



Project No. 2302

June 3, 2025

Committee of the Whole
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

Delivered by email to clerks@vaughan.ca

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee of the Whole,

Re: Committee of the Whole (Public Meeting) Report – Item 4.10
Draft Vaughan Official Plan, May 2025 Draft
Draft Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan April 2025 Draft
3131 Highway 7 West (Toromont Lands)

We are the planning consultants for Toromont Industries Ltd. (“Toromont”) with respect to their lands at 3131 Highway 7 (the “subject site”) which is located at the southwest corner of Jane Street and Highway 7 in the centre of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (“VMC”) Secondary Plan area.

We understand that the City has released a May 2025 draft of the VOP 2025 (“VOP 2025”), which includes a draft of the VMC Secondary Plan April 2025 (“**VMC SP 2025**”), which will both be presented at a statutory public meeting at the Committee of the Whole (“COW”) on June 4, 2025, to receive comments from the public and the Committee of the Whole. We also understand that VOP 2025 inclusive of the VMC SP 2025 and the Weston Road and Highway 7 Secondary Plan will be brought forward to Council for adoption in Fall 2025.

This letter provides commentary, on behalf of Toromont, on both the VOP 2025 and the VMC SP 2025. Toromont has commented on earlier versions of these draft policies by filing three letter (dated October 2, 2023, August 1, 2024, and March 28, 2025) regarding a previous drafts of the VOP 2025, and filing a letter with the VMC Subcommittee regarding a previous draft of the VMC SP on September 23, 2025.

Summary of comments:

- We were unaware until May 2025 that the City was intending to bring the VOP 2025 inclusive of the VMC SP 2025 and the Weston Road and Highway 7 Secondary Plan forward for approval as a single item under Section 17 of the Planning Act. We are concerned about the approval

pathway for the secondary plans being the Province as there will be no opportunity for appeals to the OLT for plans that provide detailed direction on the Secondary Plan lands. This will result in numerous site-specific applications in the future.

- We have concerns with lack of flexibility around built form policies in both the VOP 2025 and VMC SP.
- We have concerns related to park and POPS design policies, as well as lack of clarity around credit for encumbered parks (strata parks and POPS) in both the VOP 2025 and VMC SP.
- We have concerns around the list of requirements for complete applications in the VOP 2025.
- We have concerns about the introduction of a “Recommended Major Community Service Facility” on the subject site in the VMC SP.

1. Detailed Comments on VOP 2025

The following provides our comments on the VOP 2025.

A. Section 1.4.2 – Transition Policies

We support the inclusion of draft Policy 1.4.2.4 (a), which clarifies that applications that have been deemed complete prior to the approval date of the new VOP 2025 shall be reviewed and addressed under the Official Plan in effect at the time the application was deemed complete. **However, as we continue to request that this policy clarify that applications should be “reviewed and assessed under Volume 1 and Volume 2 in effect the time the application was deemed complete.”**

Draft Policy 1.4.2.1 (b)(ii) states that Volume 2 of the VOP 2010 remains in force for lands subject to secondary plans, save and except for the VMC Secondary Plan. **Again we request that this policy be updated to reflect that the Secondary Plans in Volume 2 of the VOP 2010 will remain in force for the lands subject to those plans until such time as those secondary plans are repealed and replaced.**

B. Chapter 2: Shaping Vaughan – Growth and Phasing Policies

We support the City’s planned urban structure objectives for the VMC as outlined in Draft Policy 2.2.1.1, and draft Policy 2.2.2.2 which encourages development to occur first in **Strategic Growth Areas** currently served by subways.

Strategic Growth Areas

Draft Policy 2.4.1 states that in **Strategic Growth Areas**, new development will support Balanced Density to achieve Complete Communities. The term “Balanced Density” is only used once in VOP 2025 and it relates to the following new definition in the Glossary:

“Balanced Density: An approach to urban design that ensures people, jobs, amenities, and services are located throughout an **Urban Area** in balanced proportions. It is achieved through a mix of open spaces as well as low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise that expand opportunities for mixing of residential, commercial, community, and recreational uses, while providing a wide selection of housing and employment opportunities that help contribute to a complete community. “

While we support the concept of achieving **Complete Communities**, we are concerned that the introduction of “Balanced Density” will create interpretation challenges.. **We request that the definition of Balanced Density be deleted, and that Policy 2.4.1.1 b) be reworded, as follows, to reflect Policy 2.4.1 of the 2024 PPS:**

b. Support ~~Balanced Density to achieve~~ the achievement of **Complete Communities**, a range and mix of housing options, intensification and more mixed-use development;

C. Section 4.1: Housing

Affordable Housing

Draft Policy 4.1.1.1 states that a minimum of 35% of new residential units in the VMC and PMTSAs be Affordable Housing. Given that there is no basis for this requirement without Inclusionary Zoning, **we request that this policy be amended to refer to add “...where implemented through Inclusionary Zoning”.**

D. Section 4.2 Economy and Employment

Draft Policy 4.2.2.2 (former Policy 3.4.2.2) states that “other economic activities, including **Retail** commercial activities and **Major Offices** shall be directed to

Strategic Growth Areas, where they can be better served by transit and help create vibrant mixed-use centres and corridors.”

It is our opinion that it is undesirable to require an over-provision of non-residential uses that are not supported by market demand. We understand that demand for office space has changed in recent years and may continue to fluctuate. **We request the following changes: “...should be directed to Strategic Growth Areas and are encouraged to be supported by market demand, where they can be better served...”**

E. Section 4.3 – Urban Design and Elements of a Great City

Draft Policy 4.3.1.5 (b) states that “Privately Owned Public Spaces [“POPS”] should be designed to a high level of quality and achieve the following: b. be highly visible for pedestrians, with frontage on at least one public street.”

In our experience, it can be desirable to locate a POPS space away from street frontage and provide connection and visibility to that space from a public street through a public access easement. **We request that the wording be updated to include: “be highly visible for pedestrians, with frontage on, or direct access and connection to, at least one public street.”**

Site Design and Building Types

Section 4.3.3 contains several policies that contain restrictive built form metrics including required minimum setbacks, building lengths, and tower floorplates. It continues to be our opinion that these matters are more appropriate in a guideline because they regulate built form too rigidly, and the Official Plan should not include such strict and prescriptive requirements, since they do not capture every scenario where it may be desirable to exceed these requirements.

We request that the policies on built form be worded to provide guidance only without numerical requirements and if numerical requirements are necessary, add “generally” or “where feasible” to provide some flexibility, as identified in the bullet list below.

- Draft Policy 4.3.3.10 – pedestrian-scaled podium which is “generally two to six **Storeys** in height.”
- Draft Policy 4.3.3.11 – taller building elements above a podium will “generally be setback three metres along all public street frontages.”

- Draft Policy 4.3.3.12 – separation of “**generally** 15 metres will be established...”. The separation distance between the tower portion of **High-Rise Buildings** will “**generally** be a minimum of 25 metres.”
- Draft Policy 4.3.3.13 (d) – “...~~maximize the hours of direct sunlight~~ **minimize shadowing** on the Public Realm.”
- Draft Policy 4.3.3.14 (a) – “the base and/or podium of the building should **generally** be no longer than 80 metres...”
- Draft Policy 4.3.3.14 (c) – “the portions of **High-Rise Buildings** above twelve **Storeys** shall **generally** be setback a minimum of 12.5 metres from any side or rear property line.”

F. Parks and Open Space

Based on the definition of **Strata Park** provided and limitations in draft Policy 4.4.2.4 (b), the City appears to be indicating that Strata Parks are primarily intended to be located above private parking. We do not see the distinction being made between parking infrastructure and the other kinds of infrastructure listed in 4.4.2.4 (b). All examples provided may be important functional elements of a given building or site.

In addition, Section 42 of the *Planning Act* has been amended to permit the conveyance of strata parkland encumbered by below grade infrastructure. There are no qualifications. Although not in force yet, once these additions come into force, 4.4.2.4 will be contrary to the *Planning Act* by building in qualifications to strata park conveyance where none exist. **We request the deletion of this policy.**

Draft Policy 4.4.2.4(a)(i) limits the total encumbrances to 60% of the surface area of the park. There may be cases where it is desirable to have a Strata Park that has a higher percentage of below-grade encumbrances. **We request that this policy be deleted, or amended to say “limits the total encumbrances to generally 60% of the surface area of the park, or as otherwise supported by the City, where below grade encumbrances are deemed to not encumber the surface area of the park.”**

Draft Policy 4.4.2.6(c) states that, with respect to Strata Parks, “parkland dedication credit shall be calculated net of all encumbrances in accordance with Section 3.5.5 of this Plan.” **We request that this apply only to surface encumbrances that displace occupiable space.** If the entirety of the encumbered area of a stratified park is excluded from parkland dedication credits, there is no basis for creating them.

Parks and Open Space Design

Draft Policy 4.4.4.3 (d) states that parks shall generally be situated and oriented to be highly visible with prominent public street frontage (50% of park perimeter) to enhance passive surveillance. We request that the numerical percentage be removed from this policy. In our opinion, the intent of the policy can be achieved without meeting the 50% park perimeter, and it may result in unnecessary OPAs. Accordingly, **we request that the policy be revised to add the word “generally”, or remove the reference to “50% of park perimeter” or add “where feasible”.**

Draft Policy 4.4.4.7 (b) states that where Development is proposed adjacent to parks or open spaces, “Development shall configure building massing and orientation to optimize access to sunlight in parks throughout the day and seasons.” **We request that this be reworded to require Development to “minimize shadowing in parks throughout the day and seasons to preserve their utility.”** It may be difficult and potentially undesirable from a built form and intensification perspective to require sunlight in parks to be optimized.

Draft Policy 4.4.4.8 (a)(iii) states that POPS will have 50 percent minimum perimeter public frontage, of which half shall be public street, and the balance shall include any combination of Public Realm element. In our experience, there are desirable configurations of POPS spaces that are accessible and visible from the street but do not have 50% frontage. **We request that this policy be reworded to state that POPS: “be highly visible for pedestrians, with frontage on, or direct access and connection to, at least one public street.”**

Draft Policy 4.4.4.8 (a)(vi) states that POPS shall maintain public street frontage along a minimum of 50% of the space’s perimeter, exclusive of private driveways. Similar to our comments above, in our experience, there are desirable configurations of POPS spaces that are accessible and visible from the street but do not have 50% frontage. **We request that this policy be reworded to state that POPS: “be highly visible for pedestrians, with frontage on, or direct access and connection to, at least one public street.”**

Draft Policy 4.4.4.8 (a) (vii) states that POPS shall incorporate active ground-floor uses along all building frontages adjacent to the space, with no blank facades, service areas, or other non-active uses permitted along these frontages. In our opinion, this may be an unreasonable requirement in certain configurations. **We request that this policy be reworded to include the phrase “where feasible and desirable”.**

Draft Policy 4.4.4.9 (b) states that POPS receiving parkland credits shall not be included in site area calculations for density purposes. **We request that this policy be removed.** It is inconsistent with the new definition in VOP 2025 proposed for “Floor Space Index”, which is based upon lot area with no exclusions. We note that previously, under VOP 2010, the calculation of FSI was based upon a “net developable area” and excluded parkland and other conveyances.

Parkland Dedication

Draft Policy 4.4.5.2, which outlines the parkland dedication rates of 5% or 1 hectare of parkland per 600 dwelling units, uses “Net Developable Area”. However, Draft Policy 4.4.5.4 which outlines the parkland caps uses “Gross Developable Area”. It is unclear how the Gross vs. Net Developable Area definitions would operate. **We request clarity on the intent of these definitions and policies as we are concerned that the intention may be to attempt to increase the maximum conveyance or payment in lieu beyond that allowed by s. 42(3.3) of the Planning Act.**

Draft Policy 4.4.5.11 states that parkland conveyed shall be credited net of all encumbrances. We request that this policy make reference to the Policy 4.4.5.8 (which states that POPS may be eligible for parkland credit) as well as the policies relating to Strata Parks.

G. Section 4.6.4 – Urban Agriculture

Draft Policy 4.6.4.1 (c) requires the identification of space for Urban Agriculture in new residential Development. **We request that this policy be modified to encourage rather than require Urban Agriculture and if provided, that lands for Urban Agriculture be included in the parkland dedication requirements where they are provided on lands conveyed to the municipality.**

H. Section 5.1.3 – Implementation Tools

Draft Policy 5.4.2.2 outlines items that may be required as part of a complete application and includes Table 5.1 which lists information, reports, studies, and materials. **We request several changes to Table 5.1:**

- We request renaming the title of Table 5.1 to remove the word “required.”

- We request removing “Executed and Valid PAC Understanding” and “Executed Preapplication Understanding” as this item cannot be required as part of a complete application.
- We request correcting the alphabetizing of certain items.
- Some of these items say “where applicable” (such as Architectural Control Architect Approved Drawings), but this is inconsistently used. Many of these items are required “where applicable”. We request that a consistent approach be applied.

Some items listed under “other” are not materials, rather, they are instructions about how to submit items, such as “all files shall be labelled in accordance with the City of Vaughan’s standard nomenclature”. **We request these be removed.**

Draft Policy 5.4.2.7 states that “where a study has been submitted in support of a development application(s), and it is determined that a peer review is required, the peer review shall be coordinated by the City and undertaken by a peer reviewer retained by the City, but at the expense of the applicant. This would be required as a component of a complete application.” In our opinion, it is not appropriate to delay the processing of an application by preventing an application from being deemed complete due to the City’s lack of capacity or expertise to review a certain report. The complete application requirement is to confirm that required materials have been submitted to begin with. It is not a process intended to intricately assess the adequacy of the submission; such a process would result in unfair delays. **We request that this be reworded to remove the sentence requiring the peer review as a component of a complete application.**

I. Schedules 9A and 9B

The Street Classifications and right-of-way widths included in the Draft VOP 2025 are not consistent with those in the current VMC Secondary Plan and VMC SP 2025.

Schedule 9A – Street Classification and 9B – Street Types identifies a north-south local street immediately south of Highway 7 and west of Jane Street whereas the current VMC Secondary Plan and the draft schedules for the VMC SP 2025 identify it as a pedestrian mews.

We request the Draft VOP 2025 schedules be updated to reflect the road network of the current and emerging VMC Secondary Plan.

Further, we acknowledge that Schedule 9A – Street Classifications identifies various Street Types including Employment, Centres, Community, and Natural areas. Although we understand that the purpose of these Street Classifications is to implement the City’s Complete Streets guidelines with respect to the planned road cross sections, we note that the policies of the Draft VOP 2025 do not speak to this. **We request that before the VOP 2025 is finalized that the City share their analysis on the direction that they intend to take with respect to these Street Classifications, providing opportunity to comment on the approach before the OPA is finalized, particularly with respect to the design and intent of the road network within the ‘Intensification’ Street Classification and how that might differ from the other Classifications.**

2. Detailed Comments on VMC SP 2025

The following provides our comments on the VMC Secondary Plan 2025.

Section 4.0 – Growth Management

Policy 4.2.3 states that development can only be permitted if sufficient parkland provided 0.3 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents. **We request that this be rephrased as a target and updated to reference the parkland dedication requirements under the *Planning Act*.**

Policy 4.3.2. states that “each phase of development shall” provide a variety of public benefits. **We request that this policy be revised to allow for the delivery of public benefits by phasing development in a manner that supports the orderly development of the VMC.**

Section 6.0 – Energy, Water and the Natural Environment

Policy 6.5.2 states that: “...In addition, all applicable development proposals located in Intensification Areas as defined in VOP 2025 shall meet or exceed a minimum performance standard of LEED Silver.” **We request that this portion of the policy be deleted.**

Section 7.0 Parks and Open Spaces

Policy 7.1.2 states that the minimum rate of parkland provision shall be 0.3 hectares per 1,000 population. As above, **we request that this be rephrased as a target and updated to reference the parkland dedication requirements under the *Planning Act*.**

Draft Policy 7.2.2. and 7.2.3 provide requirements that urban parks and public squares maintain public street frontage along 50% of the park perimeter, distributed across a minimum of two public streets. In addition, these policies require a minimum contiguous area of 0.75 hectares for urban parks and between 0.2 and 0.75 hectares for public squares. **We request that these policies be amended to include the word “generally”, and to acknowledge that some of the parks identified on Schedule E may not be provided by a single owner, therefore parkland dedication may not meet these requirements individually on a single development site.**

Draft Policy 7.2.5 provides additional design requirements, including the need to maintain a depth-to-width ratio not exceeding 1:4. **As above, we request that these policies be amended to include the word “generally”, and to acknowledge that some of the parks identified on Schedule E may not be provided by a single owner, therefore they may not meet these requirements individually on a single development site.**

Draft Policy 7.4.1 permits parks with surface and below-grade encumbrances, but not exceeding 60% of the total surface area of the park. **We request that this be reworded to: “limits the total encumbrances to generally 60% of the surface area of the park, or as otherwise supported by the City, where below grade encumbrances are deemed to not encumber the surface area of the park.”**

In Draft Policy 7.4.4, the city seems to be indicating that encumbered parks are primarily intended to be located above private parking. We do not see the distinction being made between parking infrastructure and the other kinds of infrastructure listed in 7.4.4. All examples provided may be important functional elements of a given building or site.

In addition, Section 42 of the *Planning Act* has been amended to permit the conveyance of strata parkland encumbered by below grade infrastructure. There are no qualifications. Although not in force yet, once these additions come into force, 4.4.2.4 will be contrary to the *Planning Act* by building in qualifications to strata park conveyance where none exist. **We request the deletion of this policy.**

Section 8.0 – Community Services, Cultural Facilities and Public Art

Schedule F identifies a Recommended Major Community Service Facility on the Toromont Lands, and Policy 8.1.5 provides:

“Schedule F identifies a preferred zone for major community services intended to serve the entire VMC population and other potential institutional uses, including major cultural facilities, community/recreation centres, libraries and/or university/college facilities, in or close to the mobility hub formed by the VMC Subway Station, VIVA station and York Region Transit SmartVMC Bus Terminal. With its excellent access to higher order transit, this zone is also the preferred location for city-servicing services and institutions. Recommended locations for a major community service facility and performing arts and cultural centre are identified on Schedule F.”

We recognize the importance of providing community services within the VMC; however, **we request more detail regarding how the City intends to secure these facilities. The City only has the ability to secure community facilities through the 4% Community Benefits Charge as outlined in the Planning Act. In our opinion, this policy should reflect that requirement.**

Section 9.0 Land Use, Density and Built Form

Policy 9.2.4 requires office, retail and service commercial uses to account for 10% of total gross floor area on all sites within the Mixed Use designation. In our opinion, this number should be determined by market demand and is not reflective of the current development applications approved in the VMC. **We request the policy be amended to remove the requirement for 10% of the total gross floor area, and to state that “development will support the achievement of Complete Communities, a range and mix of housing options, intensification and more mixed-use development.” We also request Policy 9.2.4 be amended to broaden the list of non-residential uses including adding community service facilities to the list.**

Policy 9.2.5 outlines conditions to permit the reduction of required office, retail and service commercial uses. Ultimately, these conditions speak to transferring the quantity of office, retail or service commercial uses to other development sites. **We request that this policy be deleted, per our comments above.**

Subsection 9.7 – Housing

Policy 9.7.2 of the VMC SP 2025 states that a minimum of 35% of new residential

units within the VMC shall be affordable, as defined by the Province. A portion of affordable units shall be accessible for seniors and people of different or varying abilities. **We request that this policy be amended to add "...where implemented through Inclusionary Zoning".**

Subsection 9.9 – Built Form

Policy 9.9.21 includes minimum floor heights for the ground floor of buildings, which is typical to include in a secondary plan, and minimum floor heights for residential and non-residential floors above grade, which is not typical to include in secondary plans and generally left to the Ontario Building Code to regulate. **We request deleting the portions of this policy that seek to regulate above-grade floor heights, as this is more appropriate in a guideline.**

Policy 9.9.22 outlines where stepping should occur within mid-rise buildings. **We request that the word "generally" be added to this policy.**

Policy 9.9.23 provides that the maximum height of high-rise building podiums are: along Highway 7 is 7 storeys; 6 storeys along Jane Street and Millway Avenue, fronting the Black Creek corridor and elsewhere within the Mixed Use designation; and 4 storeys along other frontages. **We request that this policy be amended to introduce the term "generally" to allow for flexibility in design.**

Policy 9.9.24 requires towers to be set back from the edges of podium by a minimum of 3 metres. This level of detail is captured in the City's Zoning By-law 001-2021 and **we request this policy be deleted or amended to include "generally."**

Policy 9.9.25 states

"Tower elements of high-rise residential buildings shall be slender and spaced apart from one another to adequately limit the shadow impacts on the public realm and neighbouring properties, provide adequate sky view from the public realm, maintain privacy and contribute to an interesting skyline. Residential towers shall have average floorplates no greater than 800 square metres. Variations in tower floorplates may be considered to reflect specific building design and building use. The floor plate layout and size in each level will be determined by building articulations that are designed to enhance micro-climate conditions and pedestrian comfort levels. Floor plates should become smaller as building height increases to allow for increased separation distance, access to sky view and openness between towers. There are no restrictions on the size office tower floorplates."

We request amending this policy as follows:

- **Limit residential towers to have average floorplate “generally no greater than 800 square metres of gross floor area” and introduce wording that allows larger floorplates for taller buildings, such as the signature towers proposed on the subject site, subject to addressing built form impacts.** Within the City-wide zoning by-law, tower floorplates are measured in gross floor area.
- **Remove the sentence that states that floor plates should become smaller as building height increases.** In our experience, as building height increases the floorplate size also increases as there is a need for additional structural support and elevator cores that necessitate a larger floorplate.

Draft Policy 9.9.26 states that the distance between the facing walls of two towers within the Mixed Use designation shall be 25 metres, and that the tower portion shall be setback a minimum of 50% of the tower separation distance from any side or rear property line. **We request that this be clarified to “generally” require a 25-metre facing distance and to the 50% minimum separation from a side or rear property line. We also request that this policy clarify that the 50% tower separation from a side or rear lot line shall not apply if they abut a public street or park, or other property that will not develop with a tall building.**

Draft Policy 9.9.31 provides direction on long building facades. In order to ensure flexibility in building design, **we request deleting the portion of the policy that states that “the maximum building length shall be 60 metres.”**

Policy 9.9.37 states that private amenity areas shall be provided in all residential developments, and that a portion of private outdoor amenity areas shall be provided at grade. Given the proportion of non-residential uses required at-grade in new developments, **we request that this policy be revised to remove the requirement for private outdoor amenity space at grade on tall building sites.**

Section 10.0 Administration and Interpretation

Policy 10.4.1 states that “This Plan is a statement of policy intended to guide the development of the VMC Secondary Plan Area. The City may permit some flexibility in the interpretation of general policies, provided the intent of the principles and policies of the Plan are maintained.”

Policy 10.4.8 states that “Minor variations from numerical requirements in the Plan

may be permitted without an Official Plan Amendment where it is demonstrated through a site planning process to be appropriate and provided that the general intent of the Plan is maintained.”

We support the inclusion of the policies above, as it appears to provide the City with flexibility in interpretation and implementation.

Schedule D – Active Transportation

Schedule D identifies an underground connection that runs southward from Highway 7 to Doughton Road, crossing under Celebration Avenue. It may be difficult and undesirable to extend a below-grade connection to the development block south of Celebration Avenue. While we acknowledge that the associated policies (Draft Policy 5.2.7) states that these linkages are “pending further study”, **we request that this map be revised to remove the underground connection underneath Celebration Avenue. We also request the word “potential” be added to Schedule D.**

Concluding Thoughts and Next Steps

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these important policy documents. We would like to continue to be notified of any updates or decisions on this matter. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to Anna Wynveen or the undersigned.

Yours very truly,

Bousfields Inc.



Emma West
MCIP, RPP

cc: *Fausto Filipetto, OP Manager, via email*
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