

**3. HIGHWAY 7 LAND USE FUTURES STUDY AND
DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS NO. 660, 661, 662, 663 AND 664
JANE/7 EMPLOYMENT AREA REDEVELOPMENT STUDY
FILE NO. 15.87**

P.2005.66

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT this report concerning 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 RECEIVED; and

THAT the issues identified by the public and Council be addressed by Staff in a future report to Committee of the Whole.

Economic Impact

The economic impact to the City should 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.

Purpose

The purposes of this report are to:

- 1) Submit the draft Official Plan Amendments #660, 661, 662, 663 and 664, implementing the recommendations of the City-initiated Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study for the consideration of Committee of the Whole; and,
- 2) To receive the public's comments on the draft Official Plan Amendments.

Background – Analysis and Options

Location

The Study Area for the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study traversed 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 extended approximately 400 metres on both the north and south sides of the Highway 7 right-of-way (Attachment 1). The draft Official Plan amendments are proposed to amend five (5) current plans (OPA's #450, 240, 345, 500 and 467).

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 (Attachment 2).

(Note: All references to 'Highway 7' and 'Avenue 7' in this staff report and the reports on the two studies pertain to 'Regional Road 7'. Regional Road 7 was formerly Provincial Highway 7 until its ownership was transferred to York Region.)

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

- On May 14, 2001, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Regional Road (Highway 7) Policy Review.
- On October 15, 2001, Council approved selection of a consulting team led by the firm 'The Planning Partnership' to be retained to conduct the review. The team included: duToit Allsopp Hillier (urban design); Sterling Finlayson Architects (urban design); Oleson Worland Architect (urban design); Royal LePage Advisors (market intelligence and development feasibility); Poulos + Chung (transportation); Stantec (engineering/stormwater management); and, DCS (environmental site remediation).
- On February 27, 2002, a Technical Advisory Committee was established to assist in conducting the review. The first meeting of the Committee was held to review the draft Phase I Background Reports. The Committee included staff representation from:
 - Region of York
 - York Region Transit
 - York Region Transit Plan
 - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
 - City of Vaughan Development Planning, Engineering, Economic and Technology Development, and Real Estate departments.
- 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 in the Council Chambers to provide an overview of the studies and obtain comments from the public on the evolving vision for Highway 7.
- On October 15, 2002, a Committee of the Whole Working Session was held with presentations from the City's consultants on the Phase II reports, as well as York Regional Staff on the policy initiatives on York Region's Centres and Corridors policy initiative and the York Region Rapid Transit Plan.
- 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) had progressed to the point where it became prudent to delay finalizing the Vaughan's Highway 7 Policy Review until these Regional initiatives were concluded.
- On October 25, 2004, Council adopted Staff recommendations on the Provincial Government's discussion papers on planning reform initiatives that included a draft Provincial Policy Statement. Council also adopted Staff recommendations on the Provincial Government's document entitled "Places to Grow – A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe".
- On November 22, 2004, Council directed the scheduling of a statutory Public Hearing on the Highway 7 Policy Review, so comments from Council and the public could be

received prior to finalizing the draft amendments for Council adoption. This report and Public Hearing responds to that recommendation.

- On December 17, 2004, Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 43 was adopted and, there being no appeals, came into effect on January 7, 2005.
- On February 28, 2005, the Greenbelt Plan was approved under Section 3 of the Greenbelt Act, 2005, and came into effect on December 16, 2004.
- On March 1, 2005, amendments to the Provincial Policy Statement were approved and came into effect replacing the Provincial Policy Statement issued May 22, 1996, and amended February 1, 1997.
- On October 6, 2005, a Public Information Meeting was held at Woodbridge Library Meeting Room on Woodbridge Avenue that included a presentation from the City's consultants The Planning Partnership on the results of both the Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and Jane/Highway 7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study, and informed the public on the remaining steps to completion of the planning process.
- A notice of statutory Public Hearing was distributed to property owners in and surrounding the Study Area, and to attendees at all previous public meetings, and was advertised in the Vaughan Weekly on Nov. 10 and Nov. 24, 2005.

THE POLICY AND PLANNING CONTEXT

The current Provincial government has undertaken three significant policy initiatives which have modified the planning and policy context of the Highway 7 Policy Review. The updated Provincial Policy Statement and Greenbelt Plan were approved earlier in 2005, while the growth management document, "Places to Grow", is now approaching final approval. 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 provision and 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 have been held in abeyance.

These new initiatives are briefly summarized below.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The current Provincial Policy Statement, which was approved on March 1, 2005, provides direction to municipalities on land use decisions. Such decisions "shall be consistent with" the PPS. The Highway 7 draft OPA's are generally consistent with the new PPS. The relevant sections include the following:

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 OPAs are very supportive of the current Provincial Policy Statements.

“Places to Grow – A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe”

The “Places to Grow” discussion paper was released in the summer of 2004. Broadly speaking, the discussion paper reflects many of the themes of previous Provincial growth management plans prepared in the past. The discussion paper is expected to become the basis of a Provincial growth management plan, and provide more detailed direction than the PPS to managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area. The discussion paper 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 by “Places to Grow”.

“Places to Grow” also proposes to consider the extension of urban boundaries only after a municipality has plans in place to accommodate at least 40% of projected growth through intensification of existing urban areas. In commenting on the draft Provincial document, Council recommended that the Region’s current policy (at least 20% of growth through intensification) be retained “to provide municipalities with the ability to achieve higher targets if local conditions warrant, and only if and when Provincial transit infrastructure investments are delivered.”

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 Highway 7 draft OPA’s are strongly supportive of the direction of the “Places to Grow” discussion paper.

Greenbelt Act

On February 24, 2005 the Greenbelt Act received Royal Assent and was deemed to have come into affect on December 16, 2004. The Greenbelt Plan, approved on February 28, 2005, identifies lands as “Protected Countryside” where future urban growth will not be permitted. The Greenbelt Plan encourages Vaughan to focus growth in existing urban areas and achieve more efficient land use. The Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study examines opportunities to intensify development in support of public transit ridership to achieve the goal of land use efficiency.

York Region Official Plan

As the York Region Official Plan is the upper tier planning document that provides the framework for achieving the Region’s urban structure, the amendments to the City’s Official Plan documents must conform to the Region’s OP. 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
- a focus 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 high order and connected transit network to support these uses
- urban design criteria that supports transit and pedestrian oriented uses
- implementation strategies

The York Region OP (ROPA 43) identifies Highway 7 as one of two Regional Corridor – Yonge Street being the other – which are expected to develop with higher density land uses that will

support planned transit routes. The ROP suggests that over the next 25 to 50 years, the vision for Highway 7 will direct its transition from a provincial highway to a multi-purpose, transit-supportive urban street that is both a corridor and an urban space. It will link three regional centres that serve as compact mixed use areas that are intended to function as focal points for business, government, higher density residential and cultural uses.

York Region has been an active participant in the City of Vaughan's Technical Advisory Committee for the Highway 7 Policy Review and has been supportive of the policies in the proposed Highway 7 OPA's. The Highway 7 OPA's respond to the Regional Official Plan and conform by establishing 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 and pedestrian based uses and densities; and, set the framework for initiating an incentive based implementation strategy.

ROPA 43 was approved on January 7, 2005. The amendment identifies four "Regional Centres" (located in Newmarket, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham) and two high priority 'Corridors' for higher order public transit service (Highway 7 and Yonge Street). The four Regional Centres are planned to become hubs of business, cultural, government, and social activity that will serve to promote the concentration of development in a system of centres and corridors with the support of rapid transit services. 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 "Regional Centres" and "Regional Corridors" as described by ROPA 43.

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. Construction work on the York Regional Transit Plan (YRTP) "Quick Start" transit program that will serve portions of the Highway 7 corridor is now underway. 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. 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 7 LAND USE FUTURES STUDY

This Study was initiated in 2001 to determine how Highway 7 would continue to evolve from land uses that responded to the historic highway function of the corridor, towards more of a locally functioning 'main street'. With the introduction of Highway 407, and with the transfer of Highway 7 from the Provincial government to York Region, the opportunity to facilitate change in the function of the road and adjacent land uses has accelerated.

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 400 metres on both sides 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 a need to also provide policy support to establish 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 and Open Space Master Plan Study, which will complement this evolution of the transit service and the associated higher order land uses.

THE JANE/7 EMPLOYMENT AREA REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

One area of particular interest on the Highway 7 corridor is an established industrial area south of the highway between Jane Street and the CN Rail Yard. This is part of the City's first generation of employment lands that were established in the 1950's and 1960's. Now, as part of Vaughan's future downtown, the Vaughan Corporate Centre, it is appropriate to consider how the area will redevelop to support the higher order 'downtown' vision for the area. While the planning policies are generally in place to facilitate redevelopment, the Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study was undertaken to look at what additional steps beyond land use planning and the introduction of higher order transit could be initiated by the City to encourage redevelopment.

The Study involved a review of opportunities and constraints to redevelopment in the area, including market conditions, the potential need for site remediation, and the planning framework and tools available to support redevelopment. Utilizing detailed 'Demonstration Plans' as case studies on three representative sites, the Study assessed the feasibility of higher density redevelopment in terms of both market forces and development cost factors. The Study prepared a redevelopment strategy to enable the City to begin the process of changing the area from an older industrial area in a manner consistent with the ultimate vision for the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

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 expectation, 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 should be successful and sustainable over time. Avenue Seven should 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 (OPA's) 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 to be amended by OPA 660
- OPA 240 (Woodbridge Community Plan) to be amended by OPA 661
- OPA 345 to be amended by OPA 662
- OPA 500 (Vaughan Corporate Centre Plan) to be amended by OPA 663
- OPA 467 to be amended by OPA 664

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, OPA's 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. OPA's 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 broken into five distinguishable areas coinciding with areas subject to current Official Plan amendments. Highway 7 varies in width from four to six lanes, and has an interface 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 currently live and 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 also are 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 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 OPA's. 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 OPA's have the potential to add an estimated 150,000 residents and employees to the corridor.

The draft amendments are not based upon achieving an overall growth management population or employment target. The amendments envision a continuing structural evolution and intensification of development along the corridor over a long time period, supported and encouraged by enhanced transit services.

It is important to assess and monitor the growth that may occur in the amendment areas on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the Highway 7 OPA's 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 and appropriate forms of development in the corridor in the context of emerging Provincial and Regional growth forecasts and policies.

The Avenue 7 Land Use Structure

The draft OPA's identify a hierarchy of centers, differing in terms of their anticipated scale of development and importance as focuses 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 three "Transit Nodes". Between these centres, it is intended that there 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); and
- removing the height limits for all areas of the Corporate Centre Node
- providing policies governing interim forms of development (at densities of less than 3.5 FSI)
- 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
- establishing a maximum height limit of 16.5 m for most uses
- 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
- height limit of 26 metres
- 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 to become located in the Corporate Centre, the proposed amendment provides for the City to undertake an open space Master Plan to coordinate the provision of parks facilities with residential development. (Note: The Vaughan Corporate Centre Streetscape and Open Space Master Plan Study is currently in preparation).

“Seven/427”, “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 two Go Rail stations are located within the Highway 7 corridor. The westerly station would be located on the CP Rail line (Bolton subdivision) near the Woodbridge Fairgrounds. The easterly station is located on the Bradford GO Rail line in Concord. A third centre will be generally located at the intersection of Highway 7 and Highway 427, which is part of the the “Vaughan Enterprise Zone”, a key location for major employment generating land 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. Requirements of the tertiary plan are set out in detail in the draft amendments.

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. Seven such centres are generally located at the intersections of Highway 7 with major arterials. Their precise locations will be determined through the Environmental Assessment process. From west to east, they are located at:

- Highway 50
- Highway 27
- Martin Grove Road
- Islington Avenue
- Pine Valley Drive
- Weston Road
- Keele Street

The Transit Stop Centre designation encompasses approximately 15 hectares, extending 200-metre 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 (12.8 m) height limit within 30 m of low density residential uses

“Avenue 7 Corridor”

Between the series of designated centres on Highway 7, the OPA's 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 within a 200-metre distance north and south of the Highway 7 right-of-way. 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 25.6 metres
- 4 storey (12.8m) 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	
Corporate Centre	Node	5.0 FSI Target	Unlimited (subject to built form, context, pedestrian comfort and public realm considerations)	
	Corridor	1.5 FSI Average	26 metres	
GO Centres	< 400 metres 50 ha	3.5 FSI Target	10 stories or 32 metres	4 stories max. within 30 metres of low density residential
Transit Stop	< 200 metres 15 ha	3.0 FSI Target	10 stories or 32 metres	
Corridor	< 200 metres	1.5 FSI Average	8 stories or 26 metres	

The Avenue 7 Policy Framework

The policies in the draft OPA's 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 OPA's 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
- institutional and civic uses.

The uses may be in the form of stand-alone or mixed-use development. Outside storage of goods and materials, and uses with "drive-throughs" are 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 OPA's 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 toward 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. To that end, the plan provides for the gradual establishment of residential community in the Vaughan Corporate Centre, with the Streetscape and Open Space Master Plan Study playing the key role in coordinating new development with the provision of parks and other public and quasi-public spaces within the Corporate Centre.

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, and exclude low density residential areas rear-lotted onto Highway 7, there are a few locations on the corridor where proposed higher density development 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, of 12.8 metres, whichever is less."

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 private automobile use. 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 OPA's 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 Interim Uses

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. This project should be initiated following Council adoption of the proposed Official Plan amendments.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision

This report and the draft amendments will address priorities previously set by Council in the Vaughan Vision. 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 are applicable:

- 3.2.1 Support the Region of York and other agencies to ensure higher order transit.
- 3.2.1 Encourage land use designations and urban form to support transit usage.
- 3.2.3 Ensure that growth does not outpace the road network infrastructure.
- 3.2.4 Support regional and provincial initiatives on transportation infrastructure.
- 3.2.5 Develop and implement bicycle and pedestrian networks.

Conclusion

The Highway 7 Policy Review provides Vaughan with a long-term land use planning structure and policy framework that will guide development and ensure that it supports higher order transit.

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

OPA 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.

The issues identified above, among others, will be considered in the technical review of the proposed amendment. Combined with the comments from the public and Council expressed at this Public Hearing, these issues will be addressed in a comprehensive report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Attachments

1. Location Map - Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study
2. Location Map - Jane/Highway 7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study
3. Draft Official Plan Amendment 660 (Councillors only)
4. Draft Official Plan Amendment 661 (Councillors only)
5. Draft Official Plan Amendment 662 (Councillors only)
6. Draft Official Plan Amendment 663 (Councillors only)
7. Draft Official Plan Amendment 664 (Councillors only)

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Respectfully submitted,

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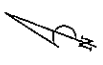


LEGEND

- STUDY AREA (400m NORTH AND SOUTH OF HIGHWAY 7)
- URBAN VILLAGES AND WOODBRIDGE EXPANSION AREA
- VAUGHAN CENTRE
- VAUGHAN CORPORATE CENTRE
- RURAL AREA - GENERAL
- MAJOR OPEN SPACE & VALLEY LANDS
- WASTE DISPOSAL ASSESSMENT AREA
- EMPLOYMENT SECONDARY PLAN STUDY AREA

- EXISTING COMMUNITY / EMPLOYMENT AREAS (NOT SUBJECT TO OPA 600)
- EMPLOYMENT AREAS
- COMMUNITY AREAS * AS AMENDED

MODIFICATION #17 UNDER SECTION 17(9) OF THE PLANNING ACT



Location Map - Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study



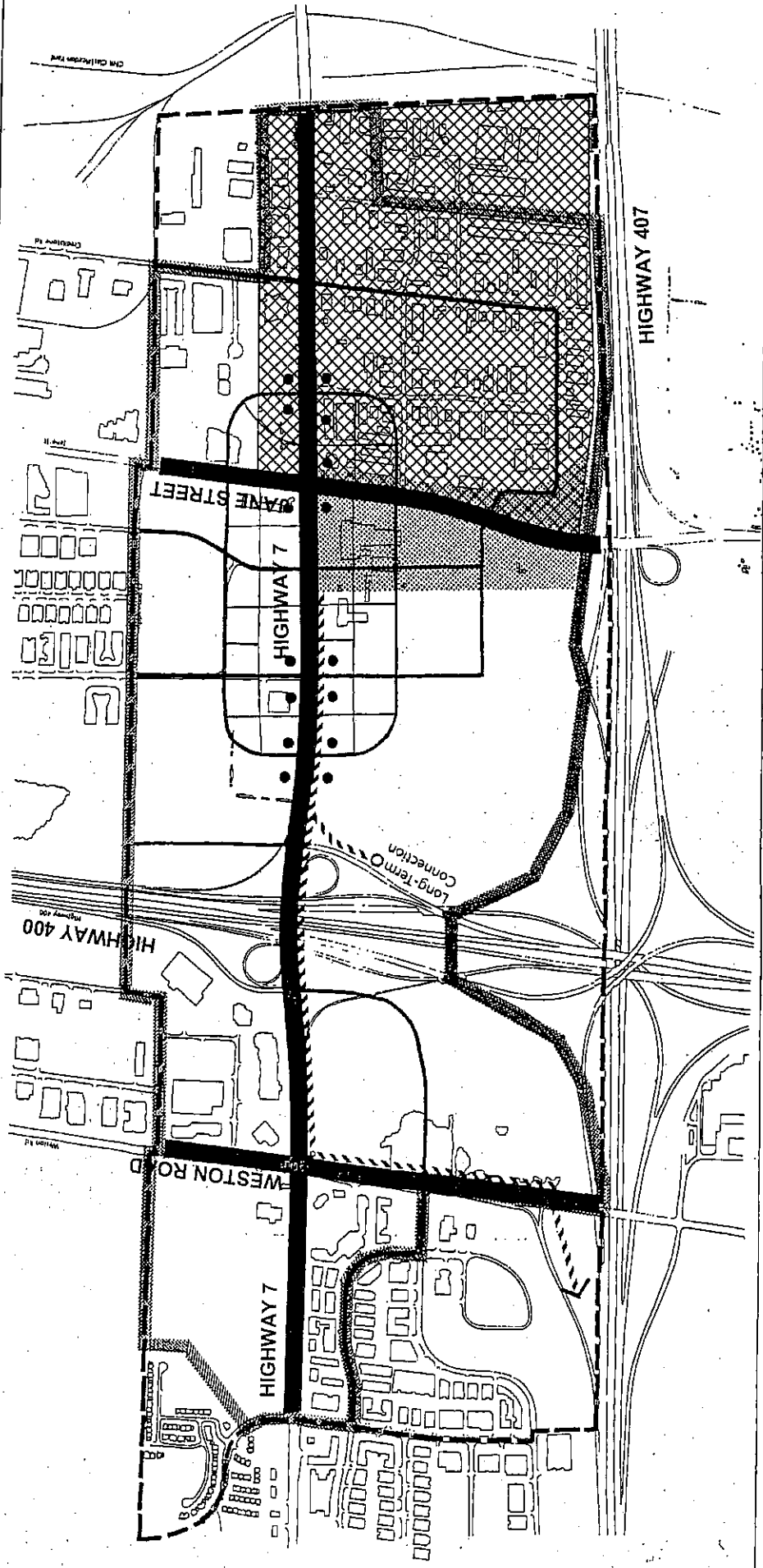
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Attachment 1

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Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan Amendment No. 500

- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Inter-regional Transitway (Potential)
- Potential Connection to Spadina Subway and/or Inter-regional Transitway
- Gateway Sites
- Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan Study Area Boundary
- Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan Area Boundary
- Jane Street - Highway 7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study

**Location Map -
Jane/Highway 7
Employment Area
Redevelopment Study**



Policy Planning / Urban Design Department

**Attachment
2**

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November 24, 2005

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