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May 15, 2020

MGP File: 19-2836

Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua and
Members of Vaughan Council
2141 Major Mackenzie Dr.
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

**COMMUNICATION : C 6
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2)
MAY 20, 2020
ITEM # 10**

via email: clerks@vaughan.ca and council@vaughan.ca

Attention: Mayor and Members of Vaughan Council

Dear Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of Vaughan Council:

**RE: Committee of the Whole, May 20, 2020
Item 10 Request for Comments: York Region Evaluation of Employment Land
Conversion Requests
Portage Landowners Group, City of Vaughan**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. ("MGP") is the planning consultant to the Portage Landowners Group ("Portage Landowners"), who own approximately 5.83 ha (14.41 ac) of land north of Portage Parkway and west of Jane Street ("Portage Lands"), within the City of Vaughan. The Portage Lands are adjacent to the northern boundary of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre ("VMC") and located in proximity to the SmartVMC Bus Terminal as well as the VMC Subway Station. A portion of the lands are within 500m of the VMC Subway Station; however, the Portage Lands are outside of the VMC Secondary Plan.

I have reviewed the City of Vaughan Staff Report Item 10 Request for Comments: York Region Evaluation of Employment Land Conversion Requests, dated May 20, 2020, on behalf of the Portage Landowners. **In response, we ask that Vaughan Council support the Portage Landowners' employment land conversion request as part of the current Municipal Comprehensive Review ("MCR"), to allow the City the opportunity to consider the inclusion of the Portage Lands as part of its VMC Secondary Plan review.**

The Portage Lands are a logical transitional area to address the approved heights and density south of Portage Parkway, and bridges the contrasting gap between the existing VMC area and the employment area to the north. While I agree that a comprehensive review of the VMC Secondary Plan is required to determine any potential expansions, deferring the employment land conversion will result in a delayed timing for future implementation. In my opinion, this is a local matter where the City should have the ability to make appropriate decisions to manage the ongoing changes in the VMC through their Secondary Plan review process, without future delays in implementation.

The following sections of this letter provide a summary of the rationale for our request as well as a response to the local criteria for employment land conversion requests outlined in the Staff Report.

Background

Lands along the north side of Portage parkway are currently occupied by a range of low-density office and commercial uses, as well as restaurants and personal services. Today, there is a significant contrast between the approved high-density development south of Portage Parkway within the VMC and the existing development north of Portage Parkway (see Figures below).

Figure 1 View of Portage Pkwy Looking West from Jane St



Source: Google Earth (August 2019)

Figure 2 View of Portage Pkwy Looking East from Applewood Cres



Source: Google Earth (August 2019)

Figure 3 View of Portage Pkwy Looking East from Monte Carlo Inn



Source: Monte Carlo Inn (May 2020)

To address this contrast, on November 22, 2019, an employment conversion request was submitted on behalf of the Portage Landowners Group to allow the opportunity to plan for the future transition of the VMC area. We further requested that the City of Vaughan support and undertake comprehensive planning for the Portage Lands as part of their VMC Secondary Plan Review.

On January 15, 2020, I met with York Region Staff and a member of City of Vaughan Staff to discuss Regional Staff's position on the employment conversion request, where I reiterated my opinion that the decision should be deferred to Vaughan Council for consideration. A deferral to Vaughan Council is also consistent with the Regional Chairman's comments at the October 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting in which he noted that employment conversion requests are local matters. Based on our discussion, I understood that Regional Staff's position was to defer the request to the next MCR, which in my opinion would unduly delay the planning process for the Portage Lands by 10-15 years. I submitted further correspondence on this request on March 12, 2020, as input to the Region of York's Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions Staff Report.

The Portage Lands Should Be Considered for Employment Land Conversion Under the Current MCR Process

In my opinion, the VMC boundary will inevitably change and evolve; the current request for employment land conversion and request for the City of Vaughan to consider and support the Portage Lands as an expansion to the VMC initiates planning for this area. I recognize that lands within VMC will remain a focus for the City; however, that does not prohibit consideration of transitional lands that will complement lands within the current VMC boundary.

The current Regional MCR, which examines the Region's Employment Lands and employment land conversion requests, will culminate in a new Regional Official Plan. The current Planning Act framework provides a 10-year period prior to the next Official Plan Review and MCR. It is prudent that the proposed transitional area is examined in the planning horizon to 2041 in order to mitigate future conflicts that may arise.

The proposed transitional area is not intended to challenge the timing of the buildout of development within the existing VMC boundary. The request for employment land conversion instead recognizes that the planning process to bring this vision to fruition will take place over a number of years. In particular, if approved for conversion as part of the current MCR, the City of Vaughan will require additional study and consultation to determine a final detailed plan for the expansion of the VMC boundary, which Vaughan Council will need to adopt as an amendment to the Vaughan Official Plan ("VOP") and subsequently York Regional Council must review and provide approval.

Based on my experience, the Official Plan Amendment process is lengthy in order to capture the envisioned development accurately and respond to stakeholder comments. As well, the planning process must also comprehensively plan for servicing and transportation infrastructure.

In addition, the VMC Secondary Plan review process can determine appropriate phasing for the development of any expansion lands, in order to ensure the timing of buildout for the current VMC area and growth targets.

The Portage Lands Provide an Opportunity for Enhanced Transition North of VMC and Should be Included within the Future Secondary Plan Boundary

The VMC Secondary Plan review process is necessary as the VMC area has seen explosive growth since the approval of the Secondary Plan. Currently, the VMC Secondary Plan (Section 11.12 of the VOP) does not include transition policies to address the interface along Portage Parkway, the northern boundary of VMC. As a result, the current policies and approved developments have inadvertently created an edge where lands within VMC are significantly taller and denser than lands north of Portage Parkway.

With the significant increases in approved height and density within the VMC, it is appropriate to consider a more effective transition to the surrounding lands. The Portage Lands have frontage that spans the majority of Portage Parkway and can be planned comprehensively to address the existing VMC edge and instead create a sustainable transition that protects the core employment area.

Attachment 1 shows the approximate boundary for the proposed transitional area, shown as “Proposed North Mixed Use Precinct”, which is intended to ultimately lead to a potential boundary adjustment to the VMC Secondary Plan area. Potential heights are also shown on the north side of Portage Parkway, in context of some of the approved heights within VMC. The Portage Landowners are not asking for specific permissions at this time, as the graphic represents an idea of the potential. The final heights and densities should be explored as part of the VMC Secondary Plan review. As mentioned, the employment land conversion request is intended to allow for this process to occur.

The transitional area is a vision for the future of VMC, recognizing that the area will continue to change over time. A majority of the Portage Lands are occupied by employment and light employment-related uses, including office uses, commercial uses, personal services, and restaurants. It is expected that the same, if not additional, quantity of jobs will be developed on the Portage Lands. Maintaining jobs on the Portage Lands will be a key consideration, particularly for lands in the northern portion of the transitional area, adjacent to the remaining employment area. The vision for the transitional area also includes a potential mid-block collector road, where to the north, a Prestige Employment land use designation can more effectively interface with low-to mid-rise buildings.

Mixed-use is warranted in the transitional area to support existing transit investments, and more importantly, to provide a logical transition between the existing VMC developments and existing employment uses north of VMC. The contemplated range of urban uses should include residential uses in appropriate areas to complement uses within the VMC. It is intended that there will be a gradation of permitted residential uses, with the greatest densities permitted in proximity to Jane Street and Portage Parkway.

In addition, the Portage Lands meet the definition of a Major Transit Station Area (“MTSA”) under A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (“Growth Plan”). In particular, the Portage Lands are partially within the 500m radius to the closest entrance of the VMC Subway Station and almost fully within the 800m radius. Further, the majority of the lands are within the 500m radius to the closest entrance of the SmartVMC Bus Terminal and fully within the 800m radius. As such, the Portage Lands should be included within York Region’s proposed MTSA boundary, as well as the boundary of the VMC Urban Growth Centre. Further, both MTSA’s and Urban Growth Centres are considered Strategic Growth Areas under the Growth Plan, where it is the focus for accommodating intensification and higher-density mixed uses, which this request is

intended to achieve. In my opinion, the boundary of these should be the same for VMC and can appropriately include the Portage Lands.

The Existing Number of Jobs and Tax Base Can Be Enhanced

The employment conversion request and potential inclusion and consideration as part of the VMC Secondary Plan can positively enhance the future jobs and tax base for the Portage Lands. Based on a survey of the Portage Landowners, I understand that currently, the participating lands provide a minimum of approximately 260 jobs, based on a range of low-density office, commercial, personal service, and restaurant uses. In addition, I surveyed the Portage Landowners on their current annual property taxes. The surveyed owners currently contribute an average of approximately \$65,600 in annual property taxes, with a range from \$25,600 to \$218,500.

An employment land conversion, together with consideration through the Secondary Plan, would allow broader at-grade uses that contribute to an active pedestrian environment along Portage Parkway, which matches the transit-oriented character of the VMC. The increased range of uses also provides a wide range of future jobs that may be accommodated in the redevelopment of the Portage Lands. It is my understanding that the Portage Landowners intend to maintain and preferably increase the number of future jobs in comparison to what exists today. Based on my understanding, there is also a potential for property tax revenues to generally increase as the quality and quantity of uses are also increased on the Portage Lands, if permitted through the employment land conversion request and Secondary Plan review.

Local Criteria to Assess Employment Land Criteria Conversion Requests

The following section provides a response to the local criteria prepared by City Staff. I have previously provided a response to York Region's Conversion Criteria in my November 22, 2019 letter (see **Attachment 2**).

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

Response: The request is in response to the existing issue of incompatibility between the character of the north and south sides of Portage Parkway. The introduction of residential uses is intended to complement existing permissions on the south side of Portage Parkway within VMC. Sensitive uses, such as residential uses, are currently permitted adjacent to the employment area; the current request does not change this existing condition as residential uses would not have been permitted along Portage Parkway if there was an unresolvable incompatibility.

The Staff Report notes that Portage Parkway is a logical boundary between VMC and the employment area; however, in my opinion, the contrast between either side of Portage Parkway has become overwhelmingly stark, and the interface needs to be addressed. The increased heights and densities approved within VMC are attributed to a significant increase in residential growth, particularly along Portage Parkway, where this residential growth is now juxtaposed against low-density employment uses. There is a need to enhance the interface of the northern edge of VMC; the Portage Lands can be planned comprehensively to resolve this issue and create a sustainable transition that protects the core employment area.

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)

Response: The proposed site is not directly adjacent to a 400 series highway and does not have highway frontage. The Portage Lands are approximately 250m from the location of Highway 400 and approximately 500m from the closest interchange; however, the closest access from the Highway 400 interchange to the Portage Lands is through the VMC or from Jane Street. Staff have noted that Portage Parkway is identified as a truck route; however, in my opinion, this does not provide a further level of incompatibility as there are existing residential uses on the south side of Portage Parkway. The existing road network would continue to provide alternative access routes into the employment area. Further, comprehensive planning for the proposed transitional area can consolidate driveways and mitigate the need for additional access to Portage Parkway.

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

Response: The employment land conversion request is intended to allow for the opportunity to consider an expansion to the VMC Secondary Plan. I recognize that an extensive study process is required to determine a final boundary expansion; however, I maintain my opinion that the Portage Lands constitute a logical area to provide transition north of the existing VMC area. The request for employment land conversion as part of the current MCR is to acknowledge the lengthy process that is ahead in the planning process. As mentioned, it is not intended for the Portage Lands to challenge the timing of the building of development within the existing VMC boundary, where there remain vacant mixed-use lands. In my opinion, phasing can be proposed as part of the planning for the Portage Lands, to ensure that the existing VMC area remains the current focus for development.

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

Response: The Portage Lands span the majority of the northern side of Portage Parkway, adjacent to the VMC boundary. In my experience, it is uncommon for such a number of contiguous landowners to be willing participants within the built-up area. However, this provides an opportunity for the City to engage in comprehensive planning with active landowners. In addition, the intent of creating a transitional area on the Portage Lands is to resolve the current contrasting VMC edge and also prevent a future occurrence of the same. The transitional area should be utilized to scale down in heights and densities towards the employment area to the north, to mitigate creating expectations.

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

Response: The Portage Lands are appropriate as a transitional area as there is access to the mentioned services in VMC as well as the potential to provide some of these services north of Portage Parkway. As mentioned, the Portage Lands are within the 500m distance to the SmartVMC Bus Terminal, and partially within the 500m distance to the VMC Subway Station. The proposed transitional area is intended to provide a walkable and pedestrian-friendly environment on the north side of Portage Parkway, which complements development on the south side.

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

Response: As mentioned, I recognize that there is a need for a comprehensive planning exercise to consider the Portage Lands. The City is currently initiating the VMC Secondary Plan review, which aligns with the timing of the Regional MCR. Comprehensive planning for the Portage lands requires both of these processes to take place, and therefore, in my opinion, this is an appropriate time to consider planning for the Portage Lands. The Portage Landowners are requesting the employment land conversion as the first step in this planning process, with the understanding that the appropriate uses, densities, and phasing will be determined as part of the VMC Secondary Plan review.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with City Staff to further discuss the creation of a mixed-use transition area and the employment land conversion that is required to enable this opportunity. We are continuing to prepare materials to assist Council in their decision for this employment land conversion, and expect that additional submissions will follow.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments in greater detail, please contact me at 905.513.0170 or DGiven@mgp.ca.

Yours very truly,

Malone Given Parsons Ltd.




Don Given, MCIP, RPP




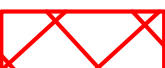
Enclosures: Attachment 1: Portage Landowners Conceptual Plan
Attachment 2: Employment Land Conversion Request Letter, dated November 22, 2019



Cc: Portage Landowners Group
Bill Kiru, City of Vaughan
Fausto Filipetto, City of Vaughan
Christina Bruce, City of Vaughan

Attachment 1



-  Participating Landowners
-  Separate Application for Employment Conversion
-  Distance to VMC Subway Station

- Schedule F - Land Use Precincts**
-  Proposed North Mixed Use Precinct
 -  Station Precinct
 -  Neighbourhood Precinct
 -  Office Uses Permitted

- Schedule 13 - Vaughan Official Plan**
-  General Employment
 -  Prestige Employment

DRAFT
FOR DISCUSSION
PURPOSES ONLY

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
PORTAGE LANDOWNERS GROUP
City of Vaughan
Regional Municipality of York



Date	Revision	By
Apr 16, 2020		

Prepared For:

MGP File: 19-2836



Attachment 2



Don Given
905 513 0170 x109
DGiven@mgp.ca

November 22, 2019

MGP File: 19-2836

Regional Municipality of York
Planning and Economic Development
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
AND
City of Vaughan
Planning and Growth Management
2141 Major Mackenzie Dr.
Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1

via email: Paul.Freeman@york.ca and Jason.Schmidt-Shoukri@vaughan.ca

Attention: Paul Freeman, Chief Planner
Planning and Economic Development, Regional Municipality of York
AND
Jason Schmidt-Shoukri, Deputy City Manager
Planning and Growth Management, City of Vaughan

Dear Mr. Freeman and Mr. Schmidt-Shoukri:

RE: Employment Land Conversion Request
Portage Landowners Group, City of Vaughan

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. ("MGP") is the planning consultant to the Portage Landowners Group ("Portage Landowners"), who own approximately 7.54 ha (18.63 ac) of land north of Portage Parkway and west of Jane Street ("Portage Lands"), within the City of Vaughan.

The Portage Lands are shown in Attachment 1 to this letter. The Portage Lands are adjacent to the northern boundary of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre ("VMC") where transitional heights, densities, and uses are required, in our opinion. The basis for this assertion is that the existing policies and approved developments along the northern boundary of the VMC have created an 'edge' where development north and south of Portage Parkway are starkly different.

Request

We are writing to submit a request for Employment Land Conversion for the lands generally within the "Approximate Extent of Transitional Area" boundary in Attachment 1. The boundary generally extends the conceptual east-west road shown on VMC Secondary Plan Schedules, between Applewood Crescent and Edgeley Boulevard, further east to Jane Street.

In our opinion, the current Municipal Comprehensive Review ("MCR") process should consider initiating opportunities to begin planning for the future transition from the VMC. As part of the Region's Employment Land Conversion process, the Portage Lands should be converted to allow non-employment uses to recognize its location as a transitional area from the VMC to protect the core employment area.

We further request that the City of Vaughan support and undertake comprehensive planning for the Portage Lands as part of their VMC Secondary Plan Review, and work cooperatively with stakeholders, such as the Portage Landowners. It is acknowledged that the planning process to implement this vision through an Official Plan Amendment requires time to be developed. However, it would be imprudent to require the consideration of this process to be delayed until the next MCR.

This request meets the November 29, 2019 deadline outlined in York Region’s October 10, 2019, Committee of the Whole Agenda Item E.2.3 “Employment Area Conversion Process Update”.

Site Characteristics & Context

The Portage Lands are located on the north side of Portage Parkway, west of Jane Street and extends to the east side of Applewood Crescent. The Portage Lands are in proximity to the Smartcentres Place Bus Terminal as well as the VMC Subway Station. A portion of the lands are within 500m of the VMC Subway Station; however, the Portage Lands are outside of the VMC Secondary Plan.

The ownership accounts for lands approximately 150m north of Portage Parkway. Currently, the Portage Lands are occupied by a range of office and commercial uses, as well as restaurants and personal services.

A separate submission by John Zipay and Associates was submitted to the Region on behalf of York Region Condominium Corporation 945, who own 201 Millway Avenue. Note that 201 Millway is not part of the Portage Landowners; however, we are generally supportive of their request and intend to work cooperatively with the owners of 201 Millway Avenue.

Existing Land Use Designation

The Portage Lands are currently designated “General Employment” and “Prestige Employment” under Schedule 13 (Land Use) of the Vaughan Official Plan (“VOP”). The General Employment designation permits a full range of industrial uses as well as accessory office and retail uses. The Prestige Employment designation is intended as the transition between General Employment areas and sensitive land uses, as it permits industrial, office, and accessory retail uses but restricts outdoor storage. Buildings within the Prestige Employment should be high quality and provide an attractive pedestrian-friendly environment.

However, there remains a significant contrast between the permitted and approved heights and densities for development south of Portage Parkway within the VMC and existing development north of Portage Parkway. Currently, the VMC Secondary Plan (Section 11.12 of the VOP) does not include transition policies to address the interface along Portage Parkway, the northern boundary of VMC. As a result, the current policies and approved developments have inadvertently created an edge where lands within VMC are significantly taller and denser than lands north of Portage Parkway.

Portage Lands Provide an Opportunity to Create a Transitional Area

The Portage Lands offer an opportunity to provide appropriate transition north of Portage Parkway to the existing employment area by creating a sustainable edge that protects the core employment area. We recognize that lands within VMC will remain a focus for the City; however, that does not prohibit consideration of transitional lands that will complement lands within the current VMC

boundary. In our opinion, the Portage Lands are an opportunity to comprehensively provide a middle ground between the approved heights and densities in VMC and the existing employment area to the north. These participating lands have frontage that spans the majority of Portage Parkway and can be planned comprehensively to address the existing VMC edge.

The Portage Lands are an opportunity to create a mixed-use transition area to bridge the high-density character of VMC to the low-density employment area. The mixed-use area provides an opportunity to complement uses within VMC as well as replace the existing jobs within the Portage Lands. It is intended that heights and densities compatible with VMC will be gradated down from the Portage Parkway frontage to the employment area to the north. As well, it is envisioned to allow a range of urban-type uses, complementary to the mixed-use character of VMC along Portage Parkway; the transitional area will provide both jobs and residents.

A majority of the Portage Lands are occupied by employment and light employment-related uses, including office uses, commercial uses, personal services, and restaurants. It is expected that the same, if not additional, quantity of jobs will be developed on the Portage Lands. Maintaining jobs on the Portage Lands will be a key consideration, particularly for lands in the northern portion of the transitional area, adjacent to the remaining employment area.

The contemplated range of urban uses will include some residential uses in appropriate areas to complement uses within the VMC. It is intended that there will be a gradation of permitted residential uses, with the greatest densities permitted in proximity to Jane Street and Portage Parkway.

We recognize that the existing Walmart within VMC will be relocated to lands between Highway 400 and Applewood Crescent, north of Portage Parkway. Accordingly, retail and other complementary uses should be located in proximity to the relocated Walmart.

Attachment 1 shows the approximate boundary for the proposed transitional area, which is intended to ultimately lead to a boundary adjustment to the VMC Secondary Plan area. However, we note that the transitional area is not intended to challenge the timing of the existing VMC buildout. The transitional area is a vision for the future of VMC, recognizing that the area will continue to change over time. We believe the lack of existing transitional policy will eventually lead to 55-storey mixed-use buildings with the VMC interfacing with employment/industrial buildings that are permitted to be mid-rise, at most.

Portage Lands Should Be Considered Under the Current MCR Process

As mentioned, the proposed transitional area is not intended to challenge the timing of the buildout of development within the existing VMC boundary. The request for employment land conversion instead recognizes that the planning process to bring this vision to fruition will take place over a number of years. In particular, if approved for conversion as part of the current MCR, the City of Vaughan will require additional study and consultation to determine a final detailed plan for the expansion of the VMC boundary, which the City of Vaughan Council needs to adopt as an amendment to the VOP and subsequently York Regional Council must review and provide approval. Based on MGP's experience, the Official Plan Amendment process is lengthy in order to capture the envisioned development accurately and respond to stakeholder comments. Additionally, the planning process must also comprehensively plan for servicing and transportation infrastructure.

The current MCR process is part of the Region's Official Plan Review that will produce a new Regional Official Plan. Based on this, the existing Planning Act framework provides a 10-year period prior to the next Official Plan Review and MCR. It is prudent that the proposed transitional area is examined in the planning horizon to 2041 in order to mitigate future conflicts that may arise.

In our opinion, the VMC edge will inevitably change and evolve; the current request for employment land conversion and request for the City of Vaughan to consider and support the Portage Lands as an expansion to the VMC initiates planning for this area.

This is appropriate as Portage Parkway is currently undergoing upgrades as a major collector road. Frontage along the Portage Lands are being expropriated to accommodate a future road widening as a result of the Environmental Assessment Study for Portage Parkway Widening and Easterly Extension to Creditstone Road. The road widening has resulted in reduced parking areas north of Portage Parkway. As a result of the overpass connecting Portage Parkway west to Chrislea Avenue, the Portage Landowners have experienced higher volumes of traffic as well. The vision for the transitional area includes the proposed extension of the conceptual east-west road shown on VMC Secondary Plan Schedules, between Applewood Crescent and Edgeley Boulevard, further east to Jane Street. This extension is intended to provide relief for local traffic from Portage Parkway.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe ("Growth Plan") defines a Major Transit Station Area ("MTSA") as:

*"The area including and around any **existing or planned higher order transit station** or stop within a settlement area; or the area **including and around a major bus depot** in an urban core. Major transit station areas **generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800-meter radius of a transit station**, representing about a 10-minute walk." [emphasis ours]*

Based on the above definition, Attachments 2 and 3 demonstrate the approximate 500m to 800m radius from the closest entrances of the VMC Subway Station and SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal, both of which meet the definition of an MTSA under the Growth Plan. The Portage Lands are partially within the 500m radius to the VMC Subway Station and almost fully within the 800m radius. Further, the majority of the lands are within the 500m radius to the SmartCentres Place Bus Terminal and fully within the 800m radius. Therefore, mixed-use is warranted in the transition area to support existing transit investments.

York Region initiated draft MTSA delineations in April 2019, as part of the Region's intensification strategy and updated Official Plan. The Region identified the VMC Subway Station as an MTSA; however, the delineation did not include the Portage Lands. Rather, the VMC Subway Station MTSA (MTSA 1) extends from Portage Parkway south to Highway 407, east and west of Jane Street. The Region further identified the Commerce BRT Station as an MTSA (MTSA 12), and the delineation similarly extends from Portage Parkway south to Highway 407, between Edgeley Boulevard and Highway 400. The majority of lands south of Highway 7 are outside of the 500m radius of the VMC Subway Station, and a portion is also outside of the 800m radius.

In addition, the SmartCentres Bus Terminal, a YRT terminal that opened in November 2019, has not been recognized as an MTSA by York Region in their draft delineation. The SmartCentres Bus Terminal falls under the MTSA definition of a major bus depot in an urban core. Given that the Bus Terminal is in close proximity to the VMC and Commerce BRT Station, York Region should consider expanding the draft MTSA boundaries to include the 500m distance from the Bus Terminal.

In our opinion, the Portage Lands should be included within both the VMC Subway Station and Commerce BRT Station MTSA in order to provide a transition between the existing VMC boundary and the core employment area. This expansion of the draft MTSA delineation should occur in tandem with the employment land conversion request.

The Portage Landowners are requesting this conversion to provide the City of Vaughan with the ability to begin comprehensively planning for these lands. Approval of this conversion does not imply that the lands will be immediately available for development, and it is anticipated that any conflict with the existing buildout of VMC can be addressed through phasing. The detailed height, densities, uses and phasing for the transitional area will be determined through the secondary plan process.

It is based on these reasons that we believe that the Portage Lands require an employment land conversion through the current MCR. As such, we request that the Region approve the Portage Lands as a mixed-use transitional area through the Region's ongoing Employment Land Conversion Process.

Employment Conversion Criteria – Growth Plan

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) ("2019 Growth Plan") outlines employment land conversion criteria that are required to be met prior to the conversion of employment land to non-employment uses.

The following provides the consistency of the proposed conversion with the 2019 Growth Plan Criteria:

a) *there is a need for the conversion;*

The proposed conversion is required to allow the City of Vaughan to consider the Portage Lands, as a transitional area to the VMC as part of their current Secondary Plan review. Currently, the VMC Secondary Plan does not outline transition policies to address the interface of development along the northern boundary with lands outside of the Secondary Plan. Being identified under employment designations, the Portage Lands are restricted to primarily employment and industrial uses with accessory office and retail uses. Further, the heights and densities approved south of Portage Parkway within the VMC is drastically in contrast to the existing development north of Portage Parkway; this results in an urban edge at the boundary of the VMC.

b) *the lands are not required over the horizon of this Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated;*

The majority of parcels within Portage Lands are currently occupied by employment buildings; there are currently 2 non-participating parcels that are vacant. It is not expected that the 2 vacant parcels will significantly affect the achievement of the Region's employment forecast.

As mentioned, the timing of the Portage Lands is not expected to challenge the existing buildout of the VMC, which has already exceeded the 2031 growth targets. The buildout of the Portage Lands is intended to be phased to complement the existing VMC and will not affect the achievement of the planning horizon.

It should be noted that the majority of the Portage Lands are built and occupied by a mix of low-density office, commercial, retail and some light industrial uses. The Portage Lands do not currently provide a full range of employment land employment uses.

It is anticipated that the lands will be redeveloped within the 2041 planning horizon, implying that the existing range of employment uses will remain in the interim. However, if a transitional area is approved, it is expected that a similar, if not increased, number of jobs will be generated when the Portage Lands are redeveloped in the future.

Therefore, the lands are not required for the horizon of this Plan, as the redevelopment will not conflict with this timeline.

- c) the municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan;

The majority of the Portage Lands are built and occupied by a mix of low-density office, commercial, retail and some light industrial uses. These uses will have been accounted for as a fixed number of jobs in determining employment land needs for the Region and City. A small portion of the Portage Lands remain vacant today and are not expected to impact the Region and City's ability to achieve employment growth.

Further, if a transitional area is approved, when the Portage Lands are redeveloped in the future, it is expected that a similar, if not increased, number of jobs will be generated. With this, the Portage Lands will not negatively impact the municipality's ability to maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan.

- d) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan; and

The proposed transitional area is intended to provide a bridge between the existing employment area to the north and the high-density mixed uses approved within the VMC. While the detailed uses will be determined at the Secondary Plan/Official Plan Amendment stage, the goal is to maintain the overall viability of the employment area to the north. This includes examining distance separations for any existing uses and considering permissions for strategic locations of uses to provide noise and vibration mitigation.

At this time, the vision includes a gradation of residential uses that are concentrated along Jane Street as well as Portage Parkway. Office and other commercial/retail uses are more appropriate closer to the existing employment area.

Further, to avoid conflict with the current VMC's minimum intensification and density targets, phasing will be considered for the transitional area.

Therefore, the proposed uses are not intended to affect the overall viability of either the employment area or the achievement of targets.

- e) there are existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the proposed uses.

As the Portage Lands are located within the urban area of the City, the majority of the Portage Lands are built and construction has begun in the VMC, it is reasonably expected that the transitional area has access to existing infrastructure and public service facilities. The capacity will be examined at a later stage.

However, the build-out of the transitional area is not expected in the near term. As part of the City's Official Plan Amendment process as well as future development applications, infrastructure and

public service capacity will to capture the envisioned development and respond to stakeholder comments accurately.

Provincially Significant Employment Zone

In addition, the 2019 Growth Plan identifies the Portage Lands within a Provincially Significant Employment Zone (“PSEZ”). Lands within a PSEZ are restricted from employment land conversion prior to an MCR. As York Region is currently undertaking an MCR, this policy would be satisfied.

Based on the above, it is our opinion that the requested employment land conversion for the Portage Lands are consistent with the 2019 Growth Plan.

Employment Conversion Criteria – York Region

In addition to the 2019 Growth Plan criteria, York Region Council endorsed additional criteria on March 21st, 2019, to guide employment area conversion requests through an MCR.

The York Region Committee of the Whole Report entitled “Proposed Employment Area Conversion Criteria”, dated March 7, 2019, contains the additional criteria in Revised Attachment 4 of the report. These additional criteria are listed below and addressed to demonstrate conformity. The Growth Plan employment area conversion criteria have been addressed in the previous section.

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).

The Portage Lands were not recently brought into the urban boundary, and the majority of lands have been developed.

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.

The Portage Lands are not surrounded by employment lands on all sides. To the south is the VMC Secondary Plan area, which has permitted and approved mixed uses along Portage Parkway. To the west is the future relocation site for the existing Walmart within VMC; this area is governed by a Minister’s Zoning Order, which permits a range of retail, service, and prestige employment uses. These lands to the west are outside of the PSEZ and designated Prestige Employment under the VOP. Lands to the north are designated General Employment and lands on either side of Jane Street are designated Prestige Employment.

The entire perimeter of the site will remain viable to continue as an employment area. The vision for the transition area is intended to extend complementary uses from the VMC north of Portage Parkway while maintaining some employment functions in the northern portion of the transition area. In contrast to the criteria, the proposal of a transition area is intended to improve the viability of mixed uses south of Portage Parkway by creating a future interface that matches the intended pedestrian attractive environment, while maintaining prestige employment uses to complement the existing employment area where such high-quality buildings are needed.

Conversion of the site would not compromise the Region's and/or local municipality's supply of large-sized employment area sites (i.e. 10 ha or greater) which allow for a range uses including but not limited to land extensive uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and logistics.

Overall, the participating Portage Landowners have total ownership of 7.54 ha (18.63 ac); however, the lands are a collection of various landowners. Therefore, a range of land-intensive uses is not viable on these sites.

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.

The requested employment land conversion is not intended to adversely affect the operation or expansion of existing or future businesses. The existing VMC Secondary Plan locates sensitive uses in proximity to the employment area, including the Portage Lands. The proposed transitional area is intended to provide a mix of uses along Portage Street that enhances the interface with the existing VMC boundary. Within the Portage Lands, the northern portion will also provide appropriate buffering through the strategic location of uses to mitigate potential impacts on existing or future business. At the Secondary Plan level, land use location and permissions will need to take into account Provincial separation distance guidelines.

The transitional area is intended to maintain the abutting lands to the north for employment purposes over the long term. The transitional area is not intended to burden lands further to the north; rather, it is expected to account for transition within its own boundary.

The requested employment land conversion will not hinder the attraction of a broad range of employment opportunities to the area, but is intended to stimulate redevelopment to achieve a true transition from the urban uses in VMC to the existing employment area. The existing edge created by the contrast in heights, densities, and uses within the VMC versus north of Portage Parkway has resulted in the existing Portage Lands being restricted by sensitive uses and lacking the incentive to redevelop. The Portage Lands can better attract a range of prestige employment uses through proper transitioning policies and land use strategies. It is intended that the Portage Lands will maintain the existing number of jobs and have the ability to better encourage economic activity.

The vision for the Portage Lands is to provide appropriate buffering between the VMC and the existing core employment area. Therefore, the Secondary Plan stage will include consideration for appropriate buffering and distances between certain types of employment uses and sensitive non-employment uses.

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.

The existing General Employment designation on the northern portion of the Portage Lands and the majority of the existing employment area is focused on a full range of industrial uses and only

allows accessory office and retail uses. The existing Prestige Employment designation along Portage Parkway allows non-accessory office uses and is intended to be characterized by high-quality buildings in attractive pedestrian-friendly, connected and transit-oriented working environments. This Prestige Employment designation was intended as a transitional designation; however, given the existing contrast in heights, densities, and uses south of Portage Parkway, the permissions of this designation do not provide an effective transition.

Therefore, the conversion to a non-employment use applies to lands where non-employment uses are appropriate, and the balance of the transitional area will remain focused on employment uses or accessory uses to employment. The conversion is intended to mitigate existing land use conflicts between the VMC and the core employment area.

The site offers limited development potential for employment land uses due to factors including size, configuration, access and physical conditions.

The site currently offers limited development potential for employment land uses beyond what is already built, due to the small parcel sizes, fragmented ownership, and existing interface with the northern boundary of VMC. The total land area of the participating Portage Landowners is 7.54 ha and the lands are divided into various ownership; therefore, the lands have limited potential for land-intensive uses such as warehousing. Further, there is limited potential for industrial employment uses due to the proximity to the urban uses with VMC.

The requested conversion is intended to address the existing contrast north and south of Portage Parkway; the participation of the majority of landowners along Portage Parkway implies a greater chance for implementation of the vision, despite the varied ownership.

The proposed site is not adjacent to 400-series highways, or is not located in proximity to existing or planned highways and interchanges, intermodal facilities, airports and does not have access to rail corridors

The proposed site is not directly adjacent to a 400 series highway and does not have highway frontage. The Portage Lands are approximately 250m from the location of Highway 400 and approximately 500m from the closest interchange; however, the closest access from the Highway 400 interchange to the Portage Lands is through the VMC, which is not ideal for heavy truck traffic.

The proposed conversion to a non-employment use does not compromise any other planning policy objectives of the Region or local municipality.

The conversion does not compromise any other Regional or Local planning policy objective; the Portage Lands are intended to continue to accommodate a similar number of jobs to contribute to the Regional and Local jobs density requirements.

Cross-jurisdictional issues have been addressed.

There are no cross-jurisdictional issues as the lands are not adjacent to another municipality.

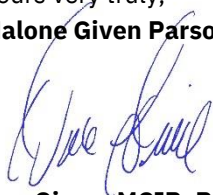
Request to Meet with Regional and City Staff

We request a meeting with Regional and City staff to discuss the creation of a mixed-use transition area and the employment land conversion that is required to enable this opportunity. For the reasons mentioned above, we believe it is prudent that York Region approves this employment conversion request to allow the City of Vaughan to commence all work necessary to support a municipally initiated Official Plan Amendment to implement a transitional area for the VMC.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments in greater detail, please contact me at 905.513.0170 or DGiven@mgp.ca.

Yours very truly,

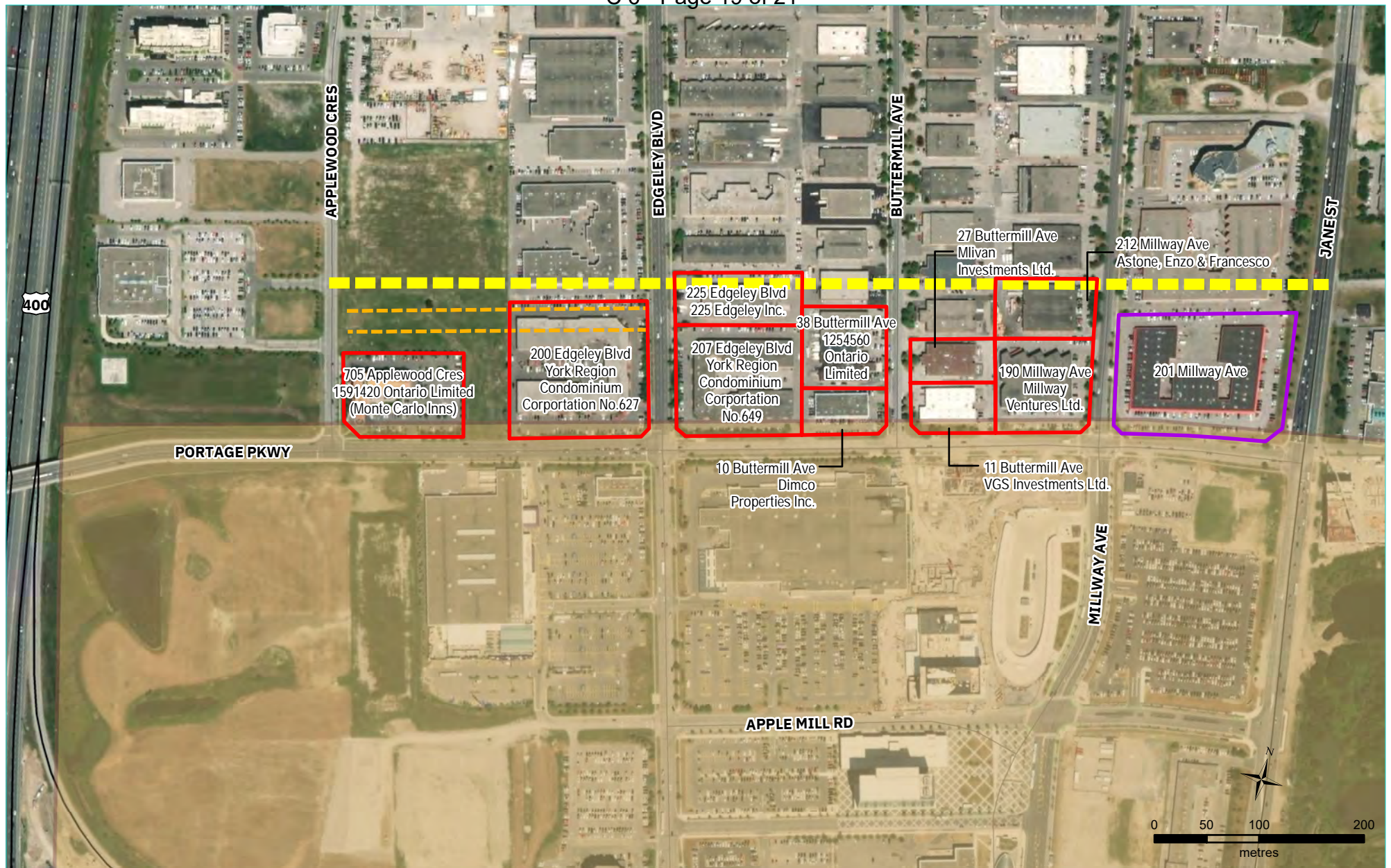
Malone Given Parsons Ltd.



Don Given, MCIP, RPP

Enclosures: Attachment 1: Portage Landowners Participating Lands
Attachment 2: VMC Subway Station 500-800m Radius
Attachment 3: Bus Transit Terminal 5000-800m Radius

Cc: Hon. Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of Council, City of Vaughan
Sandra Malcic, Director, Long Range Planning, York Region
Portage Landowners
York Region Condominium Corporation 945, 201 Millway Avenue (c/o John Zipay)



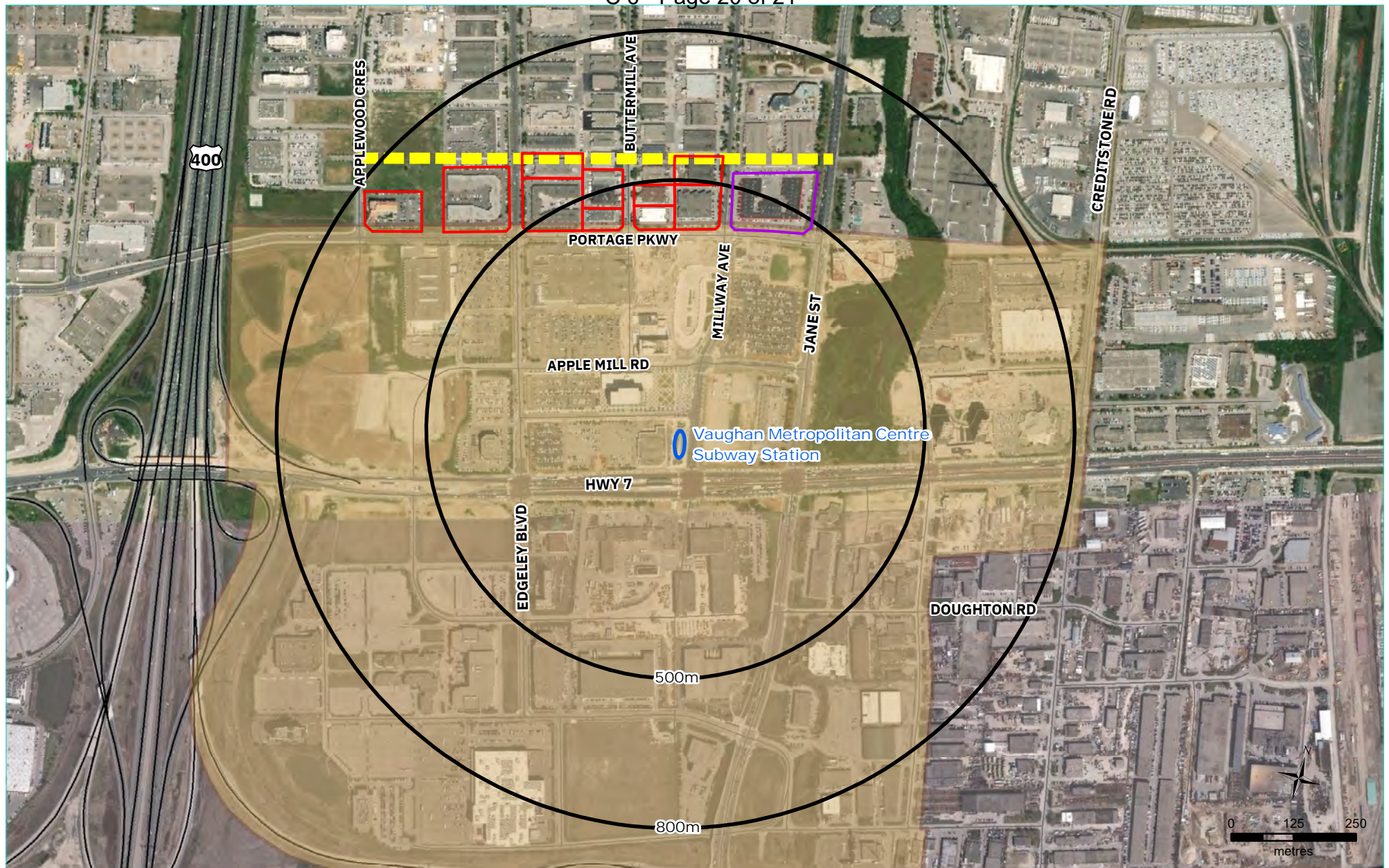
PORTAGE LANDOWNERS PARTICIPATING LANDS VAUGHAN, ON

Attachment 1

Sources: York Region, 2019, Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – Ontario

MGP File: 19-2836
Date: November 20, 2019

MGP Malone Given Parsons.



PORTAGE LANDOWNERS PARTICIPATING LANDS VAUGHAN, ON

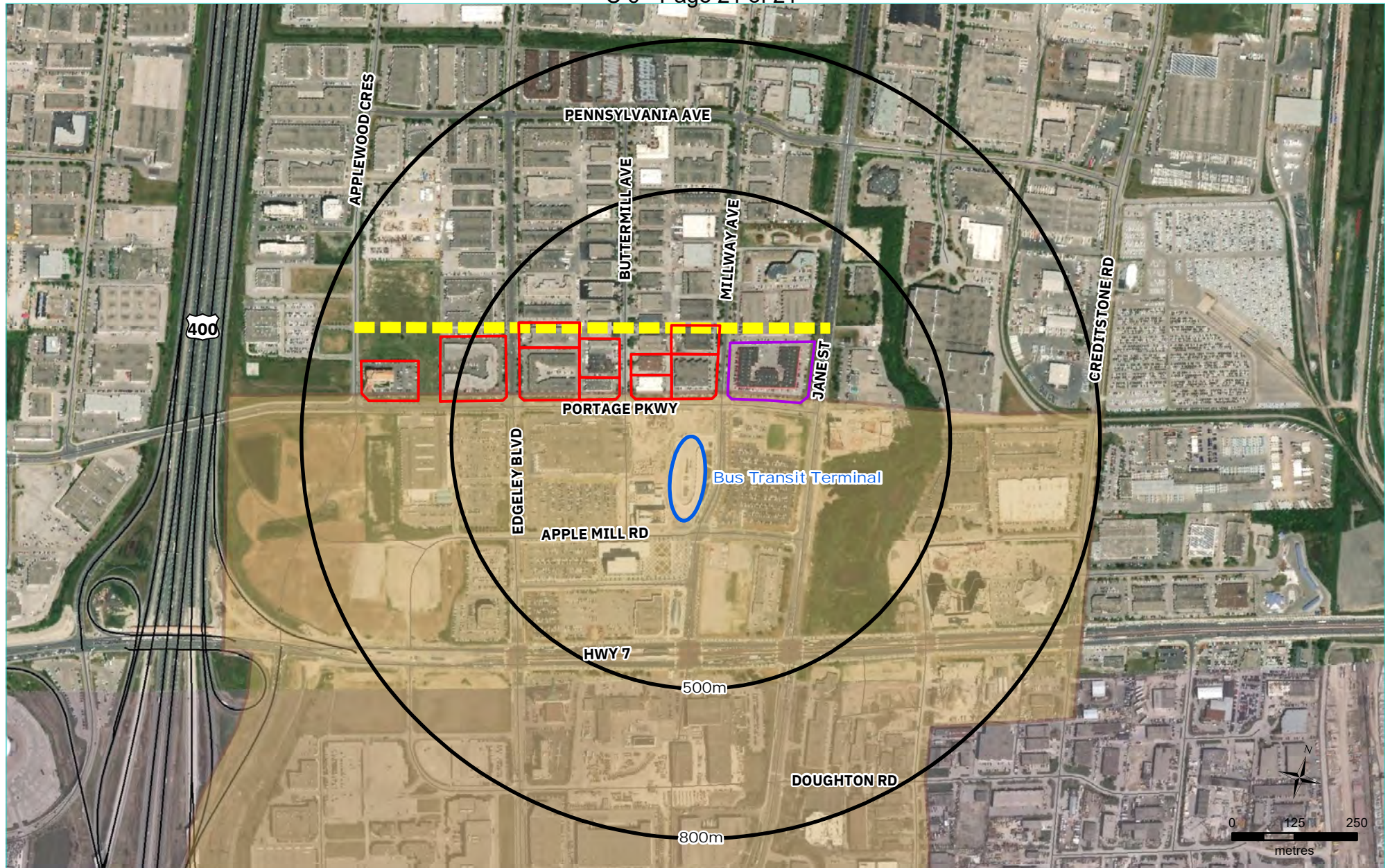
Attachment 2

- Participating Landowners
- Transit Building
- Separate Application for Employment Conversion
- Distance from Transit Stop
- Approximate Extent of Transitional Area
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Area

Sources: York Region, 2019, Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – Ontario

MGP File: 19-2836
Date: November 22, 2019

MGP Malone
Given
Parsons.



PORTAGE LANDOWNERS PARTICIPATING LANDS VAUGHAN, ON

Attachment 3

- Participating Landowners
- Transit Building
- Separate Application for Employment Conversion
- Distance from Transit Stop
- ▬ Approximate Extent of Transitional Area
- ▭ Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Area

Sources: York Region, 2019, Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – Ontario

MGP File: 19-2836
Date: November 22, 2019

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