

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OCTOBER 7, 2002

**OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION FILE OP.00.022
ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT APPLICATION FILE Z.00.107
REPORT #P.2001.12
1168912 ONTARIO INCORPORATED**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT Official Plan Amendment Application OP.00.022 (1168912 Ontario Incorporated) BE APPROVED, subject to the following conditions:
 - a) redesignate the subject lands to a "Prestige Area" designation under OPA 450 (Employment Area Plan), subject to the "Service Node" policies;
 - b) permit office, hotel and conference/banquet hall, limited retail commercial and associated ancillary uses, together with appropriate development policies addressing such matters as intensity, traffic, and site function; and,
 - c) incorporate urban design objectives into the site-specific amendment to ensure proper integration of the development with the adjacent land uses.

2. THAT Zoning By-law Amendment Application Z.00.107 (1168912 Ontario Incorporated) BE APPROVED, subject to the following conditions:
 - a) that the implementing zoning by-law:
 - i) rezone the subject lands to C7 Service Commercial Zone;
 - ii) restrict the site to office buildings; hotel with related hospitality, conference/banquet hall facilities, and eating establishment/outdoor patio; and limited retail store uses;
 - iii) provide minimum 9 m wide landscaped buffers adjacent to Regional Road 27 and the cemetery, and any necessary build-to or setback requirements to achieve appropriate built form and to facilitate a significant urban landscaped treatment within the right-of way of Toronto RV Road;
 - iv) permit any necessary exceptions to implement the approved site plan; and,
 - b) that prior to the implementing by-law being enacted, the required site plan application shall be approved by Council.

Purpose

On July 25, 2002, the Owner submitted revised applications to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to redesignate and rezone two parcels of land to permit the following office/hotel/commercial uses:

- Easterly Parcel (0.71 ha/1.76 ac): 9-storey hotel with 120 rooms, and 2-storey conference/banquet centre with reception, eating establishments, recreational and meeting rooms, comprising a total of 9,300 m² (100,100 ft²);

- Westerly Parcel (1.33 ha/3.28 ac): 8-storey (Phase 1) and 7-storey (Phase 2) office buildings, including ground floor retail, comprising a total of 20,424 m² (220,000 ft²).

A total of 1,294 parking spaces are proposed for the office and hotel development, comprising 118 surface and 1,176 underground spaces on 2 levels, with direct access to both parcels from Toronto RV Road, off Regional Road 27.

Background - Analysis and Options

The subject lands are located on the west side of Regional Road 27, north of Highway 407, (7242 Regional Road 27) in Lot 2, Concession 8, and Lots 2 and 3, Concession 9, City of Vaughan. The easterly parcel is developed with the Woodbine Motel, and the westerly parcel is vacant. The surrounding land uses are:

- North - Queen of Heaven Cemetery (PB2 Zone)
- South - cemetery and Toronto RV Centre (PB2 Zone)
- East - Regional Road 27; vacant (PB1S Zone)
- West - cemetery (PB2 Zone)

The original development applications submitted on November 30, 2000, proposed a much higher and denser office and hotel development as follows:

- Easterly Parcel (0.71 ha/1.76 ac): 11-storey hotel with 250 rooms, including a 2-storey conference centre with reception, eating establishments, recreational, meeting rooms, offices and retail, comprising a total of 22,263.5 m² (239,650 ft²); and,
- Westerly Parcel (1.33 ha/3.28 ac): two 16-storey office buildings, including 3 floors of retail and eating establishments, comprising a total of 46,165.7 m² (496,940 ft²).

Parking for the office towers was proposed within a 5-level above-ground parking structure, and 3-levels of underground parking to serve both the office and hotel buildings.

On December 22, 2000, a notice of public hearing based on the above-noted proposal was circulated to all property owners within 120 m of the subject lands. To date, correspondence from the planning consultant representing the adjacent cemetery has been received with the following comments (summarized):

- the overwhelming scale and intensity of use, which is in excess of that permitted in the Highway 427/7 area, Vaughan Centre and most of the Corporate Centre;
- the cemetery, RV Centre and motel share the access to Highway 27, and adding this development will exceed intersection capacity; there has been no traffic study to consider funeral processions;
- potential impact on cemetery (eg. noise, lighting, inappropriate passive use, overshadowing, lack of privacy and serenity);
- comprehensive planning for all parcels in the area is desirable.

The recommendation of the Committee of the Whole on January 22, 2001, to receive the public hearing and forward a comprehensive report to a future Committee meeting, was ratified by Council on January 29, 2001.

Peer Review of Original Proposal

The applicant submitted a Market Analysis Report prepared by Realty Research Group Ltd., dated June 2001, in support of the original proposal. Hemson Consulting Ltd., which was retained by the City to peer review report, submitted the following finding on November 13, 2001:

- the density proposed on the site is about 3.46 times coverage, which far exceeds the typical densities of about 0.7 times coverage for the office and hotel developments in suburban GTA;
- the applicant is proposing a structure and underground parking which has not proven to be economically feasible for the vast majority of suburban office buildings in the GTA;
- the development of a 495,000 square foot office building at Highway's 407 and 27 could have significant negative implications for the future development of the Vaughan Corporate Centre; the proposed office building would consume over 40% of Vaughan's projected office space demand of 1.2 million square feet over the next 10 years;
- an office building in the order of 100,000 square feet would be more reasonable for the site, and would be consistent with existing office buildings in Vaughan and with the density of most suburban office buildings in the GTA; and,
- the development of a hotel of any size on the subject site would not have any significant impact on the Vaughan Corporate Centre, however, a smaller hotel of about 55,000 square feet would be more appropriate from a site density perspective.

Following the release of the Hemson report, Planning Staff met with the applicant and representatives of the Cemetery and Toronto RV Centre, and discussed the following: reducing the height and density of the development; traffic and access on Toronto RV Road; treatment of parking (surface/underground); building placement; and, feasibility of the overall project. Staff also held separate meetings with the applicant to discuss urban design and a reduced scale of development.

Although the cemetery's comments had not changed from earlier, the Toronto RV Centre indicated a benefit from the construction of municipal services to their property and the beautification of Toronto RV Road, which would enhance their business of selling and renting motor homes. The Toronto RV Centre did not express any intentions to redevelop, other than to expand their business. Concerns were related to maintaining visibility along Regional Road 27 and Highway 407, and a potential loss of business during construction. They were assured that the development of the subject lands would be sensitive to the Toronto RV Centre through the application of appropriate urban design and construction measures, to be determined at the site plan stage.

Revised Proposal

On July 25, 2002, the applicant submitted revised applications by reducing the height and density of the development, and placing the buildings further from the cemetery. The revised height and floor area falls between the original proposal and Hemson's recommendations. The applicant also submitted a Market Review and Financial Feasibility Report prepared by the IBI Group in support of the new proposal, which concluded (in part):

- “1. IBI Group would generally agree that the scale of the proposed development is significant, particularly in the suburban context and more specifically in the City of Vaughan. Vaughan has historically been very successful in its growth and development in the manufacturing and warehousing sectors with less emphasis on office development. However, the subject location at the intersection of Highway's 27 and 407 is well suited to more than the “typical” suburban office model of development.

Given that the site is relatively isolated from other suburban activity, but has superior regional accessibility characteristics, there is a need to establish a critical mass in order to attract development. IBI Group suggests that some

200,000 sq.ft of office space (GLA) and a 120,000 sq.ft hotel represent a critical mass which would be appropriate for the subject site.

The analysis focuses on the office component of the proposed development. The development of the hotel is primarily contingent upon the office component proceeding.

In order to accommodate the required parking on site, the analysis assumes 100 surface parking spaces and the residual parking is to be accommodated in underground parking.

2. IBI Group suggests a phased approach to development to ensure that an appropriate amount of office space is introduced into the northwest GTA market at this location. This will also allow for competitive developments in Vaughan in designated office areas such as the Vaughan Corporate Centre. Each of Phases 1 and 2 would comprise approximately 100,000 sq.ft (GLA). It is anticipated that each office building would have floor plates on the order of 15,000 sq.ft and would be approximately 7-storeys in height. The density of the proposed office component is about 1.43 times coverage.”
- “4. Current office market characteristics indicate that:
 - net rates are in the \$8.50 to \$15.00 per sq.ft GLA range; larger projects in advantageous locations generally charge rents at the higher end of the range;
 - floor plates range from about 10,000 to 31,000 sq.ft but most are in the 15-17,000 sq.ft range;
 - on average, office buildings in Vaughan are 4-5 storeys; large projects are in the 7-11 storey range;
 - some office buildings provide underground parking; about half of the buildings providing underground parking charge a monthly parking rate in the \$30-\$75 per month range.
5. IBI Group estimates that there is an opportunity in the 2001 to 2011 timeframe for some 1.2 to 2.5 million sq.ft of additional office space in the City of Vaughan. The lower estimate assumes only a nominal increase in the share of office employment in the City whereas the higher estimate assumes that Vaughan’s share of office employment will increase to levels comparable with York Region as a whole. Based on this demand forecast, the proposed development represents between 8% to 17% of the potential future market.”
- “7. Based on the analysis carried out by IBI Group, we conclude that the proposed office development is feasible both from a market perspective as well as a financial perspective. We recommend that a phased approach be adopted in the development of this project to ensure orderly development of office space potential in the Vaughan market.”

The IBI Group report indicates that the securing of a prime office tenant will occur once development approvals have been obtained. The hotel development, which would include conference/banquet facilities to serve the northwest GTA market, would follow the Phase 1 office building, or possibly the Phase 2 office building. The hotel development would proceed once a commitment is secured from a hotel chain to lease/manage the facility, which is the current practice adopted by hotels. The applicant has advised that the entire project will be completed in 6 years.

The revised proposal is the subject of this staff report.

Official Plan

The subject lands are designated "General Complementary Use Area" by the Provincial Parkway Belt West Plan. The lands were removed from the Plan in October 1997, but were not redesignated for an urban use. An Official Plan Amendment is required to facilitate the proposed office, hotel and commercial uses.

The appropriate designation is "Prestige Area" under OPA 450 (Employment Area Plan), subject to the "Service Node" policies. The "Prestige Area" designation accommodates uses that require high visual exposure, good accessibility, and an attractive working environment. Service Nodes provide for the day-to-day convenience and service needs of businesses, industries and their employees. Service Nodes are generally located at the intersection of arterial and/or collector roads within the Employment Area, but are permitted in other areas that are conveniently located, or are predominantly devoted to such uses such as an office complex and hotel. The maximum area of a Service Node is 1.2 ha, which can be exceeded if the site is developed with a predominant use, such as an office building or hotel.

OPA 450 permits service commercial uses, but not full retail commercial, unless it is located on the ground floor of an office building. The proposal includes 1,600 m² of retail store uses on both the ground floor and outside of the two office buildings. Given the somewhat isolated location of the property and distance to retail sites in Woodbridge and Toronto, the limited amount of retail is considered to be complementary to the primary office and hotel uses, and will provide a service to its users. Staff can support retail commercial uses, with a restriction on the gross floor area being set out in the Zoning By-law, based on the Official Plan including a policy such as the following:

- The priority uses for the subject lands shall be offices, hotels with related hospitality, eating establishment and conference/banquet hall facilities, and other prestige employment uses. Ancillary retail commercial uses shall be permitted where their orientation and location are appropriately integrated into a development that is designed and devoted to the priority uses. The implementing Zoning By-law shall establish the permitted uses and development standards.

Zoning

a) Permitted Uses

The subject lands are zoned PB2 Parkway Belt Complementary Use Zone by By-law 1-88. A Zoning By-law Amendment is required to facilitate the proposed office building, hotel and retail store uses, which are defined in the by-law as follows:

Office Building - Means a building having more than one-storey used for business or professional office purposes. If an office building exceeds three (3) storeys in height, the following uses shall be permitted on the ground floor provided the combined total gross floor area of all such uses does not exceed fifteen (15%) of the total gross floor area of the said office building:

- bank
- eating establishment
- eating establishment, convenience
- eating establishment, take-out
- health centre
- personal service shop
- retail store
- a "variety store" which shall mean a kiosk serving the daily or occasional needs of the employees in the office building with a variety of goods such as food

snacks and beverages, sundries, tobacco, stationery, magazines and newspapers, but not including groceries, meats and produce, with no direct access to the exterior of the building and a gross floor area not exceeding fifty (50) square metres.

Hotel – Means a building or part thereof on the same lot used to accommodate the traveling public for gain or profit, by supplying them with sleeping accommodation but without individual private cooking facilities.

Retail Store – Means a building or part of a building where goods, wares, merchandise, substances, articles or things are offered or kept for sale directly to the public at retail and includes a convenience retail store and a pharmacy, but does not include a supermarket or an automotive retail store.

The zone category to implement the “Service Node” policies of the Official Plan is C7 Service Commercial Zone by By-law 1-88. The C7 Zone permits a wide range of commercial, automotive, eating establishment, institutional and office uses, many of which would be inappropriate in the context of the proposal.

Consequently, it is recommended that the implementing by-law be site-specific to the development proposal and permit only: office buildings; hotel with related hospitality, conference and banquet hall facilities, and eating establishment/outdoor patio; and, retail store uses. The amount of retail commercial beyond the ground floor of the office buildings, should be limited to that which is ancillary to the priority office building and hotel uses, and integrated into a development design that is devoted to the priority uses, to be determined through the site plan review process.

b) C7 Zone Standards

The conceptual site plan shows 7 and 8-storey office buildings and a 9-storey hotel, built close to the street line, which will require exceptions to the C7 Zone standards. Staff is supportive of the overall development concept, but specific exceptions will need to be identified and reviewed in the context of a site plan application having regard to appropriate setbacks and landscaped buffers, noise, lighting, access, parking and traffic. Exceptions to the C7 Zone will be identified through the technical review of the site plan application and included in a site specific zoning by-law.

c) Parking

Parking for an office building, hotel and retail store uses is based on the following standards in By-law 1-88:

- Office Building: 3.5 spaces/100 m2 GFA devoted to office uses, plus the requirement for any other use;
- Hotel: 1 space for each bedroom, plus the requirement for any other use;
- Retail Store: 6 spaces/100 m2 GFA;
- Other Use such as an Eating Establishment/Outdoor Patio: 16 spaces/100 m2 GFA.

The applicant’s Market Feasibility Report seeks the application of parking standards that exceed the City by-law requirements (ie. office at 5 spaces/1000 ft2 = 5 spaces/92.9 m2). The required and appropriate amount of parking for the overall development will be considered through the technical review of the site plan application and included in the implementing by-law.

Land Use

The redesignation and rezoning to allow service commercial uses constitutes an appropriate development of the subject lands for the following reasons:

- a) the subject lands are located at a highly visible and prominent location at Regional Road 27 and Highway 407, which is conducive and in close proximity to businesses and industries;
- b) the proposed development of the subject lands is not considered to impact upon the existing and planned surrounding land uses, with respect to traffic or the natural environment;
- c) the proposed uses are considered to be compatible with existing and planned surrounding uses, including the cemetery to the west and the Toronto RV Centre to the south, and should complement the office and hotel sector growth that is planned for the Vaughan Corporate Centre and the Employment Centre at Highway 427 and Regional Road 7;
- d) the subject lands are highly accessible to both traffic and public transit, and given its proximity to Regional Road 27, Highway's 407 and 427, Regional Road 7 and Steeles Avenue West, should ensure quick dispersal of traffic in the area and negligible traffic impact.

The site is also located close to the planned Ministry of Transportation Ontario's light rapid transit line and station with 600 parking spaces at the northwest corner of Regional Road 27 and Steeles Avenue West. The MTO's "Transitway Corridor Protection Study" dated December 1998, indicates that the Highway 27 transit station is advantageous since it would be possible to access Lester B. Pearson International Airport (LBPIA) via a transit corridor along Highway 27; and

- e) the proposed development provides additional service commercial lands for the City, which will facilitate businesses and industries and the traveling public, and will create new opportunities for employment, taxable assessment, and spin-off economic and social opportunities, that will benefit the business community, travelers and the City as a whole.

Transportation

- a) Vaughan Engineering Department

The Transportation Impact Study that was prepared by the IBI Group for the original site proposal is to be revised to reflect the recent down-scaled proposal. The revised study is to be submitted at the site plan stage for review by the City, Region of York, and the Ministry of Transportation Ontario. The report is to include additional information respecting trip assignment and trip generation rates. Proposed exclusive left and right turn eastbound lanes onto Regional Road 27 from Toronto RV Road must be of sufficient length to accommodate expected queue lengths. Potential for traffic flow conflict on Toronto RV Road at the entrance of the Queen of Heaven Cemetery will need to be addressed.

The proposal contemplates two levels of underground parking below Toronto RV Road, which is generally not acceptable to the City. The applicant would like to discuss this matter further with the Engineering Department to identify parking options below grade, prior to the formal submission of the site plan application. All costs to upgrade Toronto RV Road and any intersection improvements at Regional Road 27 are to be borne by the applicant.

b) Region of York

Regional Road 27 is under the jurisdiction of the Region of York. The Transportation and Works Department has no objection to the proposal, subject to receiving a detailed engineering submission at the site plan stage.

The Region's Development Review Committee has indicated that they have no objection to the more intensive employment and business uses proposed for the area. The subject lands are located along a portion of Regional Road 27 that is identified as an Urban Corridor by the Regional Official Plan, having potential for more intensive, transit-supportive mixed-use development. The proposal conforms to the "Urban Area" designation in the Region's Official Plan.

c) Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO)

The subject lands are located in close proximity to the on/off-ramps of Highway 407, which is owned by the 407/ETR, with development approvals co-ordinated by the MTO. The MTO advises that all access to the site must be from Toronto RV Road. The existing access south of Toronto RV Road is to be closed and removed.

The Transportation Impact Study must be updated to reflect higher traffic volumes and an increased growth rate than what is proposed in the original study. A progression analysis will also be required to verify whether there will be any queuing at the several intersections in this stretch along Regional Road 27 that could affect operations on the Highway 407 ramps. An analysis of pedestrian movements at the Highway 407 intersections will also be required as part of this report.

Servicing

A Functional Servicing Report, site servicing and grading plan and a stormwater management report must be submitted at the site plan stage for review by the Engineering Department, Region of York Transportation and Works Department, Ministry of Transportation Ontario, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and Hydro Vaughan Distribution Inc. The MTO indicated that the Functional Servicing Report must address the Ministry's Directives, Drainage Manual and Technical Guidelines.

The Engineering Department has indicated that storm and sanitary sewers and water are to be provided through the Region of York's right-of-way to the site, and an actual design of each service is to be provided through the municipal road allowance to the structures.

Urban Design

Given the scale and phasing of the overall development, a detailed urban design guidelines report, master landscape plan, and comprehensive development phasing plan must be submitted with the site plan application.

Enhanced architectural treatment and appropriate mass and scale of the buildings, including setbacks on upper storeys, are to be provided for the overall development, given the site's prominent location at Highway 407 and Regional Road 27. Buildings must be designed so that elevations facing a street must present a "front-like" elevation. Similarly, sensitive architectural treatment will be required for the facades that face the cemetery and Toronto RV Centre and the entrance to the site.

Surface parking and service areas must be appropriately landscaped and screened from view. Perimeter landscaping will assist to enhance the built environment, and is to include minimum 9m wide landscaped buffers adjacent to Regional Road 27 and the cemetery, and any necessary

zoning exceptions to facilitate a significant urban landscaped treatment within the right-of way of Toronto RV Road. The outside storage of goods and materials and garbage will not be permitted in order to provide attractive streetscapes.

The Official Plan Amendment will contain urban design provisions to this effect, and the overall development must address the following urban design policies in Section 2.3.1 of OPA 450:

- i) Master Landscape Plan, addressing streetscape, perimeter landscaping and publicly accessible open spaces.
- ii) Urban Design Plan dealing with the following matters:
 - the height and massing of buildings;
 - the distribution of uses and densities;
 - the relationship between streets and buildings;
 - the integration of new developments with transit service;
 - the pedestrian and vehicular systems;
 - the parks and open space systems;
 - the primary public entrances;
 - micro-climatic conditions (wind, sun-shade relationships);
 - signage, streetscape amenity elements, lighting and site furnishing; and,
 - conceptual landscape treatment and relationship to any master landscape plan.
- iii) A Comprehensive Development Plan for large sites or where phasing is provided.

To address the development and design policies, a site plan application and the accompanying urban design plans must be submitted. The technical report for the site plan application will also include the necessary zoning exceptions to implement the site development.

Conclusion

Staff has reviewed the proposed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law and are of the opinion that the redesignation and rezoning of the subject lands to permit office building, hotel and retail commercial uses is appropriate. The proposed uses are compatible with the existing and planned uses in the surrounding area, and will complement the office and hotel sector growth that is planned for the Vaughan Corporate Centre and the Employment Centre at Highway 427 and Regional Road 7. The site is located at a visibly prominent and prime development location at Highway 407 and Regional Road 27. Its proximity to other major roads including Regional Road 7, Highway 427 and Steeles Avenue West, also makes this site attractive to businesses. The site is close to Pearson International Airport and would provide convenient hotel service to businesses and the traveling public in the west part of Vaughan.

The "Prestige Area" designation of OPA #450, subject to the "Service Node" policies and the urban design objectives to be included in the site-specific official plan amendment, will ensure an attractive development and an appropriate interface with the adjacent Queen of Heaven Cemetery and Toronto RV Centre. Similarly, the proposed rezoning to C1 Zone, with site-specific uses of an office building, hotel and limited retail stores and ancillary uses, will appropriately implement the proposal.

Given the scale and phasing of the overall development, a detailed urban design guidelines report, master landscape plan, comprehensive development phasing plan, traffic and parking impact study and a functional servicing report, are to be submitted together with a site plan application. The technical report for the site plan application will identify the necessary zoning exceptions to implement the site development for inclusion in the site specific zoning amendment.

For these reasons, Staff can recommend approval of the official plan and zoning by-law amendment applications, subject to the provisions in this report. Should the Committee concur, the recommendations in this report can be adopted.

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Conceptual Site Plan
3. Conceptual Perspective Plan

Report prepared by:

Grant A. Uyeyama, Senior Planner, Development, ext. 8635
Marco Rammuno, Manager of Development Planning, ext. 8485

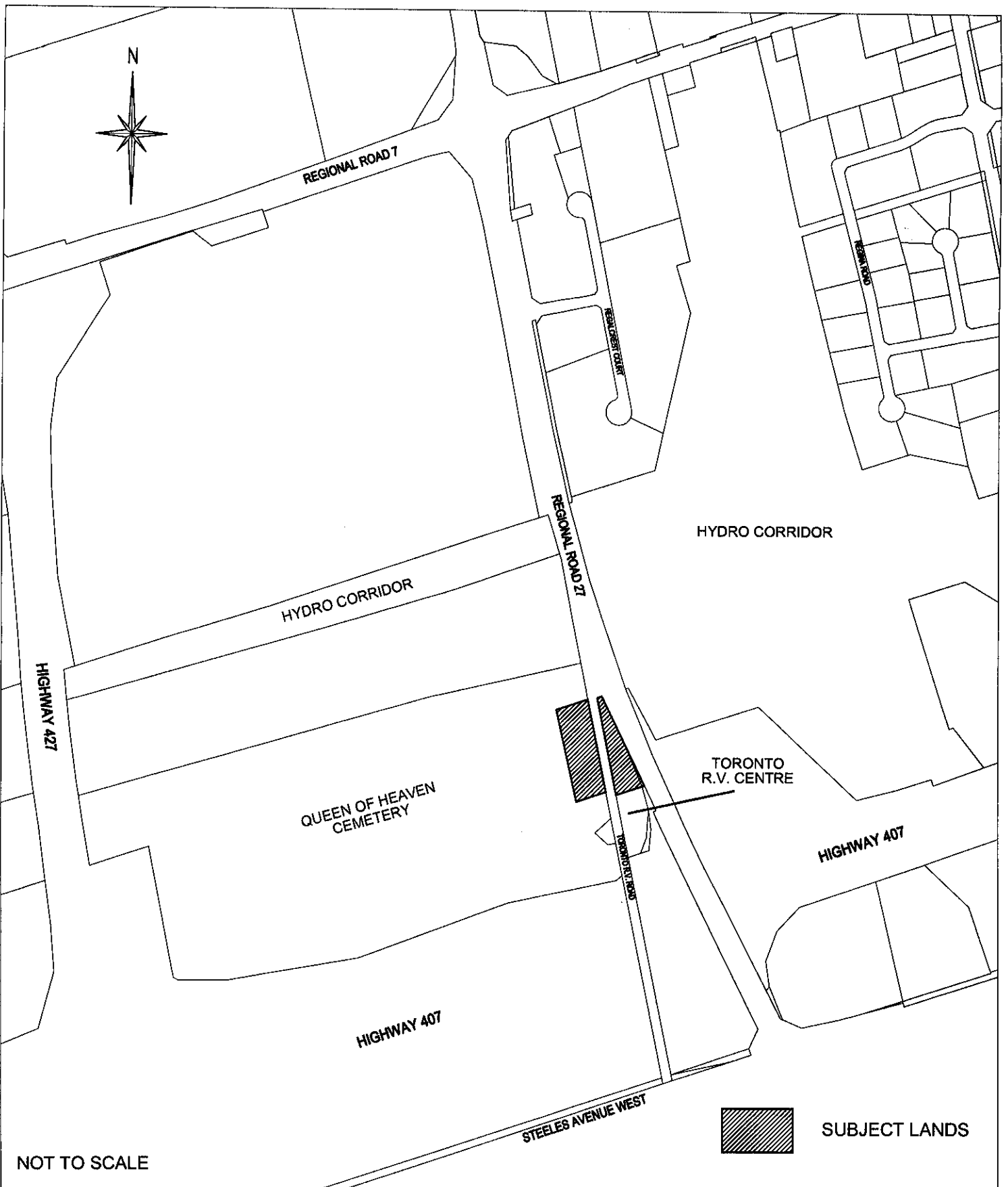
Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL DeANGELIS
Commissioner of Planning

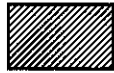
JOANNE R. ARBOUR
Director of Community Planning

/CM

R:\SER\WORKING\UYEYAMAG\ImportanneCentre.cw.doc



NOT TO SCALE

 SUBJECT LANDS

Location Map

Lot 2, Concession 8 &
Lots 2 & 3, Concession 9

APPLICANT:
1168912 ONTARIO
INCORPORATED



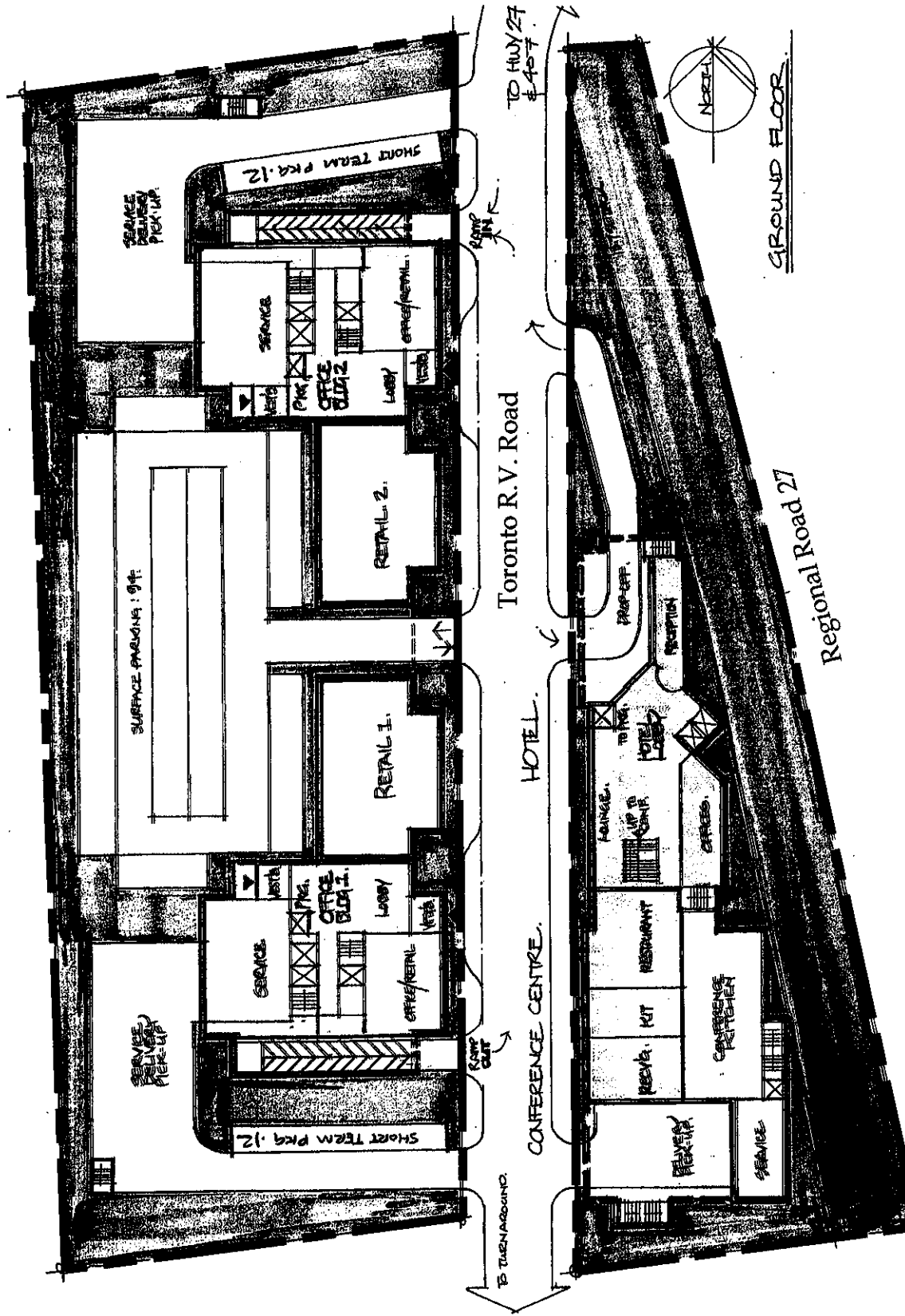
Community Planning Department

Attachment

FILE No.:
OP.00.022 & Z.00.107

September 19, 2002

1



NOT TO SCALE

--- SUBJECT LANDS

Conceptual Site Plan

Lot 2, Concession 8 &
Lots 2 & 3, Concession 9

APPLICANT:
1168912 ONTARIO
INCORPORATED

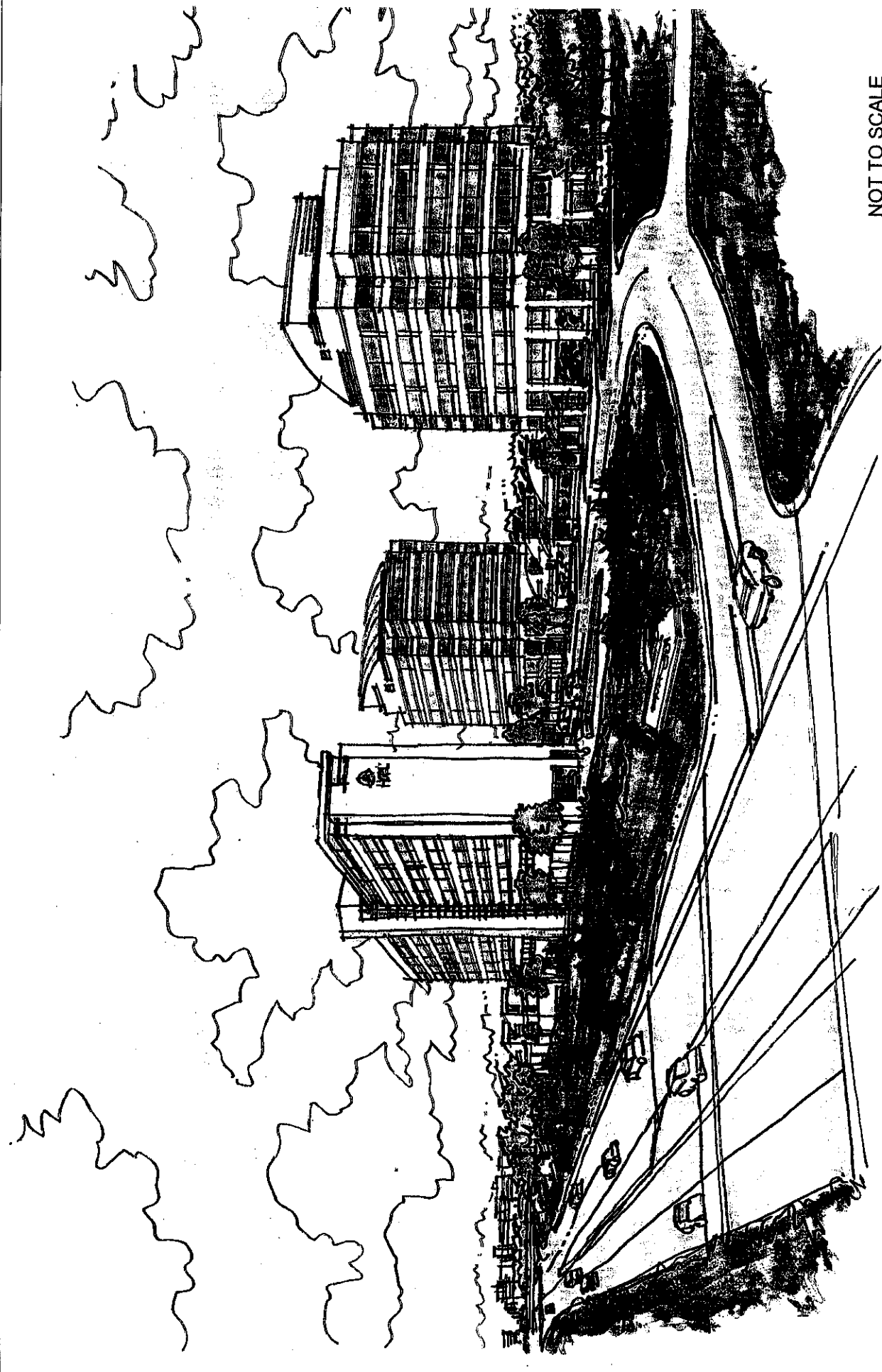


Community Planning Department

Attachment 2

FILE No.:
OP.00.022 & Z.00.107

September 19, 2002



NOT TO SCALE

Conceptual Perspective Plan

Lot 2, Concession 8 &
Lots 2 & 3, Concession 9
APPLICANT:
1168912 ONTARIO
INCORPORATED



Community Planning Department

Attachment 3

FILE No.:
OP.00.022 & Z.00.107

September 19, 2002