

June 25, 2024

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VMC Sub-Committee (c/o Office of the City Clerk)
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1
via email: Clerks@vaughan.ca

<p>C 6 Communication Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Sub-Committee – June 26, 2024 Item No. 1</p>
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Dear Members of the VMC Sub-Committee:

RE: VMC Sub-Committee – June 26, 2024
Item C1: Presentation “VMC Secondary Plan Update: Height and Densities”

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. is the land use planner for the Portage Conversion Landowners Group (“**Portage Landowners**”), who own approximately 7.0 ha of land on the north side of Portage Parkway between Millway Avenue and Applewood Crescent (“**Portage Lands**”) in Expansion Area B. The Portage Landowners have been actively participating in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan (“**VMCSP**”) Update by attending Subcommittee meetings, landowner meetings, and meetings with the VMCSPP project team.

We offer the following comments on the staff presentation *VMC Secondary Plan Update: Heights and Densities* distributed June 21, 2024. In an effort to keep this letter brief and to the topic before the Sub-Committee, previous comments provided on behalf of the Portage Landowners to the VMCSPP Update Project Team remain current.

Request VMC Sub-Committee to direct staff to remove the height and density maximums.

The Portage Landowners support the second option presented by staff to “*Proceed with making the required changes to the VMC Secondary Plan to set parameters for minimum heights and densities without prescribed maximums.*” We request this same approach be applied to Expansion Area B (which includes the Portage Lands).

Removing arbitrary height and density restrictions will not only speed up the development approvals process (such as removing OPAs to amend such parameters), but it also supports the expeditious production of more housing, particularly affordable housing within a PMTSA, and incentivize the inclusion of non-residential land uses to support the residential population and create a more balanced downtown. Removal of height and density caps will allow the market to dictate appropriate intensity and is more consistent with recent provincial policy direction for PMTSAs, including Bill 185 which restricts parking requirements in PMTSAs.

We agree with the staff that removing height and density caps provides a better opportunity to achieve a more balanced community. Height and density caps are an arbitrary way to control adverse impacts when there is no clear rationale for dictation of the skyline view (i.e. preserve view of the CN Tower etc.). With the right policy direction, adverse impacts such as those related to the balance of non-residential uses, housing mix and affordability, microclimate, and transition to adjacent employment lands can be more appropriately

addressed on a site by site basis with the goal of mitigating the specific impact versus arbitrarily limiting the height or density with hopes of mitigating those impacts. Additional information related to such policies is requested to further understand the implications.

We continue to recognize the role Expansion Area B plays in providing appropriate transition to existing employment uses to the north. Building heights and densities along the north side of Portage should provide a gradual transition to the existing employment lands, which we continue to recommend be redesignated to Prestige Employment. Again, appropriate policy direction can be provided that would require such a transition be provided with the goal of protecting and mitigating impacts on the adjacent employment lands.

Continue to request the VMC Subcommittee and Project Team consider an alternative approach for the proposed parkland in the Expansion Area B lands.

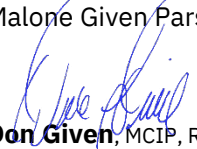
Although we understand the presentation at the VMC Subcommittee meeting on June 26th is not focused on discussing proposed land uses, we want to reiterate that the Portage Landowners continue to disagree with the arrangement of parkland proposed by the Project Team for Expansion Area B. The preferred Land Use Plan presented by Staff includes a large park designation at the northeast corner of Edgeley and Portage. In contrast, the Portage Landowners Conceptual Master Plan (as attached) proposes an arrangement of parkland across each block that will provide a better distribution, access and amount of parkland. Schollen and Company has completed preliminary facility fits to illustrate that the parkland proposed by the Portage Landowners is sufficiently sized to accommodate the facility needs as identified in the VMC Parks Master Plan Update.


The arrangement of parkland proposed by the Portage Landowners will provide open space directly adjacent to future visitors, employees and residents in the Expansion Area B, breaking up and providing relief from the built form and massing. The Portage Landowners Conceptual Master Plan illustrated three (3) public parks sized at 0.57 ha (1.4 acres), 0.41 ha (1 acre), and 0.33 ha (0.82 acres) for a total of 1.31 ha (3.24 acres), whereas the Final Concept Plan presented by staff illustrates a single park of 1.0 ha.

In conclusion, we request Committee direct Staff to make the required changes to the VMC Secondary Plan policy framework to accommodate unlimited heights and densities and we remain concerned with the parkland distribution proposed Final Concept Plan.

As always, we thank the project team for their efforts to address our concerns and comments regarding the VMC Secondary Plan Update and appreciate the opportunity to collaborate proactively to achieve the share goal of a great and vibrant downtown for Vaughan.

Yours very truly,
Malone Given Parsons Ltd.


Don Given, MCIP, RPP
Founding Principal


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Portage Conversion Landowners Group

Attachment: Portage Landowners Master Landscape Concept Plan

