

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APRIL 30, 2007

### **DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS NO. 660, 661, 662, 663 AND 664 HIGHWAY 7 POLICY REVIEW FILE NO. 15.87**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT the modifications identified in this report be approved by Council;
2. THAT draft Official Plan Amendments 660, 661, 662, 663 and 664 (pursuant to the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study) BE ADOPTED;
3. THAT the Region of York be requested to rename Highway 7 to "Avenue Seven" in keeping with its intended urban, transit-supportive future role in Vaughan;
4. THAT Staff be directed to initiate discussions with the Region of York and York Region Transit with respect to the preparation and implementation of streetscaping requirements to complement transit objectives to the satisfaction of the City; and
5. THAT the Commissioner of Economic/Technology Development and Communications be directed to undertake a marketing strategy to guide and promote the 'Avenue Seven' initiative and that the funds required for the marketing strategy be addressed through the budget process.

#### **Economic Impact**

The economic impact to the City will be strongly positive in terms of the value of investment and assessment which will ultimately result from the implementation of the final plan for the Highway 7 corridor via new development and redevelopment.

#### **Communications Plan**

Courtesy notice of today's item and Committee of the Whole meeting was sent out to all individuals and corporate interests on the list assembled from numerous previous public meetings and correspondence. Draft copies of the Official Plan amendments were made available to the public on Friday, April 27, 2007. Following Council adoption of the amendments, notice will be given by the Clerk's Department to all those on the list.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to address concerns raised at the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 15, 2006, respecting the draft Official Plan Amendments #660, 661, 662, 663 and 664, and to bring forward modifications to the Official Plan Amendments for Council consideration for approval.

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

##### **Location**

The lands subject to OPA 660, 661, 662, 663 and 664 include properties that traverse the entire length of the Highway 7 corridor in the City of Vaughan, from Brampton in the west to Richmond Hill in the east and extend up to 200 metres on both the north and south sides of the Highway 7

right-of-way. The draft Official Plan amendments amend six current plans (OPA's #450, 240, 345, 500, 467 and 4). The lands subject to the amendments are shown conceptually on Attachment 1.

The Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study is located within the Vaughan Corporate Centre, and extends from the north side of Highway 7 to Highway 407 on the south, and from Jane Street on the west to the CN Rail Yard on the east.

### Public Consultation Process

The following is a brief record of the public process, associated Council meetings and relevant policy initiatives on this file to date:

- On May 14, 2001, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Highway 7 Policy Review.
- On May 13, 2002, Council received the Phase I Background Reports for both the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and the Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study; endorsed the criteria for selecting candidate Demonstration Plan sites for the Jane/7 study; and, forwarded the Phase I reports to the Region of York as input to their emerging initiatives.
- On June 18, 2002, a Public Open House was held to provide an overview of the studies and obtain comments from the public on the evolving vision for Highway 7.
- On November 26, 2002, a second Public Information Meeting was held.
- On June 23, 2003, Council directed that Official Plan Amendments be prepared to implement the land use changes identified in the Phase II reports.
- Both the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and the Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study were largely completed in early 2004. However, York Region's initiatives on both the YRTP Transitway corridor, and ROPA #43 (Centres and Corridors policies) had progressed to the point where it became prudent to delay finalizing the Highway 7 Policy Review until these Regional initiatives were concluded.
- On October 6, 2005, a Public Information Meeting was held at Woodbridge Library to present the results of both the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and Jane/Highway 7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study, and inform the public on the remaining steps to completion of the planning process.
- On Dec. 5, 2005, a statutory Public Hearing was held respecting five draft amendments to the Official Plan to implement the recommendations of the Highway 7 Futures Study. Staff was directed to address the issues raised at the Public Hearing in a subsequent report to the Committee of the Whole.
- On May 23, 2006, Council deferred the approval of the five draft amendments to the Official Plan, and directed staff to report on the impacts associated with the subway extension, high capacity transit link and other services.

### The Policy and Planning Context

The Province has recently undertaken three significant policy initiatives which have modified the planning and policy context in terms of Provincial policy. The updated Provincial Policy Statement and Greenbelt Plan were approved early in 2005. On June 13, 2005, the Places to Grow Act was approved, providing a legal framework for growth planning in Ontario. A regulation was also passed identifying the Greater Golden Horseshoe as the first area in the Province for which a

growth plan will be prepared under the Places to Grow Act. In November, 2005, a Proposed Growth Plan For the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released for public comment.

Also, early in 2005, the Region of York amended its Official Plan (ROPA 43) incorporating new policies governing development within key development nodes and corridors. In addition, a number of environmental assessments are well underway to significantly enhance the quality of public transit infrastructure and service with important implications in their vicinity. Recognizing that these new initiatives could have significant implications for development in the Highway 7 corridor, the City's studies and draft amendments to the Official Plan were held in abeyance throughout 2005.

These new initiatives are briefly summarized below.

#### Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The current Provincial Policy Statement, approved on March 1, 2005, generally supports the Highway 7 draft OPA's. The new PPS includes the following statements of relevance to the Highway 7 studies:

Section 1.2.2.b): "identify areas where growth will be directed, including the identification of nodes and the corridors linking these nodes";

Section 1.2.2.c): "identify targets for intensification and redevelopment within all or any of the lower tier municipalities, including minimum targets that should be met before expansion of the boundaries of the settlement area is permitted"; and

Section 1.2.2.d): "where transit corridors exist or are to be developed, identify density targets for areas adjacent or in proximity to these corridors, including minimum targets that should be met before expansion of the boundaries of settlement areas is permitted".

Overall the Highway 7 draft OPA's are very supportive of the current Provincial Policy Statement.

#### The Places To Grow Act

The Growth Plan For The Greater Golden Horseshoe was prepared and approved under the Places To Grow Act, and came into effect on June 16, 2006. The Places to Grow Act provides more detailed direction than the PPS to managing growth. The Act supports a series of urban centres connected by urban transit. In the case of Vaughan, this implies the connection of Vaughan Corporate Centre with Brampton City Centre to the west, and to the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway and Markham Centre to the east. The City's Highway 7 corridor work and York Region's YRTP transit initiatives will ultimately serve to fulfill the vision described of the Places to Grow Act.

The Places To Grow Act also requires, as a condition of extending urban boundaries, that a municipality must have plans in place to accommodate at least 40% of projected growth after 2015 through intensification of existing urban areas. The Highway 7 corridor provides perhaps the greatest opportunity in Vaughan to accommodate substantial growth through intensification of existing areas, and in areas which will be well served by planned transit improvements.

#### The York Region Official Plan

The Official Plan Amendments for Highway 7 must conform to the goals, objectives and policies of the Region of York Official Plan. Since the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study report was drafted, the Regional Official Plan has been amended by OPA 43, which came into full force and effect on January 7, 2005. The "Centres and Corridors" policies of OPA 43 provide more explicit direction to

local municipalities in implementing the Region's planned urban structure of Regional Centres, linked by Regional Corridors. Key elements of the Regional Official Plan include:

- a shift towards growth in the existing designated urban areas
- focusing of growth in Regional Centres and Corridors
- a mix of uses for both population and employment
- an overall, long term density target of 2.5 FSI
- identification of Key Development Areas along the Regional Corridors
- the provision of a higher order and connected transit network to support these uses
- urban design criteria that supports transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly uses
- implementation strategies

The Highway 7 OPA's conform with the Regional Official Plan by establishing leading edge municipal policies that: provide for an increased range of residential and employment uses; identify 'Key Development Areas'; permit a range of higher density targets according to the local context and conditions; include consistent urban design criteria that address both compatibility with adjacent stable low-density residential designations as well as transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly uses and densities; and, set the framework for initiating an incentive-based implementation strategy.

It is appropriate to recognize that the lands subject to the draft amendments along the Highway 7 corridor conform with the role and function of "Key Development Area" as described by ROPA 43, Section 5.5:

- a) areas with the greatest opportunity for compact and mixed-use development;
- b) areas assigned early priority for rapid transit services and infrastructure;
- c) areas abutting or adjacent to rapid transit stations; and
- d) areas of the Corridor that intersect with other major transportation routes or facilities, including passenger rail and other surface transit services.

#### YRTP & TTC Planned Transit Improvements

As a Regional Corridor linking a series of Regional Centres, Highway 7 has the potential to be part of a major transit corridor of GTA-wide significance. The Environmental Assessment (EA) for interim Bus Rapid Transit services, through the corridor and ultimately linking to the Spadina subway extension at Steeles Avenue, is now nearing completion. As the major connecting link to Vaughan, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is also conducting the EA for the extension of the Spadina subway to Steeles Avenue. On Mar. 23, 2006, the Province announced its commitment to the extension of the Spadina subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre at Highway 7.

The Official Plan amendments arising from the Highway 7 Futures Study support and take advantage of these transit initiatives, and associated development opportunities.

#### The Highway Seven Land Use Futures Study

The Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study began with a broadly defined Study Area extending across the entire Highway 7 corridor in the City of Vaughan and included approximately 200 metres on each side of the corridor. The Study Area was further refined to exclude environmental areas (river valleys) and stable residential areas backing onto the corridor. The corridor was also narrowed in width to further focus the potential density in close proximity to the right-of-way.

The Study analyzed the land use character along the corridor and the existing arterial road network that intersects with it. The Study examined the variety of existing conditions along the corridor, the existing planning policies, and the land use and urban design opportunities that the corridor provides. It also reviewed the evolution of the corridor, the existing policy context and recent

Provincial and Regional initiatives. Based on this work, the Study then developed a Vision that would be the basis for preparing Official Plan amendments and an Implementation Action Plan.

Since the beginning of the Study, the need for Highway 7 to continue to evolve as a main axis for the City's residential and employment communities has become even more apparent. York Region is aggressively pursuing both short and long-term higher order transit improvements in the corridor through the York Region Rapid Transit Plan. Transit services are being implemented through a 'quick-start' program that will provide increased levels of transit service in the corridor. The next step in transit service level is being developed through an Environmental Assessment and will incorporate dedicated lanes in the Highway 7 corridor for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The final phase is to upgrade the dedicated bus lanes to accommodate a light rail system.

The introduction of higher order transit service means there is also a need to provide policy support for development which is more urban and transit-oriented. The City's Study is intended to provide the analytical basis and policy framework for proposed official plan amendments supporting the Region's transit initiatives. The City is also nearing completion of the Vaughan Corporate Centre Streetscape Master Plan Study, which will complement this evolution of the transit service and the associated higher order land uses.

The five Official Plan amendments, which are the subject of this report, are intended to implement the recommendations of the Highway 7 Land Use Study, and thereby facilitate the gradual transformation of development within the Highway 7 corridor into a scale, form and character reflective of an urban, transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly environment.

#### Staff Response to Council Direction

Pursuant to Council's direction, Development Engineering staff have reviewed the anticipated impacts of the five Official Plan amendments, in terms of transportation and servicing implications, and have commented as follows:

- The Transportation Planning Division is generally supportive of the OPAs' intent to facilitate the change in urban structure along Highway 7 with a plan to establish a sustainable urban structure that will support higher order transit. The amendment also conforms with and supports Provincial and Regional policy.
- In order to achieve the overall density targets, the planned parallel east-west road network defined by development blocks of typically 100 metres by 200 metres north and south of Highway 7 (Avenue 7) will provide access to the developments and balance traffic along Highway 7, where such a road and block pattern is achievable. An adequate transportation infrastructure is paramount for achieving the overall density of the Plans.
- The proposed grid road network is to be established through more detailed tertiary planning, the preparation of Block Plans and/or through the approval of individual development applications, and must proceed through the Draft Plan of Subdivision process in order to convey the planned road allowances to the City of Vaughan.
- A development and transportation infrastructure phasing plan should be required as part of the Block Plan or Tertiary Plan approval process for blocks located west of Highway 27. The phasing plan should also address the impact of the non-participating landowners on the overall servicing of the Block, and what interim servicing measures will be required
- The City of Vaughan Corporate Centre Transportation/Transit Planning and Functional Design Study was completed in October 2000. The Study provided a significant level of detail necessary to support the Vaughan Corporate Centre (VCC) development vision. A proposed grid road network is an essential component of the VCC transportation network that will support both existing development and the anticipated planned growth.
- Currently there are two Class Environmental Assessments underway in the VCC area:
  - Highway 7 Corridor and Vaughan North-South Link EA, and
  - Highway 400 and Highway 7 Improvements to Support the Vaughan Corporate Centre Class EA (Links 4 and 5 EA)

- With Federal support along with commitments from the Provincial government and York Region for the subway extension to the VCC, the existing OPA 500 Plan requires a comprehensive review of existing and planned transportation infrastructure. The transportation study should identify studies and opportunities for improvement, assess recommendations of the above noted studies and investigate road network requirements to be in place at the time subway is built and higher order transit services are provided on Highway 7.
- The proposed Draft OPA 663 and/or current OPA 500 policies do not provide enough detail to protect for transportation infrastructure within the VCC and in our opinion an updated transportation study should be completed as part of the City's forthcoming Transportation Master Plan for the area in support of the subject OPA.
- In general the proposed Highway 7 Official Plan Amendment areas are within existing serviced areas of the City. Additional specific servicing capacity requirements to support the proposed re-development of these lands will be addressed in conjunction with the City-wide OP Master Servicing Plan preparations. In addition, the subject lands will also be subject to the findings of the on-going City-wide stormwater management retrofit study requirements.

#### Modifications to the Draft Amendments

The following modifications to the earlier drafts of OPA 660, 661, 662, 663, and 664 have been introduced to strengthen the policies, and improve the clarity of the documents.

*1. Exclude certain stable residential areas that were proposed for redesignation by draft OPA 661 (amending OPA 240 – Woodbridge Community Plan) and draft OPA 664 (amending OPA 4 - Concord West neighbourhood)*

The subject areas are established residential areas located within the Woodbridge community, as well as the Concord West neighbourhood south of Highway 7 and east of Keele Street.

The Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study recommended that, with the exception of lands zoned Open Space or Special Policy Area (SPA), and existing residential subdivisions backing onto Highway 7, other residential areas within 200 metres of the highway should be considered for redevelopment to transit-supportive densities. Generally, those areas located within a convenient walk of transit service are most important in generating transit ridership; therefore, it is logical to try and intensify development there to maximize the potential number of riders.

The Highway 7 Study also recommended establishment of “a parallel east-west collector road network north and south of Highway 7, to complement and support it and facilitate traffic circulation in its vicinity”. Intensification of development along Highway 7 can be expected to increase traffic on the road. A more porous road network in the areas north and south of Highway 7 would enable more local trips to utilize the local road network instead of relying mainly on Highway 7.

Staff have completed a review of the areas north and south of Highway 7, in order to assess the potential for improving the local road network there. Staff have concluded that, within the Woodbridge community and the Concord neighbourhood, significant improvements are unlikely to be achieved due to the existing pattern of development, the presence of major topographical constraints, natural features and railway lines. The establishment of new east-west roads paralleling Highway 7, 200 metres north and south, is probably achievable only within the employment areas flanking Highway 7, where large land parcels exist and the potential is present to improve the road system as redevelopment occurs over time.

In Staff's view, a sensitive approach to the Concord and Woodbridge neighbourhoods is appropriate to respect their stable residential environments. Properties located on local streets internal to the neighbourhood are physically separated from the transit service on Highway 7 by greater distance, and should not become the subject of redevelopment pressure. It is appropriate

to limit redesignation to those properties which are most conveniently accessible to the improved transit service planned for Highway 7.

Therefore, Staff have concluded that generally, within Woodbridge, the redesignations to encourage redevelopment of existing residential uses should be confined to the Highway 7 frontage. The existing neighbourhoods along Highway 7, whether backing onto the highway or not, are quiet, stable residential areas which generally are not showing signs of deterioration or transition to other non-residential development. Staff also examined the properties fronting on north/south arterials within 200 metres of Highway 7, to determine whether they should be included in the area to be redesignated to the 'Prestige Areas – Centres and Avenue Seven Corridor' designation. However, these arterials generally are fronted by stable residential development which is less than 25 years in age and where redevelopment is unlikely until well into the future. The only exception is Kipling Avenue, where the existing residential area is much older and shows evidence of transition, with the presence of some commercial uses along the Kipling frontage, particularly north of Highway 7. (Note: Further north, the lands fronting Kipling are currently the subject of the Kipling Avenue Land Use Study.) Staff are proposing that the properties fronting Kipling within 200 metres of its intersection with Highway 7 be included in the redesignated area to foster intensification. These properties are effectively located at the outside edge of the surrounding neighbourhood, and are within an easy walk of the planned Transit Stop at Kipling/Highway 7.

Within the Concord West neighbourhood, a detailed review has likewise shown it to be a stable residential neighbourhood. Furthermore, those properties fronting the south side of Highway 7 are limited in depth, owing to the presence of a watercourse which defines their southern boundary. Insufficient depth results in too little area to permit any significant amount of intensified development to occur on these properties. Therefore, in Staff's view it would not be appropriate to redesignate them for more transit-supportive development.

Within OPA's 661 and 664, the properties to be redesignated to 'Prestige Areas – Centres and Avenue Seven Corridor' are identified and outlined on Attachment 2 through to Attachment 6. For the balance of the Highway 7 corridor where employment areas predominate, a wider area extending 200 metres north and south of Highway 7 (where a more porous local road network is achievable) is redesignated to encourage transit supportive redevelopment.

*2. Require development to proceed via draft plan of subdivision in the Vaughan Corporate Centre (OPA 663) and along Highway 7 west of Highway 27 (OPA 660)*

The Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study recommended that parallel east-west collector roads north and south of Highway 7 be established. To accomplish this objective, Staff are recommending that OPA's 660 and 663 include policies requiring that development within these areas proceed via draft plan of subdivision, in order to ensure that these essential roads will be constructed and conveyed to the City.

In the Corporate Centre, development to date has occurred through the site plan approval process (Section 41 of the Planning Act). This process has been employed with the development of one building at a time on part of a large landholding, particularly where the development site abuts an existing arterial and/or collector road that provides access and servicing. Unlike the subdivision approval process, Section 41 only provides the municipality with the authority to obtain lands for widening of existing roads, but not for the right-of-way for a new road. Consequently, in most cases in the Corporate Centre, the City has protected the rights-of-way for planned roads by using the site plan process to prevent buildings from locating on the right-of-way. However, this process has not enabled the roads to be constructed or conveyed, leaving the City in a position where it may be required to either expropriate the road allowances or wait until they can be secured as a condition of a future redevelopment approval.

In light of the imminent construction of the Spadina subway extension and establishment of a subway station within the Corporate Centre, and recognizing the importance of providing the local road system early in the development process, simply protecting rights-of-way for planned roads is no longer sufficient. The envisioned scale and intensity of development requires that the local road network be established at an early stage to provide the necessary porosity, connectivity and access throughout the development area. Therefore, a stronger policy has been incorporated into OPA 663 for the lands within the Corporate Centre. The new policy requires that, development approvals shall be initiated via a plan of subdivision/condominium, or alternatively, to Council's satisfaction, via a development agreement providing for the construction and conveyance of the road allowance to the City.

A similar policy has been incorporated into OPA 660 for the lands west of Highway 27. Currently, most of the properties west of Highway 27 are undeveloped and have sufficient depth to readily accommodate east-west roads north and south of Highway 7. A grid road network within the lands close to Highway 7 will ultimately facilitate access from developed areas to the transit service on Highway 7. The Highway 7 Land Use Study has identified Transit Stop Centres at the Highway 27 and Highway 50 intersections with Highway 7. The 427/7 Centre will ultimately become an intensively developed focus which should support high quality transit service. To ensure that such improvements are undertaken in a timely manner in coordination with redevelopment and transit service enhancements, it is appropriate to require development to proceed via draft plan of subdivision.

### *3. Include definition of 'net developable land' in each OPA*

Staff recognize the need to further define "net developable land" in the calculation of Floor Space Index (FSI). The Plan provides that the overall FSI target densities shall be based on the "net developable land" area, but does not include a detailed description. The definition of "net developable lands" has been added and excludes: major arterial distributor roads; City streets; valleys; woodlots; parks; open spaces (including stormwater management ponds); hydro easements; existing development; parks; and schools.

### *4. Introduction of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines*

To provide an appropriate context for coordinated development, additional policies have been added to each of the amendments, requiring development applications to be consistent with the design policies outlined in the York Region Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines. The TOD Guidelines provide guidance with respect to the design of the built environment along Regional roads like Highway 7. The Highway 7 Study envisions a pedestrian-friendly, transit supportive, and attractive built environment of high-quality design that is compatible with adjacent neighbourhoods. The TOD Guidelines are expected to be instrumental in achieving the desired form of future development, consistent with the vision for Highway 7.

### *5. Introduction of new provisions of The Planning Act, respecting Site Plans and Plans of Subdivision*

Bill 51 has introduced changes to the Planning Act, Section 41 (Site Plan Control) and Section 51 (Plans of Subdivision) enabling municipalities to require drawings displaying the exterior design buildings, the relationship between the design of a proposed plan of subdivision and site plan control matters, and the range of permitted subdivision approval conditions pertaining to those subdivision plans including a school site, and those including a highway, pedestrian and bike pathways and transit rights-of-way. In order to implement such provisions, amendments are needed to the Official Plan and zoning bylaw. A policy has been added to each of the five Highway 7 OPAs to permit the City to utilize these provisions.



## *6. Phasing plans required for blocks west of Highway 27*

Pursuant to the recommendations of Engineering staff, a requirement for a development and transportation infrastructure phasing plan has been added to OPA 660 as part of the Block Plan approval process for blocks located west of Highway 27. These blocks are the only lands in the Highway 7 corridor where developable greenfield areas remain and the opportunity to prepare block plans remains available. The phasing plan includes a requirement to address the impact of the non-participating landowners on the overall servicing of the Block, and what interim servicing measures will be required.

## *7. Revisions to OPA figures and schedules*

Staff have revised and updated Figures and Schedules in the 5 OPA's to reflect the changes to the Plan described in this report. The following is a list of changes that have been made:

- revise development boundary areas in OPA 661 and OPA 664
- update Transit Stop Locations along Highway 7 in all 5 OPA's as identified in the York Region Highway 7 Corridor & Vaughan North-South Link Public Transit Improvements: Environmental Assessment Report
- refine labels and identifiers on the Schedules and Appendix to improve the visual clarity on mappings

## Additional Work Completed By Staff

Staff have also undertaken further work in response to the Highway 7 Land Use Study, to refine and improve the draft amendments to be considered by Council. This work has included the following:

### *1. Vaughanwood Ratepayers' Association concerns*

Staff met with the Vaughanwood Ratepayers' Association to discuss their concerns respecting the proposed height and safety implications associated with the Official Plan Amendment File OP.06.013 (1643750 Ontario Limited) and its related Zoning By-law Amendment File Z.06.035 located on the north side of Highway 7 adjacent to the Cosmetic Surgery Hospital. The property owner has proposed development of a private residential condominium building, varying in height between four and eight storeys, with its access on the north side of Highway 7 via the driveway entering the Hospital.

Residents have concerns that access to the proposed high density development, particularly left turn access into and out of the site, will worsen already existing high traffic volumes, speeding and aggressive driving along this stretch of Highway 7. Staff acknowledge the concerns of the residents regarding the high speed and risks to pedestrians along Highway 7. However, Staff are advised by York Region Engineering that the proposed access arrangements to and from Highway 7 satisfy accepted safety standards, and that, when it is constructed, the dedicated transitway in the centre median of Highway 7 will effectively eliminate left turns to and from the driveway onto Highway 7. These opinions are supported by Vaughan Engineering. The planned construction of the dedicated transit-way on Highway 7 and associated streetscaping should have a significant influence on the character of the street, changing it from a primarily auto-oriented highway, operating at relatively high speeds, to a more pedestrian friendly avenue.

With regard to building heights, OPA 661 permits residential uses to a maximum of eight storeys or, alternatively, a maximum of four storeys within 30 metres (12.8 m) of an existing low density residential designation. With respect to the development application, there is only one low density residential building within 30 metres of the proposed building. The height of the central portion of the building is proposed to be eight storeys, but is limited to four storeys within 30 metres of the one low density residential use. Since the development is appropriate relative to the scale and

capacity of Highway 7, Staff have concluded that no change is required to the maximum height policies of OPA 661.

## *2. Height policies in the Vaughan Corporate Centre – OPA 500*

Staff have considered the recommendation of the Highway 7 Land Use Study to remove the height restrictions within the Vaughan Corporate Centre. OPA 500 currently provides that “the maximum height of any building shall be 25 metres, except that on development blocks identified on Schedule ‘B’ as “Gateway Sites”, there will be no maximum height limit.”

The Highway 7 Study’s recommendation was intended to stimulate development there, given the expectation that it would likely be many years before the Spadina subway would be extended. However, since the Study was completed, the development context has changed considerably. The recent announcements of Federal and Provincial funding commitments to the Spadina subway extension have significantly shortened the horizon for its development, resulting in much greater interest in near-term development in the Corporate Centre.

In Staff’s opinion, OPA 500 is in need of a comprehensive review, and policy changes which could have a significant impact on the form or scale of its future development should be considered within such a review. The scale of development also will have implications for servicing and transportation requirements. It is anticipated that the forthcoming Official Plan Review will include a comprehensive review of OPA 500, including detailed study of its height and density provisions. In the meantime, the current height policies in OPA 500 should continue to apply, and are reflected in the current draft of OPA 663.

### Conformity With The Places To Grow Act

The Growth Plan For The Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) was prepared and approved under the Places To Grow Act, and came into effect on June 16, 2006, establishing broad policy direction for GGH municipalities engaging in growth management. The Highway 7 OPA’s are strongly supportive of the direction of the Places To Grow Act, particularly with respect to encouraging transit-supportive development in areas where significant public investment in transit infrastructure is planned, such as on Highway 7.

The Places To Grow Act includes specific policy direction respecting the introduction of permissions for non-employment uses within designated employment areas. Specifically, the Places To Grow Act, Section 2.2.6 (5) provides:

“Municipalities may permit conversion of lands within employment areas, to non-employment uses, only through a municipal comprehensive review where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) there is a need for the conversion
- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan
- c) the conversion will not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area, and achievement of the intensification target, density targets, and other policies of this Plan
- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion
- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated
- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

For the purposes of this policy, major retail uses are considered non-employment uses.”

This section of the Act is relevant to OPA's 660, 662, 663 and 664. Each of these amendments propose to introduce permissions for residential uses within designated employment areas.

For the purposes of the Act, a municipal comprehensive review is defined as "An official plan review, or an official plan amendment, initiated by a municipality that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan".

In Staff's view, the Highway 7 Land Use Study satisfies the requirements of the Places To Grow Act for a municipal comprehensive review. The Study is the result of four years of work, examining the Highway 7 corridor from a comprehensive planning perspective. In response to the criteria articulated in the Act:

- a) there is a need for the conversion in order to provide the form and density of development to support the planned public investment in transit infrastructure on Highway 7;
- b) the City has recently completed an analysis of its long term requirements for employment lands, and has adopted OPA 637 to provide sufficient employment land to address not only its own forecast needs but the further needs of York Region;
- c) the conversion will not adversely affect the viability of the subject employment areas, and will facilitate achievement of intensification and density targets, and public transit policy objectives;
- d) the planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion will be put in place via York Region's YRTP initiative, and Master Plans to upgrade water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure;
- e) the lands are not required over the long term for employment purposes, as much of the designated land is currently occupied by major retail developments which are considered non-employment uses under the Act and are unlikely to ever be converted to employment use;
- f) there are no significant, negative cross-jurisdictional uses to be considered.

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

This report and the draft amendments will address priorities previously set by Council in Vaughan Vision 2007. The necessary resources were allocated and approved by Council upon adoption of this project's initial terms of reference.

The following sections of Vaughan Vision 2007 are applicable:

- Section 2.5 Strengthen the City's diversified economic base.
- Section 3.1 Support the TTC subway extension projects.
- Section 3.2 Implement solutions to traffic gridlock.
- Section 4.1 Promote and encourage investment in the Vaughan Corporate Centre.
- Section 4.7 Implement OPA 600

### **Regional Implications**

The land use permissions introduced by these amendments will, in time, result in significant redevelopment along Highway 7 in support of the higher order transit initiatives of York Region. There will also be a requirement for significant improvements to streetscaping along Highway 7, a regional road. The need for additional servicing capacity to serve redevelopment will be examined in the City's Servicing Master Plans, and would have an impact upon the broader regional water and sanitary sewer systems.

## **Conclusion**

The five Official Plan amendments submitted for adoption by this report will provide Vaughan with a long-term land use planning structure and policy framework that will guide development and ensure that it supports higher order transit. The proposed modifications improve and strengthen the policy framework being established for future development in the Highway 7 Corridor, in keeping with the recommendations of the Highway 7 Land Use Study. The modifications will afford greater protection to existing stable residential neighbourhoods, while still providing a significant amount of intensification opportunity along the Highway 7 corridor to support transit service there.

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 660, OPA 661, OPA 662, OPA 663 and OPA 664 establish a policy framework that:

- introduces a range of new land uses;
- provides for increased densities;
- guides the delivery of the necessary infrastructure and community services;
- sets out clear rules for the design of development; and
- establishes an incentive-based strategy for implementation, where appropriate.

The amendments also conform with and support Provincial and Regional policy. Should Council concur with the policy framework established in the draft amendments, they should be adopted.

In view of the Region's commitment to higher order transit services on Highway 7, and the intent of the five amendments to encourage transit-supportive development throughout the Highway 7 corridor, Staff recommend that the Region of York be requested to rename the route "Avenue Seven" in keeping with its intended urban character.

To achieve these objectives, Staff also recommend that discussions be initiated with the Region of York to secure a commitment to identify and implement transit-supportive urban design and streetscaping requirements to complement the introduction of transit infrastructure.

## **Attachments**

1. Attachment 1: Highway 7 Concept Subject Lands
2. Attachment 2: Developable Land Adjustment
3. Attachment 3: Map of Development Limits
4. Attachment 4: Map of Development Limits
5. Attachment 5: Map of Development Limits
6. Attachment 6: Map of Development Limits
7. Attachment 7: Overview of the Official Plan Amendments

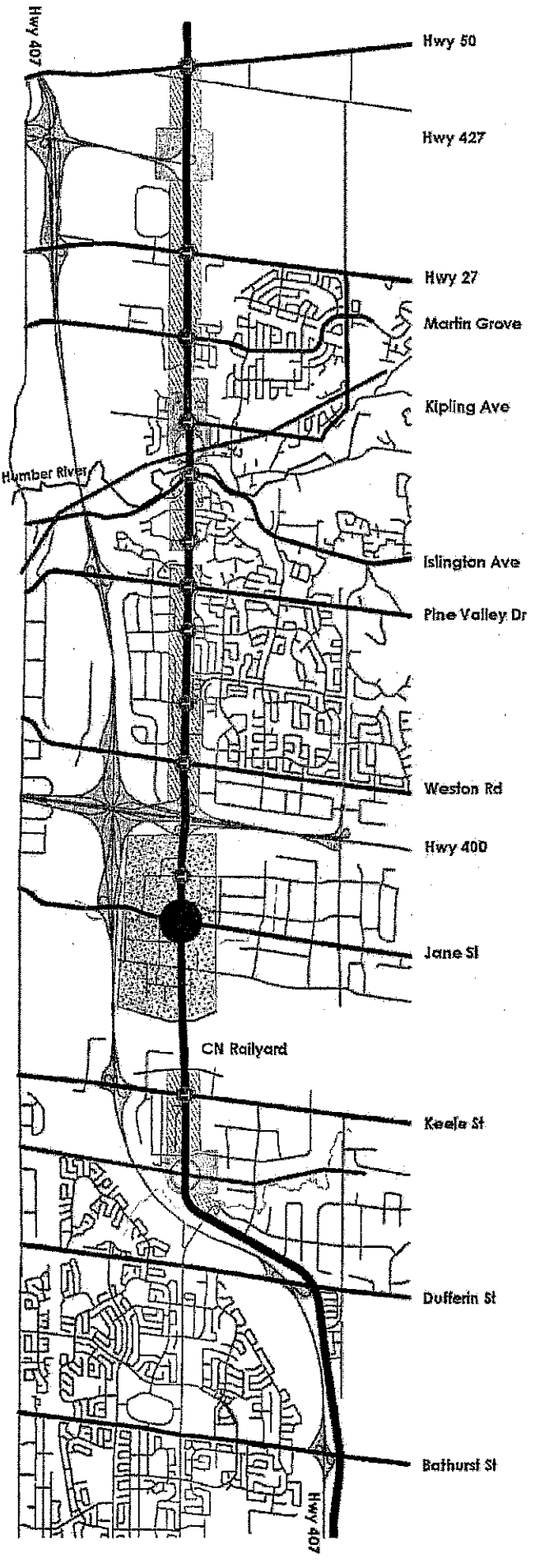
## **Report prepared by:**

Clement Chong, Planner I, ext. 8214  
Paul Robinson, Senior Planner, ext. 8410











Respectfully submitted,

JOHN ZIPAY  
Commissioner of Planning

DIANA BIRCHALL  
Director of Policy Planning/Urban Design



**LEGEND**

-  Corridor
-  Centres
-  Vaughan Corporate Centre
-  Avenue Seven
-  GO Train Line
-  Main Bus Routes
-  Humber River
-  GO Transit Node
-  Main Transit Node
-  Transit Stop Centres

Map Prepared by Highway 7 Corridor Public Transit Improvements Highway 7 Concept, Subject Lands Only

**Highway 7 Concept  
Subject Lands**

# Developable Limit Adjustments

Identification	General Location	Adjustments
A	Martin Grove Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EXCLUDE Armalfi Court</li> <li>EXCLUDE south end of Agincourt Road</li> </ul>
B	Kipling/Highway 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INCLUDE residential and commercial developments along Highway 7 and developments with frontage on Kipling Avenue up to approximately 200m north and south of Highway 7</li> <li>EXCLUDE subdivision and townhomes</li> </ul>
C	Islington Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EXCLUDE Special Policy Area (SPA)</li> </ul>
D	Bruce Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EXCLUDE new residential development</li> </ul>
E	Anacapi Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EXCLUDE cul-de-sac</li> </ul>
F	Ainsley Grove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EXCLUDE new residential development</li> </ul>
G	Hillside Avenue & Keeleview Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EXCLUDE residential development</li> </ul>

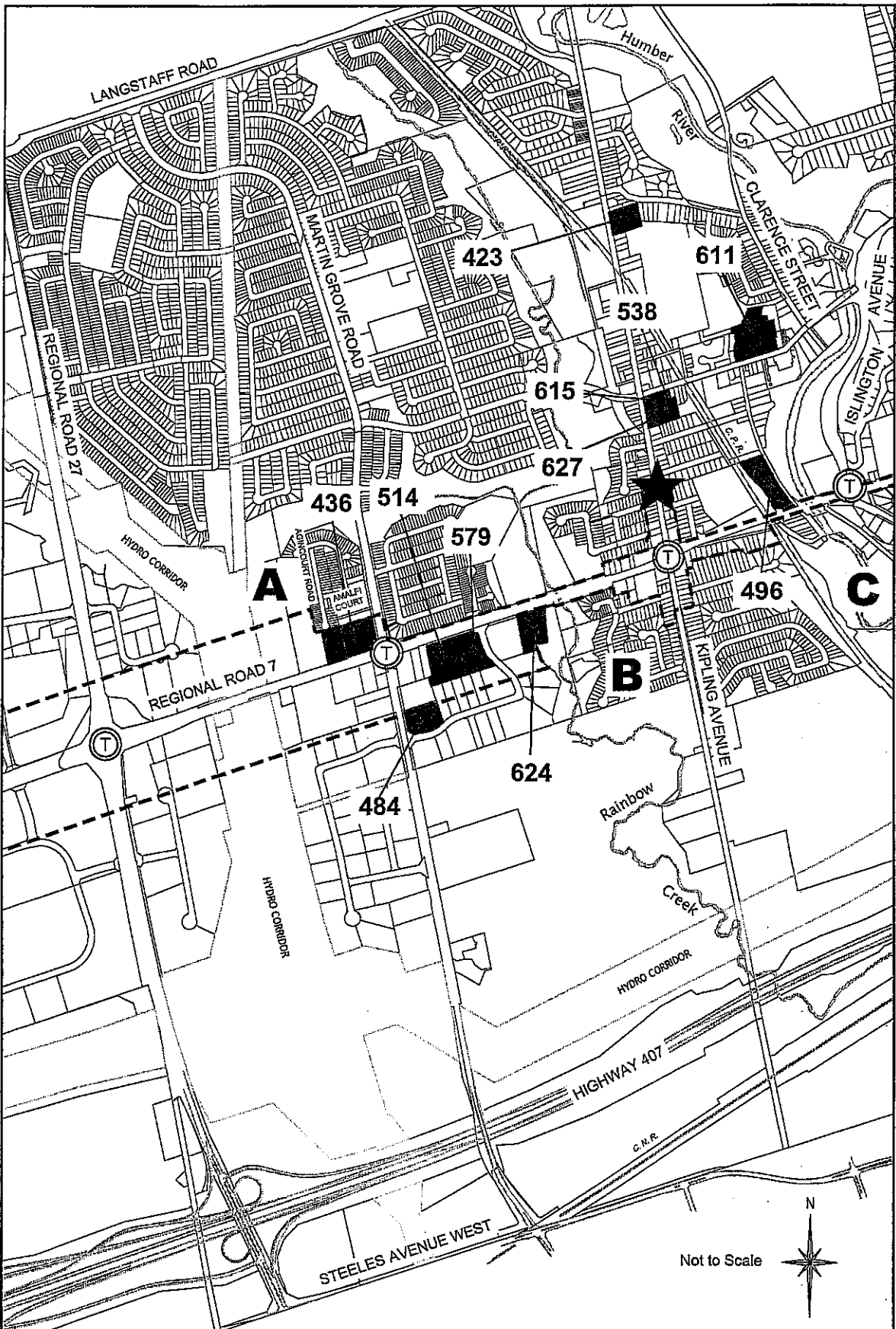
\\prod\proj\Highway 7 Condoir Public Transit Improvements\Highway 7 Concept\_Subject Lands.doc

## Developable Limit Adjustments



The City Above Toronto  
Development Planning Department





## Attachment

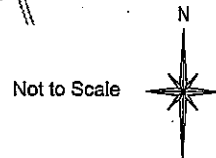


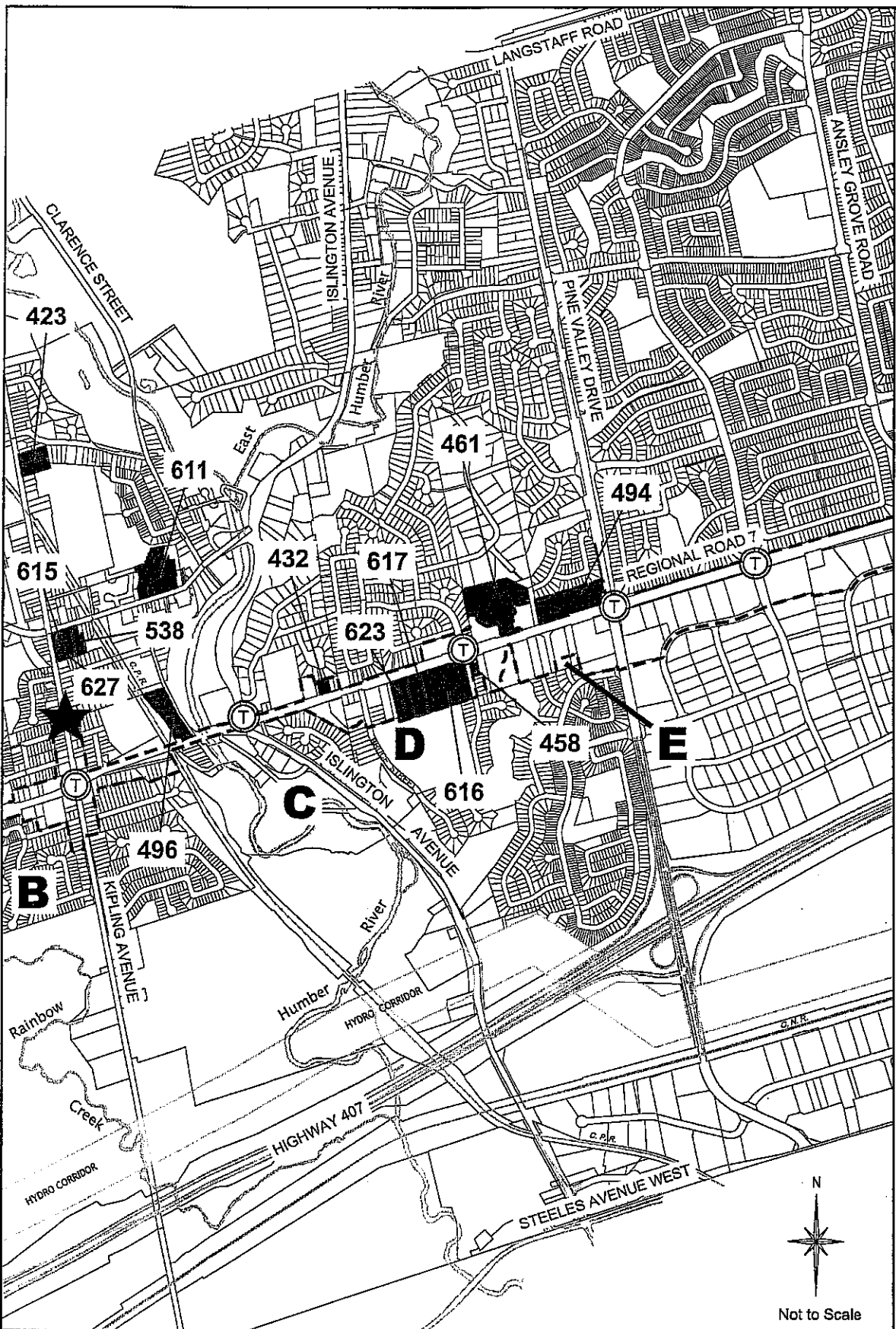
# ATTACHMENT 3

## Development Limits

### LEGEND

-  Woodbridge GO Centre  
(Study Area To Be Determined)
-  Approximate Limit of  
Avenue Seven Corridor
-  Transit Stop  
Centre
-  Site-Specific OPA #





# ATTACHMENT 4

## Development Limits

### LEGEND



Woodbridge GO Centre  
(Study Area To Be Determined)



Transit Stop  
Centre

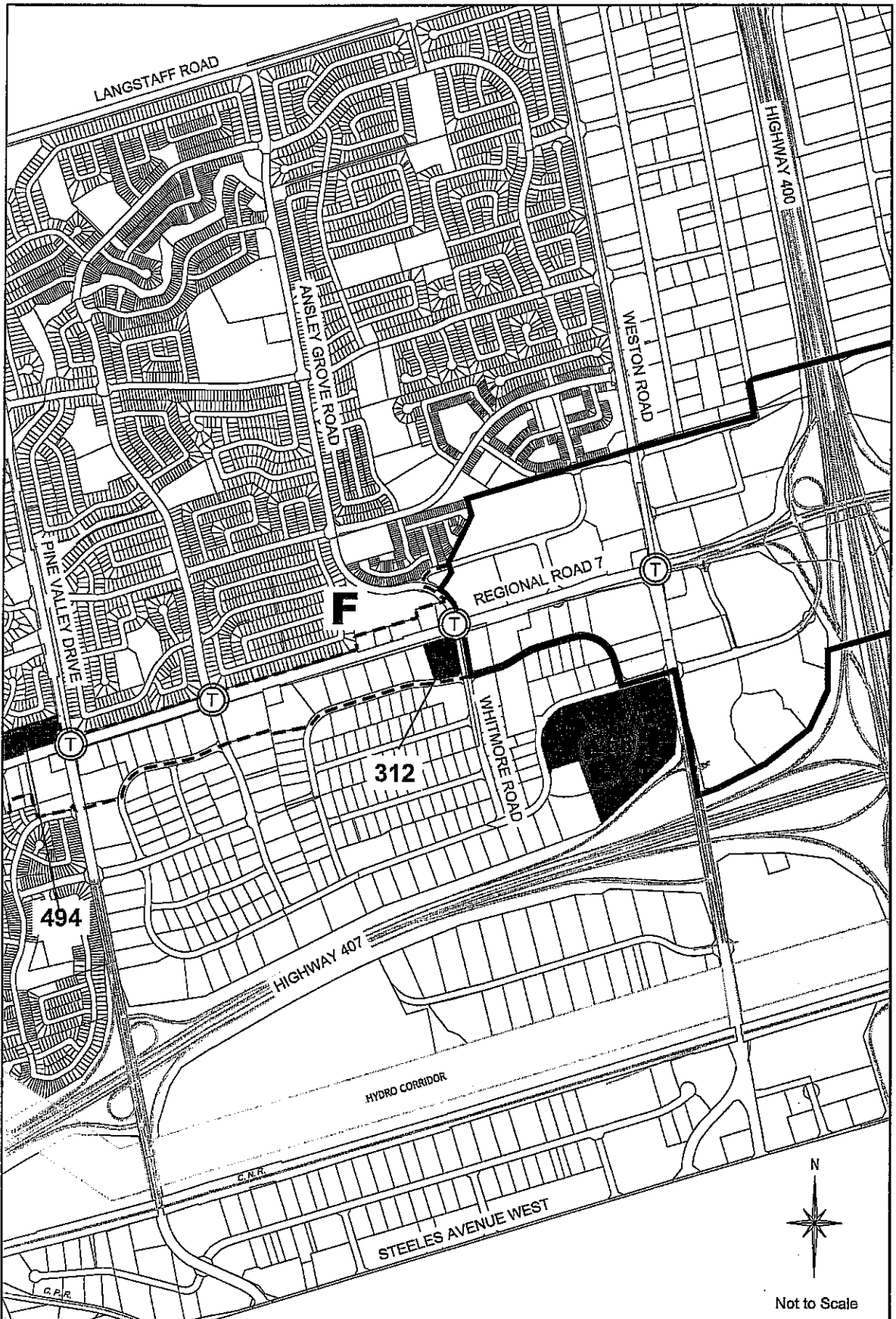


Approximate Limit of  
Avenue Seven Corridor



Site-Specific OPA #





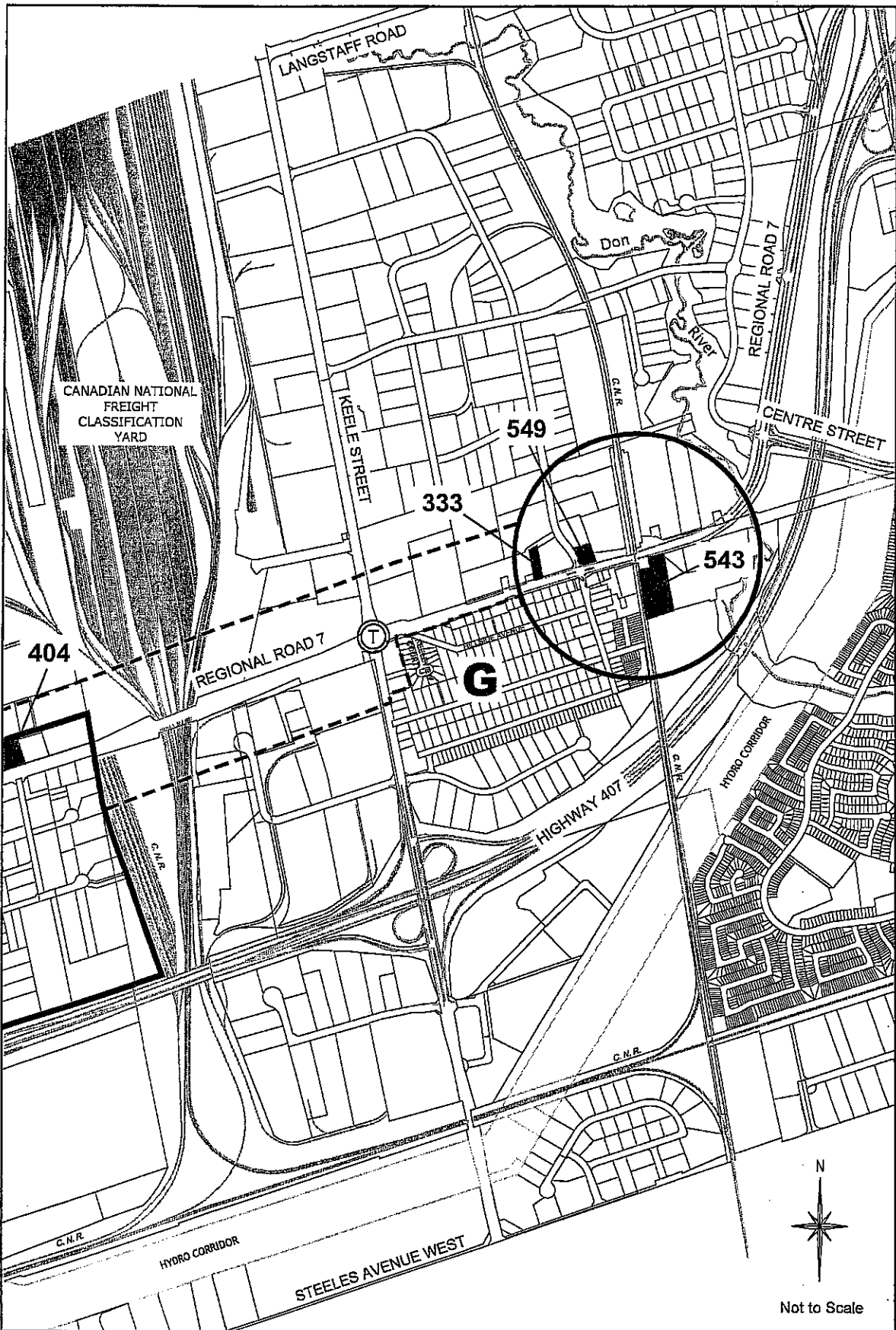
# ATTACHMENT 5

## Development Limits

### LEGEND

- Vaughan Corporate Centre
- Approximate Limit of Avenue Seven Corridor
- Transit Stop Centre
- Site-Specific OPA #



N:\Projects\Highway 7 OPA Study\Highway 7 OPA Study.dwg






# ATTACHMENT 6

## Development Limits

### LEGEND

-  Vaughan Corporate Centre
-  Approximate Limit of Avenue Seven Corridor

-  Transit Stop Centre
-  Concord GO Centre
-  Site-Specific OPA #

## **ATTACHMENT 7: OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS**

### **Description of the Proposed Amendments to the Official Plan**

The purpose of the proposed amendments is to establish within the City's Official Plan:

1. a clear vision of the intended long term urban structure within the Avenue Seven corridor;
2. a transit-supportive land use plan that includes a series of urban centres, and provides broad direction respecting the expected street and block patterns, land use, building height, density and urban design;
3. a framework for implementation that reflects clear expectations, flexible planning policy, and potential to establish an incentives-based development program through the Community Improvement legislation of the Planning Act;
4. a strategy to guide decisions regarding public investment; and
5. a monitoring program to ensure achievement of the City's objectives.

The draft amendments reflect the intended vision articulated by the Highway 7 Land Use Future Study:

"The Corridor's future calls for it to become a broad urban avenue that embraces the vitality that will come with intensification. To be consistent with the image of an urban avenue, Highway 7 should be renamed Avenue Seven. It is envisioned as a multi-purpose urban avenue that is both a corridor and a series of centres. Avenue Seven will become a beautiful street that evolves into the focus of activity for the entire City. It is the necklace on which are strung a series of pearls – centres developed around major transit connections. In the centres, Avenue Seven will be lined with buildings that create mixed use districts, at a mix of densities. The spine will be the focus for the residential neighbourhoods that support each centre. By providing a range of housing types at a variety of densities, the centres will be healthy, vital and dynamic districts that will be successful and sustainable over time. Avenue Seven will be an appealing route of travel for pedestrians and cyclist, transit riders, as well as motorists."

Another key concept in establishing the Vision for the Avenue Seven Corridor is to promote a finer grained road and development block pattern within 200 metres either side of Avenue Seven. Part of this objective is to establish parallel east-west collector roads, both north and south of Avenue Seven as alternate routes for vehicles as traffic demands within the Corridor increase over time. The intent of this concept is to improve the overall connectivity between land uses and districts within the Avenue Seven Corridor (north-south and east-west), as well as to enhance the vehicular and pedestrian permeability to Avenue Seven (primarily north-south).

Historically, development in the Highway 7 corridor has been regulated by several Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) produced at various stages in the City's overall evolution. The proposed draft amendments will amend each of these plans in a consistent manner across the corridor. The draft amendments introduce new policies to guide the long term transformation of "Highway 7" to "Avenue 7", based on the findings and recommendations of the Study.

The existing City documents to be amended by the draft amendments to the Official Plan include, from west to east:

- OPA 450 (Employment Areas)
- OPA 240 (Woodbridge Community Plan)
- OPA 345
- OPA 500 (Vaughan Corporate Centre Plan)
- OPA 467
- OPA 4

The draft amendments are substantially similar in that they establish a new land use designation, "Prestige Areas – Centres and Avenue Seven Corridor". Within that designation there are policies that deal with the hierarchy of centres and interstitial areas, as well as the nature and form of development anticipated throughout the Avenue Seven Corridor. In addition, each Amendment includes new "Community Improvement" policies to facilitate implementation of a financial incentives package. Generally, to qualify for incentives, development is required to achieve a specified minimum development density.

The areas subject to these Official Plans reflect a wide variation in character and land use designation across the Highway 7 corridor, from employment areas (OPA 450 and OPA 345) to predominantly residential and commercial areas (OPA 240) to the broad mix of land uses and development densities envisioned in Vaughan's planned 'downtown', the Vaughan Corporate Centre (OPA 500).

While the Study Area was initially defined to include all of the lands within approximately 400 metres north and south of the entire Highway 7 corridor from west to east, the limits of the amendment areas are somewhat irregular, primarily owing to their proximity to and compatibility with existing adjacent development, as described below.

Separate from the Highway 7 planning process, OPAs 671 and 672 were adopted by the City and approved by York Region earlier in 2005. These documents amend OPA 450 and OPA 210 (Thornhill Community Plan) within Thornhill. East of the Concord industrial area, the Environmental Assessment for the Highway 7 corridor recommends that the higher order Highway 7 transit service divert from the Highway 7 corridor onto Centre Street, proceeding east to Bathurst Street and then north up Bathurst to rejoin Highway 7. OPAs 671 and 672 establish the policies applicable to the Centre Street corridor, and the transit-supportive development intended to locate there in the long term.

#### Highway 7 Right-of-Way - Existing Conditions

The existing conditions along the approximate 17-kilometre stretch of Highway 7 in Vaughan were analyzed as part of the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study. The corridor was divided into five distinguishable areas. Highway 7 varies in width from four to six lanes, and interfaces with private properties and buildings along much of the corridor. Of this 'built edge', about half of it faces Highway 7 with direct access. The other half of the developed frontage has either limited access or reverse frontage conditions. There is also a significant part of the frontage which is occupied by open space, or runs parallel with and adjoins local or regional roads, or Provincial highways (407, 427 and 400).

The amendments are not based upon meeting an overall growth management population or employment target. They envision a continuing and long-term structural evolution and intensification of development along the corridor, supported and encouraged by enhanced transit services. It is nonetheless important to assess and monitor the growth that may occur in the amendment areas.

#### Highway 7 – Population and Employment

A very significant part of Vaughan's population and employment base currently live and/or work in the areas contiguous to the Highway 7 corridor. Based on the 2001 Census and the 2003 York Region Employment Survey, approximately 100,000 residents occupied approximately 32,000 dwelling units in the concession blocks along Highway 7, which is also the location where about 108,000 persons are employed. Thus, in 2001, this southern area accounted for more than half of Vaughan's population and a significant majority of its employment.

A preliminary review has been undertaken to help assess the potential levels of growth the proposed amendment areas could accommodate. A broad-based forecast has thus far been determined based on applying the permitted floor space index against a gross estimate of developable area in each amendment area (e.g. Transit Stop, Corridor). The analysis suggests that a considerable amount of floor space could be provided in the entire corridor over time - in the order of 800-900 hectares. The actual use and distribution of this floor space for either employment or residential growth is not proposed to be controlled by the OPAs. The mixed-use and transit supportive nature of the corridor makes it best left to market forces to provide flexible opportunities for both employment and residential uses. Based on some broad assumptions about the potential use of this floor space however, the proposed OPAs have the potential to add an estimated 150,000 residents and employees to the corridor.

It is important to assess and monitor the growth that may occur in the amendment areas on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the Highway 7 OPAs require that monitoring and forecasting be undertaken in conjunction with periodic reviews of the City's population and employment forecasts. Staff will continue to monitor and report on growth potential in the corridor in the context of emerging Provincial and Regional growth forecasts and policies.

### The Avenue 7 Land Use Structure

The draft OPAs identify a hierarchy of centers, differing in terms of their anticipated scale of development and importance as foci of transit service. In descending order of importance the hierarchy consists of the "Vaughan Corporate Centre"; three key urban centres including two "GO Station Centres" and the Seven/427 Centre; and twelve "Transit Nodes". Between these centres, there will be less dense, transit-supportive development in the interstitial lands linking the centres.

### Vaughan Corporate Centre

As the City's planned downtown, the Vaughan Corporate Centre provides for the highest level of density, the highest order of uses, and will be well served by transit service, being at the intersection of the highest orders of east-west and north-south transit. The Vaughan Corporate Centre is the City's largest and most important centre.

Under OPA 500, two designations were established: 1) "Corporate Centre Node" encompassing an area of about 50 hectares on both sides of Highway 7 from Highway 400 to east of Jane Street; and 2) "Corporate Centre District" applicable to the lands north and south of the 'Node' designation as well as east and west of it.

The proposed amendment modifies OPA 500 within the "Corporate Centre Node" by:

- establishing a density target of 5.0 Floor Space Index (FSI);
- providing policies governing interim forms of development (at densities of less than 3.5 FSI); and
- permitting up to 600,000 sq m GFA of development.

The proposed amendment modifies OPA 500 within the "Corporate Centre District" by:

- establishing a maximum permitted net density of 1.5 FSI
- establishing maximum permitted net density resulting from density transfer to 2.0 FSI
- adding a new policy respecting protection of the CN Rail Yard, including prohibiting sensitive land uses from locating within 300 m, and requiring noise impact studies for uses proposed within 1000 m

The proposed amendment to OPA 500 also redesignates lands south along Jane Street, and east and west of the 'Node' along Highway 7 from "Corporate Centre District" to a new designation, "Corporate Centre Corridor". Although these lands are outside the Corporate Centre Node, they

are expected to accommodate an array of land uses at densities and in building forms which support transit in the Jane and Highway 7 corridors. The key elements of this new designation include:

- permissions for a wide range of office commercial, institutional and civic, recreational, retail (up to a maximum of 9290 sq m GFA), financial, service, medium and high density residential uses and community facilities (including parks, urban squares, open space, pedestrian linkages, day nurseries and places of worship)
- average FSI target of 1.5 ranging from .75 to a maximum 2.5
- providing policy governing interim development forms (at densities of less than 1.0 FSI)

The proposed amendment to OPA 500 also deletes lands designated "Prestige Area" from OPA 450 south of the Corporate Centre, and redesignates them to "Corporate Centre District" under OPA 500. This is a minor rounding off of the Corporate Centre District to include lands which are a logical part of it.

Lastly, to facilitate and encourage a substantial residential community and higher order uses to become located in the Corporate Centre, the proposed amendment provides for the City to undertake an open space and streetscape Master Plan to coordinate the provision of parks facilities with development.

#### Major Centres: Seven/427 Centre, Woodbridge GO Centre and Concord GO Centre

The next level down in the land use structure are three centres, including the two future GO Station Centres at Woodbridge and Concord (as identified by GO Transit, and reflected in the York Region Transportation Master Plan).

The location of the westerly station will be the subject of an Environmental Assessment, and is generally expected to be between Highway 7 and the Woodbridge Fairgrounds, on the existing CP rail line. The easterly station will be located on the Bradford GO Rail line in Concord, generally between Highway 7 and Highway 407. These GO Transit Centres will include a full range of urban land uses, including high density residential, major office, business, retail, institutional and civic uses.

Because of the importance of these centres, the anticipated impact of their development on surrounding lands, and the need to ensure that they are planned and developed in a manner consistent with transit-supportive goals, a tertiary plan must be prepared for each centre to address the full range of associated planning issues, including access, local road and block structure, and integration with the GO Station and adjacent land uses. The studies will also identify policies to provide an appropriate level of protection for older residential areas within the tertiary plan study areas. Requirements of the tertiary plan are set out in draft OPA 660 and 661.

A third major centre has been identified on the lands surrounding the intersection of Highway 7 and Highway 427, within the "Vaughan Enterprise Zone", a key location for major employment generating land uses. The Seven/427 Centre will include a wide range of employment uses, including major office, business, retail and other commercial uses.

The documents to be amended are the Woodbridge Community Plan (OPA 240), and the Employment Areas Plan (OPA 450). Like the Corporate Centre, the designation of these three centres is based upon a 400-metre walking distance from a planned transit station, and a total estimated 50-hectare land area. As the next level in the urban structure, the GO Station Centres incorporate the following key elements:

- density target of 3.5 FSI based on net developable land area
- height limit of up to 10 stories or 32 metres

- 4 storey (12.8 m) height limit where adjacent to low density residential development

### Transit Stop Centres

The "Transit Stop Centres" are the lowest order of centre along the Highway 7 corridor. Twelve such centres are generally located at the intersections of Highway 7 with major arterials. From west to east, they are located at:

- Highway 50
- Highway 27
- Martin Grove Road
- Kipling Avenue
- Islington Avenue
- Helen Street
- Pine Valley Drive
- Aberdeen Avenue
- Ainsley Grove Road
- Weston Road
- Edgeley Boulevard
- Keele Street

The Transit Stop Centre designation encompasses approximately 15 hectares, extending 200-metres north and south from the Highway 7 corridor where the transit stop will be located. The Transit Stop Centres incorporate the following key elements:

- density target of 3.0 FSI based on net developable land area
- height limit of up to 10 stories or 32 metres
- 4 storey (14.0 m) height limit within 30 m of low density residential uses

### The Avenue 7 Corridor

Between the series of designated centres on Highway 7, the OPAs also provide for increased densities to support transit by applying a new "Avenue Seven Corridor" designation. This designation applies to the portions of the corridor that were determined through the analysis to provide appropriate opportunities for (re)development. The designation applies to properties north and south of the Highway 7 right-of-way generally to a maximum depth of 200 metres depending on the configuration of the existing local road network, excluding existing residential areas rear-lotted onto Highway 7, and subject to addressing land use compatibility and transportation impacts. As the lowest level of development in the Highway 7 structure that links the Centres, and supports mid-block transit stops, this policy incorporates the following key elements:

- overall density target of 1.5 FSI
- maximum of 2.5 FSI on the net developable land area of an individual development parcel
- height limit of up to 8 stories or 26 metres
- 4 storey(14 m) height limit within 30 m of low density residential uses

In summary, the land use structure described above can be illustrated as follows:

	Area	Density	Building Height	
<b>Corporate Centre</b>	Node	5.0 FSI Target	25 metres except in gateway site (no height limit)	
	Corridor	1.5 FSI Average	15 metres	
<b>GO Centres &amp; 7/427 Centre</b>	< 400 metres 50 ha	3.5 FSI Target	10 stories or 32 metres	4 stories max. within 30 metres of low density residential
<b>Transit Stop</b>	< 200 metres 15 ha	3.0 FSI Target	10 stories or 32 metres	
<b>Corridor</b>	< 200 metres	1.5 FSI Average	8 stories or 26 metres	

#### The Avenue 7 Policy Framework

The policies in the draft OPAs are largely consistent across the Highway 7 corridor in terms of permitted uses, urban design requirements, transportation, and development incentives, including the establishment of Community Improvement Areas as a tool to achieve planning objectives.

#### Permitted Uses

The permitted uses in the proposed OPAs reflect the vision and function that Avenue 7 is expected to fulfill over the long term. To provide the support for a "prestige urban environment" to evolve from that of a 'highway' to a 'Main Street', and to support the infrastructure investment in transit, a broad mix of land uses will be permitted on the lands subject to the proposed amendments, including:

- office
- business
- retail
- residential (excluding the Seven/427 Centre)
- institutional and civic uses.

The uses may be in the form of stand-alone or mixed-use development. Outside storage of goods or materials is not permitted. The implementing zoning by-law will establish the full range and mix of permitted land uses and development standards.

Along the Highway 7 Corridor within the Vaughan Corporate Centre 'Node', the range of permitted uses have been tailored to fit with the level of detail in OPA 500.

#### Urban Design Policies

The draft OPAs each include urban design policies, based on the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study, which are intended to ensure that all new development will be consistent with the design vision for the Highway 7 corridor. Both public and private sector development must be of a high quality and urban in character for the Highway 7 corridor to fully achieve the City's goals. The urban design policies address both public sector actions in terms of the design of the public realm, and private sector actions in terms of delivering development that satisfies the desired form and function of the corridor. While it will take many years for the corridor to fully evolve into the form



envisioned for it, it is important to clearly establish at the outset the design elements that play a crucial role in establishing the corridor's ultimate form and function.

#### Compatibility With and Transition to Low Density Residential Designations

While the draft amendments generally apply to lands on or very close to the Highway 7 corridor (within 200 metres north and south of the highway right-of-way), and exclude recently developed low density residential areas most of which are rear-lotted onto Highway 7, there are a few locations on the corridor where higher density development/redevelopment may interface with existing low density areas. Policies have been included in each of the draft amendments, where this circumstance may arise, to address this issue:

"It is the intention of this plan that older residential neighbourhoods be protected. Therefore, there shall be an appropriate height transition between development within the Centre to adjacent, sensitive land uses. For sites that abut a low density residential designation, the maximum height of development within 30 metres of such designation shall be 4 stories, or 14 metres, whichever is less."

Two older residential neighbourhoods located within 200 metres of Highway 7 also lie within the areas to be addressed in the tertiary planning exercises required for the Woodbridge GO Centre and Concord GO Centre. These planning studies will establish policies governing the appropriate level and form of policy protection to be afforded to these neighbourhoods.

#### Traffic and Transportation

Highway 7 is a very busy traffic corridor. The function of this corridor continues to shift from its long distance vehicle movement function – now increasingly the role of Highway 407 – to more of a short distance local function. The diversity of uses along the corridor contributes to a diversity of traffic associated with the employment, commercial and residential development in its vicinity.

The planned improvements to transit services in the corridor will provide a significantly improved service as an alternative to the private auto. While the development densities proposed by the draft amendments are needed to support improved transit service, there is also a need to complement transit by improvements in the capacity of the road network. The draft OPAs require:

- a street network defined by development blocks of typically 100 metres by 200 metres
- a parallel and continuous east-west collector road network on the north and south sides of Highway 7, generally within 200 metres of the corridor.

An expanded road network will improve the porosity and connectivity within the area, and thereby enable more convenient access to and from the uses located there while enhancing the efficiency of the network overall. Gradually expanding the road network as development occurs along the corridor will reduce the impact of individual developments on the road network and, over time, will begin to knit together a street fabric that supports a truly urban main street: the new "Avenue 7".

#### Implementation Policies - Incentives, Minimum Densities and Marketing

The draft amendments provide a long-term vision and policy framework to guide the transformation of the Highway 7 corridor. Achieving that vision will depend upon both public and private investment. However, the Highway 7 Policy Review determined that, to facilitate appropriate development and redevelopment within some portions of the Highway 7 corridor, financial and other incentives may be required.

Therefore, each of the draft amendments includes provisions which utilize the Community Improvement powers of Section 28 of The Planning Act to establish an incentive-based strategy to development in the corridor. Each draft amendment identifies areas as "Community Improvement

Areas" on the Highway 7 corridor which are proposed to be confirmed by by-law as "Community Improvement Project Areas", for which detailed "Community Improvement Plans" are to be prepared.

Under this strategy, the identified areas normally display some or all of the following characteristics: inadequate infrastructure or community services, building or property deterioration, densities too low to support planned transit facilities, and site contamination requiring environmental site remediation. This strategy enables the City to engage in a variety of activities aimed at facilitating redevelopment, including acquiring, holding and preparing land for community improvements, constructing or rehabilitating buildings, selling, leasing or disposing of land and buildings, and making grants or loans to property owners to pay for the costs of rehabilitating lands and buildings.

This strategy is currently being successfully used or considered by a number of Ontario municipalities (e.g. Hamilton, Waterloo). York Region is also considering the potential to use such financial incentives to support development in the transit-based Regional Centres and Corridors.

The "Highway 7 Implementation Study", approved by Council in the 2004 capital budget, will consider the appropriate steps and tools in the City's implementation strategy. As part of the 'Highway 7 Implementation Study' a marketing strategy should be undertaken by the Economic/Technology Development and Communication Department to guide and promote the successful completion of this project and the funds required for it be addressed through the budget process. This project should be initiated following Council adoption of the proposed Official Plan amendments.