

VMC Sub-Committee (c/o Office of the City Clerk)  
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Date: Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
 Subject: **VMC Sub-Committee – VMC Secondary Plan Update Follow-Up Comments**

**C 4**  
**Communication**  
 Vaughan Metropolitan Centre  
 Sub-Committee – February 28, 2024  
 Item No. 2

Dear Members of the VMC Sub-Committee,

Arcadis Professional Services (Canada) Inc. (“Arcadis”) is writing this letter on behalf of 2748355 Canada Inc. (“274”) for their landholdings within the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC). 274 and its various partnerships own approximately 84 acres of land within the southwest quadrant of the VMC. Previous letters dated Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, and January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, were submitted to City Staff in response to the proposed Preferred Option for the VMC Secondary Plan Update and the revised schedules presented to the VMC Sub-Committee on Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Figure 1: VMC SP Preferred Option (January 2024) and 2748355 Canada Inc. Development Blocks



274 has been working with the City on the development and redevelopment of these lands for the past 20+ years. Over the course of this period, the area has undergone substantial changes, both in terms of policy framework and progress in building construction. As part of the current Secondary Plan Update process, Arcadis and 274 have met with City Staff, Consultants, and relevant commenting agencies to provide input.

The comments outlined in this letter are based on the recently released draft schedules for the VMCSPP. The comments are made within the context that no policies have been released to complement these schedules. Until such time as the draft policy framework is released, the comments should be considered preliminary.

We recognize that there has been progress on moving to resolve some of our issues and in consideration of our ongoing commitment to engagement, we would like to request a meeting with staff ahead of the next Landowner's Group meeting, currently planned for Q1/Q2 2024. We would like to use the opportunity of this meeting to revisit our vision of the Master Plan for the Southwest Quadrant with staff, in addition to reviewing our issues based on the draft VMC Secondary Plan materials presented to date. These matters are summarized below.

### **Land Use**

We note that the revised schedules continue to designate Blocks 6E, 6W and 1W as "neighbourhood", which is inconsistent with the emerging built form within the quadrant. As previously submitted to the City, the east-west corridor of Interchange Way represents the logical transition point from a high-rise mixed use urban centre to a more supportive "neighbourhood" character. This transition has already been reinforced through the Mobilio development, IKEA store, and future school campus. Further, we hold active development applications for the lands known as Block 6E (File No. OP.22.011, Z.22.020, & DA.22.031), which proposes to include a mix of residential and non-residential uses, including the potential for a civic facility (also newly added to the schedules). The proposed land uses and density will need to be appropriate to create a dynamic community hub that anchors a number of key elements within the quadrant such as the western terminus of the Assembly Park Community park, the southern terminus of the key retail spine, the central linkage to the newly emerging school campus and spoke of the various mews corridors in the quadrant. We continue to submit that all three blocks north of Interchange Way be designated as *Mixed Use*.

We note that Block 5 (lands on the western edge of the quadrant) has changed from *Non-residential Mixed Use* to *Mixed Use*, including a potential new park and podium school which reflects the better use of that block.

### **Proposed School Location(s)**

As the City is aware, 274 has been working with both the York Catholic District School Board, and the York District School Board to determine the optimal location, size, layout, and built form of the school(s) that are planned to be located within the southwest quadrant. We support the proposed new location for the schools as identified on the new schedules with the understanding that the Block 5 location is intended as a potential future podium school with no minimum land acreage.

### **Civic Facilities**

We support the identification of a potential civic facility within Block 6E which is to be integrated with the main central park and surrounded by an appropriately scaled mixed use block design.

### **Parkland Locations**

The overall structure of the Assembly Park Master Plan, including land uses, densities, heights, connections and open space have been carefully designed to create a vibrant and connected community. It was recognized that additional density was being proposed in areas of the Master Plan. In recognition of the proposed increases in

density, the Master Plan identifies locations for additional possible parkland, open spaces and POPs. It is submitted that these additions complement and expand on the structure previously proposed by the City. It should be noted that the additional parkland was tied to the concept of additional density as proposed within the overall Master Plan

### **Road and Mews Network**

We note the January 2024 schedules have been revised to reflect a road network that matches the Master Plan and submitted Draft Plan of Subdivision (File No. 19T-23V001). However, the schedule continues to identify an east-west road through Block 6E. This connection will significantly impact the overall design of the community hub and viability of any potential civic facility. As previously submitted, this road should be removed.

### **Retail**

The overall retail strategy, as identified in the Master Plan consolidates the retail into a critical mass along a specifically designed retail spine network. The location of retail has been carefully considered to create a vibrant retail and service core for the emerging community. We note the January 2024 schedules have been revised to partially reflect the retail strategy as approved and proposed. The recommended retail frontage shown along Interchange Way, east of Edgely fails to capture the newly completed built form within Mobilio (Block 2) and the intended nature of this area of the Master Plan. While we support the optionality of including the potential for retail within a “*Mixed Use*” designation, there should be no policy mandate for retail in this area.

### **Density and FSI**

As previously submitted, the Assembly Park Master Plan has been carefully designed in order to create a logical transition of density, height and uses from Highway 7 to Interchange Way and then to the 407 corridor. Additional parkland, new community/civic facilities and a critical retail spine were all proposed to complement these densities and heights. We continue to have significant concerns with the densities outlined in the newly released schedules.

It would appear that the City is considering a proposed expansion of the VMC boundaries in order to accommodate further growth in the downtown. We do not object to these expansion areas, but it should not be done by reducing or freezing density in existing areas of the VMC. The proposed densities outlined in the Assembly Park Master Plan are consistent with previous approvals, the emerging built form, Provincial direction, and the efficient use of urban land within MTSAs. 274 continues to have significant concerns with the proposed densities as currently shown on the draft schedules and any changes to the proposed definition to calculate density.

### **Height**

The January 2024 revised schedules include the reintroduction of a new *Height* schedule that had previously been proposed to be removed. As outlined above, the Assembly Park Master Plan identifies a logical transition between heights, densities, land uses and complementary community elements. The Province has recommended against imposing maximum height restrictions within areas well serviced by public transit. Further, the imposition of artificial height limits reduces the flexibility for careful and creative design approaches. We request that this schedule be either deleted or adjusted to consider a logical range of permitted heights based on the Assembly Park Master Plan.

### Mixed Use Non-residential Requirement

We are concerned that the location and quantity of minimum Non-residential requirements, shown on the recently released schedules, is not appropriate in consideration of market conditions and may have impacts on the success that the VMC has realized to date. Blocks that are currently under construction, approved or proposed include a comprehensive non-residential/retail strategy that support the creation of a vibrant community in the SW Quadrant. Blocks 4S and 6E, as proposed in the existing applications, and the overall Assembly Park Master Plan all propose non-residential elements. We submit that greater flexibility as to the location, type and quantity is required to address market conditions. We request that this schedule either be deleted and better addressed through policy.

### Summary of Issues List

As noted above, the comments raised in this letter are submitted without the context of the policy framework that should accompany the draft schedules. As such, our client reserves the right to provide further comments once the policy language is released.

Based only on the draft Schedules released, 274 continues to request that the Preferred Option be revised to better reflect the Assembly Park Master Plan, as submitted to the City, and the ongoing development and discussions with the City that inform this Master Plan.

Table 1: VMC SP Preferred Option Schedule Changes

No.	Changes
<b>Land Use</b>	
1	Block 1W, 6E and 6W changed from Neighbourhood to Mixed Use.
2	Block 4S change to Mixed Use only, removing the Non-Residential Uses Requirement.
3	Remove E-W road from Block 6E.
4	New Parkland subject to further discussions related to density.
<b>Non-Res Required</b>	
5	Should be deleted and better addressed through policy. In addition, any Non-Res requirement should be removed from Block 4S.
<b>Density</b>	
6	Block 1W up to 5.0 FSI.
7	Block 1E up to 6.0 FSI.
8	Block 4N up to 9.0 FSI.
9	Block 4S up to 7.5 FSI.
10	Block 5 up to 6.0 FSI.
11	Block 6W up to 5.0 FSI.
12	Block 6E up to 7.5 FSI.
<b>Retail</b>	
13	Remove recommended retail along Interchange Way, east of Edgeley.
<b>Civic Facilities</b>	
14	School S1 should be identified a combined dual school site.
15	School S5 should be footnoted to be identified as a potential podium school only.
<b>Height</b>	
16	Should be deleted or revised to reflect the gradation of heights shown on the Assembly Park Master Plan.

VMC Sub-Committee  
City of Vaughan  
February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Conclusion

We hope to further discuss these comments with staff and advance towards a resolution ahead of the next Landowner's Group Meeting, Public Open House, and Statutory Public Meeting planned for later this year.

2748355 Canada Inc. and their joint venture partnerships, continue to look forward to the opportunity to refine the draft schedules of the VMC Secondary Plan and work collaboratively with the City of Vaughan, Region of York, and all other relevant agencies, stakeholders, and the public with regards to these land use designations, heights, densities, policies, and permissions.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you require clarification or additional information.

Sincerely,

## Arcadis Professional Services (Canada) Inc.



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