

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MAY 15, 2012

MODIFICATIONS TO THE VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN – 2010 NORTHEAST CORNER OF WIGWOSS DRIVE AND HIGHWAY 7 FOLLOW UP REPORT WARD 3 FILE 25.1

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends that:

1. The Vaughan Official Plan 2010, Volume 1, be modified by re-designating the properties on the northeast corner of Wigwoss Drive and Highway 7, municipally known as 10, 20 and 24 Wigwoss Drive from “Mid-Rise Mixed-Use” with a maximum allowable height of 10 storeys and an FSI of 3 to “Mid-Rise Mixed-Use” with a maximum allowable height of 6 storeys and an FSI of 2.5; and
2. This report and Council minutes be forwarded to the Region of York as a recommended modification to the Vaughan Official Plan 2010, Volume 1, and that the Region of York be requested to consider this modification to the Plan accordingly, as part of the process leading to the approval of the Vaughan Official Plan 2010.

Contribution to Sustainability

Goal 2 of *Green Directions Vaughan*, the City’s Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan, focuses on the new Official Plan to “ensure sustainable development and redevelopment”. The description of Goal 2 explains the transformative vision for the new Official Plan.

Vaughan is committed to sustainable land use. Vaughan Tomorrow, our consolidated Growth Management Strategy – 2031, has a central focus on creating a cutting-edge Official Plan that will provide for increased land use densities, efficient public transit, considerations for employment lands and open space systems, as well as walkable, human scale neighbourhoods that include services, retail and an attractive public realm. The plan will guide the creation of the physical form that will reflect a “complete” community.

Economic Impact

The Vaughan Official Plan 2010 establishes the planning framework for development throughout the City to 2031. The Plan, when approved, will have a positive impact on the City of Vaughan in terms of managing growth and fostering retail and residential intensification and employment opportunities while fulfilling the City’s obligations to conform with Provincial policies and meet Regionally imposed targets for residential and employment growth.

Communications Plan

Direction to proceed to Committee of the Whole with this report was given at the Council meeting of April 17, 2012, in response to Item 29 of Report No. 12 of the Committee of the Whole. This report was posted on the City’s website as part of the Committee of the Whole Agenda on May 11, 2012. Pursuant to a request from the affected property owners, notice of this report has been sent to the residents of 10, 20 and 24 Wigwoss Drive.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to examine the appropriateness of the land use designations for the lands located on the northeast corner of Wigwoss Drive and Highway 7, as adopted on September 7, 2010.

Background - Analysis and Options

Location and Context

The subject lands are located west of Pine Valley Drive, on the northeast corner of Wigwoss Drive and Highway 7. The lands have an area of approximately 0.27ha and include the first three properties on the east side of Wigwoss Drive, municipally known as 10, 20 and 24 Wigwoss Drive. These properties abut a vacant lot to the east which has a current application for a 7 storey residential condominium building; an existing commercial plaza to the west which is subject to an application for two 10 storey buildings with an FSI of 3.0; low-rise residential dwellings to the north; and town homes, a low-rise office building and other commercial uses to the south, on the opposite side of Highway 7.

The subject lands are shown on Attachment 1 to this report.

Background

As part of the consideration of modifications to VOP 2010, concerns about the height and density of the subject lands, as adopted, were raised by owners to the north of the subject lands. A member's resolution was brought forward at the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 3, 2012 to amend the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 by redesignating the subject lands from "Mid-Rise Mixed-Use" with a maximum allowable height of 10 storeys and a floor space index (FSI) of 3.0 to "Low-Rise Residential". Some of the affected landowners made deputations to Committee in opposition to the motion. Planning staff has also received formal letters from the residents of 10 and 24 Wigwoss Drive opposing any change to the subject lands, as per the adopted version of VOP 2010. At the Council Meeting of April 17, 2012, Council directed that the member's resolution be referred to staff for a further detailed report.

This report has been prepared in response to this direction.

Policy Framework

a) Official Plan Amendment 661

OPA 661 amends OPA 240 (the Woodbridge Community Plan) and is the effective land use policy applicable to the subject lands. This amendment identifies Highway 7 as a transportation corridor and aims to establish Highway 7 as a high order transitway, accommodating regional and inter-regional transit facilities in support of higher density, mixed use development on the lands adjacent to Highway 7.

OPA 661 designates the subject lands "Prestige Areas – Centres & Avenue Seven Corridor", which permits a wide range of land uses including office, business, retail, residential, institutional and civic uses. More specifically, the intersection of Helen Street (opposite Wigwoss Drive) and Highway 7 is planned as a Transit Stop Centre within the corridor. Generally speaking, these Centres have an overall density target of 3.0 FSI, with a maximum height for any building in a planned Centre of 10 storeys or 32.0 metres, whichever is less. For all sites which abut a low density residential designation, the maximum height of development within 30 metres of such designation shall be 4 storeys, or 12.8 metres, whichever is less, in order to establish appropriate height transitions between development within the Centre and adjacent land uses.

The lands immediately east of the subject properties have a site specific policy under OPA 661 permitting a maximum height limit of 4 storeys within 30 metres of the existing low density residential designation and a maximum height of 6 storeys at a greater distance.

For the areas between the Transit Stop Centres, the overall density target is 1.5 FSI, with a maximum density of 2.5 FSI. The maximum height of any building in these areas is 8 stories or 25.6 metres, whichever is less.

b) Region of York Official Plan

The Region of York Official Plan identifies Highway 7 as a Regional Corridor, which is planned to function as an urban mainstreet supporting a range of compact, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly and transit-oriented built forms. Regional Corridors are to provide for a mix of activities that enrich the character and meet the needs of the adjacent communities. The Regional Official Plan provides for a long-term density target over the length of the corridor of 2.5 FSI.

c) Vaughan Official Plan 2010

The City's Urban Structure Plan shows this section of Highway 7 as a Regional Intensification Corridor. The Vaughan Official Plan 2010, as adopted and amended, designates the site as Mid-Rise Mixed-Use with a maximum allowable height of 10 storeys and a maximum FSI of 3.0. The properties to the east and west of the site are also Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, with maximum heights of 6 storeys and densities of 2.0. Applications for 7 and 10 storey residential condominiums have been filed for each site, respectively. Properties fronting the north and south sides of Highway 7 to the east of the study area and west of Pine Valley Drive have a Mid-Rise Mixed-Use designation with maximum allowable heights ranging from 4 to 10 storeys and maximum densities of 2 to 3 FSI. The lands to the immediate north of the subject properties are designated Low-Rise Residential; fronting both the east and west side of Wigwoss Drive.

Analysis

The Mid-Rise Mixed-Use designation along this section of Highway 7 is consistent with the policies of the Region of York Official Plan and the Vaughan Official Plan 2010. The future transit stop at this location warrants the consideration of higher densities to support a range of compact, mixed uses that promote transit-oriented, pedestrian friendly complete communities. OPA 661 and VOP 2010 account for this planned intensification through greater allowances for both height and density along Highway 7.

It is important to recognize the sensitivity of the low-rise residential community to the immediate north of the subject lands. This was accommodated in OPA 661 by establishing a 30 metre buffer in which lower height and density provisions applied. This type of transition is necessary in order to achieve compatibility between the two different land uses. VOP 2010 also permits lower density building forms (townhouses, stacked townhouses and low-rise buildings) in the Mid-Rise Mixed-Use designation within 70 metres of an area designated Low-Rise Residential to facilitate this transition.

The limited area and dimensions of the site in comparison with the adjacent properties fronting Highway 7 may prove to be too restrictive to achieve the maximum height and density as currently provided for in VOP 2010. The immediately abutting property to the east is being developed with a stand alone building, thus limiting the potential for comprehensive redevelopment that might facilitate the ability to achieve a higher intensity development at this location. Further, given the low-rise residential dwellings to the north, and the maximum height allocations of 6 storeys for the properties to the east and west of the subject property, it is questionable as to whether a 10 storey, 3.0 FSI maximum is suitable for this location.

For these reasons, a more modest approach to achieving higher densities and a complete, mixed-use community reflective of the objectives of the Region of York Official Plan and VOP 2010 is appropriate for the subject lands. On this basis, staff can recommend that the properties

located at the northeast corner of Wigwoss Drive and Highway 7, municipally known as 10, 20 and 24 Wigwoss drive, maintain their current designation of "Mid-Rise Mixed-Use", with a reduced height and density of 6 storeys and 2.5 FSI respectively, in recognition of both the significance of this intersection on a Regional scale, and the sensitivity of the adjacent residential community.

Due to the confined dimensions of the site, a 6 storey building may also be difficult to achieve due to parking, access and other road requirements. The feasibility of a 6 storey building would be dependent upon a site specific application and supporting studies. A step-down buffer between the low-rise residential uses and any proposed development is recommended and would need to be established during the review of any site specific applications.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The preparation of the new Official Plan is addressed under the objective "Plan and Manage Growth & Economic Vitality", including the following specific initiatives:

- Complete and implement the Growth Management Strategy (Vaughan Tomorrow);
- Conduct the 5-year comprehensive review of the Official Plan as part of the Growth Management Strategy 2031;

Regional Implications

This report and the accompanying Council minute will be forwarded to the Region of York for its consideration in the approval process for VOP 2010 Volume 1.

Conclusion

The subject properties at the northeast corner of Wigwoss Drive and Highway 7 are located along a Regional Intensification Corridor and are adjacent to a future transit stop. The site is currently located between two properties designated Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, which are in the process of intensifying, and the subject properties would therefore support a Mid-Rise Mixed-Use designation. However, given the more sensitive land uses to the north of the study area, and the area and dimension of the subject properties, reducing the maximum height and density of the lands from what is currently permitted by VOP 2010, to be more consistent with the adjacent properties to the east and west is a suitable approach.

Therefore, it is recommended that the subject lands be designated Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, with a maximum height of 6 storeys and a maximum density of 2.5 FSI. It would also be appropriate at the zoning amendment stage to establish a step-down zone to ensure a transition in building heights between the Mid-Rise and Low-Rise designations, consistent with the current policies in OPA 661 and VOP 2010.

Attachments

1. Location and Context Map

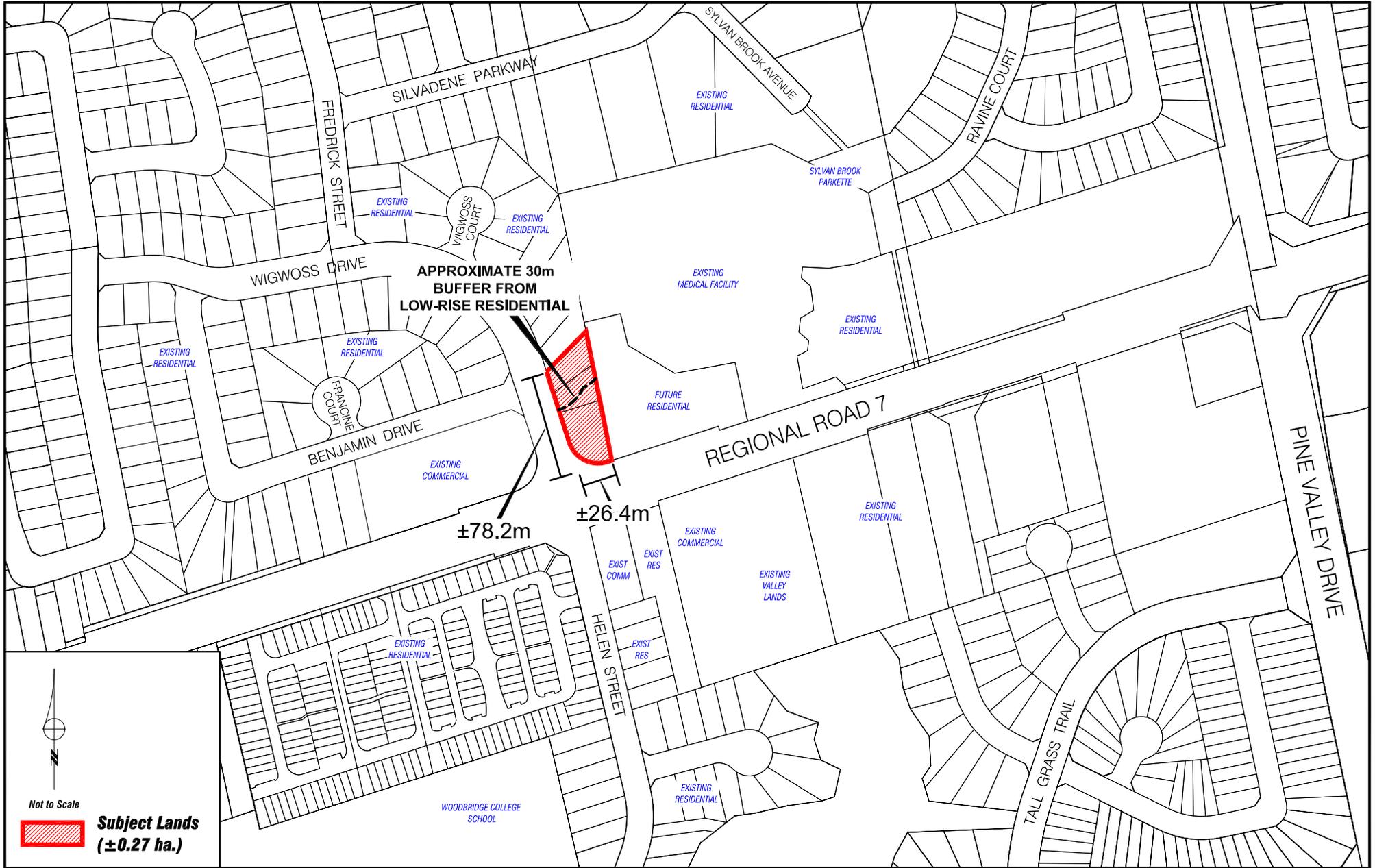
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Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE
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for: DIANA BIRCHALL
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Context Location Map

Location: Part of Lot 6,
Concession 7

