

## HUMPHRIES PLANNING GROUP INC.

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May 19, 2020  
HPGI File: 18551

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

The Corporation of the City of Vaughan  
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive  
Vaughan, Ontario  
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**Attention: Mr. Todd Coles, City Clerk**

**Re: Staff Report– Requests for Comments: York Region Evaluation of Employment Land  
Conversion Requests  
Committee of the Whole Meeting – May 20, 2020  
2276771 Ontario Inc.  
2739 Highway 7**

Humphries Planning Group is the agent and planning consulting for 2276771 Ontario Inc., the legally registered owners of the property municipally addressed 2739 Highway 7 in the City of Vaughan. Our client has reviewed the Planning and Growth Management Report dated May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and respectfully disagree with the recommendations contained in the Report. We would like to offer the following comments for consideration as the City advances their assessment and endorsement of site-specific employment land conversions requests which will be used to inform and assist the Region in identifying suitable locations for employment conversion through potential amendments to the Regional Official Plan and current land use planning policies.

### **Site Specific Conversion Request**

The 2276771 Ontario Inc. employment area conversion request is identified as Request Number 12 in Attachment 4 – *Summary Table of Staff Recommendations* of the Committee of the May 20, 2020 Committee of the Whole Report.

Staff's Summary of Assessment is that, *"the land is surrounded by employment uses and the introduction of sensitive uses, including residential, to the area would create compatibility issues"*. Further, the site is in proximity to the VMC Secondary Plan Area and the conversion would constitute an unplanned expansion of the defined secondary plan area. As a result of this assessment, Staff's recommendation is that they, *"do not support the request for conversion"*, at this time.

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**Comments on Staff's Position**

In general, although it is recognized that the site is surrounded by employment designated lands, it is important to note that the existing land uses, especially those located on or adjacent to Highway 7 are currently not being used for traditional employment type uses such as warehousing and manufacturing. Rather, they appear to be more service and commercial orientated due to their frontage and access to Highway 7 which offers these types of businesses a high degree of exposure and accessibility. Despite the fact that the area was intended to primarily accommodate a cluster of industrial activities, however, for a number of reasons, it has not fully developed for these purposes. It should be noted that the subject property is currently utilized for the outside display or storage of vehicles associated with a vehicle dealership which offers little to no benefits to other employment area businesses. Further, the site, as well as other parcels in the immediate vicinity currently benefit from a Commercial land use designation and zoning, which, is not considered as an employment land use designation.

Secondly, the property is located in an area which generally meets the criteria for a Key Development Area as defined by the York Region Official Plan as well as Provincial plans as they can be identified as "*lands immediately adjacent to transit terminals*". MTSAs are defined as a 400 to 800 metre radius around a transit station. The Creditstone BRT Station is located approximately 100 metres away and within the prescribed radius and along the Highway 7 planned rapid transit corridor. MTSAs are the focus for accommodating intensification and are planned to contain a mix of housing, employment, and public open space in order to support the use of public transit. Further, Highway 7 is contemplated to be developed as a mixed-use corridor with an emphasis on focusing height and density along the regional rapid transit corridor and within proximity of planned regional bus terminals. The conversion of the site would contribute to the fulfillment of this objective.

Thirdly, the Region has invested significant capital resources in the expansion and maintenance of Regional roads and transit system improvements, with a number of large projects currently underway or have been fully delivered. Specifically, the segment of Highway 7 abutting the property has benefited from significant streetscape design enhancements through the provision of elements such as street tree planters, decorative street lighting, banner poles, street furniture, dedicated cycling routes, and pavers (Figure 2). This shift and context sensitive approach to streetscape design reflects an emphasis on a pedestrian orientated pattern of development which is relied upon from vibrant mixed-use communities.

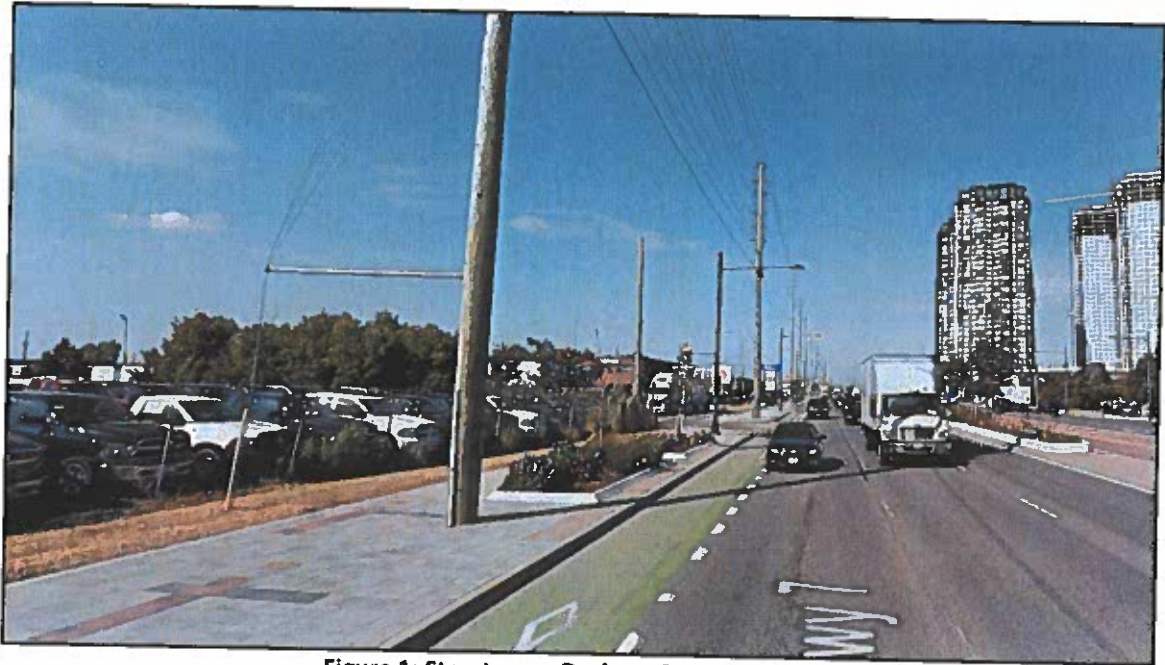


Figure 1: Streetscape Design – 2739 Highway 7

Lastly, in their Report, Staff have identified potential compatibility issues arising from the introduction of sensitive land uses in proximity to other employment uses. We do not agree with this assessment and highlight other successful developments within the City (i.e. VMC, Block 33 W) which have established appropriate transitions between employment and residential uses. There are a number of built form and urban design strategies that can be implemented in future design that would help to overcome interface challenges with the broader industrial setting and address the relationship between uses.

Finally, it remains our contention that a Staff recommendation on the conversion request is premature subject to the completion of the Land Needs Assessment (LNA) including updated population and job forecasts by the Province. The LNA will provide important technical inputs obtained through the comprehensive analysis of the supply of residential and employment designated lands are required in order to properly evaluate population and job growth forecasted to the year 2041 and should be considered in determining the appropriateness of site-specific employment area conversions. Any recommendations with respect to employment conversion requests should not preclude or predetermine the findings of the LNA and/or any decision related to employment conversion should be delayed until such time that a full analysis of all information has been completed.

For the reasons stated above, HPGI disagrees with Staff's recommendation. We ask that City Staff and Council reconsider the recommendation, as it relates to site specific conversion request number 12, and instead, support our client's employment conversion based on our comments and concerns outlined herein. Further, we also suggest that the City pause any final decision related to employment area conversions pending to the completion of the LNA by the Region in order to ensure an equitable and comprehensive review and evaluation process.

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2739 Highway 7 for 2276771 Ontario Inc.  
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Yours sincerely,  
**HUMPHRIES PLANNING GROUP INC.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' and 'H' intertwined.

Rosemarie Humphries, BA, MCIP, RPP  
President

cc: Mr. Luigi Iacobelli  
Bill Kiru, Acting Deputy City Manager, City of Vaughan  
Mr. Paul Bottomley, Manager of Policy, Research and Forecasting  
Mayor and Members of Vaughan Council