

## IV EMPLOYMENT LAND CONVERSION

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The appropriateness of permitting changes to the City's employment land supply is considered within the context of the adequacy of the supply to accommodate growth projected by the Province and the Region, as well as new policy directions to minimize the conversion of employment land to non-employment uses, particularly the specific tests that are set out in the *Growth Plan*. Section 2.2.6.5 states that:

Municipalities may permit conversion of lands within employment areas, 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.

For the purposes of this policy, major retail uses are considered non-employment uses.

Within this context, it is our view that the vast majority of the City's employment land supply should be retained for continued employment land use. Demand for employment land is anticipated to remain strong in the GTA and City of Vaughan, and virtually the entire supply is competitive and suitable for continued employment use.

This is not to say, however, that no change in employment land should ever be permitted. There will clearly be some cases where a conversion of employment land is considered to be good planning based on site-specific reasons. Some change may allow the City to make more efficient use of the existing urban land supply. Other changes may allow the City to take better advantage of planned transit investments or rationalize the current greenfield supply to limit the amount of new land designations required. It is also worth noting that the Regional employment forecasts contained in the *Growth Plan* account for some shifts in the employment land base and the evolution of older industrial areas over time, including a wider range of use or limited conversions to non-employment uses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For details on the method used to create the Growth Plan employment allocations, see the Growth Outlook for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, *Hemson Consulting Ltd.*, 2005.

In the City of Vaughan, the following sites may be suitable for other uses for compelling site-specific reasons:

- Some parcels within the Highway 7 corridor;
- Some arterial frontage lands within the Weston – 400 North employment area;
- A smaller industrial area adjacent to the Keele Valley Landfill site;
- Two isolated remnant sites: the Hayhoe Mills site off Islington Avenue in Woodbridge and motel site on the northwest corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets;
- Some lands in the Elder Mills employment area in northwest Vaughan; and
- The Rutherford GO Station parking lot.

Each is discussed in turn in the following sections.

#### **A. HIGHWAY 7 CORRIDOR**

In 2001, the City of Vaughan initiated a review of land use planning policies in the Highway 7 corridor. The area includes lands generally along Highway 7 from the City’s western boundary to just beyond the railway tracks east of Keele Street. Two land use planning studies were prepared as part of the review and completed in September 2004.<sup>1</sup>

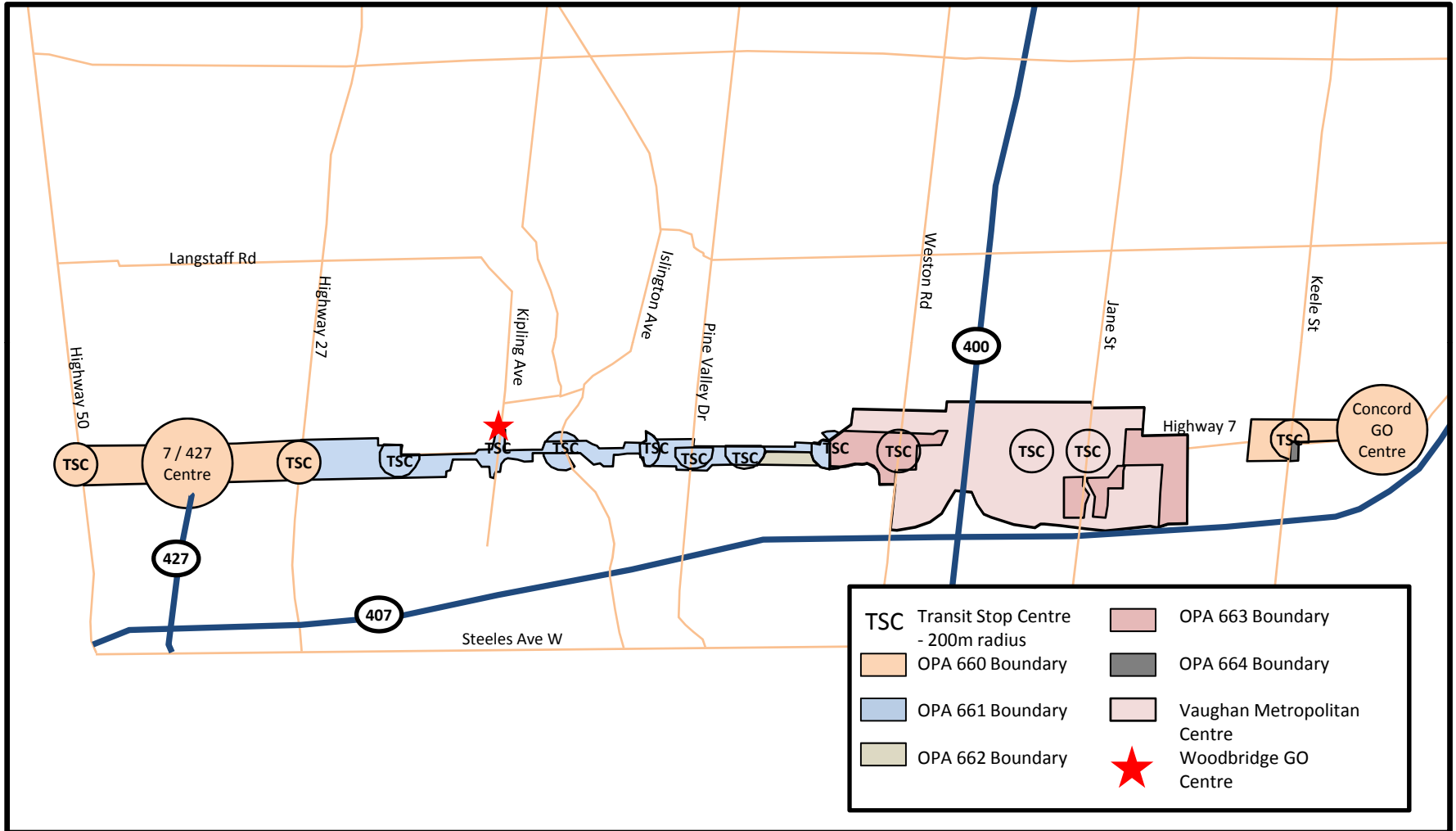
Based on the findings of the two studies, the City of Vaughan developed a new vision for the Highway 7 corridor: one that over time transforms the existing and developing land use pattern from a mainly low-intensity form and use to a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented environment. The vision will take advantage of planned transit investment along Highway 7 by encouraging more redevelopment and intensification.

The vision was implemented through City of Vaughan Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) number 660, 661, 662, 663 and 664 (the “Highway 7 Amendments”). The Highway 7 Amendments were adopted by Vaughan Council on June 25, 2007, and are illustrated on the map on the following page.

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<sup>1</sup> See Highway 7 Land Use Futures Study and Jane/7 Employment Area Redevelopment Study both of which were prepared by the Planning Partnership in association with a number of other consulting firms.

# City of Vaughan Highway 7 Amendments



Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on York Region's Report No. 7 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, *Vaughan's Highway 7 Corridor: Official Plan Amendment Nos. 660, 661, 662, 663 and 664.*



On June 3, 2008, OPA 661 was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) by one of the landowners in the area. OPAs 662, 663 and 664 were approved by York Region on July 17, 2008. OPA 660 was approved, in part, by York Region on August 1, 2008 with deferrals corresponding to the Region's concerns with proposed conversions of employment lands to non-employment uses:

- Although OPA 660 states that residential uses not be permitted west of Highway 27, some employment land areas are affected by the proposed changes. OPA 660 expands to include residential land uses currently designated for employment in two areas: one east of Highway 27 in the City's western end and the other around Keele Street in the east.
- The Region of York is concerned about the potential loss of employment land in these locations as it relates to its own growth management objectives and new Provincial policies, in particular the Section 2.2.6.5 conversion tests set out in the *Growth Plan*.
- As a result, York Region has recommended a deferral of the policies permitting residential uses in employment designations within OPA 660, pending additional work undertaken in this report. The deferral applies to the two geographic areas noted above, identified by the Region as the "West" and "East" deferral areas.

The Region's two deferral areas are illustrated on the map on the following page.

The focus of this report is on the Region's deferral areas and the economic planning implications of adding residential permission to lands currently designated for employment use in these locations. An opinion is not provided regarding the balance of amendments affecting lands in the Highway 7 corridor, as they have been adopted by the City of Vaughan and approved by the Region.

#### **1. Highway 7 Amendments Advance a Number of Sound Planning Objectives**

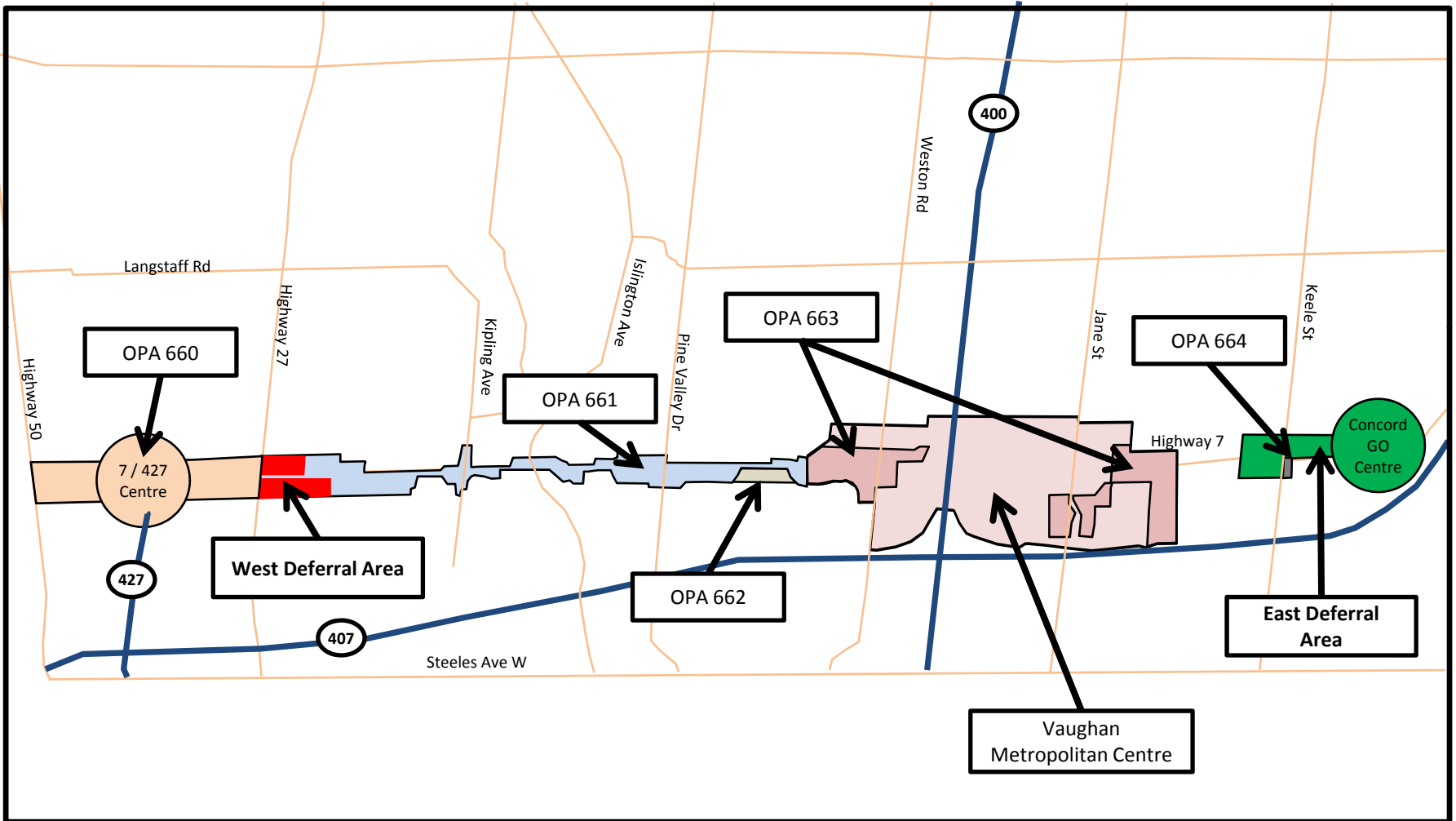
The Highway 7 Amendments, as recently approved, take a long-term view towards encouraging higher-intensity urban form and activities that will best support the transit corridor. In doing so, they advance a number of sound planning objectives, including transit-supportive development and intensification in keeping with Provincial, Regional and City planning policy.

In the context of the City of Vaughan, which is a relatively young community, the Highway 7 corridor is developed largely with first generation urban uses, which are located within the corridor to take advantage of the high traffic volumes and relatively easy access to the regional transportation system.

Some of the areas are vacant or underdeveloped, but for the most part, lands fronting Highway 7 have been built relatively recently for highway commercial and business uses along its length. Recognizing these conditions, it is important to plan for a range of land uses within the corridor.



# City of Vaughan Highway 7 Amendments and Regional Deferral Areas



Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on York Region's Report No. 7 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, *Vaughan's Highway 7 Corridor: Official Plan Amendment Nos. 660, 661, 662, 663 and 664.*





To this end, the Highway 7 Amendments:

- Set out density targets, permitted land uses as well as built form and urban design frameworks for identified redevelopment areas which are intended to support more transit-oriented development and a prestige urban environment; and
- Establish a new designation, *Prestige Area–Centres and Highway 7 Corridor*, which permits office, business, retail, institutional and civic uses and high-density residential, thereby facilitating the intensification of Highway 7 into a mixed-use transit corridor.

By setting out new density targets and land use designations, the Highway 7 Amendments support a number of sound planning objectives, including:

- Provincial planning objectives to encourage the efficient use of infrastructure to support growth in a compact form and encourage transit-oriented development in key locations;
- The Region’s *Centres and Corridors Strategy* as implemented through Regional Official Plan Amendment 43, the foundation of which is a system of corridors focussed on rapid transit, including Highway 7 in the City of Vaughan;
- The City’s objectives for the VMC, which is located within the Highway 7 corridor and contains the City’s Urban Growth Centre, identified by the *Growth Plan* as a focus for higher-order development; and

- The City’s broader vision for growth, which is to encourage a shift away from traditional suburban development and towards more intensive, mixed use and transit-supportive development.

The Highway 7 corridor is considered to have great potential to achieve these planning objectives as a result of its central location within the GTAH and planned transportation improvements that will provide future connections to the Region’s VIVA transit system, GO Transit, York University and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC).

## **2. Land Areas Involved Represent a Large Theoretical Development Capacity**

The Highway 7 Amendments permit a wider range of use for the retail frontages, small enclaves of older industrial use and isolated pockets of under-utilized or remnant parcels. Considering the economics of urban redevelopment, taken together the land areas involved represent a fairly large theoretical development capacity. The following points warrant attention:

- The total land area of the Highway 7 Amendments (including the Region’s deferral areas) is approximately 500 net ha. A typical density for a large apartment building is approximately 250 units per net ha.
- Assuming that half of this total land area develops at this density, the ultimate capacity would be over 60,000 apartment units. Not all of this land area, of course, can be expected to develop.

- Through its background work to the draft official plan, Urban Strategies Inc. identified a number of “opportunity” areas, characterized by older or underutilized parcels that are considered more likely to redevelop in the near term.
- Together, these opportunity areas make up an area of approximately 225 net ha. Based on the development of a range of housing units, including some lower-density forms, the ultimate unit capacity is estimated to be approximately 16,000 units.
- Excluding from this estimate the Region’s deferral areas the potential is reduced to approximately 14,000 units, which would still be a large amount of intensification over the planning period.

There is also a theoretical potential to accommodate intensification in any number of other locations throughout the community. As a result, additional units are not required to meet the *Growth Plan* conformity objectives and will not likely be taken up in the current planning period to 2031.

### **3. Potential to Threaten the Stability of Adjacent Employment Land Areas Is a Concern**

Over the planning period to 2031, a certain amount of redevelopment can be anticipated to occur in the Highway 7 corridor, mainly focussed in the older areas and parcels that are economically underutilized. Encouraging change for these parcels is good planning.

Encouraging change on parcels that accommodate existing and viable industrial uses is more problematic. In particular, the introduction of high-density residential use creates a significant risk of destabilizing adjacent employment areas for the following reasons:

- While every site has its own characteristics, it is generally understood that where demand exists high-density residential development land is more valuable than industrial land.
- Because high-density residential development land is generally more valuable than industrial land, adding such permissions may create a “value gap” with the adjacent occupied industrial lands;
- Over time, this value gap has the potential to lower the perceived risk of failure in converting other employment lands to residential use. This change, in turn, has the effect of increasing the value expectations of nearby land owners potentially shifting their primary interests from investment in and management of industrial buildings to a speculative interest in land use conversion; and
- Under this scenario, additional redesignation applications could then be made for adjacent and nearby lands, which could result in further erosion of the lands designated for employment uses within the employment areas abutting the Highway 7 corridor.

While in the short term the value gap may not be large, over the long term it may widen as the existing industrial buildings age and depreciate and, hence, the incentive to pursue a change in land use rises.

#### 4. Region's Deferral Areas Are Considered Within the Context of These Conclusions

From an economic planning perspective, it is of concern that relatively little in the way of redevelopment may occur over the planning period, given the theoretical development capacity both within the Highway 7 corridor and other locations, such as the VMC. In our view, this condition could potentially lead to a destabilization of existing industrial areas through upward pressure on land values.

It is also important to remember that intensification, in and of itself, is not the only goal of the *Growth Plan*, which at its foundation is seeking to create more “complete communities” and livable neighbourhoods with a balance of jobs, housing and recreational opportunities.

Within the context of these conclusions, our opinion is that residential uses are, for the most part, not appropriate in the Region's deferral areas. There is no need to provide additional unit capacity from a demand or planning perspective and, in our view, the potential for area destabilization is high. Neither objective is consistent with Regional or Provincial planning policy, nor with the City of Vaughan's best economic interests.

The only area where residential uses may be appropriate is east of the railway tracks in the east deferral area, as part of a mixed use node centred on the future GO station. These conclusions are addressed in more detail below.

#### West Deferral Area

The West Deferral Area is characterized by relatively new employment land development including a number of facilities occupied by Royal Plastics, one of the City's largest employers. These uses should be maintained as part of the economic base along with other economic uses in the West Deferral Area.

There is also no clear boundary between the Highway 7 corridor and the abutting employment land areas, suggesting that the potential for destabilization would be particularly high.

For these reasons, our opinion is that the introduction of residential uses into the designated employment lands in the West Deferral Area is not appropriate.

#### East Deferral Area

Similarly, the introduction of residential uses is not considered appropriate for most of the east deferral areas, in particular the area between the GO Rail line and the CN Concord Rail Yard:

- Like the West deferral area, the area to the west of the railway tracks in the East Deferral Area is occupied by relatively new employment land development and contains a number of major industrial users, such as Weldtube Canada and National Sports;
- Although some of the uses within this area are in a quasi-retail form, they still serve industrial-type functions and are not clearly separated from abutting employment land uses to the north and south; and

- As a result, it is our view that the potential for area destabilization is high.
- West of Keele Street, the East Deferral Area is in close proximity to a major element of the City's economic infrastructure, the CN Rail Yards, compounding the risk of area destabilization and creating the potential for land use conflict between the rail yards and residential uses.

Based on the *Growth Plan* tests for conversion, both the West Deferral Area and the portion of the East Deferral Area west of the GO Rail line are both conversions of employment land that are not considered to be good planning. In our view, the proposed conversions of employment land do not meet the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 and are therefore contrary to the *Growth Plan* criteria:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is no need for the conversion because there is a sufficient potential supply of lands for mixed use development within the Highway 7 corridor and other identified intensification corridors and sites in the City, such as the VMC.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Both the employment land in the west deferral area and the portion of the east deferral area, west of the railway tracks, is included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and therefore required to meet the allocated employment forecasts. In our view, conversions of these lands will impair the City's ability to

achieve the forecasts, particularly as it relates to the risk of employment area destabilization.

- 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

Permitting residential uses is likely to have a destabilizing effect on remaining employment land in the Highway 7 area, by lowering the perceived risk of failure in seeking redesignation of other parcels in the vicinity. This will adversely affect the overall viability of the abutting employment areas.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is existing and planned infrastructure to accommodate either residential or employment uses. Transit upgrades, in particular, are in place to serve both residential and employment uses in appropriate locations.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The east and west deferral lands are included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and are therefore required to meet the allocated employment forecasts.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

**5. Residential Use Is Only Appropriate East of the Railway Tracks, Around the Potential Concord GO Station**

The area east of the railway tracks is distinguished from the rest of the deferral areas by its proximity to the proposed Concord GO station, a clear policy interest in encouraging mixed-use development in appropriate locations to promote transit, and separation from the larger, abutting employment areas observed elsewhere in the corridor.

The area is also not occupied by active industrial uses. Rather, the area is characterized by older agricultural use and remnant rural-type use that predates the more substantial urban development in the rest of the Highway 7 corridor:

- To the north of Highway 7 is Concord Floral, which has been growing roses since the 1920s; and
- To the south of Highway 7 are two uses: a garden centre and a recreational vehicle dealer that have been in operation for some time. The areas to the south of Highway 7 are not within a designated employment area, and are included only for the purposes of providing a general area description.

Residential uses may be appropriate for these lands given their clear separation from the remaining employment areas and potential to contribute to the development of a mixed-use node focussed on the proposed Concord GO station.

In our view, the proposed conversions of employment land east of the GO Rail line satisfy the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is a need for the conversion from a site-specific planning perspective. Additional high-density residential unit capacity is considered desirable particularly in this location to support the proposed Concord GO station.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Conversion of employment land in this location will not impair the City's ability to achieve the employment allocations. The railway provides a clear boundary to employment areas to the west. The lands are not occupied by active industrial uses, but rather remnant rural-type uses around which a mix of urban development has occurred over time.

- 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

Permitting residential uses in this location is less likely to have a destabilizing effect on other employment areas abutting the Highway 7 Corridor. Other parts of the Regional deferral lands form a part of larger employment areas. In this case a clear land use boundary exists in the form of the railway tracks, making the parcels to the east relatively more isolated from existing employment areas.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

As noted, there is existing and planned infrastructure to accommodate either residential or employment uses. The proposed Concord GO station makes this location unique in terms of future transit access.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The Regional employment forecast in the *Growth Plan* accounts for the continued evolution of older employment areas, including a wider range of use or limited conversions to non-employment uses in such circumstances. A sufficient supply of employment land is being provided to accommodate long-term growth, particularly the Highway 400 north lands, which are anticipated to be highly competitive.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

On the whole, the Highway 7 Amendments advance a number of sound planning objectives. In our view, however, within the Region's deferral areas the only location where residential uses may be appropriate is at the proposed Concord GO Station, as part of a future mixed-use node. There is already a large potential supply of intensification sites available throughout the community and already approved by the Region in the Highway 7 corridor.

## **B. ARTERIAL FRONTAGE LANDS WITHIN THE WESTON–400 NORTH EMPLOYMENT AREA**

Within the context of the City's overall employment land needs, no change is recommended for the interior portions of any of the major employment areas. Some change, however, may be appropriate for arterial frontage lands in locations that are planned for higher-order transit, or are considered to have a strong potential for redevelopment.

In particular, a change in use may be appropriate for the frontage lands on the south side of Rutherford Road, between Highway 400 and Weston road. These lands provide an opportunity for commercial mixed-use corridor development to support the City's planning objectives, as well as other transit-supportive development goals identified as desirable by the Region and Province.

Previously, a somewhat larger area was identified for a residential mixed-use designation: one that extended south from Rutherford Road to the extension of Bass Pro Mills Drive, which provides access to Highway 400. Upon further review and analysis, however, it was determined that this area, previously identified for a residential mixed-use designation, should be retained as employment land and that the frontage lands should be limited to non-residential mixed-use development.

The lands in question are shown on the map on the following page, distinguishing between the area that is considered acceptable for commercial mixed use and the area that is recommended to remain in employment land use.

The area that is not recommended for mixed use should be retained in an employment designation for a number of reasons, primarily related to its strong locational advantage and marketability:

- The Weston 400 North employment area is one of the most successful business parks in the City of Vaughan. It forms part of a much larger and almost fully developed area around the CN Concord Yard, which contains a major economic concentration and is healthy and competitive for continued employment land use.
- The larger area originally considered for a mixed-use designation has excellent transportation access, particularly to Highway 400, as well as both Weston Road and Rutherford Road. It is very well-suited and marketable as employment land and does not face major physical constraints to development.
- Most important, the area also contains some of the few remaining greenfield employment land sites in central Vaughan and is therefore considered to be a very important asset for accommodating new industrial investment and development.

Based on the *Growth Plan* tests for conversion, conversion of this area to non-employment use is not considered to be good planning and does not meet the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 and is therefore contrary to the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

The area is highly competitive and marketable for employment land and should be retained in that designation to accommodate long-term growth.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Like the Regional deferral lands, the area is included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and therefore required to meet the allocated employment forecasts.

- 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

Considering the size of the area, permitting residential mixed-use development would have a major destabilizing effect, which will adversely affect the overall viability of the abutting employment areas.





# WESTON 400 NORTH EMPLOYMENT AREA LANDS





- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is existing and planned infrastructure to accommodate either residential or employment uses. Transit upgrades, in particular, are in place to serve both residential and employment uses in appropriate locations.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The area is included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and is therefore required to meet the allocated employment forecasts.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

In our view, the larger area in question should be retained for employment land purposes. From a site-specific perspective, however, it may be appropriate to consider allowing for a pattern of commercial mixed-use development along the Rutherford Road frontage. The frontage lands are considered appropriate for a wider range of uses for a number of reasons:

- The lands are partially developed, including new retail uses at the Weston road interchange in the form of restaurants, convenience retail, banks and other population-serving activities.

- To the east of the new retail at Weston Road, the lands are occupied by a range of primarily low-intensity land uses such as open space and playing fields and a metal recycling facility.
- The surrounding pattern of development together with the low-intensity, primarily commercial character of the frontage lands speaks to the potential for more intense mix of employment uses.
- The main opportunity for the frontage lands is to provide additional commercial services for the local population and improve the streetscape with more pedestrian-oriented uses. Residential uses are not considered appropriate because of the potential to destabilize the larger employment area to the south.
- Permitting a wider mix of uses would expand and solidify the mixed use node that has already been established at the Rutherford and Weston Road interchange. The frontage lands are within walking distance of York Region transit and within walking distance to the Vaughan Mills retail centre.

In our view, the proposed conversion of employment land for the Rutherford Road frontage west of Highway 400 satisfies the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is a need for the conversion from a site-specific planning perspective. Most of the lands are occupied with existing retail and other low-intensity uses. The site is near transit and other retail uses. A more efficient use of the lands would be to include them within the mixed use node that has already been established. Additional residential use is not required to support the node.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Conversion of employment land in this location will not impair the City's ability to achieve its economic objectives. A sufficient supply of employment land is being provided to accommodate long-term growth, particularly the Highway 400 north lands. The lands are already occupied with a mix of uses, including retail.

- 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

The frontage lands are not integral to the remaining employment area. Change in land use for the frontage lands will primarily serve to expand and solidify the mixed-use node that has already been established, including Vaughan Mills and surrounding lands that are part of the node. Buffering of the employment uses to the south will need to be a priority.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is existing and planned transportation infrastructure to accommodate either residential or employment uses, including access to York Region transit.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

Most of the existing development is in retail and other non-employment uses. We also understand them to be planned by the City to accommodate retail and commercial uses in the future. As such, the frontage lands have already been effectively removed from an employment land designation.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

The frontage lands on the south side of Rutherford Road, between Highway 400 and Weston Road provide an opportunity to encourage mixed-use corridor development in a location that has not been industrial in character for some time. Providing such a change in use would make more efficient use of the frontage lands, and expand and solidify the mixed-use node that is already established.

### C. LANDS ADJACENT TO THE KEELE VALLEY LANDFILL SITE

In addition to these arterial frontage lands, there are some older occupied industrial areas, outside of the City's designated employment areas, that are considered unlikely to redevelop for modern industrial uses. Consideration for new uses, generally through comprehensive area-wide studies, may be appropriate for these areas. In particular, there is a small industrial area adjacent to the Keele Valley Landfill, which has been identified as suitable for a wider range of use, including residential, for a number of reasons:

- The area is abutted by residential use to the south and west. According to City of Vaughan staff, this condition is creating conflicts between existing industrial users and residents in abutting neighbourhoods;
- The area is characterized by a number of older and land-extensive uses, which include a lumber yard and roof truss maker (the Alpa Lumber Group) and aggregate operations and concrete producers (Dufferin Concrete Maple facility), as well as some newer uses such as a self-storage facility; and
- According to City staff, local residents are increasingly objecting to the lights, noise and other externalities commonly associated with normal industrial-type operations.

The lands are illustrated on the map on the following page. In the short term, the area will continue to function as currently planned. Over the long term, however, a controlled transition to other uses may be appropriate should local land use conditions change or conflicts worsen. City staff are of the view that the rail line is a more appropriate boundary between residential and employment uses, and that a policy framework should be put in place now so land use change can be planned comprehensively and on an area-wide basis.

In our view, the proposed conversion of employment land for the lands adjacent to the Keele Valley landfill site satisfies the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

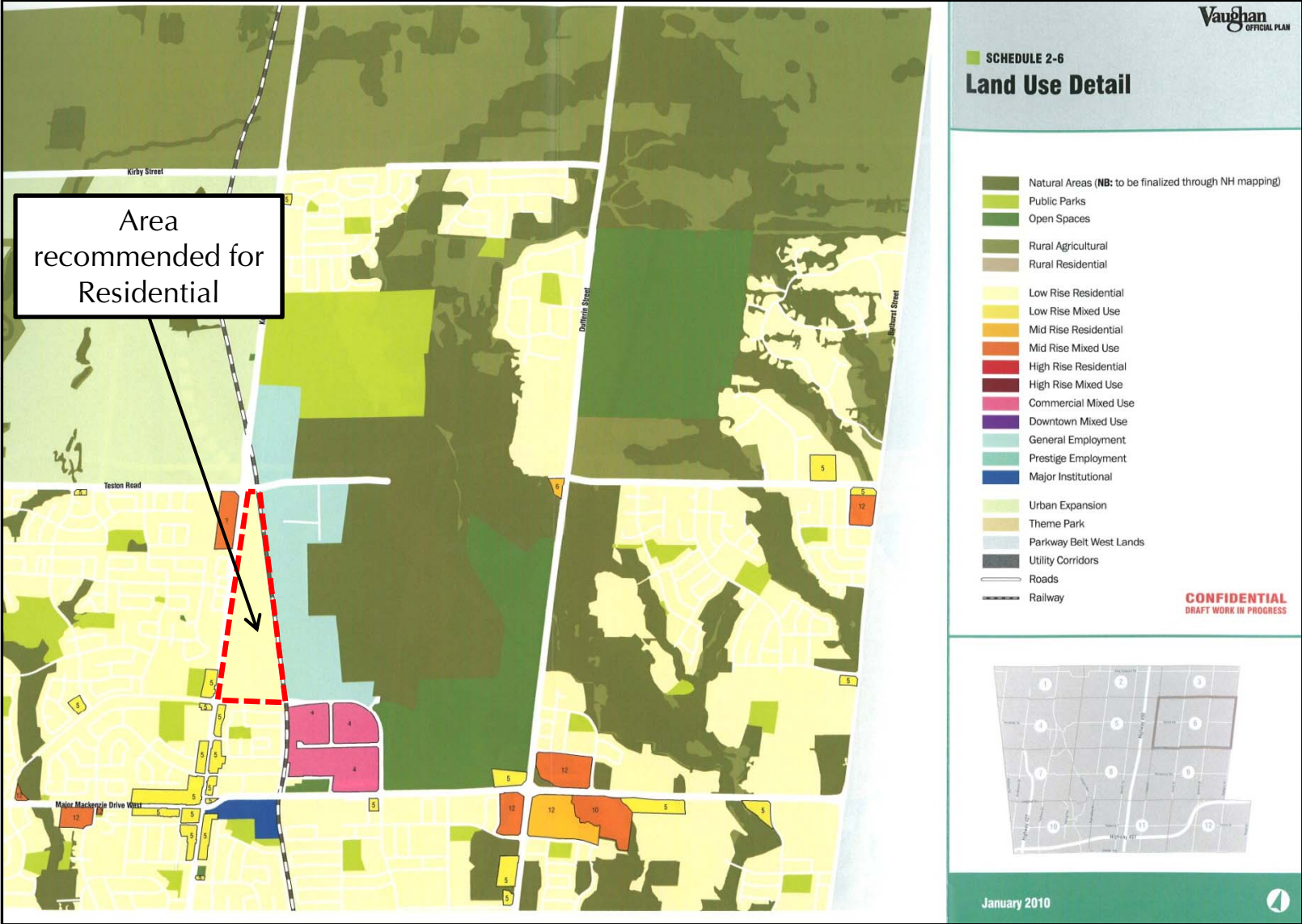
There is a need for the conversion to address growing land use conflicts and to provide for a controlled transition and comprehensive planning for other land uses over time.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Conversion of employment land in this location will not impair the City's ability to achieve its economic objectives. The area is characterized by a number of land-extensive uses that may relocate over time.



# LANDS ADJACENT TO THE KEELE VALLEY LANDFILL SITE







- 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

In the short term, the conversion will not affect the overall viability of the area which is anticipated to continue to function as planned. Over time, an evolution to other land uses will facilitate achievement of other policies of the *Growth Plan*, including intensification. As this occurs, the issue of viability will become less relevant.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is existing and planned transportation infrastructure to accommodate either residential or employment uses.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The Regional employment forecast in the *Growth Plan* accounts for the continued evolution of older employment areas, including a wider range of use or limited conversions to non-employment uses in such circumstances.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

The small industrial area adjacent to the Keele Valley landfill site is identified as suitable for conversion as it is abutted on two sides by residential use and the land base is made up of a number of land-extensive uses. The current pattern of development combined with a high level of interface with abutting residential land uses suggests that a wider range of uses may be appropriate.

#### **D. TWO ISOLATED REMNANT SITES ALSO INCLUDED FOR POTENTIAL CONVERSION**

Within the City of Vaughan, there are some isolated remnant sites outside of the designated employment areas which may be suitable for other land uses. These sites are different than sites and parcels *within* the City's employment areas that are likely to remain vacant over the long term as a result of physical or other constraints to development, referred to as "long-term vacancy" for employment land planning. No change should be permitted for scattered vacant sites within the City's designated employment areas.

On the isolated sites outside of the employment areas, however, some change may be warranted. Two such sites have been identified in Vaughan to consider now for potential conversion: the "Hayhoe Mills" site off Islington Avenue in Woodbridge and the motel site at the northwest corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets. Each is discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

### 1. Hayhoe Mills Site at Islington Avenue and Pine Grove Road

The Hayhoe Mills site is located on Pine Grove Road, east of Islington Avenue in the community of Woodbridge, as shown on the map on the following page. The site was the location of a historic four mill which dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century until June of 2008, when it was destroyed by fire. The site is now vacant and has been identified as suitable for alternative use for a number of reasons:

- The site is considered unlikely to redevelop as currently designated, and would likely create land use conflicts if developed for employment use;
- The site's location within the urban valley lands system may also limit the uses that may be appropriate for the site;
- The site is abutted by a number of non-employment uses, including a seniors home to the west and a low-density residential community to the south; and
- In our view, conversion of the site would make better use of the existing urban land supply in this location, therefore advancing other City and Provincial planning goals including intensification.

In our view, the proposed conversion of the Hayhoe Mills site satisfies the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is a need for the conversion to make better use of the urban land supply and avoid potential land use conflicts with surrounding uses.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Conversion of employment land in this location will not impair the City's ability to achieve its economic objectives. It is an isolated, vacant, remnant rural site.

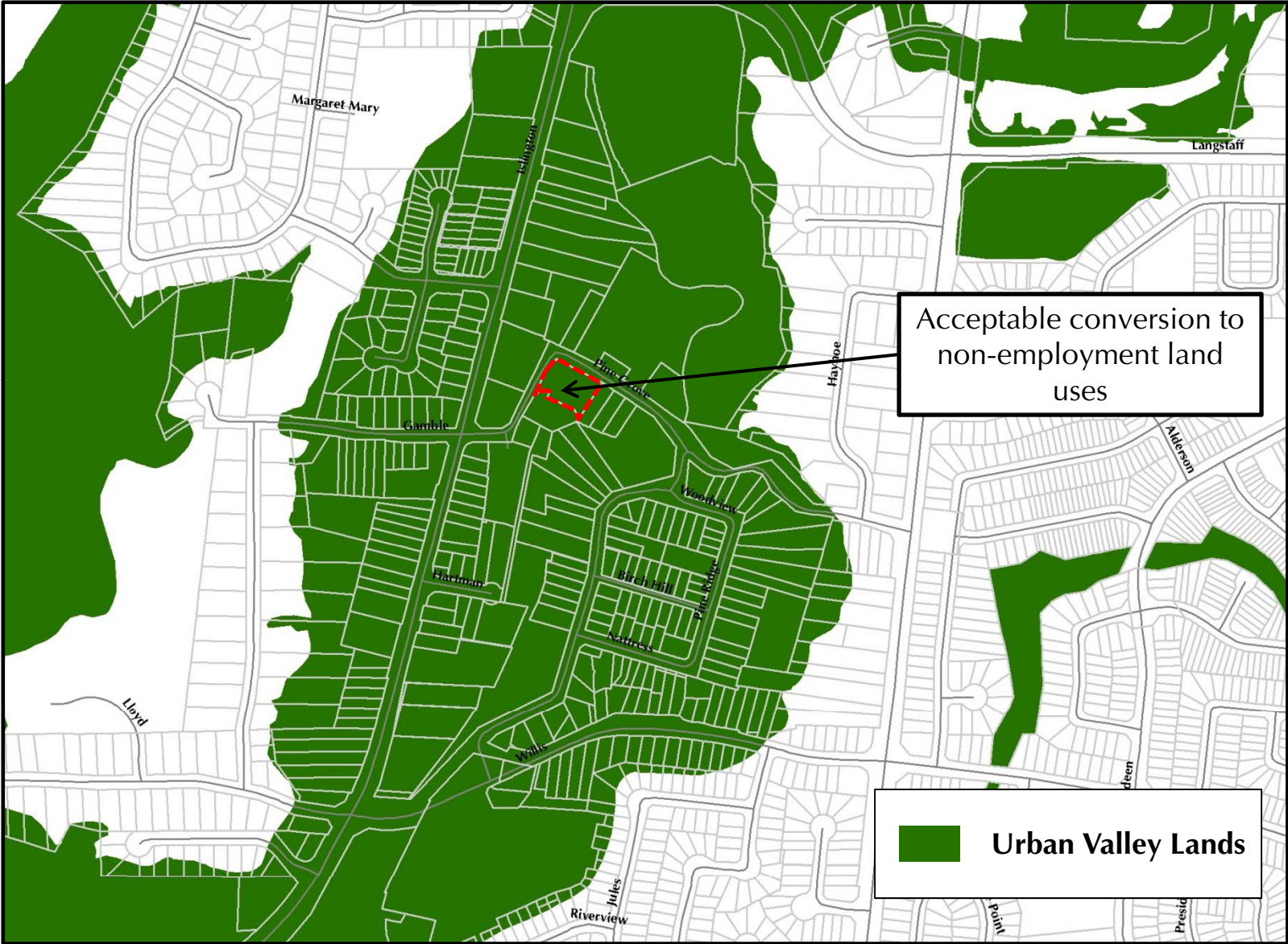
- c) the conversion will not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area, and achievement of the intensification target, density targets, and other policies of this Plan

Because it is a single isolated site, the issue of employment area viability is not relevant.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is existing transportation infrastructure in the vicinity to accommodate either residential or employment uses. Site-specific access and transportation infrastructure is appropriately considered as part of any future development proposal.

# HAYHOE MILLS SITE





- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The site is not included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and is therefore not required to meet the allocated employment forecasts.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

## 2. Former Motel Site at the Corner of Dufferin and Centre Streets

The former motel site is located at the northwest corner of Dufferin and Centre streets as shown on the map on the following page. The site is occupied by a vacant motel structure and associated parking lot, and has been identified as suitable for a wider range of use for a number of reasons::

- Like the Hayhoe Mills site, it is a remnant isolated parcel for which redevelopment for general employment purposes is considered to be unlikely.
- The site is abutted to the west and north by a hydro-electric transmission corridor and the Highways 407 and Highway 7 rights-of-way. To the south and east the site is abutted by Centre Street and Dufferin Streets and then retail commercial uses and a residential community beyond; and

- Conversion of the site would make better use of the existing urban land supply in a location that is planned for higher order transit improvements, and will, therefore, advance City planning goals to develop a mixed-use node at this location.

Given the surrounding land uses, particularly the hydro-electric corridor and major roadways, the most appropriate change in our view would be to promote a more intense pattern of office or commercial employment use. New uses, however, should be determined through a comprehensive area-wide study, particularly if new residential uses are being contemplated. Notwithstanding, the proposed conversion of the subject site satisfies the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is a need for the conversion to make better use of the urban land supply and support the development of a mixed-use node in this location.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

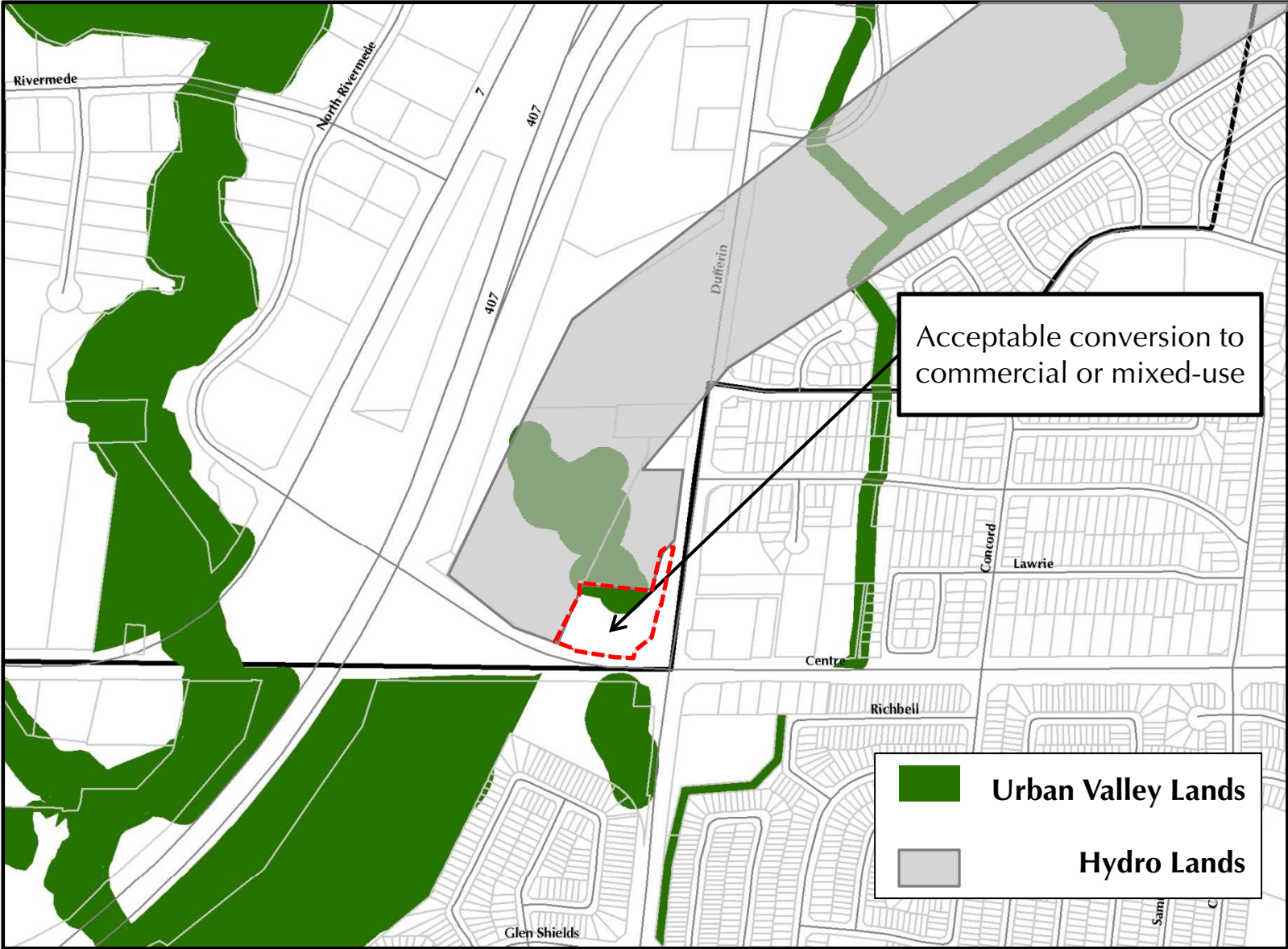
Conversion of employment land in this location will not impair the City's ability to achieve its economic objectives. It is a remnant isolated parcel.

- 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

Because it is a single isolated site, the issue of employment area viability is not relevant.



# NORTHWEST CORNER OF DUFFERIN & CENTRE STREETS SITE







- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is existing and planned transportation infrastructure to accommodate either residential or employment uses.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The site is not included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and is therefore not required to meet the allocated employment forecasts.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

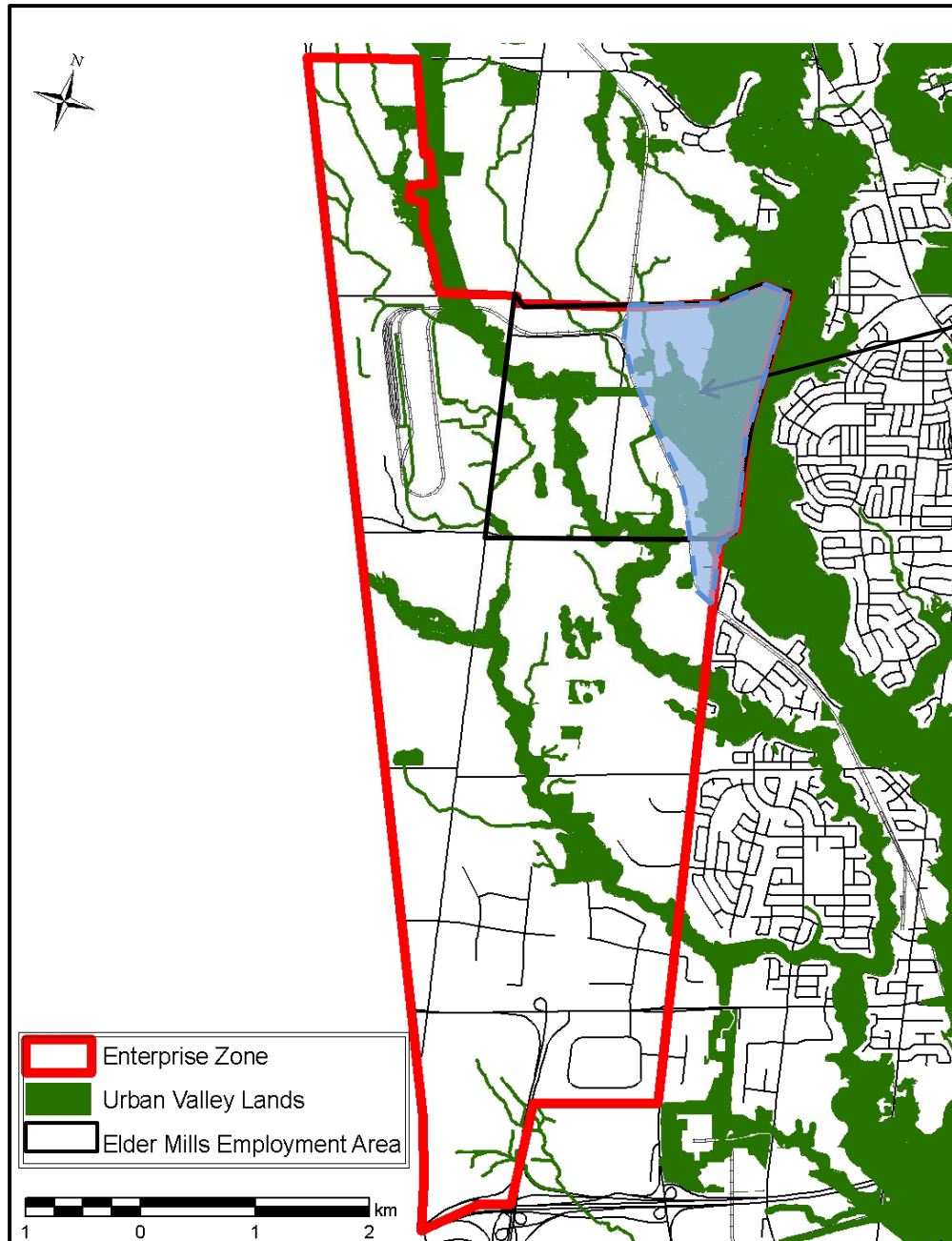
#### **E. EAST ELDER MILLS IN NORTHWEST VAUGHAN**

Some change may be appropriate in the Elder Mills employment area, located in the Vaughan Enterprise Zone. A small area east of the railway tracks is considered appropriate for residential uses. The area is illustrated on the map on the following page. Change is considered appropriate for a number of reasons:

- The remaining lands are fragmented, and do not enjoy the same level of transportation service or access as other parcels within the employment area, particularly access to the planned Highway 427 extension. As a result, in our view, the lands may be a challenge to develop;
- Similar to the lands adjacent to the Keele Valley landfill, City staff are of the view that the rail line will be a more appropriate boundary between residential and employment uses over time; and
- The east Elder Mills employment land is greenfield supply in a constrained location. Through the work undertaken for this report, the designation of additional land for both residential and employment uses is being recommended. In other words, the east Elder Mills employment lands are effectively being “replaced” with more competitive supply, particularly in the Highway 400 North area.
- The combined effect is to provide a greater supply of competitive employment land while reducing the need for new residential designations outside the urban area. Good growth management (and new Provincial Policies) dictates that opportunities to accommodate growth within the urban boundary be taken advantage of first, before considering new land use designations outside the urban boundary.
- Mainly, a significant amount of the area is within the City’s valley system. The total area of the east Elder Mills lands is approximately 160 net ha, of which 90 net ha, or over 50%, is natural heritage lands and therefore unavailable for development;



# EAST ELDER MILLS – VAUGHAN ENTERPRISE ZONE



Area recommended for Residential



Based on local land use conditions and the opportunity to rationalize some of the City's greenfield land supply, a change in East Elder Mills is considered appropriate. It is also consistent with policy directions to minimize the amount of new urban land use designations while still providing the most competitive employment areas possible. In our view, the proposed conversion of employment land in East Elder Mills satisfies the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is a need for the conversion to rationalize the City's existing greenfield land supply and minimize the amount of new urban land designations. Opportunities to provide much more competitive employment land are proposed along Highway 400.

- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Conversion of employment land in this location will not impair the City's ability to achieve its economic objectives. The lands are not included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need.

- 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

Permitting residential uses in this location is unlikely to have a destabilizing effect on the remainder of the employment area given that the rail line provides a clear

land use boundary. A limited change in this location will not affect the City's ability to achieve the *Growth Plan* forecasts.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

The lands would enjoy the same access to infrastructure as existing residential neighbourhoods to the south and west. Transportation infrastructure is in place to serve employment and residential uses.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The lands are being replaced with much more competitive supply along Highway 400.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

Primarily in an effort to rationalize the City's existing greenfield land supply, a change to residential land use in East Elder Mills is considered appropriate and good planning. The lands are largely in the City's valley system and would likely face challenges to development. They are better suited as residential, given both the constraints to development and a desire to limit new designations.

## F. RUTHERFORD GO STATION

The Rutherford GO Station is located on the south side of Rutherford Road, west of the Bradford GO line, as illustrated on the map on the following page. It is one of two existing GO Rail stations in the City of Vaughan, the other being the Maple GO Station at Keele Street and Major Mackenzie Drive.

The Rutherford GO Station has been identified as suitable for a wider range of use, including higher density residential, primarily to advance Provincial and Regional policy objectives for intensification around transit stations:

- The *Growth Plan* directs municipalities to plan to achieve increased residential and employment densities in Major Transit Station Areas, generally defined as the area within an approximate 500 m radius of a transit station;
- The *Region of York Official Plan* directs local municipalities to accommodate their residential intensification targets within a Regional structure that includes GO Transit stations; and
- Unlike the Maple GO Station, there is a large area for surface parking at the Rutherford Station, which provides a unique opportunity for more intense, transit-oriented forms of development, thereby advancing Provincial and regional objectives.

While the near-term potential for redevelopment may be limited, the City of Vaughan is still interested in eventually taking advantage of the unique opportunities around the Rutherford GO Station. <sup>1</sup> New uses, however, should be determined through a comprehensive area-wide study, particularly if new residential uses are being contemplated.

In our view, the proposed conversion of the subject site satisfies the tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*, particularly as it relates to Provincial and Regional objectives to support transit and intensification:

- a) there is a need for the conversion

There is a need for the conversion to advance Provincial and Regional planning objectives to encourage intensification around transit stations.

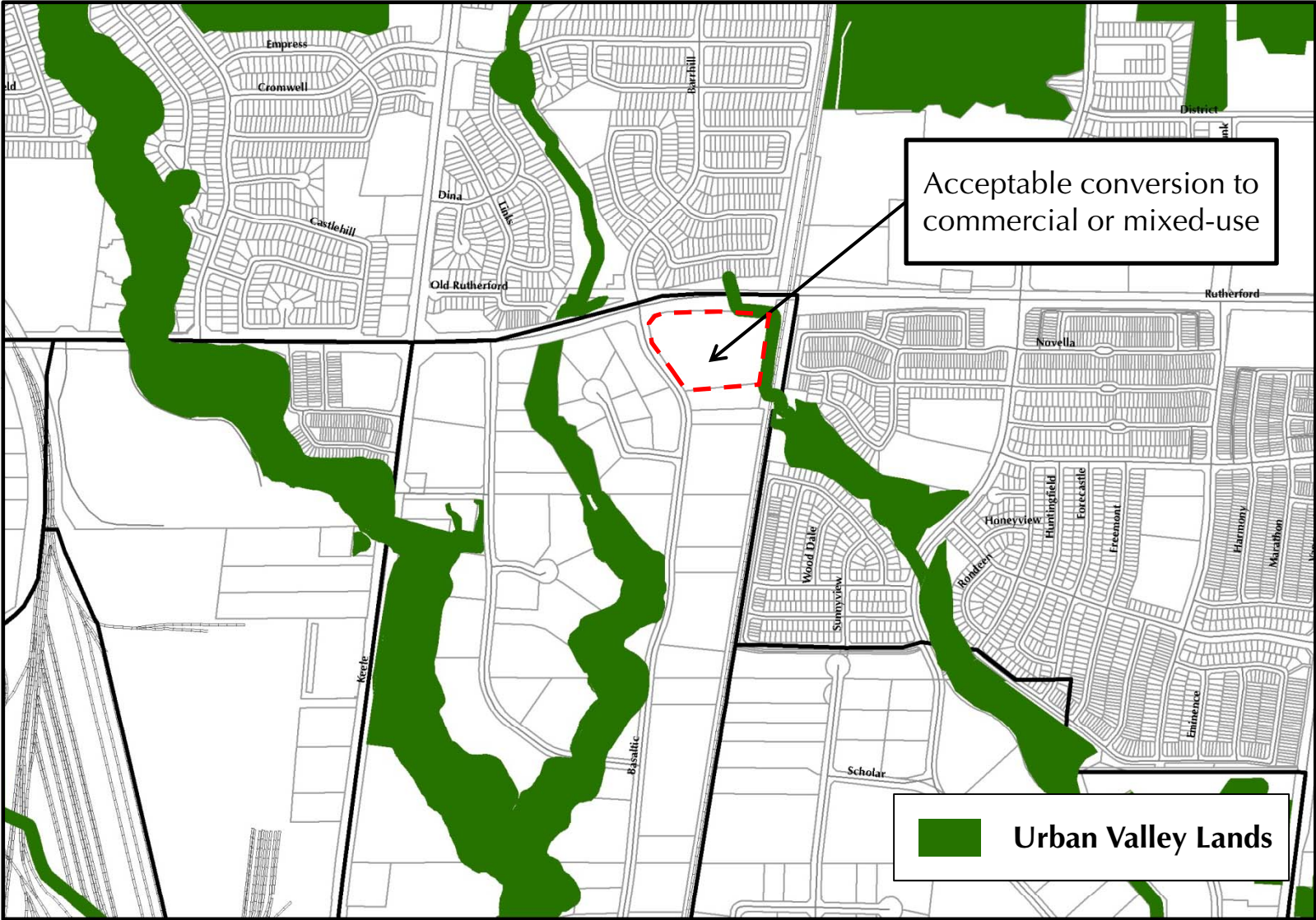
- b) the municipality will meet the employment forecasts allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan

Given its current use as part of the GO Transit infrastructure, conversion will not impair the City's ability to achieve its economic objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> *The key challenge to redeveloping the site with additional residential use is that it is currently owned, and in use as a GO Transit surface parking lot. To accommodate additional residential development while maintaining the function of the station would likely require the provision of either underground or multi-storey structured parking, both of which may be too expensive to allow for near-term development.*

# RUTHERFORD GO STATION SITE







- 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

The conversion is unlikely to affect the overall viability of the employment area because the site is in a corner location. Care would, however, need to be taken to ensure appropriate buffering, particularly to the employment land uses to the south.

- d) there is existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate the proposed conversion

There is an existing GO Transit station which is in place and could accommodate both residential and employment uses at this location.

- e) the lands are not required over the long term for the employment purposes for which they are designated

The site is not included as part of the base supply in the analysis of employment land need and is therefore not required to meet the allocated employment forecasts.

- f) cross-jurisdictional issues have been considered.

Cross-jurisdictional issues are not relevant.

Taken as a whole, only a limited change is being proposed for the City's employment land supply, for site-specific reasons, to take advantage of investments in transit, address land use conflicts or make more efficient use of the existing urban land supply. The vast majority of the City's employment land supply should be maintained as currently designated, as it is considered to be well-suited and very marketable for new investment.

In order to implement these recommendations, a number of policy directions will need to be included in draft official plan. And, when taken together with the issue of accommodating residential and employment growth discussed in Chapters II and III of this report, there are clearly a number of challenges that will need to be overcome. Accordingly, the final chapter of this report describes in more detail the implications of the growth outlook and the policy choices that will need to be made to address them.