

Office of the City Clerk
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

September 29, 2023
File 8784

Attn: Mayor and Members of Council

**RE: Vaughan Official Plan Review (OPR) – Draft Part A OPA
Committee of the Whole (October 3, 2023) – Item 4.2
Lands Southwest Corner of Highway 7 & Martin Grove Road
City File No.: OP.22.007**

Weston Consulting is the planning consultant for ‘Highway 7 & Martin Grove Landowner’, the owners of the properties municipally known as 5657, 5731, 5781, 5655 Highway 7, 7700 and 7714 Martin Grove Road, in the City of Vaughan (herein referred to as the “subject property”). We have been monitoring and actively participating in Vaughan’s Official Plan Review (“OPR”) process on behalf of the landowner as it relates to the subject property.

We understand that updates to the Vaughan Official Plan (“VOP”) are being undertaken in two parts: Part A being Provincial and Regional Conformity and Part B being City Context and Initiatives. In September 2023, a draft of the Part A OPA was released as part of the OPR process for public review and comment. We are pleased to provide this letter as a formal submission to provide commentary on the OPR process that will guide the future growth and development in the City.

Description of Subject Property

The subject property is located at the southwest quadrant of the Highway 7 and Martin Grove Road intersection in the community of Woodbridge. The subject property is comprised of six parcels and is approximately 6.96 hectares (17.17 acres) in area, with 369 metres of frontage onto Highway 7 and 79.6 metres onto Martin Grove Road. The subject property is currently occupied by a variety of single-storey commercial and retail uses, including a shopping centre, a grocery store, bank, motor vehicle sales, motor vehicle repair shops, and outdoor stone depot. The majority of the lands are covered by surface parking, with minimal onsite landscaping.

Planning Policy and Background

The Subject Property fronts onto Highway 7, identified as a Regional Rapid Transit Corridor per Schedule 10 – Major Transit Network of the City of Vaughan Official Plan (VOP). Per Schedule 9 – Future Transportation Network of the VOP, Highway 7 is classified as a Major Arterial (Regional) Road. The VOP directs the highest intensity uses to areas served by higher-order transit, including Rapid Transit Corridors. Per Schedule 13 – Land Use of the VOP, the subject property is designated as “Mid-Rise Mixed-Use”, which permits a broad range of residential, offices, retail, community facilities, and cultural uses. A maximum site density of 2.5 - 3.0 FSI and a maximum height of 8 - 10 storeys are currently

permitted on the subject property.



Figure 1: Aerial Photo of Subject Property

Weston Consulting, on behalf of the landowner group, submitted an Official Plan Amendment Application (City File# OP.22.007) in April 2022 to enable the subject property's redevelopment and revitalization to create a robust and vibrant mixed-use community. The proposed amendment was requested to permit a phased high-rise mixed-use master plan consisting of 10 residential apartment blocks totaling 13 buildings with at-grade commercial uses, a maximum height of 28-storays, a maximum floor space index (FSI) of 5.62 times the area of the lot and a total of 3,390 units. The development proposal also included the construction of both public and private streets, public park spaces, and privately owned publicly accessible spaces. In June 2022, the City Clerk and Development Planning Department issued the Notice of Complete Application. Since then, we have been working with the property owner and the project team to prepare our resubmission addressing the staff/agency comments.

The landowner group and the project team have also been engaged in several public consultation meetings with the ratepayer groups and residents to obtain feedback on the proposed development, including the Committee of the Whole (Public Meeting) on February 7, 2023, and Community Consultation Meeting on June 13, 2023. The Committee of the Whole recommended facilitating a working group with the applicant, residents, staff, Local and Regional Councillors, and Mayor to continue to discuss the proposal and receive comments for consideration regarding the Official Plan review, which is currently

under review by the City.

Draft Part A OPA

We have reviewed the draft Part A OPA policies and mapping as it relates to the subject property and offer the following comments.

Based on our review of the draft Part A OPA, we note that the subject property is within the “Community Area” per draft Schedule 1 – Urban Structure and is located along a Regional Intensification Corridor per draft Schedule 1A – Strategic Growth Areas, consistent with Schedule 1 – Urban Structure of the VOP. The draft Part A OPA includes the population growth of the City forecasted by the York Region Official Plan (2022), which is expected to increase from 340,700 in 2021 to 575,200 in 2051. Similarly, employment will increase by approximately 112,200 more jobs, bringing the total employment to 352,300 in 2051. We note that the draft Part A OPA intends to accommodate 57% of new residential growth through intensification, a 12% increase from the 45% mandated by the VOP. This will require 51,300 new residential units to be developed between 2016 and 2051 within the built-up area through intensification.

The draft Part A OPA also supports higher-density housing forms throughout the built-up area and identifies Strategic Growth Areas as the primary locations for accommodating intensification. We also note that the draft Part A OPA promotes a wider range of housing options in the Community Area. The draft Part A OPA establishes a hierarchy of Strategic Growth Areas and specifies Regional Intensification Corridors in the second order of density and intensity of use. Strategic Growth Areas are identified as the primary locations to accommodate growth and the greatest mix of uses, heights, and densities in accordance with the established hierarchy. Furthermore, the Regional Intensification Corridors are prioritized for higher intensity of uses and growth over Primary Intensification Corridors.

Conclusion

Based on our review of the draft Part A OPA, our position is supportive of the direction the City is taking to accommodate the forecasted growth and guide development in the City by 2051. We believe the subject property, with 6.96 hectares (17.17 acres) of currently underutilized commercial uses, is suitable to accommodate substantial population growth through intensification, consistent with the direction provided by the draft Part A OPA for Strategic Growth Areas along Regional Intensification Corridors. The proposed redevelopment of the subject property will help the City to meet its current and future housing needs, offer a range and mix of housing options and uses, and lessen the impact of the housing crisis experienced over the past years in the City.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Weston Consulting and our client would like to reserve the right to provide further comments on the OPR process as it relates to the future development of the subject property. We respectfully request to be notified of any future reports, public meetings, and decisions in relation to this matter.

If you have any questions regarding the above comments, please contact the undersigned at extension 245 or Raj Lamichhane at extension 330.

Yours truly,
Weston Consulting
Per:



Sandra K. Patano, BES, MES, MCIP, RPP
Vice President

c. Highway 7 & Martin Grove Landowner