

**5. DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 620
STEELES CORRIDOR - JANE TO KEELE- SECONDARY PLAN
FILE NO. 15.90**

P.2006.44

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

THAT the Public Hearing for File 15.90 (Steeles Corridor-Jane to Keele-Secondary Plan OPA 620) 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the key elements of the revised draft OPA 620.

Location

The Steeles Corridor-Jane to Keele-Secondary Plan area is bounded by Steeles Avenue on the south and the CN Rail York Subdivision on the north, and by Jane Street on the west and Keele Street on the east. The boundaries of the Plan are identified on Schedule "A" to the draft amendment, which forms Attachment 1 to this report. The subject lands have an area of approximately 43 hectares (106 acres)

Background – Analysis and Options

Process Followed to Prepare the OPA

- June 24, 2002 - Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Steeles Avenue Corridor Land Use Review – Jane Street to Keele Street.
- October 15, 2002 - Council adopted the recommendation from the Commissioner of Planning that the firm 'Urban Strategies Inc.' be retained to conduct the review. In addition to being the lead land use consultant, Urban Strategies Inc. also provided the urban design services. The Study Team was joined by Marshall Macklin Monaghan Ltd. for the transportation analysis, and urbanMetrics Inc. for real estate and market analysis.
- January – February 2003: Phase I of the Study

Phase I of the study produced an "Inventory and Assessment of the Current Situation" that included:

- Analysis of previous planning studies and existing regulatory framework
- Land use analysis
- Urban design analysis
- Base mapping/modeling
- Transportation and servicing analysis
- Market opportunities
- A review of opportunities and constraints

To assist in conducting the review, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established, including staff representation from:

- Region of York
 - City of Toronto
 - York University
 - York Region Transit
 - York Consortium (YRTP)
 - Toronto Transit Commission
 - GO Transit
 - Ministry of Transportation
 - Smart Commute Association of Black Creek
 - York Region Catholic and District School Boards
 - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
 - City of Vaughan Planning, Urban Design, Engineering, Economic and Technology Development, and Real Estate departments.
- January 2003: Individual interviews were held with many of the key TAC members and study area landowners.
 - February 2003: The first full TAC meeting was held to present the draft Phase I Working Paper.
 - February 25, 2003: A presentation of the Phase I Working Paper was made to the Committee of the Whole Working Session.
 - February 27, 2003: a Public Information Meeting was held at the Dufferin Clark Library to present the findings of the Phase I Working Paper.
 - February 2003: Individual meetings were held with study area landowners.
 - March 2003-December 2003: Phase II of the Study
 - Based on the Phase I "Issues and Opportunities" Working Paper, the objective of Phase II was to "Develop the Vision for a New Planning Framework." This involved preparing conceptual development and urban design options, for refinement through subsequent consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, landowners, and public.

To determine whether lands in the hydro corridor were available to provide all or part of the critical east-west road connection, meetings were held during the summer of 2003 with staff from the Province of Ontario and Hydro One.
 - December 2003: The draft Phase II results were presented to a TAC meeting for input.
 - January 15, 2004: The draft Phase II report was presented to a Public Information Meeting at Dufferin Clark Library and to area landowners for their input.
 - February-May, 2004: The draft consultant report and first draft of the Official Plan Amendment were prepared.
 - June 11, 2004: Staff made an informal presentation on the study to the Spadina-York Subway Extension Committee.
 - June 15, 2004: Urban Strategies presented the study recommendations to the Committee of the Whole Working Session. On June 28, 2004 Council adopted the Committee of the Whole recommendations to:

- provide a further report addressing the comments from members of Council (provided herein);
 - receive the presentation and material from Urban Strategies Inc.
 - schedule a statutory Public Hearing in the fall subsequent to receiving input from the Technical Advisory Committee and making any necessary changes to the draft report; and,
 - have Staff consult with the landowners in the amendment area to discuss the final results of the study, and provide a summary of this consultation in the Public Hearing report (provided herein).
- June 25, 2004: The draft final report and initial draft of Official Plan Amendment Number 620 were presented to the TAC for comment. Comments from TAC members on the draft final report were received up to the end of July, and on the draft OPA 620 up to September 3, 2004.
 - September 9, 2004: Notice of a statutory Public Hearing was distributed to property owners in and around the study area, to attendees at previous public meetings, and published in the Vaughan Weekly.
 - September 13, 2004: The consultant's Final Report and initial draft of Official Plan Amendment Number 620 were made available to the public and posted on the City's website.
 - November, 2005: A report was presented to Committee of the Whole Working Session, summarizing the results of further work completed by the City's consultants, examining the introduction of increased development densities throughout the subject lands.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Existing Uses

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

- a vacant site 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 5 acre site acquired for a transit terminal/commuter facility;
- a vacant parcel owned by the Glen Corporation;
- four single storey employment buildings; and
- vacant lands owned by the Steeles-Keele Investments Ltd., including a 4 storey office building under construction 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.

Official Plan

The amendment area is currently designated as "Employment Area" under OPA 450, which was 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 below grade higher order transit right-of-way to 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 study was prepared in response to this policy.

Regional Official Plan

As the upper tier planning document that provides the framework for achieving the Region's urban structure, the Secondary Plan must conform to the York Region Official Plan (ROP). The ROP currently designates the amendment area as a Regional Corridor. The ROP includes policies in Section 5.4. – "Corridors" encouraging area municipalities to comprehensively examine such areas to provide opportunities for mixed use and higher densities. OPA 620 satisfies these goals.

Early in 2005, the Region 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 with and supportive of the ROPA 43.

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 Applications

The OMB has approved development of a mausoleum/crematorium on a site on the northeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue. The owner has not yet submitted a site plan application to proceed with this development.

United Parcel Service (UPS), owner and operator of a large parcel distribution facility on the lands just east of Jane Street, has submitted a site plan application to permit a significant expansion of their building eastward into the vacant portion of their site. This vacant area has also been identified as a possible location for a part of the proposed transit station facilities, and is subject to the EA currently being completed for the Spadina subway extension. The City is in discussions with UPS regarding their proposed expansion.

Steeles-Keele Investments Ltd. (SKI) is the owner of approximately 16 hectares, which constitutes the eastern third of the Amendment Area. Construction of a 4-storey office building on the northwest corner of Keele and Steeles is already complete. In addition, the owner wishes to proceed with approvals to develop the balance of the property, which could include high density mixed-use development with a range of office, commercial, and residential uses. Staff have met with the owner and his architect several times, and continue to work with them toward a master plan for the site.

Outside the Amendment Area, on the northeast corner of Steeles Avenue and Keele Street, a site plan application for a four-storey office building has recently been approved.

Planned Transit Improvements

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 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 north of Highway 7, which 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 ongoing Toronto/TTC Spadina Subway Extension EA. In advance of the approval 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. This EA could receive approval in the summer of 2006.

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 was approved for submission by Toronto City Council in December, 2005, and was submitted to the Ministry of Environment in February, 2006. Approvals could be obtained by early autumn, 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 immediately to the south of Highway 407. It then heads into the Corporate Centre along the OPA 529 alignment, ultimately intersecting with Highway 7 at Millway Road.

On March 23, 2006, the Province announced its commitment to the extension of the Spadina subway to the Vaughan Corporate Centre at Highway 7. This will negate the need for the interim bus rapid transit service, and allow for the immediate implementation of subway technology. This will enhance access to the OPA 620 amendment area making it a major focus for subway riders, bus passengers and drivers using the planned commuter lot.

Analysis and Options

The revised draft OPA 620 is the result of a lengthy planning and public consultation process. Based on technical analysis from the City's planning, urban design, transportation and market consultants, as well as agency comments and public/landowner input, a 'preferred option' was developed in the form of the initial draft OPA 620, which was presented to Public Hearing on October 4, 2004.

The initial draft of OPA 620 was intended to provide densities that take advantage of their proximity to higher order transit service and supply the necessary ridership support. However, due to concern that the proposed densities might not be high enough to properly support the introduction of higher order transit to the area, Council directed that higher densities be examined to determine their planning implications. Council also directed that townhouses and semi-detached dwellings be deleted as permitted uses from the Plan, in favour of higher intensity uses.

Subsequently, the City's consultants examined additional higher density scenarios for the Amendment Area, and concluded 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. This conclusion makes clear that 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.

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. 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 is the preferred solution as residential uses are a significantly lower generator of auto trips than major office or large format retail commercial development.

The increased amount of permitted development reflected in the revised OPA 620 implies an increase in the number of workers and residents, and greater needs for hard services, schools, parks and community services. Greater attention to urban design and streetscaping is also required, as well as additional requirements to address noise and other micro-environmental concerns (ie. wind, weather protection, etc.). Consequently, the revised OPA 620 incorporates a number of policy modifications and refinements to ensure that these concerns are appropriately addressed.

Revised Draft OPA 620

To achieve higher density development, revised 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 five minute walk.

Key components of the revised draft OPA 620 (see Attachment 1), include:

- **“Transit Core” designation**
 - within 250 metres of the proposed Transit Station site
 - Floor Space Index (FSI) target of 4.0
- **“Transit Transition” designation**
 - from 250 metres to 500 metres of the proposed Transit Station site
 - FSI target of 2.5
- **“Corridor” designation**
 - beyond 500 metres from the proposed Transit Station site
 - FSI target of 1.5

Revised draft OPA 620 includes 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.

	Area (Hectares)	Area (Acres)	%
Total Study Area	48,03	118.7	100
Development Parcel Area	27,08	66.9	56.4
Open Space Area	3,93	9.7	8.2
Institutional Area	1,75	4.3	3.6
City Owned SWMP	1,03	2.5	2.1
Primary and Secondary Road Area	14,25	35.2	29.7

Table 1: Land Use Distribution

	<u>Hectares (ac.)</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Total Study Area	48.03 (118.7)	100.0
Development Parcel	27.08 (66.9)	56.4
Open Space	3.93 (9.7)	8.2
Institutional	1.75 (4.3)	3.6
Stormwater Pond	1.03 (2.5)	2.1
Primary & Secondary Roads	14.25 (35.2)	29.7

The “Transit Core” designation provides for major office development directly on Steeles Avenue at the transit station, as well as an Urban Plaza, High Density Residential uses, including apartments and townhouses, Public and Institutional Uses, and Mixed Use development.

The "Transit Transition" designation provides for a transition in scale between the high density development in the Transit Core, and the lower density development further east and west. The "Transit Transition" designation permits essentially the same range of uses as the "Transit Core" designation, but limits single use prestige office employment uses to a maximum density of 0.5 FSI.

The "Corridor" designation provides further for transition to the low density development surrounding the Amendment Area. The "Corridor" designation has the same range of permitted uses at a lower scale than the "Transit Transition" designation.

Retail uses are permitted in all areas of the plan but may be provided only at grade, as a component of a multi-storey building, and only as an ancillary use to the main use in a building combined with High Density Residential, Prestige Office, or Public/Institutional uses.

Public/Institutional uses, including schools, parks and community facilities, are permitted in all areas of the plan without requiring an amendment. Draft OPA 620 conceptually identifies the locations of three Neighbourhood Parks, five Neighbourhood Squares/Green, an Urban Plaza, and one elementary school site (Attachment 3). The school site has been identified at the request of the York Region District School Board.

Revised OPA 620 includes policies respecting noise and vibration, which are a particular concern considering the Amendment Area's proximity to the CN rail corridor and railyards. Identification of the limits and levels of noise sources and their mitigation is required. Residential and other sensitive land uses will require a noise and vibration study to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the City and CN; if feasible, mitigative measures will be required as a condition of approval. Residential and other sensitive land uses may also be required to undertake mitigation to address impacts associated with noise originating from the subway, bus and truck traffic.

Revised OPA 620 incorporates significant improvements to the road network north and south of Steeles Avenue (see Attachment 2). North of Steeles Avenue, a new east-west road running continuously from Jane Street to Keele Street is proposed, together with seven north-south roadways linking the east-west road to Steeles Avenue. A similar road network is shown conceptually south of Steeles, anticipating that additional roads will likely be needed to accommodate future development there, but recognizing that it is outside the Amendment Area and will be subject to the outcome of the process to update the York University Campus Master Plan. Revised OPA 620 also supports the continued protection of the subway corridor to the Vaughan Corporate Centre as established by OPA 529.

Respecting existing uses, given that the ultimate target densities provided in the plan may take time to achieve, policies are included in the plan that permit those existing uses to continue. As well, policies allow those existing uses to have extensions or expansions subject to a number of tests (e.g. protection of road network).

Revised OPA 620 also makes provision for establishment of a Community Improvement Plan within the Amendment Area. Until recently, the Amendment Area has been viewed primarily as a place for low-density employment uses. To help make a shift towards the transit-based vision embodied by this plan, it will be necessary for the City to take a supportive role towards transit-supportive development densities. The plan includes policies to allow the City to designate all or part of the amendment area as a Community Improvement Area under Section 28 of the Planning Act. This gives the City an opportunity to develop and provide a financial and/or land use incentive package (e.g. including development charges, parking requirements, parkland dedication, municipal fees, etc.) to development that helps to fulfill the new transit-supportive vision.

Revised OPA 620 includes urban design policies intended to create buildings and spaces to complement the permitted uses and densities of the plan, and help to establish an environment,

which is strongly transit-supportive and pedestrian-oriented in character. The proposed OPA 620 includes policies regarding: built form, building heights, setbacks, street wall, building massing, open space, pedestrian realm, and road allowance and streetscaping. The key elements of the urban design policies include: a 'build-to' line to provide building fronts on Steeles Avenue and the north-south local roads; setbacks that support the street edge, as well as enhanced streetscapes on Steeles Avenue and the north-south local roads.

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

The Steeles Avenue Corridor Land Use Review – Jane to Keele Street – provides Vaughan with perhaps the best near term opportunity to implement land use policies that will support the introduction of high 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 620 establishes a policy framework that:

- introduces a range of new land uses;
- provides for increased densities;
- guides the delivery of the necessary infrastructure, open space and community services; and
- sets out clear rules for the design of development.

Following Council's receipt of the public hearing, staff will prepare a comprehensive report to a future Committee of the Whole meeting, to address all identified issues relevant to revised OPA 620.

Attachments

1. Schedule A – Land Use and Density, Draft OPA 620
2. Schedule B – Conceptual Street Network, Draft OPA 620
3. Schedule C – Conceptual Open Space Network & Public Amenities, Draft OPA 620
4. Draft Official Plan Amendment 620 (Members of Council ONLY)

Report prepared by:

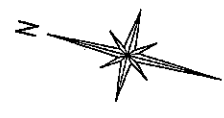
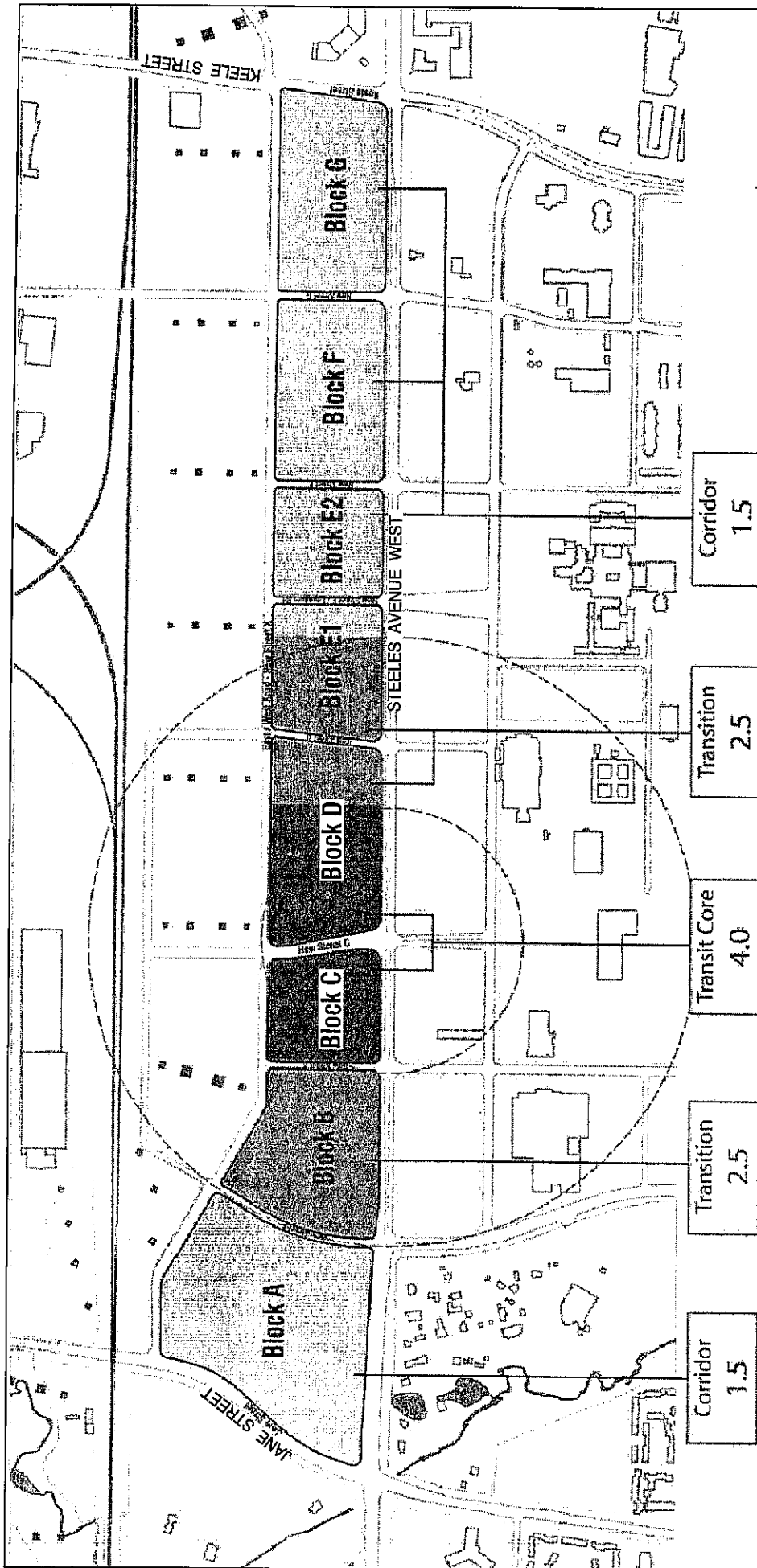
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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Planning

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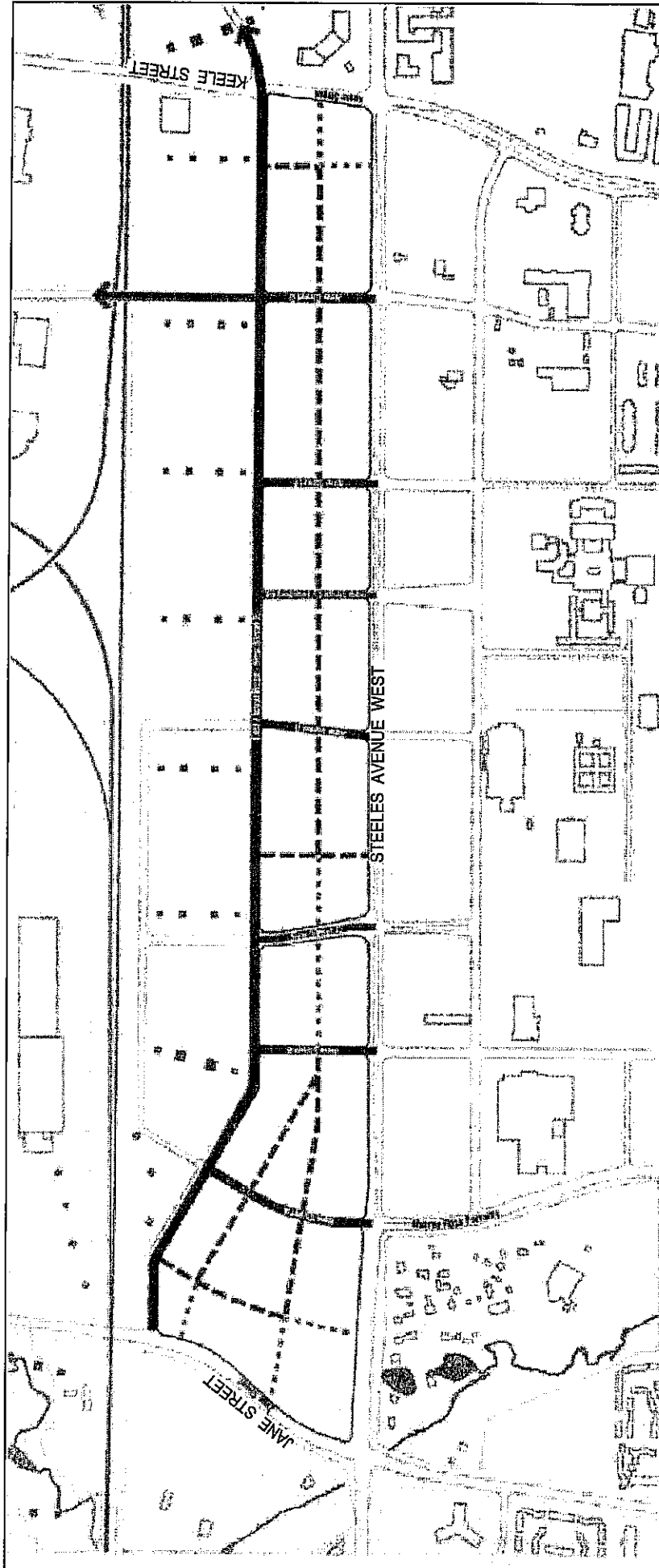
Schedule A - Land Use & Density

**Steeles Corridor - Jane St. to
Keele St. - Secondary Plan
(Draft OPA 620)**



Policy Planning Department

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- Primary Road Network
- Secondary Road Network
- Pedestrian / Cycle Link or Secondary Street

Schedule B - Conceptual Street Network

Steeles Corridor - Jane St. to
 Keele St. - Secondary Plan
 (Draft OPA 620)

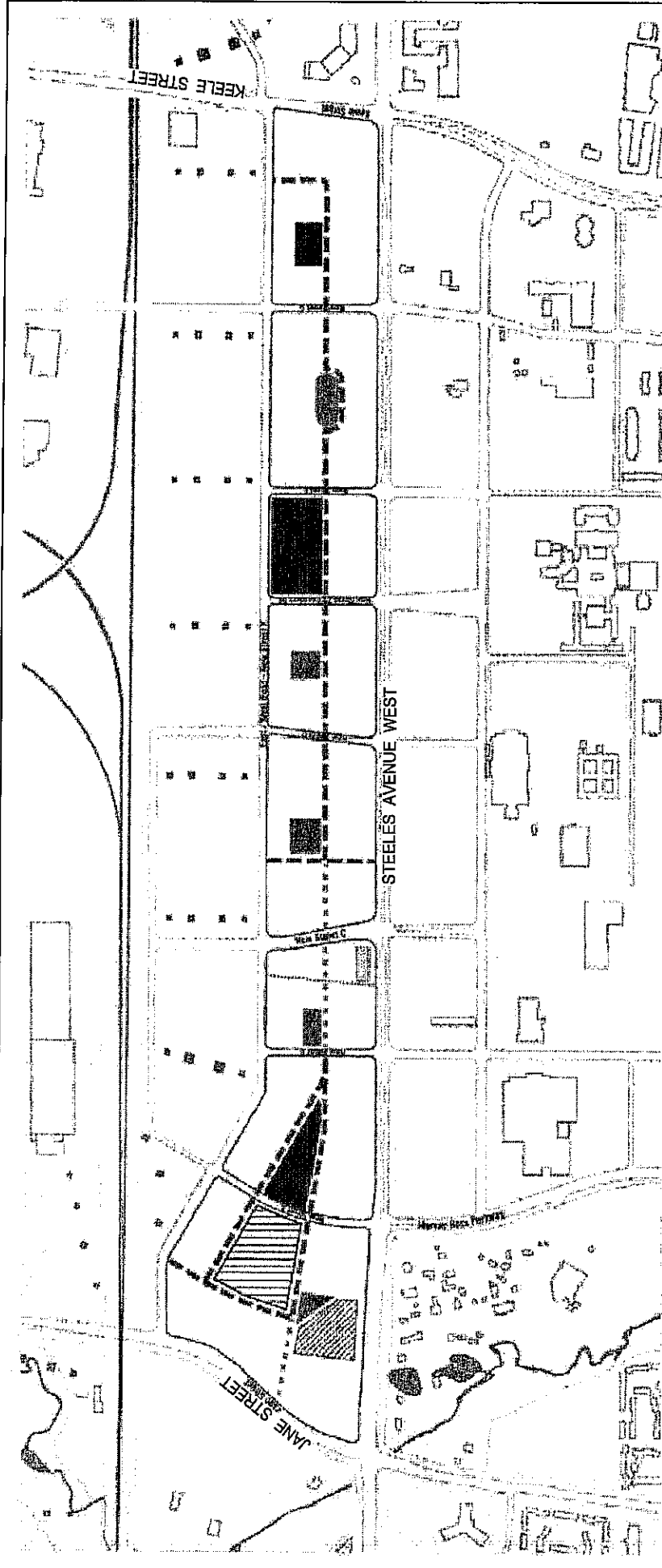


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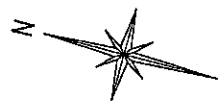
Attachment

Lot 1,
 Concession 4
 May 17, 2006

2



- Neighbourhood Park
- Neighbourhood Square / Green
- Urban Plaza
- Potential School Site or Open Space
- Secondary Road Network
- Pedestrian / Cycle Link or Secondary Street
- Existing Storm Water Management Pond
- Lands Acquired for Transit Terminal



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Schedule C - Conceptual Open Space Network and Public Amenities

Steeles Corridor - Jane St. to
 Keele St. - Secondary Plan
 (Draft OPA 620)



Policy Planning Department

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