

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JULY 6, 2010

COMMERCIAL LAND USE REVIEW FILE #25.1.13 WARDS 1 - 5

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That the Commercial Land Use Review prepared by urbanMetrics Inc, BE RECEIVED and that the new Official Plan contain appropriate policies having regard for the findings in the Review; and
2. That a budget and a Terms of Reference for a Retail Land Use Strategy, Best Practices and Urban Design Guidelines Study, as discussed in this report, be prepared and brought forward for Council's consideration as part of the 2011 Capital Budget deliberations.

Contribution to Sustainability

Many of the recommendations in the Commercial Land Use Review are supportive of sustainability through:

- intensification and/or redevelopment of existing shopping centres / power centres to make more efficient use of land and public infrastructure;
- incorporation of design elements for existing, retrofitted and new commercial development to enhance pedestrian accessibility and provide commercial uses within an appropriate walking distance of residential communities;
- enhancing existing village cores to maintain their historic function as "main streets", and guide appropriate intensification towards these original commercial nodes;
- intensification of underutilized commercial sites with "mixed-use" development, to sustain a population base to support the local economy, and enhance services to surrounding communities; and
- supporting the viability of local businesses by identifying and locating a range of commercial development within the context of the community and the context of the commercial hierarchy.

Economic Impact

The recommendations contained within this report may have financial implications for the City. The actual amount of budgetary funds needed for consultant work to supplement and support staff work will be determined along with the development of a Terms of Reference which will be brought forward as part of the City's budget process and considered based on City Department and Council's priorities.

Communications Plan

On October 27, 2009, the Official Plan Review Committee received a presentation by urbanMetrics Inc. outlining the key findings of its analysis and recommended that the draft report be forwarded to the Committee of the Whole. It was noted by the Committee, that Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue should be included in the report and that the data in the final report should demonstrate the biggest draws and their economic impact. A copy of the Review has been posted on the Vaughan Tomorrow website and its findings have been considered in the preparation of the draft Official Plan.

urbanMetrics Inc. attended both Official Plan Open Houses on November 18, 2009 and May 28, 2010 with presentation boards displaying work in progress on the Review. The format of the Open House allowed for informal discussion with urbanMetrics Inc. regarding the Review.

On June 10, 2009, a presentation regarding the background research and emerging trends in retail trends was given to representatives from Policy Planning, Development Planning, Economic Development and Technology, and City Manager's Office, York Region Community Planning Department.

On June 16, 2009 the Official Plan Review Committee received a presentation on the work plan for the Commercial Land Use Review (the Review) being undertaken by the consultant, urbanMetrics Inc.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Commercial Land Use Review, associated with the Official Plan to the Committee of the Whole.

Background

On May 7, 2007 Council approved the Terms of Reference for the City's Official Plan Review, including a number of component studies, which included the Commercial Land Use Review. The approved 2008 Capital Budget included funds to carry out a commercial review to inform the preparation of the Official Plan. On June 23, 2008, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Commercial Land Use Review.

On February 24, 2009 Council approved the recommendation of the Policy Planning Department to retain urbanMetrics inc. to conduct a city-wide commercial land use review. Prior to the commencement of this Review, the City had not carried out a comprehensive analysis of its commercial space requirements and associated issues since the Vaughan Retail Planning Study was carried out in 1993-1994 by Stamm Economic Research, as part of the planning process for Official Plan Amendment #400.

On April 1, 2010, the Official Plan Review Committee received and referred the Commercial Land Use Review to the May 11, 2010 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Purpose and Scope of Commercial Land Use Review

The purpose of the Commercial Land Use review is to: 1) define the City's long-term requirements for commercial uses; 2) determine their optimal spatial distribution, and 3) develop a commercial land use policy framework. The review also examines a variety of issues and questions pertaining to existing commercial development, and future commercial development trends.

The scope of the Commercial Land Use Review requires the consultant to examine the City's current commercial structure, and develop an understanding of its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The consultants were also required to provide an assessment of the City's capability of meeting current and future commercial land use needs, emerging trends in commercial development, and provide recommendations to guide future commercial development in Vaughan.

The Review proceeded in two phases, the first phase, due diligence and empirical data collection, the second phase, consisting of SWOT (Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) analysis, interviews with the public, business and community stakeholders.

Analysis and Options

Provincial Policy Statement (2005):

The policies in the PPS promote sound community planning and development intensification, a mix and concentration of uses including retail uses, that minimize vehicular commuting and encourage the use of public transit (Section 1). Section 1.7 of the PPS encourages optimizing the long-term availability of land and the enhancement and viability of downtowns and main streets. The recommendations in the Commercial Land Use Review are consistent with the PPS.

Places to Grow: Provincial Growth Plan

Many of the overarching policies in the PPS are further refined in the Growth Plan. The main objective of the Growth Plan is to achieve compact urban form which includes development such as multi-storey commercial development and offices or apartments above retail. The Province has defined intensification targets which apply to all the municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Policy provisions in the Growth Plan encourage transit-supportive, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly environments with less automobile reliance.

The Growth Plan strongly protects Employment Lands and discourages the conversion of Employment Lands to permit non-employment uses. Such conversion may only be achieved through a comprehensive Official Plan review.

This is highly relevant to planning for future retail development because the Growth Plan clearly identifies "major retail uses" as "non-employment" uses. Until now, many major retail uses have been located within Vaughan's employment areas, which is now prohibited by the Growth Plan.

York Region Official Plan

York Region Council adopted the York Region Official Plan on December 16, 2009. Chapter 4 of the draft approved Regional Official Plan (ROP), addresses economic vitality.

Section 4.4 of the draft ROP focuses on planning for retail. The policy objectives in this section seek to ensure "that retail is well-designed and appropriately integrated into communities so that residents can meet their daily needs through walking, cycling, and transit". Planning for retail facilities includes policies that generally ensure: protection of historical main streets; the direction of mix-used development to Regional Centres and Corridors; support redevelopment and retrofitting for major retail through design, and to work with local municipalities to designate lands for "major retail" and ensure it is integrated with the community. The Region also requires a Regional Impact Analysis be completed for new retail facilities in excess of 30,000 gross leasable square metres.

With respect to retail uses in employment lands, it is important to note that Policy 4.3.6 (a-b) of the ROP prohibits "major retail and non-ancillary" uses on employment lands, and further, conversion of employment lands to non-employment lands uses is not permitted without a municipal comprehensive review. 'Major Retail' is defined in the draft ROP to include big box stores, retail warehouses and shopping centres. Non-ancillary uses are those uses other than small scale retail and commercial uses that primarily serve the business functions on employment lands.

Current Vaughan Official Plan Retail Policy within OPA #600

The Review assesses Vaughan's current commercial policies as expressed in OPA #600. The current commercial hierarchy is described in the Review as follows in descending order of importance:

1. The Vaughan Corporate Centre and Vaughan Centre are currently identified at the top of the commercial hierarchy as the pre-eminent commercial centres in Vaughan.
2. District Centers (Carrville and Vellore) are the main mixed-use commercial centres serving the Carrville and Vellore communities, with commercial space limited to 40,000 m² (430, 000 square feet) and are required to be part of mixed-use development. The Review also identifies the 'Vaughan Centre' (Vaughan Mills) as a third district centre, which is subject to the same size restrictions as other District Centres.
3. Neighbourhood Commercial Centres are intended to serve the weekly shopping needs of each neighbourhood. These centres are limited to 20,000 m² (215, 000 square feet) of commercial space. Both Vellore and Carrville were planned to include 4 or 5 neighbourhood centres.
4. Local Convenience, general commercial and service station designations are intended to serve the day-to-day commercial functions and should be within walking distance of most residential neighbourhoods.

Key Findings in the Commercial Land Use Review

The following summarizes the key findings of the Commercial Land Use Review.

i) Commercial Policies

The Review identified some issues in Vaughan's current commercial policies:

- The policies do not adequately delineate a strategy to accommodate the potential expansion of additional regional-serving space, or whether additional regional-serving facilities are required outside the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and the Vaughan Mills area.
- The function of the Village Cores is not clearly defined within the commercial structure. The Review determined that the Village Core areas serve different functions, making it difficult to classify them within the existing commercial structure. The Review recommends that the function and role of the Village Cores be clearly defined in the new Official Plan.
- The Review advises that the maximum permitted size of neighbourhood commercial centres of 19,973 m² (215,000 square feet) is excessive, resulting in competition with District Centres to address the same shopping needs.

ii) Commercial Structure

The Review concludes that Vaughan generally has a good range of commercial opportunities at all levels of the hierarchy and an appropriate geographical balance. Based on the research, Vaughan residents are generally satisfied with the amount and variety of retail facilities.

The Village Cores play a significant role in defining their surrounding neighbourhoods, provide pedestrians with transit-oriented retail opportunities, and in some cases draw visitors to the City. Some key observations about the Village Cores are identified in the report:

- The Core areas lack supermarkets (except Maple) or have limited availability of food stores, making it difficult to serve their neighbourhood function. The Core areas are also overshadowed by Big Box development and major malls.
- Some new commercial development has taken the form of street-related retail, with some above-grade residential uses that function as a successful neighbourhood serving core.
- Kleinburg and the Old Thornhill Cores serve wider areas beyond local neighbourhood needs. Kleinburg relies heavily on the tourist market, making it vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations and tourist trends. Approximately 25% of retail space in Kleinburg consists of food-service facilities however the variety of restaurants is limited. Old Thornhill's commercial area relies on passing automobile traffic, reflective of the auto-oriented commercial formats along Yonge Street.
- The Woodbridge Core contains three major banks drawing neighbourhood support however; the success of Market Lane underperforms due to the lack of exposure to the main street and passing traffic. Approximately 9% of the commercial space in the Woodbridge Core is vacant, which is slightly higher than the average 5% vacancy rate. The Woodbridge Core lacks a Business Improvement Association (BIA) that would assist with attracting new business and marketing of the area.

Since 1986, Vaughan's population has tripled and almost all major commercial construction has taken the form of big box development. The lack of big box retail development in the City of Toronto over this time, coupled with excellent accessibility via Highway 400, enabled Vaughan to become a regional-serving commercial centre. Based on the research, over 60% of vehicles parked in Vaughan's major retail areas originated from outside Vaughan.

Vaughan has some 'unique' commercial attributes to its commercial structure such as:

- Tourism – Vaughan is the second largest tourism destination in the Toronto Region and one of the leading destinations in the Province. Canada's Wonderland, McMichael Art Gallery, and Vaughan Mills are the City's most prominent tourist destinations.
- Village Cores – Kleinburg, Maple, Thornhill and Woodbridge are unique in character and made up of mostly service uses. These commercial spaces provide a special commercial character for surrounding neighbourhoods and offer pedestrian-oriented, local-service retail opportunities. The Cores also draw tourists with their heritage architecture and specialized retail.
- Independent Retailers – almost 50% of Vaughan's commercial space are independently-run retail and service businesses. The report identified independent retail businesses as a significant source of investment and economic development for local residents.
- Culinary Opportunities – Vaughan offers a variety of regional cuisines and dietary options that include a variety of independently operated restaurants co-existing with chain restaurants, conference centres, and banquet halls catering to the wedding

industry. Vaughan also maintains an abundance of local wineries, bakeries, butchers and pasta makers.

- Regional Retail Centres – Vaughan's connectivity to the 400 series highways and proximity to Toronto has enabled Vaughan to attract retail centres and draw customers from outside its boundaries. The Highway 400 and Highway 7 commercial cluster has over 278,700 m² (3 million square feet) of retail and service space (double the size of the Yorkdale mall).

iii) Supply of Commercial Space

Based on the Review's research and analysis Vaughan has approximately 1.319 million m² (14.2 million square feet) of commercial space with a relatively low vacancy rate. Non-food retail space makes up about 50% of the commercial space, which is about 25% above the average for similar communities. However, the Review suggests this number is not excessive due to Vaughan's role in serving the broader regional area of the GTA.

The Review concludes that half of Vaughan's commercial space is occupied by independent businesses and over half of these businesses are independently owned. This has implications for future policies directed at minimizing the potential impact of chain retail in intensification areas, to ensure future commercial supply can continue to accommodate affordable space for independent retail businesses.

iv) Growth Prospects

Vaughan is projected to grow by an additional 143,000 persons by 2031. Growth will be more manageable (approximately 6,500 persons per year) than experienced from 1996 to 2006 (11,000 per year). Based on the research, urbanMetrics Inc. expects that this growth will require an additional retail supply of 761,780 m² (8.2 million square feet) of commercial space by 2031 to address demand. Out of the future warranted space, approximately 50% is non-food retail; 10% food-store space; and 40% service retail and local-serving office space (medical, dental, real estate, accounting and other professional offices). The Review assumes that 40% of the population will be accommodated within intensification areas, which may have implications for the planning of commercial facilities, particularly those at the higher end of the commercial hierarchy.

Section 6.2.4.3. of the Review, discusses some discrepancies in the methodology used by the Region to forecast the commercial land needs. The Review recommends that "the placement of a large single use retail centre in the white belt, as the Region suggests, is not practical", given the intensification opportunities available. The Region's commercial land needs were based on employment projections rather than a market demand analysis. As a result it fails to recognize the existing and proposed retail facilities in Vaughan, policy directional shifts and changing trends.

v) Committed Commercial Space

Results from the Review indicate that 483,080 m² (5.2 million square feet) or 60% of the additional commercial space has already been either approved or is in the approval process. An additional 204,380 m² (2.2 million square feet) of commercial space is currently unapproved and under review by the City.

The Review estimates that there is a further need for approximately 278,700 m² (3 million square feet) of commercial retail space beyond current applications to meet the projected 2031 population requirements. urbanMetrics Inc recommends that additional space be allocated to accommodate the 'unfulfilled demand' by 2031 as follows:

- 55,740 m² (600,000 square feet) of new commercial space (retail stores and services appropriate for employment areas) is warranted in Employment Areas (excluding large general home improvement centres not considered appropriate for employment areas). These commercial uses will support the function of the employment area or are ancillary to manufacturing or warehouse businesses.
- 9,290 m² (100,000 square feet) of new commercial space is warranted for Kleinburg-Nashville, due to the limited intensification forecasted for this area.
- 65,030 m² (700,000 square feet) of new commercial space is warranted for White Belt Areas. The Review suggests this should be identified through the Secondary Plan process and include convenience, neighbourhood and district-serving retail.
- 148,640 m² (1.6 million square feet) of new commercial space is warranted for Intensification areas, specifically Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue, Steeles West and other areas surrounding future subway / rapid transit stations. The Review suggests that commercial space in intensification areas should serve the day-to-day and regular shopping trips of residents, including large and small-scale food stores.
- the Review suggests the City can protect employment lands from pressure for commercial conversions by: ensuring sufficient supply of commercial land located elsewhere; developing a long-term strategy for retail development; and providing developers with incentives to develop in other areas of the City.

Review Recommendations

Based on the research conducted by urbanMetrics Inc. the following key recommendations are discussed in the Review. A copy of all the recommendations of the Review is appended as Attachment 2. The Review recommends the following with respect to Commercial Land Use:

i) New Commercial Development

The Review concludes that there is sufficient amount of commercial space in existing designated greenfield lands, to address community needs.

Greater variety in retail / commercial unit sizes should be provided to ensure diversity in the range of commercial space available to businesses of varying types and sizes. It is suggested in the Review, that the following store sizes be supported:

- a) Small scale retail – approximately under 185 m² (under 2,000 square feet) appropriate for services, independent businesses and chain outlets;
- b) Medium scale retail – approximately 464 m² – 2,322 m² (5,000 to 25,000 square feet) to accommodate pharmacies, small supermarkets and specialty retailers;
- c) Larger retail – approximately 2,322 m² - 6,967 m² (25,000 to 75,000 square feet) for theatres, supermarkets, specialty retailers, and entertainment establishments; and
- d) Very large retail uses – approximately 6,967 m² and over (75,000 square feet and over), for multiplex theatres, department stores, superstores, etc.).

Future neighbourhood retail nodes should be limited to 10,000 m² (107,643 square feet) and spaced two to four kilometers apart. They should be located within two kilometers of neighbourhoods and service approximately 10,000 to 15,000 residents.

Future commercial development proposals should not detract from the market required to support intensification areas, district centres, neighbourhood or convenience retail. Opportunities for non-automobile dependent commercial uses should be considered where possible. Any new community should be organized so that convenience retail is not more than a 10 minute walk away on pedestrian friendly streets.

A market study should be required for commercial development in excess of 10,000 m² (107, 643 square feet) at the proponent's expense, to demonstrate there is sufficient market to support a proposed development. The market study should demonstrate that:

- a) The proposed commercial development will not have an impact on existing commercial nodes;
- b) opportunities for commercial expansion in intensification areas will not be affected or reduced, and
- c) the proposed development will not detract from neighbourhood convenience retail.

The Review also advises that permitting 'retail shopping centres' and 'retail warehouses' in employment areas is no longer appropriate or desirable. This is consistent with the policies of the draft new Vaughan Official Plan, draft York Region Official Plan and the Growth Plan, which specifically excludes Major Retail from Employment Areas. The Review recommends approximately 55,740 m² (600,000 square feet) of commercial Gross Floor Area (GFA) within employment areas is warranted, provided that the commercial uses support or are ancillary to employment uses, generally under 929 m² (10, 000 square feet).

It is recommended that intensification areas with over 5,000 people can support local grocery and other food stores, while intensification areas with over 10,000 people can support a full scale supermarket.

The Review recommends that further work on a long-term commercial/retail strategy be developed to accommodate additional commercial space, particularly in intensification areas identified in the New Official Plan. The strategy should identify the amount of space that could be accommodated in intensification areas, together with formats and appropriate uses to guide future commercial development in Vaughan.

In order to support of the above strategy and to guide commercial development within the urban fabric, a commercial/retail typology and urban design guideline study for development and redevelopment should be undertaken. The typology component would be a compilation and illustration of set of "best practices" that demonstrates approaches to a pedestrian friendly urban development. The design guidelines would incorporate principles of environmentally sustainable design, support and complement the Reviews' recommendations to ensure priority is given to the pedestrian environment, accessibility, transit support and integrated urban form.

Work has begun on a city-wide urban design manual that will address urban design guidelines for commercial development and build upon work completed by staff on guidelines for parking lots and drive-through uses. Although much of the work on the manual will be completed by the Planning Department, there will likely be a need to hire a consultant for aspects that cannot be completed "in-house" such as market viability, demonstration plans, graphics and assistance with best practices and implementation strategies. Therefore, it is recommended that a Terms of Reference and budget be prepared by the Development Planning Department in consultation with the Policy

Planning and the Economic Development Departments and brought forward as part of the 2011 Capital Budget deliberations.

ii) Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

The Review recognizes that the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) will be the highest order of commercial centre, with the highest mixed-use density allocation, and should include: a super regional commercial node; a neighbourhood shopping destination; a convenience and business service node; 4) an entertainment, recreation and hospitality centre. Design within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre should allow for street-front orientation of retail uses and curb-side parking, high quality design elements to enhance the public realm, pedestrian accessibility, and environmental features.

Commercial space located in the VMC should include mixed-use development, a high degree of pedestrian accessibility, and be animated by public amenities. Larger retail units are recommended to be located west of Highway 400 on Highway 7, provided that they are subject to high design standards, increased densities and are provided as part of mixed-use developments. The Review also recommends that an additional connection be provided between the east and west sides of Highway 400 near Highway 7 to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle and local traffic movements across the highway.

iii) Intensification and Redevelopment

The Review recommends that the use of existing underutilized commercial space be intensified by expanding the range of permitted uses, and by reducing the number of auto-oriented retail facilities (e.g. drive-through retail uses) in intensification and other pedestrian oriented areas. Opportunities for neighbourhood and convenience retail should be enhanced throughout the City.

iv) Village Cores

The Review identifies the Village Cores of Maple, Thornhill, Woodbridge and Kleinburg-Nashville as key pedestrian-oriented commercial retail within walking distance of residents nodes which should be enhanced and revitalized. To achieve this, the Review recommends that:

- appropriately scaled residential intensification is key to the economic health and function of the Village Cores;
- at-grade parking between the street and main building entrance is discouraged,
- internal retail malls are discouraged;
- opportunities for civic functions (e.g. public libraries) be identified;
- flexible zoning should be implemented to encourage small and large stores to locate;
- on-street parking should be permitted; and
- design guidelines be prepared, maximizing sunlight exposure for pedestrians, enhancing the pedestrian realm, and providing public art.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with Vaughan Vision 2020 Strategic Initiatives respecting planning and managing growth and economic vitality, specifically "Complete and Implement the Growth Management Strategy".

Regional Implications

The Commercial Land Use Review addresses the City's future commercial space requirements and commercial spatial allocation. Regional implications may include aspects such as: on-street parking, transportation, the regional economy, and potential for tourism.

Conclusion

The Review concludes that policies should focus on growth in intensification areas and the Village Cores, and be supported by appropriate urban design guidelines and other information that helps to evolve the commercial hierarchy to one that enhances and supports the public realm and walkable communities.

Although OPA #600 identifies a commercial hierarchy, the Review suggests that further criteria should be included in policies to further distinguish the size and function of Commercial Land Uses. Additional study is required to identify the amount of space together with formats and appropriate uses that could be included in intensification areas including Village Cores. The Review concludes that the City requires an additional 8.2 million square feet of additional commercial space, to accommodate the forecasted population until 2031, primarily within intensification areas of the City. The recommendations in the Commercial Land Use Review emphasize that appropriate scales of commercial uses be directed to appropriate locations within the City. This is consistent with the policy recommendations in the draft Official Plan.

Attachments

1. Commercial Land Use Review (Mayor and Members of Council ONLY)
2. Proposed Recommendation Summary from Commercial Land Use Review

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Recommendations

1. In that there is a sufficiently supply of commercially designated land in existing greenfield areas, no new district or regional scale commercial designations should be considered within currently designated greenfield lands. This would not preclude regional or district commercial activities required as part of the planning for intensification areas, including the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, as well as district scale retail required to serve the future residents in the Whitebelt growth area.
2. A strategy should be developed to accommodate additional commercial space in intensification areas. The strategy should identify the amount of space that could be accommodated in each area, together with formats and appropriate uses. The study should ensure that intensification areas with over 5,000 persons can accommodate or be located in proximity to grocery and other food stores. Intensification areas with over 10,000 residents should accommodate or be located in proximity to a full scale supermarket.
3. Commercial development in intensification areas should provide for a variety of store sizes. The majority of space would consist of small units – under 2,000 square feet, which would be appropriate for services, independent businesses, and smaller chain outlets. Larger units should be available for medium sized outlets (e.g. 5,000 to 25,000 square feet), to accommodate pharmacies, small supermarkets, and specialty retailers); larger outlets (e.g. 25,000 to 75,000 square feet) for theatres and entertainment establishments, full scale supermarkets, and larger format specialty stores; and very large outlets (75,000 square feet and over) to house multi-plex theatres, department stores, superstores, home design stores, and other specialty outlets).
4. Future neighbourhood scale retail nodes should be limited to a maximum of 10,000 square metres. Neighbourhood retail nodes should be spaced appropriately so as not to constitute a larger cluster that may compete for tenants with designated district retail sites. A neighbourhood scale retail facility should serve approximately 10,000 to 15,000 residents and should be located so that the residents of the area it serves should not have to travel more than two kilometres. Depending on residential densities, neighbourhood shopping destinations should be spaced approximately two to four kilometres apart. The location of future neighbourhood and lower order retail centres should be undertaken through the Secondary Plan process.
5. The designation of lands for retail shopping centres and retail warehouses in employment areas is not required, and as a matter of policy should be avoided to protect the City's employment land supply. This is consistent with the findings of the Hemson Employment Lands study conducted as part of the Official Plan

Review and the draft York Region Official Plan. However, it will continue to be important to accommodate some commercial uses in employment areas that may not be appropriate elsewhere in the hierarchy³, or would support local businesses. We estimate that approximately 15% of Vaughan's current supply of commercial space is located within employment areas. As Vaughan grows and its employment areas continue to evolve and their formats change we expect this proportion to decrease to between 5% and 10%. As such, of the projected 8.2 million square feet of warranted commercial space in the City, we would recommend that the City plan to accommodate approximately 600,000 square feet within employment areas. Commercial uses that are appropriately accommodated within employment areas should include:

- Small-scale specialty building supply outlets and home renovation outlets⁴;
 - Restaurants and eating establishments to serve the local employment base;
 - Automotive supply and repair shops;
 - Accessory office and accessory retail uses;
 - Banks and business services;
 - Small scale convenience retail and services oriented to serving the employment area;
 - Business and professional offices; and
 - Commercial schools.
6. While the ultimate population in the Kleinburg-Nashville study area has yet to be determined, commercial space in this area should be sensitive to the rural and heritage character of the area. Commercial space should be limited to local serving facilities and should total between 15 and 20 square feet per resident
7. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre should be the highest order commercial centre in the City. When fully developed, the commercial space should fulfill a variety of functions:
- A super regional commercial node containing the full range of comparison facilities to serve a market extending well beyond the City boundaries;

³ For example building supply outlets requiring outside storage (e.g. marble, monument, pool and spa dealers), building supply outlets which require warehousing, repair or assembly space (e.g. flooring outlets, kitchen cabinet dealers, air conditioning/heating suppliers), and certain automotive repair establishments (e.g. body shops, general repair facilities).

⁴ Examples of these types of uses would include kitchen cabinet outlets, flooring supply dealers, plumbing supply stores, pool and spa supply dealers. The vast majority of these uses would be under 10,000 square feet, although there may be some exceptions. Large scale, general home improvement centres should not be permitted in employment areas.

- A neighbourhood shopping destination to serve the future residential population within it, containing supermarket, specialty food, convenience retail facilities and services;
 - A convenience and business service node serving the future businesses and employees of the surrounding offices;
 - An entertainment, recreation and hospitality centre catering to tourists, hotel guests, regional visitors and Vaughan residents.
8. As Vaughan's downtown, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre should be developed with the highest densities in the City. For the most part, commercial space should be developed as part of mixed use developments. Where possible, commercial space should allow for street front orientation, with curb side parking. Internal mall space may be appropriate, providing that it is developed as an integral part of mixed use development for street-front retailing and does not detract from the overall commercial district.
9. As has proven successful in many mixed use and lifestyle centres, high quality landscaping, public amenities, environmental features, open spaces, and recreation/entertainment facilities should augment the overall experience at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This will be especially important to offset the hard edges created by Highways 407 and 400.
10. There is a distinct difference between the potential retail experience on the east and west sides of the former Vaughan Corporate Centre. The east side (now the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre), which will be connected to the future subway, will contain the highest densities. Commercial space in this area should be part of mixed use developments, should have a high degree of pedestrian accessibility and should be animated by public amenities. There will, however, still be a requirement for large retail outlets which may require more flexible planning and design approaches. These larger retail units, which would act as regional anchors, could be accommodated west of Highway 400. Notwithstanding this, because the the western side of the Highway 400/7 interchange is still within an intensification area, it should still be subject to high design standards, increased densities and commercial space should be provided as part of mixed use developments. At present the two sides of the interchange are connected only by the busy Highway 7 overpass over Highway 400. An additional, connection should be provided to facilitate local traffic, pedestrian and bicycle movement between the two sides.
11. Design guidelines should be implemented to ensure that new forms of retail development are better able to integrate into the urban fabric and are consistent with the City's sustainable planning goals. New retail development should be encouraged:

- To be part of mixed use nodes;
 - To enhance the on-site pedestrian environment by reducing distances between store entrances, providing pedestrian friendly walkways between project components; and by amenities, such as street furniture, landscaping, and publically accessible open spaces;
 - To enhance accessibility onto and within the site for non-automotive traffic including bicycles and mobility scooters, by providing bicycle racks and dedicated lanes free from vehicular traffic;
 - To facilitate greater transit accessibility; and,
 - To adopt formats which better integrate with nearby residential and business districts by maximizing pedestrian connections to store entrances and through design and site plan policies which provide for a more seamless transition between commercial and other land uses.
12. To provide an opportunity for low density commercial sites to convert to more intensive urban uses by expanding the range of permitted residential and office uses.
13. In that the retail hierarchy has become blurred as individual stores expand their merchandise into non-traditional lines, policies regulating retail development should generally be focused around design and size as a means of distinguishing function, rather than on specific store types.
14. Where possible public spaces and public amenities, including sidewalks, public squares, recreational pathways, parks, public art, etc. should be integrated into retail areas.
15. Commercial development should be planned according to environmentally sustainable design principles, which would include design guidelines with respect to: building orientation; landscaping; the re-use of existing structures; energy and water conservation; reducing land requirements; minimizing driving distances; encouraging travel by modes other than private car; and, the use of environmentally supportive building materials. Drive-throughs, which promote vehicle idling and detract from pedestrian precincts should be not be permitted within intensification areas, the Village Cores and other commercial areas where pedestrian activity is encouraged.
16. Opportunities for neighbourhood and convenience serving retail facilities should be enhanced throughout the entire City. This would include:

- Designating sites appropriate for supermarkets and grocery stores within intensification areas;
 - Ensuring that new neighbourhoods are planned to accommodate convenience and neighbourhood shopping facilities within approximately two kilometres of residences; and,
 - Providing for neighbourhood scale retail facilities at strategic gateways into new residential communities. Other locations, which are in proximity to high density residential nodes or clusters of community activities may also be considered if sufficient market draw is available and impacts on nearby residential uses are minimized.
17. The Village Cores are irreplaceable in the City's commercial hierarchy and should be strengthened and supported with an economic policy and climate that allows them to fulfill several key functions:
- As neighbourhood centres providing food, convenient retail and services for nearby residents;
 - As locations for small independent retailers and service providers that may not desire or be able to afford locations in power centres or planned shopping centres; and,
 - As cultural, heritage, recreation and small scale entertainment centres serving visitors and Vaughan residents.
18. Strategies with respect to the Village Cores should:
- Encourage residential intensification within and in proximity to the core areas, where feasible;
 - Promote a continuous and concentrated commercial street front by discouraging at-grade commercial parking between sidewalks and store entrances, and internal mall retailing.
 - Encourage the formation of Business Improvement Areas in Woodbridge, Maple and Thornhill;
 - Identify opportunities for Civic functions, such as libraries, community centres, recreation facilities, etc. within the pedestrian precinct of each core;

- Provide flexible zoning standards to allow for both small stores and larger stores that can act as anchors;
 - Provide for on-street parking, where practical;
 - Maintain high design standards with opportunities for creative public spaces; and,
 - Where possible, develop urban design guidelines that maximize sunlight within key pedestrian areas.
19. When evaluating applications for new commercial designations, the City should adopt the following criteria :
- That there is need to support the proposed additional commercial space and that they are not merely replacing facilities located elsewhere in Vaughan;
 - That they will not draw away from the existing or future market required to support identified intensification areas or the market to support required retail facilities in the Whitebelt;
 - That they will not draw away from the existing or future market required to support designated district centres;
 - That they will not adversely impact the neighbourhood or convenience retail services available to Vaughan residents; and,
 - That they will provide sufficient opportunities for non-automotive related shopping, including pedestrian connectivity to surrounding residential development and proximity to transit stops.
20. To ensure that proposed new retail designations above the neighbourhood serving level of the hierarchy are warranted, the City should require a market study for all applications for new commercial designations which exceed 10,000 square metres. The market studies would be subject to a peer review by a consultant selected by the City at the proponent’s expense. The market studies should demonstrate, whether there is sufficient market to support the proposed facility, without:
- significantly impacting the planned function of existing retail nodes; or
 - reducing the opportunity for the commercial expansion of currently designated commercial areas, including: the Vaughan Metropolitan Area,

Primary Centres, Local Centres, intensification areas, and neighbourhood retail facilities.

- eliminating or significantly detracting from the ability of residential neighbourhoods and intensification areas from being served by nearby neighbourhood and convenience shopping facilities.

This study has provided general guidelines for the allocation of future warranted and undesignated commercial space to 2031 as follows:

- 100,000 square feet within Kleinburg-Nashville;
- 600,000 square feet within employment areas;
- 1,600,000 square feet within intensification areas; and,
- 700,000 square feet within the Whitebelt.

As detailed planning and zoning for individual areas is finalized, these allocations should be refined to recognize the capacity of each area to accommodate new commercial development. These more refined allocations can be used as the basis for determining whether proposed new designations would detract from the commercial space planned for each individual area.