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VAUGHAN'S HIGHWAY 7 CORRIDOR: OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NOS. 660, 661, 662, 663 AND 664

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

1. The following deputations and communications be received:
 - (a) Ann Grech, Vaughan Resident, and letter dated June 5, 2008;
 - (b) Ron Moro, Vaughan Resident, and letter dated June 9, 2008;
 - (c) Nick Pinto, President, West Woodbridge Homeowners Association, June 5, 2008;
 - (d) Drazen Bulat, Vaughan Resident, and letter dated June 5, 2008;
 - (e) Norma Basciano, Vaughan Resident, and letter dated June 11, 2008;
 - (f) Carole Davies, Vaughan Resident;
 - (g) Letter from J. Abrams, City Clerk, City of Vaughan, June 5, 2008, regarding modifications to 'Official Plan Amendment 661, Highway 7 Policy Review'.
 - (h) Letter from Rosemarie L. Humphries, dated June 10, 2008, representing Pinegrove on Seven Inc., owners of land at the southwest quadrant of Highway 7 and Kipling Avenue, Vaughan;
2. The presentation by Augustine Ko, Planner, be received; and
3. The recommendations contained in the following report dated April 29, 2008, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, be adopted:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to **approve** Amendment Nos. 663 and 664 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan Planning Area.
2. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to **approve** Amendment No. 662 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan Planning Area, and **modify** by replacing Schedules 'A' and 'B' with the Schedules contained in *Attachments 1 and 2*.
3. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to **approve** Amendment No. 660 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan

- Planning Area and **defer** the policy permitting residential land uses in the area identified in *Attachment 3*.
4. The Ontario Municipal Board **approve** Amendment No. 661 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan Planning Area and **defer** the policy permitting residential land uses in the area identified in *Attachment 4*.
 5. At the request of the City of Vaughan Council, the Ontario Municipal Board approve the proposed modification to the boundary of Amendment No. 661 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan Planning Area, as identified in *Attachment 5* and replace OPA 661 Schedules 'A' and 'B' and Figures 1 and 2 with *Attachments 6 to 9*.
 6. Regional staff be authorized to appear at the Ontario Municipal Board in support of the Regional position.

2. PURPOSE

This report recommends the approval of a series of City of Vaughan initiated Official Plan Amendments (OPA) along the Highway 7 corridor in Vaughan. This report also

demonstrates how these Amendments are consistent with, and supportive of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)* and Regional Official Plan policies.

3. BACKGROUND

THE PLANNING BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENTS

A key foundation of the Region's urban structure is a system of Regional Centres and Corridors

The Regional Plan identifies the objective of achieving attractive vibrant Regional Corridors with public transit that links Regional and Local Centres, and Highway 7 is identified as a significant Regional Corridor. Mixed use, higher density developments are encouraged to locate along these corridors.

In support of the urban structure, the Region's June 2002 Transportation Master Plan identified the potential for rapid transit service along the Highway 7 Corridor: the "Highway 7 Corridor and Vaughan N-S Link Public Transit Improvements Environmental Assessment". To further strengthen the Regional urban structure, the Regional Centres and Corridors Amendment (ROPA 43) was adopted in December, 2004.

The new Provincial Policy Statement was introduced in 2005 and the Province's *Growth Plan* for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was approved in 2006. These upper tier government policies support and strengthen the concept of vibrant Centres and Corridors. The common directive from all these policies is the increasing priority given to mixed use, compact, transit supportive densities along existing or planned rapid transit corridors that link urban growth centres.

Vaughan initiates the Highway 7 Study

In 2001, Vaughan Council adopted the Terms of Reference for the "Regional Road 7 (Highway 7) Policy Review: Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study". The primary reason for this Study was to identify a comprehensive planning and urban design strategy for this important corridor. This work has culminated in a renewed Vision for Highway 7; one that progressively reflects the new Provincial and Regional policy structures and will lead to a sustainable urban structure along this important Corridor.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 THE HIGHWAY 7 AMENDMENTS (OPA's 660, 661, 662, 663, & 664)

The Highway 7 Amendments are a significant new threshold of City Building for the City of Vaughan. The Amendments (as illustrated on *Attachment 10*) establish a comprehensive basis of a renewed Highway 7, supporting more intense, mixed use, compact development. This section of Highway 7, in Vaughan, is a Regional Corridor and runs through a Regional Centre: the Vaughan Corporate Centre, which is also identified as an "Urban Growth Centre" in the *Growth Plan*. This Regional Corridor will be served by the VIVA rapid transit system and the Regional Centre will be the new terminus of the Spadina Subway. Vaughan has ensured a strong local planning policy framework for this Regional Corridor and Regional Centre with adoption of these Amendments.

The Amendments elevate the planned function and character of the Highway 7 corridor

The five Amendments cover the entire Highway 7 Corridor in Vaughan. The Amendments elevate the planned function and character of this Corridor by progressively planning for change by transforming a mainly low intensity Corridor to one that is more mixed use in nature, more compact, intense and dynamic. The Corridor is proposed to be pedestrian friendly and designed to be transit oriented. Vaughan has created a plan for the Highway 7 Corridor that will take advantage of the planned rapid transit along the Highway 7 Corridor, and the Spadina subway extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

The Amendments will create a new land use designation

The Highway 7 Amendments propose to create a new land use designation: “Prestige Areas – Centres and Avenue Seven Corridor”. Within this designation, there are policies that deal with the hierarchy of centres and corridor areas, as well as the nature and form of anticipated development. In addition, each Amendment includes new Community Improvement Plan policies to facilitate the implementation of the Plan. The Amendments also include urban design policies that support City Building and transit objectives, such as the Region’s Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines.

The Highway 7 Amendments will create an urban structure that is based on a hierarchy

There are five elements in the urban structure for the Highway 7 Corridor. A central cornerstone is the Vaughan Corporate Centre (VCC). The VCC is identified in the Region’s OP as a Regional Centre and, in the Province’s *Growth Plan*, as an Urban Growth Centre.

The prominence of the VCC is supported by two Centres flanking the VCC to the extreme east and west on the Corridor: the Concord GO Centre and the 7/427 Centre. There is also a future Woodbridge GO Centre identified, and its location and planned function will require further in-depth study.

Beyond the Centres, the Corridor is punctuated by a number of Transit Nodes. These are the transit stops along this Corridor’s rapid transit route. The lands between the Transit Nodes that are suitable for redevelopment and intensification are the ‘Corridor’ lands. A description of the urban structure, resulting from the five Amendments, is provided in *Table 1* below.

Table 1
Hierarchy of the Urban Structure

	Location	Primary Function	Density	Heights
Corporate Centre	400m around subway station	Commercial and residential	3.5 to 5.0 FSI	No height limits at gateway locations
GO Centres	1) Concord: Keele & Highway 7 2) Woodbridge: Kipling north of Highway 7	Mix of uses, primarily residential	2.5 to 3.5 FSI	Max. 10 storeys Max. 4 storeys if within 30m of low density residential
7/427 Centre	400m around Highway 7 & Highway 427	Mix of office and employment uses	2.5 to 3.5 FSI	Max. 10 storeys Max. 4 storeys if within 30m of low

	Location	Primary Function	Density	Heights
				density residential
Transit Nodes	200m around transit stops	Mix of uses, focus depends on adjacent uses	2.0 to 3.0 FSI	Max. 10 storeys Max. 4 storeys if within 30m of low density residential
Corridor	200m adjacent to Highway 7	Mix of uses, focus depends on adjacent uses	1.0 to 2.5 FSI	Max. 8 storeys Max. 4 storeys if within 30m of low density residential

The Amendments are responsive to existing low density residential neighbourhoods backing onto Highway 7

While the main planned function of the Amendments is to encourage intensified transit supportive mixed use developments, the Amendments are also responsive to surrounding low density residential neighbourhoods. Vaughan has carefully considered where redesignating lands for higher densities should be focused, in the context of existing lower density communities. Residential communities located on local streets internal to the existing neighbourhoods are not being redesignated to higher densities. They are physically separated from the transit service on Highway 7 and the potential impact from new development on the Corridor will require careful consideration. As the Table above indicates, redevelopment on lands within a minimum of 30m of lands designated low density residential, has a maximum height limit of four storeys.

4.2 COMPLIANCE WITH PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL POLICIES

The PPS encourages the efficient use of land

The 2005 PPS encourages efficient development patterns that:

- Optimize the use of land, resources and public investment in infrastructure and public service facilities.
- Promotes a mix of housing, employment, parks and open spaces.
- Offers transportation choices that facilitate pedestrian mobility and other modes of travel.
- Create strong, liveable and healthy communities that enhance social well-being and are economically and environmentally sound.

New developments should have a land use pattern, density and mix of uses that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support the development of viable choices and

plans for public transit. The planned function of the Highway 7 Amendments is consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement. The Amendment areas along the Highway 7 Corridor are intended to be developed with higher density, pedestrian friendly, mix of uses in a more compact urban form that is concentrated along a Regional Corridor in order to take advantage of the planned VIVA rapid transit system and the Spadina Subway extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.

The *Growth Plan* encourages the use of existing or planned infrastructure to support growth in a compact, efficient form

The 2006 *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* contains principles that provide the basis for guiding decisions on how land is developed, resources are managed and public dollars invested, including:

- Build compact, vibrant and complete communities.
- Plan and manage growth to support a strong and competitive economy.
- Protect, conserve, enhance and wisely use the valuable natural resources of land, air and water for current and future generations.
- Optimize the use of existing and new infrastructure to support growth in a compact, efficient form.
- Provide for different approaches to managing growth that recognize the diversity of communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- Promote collaboration among all sectors — government, private and non-profit — and residents to achieve the vision.

The *Growth Plan* encourages development that:

- Is in built-up areas of the community through intensification.
- Reduces the dependency on the automobile through development of mixed-use, transit supportive, pedestrian friendly urban environments.
- Develops as complete communities with a diverse mix of land uses, a range and mix of employment and housing types, high quality public open spaces and easy access to local stores and services.

The *Growth Plan* also identifies the Vaughan Corporate Centre area as an Urban Growth Centre. Such Centres are to be planned:

- As focal areas for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.
- To accommodate and support major transit infrastructure.
- To serve as high density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses.
- To accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth.
- To achieve, by 2031, a minimum gross density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

The planned function of the Highway 7 Amendments is consistent with the above *Growth Plan* policies. Development that is mixed-use, compact and more intense is encouraged to locate along Highway 7, a Regional Corridor with a planned rapid transit system. The greatest densities will be found in the Vaughan Corporate Centre, a Regional Centre and part of an Urban Growth Centre. The Amendments will greatly improve the efficient use of a finite supply of urban land along a major transit corridor.

The intensification efforts along this portion of Highway 7 will assist Vaughan, and the Region, in attaining its job and population targets as prescribed by the Growth Plan. The Corridor is within the Growth Plan's Built Boundary, and as such any development will contribute to the Growth Plan's target of 40% intensification. The Urban Growth Centre is approximately 60 hectares in size and based on a target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare, may generate a population and job total of approximately 12,000. Since the Amendments prescribe minimum density requirements, commensurate with a rapid transit corridor, development along this Corridor will significantly contribute to achieving this target.

Regional Centres are where the most intense developments are to occur

The Region's Centre and Corridor policies are a key component of the Regional urban structure. Regional Centres will mature to contain the highest concentration and greatest mix of uses in the Region, including a range of employment and housing opportunities. Development will be in a compact, well designed form that contributes to an urban fabric that is vibrant, safe, attractive, pedestrian-friendly and transit supportive. Strategic investments in rapid and conventional public transit, and other infrastructure by the public and private sectors, will ensure the long-term vitality of Regional Centres, making them desirable and efficient places to live, work, play and learn.

Regional Corridors are also intended to support more intense and mix-use forms of development

Highway 7 extends to the east and west limits of the Region, linking three of the four Regional Centres and connecting them to the rest of the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. These corridors also have great potential for more intensive and mixed-use forms of development, served by rapid transit. In addition to the Highway 7 Corridor, Vaughan also has the Vaughan North-South Corridor which will provide a rapid transit connection between the Vaughan Corporate Centre, York University and the Toronto Transit Commission subway (Downsview Station on the Spadina Line).

The Highway 7 Amendments comply with and further strengthen the Region's Official Plan

Vaughan has created a series of Amendments that comply with and further strengthen the Region's Official Plan policies on intensification and community development.

Intensifying the Highway 7 Corridor will elevate the planned function of this important Regional Corridor.

The City of Vaughan has thoroughly examined how best to transform and elevate their portion of the Highway 7 Corridor to meet the challenging demands prescribed by the *Growth Plan*. Vaughan has identified and defined a dynamic, comprehensive planning program, while setting height and density expectations. The process began with the “Highway 7 Futures Study” and has progressed through several years of thorough public and stakeholder consultation, and a number of new Provincial and Regional policy initiatives. The Highway 7 Amendments represents good planning and Regional Planning staff supports Vaughan in their efforts to strengthen their City Building directive.

4.3 MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW: CONVERSION OF EMPLOYMENT LANDS

The *Growth Plan* permits conversions through a municipal comprehensive review

Two of the Highway 7 Amendments are adding residential land uses to lands currently designated for employment uses. The *Growth Plan* permits municipalities to convert employment lands to non-employment uses, only through a Municipal Comprehensive Review, where it has been demonstrated that:

- a) There is a need for the conversion.
- b) The municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan.
- c) The conversion will not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area, and achievement of the intensification target, density targets, and other policies of this Plan.
- d) There is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion.
- e) The lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated.
- f) Cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Highway 7, in York Region, traverses through three local municipalities: Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham. Highway 7’s planned function has been elevated to a more pedestrian oriented, compact, intense, mixed use corridor, supported by a Regional rapid transit system. Due to the unique nature of this Corridor, and its primacy within York and Vaughan’s urban structure, it is critical that a continuous planned function runs along its length. It is anticipated that the work currently underway to meet the requirements of the *Growth Plan* will acknowledge the important GTA/Regional role Highway 7 will perform in the future for intensification and therefore generate geographically specific results supporting mixed uses along the Highway 7 Corridor.

In this context, Vaughan has retained the professional services of Hemson Consulting Ltd. to supplement Vaughan's work on justifying the introduction of residential uses on former employment lands. This is the subject of the deferral discussed in more detail below.

4.4 PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS AND A PARTIAL APPROVAL

Modifications are requested by Vaughan for OPA 662

There is a mapping error in Schedules A and B of the adopted version of OPA 662. The Amendment area is shown to extend into OPA 663's area. *Attachments 1 and 2*, appended hereto, are the replacement schedules, correcting the error.

OPA's 660 and 661 is proposed to be approved in part

The justification for employment land conversions, as prescribed by the *Growth Plan*, is currently being progressed. The deferral is proposed to apply to the policies permitting residential uses for two geographic areas, as illustrated in *Attachments 3 and 4*. Pending completion of this additional work to address the *Growth Plan* (Section 2.2.6.5), the further approval of OPA's 660 and 661, to remove the deferral for residential uses, if justified, is recommended to be done at the staff level. According to Hemson Consulting, this additional work should be completed in the Fall of 2008. If further modifications are required, it may be appropriate to report back to the Regional Planning

The City of Vaughan has been informed of these proposed deferrals.

4.5 LOCAL RESIDENTS ISSUES – KIPLING AND HIGHWAY 7 AREA

Residents in the Kipling/Highway 7 area have issues with OPA 661

A number of local residents have raised issues with the inclusion and redesignation of low density residential lands on the south side of the intersection of Kipling Avenue and Highway 7 by OPA 661. At the Vaughan Council meeting on May 12, 2008, Council referred the issue to the Ward 2 Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has met with local residents and Vaughan staff has reported back to the Committee of the Whole and to a Special Council Meeting held on June 3, 2008. Vaughan Council has now adopted their staff recommended modifications to the boundary of OPA 661 to exclude, generally, low density residential lots in the area surrounding the intersection of Kipling Avenue and Highway 7. The new boundary of OPA 661 is illustrated in *Attachment 5*.

The revised boundary of OPA 661 provides additional protection for the low density residential area from high density redevelopment adjacent Highway 7. This is still in compliance with Regional Official Plan intensification policies. In accordance with OPA 661 for such redevelopment parcels, the first 30m adjacent to land designated for low

density residential units are restricted to a maximum height of four storeys and beyond this 30m transitional buffer, the maximum height is 10 storeys.

The revised boundary of OPA 661, around the intersection of Kipling and Highway 7, reflects the Vaughan staff being responsive and working to find a balance between intensification and compatibility with surrounding single detached dwellings. Local Planning staff typically determines built form compatibility with adjacent structures and land uses. Regional planning staff is of the opinion that local planning staff are best able to determine the appropriate building height and density.

Prior to Vaughan Council dealing with the proposed boundary modification at its special meeting on June 3rd, OPA 661 was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by the landowner at the southwest corner of Kipling Avenue and Highway 7.

4.6 APPEAL OF OPA 661

OPA 661 is appealed by a landowner

York Regional staff received a Notice of Appeal of OPA 661 on June 3, 2008. The appeal is lodged by the landowner at the southwest corner of Kipling Avenue and Highway 7. This landowner has submitted development applications for a 17 storey apartment building. This application is currently being processed and not subject to an appeal.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The Highway 7 Amendments provide land use policies that promote the goals of Vision 2026, in particular, “A Vibrant Economy”, “Housing Choices For Our Residents”, and “Managed and Balanced Growth”.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct negative financial implications

Approving the Highway 7 Amendments will have no direct financial implications affecting Regional budgets or the tax levy.

By facilitating higher density developments on a rapid transit corridor, the Amendments will encourage developments that will also augment Regional Development Charges to support transit improvements.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Official Plan Amendment Nos. 660, 661, 662, 663 and 664 have been adopted by the City of Vaughan. These Amendments will have a positive impact on Vaughan's City Building efforts. The Amendments encourage the highest and best uses to locate along Vaughan's portion of the Highway 7 rapid transit corridor.

City of Vaughan's Planning staff has requested a modification that corrects a mapping error and they also concur with the proposed deferral on residential uses pending completion of supplemental work to satisfy the conversion criteria under the *Growth Plan*.

7. CONCLUSION

This report recommends the approval of a series of City of Vaughan initiated Official Plan Amendments along the Highway 7 Corridor. OPA Nos. 660, 661, 662, 663, and 664 amend five existing OPA's and apply to lands generally along Highway 7 from Vaughan's western boundary to the railway tracks east of Keele Street – the Highway 7 Corridor in Vaughan.

The Amendments add a new designation, "Prestige Area – Centres and Highway 7 Corridor". The new designation elevates the existing Corridor to a more intense, dynamic, mixed-use, compact, pedestrian friendly, transit supportive Corridor. The City of Vaughan has studied the Highway 7 Corridor for over six years and the resulting Amendments reflect Vaughan's progressive planning efforts at City Building.

This report recommends approving all five Amendments, with one technical modification to correct a minor mapping error, a deferral of the policies that permit residential uses in two specific geographic areas and a modification reducing the boundary of OPA 661. OPA 661 has recently been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board for disposition.

For more information on this report, please contact Augustine Ko, Senior Planner, Community Planning at Ext. 1524 or Heather Konefat, Director of Community Planning, at Ext. 1502.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The 10 attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)