

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 19, 2012**

### **RETENTION OF A BLOCK PLAN PEER REVIEW CONSULTANT DIRECTION TO ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTING SERVICES FILE 15.60.1 CITYWIDE**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends that:

1. A Request for Proposal be issued for the retention of a Block Plan Peer Review Consultant to review and comment on existing and future Block Plan applications; and
2. The Terms of Reference for the retention of the Citywide Block Plan Peer Review Consultant be prepared by staff to reflect the principles set out in this report;

#### **Economic Impact**

Funding for the Block Plan Peer Review will be provided through the Block Plan fees collected from prior years and placed in a holding account for this purpose. The current balance in the holding account is approximately \$312,000.

#### **Communication Plan**

The Request for Proposal will be advertised in accordance with current City policy.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to obtain:

- Direction to proceed with the issuance of the Request for Proposals for consulting services to peer review current and future Block Plan development approval applications; and
- Direction to prepare the draft Terms of Reference for the retention of a Block Plan Peer Review consultant on the basis of the principles identified in this report.

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

##### a) Purpose

The submission of a number of Block Plan approval applications is anticipated over the next 5 years resulting from the Official Plan approvals emerging from the VOP 2010 process and decisions related to the Regional Official Plan, specifically the new community areas. To assist staff in completing the technical reviews it would be beneficial to retain the services of a consulting firm or team that can provide land use planning and urban design and supporting services to assist in the review of the Block Plan applications. The Peer Reviewer would be on retainer and would be available to provide assistance to staff on any Block Plans submitted during the term of the contract. The capacity to review block plans will be necessary to ensure the thorough and timely review of landowner applications.

City staff will still be responsible for the processing of the Block Plan applications. The consultant would be brought in to assist on unique situations or where the City does not have expertise or immediate capacity to complete the review in a timely manner based on workload considerations.

b) Location

Review of Block Plan applications will be required for lands located in Blocks 27, 34, 35, 41, 40 (north), 47, 55, 59, 60, 62, 66 as identified for development in OPA 600 and VOP 2010 (refer to Attachment 1).

c) Context

The Block Plan is a comprehensive planning framework (tertiary planning process) that describes how the policy aspects of development will be addressed and implemented. The Block Plan process focuses on detailed aspects of development such as:

- The proposed land uses, housing mix and densities, urban design and built form;
- Traffic management, including traffic volumes, traffic-calming measures and transportation demand management;
- Public transit, pedestrian and cycling networks;
- Public and private services, and a detailed approach to stormwater management;
- Protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Network and demarcation of Core Features and Enhancement Areas;
- The precise location of natural and cultural landscapes and heritage features, and proposed approaches to conservation and/or enhancement;
- The precise location of parks, open spaces, schools, community centres; and libraries; and
- Phasing of development.

The Official Plan process provides that development of Vaughan's new communities and employment areas proceed on the basis of Block Plans, generally encompassing areas of up to 1,000 acres. Block Plan applications include a Block Plan Report, with supporting statistical and mapped information, as well as the Master Environmental/Service Plan and Environmental Impact Study and a number of related studies.

The approved Block Plan provides the basis for the submission of the implementing draft plan of subdivision and zoning amendment applications. The Block Plan process includes three stages:

Stage 1: Approval of Block Plan and Work Program:

Stage 1 provides for landowners to prepare an application and work program (to be approved by the City) outlining the steps in preparation of the Block Plan.

Stage 2: Preparation of Draft Block Plan & Supporting Documents:

Stage 2 is the preparation and submission of the Block Plan application and supporting documentation by the proponent. Generally the following studies will be required as part of the Block Plan submission:

- i) Detailed Land Use Plan (including spatial distribution of land uses and density statistics throughout the Block Plan area);
- ii) Master Environmental Servicing Plan (ME/SP);
- iii) Environmental Site Assessment;
- iv) Noise Study;
- v) Detailed Urban Design Guidelines;
- vi) Transportation / Traffic Management / Transit Requirements
- vii) Archaeological & Heritage Resource Assessment; and
- viii) Architecture and Landscape Design.

### Stage 3: Public Review and Approvals:

Stage 3 is the public process for the Block Plan, leading to Council approval. The City's review and evaluation of Block Plan submissions will be based on the policies of OPA 600 or VOP 2010 (on its approval) and be subject to the requirements of the City's Environmental Management Guideline and relevant Regional and Provincial policies. It is at this stage that the Peer Review Consultant may be required to provide assistance on the review of one or more aspects of the Block Plan submission.

### Role of the Peer Review Consultant

Staff do not anticipate that the Peer Review consultant will be involved in the evaluation of complete Block Plan applications. Staff has identified a need for periodic assistance in specific areas where additional resources are needed due to short term staffing issues, or where particular expertise may be required or where alternative approaches need to be explored. Block Plans are the products of multi-disciplinary teams. Therefore, there is the need to address issues in consultation with all of the affected disciplines. While the primary emphasis of the retainer will be on planning matters, having the other Block Plan related resources available in a Peer Reviewer may also benefit other City departments.

In response it is recommended that a Peer Review consultant, with this range of expertise, be retained on a long-term basis (three to five years) to be available to provide these services on short-notice without having to go through a recruitment process which would add time to the review process. The approach recommended will provide the Commissioner of Planning with the flexibility to bring on expertise in a timely manner, in order to ensure the expeditious and comprehensive review of the Block Plan application.

In order to proceed it will be necessary to initiate the recruitment process for the Peer Review consultant. The Terms of Reference will need to be based on principles that set out the City's expectations in terms of the financial and administrative arrangements and the range of expertise that may be needed by the Peer Review consultant. These are discussed below.

### Principles to Guide the Preparation of the Terms of Reference

In securing competitive proposals for the Block Plan Peer Review contract it is recommended that the following principles be built into the Terms of Reference. In this circumstance, the work requested will vary from block to block. Therefore, the focus in retaining the consultant will need to be on expertise, experience, ability to bring to bear the required range of disciplines and cost. Therefore, no specific project or task can be specified at this time. The recommended principles are as follows:

1. The consultant or consulting team will support and work under the direction of the Policy Planning Department in consultation with relevant City departments. In undertaking its assignments the consultant may assist City of Vaughan staff across the range of disciplines that may be encountered in conducting the Block Plan approval process, which will be specifically identified in each assignment;
2. The successful proponent will be retained for three years, which may be extended beyond three years on an annual basis, providing for a maximum term of contract of up to five-years (three and up to two additional years);
3. The annual retainer fee not exceed \$10,000.00;

4. The annual retainer fees, on a cumulative basis, will be credited to charges against work directed by the City, in accordance with paragraph 6 below;
5. All work conducted by the consultant on behalf of the City shall be charged on an hourly basis, by discipline and seniority level of the personnel. The proposal shall set out the hourly rate for each of the required disciplines at the various levels of seniority for the participating firm(s). Such hourly rates shall be fixed and be valid for three years from the date of executing the contract, provided that if the contract is extended beyond three years, the hourly rates may be renegotiated;
6. Work shall only be undertaken on the basis of written instructions from the Commissioner of Planning setting out the Scope of Work for the assignment and a mutually agreed to work plan, timeline, deliverables, personnel assignment and budget. The Commissioner of Planning shall advise the consultant of the acceptance of the work plan, timeline, deliverables, personnel assignment and budget prior to the commencement of billable work;
7. Block Plans engage a range of disciplines and involve the participation of numerous municipal (Regional and Local) departments, provincial ministries, and other stakeholders, such as agencies, utilities, landowners and the public. Therefore, the consultant may need to provide for following expertise, resulting from a request from the Commissioner of Planning in consultation with any affected City department:
  - Land Use Planning;
  - Urban Design, Architecture and Built Form Landscaping;
  - Natural Heritage expertise;
  - Archaeological & Heritage Resource Assessment;
  - Excellent communication skills including the graphic presentation of alternative concepts in response to Block Plan submissions; and
  - Public Facilitation Expertise.
8. The evaluation criteria will reflect the requirement to provide for the expertise identified in paragraph 7.

The Terms of Reference in the RFP will implement these principles.

#### Timing of Applications and Economic Impact

The annual expenditures on these services cannot be predicted with great certainty at this time. Demand will be influenced by several of variables. These include: The timing of the approval of the new Official Plan and the associated secondary plans; release of lands from the GTA West Transportation Corridor Protection Area; the number of active Block Plan submissions in process, which is influenced by market forces; the time it takes for the landowners to form a Block Plan group and prepare the required submissions; and the actual number of reviews that might be necessary, which will be determined by the challenges associated with the individual Block Plans.

Currently there is one active Block Plan application. It is anticipated that the number of submissions will begin to ramp up in the 2013-15 period resulting in a potential peak in the total applications in 2016-17, as the new Official Plan/Secondary Plans come into effect. As such, it is expected that demand for the Peer Review services may be at a maximum at that time. Assuming this peak in expenditures, it would be expected that application fee revenues, would be received approximately one-year in advance. This may place the revenue peak in the 2014-15 timeframe.

For the purpose of budgeting for these expenditures, staff will assume \$50,000 per year, recognizing that there may be inconsistencies over time. Fee revenues may initially be lower in

2012-13 but begin to increase toward 2017. These projections will be revisited on an annual basis as greater clarity is achieved in the status of the new Official Plan approvals.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020**

The peer review of incoming Block Plan applications is consistent with the City's objectives for growth management by assisting with "Planning and managing Growth and Economic Vitality".

### **Regional Implications**

There are no Regional implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The Region will be consulted during the preparation of all Block Plans in matters relevant to its jurisdiction.

### **Conclusion**

Block Plan approvals have become an integral part of the City's planning process and is one of the main drivers of the City's urban form. Ensuring the complete and comprehensive review of the Block Plan applications is critical to achieving the City's planning goals, as well meeting the objectives of the Province and the Region through their various planning policies and programs. Attachment 1 illustrates the areas where Block Plan applications are expected over the few years. Funding to retain the Peer Review consultant is available from the Block Plan Revenue/Fees Account.

Retaining a Peer Review consultant will allow for the timely review of applications and provide expertise in areas where none is available on staff or when there are workload issues. It will also provide the opportunity to explore wider alternatives based on the experience of others. Therefore, it is recommended that staff proceed with preparation of Terms of Reference for the retention of the Peer Review consultant and that the Request for Proposal be issued.

### **Attachments**

1. Location Map – Lands requiring Block Plan approvals

### **Report prepared by:**

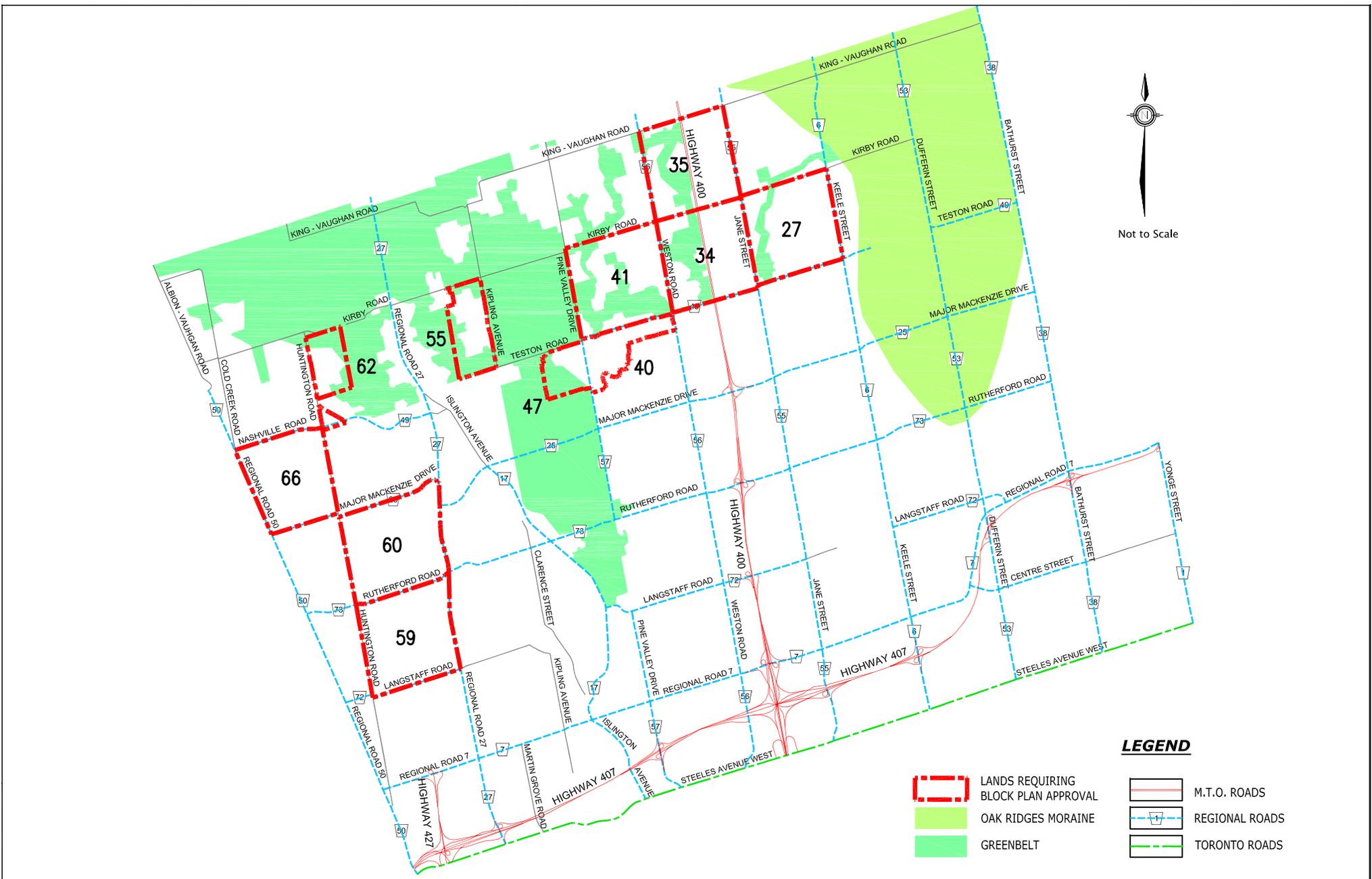
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Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE  
Commissioner of Planning

*for:* DIANA BIRCHALL  
Director of Policy Planning

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# Lands Requiring Block Plan Approval

APPLICANT: City of Vaughan  
 LOCATION: City Wide - Blocks 27, 34, 40, 41, 47, 55, 59, 60, 62, & 66



Attachment

FILE:  
15.60

DATE:  
June 5, 2012

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