OPA 620 will have a positive impact upon the City of Vaughan in terms of new development, assessment and job opportunities. The development envisioned by OPA 620 will also help to justify the extension of the Spadina subway into Vaughan, with many attendant economic benefits.

#### **Purpose**

To submit draft Official Plan Amendment 620, including modifications to the document since the May 29, 2006, Public Hearing, for the consideration of Committee of the Whole.

#### **Location**

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

#### **Background – Analysis and Options**

##### **Process Followed to Prepare the OPA**

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

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

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

- A review of opportunities and constraints

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

- Region of York
  - City of Toronto
  - York University
  - York Region Transit
  - York Consortium (YRTP)
  - Toronto Transit Commission
  - GO Transit
  - Ministry of Transportation
  - Smart Commute Association of Black Creek
  - York Region Catholic and District School Boards
  - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
  - City of Vaughan Planning, Urban Design, Engineering, Economic and Technology Development, and Real Estate departments.
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- January 2003: Individual interviews were held with many of the key TAC members and study area landowners.
  - February 2003: The first full TAC meeting was held to present the draft Phase I Working Paper.
  - February 25, 2003: A presentation of the Phase I Working Paper was made to the Committee of the Whole Working Session.
  - February 27, 2003: a Public Information Meeting was held at the Dufferin Clark Library to present the findings of the Phase I Working Paper.
  - February 2003: Individual meetings were held with study area landowners.
  - March 2003-December 2003: Phase II of the Study
  - Based on the Phase I "Issues and Opportunities" Working Paper, the objective of Phase II was to "Develop the Vision for a New Planning Framework." This involved preparing conceptual development and urban design options, for refinement through subsequent consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, landowners, and public.  
  
To determine whether lands in the hydro corridor were available to provide all or part of the critical east-west road connection, meetings were held during the summer of 2003 with staff from the Province of Ontario and Hydro One.
  - December 2003: The draft Phase II results were presented to a TAC meeting for input.
  - January 15, 2004: The draft Phase II report was presented to a Public Information Meeting at Dufferin Clark Library and to area landowners for their input.
  - February-May, 2004: The draft consultant report and first draft of the Official Plan Amendment were prepared.
  - June 11, 2004: Staff made an informal presentation on the study to the Spadina-York Subway Extension Committee.

- June 15, 2004: Urban Strategies presented the study recommendations to the Committee of the Whole Working Session. On June 28, 2004 Council adopted the Committee of the Whole recommendations to:
  - provide a further report addressing the comments from members of Council (provided herein);
  - receive the presentation and material from Urban Strategies Inc.
  - schedule a statutory Public Hearing in the fall subsequent to receiving input from the Technical Advisory Committee and making any necessary changes to the draft report; and,
  - have Staff consult with the landowners in the amendment area to discuss the final results of the study, and provide a summary of this consultation in the Public Hearing report (provided herein).
- June 25, 2004: The draft final report and initial draft of Official Plan Amendment Number 620 were presented to the TAC for comment. Comments from TAC members on the draft final report were received up to the end of July, and on the draft OPA 620 up to September 3, 2004.
- September 9, 2004: Notice of a statutory Public Hearing was distributed to property owners in and around the study area, to attendees at previous public meetings, and published in the Vaughan Weekly.
- September 13, 2004: The consultant's Final Report and initial draft of Official Plan Amendment Number 620 were made available to the public and posted on the City's website.
- October 4, 2004: A statutory Public Hearing was held to receive comments from the public on the study process, and draft OPA 620.
- October 2004 to October 2005: The City's consultants developed and modeled alternative development scenarios including increased densities at Council's direction.
- November, 2005: A report was presented to Committee of the Whole Working Session, summarizing the results of further work completed by the City's consultants, examining the introduction of increased development densities throughout the subject lands.
- May 3, 2006: Notice of a statutory Public Hearing was distributed to property owners in and around the study area and attendees at previous public meetings, and published in the Vaughan Weekly. The revised draft OPA 620 was made available to the public on May 9, 2006, and put onto the City's web site.
- May 29, 2006: A statutory Public Hearing was held to receive comments from the public on the study process, and the revised draft OPA 620.

### **Comments Received at the May 29, 2006 Public Hearing and Staff Response**

#### **A. Comments From Members of the Public**

1. A representative of United Parcel Services (UPS) identified a number of concerns about the contents of the draft OPA 620, as outlined below:
  - UPS use of its land as its national parcel sorting hub must continue to be recognized as a permitted use in the Official Plan and zoning by-law;
  - The land protection and land acquisition policies of OPA 529, and the limitations of the Planning Act, must be respected;

- UPS plans to remain at its location indefinitely, and has filed an application for site plan approval for expansion of its hub;
- The introduction of residential and other sensitive land uses in close proximity presents potential land use compatibility conflicts with UPS operations, and therefore will be resisted by UPS;
- Improvements to road and intersection infrastructure must precede new development and the proposed commuter parking facility; and
- Consideration of OPA 620 is premature until coordination with the York University secondary plan is assured.

Staff Response: Staff acknowledge the UPS concerns, and are satisfied that they have been addressed by draft OPA 620, as outlined below:

- The Plan deals with all development, both existing and new, within the Amendment Area, and recognizes the right of existing uses to continue to exist and function under the provisions of the Official Plan and zoning by-law.
  - Nothing in the Plan prevents UPS from continuing its current use and operation, or obliges UPS to redevelop.
  - The Plan requires all residential development and other sensitive land uses to undertake a noise and vibration study to support the feasibility of development and undertake measures to mitigate adverse effects.
  - The Plan establishes an extensive and efficient road network within the Amendment Area and identifies required arterial road improvements to be undertaken, under jurisdiction of the Region of York and City of Toronto; the Plan also requires that development proponents prepare transportation impact studies in support of development applications; and
  - The Plan provides for establishment of a coordinating committee, including UPS and other major stakeholders, to work cooperatively toward the implementation of the Plan, and deal with a wide range of associated development issues.
2. A Thornhill resident expressed concerns about the safety of the proposed east/west road, given its proposed 26 metre right-of-way, its length, and its straight alignment which could encourage high speeds. He also questioned whether the plan would deal with a possible reduction in the size of the planned commuter parking lot.

Staff Response: Some form of speed control may be required in the design of the road which will still permit it to function as a prime route for buses to the transit station and commuters to the parking lot in the hydro corridor. Although a 3,000 car parking lot has been assumed in the draft OPA 620, a reduction in its size will pose no problem for the plan.

3. A consultant representing the landowner (Serenity Park Cemetery Corporation) at the northeast corner of Jane and Steeles requested that the permitted density be increased to 4.5 FSI to take advantage of a 'gateway' location at a major intersection and support transit ridership.

Staff Response: Staff do not support this request. Draft OPA 620 permits a maximum density of 1.5 FSI at the east and west ends of the Amendment Area. These areas lie beyond a 10-minute walking distance from the future transit station and therefore greater density cannot be justified on the basis of support for the subway. Also, traffic congestion in the area is already significant and will increase with greater development. The Jane/Steeles intersection is the most congested in the area. Therefore, the plan established the greatest development density within a 5-minute walk of the transit station to foster transit ridership, and minimize the

generation of additional auto trips. (Note that Staff are also introducing a height limit for this property in response to comments from Black Creek Pioneer Village—see C3 below.)

B. Comments From Members of Council

1. Impact on the Amendment Area of extending the subway to Highway 7?

Staff Response: The decision to extend the subway northward to terminate at Highway 7 does not alter the vision for the Steeles Corridor of a compact, mixed-use precinct with high densities in close proximity to the Steeles West subway station. It may mean, however, that less commuter parking will be required in the hydro corridor north of Steeles Avenue, generating fewer trips to the area. This could be very beneficial, given that the intersections of Jane/Steeles and Keele/Steeles are already very congested. Since both the Amendment Area, and the Corporate Centre are envisioned to become major concentrations of development supportive of public transit ridership, the best solution to commuter parking may be to provide a large parking lot in the Highway 407 corridor near the intersection of the subway and the future 407 Transitway.

C. Other Comments Received On Draft OPA 620

1. Clarification respecting utilities policies is requested by Bell Canada

Bell Canada has requested that the following subsections be added to OPA 620:

4.3.4 xxiii) Large, above-ground utility infrastructure should be located and designed to be compatible with its environment and innovative methods of containing utility services on, or within streetscape features, such as gateways, lamp posts, or transit shelters, should be considered when determining appropriate locations for large utility equipment and utility cluster sites.

6.3 a) All utilities, including telecommunications, will be planned for and installed on a coordinated and integrated basis in initial common trenches, wherever possible, in order to be more efficient, cost effective and minimize disruption.

Staff Response: Staff support the requested changes to some extent. Generally, large utility infrastructure should be located below grade, within buildings, and away from public view. Smaller utility infrastructure needs to be concealed within the public realm through design and innovative solutions (eg., trafilgar pole).

2. Policy changes are needed to address the relationship between the proposed development and the existing railyards and rail line, and potential conflicts which could result, are requested by CN Railway Properties.

CN Railway Properties has requested changes to address the following concerns:

- Insufficient attention is given to the importance of the CN facilities to the City, Provincial, and national economy;
- More attention is needed to safety impact mitigation;
- Policies need to protect the integrity of the CN operations and avoid land use conflicts; and
- The Plan needs to establish a 300 metre minimum setback for residential and other sensitive land uses.

Staff Response: Section 5 of the revised draft OPA 620 incorporates a new subsection dealing with the CN Yards and Facilities to address the concerns noted above. However, revised draft OPA 620 does not establish the requested 300 metre setback for residential and other sensitive land uses. The most active part of the rail yard, and the industrial uses adjacent to it, are well beyond 300 metres from the Steeles Corridor. The Provincial guideline calling for the 300-metre separation recognizes, "It may not be possible to achieve the recommended minimum separation distances in areas where infilling, urban redevelopment and/or a transition to mixed use is taking place", and in such cases "mitigation is the key".. In the recent Jane-Ruth OMB decision, the Board stated that "rail operations should be considered as any other land use and the impacts of its operations on adjacent land uses should be accounted for and mitigated as required." OPA 620 will require the submission of noise and vibration studies with applications to ensure any necessary mitigation is addressed. Staff support working closely with CN to deal with its concerns on an application-by-application basis. The revised Plan now provides for ongoing consultation between the City and CN Railway Properties to identify potential sources of problems for CN with respect to proposed development, and appropriate mitigation measures to address such concerns.

3. Policy modifications are needed to address potential development impacts on Black Creek Pioneer Village (BCPV). Their concerns include:

- The visual impact of tall contemporary buildings on the historic and rural character of the Village;
- Impacts of increasing traffic congestion in the area;
- Appropriate pedestrian connections to the Village and the Black Creek ravine system from the Amendment Area should be identified and included in the Plan;
- Enhanced streetscaping treatments should be required along the edges of the Amendment Area on Steeles and Jane in proximity to the Village property to complement the Village and serve as the 'gateway' to the Village; and
- The Plan should reference potential impacts on the Village resulting from noise, vibration and lighting originating from new development in the Amendment Area, and require their study and mitigation.

Staff Response: Staff acknowledge the concerns of Black Creek Pioneer Village. The Village is located on the southeast and northwest corners of this intersection, and is an important local and regional asset. The Village includes many historical buildings, recreating the village and rural character of a pioneer community of southern Ontario circa 1867. In order to maintain this character, it is important that new development in close proximity to the Village is complementary, and does not detract from its unique character and attractiveness.

Accordingly, draft OPA 620 has been modified as follows:

- a maximum height limit of six storeys has been established on the northeast corner of Jane/Steeles, opposite the Village. This height permission will enable the property to fully achieve its permitted maximum 1.5 FSI without visually detracting from Black Creek Pioneer Village. This property is well beyond the convenient 5-minute walking distance to the Transit Station in the Amendment Area. View studies will be required from development proponents, from strategic locations within the Village property, taking into consideration proposed development, to determine whether other measures (in addition to the height limit) need to be applied (such as setbacks or additional landscaping).
- Pedestrian connections have been conceptually identified on Schedule C based on comments from BCPV and the City of Toronto.

- Additional streetscaping policies have been added in Section 4.3.7, including specific references respecting enhanced treatments in proximity to BCPV;
- Policies have been added to Section 3.4-Noise and Vibration and Section 4.3.6-Lighting referencing mitigation requirements relating to BCPV.

No further modifications have been made to the Plan to address traffic congestion as this has already been examined by the City's consultants. The Amendment Area is already congested, and is expected to continue to be congested in the future. However, the extension of the Spadina subway with stations in the Amendment Area and on the York campus should encourage many more trips to the area, and to the BCPV, to utilize public transit. The Plan also enhances the existing road network within the Amendment Area with the introduction of the east/west road and several north-south links which will improve connections to the south side of Steeles Avenue for all modes of transportation and relieve congestion on Steeles.

4. TRCA recommends that a master environmental servicing plan (MESP) be undertaken for the corridor. The existing pond west of UPS is undersized and is a quantity pond, whereas quality issues also need to be addressed. Additional storage capacity is needed for proposed development in the Amendment Area. The MESP should include a comprehensive storm water management strategy identifying the development-related storage requirements and storage locations, including innovative, sustainable water management practices (eg. 'green roof storage, underground storage) prior to consideration of development applications. TRCA has also identified concerns respecting servicing, stormwater management and natural feature protection.

Staff Response: Staff agree that a comprehensive approach to address the servicing requirements of the Amendment Area is needed. The revised draft OPA 620 has been modified to provide for these requirements to be addressed prior to consideration of development approvals. The Plan also anticipates that if additional surface blocks for stormwater storage are required beyond those identified on Schedule C, they shall be provided notwithstanding Schedule C, and density associated with the required ponds may be utilized elsewhere within the parcel. Development Engineering are currently in the process of preparing terms of reference for a study to comprehensively address the Amendment Area's storm water management requirements, and will soon be submitting it for Committee of the Whole's consideration. In addition, a Functional Master Servicing Strategy Report and a Traffic Impact Study to comprehensively address proposed development within the Amendment Area will also be required to determine water, sanitary, and transportation infrastructure requirements for the Amendment Area.

5. The City of Toronto recommends that the Plan include stronger implementation policies to ensure that future development is coordinated with the York University Secondary Plan review. The City of Toronto supports Vaughan's goal of establishing a new development framework for transit-oriented development on Steeles Avenue, and wishes to continue working with Vaughan to achieve coordinated and comprehensive planning solutions. The City of Toronto has provided detailed comments on draft OPA 620, and identifies a number of key areas of concern, including:

- Ensuring that land use, density, height, built form and streetscaping are coordinated and mutually complementary on both sides of Steeles Avenue;
- Greater clarity respecting maximum heights and density transfers;
- A need for triggers to coordinate infrastructure improvements with development;
- Traffic impacts on Steeles Avenue and the Keele Employment Area to the southeast;
- The Amendment Area's relationship to Black Creek valley, and the need to 'green' Steeles Avenue through appropriate streetscaping initiatives;

- The lack of parkland along Steeles Avenue, and open space connection to Steeles, York University and Black Creek valley;
- The need to acquire and construct the entire east-west road early in the development process, and to initiate the required Environmental Assessment as soon as possible;
- The integration of new and existing bike routes north and south of Steeles Avenue;
- The lack of sufficient community services in the area—a community services and facilities study and implementation strategy for OPA 620 is recommended
- The need for a comprehensive approach to stormwater management, including innovative practices and environmental sustainability measures; and
- Environmental policies to protect the Black Creek watershed.

Staff Response: Many of the concerns identified above are being addressed through the incorporation of additional policies into draft OPA 620:

- The Plan provides for establishment of a coordinating committee, including the City of Toronto, York University Development Corporation, Black Creek Pioneer Village, Hydro One, CN Railway Properties, landowners, and TRCA and the transit providers to oversee and facilitate the coordinated implementation of the plans north and south of Steeles Avenue and address specific issues regarding built form, roads and transportation, community services, noise and streetscaping on an ongoing basis;
- The Plan has been revised to establish appropriate height ranges and requires transitioning in height and mass for buildings adjacent to open space sites. Policies respecting the transfer of density have been clarified. They provide for density transfers when additional lands are required for public uses beyond those identified on Schedule C, and they permit transfers of density among development sites within a block provided the minimum densities set out in the plan are achieved on every lot;
- The Plan incorporates additional streetscaping policies including requirements specific to Steeles and Jane frontages opposite Black Creek Pioneer Village; The policies call for the “greening” of Steeles to occur primarily within the right-of-way, but also adjusts the build-to line to permit additional front-yard landscaping;
- The Plan provides for enhanced treatment of the existing stormwater pond on Steeles Avenue, and an associated pedestrian connection, to establish a green connection to Steeles Avenue opposite BCPV. Other pedestrian connections linking open spaces within the Corridor to Steeles have also been added to Schedule C;
- The Plan identifies the initiation of the EA for the east-west road as the top priority in the implementation of the Plan following its approval;
- The Plan provides for coordination between Vaughan’s and Toronto’s bicycle route plans;
- In terms of the provision of community services, the following statement has been added to the Plan: “The City is undertaking a master plan for the provision of Recreation, Culture, Parks, Buildings, Facilities and Libraries over the next 10–12 months. Through this process, a series of recommendations will be made which will evaluate and if necessary include any consideration for parks, recreation facilities and services in OPA 620”;
- The Plan provides for the City to undertake a comprehensive study of the Amendment Area’s stormwater management requirements, including innovative practices and environmental sustainability measures, following approval of OPA 620; and
- The Plan incorporates policies providing for protection of the Black Creek watershed, as well as other environmental sustainability objectives.



6. The York University Development Corporation requests that the description of ongoing planning work to update the secondary plan and master plan for York University be modified.

Staff Response: Staff agree and have reflected the suggested changes in Sections 2.1 and 8.2, of the revised OPA 620, as follows:

2.1 "York University and the City of Toronto began a collaborative process to update the York University Secondary Plan in mid-2005. It is a goal of the exercise to develop a planning framework of appropriate land uses and development densities to support the significant infrastructure investment on the planned expansion of the Spadina subway line. It is expected the updated Secondary Plan will also provide the necessary policy direction to ensure development along the University 's Steeles Avenue frontage will be consistent with, and complementary to the anticipated development within the lands that are the subject of this amendment."

8.2 a) iii "how the development has regard for the land use and design policies of the York University Secondary Plan that are applicable to the Steeles Avenue corridor"

7. The Region of York has identified the following issues as the basis for further discussion:

- OPA 620 should address the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement with regard to employment areas;
- OPA 620 should include bonusing provisions to permit public benefits to be secured in particular with respect to rapid transit infrastructure and community needs;
- Consideration should be given to increasing minimum heights and densities, and permission for density to be transferred from lands required for public roads to address development economics concerns; and
- Policies governing existing uses need to ensure that expansion of existing low density uses are not enabled to undermine critical development opportunities, and key objectives like transit-supportiveness, given the impending subway expansion.

Staff Response: Staff acknowledge the concerns identified by York Region, and have addressed them in the revised draft OPA 620, as outlined below:

- Part A–Preamble of OPA 620 has been modified to incorporate discussion of the PPS, and OPA 620's consistency with the PPS;
- Bonusing provisions have been introduced to the Plan;
- The minimum heights and densities established in the Plan discourage low-density development while recognizing that greater densities may not be achievable until the subway expansion is completed; also, the Plan now provides that density may be transferred and utilized from lands which are required for public roads; and
- Besides encouraging the redevelopment of existing low-density uses, the Plan establishes strict criteria to be met by plans to expand such uses, to ensure the long-term objectives of the Plan are not compromised.

#### D. Staff-Initiated Modifications To the Draft Amendments

Upon further review of the draft OPA documents, Staff have introduced several modifications to refine and improve them, and to make them more understandable and usable:

1. Mapping revisions

Staff have made minor modifications to Schedules D, F and H to provide greater clarity and accuracy in the presentation of mapped information within the Amendment Area.

2. Streetscaping policies

Staff have introduced a number of additional streetscaping policy provisions (new subsection 4.3.7) to clarify the City's requirements for the new streets within and bordering the Amendment Area, and ensure that future development will satisfy the vision for the Amendment Area.

3. Energy Conservation policies

Staff have introduced a number of energy conservation policy provisions to recognize the need to encourage development which is as efficient as possible in terms of its design and future functioning with respect to energy utilization.

4. Urban Design–Windows

In order to clarify the City's requirements with respect to the provision of windows, Staff have introduced the following policies to the Urban Design section:

- All commercial and residential buildings shall have windows fronting onto the public street system.
- In recognition of the role that windows play in providing a visual connection between the building and the outside environment, it is important that appropriate glazing materials be used. Glazing materials shall generally allow for the transmission of light and views between the outside and inside of the building, and shall not be opaque.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE REVISED OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS**

### **Policy and Planning Context**

#### **Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)**

The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. For 'Employment Areas', which include the lands subject to draft OPA 620, the PPS provides:

- "Planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by:
- a) providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment (including industrial, commercial and institutional uses) to meet long-term needs;
  - b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;
  - c) planning for, protecting and preserving employment areas for current and future uses; and
  - d) ensuring the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and projected needs."

The PPS defines 'Employment Area' as 'those areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities'.

Draft OPA 620 provides for the Amendment Area to become a mixed use area, with a variety of retail, office and residential uses, as well as other community uses. The Amendment Area will continue to be an employment area, and will provide significantly more employment than previously, owing to the anticipated redevelopment of existing low intensity uses to higher intensity uses like major office and retail development. Introduction of a wider range and mix of uses will also help to achieve more compact form, support the efficient use of public transit and other infrastructure, and enable a larger population to function in a 'live-work' situation, without the need to commute.

Draft OPA 620 is consistent with the policies of the PPS.

### Regional Official Plan

As the upper tier planning document that provides the framework for achieving the Region's urban structure, the Secondary Plan must conform to the York Region Official Plan (ROP). The ROP includes policies in Section 5.4. – "Corridors" encouraging area municipalities to comprehensively examine such arterial corridors to provide opportunities for mixed use and higher densities. OPA 620 satisfies these goals. The Regional Plan also identifies Jane Street as a Regional Corridor, and Steeles Avenue as a Local Corridor. Regional corridor policies also apply to Local Corridors that have rapid transit services and facilities in support of this infrastructure.

Early in 2005, the Region amended the ROP (Amendment 43), strengthening the policy support for identified nodes and corridors. ROPA 43 provides for area municipalities to identify 'Key Development Areas', and would support the identification of the lands subject to OPA 620 as one of Vaughan's 'Key Development Areas'. York Region staff have indicated that the proposed policies in OPA 620 are consistent with and supportive of the ROPA 43.

### Official Plan

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

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

### Zoning

Almost the entire area is zoned Prestige Employment Area Zone - EM1 except for three properties: 1) the northeast corner of Jane and Steeles was zoned C1 by a 1998 OMB decision permitting two (2 and 4 storey) buildings for a crematorium and columbarium; 2) more central to the amendment area is an exception that permits eating establishments, banks and financial institutions, with or without a drive-through, and business and professional offices; and 3) on the north edge of the amendment area, the Hydro Corridor is zoned PB1S - Parkway Belt Linear Facilities Zone.

### Existing Uses

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

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

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

### Development Applications

The OMB has approved development of a mausoleum/crematorium on a site on the northeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue. The owner has not yet submitted a site plan application to proceed with this development.

United Parcel Service (UPS), owner and operator of a large parcel distribution facility on the lands just east of Jane Street, has submitted a site plan application to permit a significant expansion of their building eastward into the vacant portion of their site. This vacant area has also been identified as a possible location for a part of the proposed transit station facilities, and is subject to the EA currently being completed for the Spadina subway extension. The City is in discussions with UPS regarding their proposed expansion.

Steeles-Keele Investments Ltd. (SKI) is the owner of approximately 16 hectares, which constitutes the eastern third of the Amendment Area. Construction of a 4-storey office building on the northwest corner of Keele and Steeles is already complete. In addition, the owner wishes to proceed with approvals to develop the balance of the property, which could include high density mixed-use development with a range of office, commercial, and residential uses. Staff have met with the owner and his architect several times, and continue to work with them toward a master plan for the site.

Outside the Amendment Area, on the northeast corner of Steeles Avenue and Keele Street, a site plan application for a four-storey office building has recently been approved.

### Planned Transit Improvements

There are Environmental Assessments currently underway for two projects that will, if implemented, dramatically improve transit service to this area. The policies of OPA 620 are designed to provide for a development regime that will support the introduction of higher order services to the area by providing uses and densities that can take advantage of the higher level of accessibility. The status of the EA studies is discussed below.

The Highway 7 Corridor & Vaughan North-South Link Public Transit Improvements

This individual environmental assessment is being conducted by the Region of York. Its purpose is to improve public transit infrastructure in the Region's primary east-west corridor and its western north-south corridor to increase ridership and support linkages to other GTA transit systems. The EA was completed in August of 2005 and has been submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for approval. The EA is recommending that rapid transit services be introduced along Highway 7 and in the Vaughan North-South Link, which connects the Vaughan Corporate Centre to the York Regional Terminal site on Steeles Avenue across from York University.

Initially the system will be operated as a Bus Rapid Transit service, with the buses primarily running in dedicated lanes. In areas of constraint, the buses will operate in mixed traffic. The EA will also confirm the subway alignment, which will provide for the further extension of the Spadina subway, north from Steeles Avenue to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

A subway alignment was originally identified in OPA 529. The EA study confirms the portion of the OPA No. 529 subway alignment that is located on the west side of Jane Street north of Highway 7, which ultimately intersects with the Millway Road road allowance at Highway 7. How the subway extension reaches the west side of Jane Street will depend on the alignment that is ultimately approved in the ongoing Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA. In advance of the approval of this work, the Highway 7/Vaughan North-South Link EA identifies a "Tie In" zone where the alignment can be adjusted to link to the Toronto/TTC EA. The "Tie In" would occur through a later amendment to the EA.

The Highway 7/Vaughan North-South Link EA is more advanced in the process than the Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA. This EA could receive approval in the summer of 2006.

#### The Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA

The purpose of this EA is to identify the alignment of a subway extension from Downsview Station at Sheppard Avenue to Steeles Avenue in the vicinity of the York Region terminal site. The EA was approved for submission by Toronto City Council in December, 2005, and was submitted to the Ministry of Environment in February, 2006. Approvals could be obtained by early autumn, 2006.

The Toronto/TTC EA has confirmed the role of the Steeles West Station as a major inter-regional facility, featuring commuter parking in the hydro corridor north of Steeles Avenue and three bus terminals with 30 to 40 bays to accommodate the TTC, GO and the Viva/YRT services. The preferred subway alignment varies from what was originally identified in OPA 529. The EA alignment crosses Steeles Avenue diagonally with the station straddling the north and south sides of the street. The OPA 529 alignment was contained entirely within the Steeles Avenue right-of-way, curving north to the Corporate Centre closer to Jane Street.

The preferred Toronto/TTC subway alignment has been examined and it can tie in with the alignment that was identified in OPA 529 from a point immediately to the south of Highway 407. It then heads into the Corporate Centre along the OPA 529 alignment, ultimately intersecting with Highway 7 at Millway Road.

On March 23, 2006, the Province announced its commitment to the extension of the Spadina subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre at Highway 7. This will negate the need for the interim bus rapid transit service, and allow for the immediate implementation of subway technology. This will enhance access to the OPA 620 amendment area making it a major focus for subway riders, bus passengers and drivers using the planned commuter lot.

### **Preparation of Revised Draft OPA 620**

The revised draft OPA 620 is the result of a lengthy planning and public consultation process. Based on technical analysis from the City's planning, urban design, transportation and market consultants, as well as agency comments and public/landowner input, a 'preferred option' was developed in the form of the initial draft OPA 620, which was presented to Public Hearing on October 4, 2004.

The initial draft of OPA 620 was intended to provide densities that take advantage of their proximity to higher order transit service and supply the necessary ridership support. However, due to concern that the proposed densities might not be high enough to properly support the introduction of higher order transit to the area, Council directed that higher densities be examined to determine their planning implications. Council also directed that street townhouses and semi-detached dwellings be deleted as permitted uses from the Plan, in favour of higher intensity uses.

Subsequently, the City's consultants examined additional higher density scenarios for the Amendment Area, and concluded that higher development densities, consistent with the "Increased Density Scenario", can be supported, as they have a relatively modest impact upon the functioning of the major intersections in the Study Area. This conclusion makes clear that the proposed new east-west road, and the north-south roads linking to Steeles Avenue are crucial to the efficient operation of the road network. These new roads significantly enhance the capacity of the network and facilitate traffic movement throughout the subject lands, thereby reducing the pressure on the existing arterial network and its major intersections. A similarly enhanced road network on the south side of Steeles is equally important to the viability of new development there.

The distribution of development densities, and the character of new development are important considerations in minimizing the impact of new development on the road network. A concentration of density in close proximity to the new transit station will serve to maximize transit ridership and reduce the generation of auto trips originating from or destined to the new development within the subject lands. A concentration of residential development is the preferred solution as residential uses are a significantly lower generator of auto trips than major office or large format retail commercial development.

The increased amount of permitted development reflected in the revised OPA 620 implies an increase in the number of workers and residents, and greater needs for hard services, schools, parks and community services. Greater attention to urban design and streetscaping is also required, as well as additional requirements to address noise and other micro-environmental concerns (ie. wind, weather protection, etc.). Consequently, the revised OPA 620 incorporates a number of policy modifications and refinements to ensure that these concerns are appropriately addressed.

### **An Overview of Revised Draft OPA 620**

To achieve higher density development, revised draft OPA 620 includes three levels of land use intensity that are related to their proximity to the transit station, with the highest density at the station site. The densities are reduced as the distance from the station increases. This approach to the distribution of densities within the development area recognizes that transit ridership is related to distance from the transit stop, with the highest levels of ridership being achieved within a 400-metre distance, or about a five minute walk.

Key components of the revised draft OPA 620 (see Attachment 1), include:

#### **"Transit Core" designation**

within 250 metres of the proposed Transit Station site  
Floor Space Index (FSI) target of 4.0

- **“Transit Transition” designation**  
from 250 metres to 500 metres of the proposed Transit Station site  
FSI target of 2.5
- **“Corridor” designation**  
beyond 500 metres from the proposed Transit Station site  
FSI target of 1.5

Revised draft OPA 620 includes a range of land uses that provide the opportunity for transit riders to walk short distances between multiple activities. The range of permitted uses include:

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

Table 1: Land Use Distribution

	<b>Area (Hectares)</b>	<b>Area (Acres)</b>	<b>%</b>
Total Study Area	48,03	118.7	100
Development Parcel Area	27,08	66.9	56.4
Open Space Area	3,93	9.7	8.2*
Institutional Area	1,75	4.3	3.6
City Owned SWMP	1,03	2.5	2.1
Primary and Secondary Road Area	14,25	35.2	29.7

\* Open Space Area will be finalized based upon the 2007 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The “Transit Core” designation provides for major office development directly on Steeles Avenue at the transit station, as well as an Urban Plaza, High Density Residential uses, including apartments and other multi-unit housing types (e.g., block and stacked townhouses), Public and Institutional Uses, and Mixed Use development.

The “Transit Transition” designation provides for a transition in scale between the high density development in the Transit Core, and the lower density development further east and west. The “Transit Transition” designation permits essentially the same range of uses as the “Transit Core” designation, but limits single use prestige office employment uses to a maximum density of 0.5 FSI.

The “Corridor” designation provides further for transition to the low density development surrounding the Amendment Area. The “Corridor” designation has the same range of permitted uses at a lower scale than the “Transit Transition” designation.

Retail uses are permitted in all areas of the plan but may be provided only at grade, as a component of a multi-storey building, and only as an ancillary use to the main use in a building combined with High Density Residential, Prestige Office, or Public/Institutional uses.

Public/Institutional uses, including schools, parks and community facilities, are permitted in all areas of the plan without requiring an amendment. Draft OPA 620 conceptually identifies the locations of three Neighbourhood Parks, five Neighbourhood Squares/Green, an Urban Plaza, and one elementary school site (Attachment 3). The school site has been identified at the request of the York Region District School Board.

Revised OPA 620 includes policies respecting noise and vibration, which are a potential concern considering the Amendment Area's proximity to the CN rail yard, the continuing presence of active industrial uses, principally UPS, and the future subway line and bus terminal. Identification of the limits and levels of noise sources and their mitigation is required. Residential and other sensitive land uses will require a noise and vibration study to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the City and CN; if feasible, mitigative measures will be required as a condition of approval. Residential and other sensitive land uses may also be required to undertake mitigation to address impacts associated with noise originating from the subway, bus and truck traffic.

Revised OPA 620 incorporates significant improvements to the road network north and south of Steeles Avenue (see Attachment 2). North of Steeles Avenue, a new east-west road running continuously from Jane Street to Keele Street is proposed, together with seven north-south roadways linking the east-west road to Steeles Avenue. A similar road network is shown conceptually south of Steeles, anticipating that additional roads will likely be needed to accommodate future development there, but recognizing that it is outside the Amendment Area and will be subject to the outcome of the process to update the York University Campus Master Plan. Revised OPA 620 also supports the continued protection of the subway corridor to the Vaughan Corporate Centre as established by OPA 529.

Respecting existing uses, given that the ultimate target densities provided in the plan may take time to achieve, policies are included in the plan that permit those existing uses to continue.

Revised OPA 620 also makes provision for establishment of a Community Improvement Plan within the Amendment Area. Until recently, the Amendment Area has been viewed primarily as a place for low-density employment uses. To help make a shift towards the transit-based vision embodied by this plan, it will be necessary for the City to take a supportive role towards transit-supportive development densities. The plan includes policies to allow the City to designate all or part of the amendment area as a Community Improvement Area under Section 28 of the Planning Act. This gives the City an opportunity to develop and provide a financial and/or land use incentive package (e.g. including development charges, parking requirements, parkland dedication, municipal fees, etc.) to development that helps to fulfill the new transit-supportive vision.

Revised OPA 620 includes urban design policies intended to achieve buildings and spaces that support the permitted uses and densities of the plan, and help to establish an environment, which is strongly transit-supportive and pedestrian-oriented in character. The proposed OPA 620 includes policies regarding: built form, building heights, setbacks, street wall, building massing, open space, pedestrian realm, and road allowance and streetscaping. The key elements of the urban design policies include: 'build-to' lines to create "street walls" along Steeles Avenue and the north-south local roads; setbacks that support the street edge, as well as enhanced streetscapes on Steeles Avenue and the north-south local roads; and the locating of parking and service areas at the rear of buildings.

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

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

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

- the TTC Spadina subway extension project to Vaughan
- solutions to traffic gridlock
- the Region of York and other agencies to ensure higher order transit
- land use designation and urban form to support transit usage
- growth that does not outpace the road network
- regional and provincial initiatives on transportation infrastructure



- bicycle and pedestrian networks

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

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

### **Conclusion**

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

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

OPA 620 establishes a policy framework that:

- introduces a range of new land uses;
- provides higher density mixed use development;
- guides the delivery of the necessary infrastructure, open space and community services;
- sets out clear rules for the design of development;
- establishes a pedestrian-friendly human-scale environment; and
- strongly supports public transit ridership.

In Staffs view, draft OPA 620 is consistent with Provincial and Regional policy. OPA 620 will guide the creation of a new and recognizably 'urban place' featuring high quality development which will complement York University and make efficient use of the extended Spadina subway into Vaughan. Should Council concur, OPA 620 should be adopted.

### **Attachments**

1. Schedule A–Land Use and Density, Draft OPA 620
2. Schedule B–Conceptual Street Network, Draft OPA 620
3. Schedule C–Conceptual Open Space Network & Public Amenities, Draft OPA 620

### **Report prepared by:**

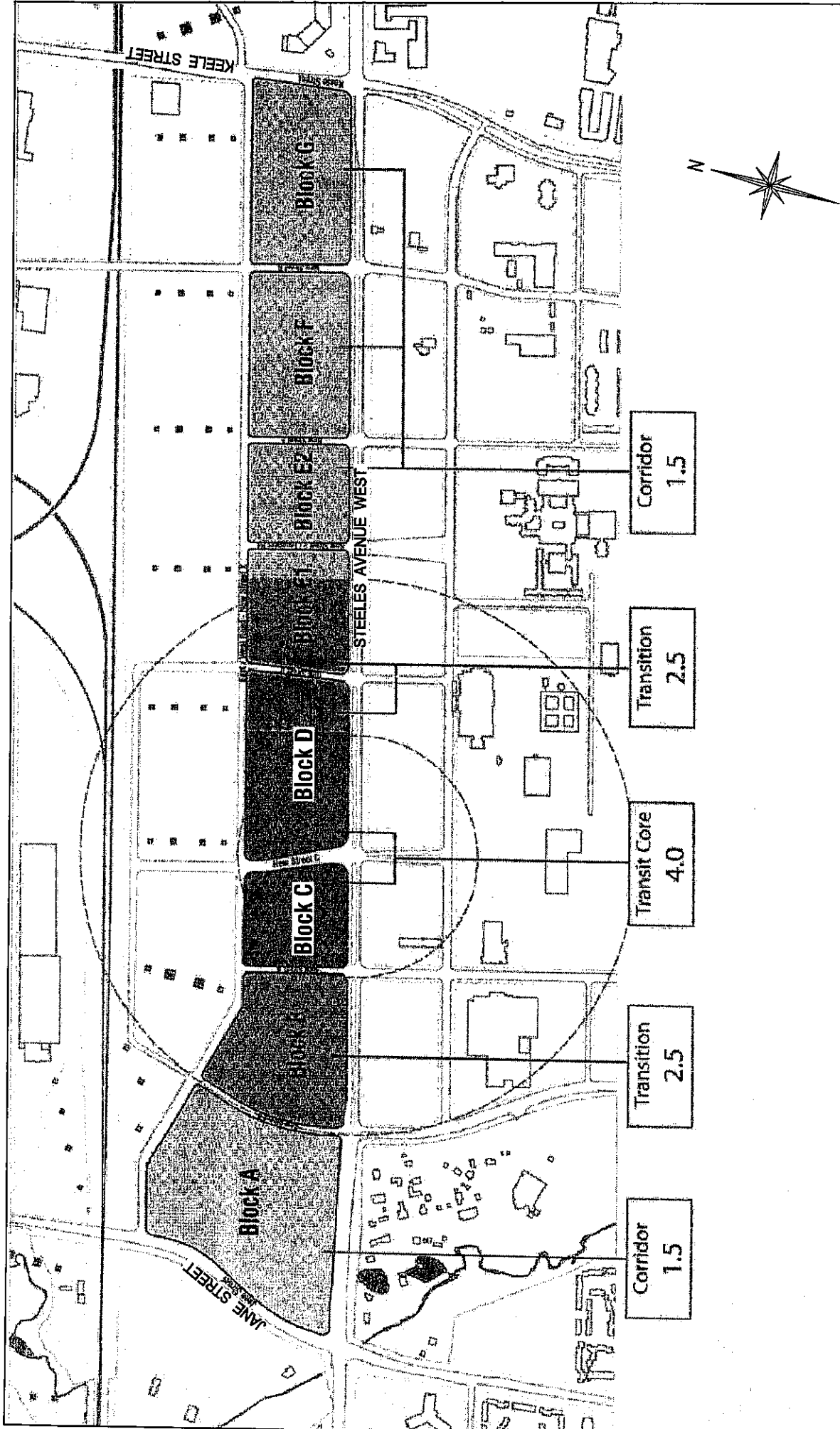
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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Planning

DIANA BIRCHALL  
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Schedule A - Land Use & Density

**Steeles Corridor - Jane St. to  
Keele St. - Secondary Plan  
(Draft OPA 620)**

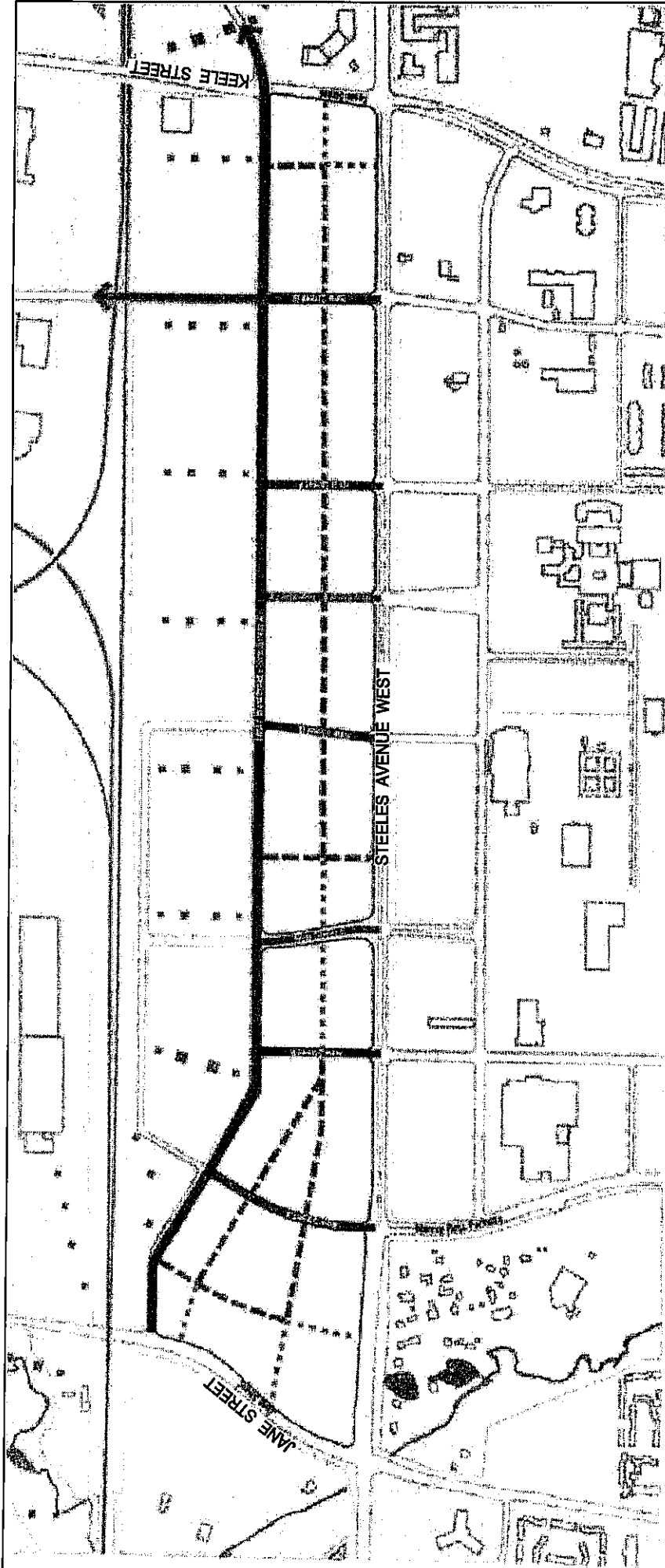


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Attachment

Lot 1,  
Concession 4  
May 17, 2006

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- Primary Road Network
- - - Secondary Road Network
- · · · · Pedestrian / Cycle Link or Secondary Street



Not to Scale

Schedule B - Conceptual Street Network

**Steeles Corridor - Jane St. to  
Keele St. - Secondary Plan  
(Draft OPA 620)**

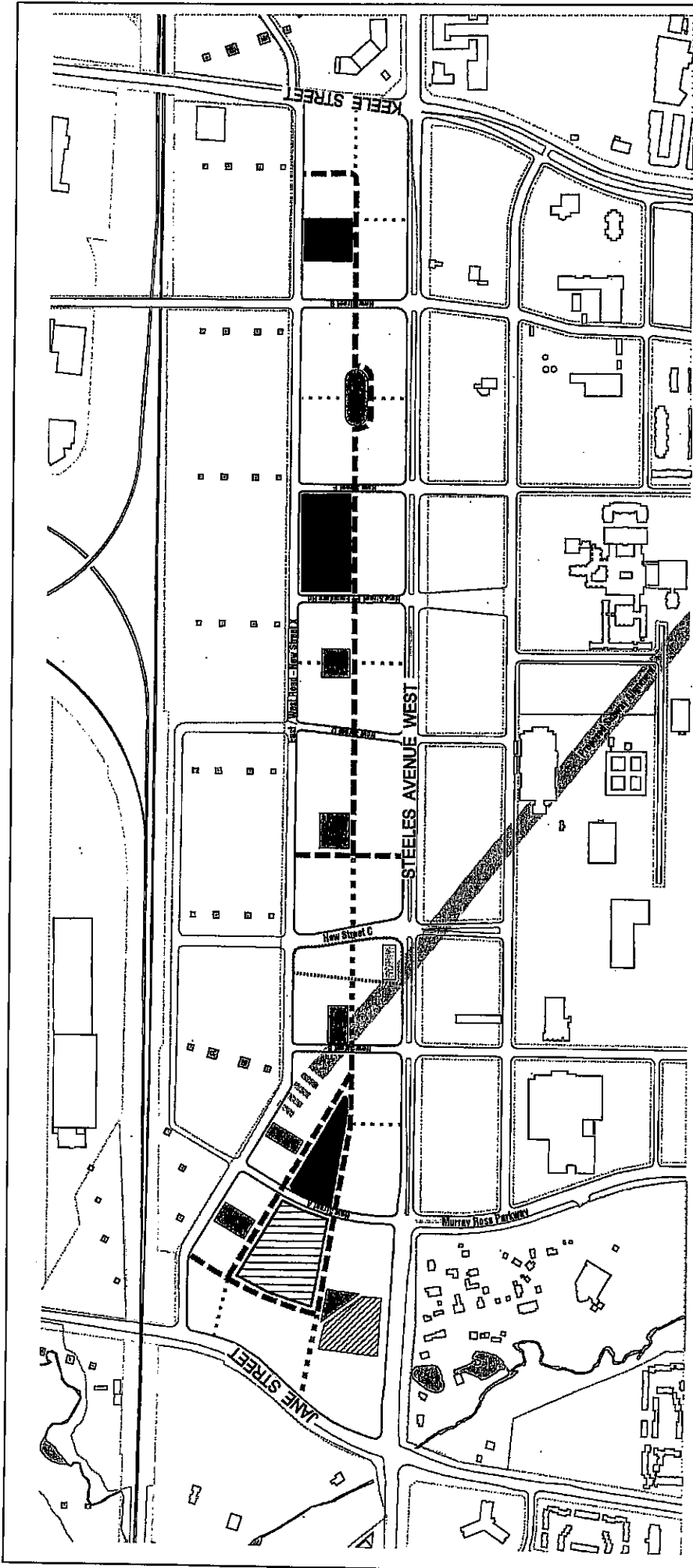


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**Attachment  
2**

Lot 1,  
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- Neighbourhood Park
- Neighbourhood Square / Green
- Urban Plaza
- Potential School Site or Open Space
- Secondary Road Network
- Preferred Secondary Street or Pedestrian / Cycle Link

- Pedestrian / Cycle Link
- Existing Storm Water Management Pond
- Lands Acquired for Transit Terminal
- Proposed Subway Alignment



Not to Scale

Schedule C - Conceptual Open Space Network and Public Amenities

Steeles Corridor - Jane St. to  
Keele St. - Secondary Plan  
(Draft OPA 620)



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Attachment

3

Lot 1,  
Concession 4  
May 17, 2006

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