

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2013

**CONCORD GO CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN STUDY
STATUS UPDATE
PRESENTATION BY PLANNING ALLIANCE**

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Commissioner of Planning, dated March 5, 2013, be approved;
- 2) That staff report back on the option of including the additional lands of Bowes Road and Highway 7 and to the North West and North East, as part of the ongoing study;
- 3) That the following deputations be received:
 1. Dr. Paulo Correa, Concord West Ratepayers' Association, Rockview Gardens, Vaughan; and
 2. Mr. Philip Levine, IBI Group, Richmond Street West, Toronto, on behalf of Liberty Developments; and
- 4) That Communication C1 from the Concord West Ratepayers' Association, dated February 20, 2013, be received.

1. That this report and the presentation by planningAlliance in respect of the Concord GO Secondary Plan Study be received;
2. That Policy Planning Staff and planning Alliance proceed to complete the Vaughan Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan Study based on input received during this working session and Council's further direction.

Objective 2.2. “To develop Vaughan as a City with maximum greenspace and an urban form that supports our expected population growth”, Action 2.2.1., “through the policies in the new Official Plan, create a Vaughan in 2031 that has more intensification with increased height and density and mixed use in thoughtfully developed nodes and along transit corridors”.

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Communications Plan

There is no communications plan associated specifically with this report. However, consultation with various stakeholders is an important aspect of this study and is described in this report under Process and Consultation To-date.

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation and covering report is to update Council on the work completed to-date, the public consultation process, introduce the emerging development concepts and identify the next steps leading to the conclusion of the project.

Background - Analysis and Options

Background

The Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan Study Area is identified as a Local Centre by Vaughan's Official Plan 2010. It is bisected by two significant transportation routes (Highway 7 and the Barrie GO Rail line). Highway 7 has been identified by the York Region Official Plan as a Regional Corridor which is expected to develop with higher density land uses in support of the planned transit routes. The vision for Highway 7 is to effect the transformation from a provincial highway to a multi-purpose, transit-supportive urban street that is both a transportation corridor and a successful urban space. The approved OPA 660 identified this area as the "Concord GO Centre" and allows for a full range of urban land uses, including high density residential, major office, business, retail, and institutional and civic uses. The Vaughan Official Plan 2010 identifies this area as one of eight required Secondary Plan Areas. This study responds to that directive.

Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Vaughan Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan on September 27, 2011. On June 26, 2012 Council approved staff's recommendation to retain planning Alliance to undertake the Secondary Plan Study.

Location

The Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan Study Area is located in the Concord community, between Dufferin Street and Keele Street where the former Canadian National Railway (now GO Rail) bridge crosses over Highway 7. The study area is divided into three parcels as shown on Attachment 1. The first parcel has an area of 13.19 hectares and is bounded by the rail line to the west, the West Don River to the east, Highway 7 to the south and extends north up to the rear lots of the properties on Ortona Court ("Northeast Parcel"). The second parcel has an area of 18.16 hectares and is bounded by the rail line to the west, Highway 7 to the north, Highway 407 to the south and the West Don River to the east ("Southeast Parcel"). The third parcel has an area of 1.81 hectares and is bounded by the rail line to the east, Highway 7 to the north, Gemini Court to the south and wraps around the existing low rise residential area east of Baldwin Avenue ("Southwest Parcel").

Process and Consultation To-Date

Phase 1 of the study is now complete. This process included background research and consultation with the Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, stakeholders and citizens.

Steering Committee meetings were conducted from October 2012 to January 2013. A total of three meetings have been held to-date. The Steering Committee includes major landowners in the study area and representatives of the Concord West Ratepayers Association. The objective of the Steering Committee has been to identify and address the opportunities and constraints

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imposed by the current situation and emerging influences allowing for feedback prior to the public meetings.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has had two meetings. The TAC includes representatives from City departments and external public agencies. Issues relating to transit, stormwater management, land use, open space, pedestrian and street networks are being discussed on an ongoing basis.

Two public meetings have taken place. The first, a Kickoff and Visioning Workshop, was held at the Vaughan City Hall on November 7, 2012. This meeting included introducing the consultant and study process; providing an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to provide input and feedback; and engaging the community in developing Secondary Plan and Urban Design Principles; and, identify hopes and concerns for the study area. Feedback from this meeting was then considered by the Steering Committee to further refine principles, hopes, and concerns. The second public meeting was held at the Vaughan City Hall on January 30, 2013 and included a design workshop that presented alternative design concepts for the study area. Participants were asked to identify the preferred elements of the alternatives under consideration. This information will assist in developing a preferred land use and development plan for the area.

Next Steps

The consulting team is in the process of compiling and consolidating comments from the public on options for each of the development concepts. Staff and planning Alliance continue to meet with commenting agencies and TAC members such as TRCA, Ministry of Transportation, Development/Transportation Engineering, the Region of York, and other agency representatives to assess future requirements and needs. Staff and consultants will also continue to consult with landowners, stakeholders, and the public through each phase of the process. A third public forum is tentatively scheduled for April 3, 2013.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This presentation supports the “Plan & Manage Growth & Economic Viability” objective of the Vaughan Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan.

Regional Implications

Staff from the Region of York have been consulted and continue to participate in the study process as members of the Technical Advisory Committee. Representatives from the Transportation and Community Planning Departments have been involved throughout the process to-date.

Conclusion

The study is currently in Phase 2 of the work program which will lead to the drafting of the Secondary Plan. Therefore, it is an appropriate time to provide an update and receive feedback from Committee of the Whole on the status of the project, and the work completed to-date.

Attachments

1. Location Map

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Report prepared by:

Kyle Fearon, Planner 1, ext. 8776

Roy McQuillin, Manager of Policy Planning, ext. 8211

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

**An Open Response from the Concord West Community
To the Open Letter from Concord Storage**

C I
COMMUNICATION
CW (WORKING SESSION)
MARCH 5 / 2013
ITEM - 1

The present communication by the Concord West community is written in response to Andy Santoloco's "Open Letter from Concord Storage to the Steering Committee Participants", dated January 3rd, 2013, whose main thrust is contained in a sentence on p. 10: "I believe that the south side of Avenue Seven east of the tracks should have equitable density parity with the north side parcel east of the tracks."

The purpose of Mr. Santoloco's Letter is to convince his audience that in the Secondary Plan for the Concord GO Centre, his Concord Storage property, which is located precisely south of Highway #7 and east of the tracks, should (1) not be designated to serve as a parking lot supporting the transit hub, and (2) be designated for high-density development. As Mr. Santoloco has made clear in Steering Committee meetings, where he chose to be more forthcoming than in his 11-page "Open Letter", if his property were to be designated as future transit-related parking, he would face expropriation; whereas if his property was designated for residential and commercial development, he could sell it for a price commensurate with the planned density of this development.

In his Letter, Mr. Santoloco takes a two-pronged tack, proceeding on both prongs by the use of cunningly collaged references to urbanistic literature of questionable relevance. He devotes the major part of the Letter to arguing that the Concord GO Centre transit hub should have "no automobile parking, period" - which, by simple though unarticulated logic, should lead the reader to conclude that, in particular, the hub should have no automobile parking on Mr. Santoloco's property. The second part of the letter shows Mr. Santoloco as a particular friend of the transit authorities, urging high-density development all around the planned Concord GO transit hub (and in particular, by another dint of unarticulated logic, on Mr. Santoloco's property) by pointing out, again in formal style and with supporting quotes from City directives and from urbanist research, that the more people you glob together near a transit station the more transit riders you will get.

While Mr. Santoloco's Letter is designed to impress planners and Provincial authorities, it cannot hide an expressly contemptuous attitude towards the Concord West community, to which he refers disparagingly and incorrectly as "the Baldwin enclave" (though half of it is neither adjacent to nor even reachable via Baldwin), whose size he understates by a factor of 2.5, and whose struggle for survival he blithely dismisses in the high-density part of the Letter by asserting that "self-selection will cure [the community's] perceived ills".

While we have absolutely nothing against Mr. Santoloco maximizing as best he can the profit from his land, his proposals are short-sighted and potentially detrimental to the natural and social environments of the Concord West community. In what follows, we address some of the Letter's highlights.

1. The "No Parking, Period" thesis

Mr. Santoloco's argument can be summarized as follows.

First, he presents a set of statistics (taken from a study by Angela Brinklow) from three communities located along California's Bart System, two of which (Hayward and Fremont) offer station-area parking, while the third (Berkeley) has "no parking, period". The statistics quoted include the percentage of inhabitants of each community that ride the Bart to work (7.9%, 7% and 17.4% for Hayward, Fremont and Berkeley, respectively) and the percentage of riders within each community that access the station by foot or bike (13%, 8% and 59%, respectively).

If one probes Mr. Santoloco's text, it is actually not clear what role – other than of window-dressing – these statistics play in his argument. Mr. Santoloco misstates the meaning of the first statistic, the ridership percentages, by claiming them to show that the "no parking, period" policy is "not detrimental to transit ridership in certain circumstances", and then adds, apodictically and with no elucidation, that the Concord GO Centre "reflects one of those circumstances". Not only is that last assertion completely spurious, but the data show no such thing: the fact that a station does or does not provide parking would mostly affect its use by those **outside** the community, not its use by the locals who can reach the station by foot or bike – and the Brinklow study does **not** provide any relevant data about **outside ridership**. The differences in local to-work

ridership would have to do with issues such as the location of people's work, i.e. what percentage of the locals work outside the given community but in a place easily accessible by Bart - and certainly not with the availability of local station-area parking. Moreover, in order to support gratuitous twist of Mr. Santoluce's argument, the study would have to deal in counterfactuals such as "what would be the effect on the overall ridership if Berkeley did provide station-area parking or Fremont did not?" Ah, for a Ministry of Counterfactual Statistics!...

As for Berkeley's 59% by-foot-or-bike statistic, Mr. Santoluce uses it as a jump-off point (and we do mean "jump"; the connection is nonexistent) to a vision of a "pedestrian-friendly" environment that would ensue if the Concord GO hub had no parking, and he suggests that this would be just what the Concord West community is clamoring for (more about this below). One is compelled to wonder, however, (though Mr. Santoluce doesn't) how the remaining 41% of the passengers arrive at the Berkeley station. Maybe they take a bus or a taxi. But, if some percentage of them do insist on driving to the station, then they must be parking somewhere – and the "somewhere" would have to be in the streets or retail-parking lots around the station. One has to seriously question whether such a scenario would enhance the pedestrian-friendliness of the Concord GO neighborhood - more likely, it would create yet another major headache, and **ultimately force the City to retrofit the hub with a parking lot at some later date**, when doing it properly will be more difficult than if it was planned-upon from the outset.

But no, says Mr. Santoluce: nobody from outside the Concord GO neighborhood will, now or in the future, insist on using the Concord GO hub. Here he really puts on a planner's hat, invoking projected future population densities in outlying areas, banking on things that will "mostly" take place, modeling the theoretical behaviour of potential (but invariably uninterested) outside riders, and quoting from guideline 10d of... the City of San Diego (California, here we go again!). Does all this warrant the confidence that Mr. Santoluce exudes when he enthusiastically urges upon his readers the slogan 'No Parking, Period'? We are sorry to say: it does not. For example, he argues that since the intention of the transit authorities is to draw ridership to the Concord GO from the north and west of the transit corridor, but those riders are much more likely to use other transit stations,

there is no need for the Concord GO hub to accommodate arrivals by car. But be that as it may, isn't it conceivable - whatever the intention of the authorities - that there will be people east or south of our hub who will find it convenient to use the hub, and will drive to it?

On our part, we would suggest that since the future of the neighboring areas and the future needs of their inhabitants are insufficiently knowable to make the kind of cavalier pronouncements that Mr. Santoluce offers, the prudent course of action would definitely be to equip the hub with parking - preferably multi-level, so as to minimize its footprint. And if the Concord GO Centre and its immediate vicinity become as vibrant a commercial center as we have heard it described, the parking (even if it were underused by hub riders) will not go to waste.

But what, then, happens to the "pedestrian-friendly interface" that Mr. Santoluce is eager to bestow, as a generous gift, to what he condescendingly calls "the peripatetic Baldwin enclave"? We will turn to this next. But before doing so, we would like to remark that these abstruse comparisons of Concord West with cities in California, etc, that planners keep bringing up are totally out of order. If nothing else, the climate restrictions alone preclude them – and if it is impossible for our residents to walk in snow-covered or ice-covered sidewalks, what to say of biking in the same conditions?

2. The Gordian red herring

First, let's get Concord West's parameters right. Concord West is the residential area east of Keele, south of Highway 7, west of the CN line, and north of Jardin. It encompasses 387 households, which - counting 2.5 persons per household - translates into a population of over 1000 (8% - 17% of the projected population of Rose Garden City).

Concord West was originally founded by Anglo-Saxon families from Concord, Massachusetts, and subsequently peopled with European emigrants from Italy, Germany, Slovenia, etc. Many of the Concord West families have lived here – in the same houses – for up to seven decades. The old-time residents acquired their piece of ground and their house through hard physical labor – as metal-workers, stone-workers, miners, etc. Many of them use their plots of land to grow their own fruits and vegetables, use the wood of

their own trees to supplement the heating of the house, do their own house-repairs and house-improvements, and employ whatever skills they have to maintain their equipment in working order for as long as possible. In other words, their way of life is what would properly be called *sustainable* before the term got hijacked by development consortia, SmartCentres, and other big commercial interests - whose brand-new usage of the term is echoed in Mr. Santoluce's enthusiasm for "new houses replacing older stock" (which he quotes as proof of all-being-well in Concord West).

In his Letter, Mr. Santoluce pretends that his "no parking, period" proposal helps solve a problem particularly pertinent to Concord West, but the problem that it purports to solve is actually a red herring. It starts out by being presented as a clash between, on the one hand, "the existing community's idea of place", its "desire for a pedestrian-friendly environment", its "need to reconnect with the Bartley Smith Parkway trail system" and, on the other, the Province's plan to build a parking lot for the transit hub. But since this particular clash would obviously not give Mr. Santoluce the required argument against **all** parking associated with the hub, he performs a little sleight-of-text and abruptly, in the same breath, morphs this insufficiently milkable clash into a clash between the building of the proposed multi-modal transit hub, and the need "to ameliorate the [ensuing] knot of traffic congestion and potential traffic gridlock", the resolution of which is, in Mr. Santoluce's words, a "legitimate concern of the Baldwin community". Either of these clashes, or perhaps their explosive combo, is indistinctly presented by Mr. Santoluce as a "Gordian knot" that he, like the great Alexander, will sever - not with his sword, but "by severing all adjacent park-and-ride lots [yay! **all** of them!] from the future design of the transit hub". And no matter what the exact clash, what Mr. Santoluce is doing he is doing for us, "the existing community", Concord West. That is the extent to which he recognizes that "many of [our] concerns are legitimate and must be addressed"...

But Mr. Santoluce has got his clashes wrong - in other words, his purported clashes are red herrings. Concord West has, with respect to the plans for the Concord GO Centre, two major and simple objections. One, **it does not want the transit hub to be located south of Highway #7**, where it would be destructive of the community's environmental and cultural heritage. Two, it wants the planned inhabitation of Rose

Garden City by 6000-12000 new residents to be conditional upon prior improvements of the road and traffic infrastructures, improvements that would alleviate the present substantial traffic problems and **accommodate the new local traffic associated with this inhabitation.**

Mr Santoluce, unsurprisingly, has no interest in these actual objections, other than distorting them for his own purposes. As for the first one, it is an explicit premise of Mr. Santoluce's argument that the transit hub will be located south of Highway 7, i.e. on the site of the Concord West Greenspace. This assumption is advantageous to him, because it makes his "no parking, period" proposal look as if it was meant to benefit Concord West, rather than Mr. Santoluce himself. He claims, with obvious condescension towards the very community whose Gordian knot he is about to sever, that it shows him to be a "pragmatist, grounded in reality, evaluating previous factual and historical events". By "pragmatism" he means here the position that Provincial decisions pertaining to transportation are, in effect, irreversible acts of despotism ensuring that high density development steamrolls over landscapes, living things, environments and communities, and indifferent to considerations that, in our view, are much more worthy of being designated as "pragmatic" - for example, the present and future quality of life of the Province's inhabitants. We certainly hope that "pragmatism" as Mr. Santoluce understands it - regarding the Province as a de-facto indifferent and arbitrary despotic power - is not the only possible grounded-in-reality position available to Ontario citizens.

As for the second objection, Mr. Santoluce distorts it into a worry, on the part of Concord West, concerning the traffic associated with the influx of car-borne transit riders from outlying areas. But this has never been Concord West's primary concern: instead, its primary concern is **the increase in traffic resulting from the increased population in the neighborhood itself.** Which brings us to our next topic: the TOD.

3. Is "our TOD" a TOD?

In his communication, Mr. Santoluce jumps from a quick ushering-in of the term "Transit-Oriented Development" (TOD) to the unsupported assumption that the Concord GO Centre and its neighborhood constitute an instance of such a thing. In fact, he refers

to it tenderly as "our TOD" - even though, to the best of our knowledge, he doesn't live anywhere near it.

What, then, is a TOD? Angela Brinklow, in the study used by Mr. Santoloco to shore up his "no parking, period" thesis, quotes Peter Calthorpe's definition of a TOD as being a "mixed-use community within an average 2,000-foot [i.e. 600-meter] walking distance of a transit stop and a core commercial area. TODs mix residential, retail, office, open space, and public uses in a walkable environment, making it convenient for residents and employees to travel by transit, bicycle, foot or car" and then adds, in part quoting Nelson & Niles, that: "In addition, the transportation hub should be located in the heart of the neighbourhood, within a 400 metre, or 10 minute walk from residents. This central location reflects the importance of transit in the community and in the region as a whole." Curiously, according to this study, the TOD should be located squarely in the middle of the Rose Garden City development, well north of Highway 7!

Will the Concord GO Centre be a TOD? Well, at present there is no reason to suppose so. As the neighborhood stands now, it has nothing even vaguely resembling a core commercial area. Without a car, getting to a supermarket, a drugstore, a dentist, a school, a community center, a clothing store, a hair salon, an office-supply store, a post office, a cinema, a park, a decent restaurant, a butcher, a hardware store, a hospital - getting to any of these, let alone getting to more than one, tends to be a major, time- and effort-consuming project. In other words, one cannot live in this neighborhood without driving or being driven. As for walking for health and pleasure, the area has no "walkable environment" outside of Concord West and its greenspace - unless one takes pleasure in desolation, ugliness and car exhaust. There is no convenient way to travel to any useful destination by transit, bicycle, or on foot; and even travel by car is frequently a hardship, due to the traffic congestion.

But isn't this all going to change? Perhaps - but as far as we know, nothing at present warrants a positive answer. We have no idea what specific non-residential amenities, if any, are being planned for the Rose Garden City development, and consequently have no reason to believe that its future occupants will be able to use cars less frequently than the neighborhood's present occupants. Moreover, we have no idea where the new residents will work, and no reason to assume that most of them will work

near transit stations and will not, in the final analysis, find driving to work more convenient than taking public transit.

Calling the Rose Garden City development a TOD – as Mr. Santoloco does in order to be able to quote TOD-related literature in support of his theses - does not make it one. And until the Concord West residents have a realistic basis for believing it will be one, they will have to assume that the development will bring with it a substantial increase in internal car traffic. It is this, not Mr. Santoloco's red herring of outside park-and-ride commuters, that constitutes the crux of Concord West's traffic-related concerns.

4. The "Pack them densely" thesis: does transit serve people, or do people serve transit?

The last part of Mr. Santoloco's Letter is dedicated to painting the vision of the Concord GO Centre as a "transit-supportive development", by which he means a development with the highest possible population density (everywhere, and in particular on his land). In support of this vision, he quotes supposedly "unchallengeable research" which shows that the more people you pack in, the more transit riders you'll get. But here is the thing: unless the Concord GO Centre is really going to become a TOD - by virtue of solid planning, rather than just Mr. Santoloco's verbal tricks - arguing for packing people in densely is arguing for disaster. Let's first see exactly where we are heading, before deciding whether we want to head there more and faster. In our book, that's what *planning*, or at least *good* planning, is all about.

5. Closing thoughts

Finally, it is noteworthy that nowhere does Mr. Santoloco's letter actually address the main concerns of our community, as they have been poignantly expressed in public documents addressed to various government bodies. Traffic congestion and parking lots associated with the hub are indeed problems that we have contended with, and which should be addressed in the context of intelligent planning, but they do not address the core of our concerns which relate to the protection of the Bartley-Smith Greenway /Langstaff Ecopark, the Upper West Don river and the environment of the Concord West and Glen Shields communities. The location of the Concord GO hub proposed by the

MTO constitutes a serious threat to the already endangered ecosystem of the greenbelt corridor and river valley, and to the quality of life of the Concord West community, while at the same time being far from optimal for the business and commercial interests which the station is designed to serve. Following the unanimous stance of Vaughan Council in 2010, the MTO's plans for the Concord intermodal transit station must be modified so that its location is **not south** of Highway 7. At the January 30th public meeting regarding the Secondary Plan for the Concord GO station, 4 out of 5 working tables arrived at the same conclusion, and chose a location **north** of Highway 7. This is the simple objective of the struggle of the Concord West community which Mr. Santoluce ignores. And it alone will ensure that, irrespective of the size of the eventual profits made by Mr. Santoluce's with his land, the Concord West greenspace and its ecological niche will be protected, annexed to the Bartley Smith Greenway/Langstaff Ecopark, and direct access of the Concord West and Glen Shields residents will be restored to both the greenspace and the Greenway. This alone will be to the benefit of all Vaughan residents, as well as all Ontarians.

Concord West Ratepayers Association

February 20, 2013

Subject: FW: attach to Item#?_ Secondary Concord GO Station_Committee of the Whole meeting
Attachments: Reply to Santoluce.doc

From: nan nan
Sent: Friday, February 22, 2013 5:14 PM
To: Abrams, Jeffrey
Reply To: nan nan
Cc: CWRA Concord West Raypayers Association; Bevilacqua, Maurizio; MacKenzie, John; Schulte, Deb; Racco, Sandra; Birchall, Diana; dsinclair@regionalarchitects.com
Subject: attach to Item#?_ Secondary Concord GO Station_Committee of the Whole meeting

Hello Mr. Abrams,

Hope this message finds you well.

Please attach the following Reply Letter, see attached, to the item#? for the Committee of the Whole meeting? Secondary Concord GO station.

It would be appreciated, if all parties acknowledge receipt of this email.

Thank you
Silvana Galloro, CWRA Secretary

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) MARCH 5, 2013

CONCORD GO CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN STUDY STATUS UPDATE PRESENTATION BY PLANNING ALLIANCE

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. That this report and the presentation by planningAlliance in respect of the Concord GO Secondary Plan Study be received;
2. That Policy Planning Staff and planning Alliance proceed to complete the Vaughan Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan Study based on input received during this working session and Council's further direction.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with Green Directions Vaughan:

Objective 2.1. "To achieve sustainable growth and development by completing and implementing Vaughan Tomorrow , the City's Growth Management Strategy – 2031, and by ensuring that the strategy is subject to periodic renew and renewal".

Objective 2.2. "To develop Vaughan as a City with maximum greenspace and an urban form that supports our expected population growth", Action 2.2.1., "through the policies in the new Official Plan, create a Vaughan in 2031 that has more intensification with increased height and density and mixed use in thoughtfully developed nodes and along transit corridors".

Economic Impact

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Communications Plan

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Attachments

1. Location Map

Report prepared by:

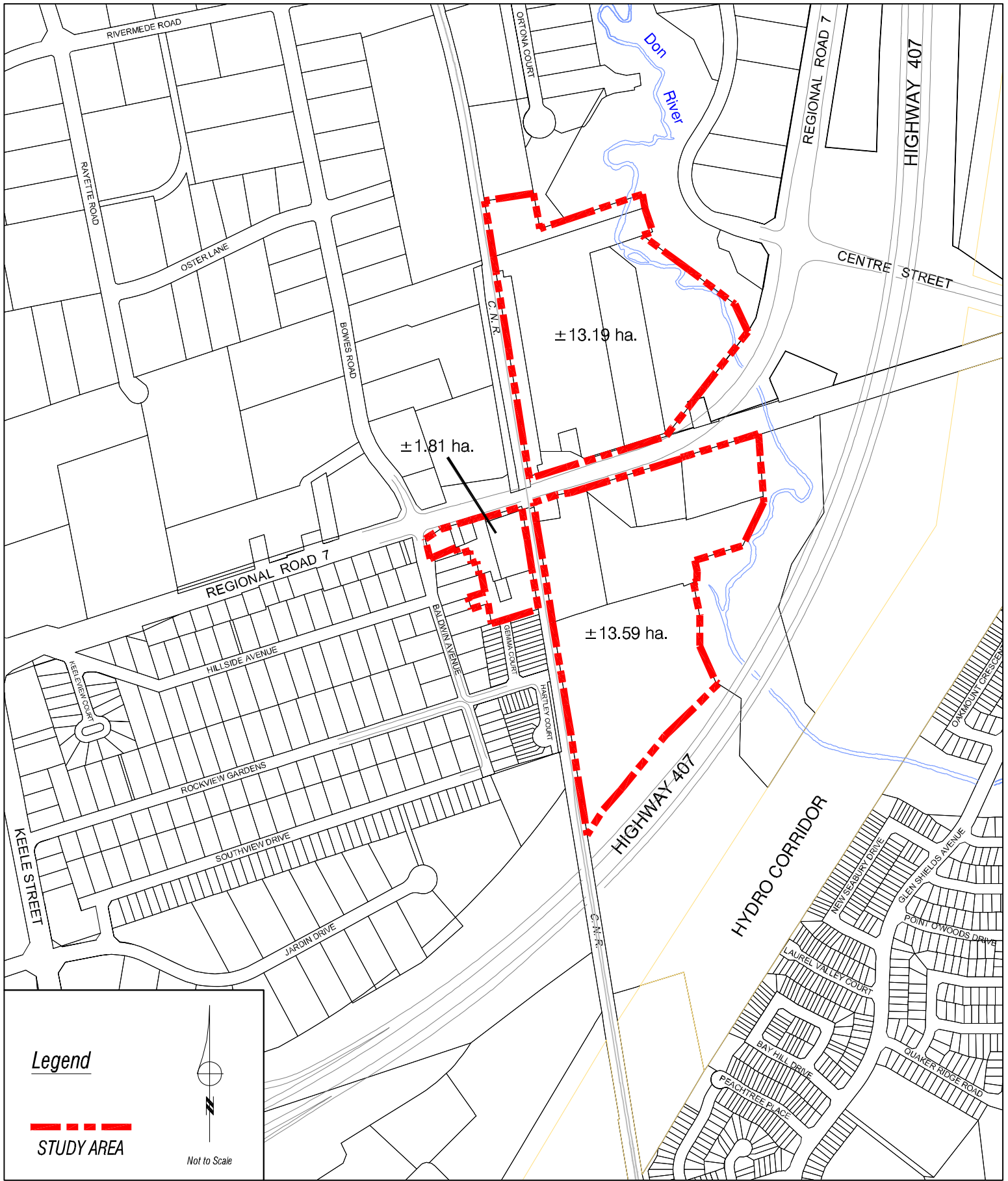
Kyle Fearon, Planner 1, ext. 8776
Roy McQuillin, Manager of Policy Planning, ext. 8211

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE
Commissioner of Planning

DIANA BIRCHALL
Director of Policy Planning

/lm



Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan

APPLICANT: City of Vaughan LOCATION: Part of Lots 5 & 6, Concession 3



Attachment
FILE: 26.3
DATE: March 5, 2013
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