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OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 650, CITY OF VAUGHAN VELLORE VILLAGE DISTRICT CENTRE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, February 12, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to approve with modifications Amendment No. 650 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan as set out in Schedule A.
2. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to further approve with modifications OPA 600 Deferral #1 which deferred Section 4.2.1.5 of OPA 600 pertaining to the density policies for Vellore Village Centre as set out in Schedule B.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of the City of Vaughan's Official Plan Amendment No. 650 (OPA 650) and provide modifications to help ensure the built form in the Village Core reflects the goals set out in OPA 600 and the Regional Official Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

OPA 650 constitutes a secondary plan for the Vellore Village District Centre of the City of Vaughan. Vaughan Council adopted the Amendment on August 25, 2003, and subsequently forwarded it to the Region for approval.

3.1 Location

The Vellore Village District Centre comprises approximately 58 hectares located around the four quadrants of the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road. It forms the central focal point of the Vellore - Urban Village 1 in the City's Official Plan (see *Attachment 1*).

3.2 Description of OPA

OPA 650 sets out the land use designations and development policies for the Vellore Village District Centre. It is the Plan's goal to establish a development concept for the area that provides a mix of residential unit types and accommodates the commercial

needs of the local residents while encouraging the evolution of a pedestrian-friendly, transit supportive development pattern over time.

3.3 History

OPA 650 was adopted after an extensive public consultation process initiated with the amendment process surrounding Official Plan Amendment No. 600 (OPA 600). The Amendment, the product of the City's 5-year comprehensive Official Plan Review exercise, updated and replaced the City's Official Plan (OPA 400). OPA 600 designated the Vellore Urban Village 1 area as a new growth area located between Highway 400 and Jane Street on the east, Rutherford Road on the south, Pine Valley Drive on the west and Teston Road on the north. OPA 600 sets out a specific policy context for Vellore Village and identifies the need to provide a variety of housing forms and tenures throughout the District Centre.

The District Centre forms the central core of Vellore Village and is intended to be the location of a key urban centre in the City, containing higher intensity residential, commercial and institutional uses of a community scale that serve the entire Vellore Community. OPA 600 requires a tertiary plan, in the form of a separate Official Plan Amendment, be adopted and approved prior to the development of any lands in the District Centre. OPA 650 represents that separate amendment.

3.4 Content of Official Plan Amendment No. 650

OPA 650 has been developed through extensive public consultation and represents a refinement of the broader policies set out in the parent Vaughan OPA 600. Development within the Vellore Village District Centre will be implemented through the approval of plan of subdivision, zoning and site plan applications. Development proposals will proceed through phasing plans that indicate how the policies of the District Centre Plan are being addressed and implemented over time.

OPA 600 was adopted by Vaughan on September 25, 2000 and was subsequently approved by the Region in 2 parts on June 28, 2001 and January 24, 2002, except for the Section 4.2.1.5 District Centres as it relates to densities in Vellore Village Centre. This section was deferred as it proposed densities lower than anticipated for a district centre. The completion of the Vellore Village Centre Study was intended to address the densities as well as the details of land use, built form, road patterns, and urban design.

3.4.1 Land Use Designations and Density

The land use and associated densities are addressed in the land use designations set out in OPA650 as follows:

- Village core uses
- Low-rise residential uses
- Village squares

i) Village Core

The lands designated “Village Core” are focused around the central intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road. The Village Core designation permits office buildings, multi-unit residential dwellings excluding townhouses, mixed-use residential/commercial buildings, restaurants, places of entertainment and limited single use commercial uses subject to specified criteria. Within the village core, as-of-right zoning will permit 3½ storeys with a density between 50-75 units per hectare (uph) and buildings up to 6 storeys and a gross density of 100 uph will be permitted provided that specific tests are met and that certain amenities are provided.

The core area is key focal point for higher density uses and sets the tone for achieving pedestrian friendly, transit oriented development. It is therefore important that the policies encourage appropriate development to achieve this objective. Some modifications have been proposed to help ensure that built form in the Village Core reflects the goals set out in OPA 600 and the Regional Official Plan which are discussed further in Section 4 of this report.

ii) Low Rise Residential

The lands designated “Low-Rise Residential” are located north, west and south of the village core area. This designation permits single-detached, semi-detached, row/street townhouses and compatible institutional uses. Block townhouses and other ground-related multiple housing forms are permitted in the blocks fronting onto Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road. The Low-Rise Residential area allows a maximum building height of 2½ storeys and a density between 17-40 uph, with an average density of 25 uph within each quadrant. Applications for senior’s residential uses up to a maximum building height of 3 storeys is also permitted provided the proposals can meet specified criteria. This area provides a stepping down from the more intense village core to the surrounding Vellore Village community.

iii) Village Square

There are three areas designated “Village Square” in the village core. The Village Squares are to provide central common green spaces for the community. The Squares are intended to be focal points of the village core, framed by the abutting built form and comprise a mix of hard and soft landscaping. It is a policy of OPA 650 that a comprehensive system of parks shall be established in the District Centre incorporating the village squares and integrated into the surrounding open space system of the urban village.

3.4.2 Density

The Region expressed issues with the proposed city-wide reduction in densities through reports on OPA 550 (January 19, 2000) and 600 (June 20, 2001). In response to the Region’s issues, the City agreed to undertake land use studies to evaluate the

opportunities to transfer some of the lost density to intensification areas along the Highway 7 corridor and the district centres.

The plan proposes that the densities can be increased to 100 uph and 6 storeys in exchange for benefits such as:

- Underground parking
- Increased on-site open space
- Greater parkland dedication
- Community and cultural facilities
- Public transit facilities

Other study requirements as part of the process for approving higher density mixed use applications include:

- The separation from low-rise residential uses.
- The stepping down in height and density towards adjacent residential and mixed-use areas.
- The demonstration through a traffic impact study that transportation capacity needs can be met.
- The preparation of a shadow impact study that evaluates the impacts on adjacent public and private properties.
- The concurrent submission and review of a site plan application.

The plan also provides flexibility to go beyond 100 uph in order to facilitate the introduction of smaller units where needed provided the building density does not exceed a floor space index of 2.0. Further comment is provided in Section 4 of this report.

3.4.3 Transportation

It is the goal of OPA 650 to provide for an integrated, efficient, multi-modal transportation network for the District Centre. The district centre plans provides for a road network system consisting of a modified grid pattern with Major Mackenzie Drive and Weston Road forming the main east-west and north-south axes respectively. A primary “ring road” surrounds the village core area enhancing traffic circulation and provides a greater opportunity for transit system loops. This ring road will minimize the need for traffic and transit to circulate through the low-rise residential area to access the primary road network.

OPA 650 also sets out policies that provide opportunities for transit by ensuring that the interconnected local road network is maintained and that require the provision of rights-of-way for bus loops, terminals, on-street bus bays and shelters through individual development plans. It is also intended that transit routes serving the surrounding community will converge on the District Centre as a hub and transit transfer location between York Region Transit and TTC buses.

A pedestrian “greenway”, a linear open space corridor in accordance with the policies of OPA 600, has been shown along the northerly limits of the District Centre. This corridor

will provide a continuous link between the Vellore Community and other areas of the City for pedestrians and cyclists.

The policies of OPA 650 encourage the sharing and incorporation of underground parking in mixed use development plans. With the exception of Major Mackenzie Drive, on-street parking will be permitted on all streets fronting commercial development in the village core.

3.4.4 Urban Design

The development concept of the Vellore Village District Centre Plan was based on an urban design study prepared by Sorenson Gravely Lowes and approved by Vaughan Council. The elements of the urban design policies include built form, pedestrian realm, road allowance and streetscaping. All of these components encourage pedestrian friendly, transit oriented development and public realm and are in keeping with the goals for urban centres in the Regional Official Plan.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Conformity with Regional Official Plan

The Region approved OPA 600 as the comprehensive 5-year review of Vaughan's Official Plan (OPA 400) on June 29, 2001. At the time of approval of OPA 600, the Region introduced a deferral of the proposed density provisions of the Vellore Village District Centre in Subsection 4.2.1.5 to allow for the detailed preparation and review of the District Centre study mentioned above. This was to ensure that the proposed densities of Vellore Village were appropriate to achieve the community building and urban centre goals of the ROP. The densities proposed in OPA 600 were from 17 uph to a maximum density of 40 uph which may be appropriate for lower density areas, but were not reflective of the higher density, more compact building objectives for the core area.

In deferring the density policies for Vellore Village, it was the Region's view that the Highway 7 corridor and District Centre studies should at a minimum:

- Review density with the view to implement minimum density standards.
- Ensure that mixed-use buildings of generally six storeys are permitted.
- Provide for pedestrian oriented built forms.
- Provide a variety of housing types and opportunities.
- Establish a high quality urban design plan.

OPA 650, with minor modifications found in Schedule A, addresses these study objectives and more fully addresses the issue of ensuring the inclusion of mixed-used buildings of generally six storeys.

4.1.1 Community Building

The Community Building policies of 5.2(7) reiterate the need for a variety of housing types and mix of uses and this is reflected in OPA 650. The provision of a low density residential form of development around a core area comprising higher density residential

and mixed use forms of development provides a central concentration of development around the intersection of two regional roads while gradually reducing densities and height towards the outskirts of the District Centre. The densities within the village core area also allow for a variety of unit sizes.

The transition of land uses towards the village core will create a defined community with a unique identity while minimizing the negative impacts of traffic, overlook and shadow on the surrounding lower density residential areas.

4.1.2 Urban Centres

Subsection 5.3.5 of the ROP sets out the criteria by which the local municipalities shall prepare plans for urban centres. These criteria pertain to such objectives as:

- Centres shall accommodate a size and context of development that is in keeping with the surrounding community and corridors.
- Permitted uses shall be similar to those permitted in regional centres with greater emphasis on residential and local employment uses.
- The centres shall comprise the highest density and mix of uses within urban areas.
- Centres should be based on the highest capacity roads with a progressive reduction of density and land use mix into areas further away from these roads.
- Plans should include methods to reduce or slow traffic within the centre through introducing higher density development and improvements to local parking.

The preparation of OPA 650 has met these Regional objectives.

4.1.3 Transit

In accordance with OPA 600, block plans for new communities are planned in a manner that residential neighbourhoods are located within a 400-metre walking distance of planned or existing transit service. Designating higher density residential and commercial uses along Weston Road and Major Mackenzie Drive will assist in creating a more supportive operating environment for transit services.

4.1.4 Proposed Modifications

The proposed densities set out in OPA 650 are appropriate for the Vellore Village area in the core area, provided some modifications are made to the plan to make the planned densities more achievable and provide for a variety of unit sizes.

In order to recognize that the core area is where the highest density, most compact form belongs, there also needs to be acknowledgment that large on-site open spaces may not be appropriate within the core itself. On-site open spaces in these types of developments need to include enhanced urban spaces with more concentrated landscaping one might find in an urban square. Large on-site open spaces also make it difficult to achieve the objective of maximizing ground floor coverage. A modification changing the benefit from “increased” to “enhanced” open space would resolve this issue.

Increased parkland dedication within the village core also makes it more difficult to achieve the higher density development that maximizes ground floor coverage. Location flexibility is needed when considering any increase to parkland dedication provided that it continues to serve the district centre area.

A recognition that separation is not the only way to achieve an appropriate relationship between built forms needs to be incorporated into the plan. The policies already clearly indicate a step-down approach in built form with the highest buildings at the busiest intersections. The achievement of compatibility rather than separation is more in keeping with the objectives of the plan and the plan criteria should be modified accordingly.

The policies that permit smaller unit sizes with densities over 100 uph appear to be geared towards seniors' types of housing. This policy should also be applicable for development that achieves more affordable or a broader mix of unit types. The policy therefore needs to be clear that smaller units sizes may be considered in a variety of developments provided a floor space index of 2.0 is not exceeded.

The policies of the core area with some modification and the surrounding low-rise residential area are conducive to a pedestrian-oriented and accessible form of development. The village core and low-rise residential designations permit a range of residential forms that provide for a range of housing needs in the community. The policies of the OPA also set out standards that will ensure an attractive and liveable community with a high level of urban design. As such, the Regional requirements outlined above for the District Centre studies will have been met should the modifications be adopted as set out in Schedule A.

4.2 Servicing

Servicing is not currently available for this district centre however both water and sewer will become available upon completion of a number of planned works. Water will become available through an inter-regional water servicing agreement signed between Peel and York Regions, which is to be implemented incrementally over the next 30 years. Sewage will become available to the area through the completion of the Bathurst Street system comprised of the Bathurst Trunk and Langstaff Trunk. A pre-paid development charge credit agreement is currently being negotiated with the land owners in the City of Vaughan. Timing of the works is dependent on resolution of issues involved with the Southeast Collector and 16th Avenue sewers.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Vellore Village District Centres plan provides for a compact, pedestrian friendly village centre with a mix of housing types and commercial uses. The plan is consistent with Vision 2026 action areas of "Creating Well-Designed and Livable Communities" and "Providing Appropriate Housing Mix and Supply".

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The district centre is covered by various block plans (Block 39, 40, 32W and 33W) all of which anticipated the higher densities proposed in the centre. No changes to the financial impact of implementing the various blocks is anticipated through the approval of this plan.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The City of Vaughan has adopted OPA 650 and the recommendations of this report are consistent with the City's objectives and will provide the necessary policy framework for development to proceed in this district centre.

7. CONCLUSION

Official Plan Amendment No. 650 was developed with extensive consultation with the public, the Region and other stakeholders. Approval of City of Vaughan's OPA 650 will facilitate the approval of the core area of a new community with urban forms of mixed-use and traditional styles of development, three village squares, a new main street area on Weston Road and an overall high level of urban design. As adopted by Vaughan Council and modified as proposed, OPA 650 is based on sound planning principles that represent and protect the values of all stakeholders and the community as a whole.

The lands are designated "Urban Area" by the Regional Official Plan and OPA 650 is consistent with the intent of this designation. It is therefore recommended that OPA 650 be modified as proposed and approved.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)