

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SEPTEMBER 5, 2006

**FILE 15.73.8
OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 637
HIGHWAY 400 NORTH EMPLOYMENT AREA SECONDARY PLAN STUDY**

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That policy modifications to Official Plan Amendment 637, BE APPROVED, including:
 - i) Item #12 of OPA 637 (respecting Section 2.2.5.2 of OPA 450, Development Policies #1a) to be revised to increase the maximum permitted floor plates of buildings housing individual retail uses in the Mixed Use Areas – Commercial/Employment designation as follows:

“1. In addition to the permitted land uses in the Prestige Areas designation, the Mixed Use Areas – Commercial/Employment designation permits a range of small scale retail and service commercial uses designed to serve through traffic, as well as the surrounding area, such as restaurants, convenience stores, pharmacies and business supply uses. However, the following uses shall not be permitted:

 - a) Individual retail uses in buildings with floor plates in excess of 2,800 square metres in size;”
 - ii) Item #12 of OPA 637 (respecting Section 2.2.5.2 of OPA 450) be modified to add a new Development Policy #4 as follows:

“4. The lands designated Mixed Use Area – Employment/Commercial at the north-west corner of Jane Street and Teston Road may permit a food store within the designation without amendment to the Plan, subject to a land use study at a future date which determines the form and character of development east of Jane Street and demonstrates the need and appropriateness of the food store.”
 - iii) Schedule C (Land Use Plan) be modified to show an expanded ‘Mixed Use Area – Employment/Commercial’ designation at the north/west corner of Jane Street and Teston Road.
 - iv) Schedule C (Land Use Plan) be modified to identify two additional Significant Interface Areas (S.I.A.) at the intersections of the mid-block east/west road crossing Highway 400 with Weston Road, and with Jane Street; and
2. That the Region of York be requested to approve the policy modifications to OPA 637 when it considers OPA 637 for final approval.

Economic Impact

Development of the lands subject to the Highway 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan will have a positive impact upon the City of Vaughan in terms of new development, increased assessment, and greater job opportunities.

Purpose

OPA 637 provides the secondary plan and policy framework to guide development within the Highway 400 North employment lands. The purpose of this report is to introduce minor modifications to the version of OPA 637 adopted by Council on June 26, 2006.

Background – Analysis and Options

The Study Process to Date

On January 14, 2005, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Highway 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan Study.

On June 26, 2006, Council adopted OPA 637, the Highway 400 North Employment Area Secondary Plan, subject to review by the Policy/Urban Design Department of the following issues:

- a. land use permission for retail warehousing uses, their nature and size; and
- b. land use permissions for the north/west corner of Jane Street and Teston Road.

Staff were directed to meet with the relevant landowners to discuss the issues and provide a report to a Committee of the Whole meeting in September 2006.

Staff Response To Council's Direction

Staff have met with representatives of the landowners, regarding the matters identified by Council, as summarized below. Also, a letter was received from Humphries Planning Group Inc. summarizing their concerns, as discussed at the meeting with staff.

1. General Prohibition of Retail Warehousing Uses

The Council-adopted OPA 637 specifically prohibits retail warehousing uses. The Highway 400 North Employment Lands Study was undertaken in order to address a shortage in the City's supply of employment lands. The Study included a detailed analysis of the City's and Region's supply of existing and available employment lands in comparison with the forecast demand for such lands. The analysis confirmed that the City and Region have an employment land shortage, and that the lands within the Study Area would help to address this shortage. This analysis provides the basis for justifying an expansion of the City's urban boundary to include the lands north of Teston Road. An amendment to the Region's Official Plan will also be required, and must be approved by the Province. The City's case justifying the urban boundary expansion relies primarily upon the demonstrated need for land for typical employment uses like manufacturing and warehousing, rather than other uses such as retail warehousing.

Given the urgent need to supplement the City's supply of employment lands, it was considered appropriate to reserve most of the land within OPA 637 for employment uses. OPA 637 also provides the opportunity to accommodate a limited number of non-employment uses based on sound planning considerations. These include a regional park, institutional uses and a small area of estate residential development abutting a similar existing area. However, the balance of OPA 637 land is planned for a variety of general and prestige employment uses, business/office uses and businesses service uses, all of which are appropriate to the traditional definition of employment uses.

A further consideration in the restriction of retail warehousing uses is their size and format. Retail warehousing uses are typically large in size, and usually develop in association with other similar 'big box' retail users in major concentrations which are significant traffic generators. The impact of additional traffic, particularly truck traffic, was one of the principal concerns identified in the

study's public consultation process. This is due in part to the location of the employment lands in close proximity to the existing estate residential area, and the existing and planned residential communities south of Teston Road.

In view of these concerns, retail warehousing uses should not be permitted within the subject lands, with the exception of the lands located at the north-west corner of Jane Street and Teston Road, as discussed below.

2. North-west Corner of Jane Street and Teston Road

Council-adopted OPA 637 establishes a Mixed Use Area-Employment/Commercial designation wrapping around the corner on the west side of Jane Street and on the north side of Teston Road. This designation generally permits small scale commercial uses, as well as large scale institutional uses. The intention is to create the opportunity for a limited range of commercial facilities at development nodes serving both employment and residential areas. The designation prohibits outside storage, and limits individual retail uses to buildings with a maximum ground floor plate of 929 square metres (10,000 square feet).

The owners of the land at the north-west corner of Jane Street and Teston Road have requested that the designation be expanded to encompass approximately 16 ha.(40 ac.) to permit a greater concentration of commercial development, including retail warehousing. The north-west corner is the only quadrant of this intersection with significant development potential, as the southern quadrants are occupied by residential development, and the north-east quadrant is constrained by the presence of a natural feature (valley/stream corridor). The landowners would like to establish a Staples Business Depot on the property. They have also requested that the maximum permitted floor plate for a building with retail uses be increased to 2,800 square metres (30,140 sq. ft.) to accommodate, for example, a typical Staples store. They have also expressed interest in locating a major food store on the property, depending upon the future use of the lands east of Jane Street and north of Teston Road, currently in rural and agricultural use.

Business-supportive uses are appropriate at the Teston/Jane location as they would be readily accessible to serve both the employment area to the north and existing residential area to the south. Such a use is more appropriately located at Teston/Jane than on Kirby Road where the plan aims to create an attractive, urban environment within the Employment Area Activity Centre occupied by smaller scale, business-oriented uses, with a strong pedestrian orientation supportive of transit use. Accordingly, the landowner request can be supported to increase the maximum floor plate to 2,800 sq. m. to accommodate this use. Item #12 of OPA 637 (respecting Section 2.2.5.2 of OPA 450, Development Policies #1a) should be revised as follows:

"1. In addition to the permitted land uses in the Prestige Areas designation, the Mixed Use Areas – Commercial/Employment designation permits a range of small scale retail and service commercial uses designed to serve through traffic, as well as the surrounding area, such as restaurants, convenience stores, pharmacies and business supply uses. However, the following uses shall not be permitted:

a) Individual retail uses in buildings with floor plates in excess of 2,800 square metres in size;"

Staff are recommending that the Mixed Use Area – Employment/Commercial designation applicable to the north-west corner of Jane/Teston be expanded in size to encompass an area of approximately 16 hectares (40 ac.) in size. A food store may be permitted within the designation without amendment to the Plan, subject to the outcome of a study demonstrating the need and appropriateness of the food store use. Representatives of the affected landowners have indicated their agreement with this policy solution. Accordingly, Item #12 of OPA 637 (respecting Section 2.2.5.2 of OPA 450) should be revised to add the following new Development Policy #4:

"4. The lands designated Mixed Use Area – Employment/Commercial at the north-west corner of Jane Street and Teston Road may permit a food store within the designation without amendment to the Plan, subject to a land use study at a future date which determines the form and character of development east of Jane Street and demonstrates the need and appropriateness of the food store."

Also, Schedule C (Land Use Plan) has been modified (Attachment 1) to reflect the expanded Mixed Use Area – Employment/Commercial designation.

3. Significant Interface Areas

Significant Interface Areas are identified on Schedule C at each arterial road intersection on Jane Street, and on Weston Road in the Employment Area. Although a balanced and integrated approach to development on both sides of Jane Street and Weston Road is important, special attention will need to be paid at major intersections which will become focal points to the new communities that abut them, and will serve as 'gateways' into the Employment Area. The urban design guidelines for the Subject Lands (currently in preparation) will address both the design parameters for the lands within the Employment Area, as well as their relationship with lands outside of the Employment Area.

During the discussions with affected landowners, it was suggested that the proposed mid-block road in Block 35 crossing Highway 400 between Kirby Road and King-Vaughan Road would likely become an important route within the Employment Area. Also, when future decisions are made respecting development west of Weston Road and east of Jane Street, the mid-block road in Block 35 will likely be extended west and east, enhancing its role as a key connector within the area. Given this expectation, Staff agree with the suggestion that the intersections of this mid-block road with Weston Road and Jane Street also be identified as Significant Interface Areas. Accordingly, Schedule C (Land Use Plan) has been modified – see Attachment 1.

Next Steps Toward Implementing a Plan for the Study Area

The consulting team is proceeding with the preparation of Urban Design Guidelines and a preliminary zoning framework in support of OPA 637.

Staff will also be meeting with York Region staff regarding the necessary steps involved in defining and implementing the servicing infrastructure required to enable development to proceed within the Highway 400 North employment lands. Affected landowners will be consulted on an ongoing basis to reach a conclusion on these requirements, including the required financial commitments.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

The modifications to OPA 637 described in this report are minor in nature, respond to specific concerns of affected landowners, and improve upon the version adopted on June 26, 2006. Should Council concur, the Commissioner of Planning's recommendation should be approved.

Staff have consulted with York Region respecting the processing of OPA 637. Staff are advised that the Region intends to schedule a public hearing, pursuant to approval of OPA 637, to amend the Region of York Official Plan accordingly.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – OPA 637, Schedule C, Land Use Plan (Revised)

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

JOHN ZIPAY
Commissioner of Planning

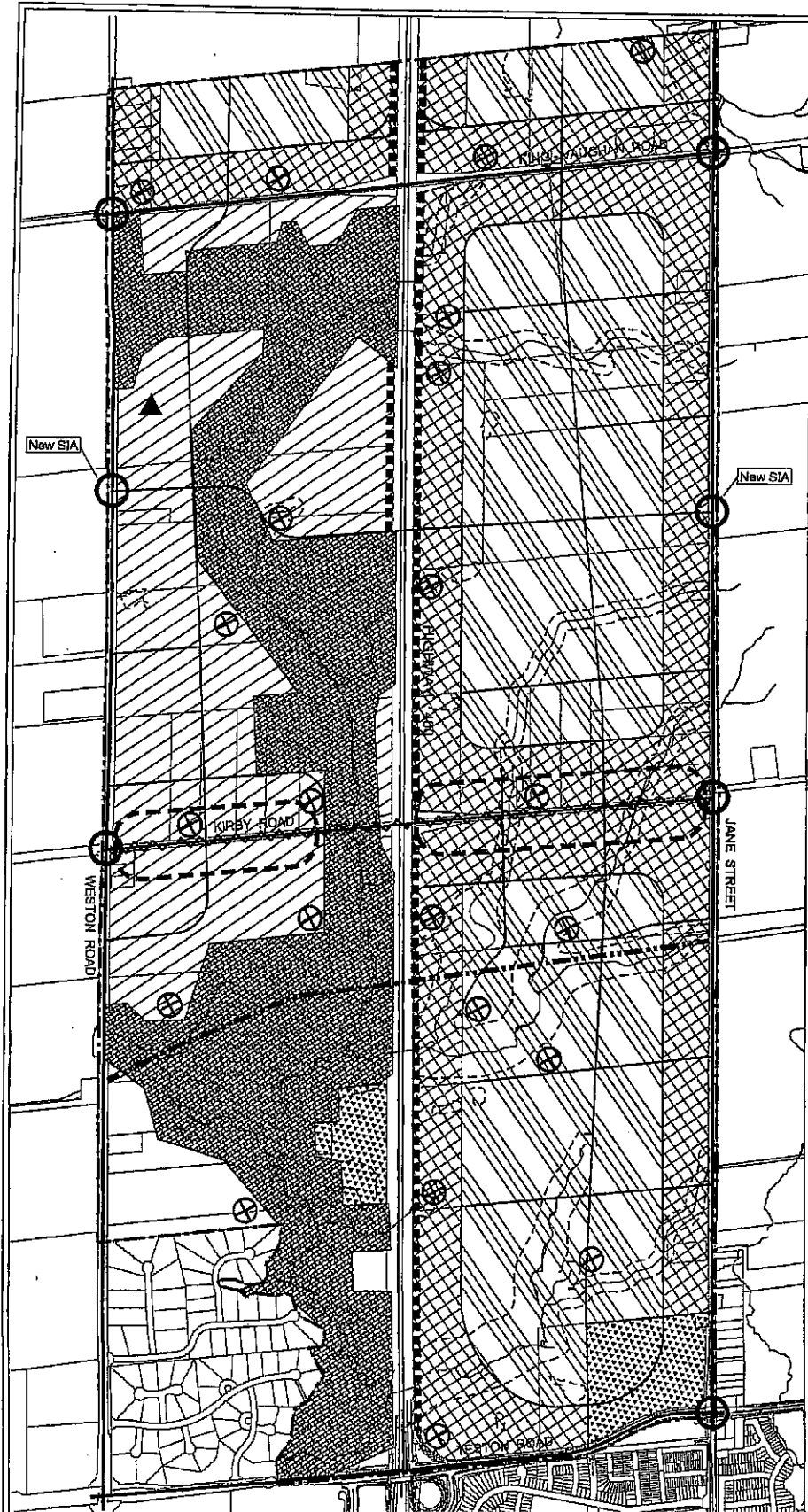
DIANA BIRCHALL
Director of Policy Planning/Urban Design

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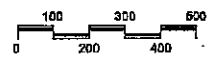
This Is Schedule 'C' to
Amendment No. 637

Schedule 2D to OPA 450
Employment Area
(Highway 400 North)
Land Use Plan



LEGEND

- Structural Plan Boundary
- ==== Provincial Controlled Access Highway
- Arterial Road
- Primary Road (planned)
- ~ Character Road
- Trans Canada Pipeline
- Employment Area Activity Centre
- Significant Interface Area (SIA)
- ▨ Greenbelt Natural System Area
- ▧ Potential Valley and Stream Corridor
- ⊗ Stormwater Management Facility
- ▲ Conceptual Regional Park (Location to be determined)
- ▩ Prestige Areas
- ▨ Prestige Areas - Office/Business Campus
- ▧ General Employment Area
- ▩ Mixed Use Area - Employment / Commercial
- Significant Enhanced Landscape Area



**This Is Schedule 'C'
to Amendment
No. 637**

**City of
Vaughan**
Policy Planning /
Urban Design Department

**Attachment
1**
FILE No.:
15.73.8
Not to Scale
September 5, 2006

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