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planning + urban design

**COMMUNICATION : C 18
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2)
MAY 20, 2020
ITEM # 10**

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

May 19, 2020
File 7829-1

Attn: Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of City Council

**RE: Response to Committee of the Whole (2) Report (Item 10)
Employment Lands Conversion Recommendation
31 Jevlan Drive & 172 Chrislea Road**

Weston Consulting is the planning consultant for A & P Colalillo Investments Inc., the registered owner of the properties municipally addressed as 31 Jevlan Drive and 172 Chrislea Road in the City of Vaughan (herein referred to as the "subject lands"). We have been engaged to provide assistance to the landowner during York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review ("MCR") process.

We have reviewed the Staff Report, dated May 20, 2020, and associated attachments (Committee of the Whole Item 10) as they relate to City Staff's recommendation on the subject lands and the active employment conversion request. At this time, it is not clear whether City Staff have considered the analysis provided in our written submission to the Region of York, dated November 29, 2019. As such, the purpose of this letter is to request that the consideration of the subject lands be referred back to Staff for discussion and further analysis.

Property Description and Surrounding Area

The subject lands consist of two parcels of land addressed as 31 Jevlan Drive and 172 Chrislea Road. The subject lands are location on the west side of Chrislea Road and the east side of Jevlan Drive. Both land parcels are located north-west of the intersection of Highway 400 and Highway 7. The subject lands have a combined are of approximately 2.55 acres (1.03 hectares) with frontage on Chrislea Road and Jevlan Drive.

The property located at 31 Jevlan Drive is currently occupied by retail commercial establishments, including a gym, dance studio, home goods retailer and distributor establishment. The property located at 172 Chrislea Road is occupied by separate retailers who share the space in an open concept format. The establishments include a furniture store, a carpet store, a bathroom fixture store and a hot tub retailer.

Although the subject lands are designated as 'General Employment Area' in the City of Vaughan Official Plan (2010), the lands have been occupied by retail uses and non-traditional employment uses for approximately 20 years. As such, they are surrounded by other non-traditional employment uses including retail uses of a jeweler and carpet store to the south. Despite being surrounded by a wider range of urban uses and having access to major arterial roads and a provincial highway, the subject lands currently contribute minimal employment opportunities to the local, regional and provincial economy. The lands further south of the subject lands on Chrislea Road and Portage Parkway are not designated for employment land purposes and are contemplated for mixed uses.

Background

On November 29, 2019, Weston Consulting submitted a letter to the Regional Municipality of York (copying Staff at the City of Vaughan) requesting consideration of the conversion of the subject lands to facilitate new mixed uses. This letter included how the subject lands demonstrates adequately addressing the five (5) criteria set out in Section 2.2.5.6 of the Growth Plan, as well as the recently adopted York Region conversion criteria. At this time, it is not clear or apparent from the analysis contained in the Staff Report whether City of Vaughan Staff considered the full analysis of our November 29, 2019 submissions, as well as the recommendations contained therein.

On March 12, 2020 York Region Planning Staff presented a report to the Regional Committee of the Whole entitled "Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions". The Report outlined the various non-supported conversions throughout the Region including the subject lands. The Summary of Assessment contained in Attachment 5 of the Report listed three reasons, including that the subject lands provide an appropriate transition between the employment area and the adjacent non-employment uses, as well as the sites contribution to economic development.

On May 13, 2020 City of Vaughan released a report to be presented at the Committee of the Whole on May 20, 2020 entitled "*Request for Comments: York Region Evaluation of Employment Land Conversion Requests*". The Report outlines City Staff's non-support for the conversion of the subject lands, stating that *the conversion is not required because the "Employment Commercial Mixed-Use" designation is considered an employment land designation*. Weston Consulting would like to gain clarity on Staff's analysis, as based on our review, the current designation is 'General Employment Area', as noted above.

For the above reasons, it is not clear whether Staff considered the analysis provided in our written submissions; and therefore, we request that a recommendation on this specific conversion request be deferred, and that this request be referred back to Staff for further analysis and discussions with Weston Consulting and the owners.

Employment Conversion Rationale

As discussed in our November 29, 2019 letter to the Region, the subject lands are in the vicinity of various high density, high-rise residential uses and are currently underutilized for employment

purposes. With additional permissions, the subject lands could provide an appropriate transition from employment uses to the north and mixed uses to the east. In addition, a wider range of employment uses could be supported with future development. It is our opinion that the proposed conversion itself would provide an appropriate transition to employment lands, while expanding mixed use permissions for the lands.

Next Steps

At this time, we respectfully request that the recommendations concerning the subject lands be referred back to Staff for discussions and further analysis, and then considered by Council at a future Committee of the Whole meeting at a later date. Weston Consulting, on behalf of the landowner, will continue to participate in the Regional MCR process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact the undersigned at extension 241 should you have any questions regarding this submission.

Yours truly,

Weston Consulting

Per:



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