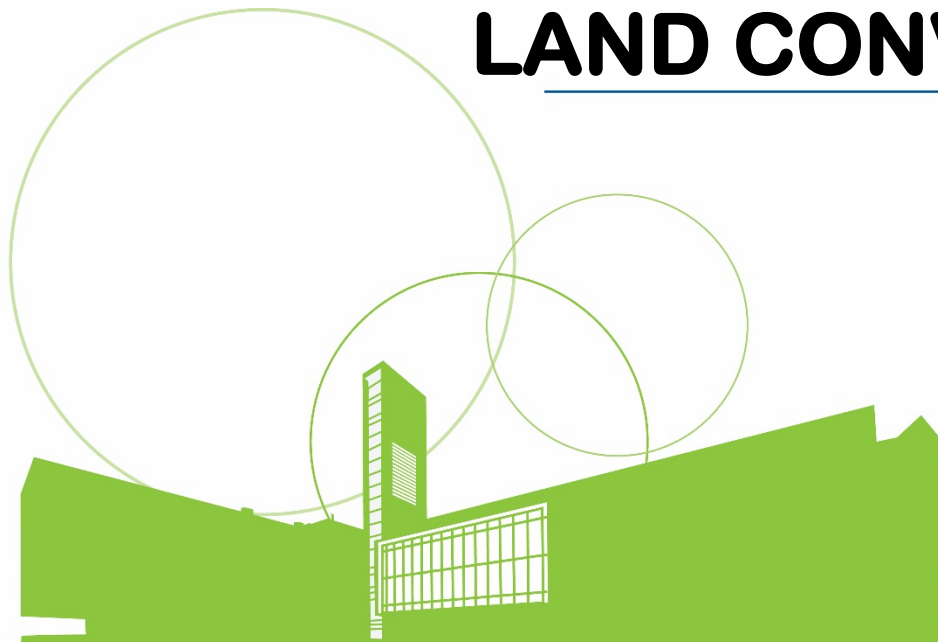


# **REQUEST FOR COMMENT: EVALUATION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND CONVERSION REQUESTS**

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**COMMUNICATION : C 22  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2)  
MAY 20, 2020  
ITEM # 10**



# Outline

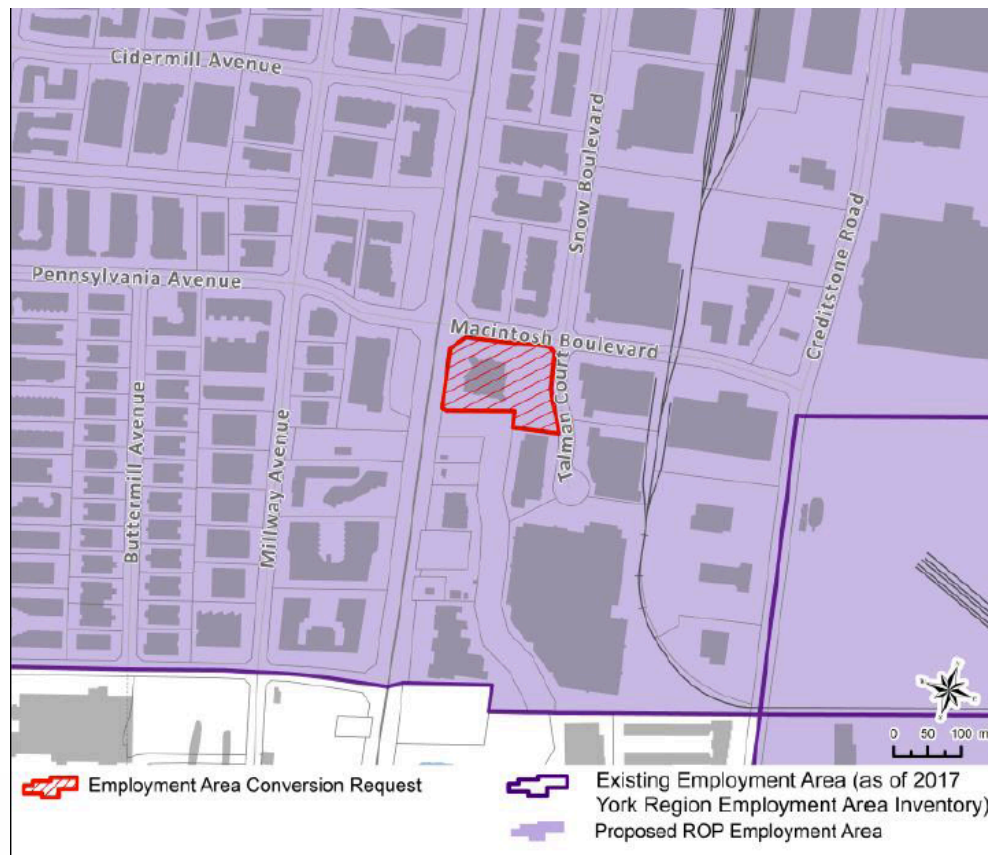
- Rules
- Employment Areas
- Summary of Requests
- Strategic Areas

# What are the Rules

The Province sets the rules through:

- The ***Planning Act***
  - identifies uses permitted in employment areas
- The **Provincial Policy Statement**
  - the importance of protecting employment lands
- The **Growth Plan 2019**
  - Provides process for assessing employment land conversions through a Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)

# What are Employment Land Conversion Requests?



# What are the roles?

## York Region:

York Region undertakes a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR):

- To conform with the Growth Plan
- Conversions only permitted through an MCR
- The responsibility rests with the Region



# What are the roles?

## Vaughan:

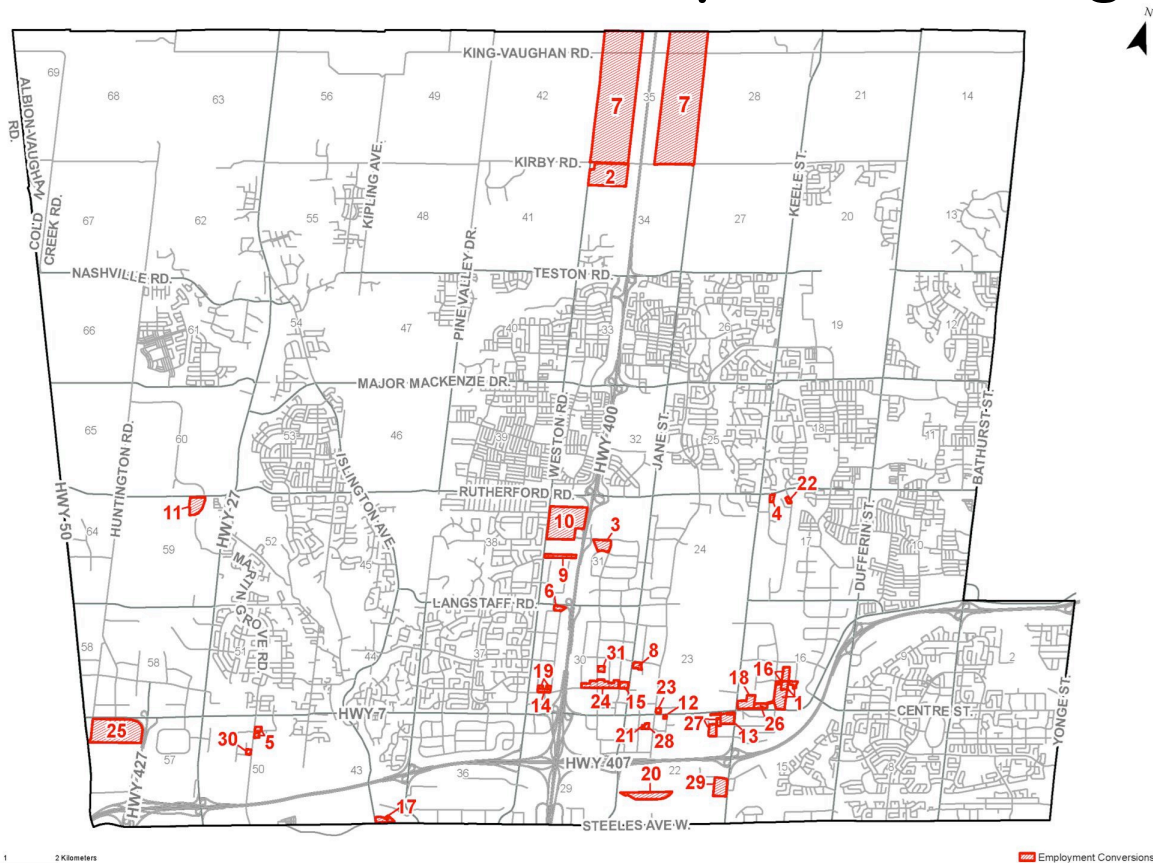
- Conform with the updated Regional Official Plan
- Work with York Region
- York Region has requested Vaughan Council's position on these requests



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# Where are the conversion requests in Vaughan?



## Process to-date

1. Region staff worked with local municipal staff to develop Regional Conversion Criteria—based on Growth Plan 2019—which were endorsed by Regional Council on March 7, 2019
2. Landowners presented requests to Region and City staff in person
3. York Region has evaluated all requests
4. City staff evaluated requests in Vaughan using local and Regional criteria
5. Region staff brought forward preliminary recommendations to Regional COW on March 12, 2020

# The Value of Employment Areas – Recent Findings

- Continue to be major drivers of economic activity
  - **67% of the city's jobs** in 2017
  - 52% of the City's total employment growth until 2024
  - Workplaces accessible by subway & BRT transit are necessary to attract and retain new employees
  - Regional Centres and Corridors are well positioned to attract highly skilled, knowledge-based jobs
- 
- Planning for Employment Background Report (York Region, 2019)
  - Economic Development and Employment Sectors Study (City of Vaughan, 2019)

# Vaughan is a Leader

- 50% of York Region's employment lands are in Vaughan
- 40% of all vacant employment lands in York Region are in Vaughan
- Employment areas in Vaughan are strategically located, close to:
  - two national rail networks
  - TTC subway
  - three 400-series highways
  - GO train and bus rapid transit service
  - Toronto Pearson International Airport

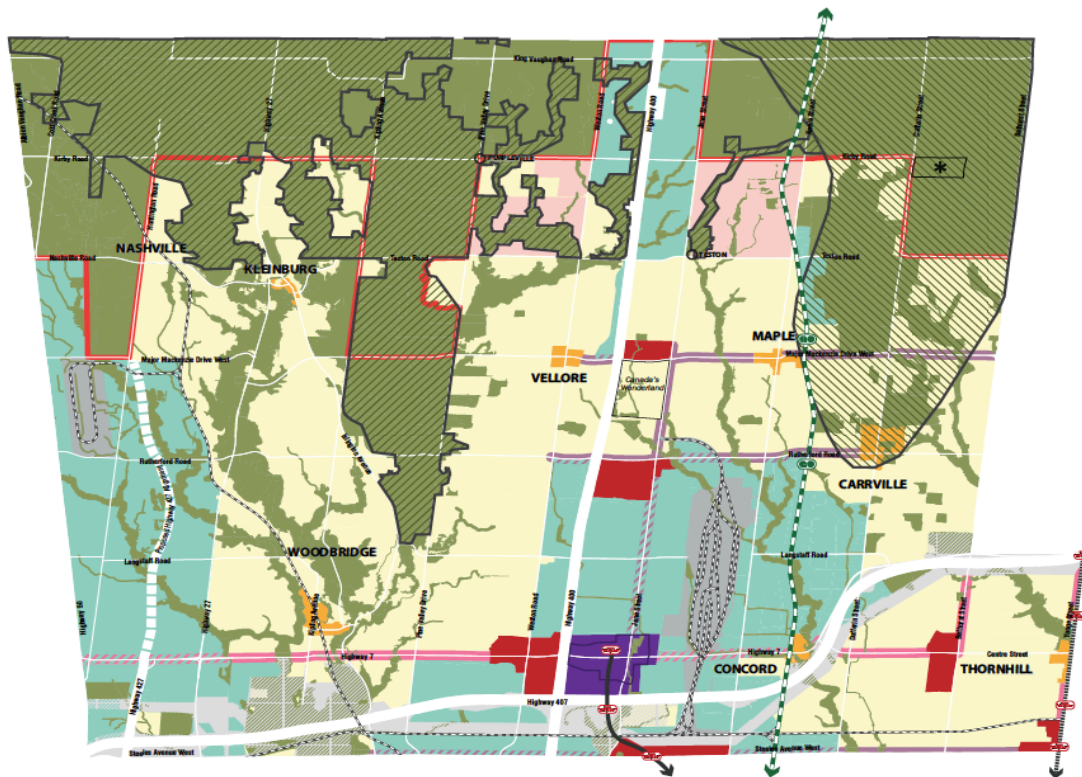
## **Employment land conversions present a risk to municipalities**

- The over-arching objective of the Growth Plan 2019:

### **build complete communities**

- Building complete communities requires a comprehensive community planning process that examines logical planning areas

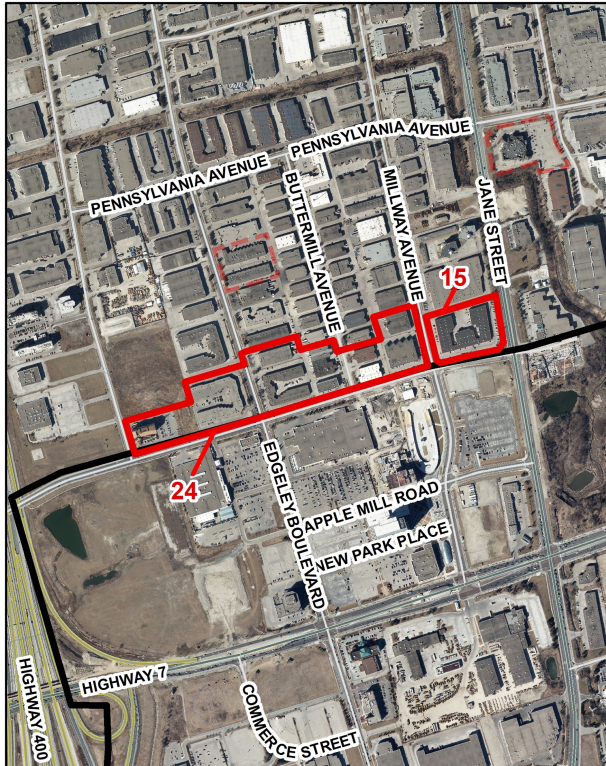
# Employment land conversions present a risk to municipalities



## Summary of Requests

- York Region received 71 requests
- Vaughan received 30 requests
  - over twice as many as the next municipality – Markham (12)
- Three were identified as not a conversion
- Five are recommended for conversion
- The rest are recommended that no conversion occur

# Strategic Areas - Vaughan Metropolitan Centre



- Approx. 70% of mixed-use lands in the VMC remain vacant
- Conversion of lands north of Portage Parkway for residential uses will destabilize the surrounding employment lands
- The Vaughan 400 employment area – north of Portage Parkway – has the highest and fastest growing number of jobs of any employment area in the City
- VMC residential targets are being met

## Strategic Areas – Keele St. / Highway 7



- Would set a precedent for further conversion requests in the surrounding stable employment area
- The lands form part of logical employment area which is planned for employment intensification
- Requests in proximity to the CN MacMillan Yard present major compatibility issues

## Next Steps

- Council's position will be forwarded to Regional Council for consideration
- The Region has tentatively planned for a Public Information Session in June for further comment from landowners, prior to reporting to Regional Council in the Fall

# Questions



# Local Criteria

	Criteria
1	The conversion involves the introduction of a sensitive use (i.e. residential) into an area that is predominated by uses that are incompatible with sensitive uses
2	The conversion is located close to major public infrastructure that, either individually or cumulatively, provides a further level of incompatibility (e.g. rail yards, major highways)
3	The conversion is in an area that would constitute an unplanned expansion of a defined secondary plan area that is either approved or identified as an area requiring a secondary plan
4	The conversion is located in area where its approval would constitute piece-meal planning, potentially prejudicing the future of the current uses and creating expectations of further conversions
5	The conversion is located in an area that is deficient in the appropriate ambience and services, (e.g. for residential) such as walkability, parks, community level retail and amenities, schools and community facilities
6	The conversion area is part of a logical planning unit, which would speak to prematurity and the need for a comprehensive planning exercise to establish the long-term future (secondary plan) and confirm the appropriate uses and densities; and ensure that all the required infrastructure (e.g. internal roads and accesses , water, sewers, stormwater management) , services and amenities are in place to support the community

# Regional Criteria

	Criteria
1	The following employment areas will not be considered for conversion as they have not yet had the opportunity to develop due to servicing constraints or have recently been brought into the urban boundary to accommodate employment land employment growth to 2031: Keswick Business Park, Queensville, Highway 404 (ROPA 1), ROPA 3, and Highway 400 North (ROPA 52).
2	The employment area will not be considered for conversion if the entire perimeter of the site is surrounded by lands designated for employment uses and is not viable to continue as an employment area.
3	The lands are not required over the horizon of the Growth Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated (Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 b).
4	The Region and local municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth, including sufficient employment land employment growth, to the horizon of the Growth Plan (modified Growth Plan 2.2.5.9.c).
5	Non-employment uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets and other policies in the Growth Plan (modified Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 d).
6	There are existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the non-employment uses (e.g. sewage, water, energy, transportation) (modified Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 e).
7	There is a need for the conversion (GP 2.2.5.9 a)
8	The conversion will not destabilize or adversely affect current or future viability and/or identity of the employment area with regards to: a) Hindering the operation or expansion of existing or future businesses b) Maintaining lands abutting or in proximity to the conversion site for employment purposes over the long term c) Attracting a broad range of employment opportunities and maintaining clusters of business and economic activities d) Providing appropriate buffering of employment uses from non-employment uses.
9	Cross-jurisdictional issues have been addressed
10	The conversion to a non-employment use is compatible with the surrounding uses such as existing employment uses, residential or other sensitive land uses and will mitigate existing and/or potential land use conflicts.