

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) NOVEMBER 29, 2005**

**STEELES - JANE TO KEELE - SECONDARY PLAN  
FILE NO. 15.90**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT this status report on the Steeles - Jane to Keele - Secondary Plan, draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 620, BE RECEIVED; and

THAT a Public Hearing for a modified OPA 620 be scheduled early in 2006.

**Economic Impact**

The economic impact to the City will be strongly positive in terms of the value of investment and assessment which will ultimately result from the implementation of the final plan for the Steeles corridor via new development and redevelopment, and the associated benefits to Vaughan of a decision to extend the Spadina subway line north of Steeles Avenue, and eventually to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of further work completed by the City's consultants, examining the introduction of increased development densities on the north side of Steeles Avenue between Keele Street and Jane Street.

**Background – Analysis and Options**

**Location**

The Steeles - Jane to Keele - Secondary Plan is bounded by Steeles Avenue on the south, the CN Rail York Subdivision and hydro corridor on the north, Jane Street on the west, and Keele Street on the east. The boundaries of the Plan include an area of approximately 48 hectares (118 acres) as identified on Schedule "A" to the amendment, which forms Attachment 1 to this report.

On October 4, 2004 a Public Hearing for the Steeles Corridor-Jane to Keele-Secondary Plan was held. Notice of Public Hearing was circulated to attendees of all Community Information Meetings, landowners in and surrounding the Study Area, members of the City's Technical Advisory Committee, and was published in The Vaughan Citizen on Thursday September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The draft Official Plan Amendment Number 620 and the consultant's supporting final report were made available to the public on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The materials were also posted on the City's website.

At the Public Hearing, Committee of the Whole and a major landowner (Weston Consulting on behalf of Steeles-Keele Investments Limited, 'SKI') expressed the concern that the draft OPA 620 does not provide density sufficient to support the planned transit improvements to the area, in particular the subway extension. Consequently, staff were directed to examine the potential to increase development densities within the subject lands. Council also directed that townhouses and semi-detached dwellings be deleted as permitted uses from the Plan.

On December 16, 2004, York Region adopted Regional OPA 43 respecting the development of significant nodes and corridors identified in the Regional Official Plan. This policy initiative is of particular relevance to OPA 620 (as explained later in this report).

### The Planning and Policy Context

#### **Existing Land Use**

From west to east, the Amendment area includes the following uses:

- a vacant site (1.77 ha.) that is approved for a mausoleum/crematorium
- a stormwater management pond on Steeles Avenue owned by the City of Vaughan
- the United Parcel Service (UPS) distribution facility
- York Region's vacant 2 hectare site acquired for a transit terminal/commuter facility
- a vacant parcel (5.79 ha.) owned by the Glen Corporation
- four single storey employment buildings
- vacant lands (16.3 ha.) owned by the Steeles–Keele Investments Ltd., including a 4 storey office building on the northwest corner of Keele Street and Steeles Avenue West.

On the north side of these parcels is the Hydro One transmission corridor that is owned by the Province of Ontario. To the south is Steeles Avenue (the municipal boundary with the City of Toronto) and York University.

### Policy and Planning Context

#### **York Region Official Plan (ROP)**

The ROP currently designates this amendment area as a Regional Corridor. The ROP includes policies (Section 5.4. – Corridors) encouraging area municipalities to comprehensively examine these areas to provide opportunities for mixed use and higher densities. OPA 620 satisfies these goals.

The Region has recently amended the ROP (Amendment 43), strengthening the policy support for identified nodes and corridors. ROPA 43 provides for area municipalities to identify 'Key Development Areas', and would support the identification of the lands subject to OPA 620 as one of Vaughan's 'Key Development Areas'. York Region staff have indicated that the proposed policies in OPA 620 are consistent and supportive of the ROPA 43.

#### **City of Vaughan Official Plan**

The amendment area is currently designated as "Employment Area" under OPA 450, approved in 1996. It is primarily aimed at providing for industrial/employment and related service uses. The Hydro One transmission corridor forms the north border of the amendment area and is subject to the policies of the Parkway Belt West Plan.

Approved in 2001, OPA 529 designates a higher order transit right-of-way that can accommodate the extension of the Spadina subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. OPA 529 also directed that a land use study be conducted in the Steeles Avenue corridor from Jane Street to Keele Street to provide for land uses that would respond to and support the transit initiatives. The Steeles Corridor - Jane to Keele - Study was prepared in response to this policy.

#### **Zoning**

Almost the entire area is zoned Prestige Employment Area Zone - EM1 except for three properties: 1) the northeast corner of Jane and Steeles was zoned C1 by a 1998 OMB decision permitting two (2 and 4 storey) buildings for a crematorium and columbarium; 2) more central to

the amendment area is an exception that permits eating establishments, banks and financial institutions, with or without a drive-through, and business and professional offices; and 3) on the north edge of the amendment area, the Hydro Corridor is zoned PB1S - Parkway Belt Linear Facilities Zone.

### **Development Enquiries**

The property on the northeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue has an approval in place for a mausoleum/crematorium. However, in a letter dated 18 November, 2005, the owner expressed an interest in developing high density residential uses on the property up to a maximum density of 4.5 FSI, and has submitted a preliminary site plan for three residential towers of twenty-four storeys reflecting this density. The owner's proposal was submitted too late to be assessed by the City's consultants. Should Council or the owner wish to have the implications of this scale of development evaluated by the City's consultants, the cost of such additional work should be borne by the landowner.

Steeles-Keele Investments Ltd. (SKI) is the owner of approximately 16 hectares that covers the eastern third of this Secondary Plan. The construction of the 4-storey office building on the northwest corner of Keele and Steeles is one component of the current official plan, draft plan of subdivision, zoning, and site plan applications made on this property since September of 2001. In addition to the office on the northwest corner of Keele Street and Steeles Avenue, the owner has expressed an interest in undertaking a high-density mixed-use development with a range of office, commercial, and residential uses. The owner has proposed that development on the property be permitted a base development density of 1.5 FSI, plus bonuses for increased streetscaping, reductions in parking, and compensation for giving up a portion of the new east-west road allowance required by the Plan, bringing total permitted FSI to 3.0.

### **Transit Improvement Environmental Assessments**

There are Environmental Assessments currently underway for two projects that will, if implemented, dramatically improve transit service to this area. The policies of OPA 620 are designed to provide for a development regime that will support the introduction of higher order services to the area by providing uses and densities that can take advantage of the higher level of accessibility. The status of the EA studies is discussed below.

### **The Highway 7 Corridor & Vaughan North-South Link Public Transit Improvements**

This individual environmental assessment is being conducted by the Region of York. Its purpose is to improve public transit infrastructure in the Region's primary east-west corridor and its western north-south corridor to increase ridership and support linkages to other GTA transit systems. The EA was completed in August of 2005 and has been submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for approval. The EA is recommending that rapid transit services be introduced along Highway 7 and in the Vaughan North-South Link, which connects the Vaughan Corporate Centre to the York Regional Terminal site on Steeles Avenue across from York University.

Initially the system will be operated as a Bus Rapid Transit service, with the buses primarily running in dedicated lanes. In areas of constraint, the buses will operate in mixed traffic. The EA will also confirm the subway alignment, which will provide for the further extension of the Spadina subway, north from Steeles Avenue to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

A possible subway alignment was originally identified in OPA 529. The EA study confirms the portion of the OPA No. 529 subway alignment that is located on the west side of Jane Street and ultimately intersects with the Millway Road road allowance at Highway 7. How the subway extension reaches the west side of Jane Street will depend on the alignment that is ultimately approved in the on-going Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA. In advance of this work, the Highway 7/Vaughan North-South Link EA identifies a "Tie In" zone where the alignment can

be adjusted to link to the Toronto/TTC EA. The "Tie In" would occur through a later amendment to the EA.

The Highway 7/Vaughan North-South Link EA is more advanced in the process than the Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA. The Highway 7/Vaughan North-South Link EA has completed the post-submission comment phase with the Ministry (Comments were requested by October 26, 2005). This EA could receive approval in the first quarter of 2006.

The introduction of the Highway 7/Vaughan North-South Link BRT service will significantly improve transit infrastructure in the area. It will enhance access to the Corporate Centre, the portion of Steeles Avenue opposite York University (the OPA 620 area), and the Spadina Subway's Downsview Station. It will also act as a precursor to the subway extension to the Corporate Centre by building ridership in the corridor. The further extension will be facilitated by the preservation of the alignment into the Corporate Centre. The greater densities being recommended by OPA 620 will support the extension of the subway to Steeles Avenue.

### **The Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA**

The purpose of this EA is to identify the alignment of a subway extension from Downsview Station at Sheppard Avenue to Steeles Avenue in the vicinity of the York Region terminal site. The EA is in its final stages of preparation. Direction is being sought to submit the EA Study to the Ministry of the Environment to start the approval process.

A report on the EA will be submitted to the Toronto Transit Commission at its meeting on November 28, 2005. This will be followed by a report to a joint meeting of the City of Toronto's Works and Transportation and Planning Committees on November 30, 2005. Final approval for submission to the province would be obtained from Toronto City Council at its December 5-7, 2005 meeting. If the EA is submitted to MOE shortly thereafter, approval could be in place by the end of summer, 2006.

The Toronto/TTC EA has confirmed the role of the Steeles West Station as a major inter-regional facility, featuring commuter parking in the hydro corridor north of Steeles Avenue and three bus terminals with 30 to 40 bays to accommodate the TTC, GO and the VIVA/YRT services. The preferred subway alignment varies from what was originally identified in OPA 529. The EA alignment crosses Steeles Avenue diagonally with the station straddling the north and south sides of the street. The OPA 529 alignment was contained entirely within the Steeles Avenue right-of-way, curving north to the Corporate Centre closer to Jane Street.

The preferred Toronto/TTC subway alignment has been examined and it can tie in with the alignment that was identified in OPA 529 from a point to the south of Highway No. 407. It then heads into the Corporate Centre along the OPA 529 alignment, ultimately intersecting with Highway 7 at Millway Road.

### Draft OPA 620

Key components of draft OPA 620 (see Attachment 2), which was presented to Public Hearing in October/04, included:

- **"Transit Core" designation**
  - within 250 metres of the proposed Transit Station site
  - Floor Space Index (FSI) target of 3.0
  
- **"Transit Transition" designation**
  - from 250 metres to 500 metres of the proposed Transit Station site
  - FSI target of 1.5.

- **“Corridor” designation**
  - beyond 500 metres from the proposed Transit Station site
  - FSI target of 1.0

Draft OPA 620 included a range of land uses that provide the opportunity for transit riders to walk short distances between multiple activities. The range of permitted uses include:

- high density residential
- prestige office employment
- commercial uses in mixed-use development, and
- public and institutional uses.

The “Transit Core” designation provides for major office development directly on Steeles Avenue at the transit station, in conjunction with an urban square, as well as with High Density Residential uses, including apartments and townhouses, Public and Institutional Uses, and Mixed Use development combining High Density Residential, Prestige Office, and Commercial uses in the same building.

The “Transit Transition” designation permits essentially the same range of uses as the “Transit Core” designation, but also permits semi-detached dwellings built at high densities, and limits single use prestige office employment uses to a maximum density of 0.5 FSI.

The “Corridor” designation has the same range of permitted uses at a lower scale than the “Transit Transition” designation.

Commercial uses are permitted in all areas of the plan but are limited to the ground floor of mixed-use buildings.

Draft OPA 620 also incorporates significant improvements to the road network north and south of Steeles Avenue. North of Steeles Avenue, a new east-west road running continuously from Jane Street to Keele Street would be provided, together with six north-south roadways linking the east-west road to Steeles Avenue. A similar road network is assumed south of Steeles, supplementing the existing network there.

The intent of draft OPA 620 was to provide densities that take advantage of their proximity to higher order transit service and supply the necessary ridership support. To this end, at the October 2004 Public Hearing, Council directed that townhouses and semi-detached dwellings be deleted as permitted uses from the Plan.

To achieve higher density development, draft OPA 620 includes three levels of land use intensity that are related to their proximity to the transit station, with the highest density at the station site. The densities are reduced as the distance from the station increases. This approach to the distribution of densities within the development area recognizes that transit ridership is related to distance from the transit stop, with the highest levels of ridership being achieved within a 400-metre distance, or about a 5-minute walk. The proposed densities in draft OPA 620 are consistent with those achieved in similar situations elsewhere, and with those in other land use plans surrounding transit stations. For example, similar densities are permitted in both Toronto (Downsview, Sheppard Avenue East) and Vancouver.

#### Analysis and Options

In response to the desire to examine higher densities, the City's consultants analyzed and compared two development scenarios in terms of their impact on the road network, and the network's capacity to accommodate them. The two scenarios are: 1) **Draft OPA 620 Scenario**, the preferred scenario defined and presented to Public Hearing in October, 2004; 2) an **Increased Density Scenario**, increasing densities on all the lands north of Steeles. Table 1

summarizes the density assumptions applicable to each proposed land use designation, for each of the scenarios.

Table 1 – Comparison of Development Densities (FSI – Floor Space Index)

Land Use Designation	Draft OPA 620 Scenario	Increased Density Scenario
Transit Core	3.0	4.0
Transit Transition	1.5	2.5
Corridor	1.0	1.5

Both scenarios assume that a new commuter parking lot will be located within the hydro corridor adjacent to the new transit station at Steeles Avenue, with 1,500 parking spaces. This facility will result in a significant amount of in-bound and out-bound traffic to and from the area. When the subway is extended even further north, consideration should be given to reducing the size of the lot here, and building a new lot near the new terminus. However, in the interim period when the subway may terminate at Steeles, the large lot and the traffic it generates need to be addressed.

Both scenarios also assume development on the York University lands to the south at a density of 1.0 FSI, consistent with development permissions already in place. This is a conservative estimate of future development likely to occur there. The University and the City of Toronto are currently engaged in a review of existing Official Plan policies. They share Vaughan's objectives of extending the Spadina subway northward, and establishing a pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive urban environment on Steeles Avenue. Therefore, at this time it appears likely that their planning process will also propose significantly increased densities above current permissions. In that regard, the presence of York University is both an opportunity and constraint in that complementary development there will contribute toward Vaughan's objectives of creating an urban place on Steeles Avenue and further strengthens the argument for a subway extension. On the other hand, development south of Steeles will also utilize a significant amount of road capacity.

## **Current and Forecast Background Traffic**

### **1. Base Case Traffic Conditions**

For the purpose of testing the transportation implications of alternative development scenarios, a base case set of traffic conditions was defined, against which other scenarios could be compared.

In order to understand the implications of alternative development scenarios, it is necessary to begin with base traffic conditions. However, the current closure of Finch Avenue west of Sentinel Road has caused traffic to be diverted onto other east-west roads including Steeles Avenue, resulting in higher than typical traffic volumes. The alternative was to rely upon City of Toronto traffic counts, recognizing that these were undertaken between 2001 and 2003. Therefore, a base set of 2003 traffic volumes were generated by "adjusting" the traffic counts to the common year of 2003. Once the construction of Finch Avenue is complete, updated turning movement counts will be required at the intersections of Steeles Avenue with Jane Street and Keele Street.

The operations of the existing intersections were then analyzed for the a.m. and p.m. peak hour traffic volumes. This analysis indicates that the Steeles/Keele intersection currently operates reasonably well during the a.m. peak hour but is over capacity during the p.m. peak hour. The Steeles/Jane intersection operates at capacity during both peak hours under "current" conditions.

## **Future Background Traffic Conditions**

Estimates of future background traffic levels were developed by taking the base case traffic conditions and adding the additional traffic forecast resulting from development on the York University lands at a density of 1.0 FSI, plus traffic related to the establishment of a 1,500-space parking facility associated with a new transit station on Steeles Avenue. No growth in through traffic to the area was assumed.

The accepted method of evaluating the performance of an intersection is to determine the volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio forecast to result from a set of traffic conditions. An intersection forecast to operate with a v/c of 1.0 is functioning at its maximum design capacity.

The analysis of future background traffic conditions indicates that the Steeles Avenue/Jane Street intersection will be operating in a very inefficient manner at both peak hours, with forecast v/c ratios of 1.50 (a.m.) or 50% more than capacity, and 1.29 (p.m.) or 29% above capacity. The Steeles/Keele intersection is forecast to function at a v/c of 0.91 during the a.m., and 1.05 during the p.m. rush hour.

Thus, even with no additional development on the north side of Steeles Avenue, background traffic levels plus the traffic resulting from the new parking facility and development south of Steeles causes the Steeles/Jane intersection to be significantly affected, and the Steeles/Keele intersection to operate at an acceptable level only during the a.m. rush hour.

## **Description of Scenarios**

### **1. Draft OPA 620 Scenario**

For the purpose of testing the transportation implications of an alternative, higher density development scenario, the Draft OPA 620 Scenario was developed as a basis for comparison. The Draft OPA 620 Scenario reflects one form which development might take based on the proposed range of land uses and densities in the draft OPA 620.

The Scenario assumes primarily high density residential development on most of the subject lands, with the exception of the Transit Core and a small part of the adjacent Transit Transition area (within Block D on part of the Glen Group property) where retail uses at grade with office commercial uses above are assumed. At the east end of the subject lands (Block G), mixed use development combining residential, retail and office commercial is assumed. Development densities are consistent with the maximums described above for OPA 620.

In total, the Scenario includes 55,000 sq m of office commercial development, 4,609 sq m of retail space, and 5,185 residential units.

### **2. Increased Density Scenario**

The Increased Density Scenario builds upon the form of development proposed in draft OPA 620 and utilizes the same planned road network, but increases the permitted densities for all of the properties within the subject lands. The Scenario also focuses the greatest development density in the Transit Core to maximize transit ridership. Densities decline with distance from the Transit Core.

The maximum permitted density in the Transit Core is 4.0 FSI, 33% more than Draft OPA 620. The Transit Transition permits an FSI of 2.5, 66% higher than Draft OPA 620. The Corridor designation permits 1.5 FSI, 50% more than Draft OPA 620.

Like Draft OPA 620, the Transit Core and adjacent Transit Transition area (in Block D) are assumed to have retail at grade with office commercial uses above. Also, at the east end of the subject lands in Block G, mixed use development combining retail, office and residential is assumed. The balance of the area is assumed to provide high density residential development at the maximum permitted densities noted above.

In total, the Increased Density Scenario includes 70,000 sq m of office commercial development, 5,000 sq m of retail space, and 7,845 residential units.

### Comparison of Scenarios

The City's transportation consultant has completed an assessment and comparison of the v/c ratios at the Steeles/Jane and Steeles/Keele intersections (see Table 2). The forecast results have also been compared with the current and forecast background traffic conditions. The implications of each scenario, in terms of their impact on the functioning of the major intersections, is readily apparent.

**Table 2 – Comparison of Volume-to-Capacity(v/c) Ratios**

Intersection and Peak Hour	Base Case Current Conditions	Future Background Conditions	Draft OPA 620 Scenario	Increased Density Scenario
Steeles/Jane a.m. peak	1.02	1.50	1.53	1.57
Steeles/Jane p.m. peak	0.97	1.29	1.41	1.46
Steeles/Keele a.m. peak	0.75	0.91	0.92	0.96
Steeles/Keele p.m. peak	1.14	1.05	1.22	1.26

#### 1. Draft OPA 620 Scenario Versus Background Conditions

The Draft OPA 620 Scenario generates v/c ratios of 1.53 and 1.41 at Steeles/Jane in the a.m. and p.m. rush hours, representing an increase of 3% and 12% respectively, compared with the background conditions. At Steeles/Keele, the result is an increase of 1% in the a.m. and 17% in the p.m. The intersections of the new east-west road with Jane and Keele, and the intersections of the new north-south roads with Steeles all perform with v/c ratios less than 1.0.

#### 2. Increased Density Scenario Versus Background Conditions

The Increased Density Scenario generates v/c ratios of 1.57 and 1.46 at Steeles/Jane in the a.m. and p.m. rush hours, representing an increase of 7% and 12% respectively, compared with the background conditions. At Steeles/Keele, the result is an increase of 5% in the a.m. and 21% in the p.m. With the exception of the Jane/new east-west road during the a.m. rush hour (with a v/c ratio of 1.17), all other intersections of the new roads with the arterials perform with v/c ratios less than 1.0.

#### Observations on the Scenarios Analysis

- Background traffic is the primary cause of the major intersections functioning beyond their design capacity. This is particularly the case with the Steeles/Jane intersection. With no new



development north of Steeles Avenue, the establishment of a large parking facility to serve the new transit station, together with development at York University at currently permitted densities, will increase traffic through the Steeles/Jane intersection by 48% in the a.m. and 32% in the p.m. rush hour.

- The Increased Density Scenario has a somewhat greater impact on traffic conditions, compared with the Draft OPA 620 Scenario. At the Steeles/Jane intersection, traffic volumes are approximately 4% greater in the a.m. rush hour, and 5% greater in the p.m. At the Steeles/Keele intersection, traffic volumes are about 4% greater in both a.m. and p.m. rush hours.
- The proposed new east-west road, and the north-south roads linking to Steeles Avenue are crucial to the efficient operation of the road network. These new roads significantly enhance the capacity of the network and facilitate traffic movement throughout the subject lands, thereby reducing the pressure on the existing arterial network and its major intersections. A similarly enhanced road network on the south side of Steeles is equally important to the viability of new development there.

### **Enhancements To Improve Intersection Function**

The scenarios analysis also looked at enhancements to achieve improvements to the functioning of the major intersections, and demonstrated that the intersections can function better if the cycle length for turning movements is extended, and if additional through-lanes and/or turn lanes are added to Steeles Avenue. These improvements have the potential to enable the major intersections to function with a v/c ratio close to or below 1.0. Achieving this objective is problematic for both scenarios at both the Steeles/Jane and Steeles/Keele intersections. However, further widening of Steeles, Jane and Keele which are already large in scale, is not considered a desirable solution, given the negative impact on the area. While further widening (to as much as nine lanes) might improve turning movements, the intersections and arterials would become massive - more like a highway than the comfortable, pedestrian-friendly human environment the City is trying to establish.

### **Implications For OPA 620**

The analysis suggests that higher development densities, consistent with the Increased Density Scenario, can be supported, as they have a relatively modest impact upon the functioning of the major intersections in the Study Area. Although the major intersections would function better with additional through-lanes on Steeles Avenue, this is not considered as a desirable solution as such an increase in the width of the street would significantly detract from the pedestrian-friendly, human-scale environment which the plan aims to establish. Crossing Steeles Avenue would require more time, and would be more intimidating to pedestrians, owing to traffic moving at greater speeds.

The distribution of development densities, and the character of new development are important considerations in minimizing the impact of new development on the road network. Both scenarios assumed that densities would be highest at the transit station and decline with distance from it, and that the area would be the focus of primarily high density residential development. These assumptions are appropriate and should be reflected in OPA 620. A concentration of density in close proximity to the new transit station will serve to maximize transit ridership and reduce the generation of auto trips originating from or destined to the new development within the subject lands. A concentration of residential development appears to be the preferred solution as residential uses are a significantly lower generator of auto trips than major office or large format retail commercial development.

In comparison with the Draft OPA 620 Scenario, the Increased Density Scenario increases the potential development by 15,000 sq m of office commercial space, 400 sq m of retail commercial space, and about 2,700 housing units. The increased worker and resident population which will result from more intensified development imply greater needs for hard services, schools, parks

and community services, greater attention to urban design and streetscaping, and additional requirements to address noise and other micro-environmental concerns (ie. wind, weather protection, etc.). The policies of OPA 620 require review and modification to ensure that these concerns are appropriately addressed by the policies of the Plan.

### **Integration of the Steeles West Terminal Facilities into the Development Plans**

The TTC's preferred alternative for the Steeles West Station shows two bus terminal facilities to the west of the proposed Street C. Street C is the main north-south collector road running north of Steeles Avenue to the planned east-west road along the south edge of the Hydro Corridor. The land for Street C was acquired by the Region as part of the purchase of the site for the inter-regional terminal facility, which abuts the west side of the road. To meet the demand from transit operators for bus bays, additional land may be necessary to accommodate the second bus facility. This will place the bus terminal facilities within the unit of land defined on the east by Street C and on the west by Street B, which are identified in OPA 620.

This area is defined in OPA 620 as part of the "Transit Core", which will permit the highest densities within the plan area. Providing transit supportive densities in areas in proximity to the Steeles West Station is one of the structuring concepts of the plan. Therefore, it is critical that the planned densities be achieved on this site. The introduction of the bus terminals makes this more challenging.

Policies will be included in the revised draft of OPA 620 that will confirm this commitment to higher intensity development in the Transit Core and ensure that steps are taken to provide for the planned densities while accommodating the needs of the transit authorities. It will be necessary to ensure that sufficient planning be done in advance of the development of any facility, to ensure that both high density development and the transit function (including the subway alignment, the Steeles West Station and the bus facilities) can be developed in harmony without resorting to land consumptive strategies.

This approach will build on the "Implementation" policies already in OPA 620 which provide for the preparation of a Development Concept Report and Phasing Plan for new development.

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

This report and the draft OPA will serve to implement priorities previously set by Council in Vaughan Vision 2007. The following sections of Vaughan Vision are applicable:

#### **Section 3 (Transportation and Transit Infrastructure):**

- 3.1.1. the TTC Spadina subway extension project to Vaughan
- 3.2. solutions to traffic gridlock
  - 3.2.1. the Region of York and other agencies to ensure higher order transit
  - 3.2.2. land use designation and urban form to support transit usage
  - 3.2.3. growth that does not outpace the road network
  - 3.2.4. regional and provincial initiatives on transportation infrastructure
  - 3.2.5. bicycle and pedestrian networks

By providing land use support for the high order transit to Steeles Avenue, the City of Vaughan is also supporting the ultimate extension of the subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre (Section 4.1.).

The necessary resources were allocated and approved by Council upon adoption of this project's initial terms of reference.

## **Conclusion**

Establishment of a major concentration of development on Steeles Avenue between Keele Street and Jane Street will create a new urban focus for the area, and a major node for public transit service. It will also result in a reduction in the operational efficiency of the road network, even with the improvements assumed in OPA 620. The traffic capacity of the Steeles/Jane and Steeles/Keele intersections are already constrained. The traffic analysis has forecast the expected impacts of the alternative scenarios. Recognizing that the forthcoming secondary plan for the York University lands is likely to provide for a greater concentration of development than has been assumed here, the traffic analysis probably underestimates the traffic impacts. Therefore, the level of development north and south of Steeles will be heavily dependent upon establishing the significant new road network and transit improvements identified by this Plan.

Staff support the modification of draft OPA 620 consistent with the Increased Density Scenario described above. It is forecast to have a marginally greater impact on traffic congestion than the Draft OPA 620 Scenario. However, traffic congestion in this section of Steeles Avenue will be significant regardless of the scale of new development. The higher development densities of the Increased Density Scenario are consistent with establishing a major urban focus on the subject lands, and will contribute to greater transit ridership.

Should Council agree with the conclusions of this report, a modified version of OPA 620 should be prepared and scheduled for a Public Hearing early in 2006.

## **Attachments**

Attachment #1 – Location Map

Attachment #2 – Draft OPA 620 Land Use and Density

## **Report prepared by:**

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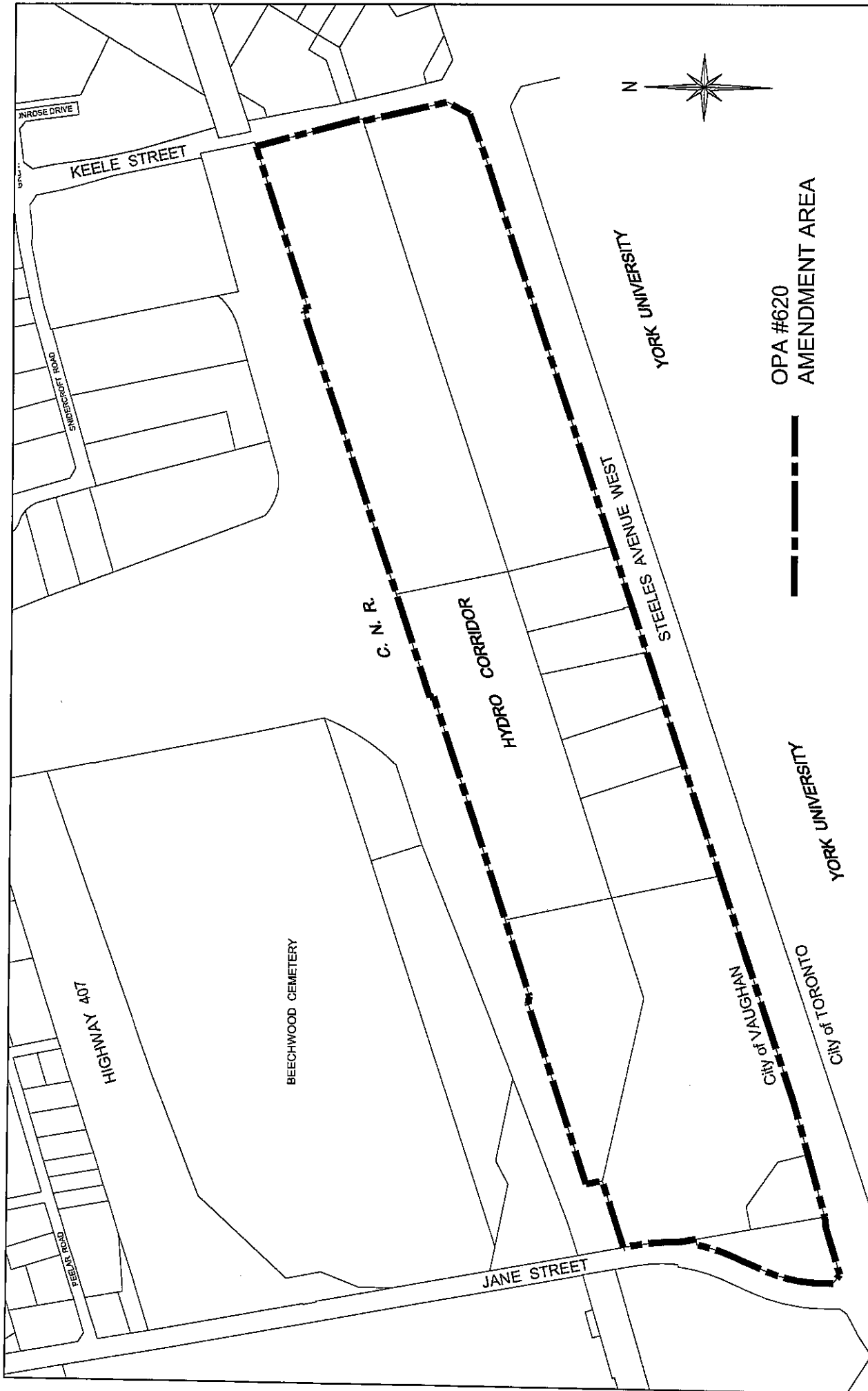
Respectfully submitted,

JOHN ZIPAY  
Commissioner of Planning

DIANA BIRCHALL  
Director, Policy Planning/Urban Design

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OPA #620  
AMENDMENT AREA

# Location Map

STEELES AVENUE CORRIDOR  
JANE TO KEELE  
SECONDARY PLAN

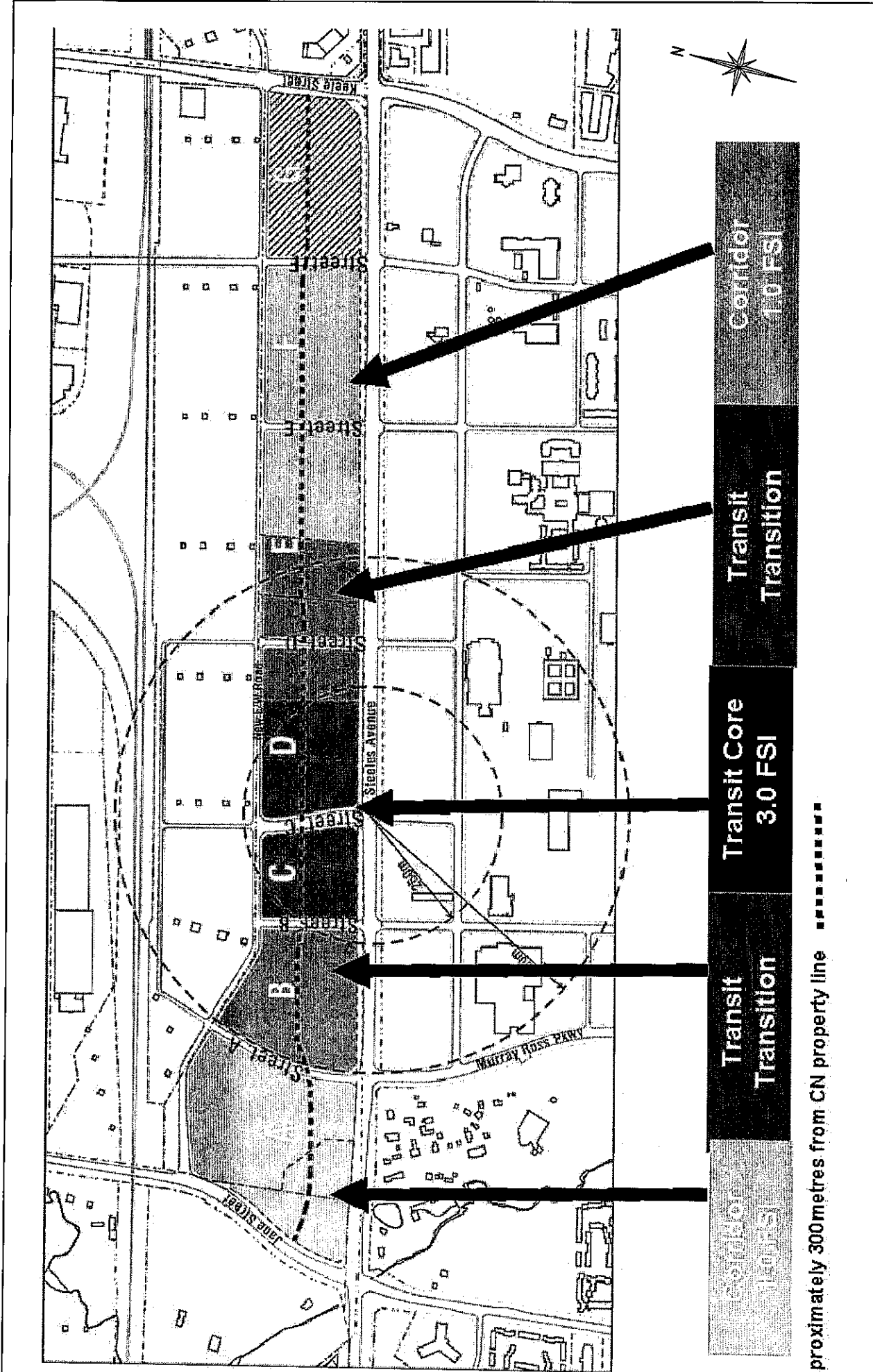


Policy Planning Department

# Attachment

Lots 1-3,  
Concession 4  
Not to Scale  
November 24, 2005





Approximately 300 metres from CN property line

# Draft OPA 620 Land Use & Density

STEELES AVENUE CORRIDOR  
JANE TO KEELE SECONDARY PLAN



Policy Planning Department

Lots 1-3,  
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Not to Scale  
November 24, 2005