

March 10, 2020

*MGP File: 19-2836*

York Region Chairman Wayne Emmerson and  
Members of Regional Council  
17250 Yonge Street,  
Newmarket, ON L37 6Z1

via email: [regional.clerk@york.ca](mailto:regional.clerk@york.ca)

**Attention: Chairman and Members of Regional Council**

Dear Chairman Emmerson and Members of Regional Council:

**RE: Committee of the Whole, March 12, 2020  
Agenda Item H.2.3 Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions  
Portage Landowners Group, City of Vaughan**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. (“MGP”) is the planning consultant to the Portage Landowners Group (“Portage Landowners”), who own approximately 7.54 ha (18.63 ac) of land north of Portage Parkway and west of Jane Street (“Portage Lands”), within the City of Vaughan.

The Portage Lands are adjacent to the northern boundary of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (“VMC”) and shown in Attachment 1. The Portage Lands are in proximity to the Smartcentres Place Bus Terminal as well as the VMC Subway Station. A portion of the lands are within 500m of the VMC Subway Station; however, the Portage Lands are outside of the VMC Secondary Plan.

**Request: The conversion of the Portage Lands is a local matter. We request that Regional Council defer their position on this conversion to the position of Vaughan Council**

On November 22, 2019, MGP submitted an employment conversion request on behalf of the Portage Landowners Group to convert the Portage Lands to allow non-employment uses and recognize its location as a transitional area from the VMC to protect the core employment area.

MGP met with Regional Staff on January 15, 2020 to discuss their position on the employment conversion request. At this meeting, Chairman Emmerson stated that the employment conversion of the Portage Lands “is a local matter” that should be resolved through the cooperation of City of Vaughan Staff and the Portage Landowners. City of Vaughan staff are working on a report to be presented to Vaughan Council at a later date that outlines staff’s position on these conversions. Vaughan Council will subsequently define their position on these matters.

We believe the Portage Lands should be converted to permit non-employment uses as the lands are a critical boundary between the VMC and employment area where transitional heights, densities, and uses are required. The basis for this assertion is that the existing policies and approved developments along the northern boundary of the VMC have created an ‘edge’ where development north and south of Portage Parkway are starkly different.

Currently, the VMC Secondary Plan (Section 11.12 of the VOP) does not include transition policies to address the interface along Portage Parkway, the northern boundary of VMC. As a result, the current policies and approved developments have inadvertently created an edge where lands within VMC are significantly taller and denser than lands north of Portage Parkway.

Recent development approvals within the VMC have exceeded the height and density provisions originally envisioned for the area by the VMC Secondary Plan and it is understood that future development within the VMC will continue to exceed the heights and densities of the Secondary Plan. With York Region's first subway station located within the VMC, the area is best suited to accommodate high-density growth and capitalize on the public infrastructure investment that has been made.

It is critical that a transitional area between the high-density urban core and adjacent employment lands is provided as the juxtaposition of high-rise towers bordering on low-rise employment uses represents poor planning and runs contrary to the policies of the Vaughan Official Plan. As VMC continues to evolve and develop, the need for a transition from the adjacent employment lands becomes more apparent and important. The Portage Lands represent the most logical place for such a transition zone and the conversion of lands to permit non-employment uses would provide an appropriate transition that protects the employment lands.


As this is a local matter, we continue to request that the City of Vaughan support and undertake comprehensive planning for the Portage Lands as part of their VMC Secondary Plan Review, and work cooperatively with stakeholders, such as the Portage Landowners.

We further request a meeting with Regional and City staff to discuss the creation of a mixed-use transition area and the employment land conversion that is required to enable this opportunity. For the reasons mentioned above, we believe it is prudent that Region Council defer their position on this conversion to the position of Vaughan Council.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments in greater detail, please contact me at 905.513.0170 or DGiven@mgp.ca.

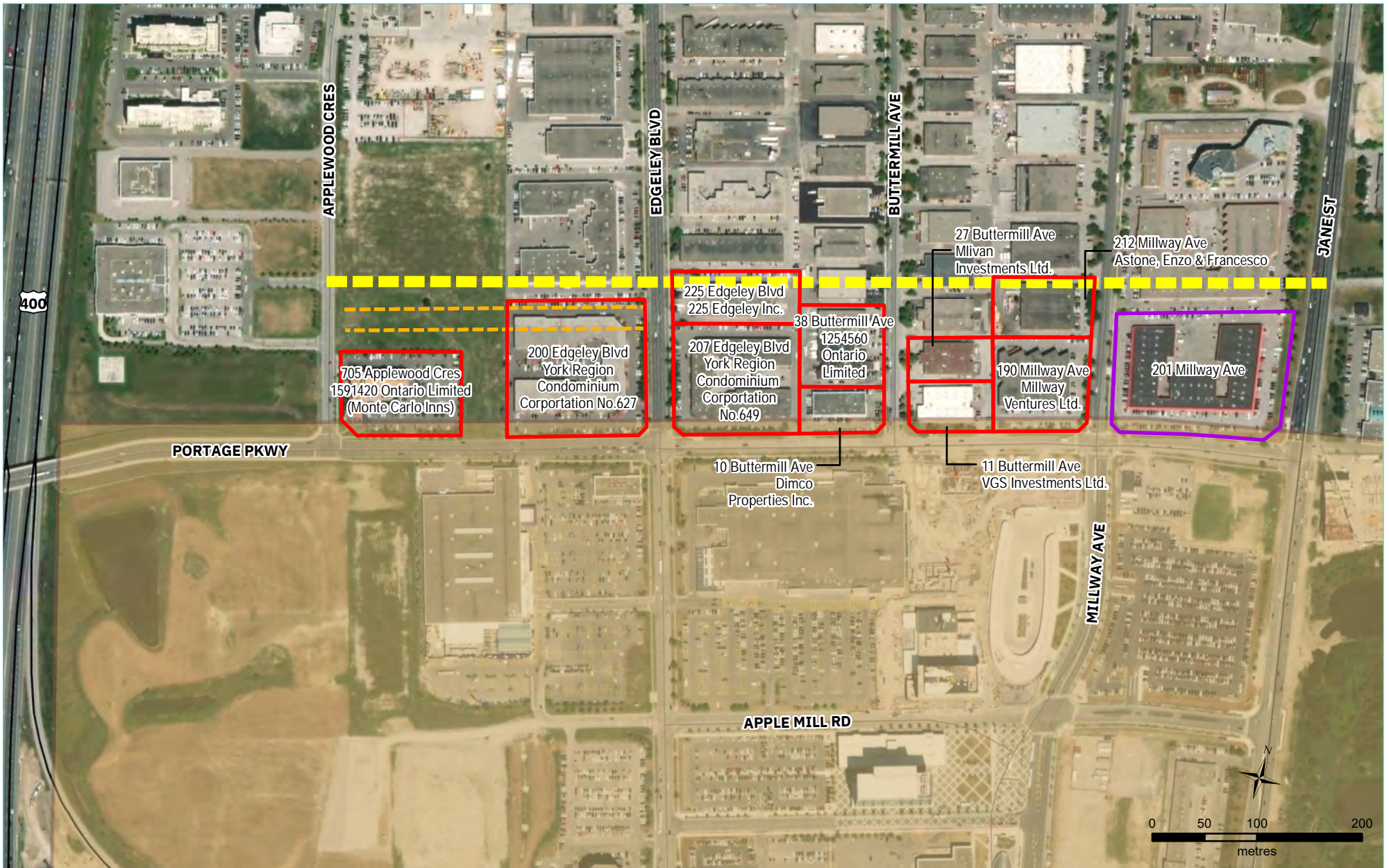
Yours very truly,

**Malone Given Parsons Ltd.**



**Don Given, MCIP, RPP**

Enclosures: Attachment 1: Portage Landowners Participating Lands



# PORTAGE LANDOWNERS PARTICIPATING LANDS VAUGHAN, ON

- Participating Landowners
- Separate Application for Employment Conversion
- ▬▬▬ Approximate Extent of Transitional Area
- ▬▬▬ Conceptual Road from VMC Secondary Plan Schedule
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Area

Sources: York Region, 2019, Contains information licensed under the Open Government Licence – Ontario

MGP File: 19-2836  
Date: November 20, 2019

