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**CITY OF VAUGHAN
OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 620
STEELES CORRIDOR – JANE TO KEELE SECONDARY PLAN**

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

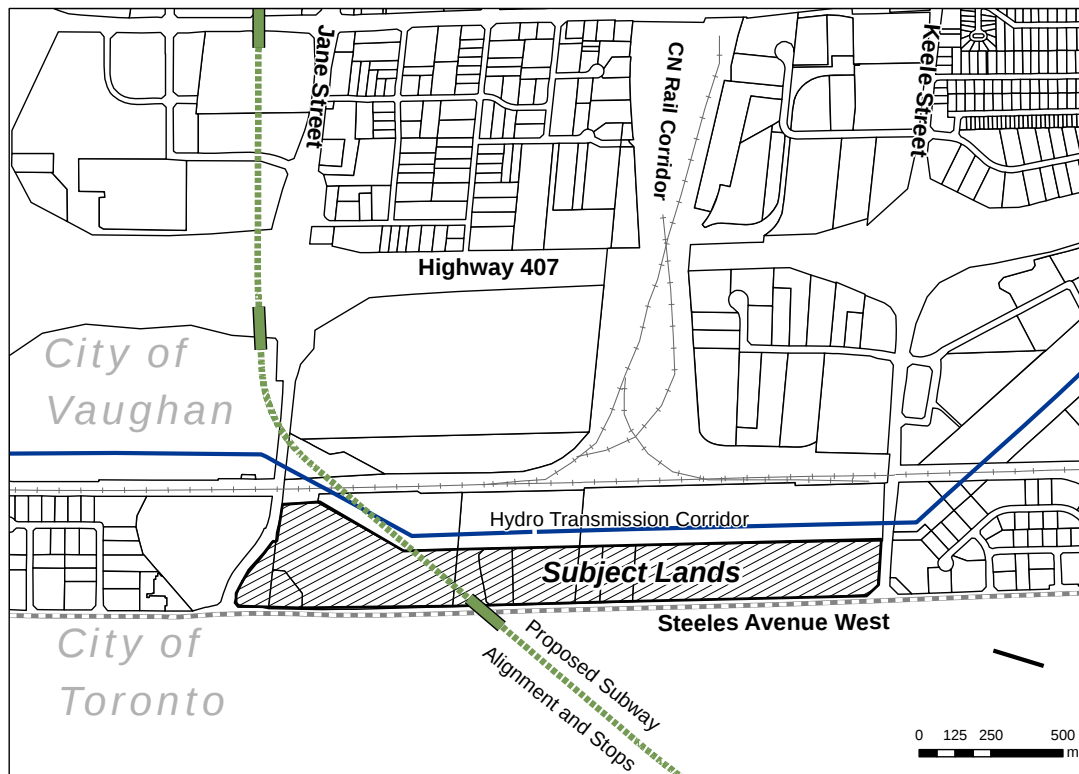
- 1. The following communications be received and referred to staff for reply:**
 - (a) R. Humphries, President, Humphries Planning Group Inc., October 3, 2006, on behalf of the registered owners Steeles-Keele Investments Limited; and**
 - (b) T. Bermingham, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP, October 3, 2006, on behalf of United Parcel Service, Canada and Quontlan Realty Inc.**
- 2. The recommendation contained in the following report, September 6, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give Notice to approve Amendment No. 620 (OPA 620) to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan, subject to the modifications set out in *Attachment #1* to this report.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to make a recommendation for the disposition of Amendment No. 620 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan.



3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Site Location and Context

This Official Plan Amendment applies to approximately 43 hectares (106 acres) of land located within the southern portion of the City of Vaughan (see key map). It is located on the north side of Steeles Avenue between Keele and Jane Streets directly north of York University in the City of Toronto. The plan is centred on a proposed station site of the Spadina Subway extension.

The current uses on the subject lands include the UPS parcel distribution centre at the corner of Jane and Steeles, small industrial condominiums mid-block and an office building at the corner of Keele and Steeles. The remainder of the lands are currently vacant. The Region owns approximately 2 ha in immediate proximity to the proposed subway station location.

3.2 Current Official Plan Designation

The subject lands are currently designated “Urban Area” in the York Region Official Plan, and designated “Employment Area” by the City of Vaughan’s OPA 450 (approved in 1996). The “Employment Area” designation is further refined by designating the lands fronting on Steeles Avenue as “Prestige Area” and the internal lands “Employment Area General”.

The “Prestige Area” designation permits a wide range of industrial, office, business and civic uses. The “Employment Area General” designation permits “Prestige Area” uses, plus outdoor storage, a full range of processing, warehousing and storage operations and transportation and distribution facilities.

3.3 The Secondary Plan

The planned function of this Secondary Plan is to create a vibrant live-work community consisting of mixed use higher density buildings in a compact pedestrian-friendly urban form. The Plan is expected to accommodate 5,500 residential units for a potential population of 11,000 persons and 83,000 sq.m. of office/commercial space generating approximately 4,000 employees. The proposed land uses, densities and built form will be in response to, and supportive of, the higher order transit infrastructure plans, including the Spadina Subway extension, a commuter parking lot and a bus terminal. The Plan also acknowledges and complements the development potential and academic function of York University to the south. The development densities range from 4.0 Floor Space Index (FSI) at the subway station to 1.5 FSI at the greatest distance from the station. The progression of density is illustrated in *Attachment #2* to this report.

The urban design section of the Plan encourages buildings to be designed with built form and massing that is non-automobile focused but rather, pedestrian and transit supportive. These principles mirror those contained in the Region’s Transit Oriented Design Guidelines.

3.4 Comments from Other Agencies

Planning staff from York Region and Vaughan have met with Toronto Planning staff. Toronto staff wanted to better understand the implications of the proposed densities, the phasing policies and the provision of adequate community services. It was explained by Vaughan staff that the FSI densities are applied on a net land basis plus the land for the east-west road. This provided certainty for Toronto that the amount of development would not increase beyond the maximum prescribed density. It should be also noted that Toronto’s update of the York University Secondary Plan is anticipated to be similar, in terms of densities and built form, to Vaughan’s Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan.

The main issue Toronto has is in regards to the strength of the implementation policies of the Secondary Plan: specifically, available road capacity and the amount of development that can occur. Toronto staff suggest that the amount of development should be more stringently controlled prior to the construction of the Spadina Subway extension.

In response to Toronto's issue, there are specific references to phasing in the Secondary Plan that determine when and how much development can occur. Phases are to be based upon the existence of, or commitment to construct: components of the local road network (including the east-west primary collector); bus-rapid transit; the subway; and public and community facilities. Community services programming will be conducted in conjunction with Vaughan's Parks Master Plan review currently underway.

Toronto staff have indicated that they support the vision of OPA 620 subject to the required infrastructure being in place and inclusion of modifications 4 and 5. Modifications 4 and 5, as set out in *Attachment #1*, address the issues raised by Toronto staff.

The Infrastructure Planning Branch has identified the transportation, water and sanitary sewer infrastructure necessary to service the Secondary Plan area. Their detailed comments are outlined in *Attachment #3*.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Vaughan Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan (OPA 620) was adopted by Vaughan Council after extensive study and public consultation. OPA 620 represents good planning that proceeded through a comprehensive public process. OPA 620 is also consistent with Provincial policy initiatives and the York Region Official Plan. The Secondary Plan facilitates the development of higher density office/commercial and residential uses that help support higher order rapid transit infrastructure and, specifically, the extension of the Spadina Subway.

4.1 Provincial Policy Initiatives

4.1.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) prescribes policies to encourage efficient development and land use patterns. 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 Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan is consistent with the PPS. The Secondary Plan area is intended to be developed with high density mixed use buildings to take advantage of the planned rapid transit infrastructure.

4.1.2 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) prescribes policies pertaining to: where and how to grow, infrastructure required to support growth, the protection of natural systems, prime agricultural areas, aggregate resources and renewable and non-renewable resources. The Growth Plan encourages development that:

- Is in built-up areas of the community through intensification.

- Reduces the dependency on the automobile through the 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 space and easy access to local stores and services.

The Growth Plan also specifies policies for Major Transit Station Areas. These areas should plan to achieve:

- Increased residential and employment densities that support and ensure the viability of existing and planned transit service levels.
- A mix of residential, office, institutional, and commercial development wherever possible.

The planned function of OPA 620 is consistent with the above noted Growth Plan policies as it is within an urban built-up area; encourages the highest concentration and density of commercial and residential uses to be located next to the proposed Steeles West Subway Station; and, encourages mixed-use built forms in a compact urban environment with planned open space and pedestrian links.

The Growth Plan also permits municipalities, through a secondary plan process, to convert employment areas to non-employment uses, subject to:

- 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 for the long term for employment purposes for which they are designated.
- f) Cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

OPA 620 is redesignating the subject lands from employment uses to a mix of employment and residential uses. The need for the conversion is borne, in part, to take advantage of the planned provision of higher order public transit infrastructure.

The City of Vaughan currently has the highest proportion of designated employment lands in the Region at about 48%, which are primarily focussed on the 400 series highway corridors and rail corridors. These employment lands are located in the westerly portion of the municipality. Vaughan also has recently adopted an Official Plan Amendment protecting for more employment lands along the Highway 400 corridor north of Teston Road.

The proposed mixed use compact urban form is consistent with the other growth policies of the Growth Plan.

The Spadina Subway extension is proposed to traverse through the York University lands. Dialogue between Toronto, Vaughan and York Region staff has taken place on Toronto and Vaughan's respective development concepts for the area. There is a collaborative effort to plan for a cohesive and seamless district on both sides of Steeles Avenue.

4.2 Regional Official Plan

The York Region Official Plan encourages a balance of employment and residential land uses while protecting and enhancing the natural environment and cultural heritage facilities. The most intense and diverse land uses are encouraged to locate along major public transit routes.

The York Region Official Plan identifies Jane Street as a Regional Corridor and Keele Street and Steeles Avenue as Local Corridors. Regional Corridor policies apply to Local Corridors with rapid transit services and facilities. Specific to this amendment area is the identified Vaughan North-South Corridor which connects the Vaughan Corporate Centre, through York University with the rest of the Toronto Transit Commission subway system. Regional Corridor policies encourage developments that are mixed-use, transit supportive in density and built form, and consider urban design policies that create a strong and vibrant public realm. Pedestrian links by way of underground connections are supported, consistent with the Guidelines for Transit Oriented Development recently endorsed by Regional Council. OPA 620, as modified, complies with these Regional policies.

4.3 Spadina Subway Extension

On March 23rd, 2006, the Province announced funding of \$670 million towards the extension of the University-Spadina subway line up through York University and into York Region terminating at the Vaughan Corporate Centre with a station located in the centre of this Secondary Plan area. The total project has been estimated at a cost of \$2 billion. The balance of the funding is to be through cost sharing between municipal and federal levels of government.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Spadina Subway extension from Steeles Avenue to the Vaughan Corporate Centre was part of the undertaking in the *Highway 7 Corridor and Vaughan North South Link Public Transit Improvement EA*. When this EA was submitted, the final alignment of the subway extension crossing Steeles Avenue had not been selected. The Ministry of the Environment requested the Region to carry out a supplementary analysis to examine the effects of the subway construction and operations for the portion of the extension connecting the preferred alignment in the Vaughan Corporate Centre to the TTC's preferred alignment at Steeles Avenue. The EA supplemental work to define a final alignment is currently ongoing.

This Secondary Plan area had been identified as a location for further development intensification supported by rapid transit prior to the announcement of the subway extension. While the possibility for the subway has been protected for through both the Vaughan and Regional Official Plans, it was anticipated through the *Highway 7 Corridor and Vaughan North South Link Public Transit Improvement EA* that rapid public transit would be implemented to serve this area.

The land use policies of this proposed Plan are supportive of the implementation of the subway extension.

4.4 Landowner Issues

York Region has received correspondence from one land owner stating their objection to the Official Plan Amendment. The subject property is located on the northwest corner of Keele Street and Steeles Avenue West, at the extreme east end of the Amendment area. Their objections relate to: land uses being too restrictive, density calculations, definition of mixed use, parkland, noise and vibration studies, urban design policies, roads and parking. A copy of their letter is attached to this report as *Attachment #4*.

The process leading to the adoption of OPA 620 has been open and consultative. Individual landowner participation and input were considered by Vaughan's Planning staff. The Secondary Plan policies have been formulated to promote good planning principles, in balance, for the entire Secondary Plan area. These policies also considered the Secondary Plan area relative to its immediate environs: the City of Vaughan and the City of Toronto, and represents good planning.

4.5 Modifications

Attachment #1 contains three modifications to OPA 620. Modification #1 corrects the boundary of OPA 620. The adopted version erroneously showed the boundary covering extraneous lands. Modification #2 makes a minor change to Section 8.1 b) to generically refer to all landowners rather than naming one specific landowner. Modification #3 changes Section 5.2 i) by ensuring development will be fully integrated, both above and below grade, at the subway station.

The City of Vaughan Planning staff concurs with these modifications.

4.6 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Steeles Corridor – Jane to Keele Secondary Plan provides 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

Attachment #5 to this report provides the evaluation of the Fiscal Impact Analysis prepared by the Regional Finance Department in conjunction with other Regional

departments. A summary fiscal impact review of the Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan indicates that the proposed development within the Plan will not adversely impact the Regional tax rate (tax levy). The infrastructure required within the OPA is part of the broader system of Regional service improvements that have been identified in long term servicing master plans. The cost of these Regional works are scheduled to be recovered through the uniform Region wide development charge, based on the growth anticipated to occur within the Region.

The specific financial implication of the Spadina Subway extension will be subject to a separate review exercise.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The recommendations of this report are consistent with the decision of the City of Vaughan to adopt Amendment No. 620.

7. CONCLUSION

The approval of the Steele Corridor – Jane to Keele Secondary Plan (OPA 620) will enhance both the Region's and Vaughan's efforts in promoting the development of mixed use communities. The Secondary Plan provides additional urban employment and residential uses in a compact urban built form and provides significant support, through its enhanced densities and design form, for the proposed new subway extension.

It is recommended that the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services issue the Notice to approve OPA 620, subject to the modifications set out in *Attachment #1*.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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