

March 10, 2020

BY EMAIL
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Our File No.: 148851

Committee of the Whole
Regional Council
Region of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Attention: Regional Clerk

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

**Re: Buttonville Airport Lands
Planning For Employment and Employment Conversions
Committee of the Whole – March 12, 2020
Agenda Item H.2.3.**

We act for CF/OT Buttonville Properties LP with regard to the above-captioned matter. We are requesting that Regional Council NOT proceed with the proposed new designation of the Buttonville Airport as Employment land.

The Buttonville Airport lands have long been the subject of a planning process contemplating the redevelopment of the site for a wide range and mix of urban uses, including significant employment uses in a mixed-use, complete community setting. This is supported by an existing policy in the Regional Official Plan, Provincial Growth Plan Policy and several decisions by the Council of Markham.

In contrast, the proposal in the mapping of the report before Regional Council proposes to designate the Buttonville lands as Employment. This proposal is inconsistent with the history and policies applicable to the site.

Province Has Removed Buttonville from Provincially Significant Employment Zone Designation

In the recently revised mapping of Provincially Significant Employment Zone, Area 7 (404 407 Markham), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has removed the subject lands from the Provincially Significant Employment Zone designation. This Provincial decision reflects the understanding of the Province that the future use of the Buttonville lands will and should be for a mix of urban uses.

This Provincial decision to not designate the lands as Provincially Significant Employment Zone, constitutes part of the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. A Regional

decision designate the Buttonville lands as only Employment would not be consistent with the Growth Plan.

Airport Operation is Anticipated to End

In April 2009, the Greater Toronto Airport Authority ceased funding to the Buttonville Airport, bringing into question its long-term viability. At this time, Toronto Airways Limited indicated that it would attempt to run the airport for “as long as it makes economic sense”. At that time the owners indicated an intention to redevelop the airport lands “to a higher use”.

York Region Official Plan Policy already Contemplates Mix of Uses at a Redeveloped Buttonville Site

Regional Policy incorporates this dual aspect of the airport use and its uncertain future. The York Region Official Plan now includes a specific policy applicable to the Buttonville Airport lands.

“7.2.92 THAT THE BUTTONVILLE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT LANDS ARE DESIGNATED FOR BUSINESS PARK USE, IN THE CITY OF MARKHAM OFFICIAL PLAN, INCLUDING PERMISSION TO OPERATE AN AIRPORT. WHEN AIRPORT OPERATIONS AT THE BUTTONVILLE AIRPORT CEASE, THE SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY OF THE SUBJECT LANDS SHALL BE RETAINED FOR BUSINESS PARK USE, AND THE BALANCE FOR A MIX OF URBAN USES. THE CITY OF MARKHAM, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE REGION, WILL DETERMINE THE DETAILS OF THE FUTURE USE OF THOSE LANDS THROUGH AN IMPLEMENTING SECONDARY PLAN PROCESS”.

“THE RE-USE OF THE AIRPORT SITE IS INTENDED TO GENERATE A RANGE OF QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPAND UPON THE NUMBER OF JOBS PLANNED FOR THE SITE”.

This policy reflects a highly urban, wide range mix of uses for the site in the future – including employment.

City of Markham Encourages a Long Term Change of the Land Use on Site

The City of Markham has, by Council resolution, adopted a planning report that foresees redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses once the Buttonville Airport operation ceases which remains before the Ontario Municipal Board at this time.

The City of Markham has conducted a Planning Study in response to the proposal from CF/OT Buttonville Properties LP for the redevelopment of the Buttonville Airport lands for a mix of urban uses. Planning staff endorsed the redevelopment of the site for urban uses.

The Planning Report summarizes the redevelopment proposal as follows:

“The proposed redevelopment of Buttonville Airport comprises an employment and high density mixed-use district”.

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This represented a dramatic shift from the previous designation of this site for Industrial – Business Park”.

This stands as clear evidence of the City of Markham position contemplating and supporting a mix of uses on the Buttonville lands.

Conclusion

Based on the City of Markham Council endorsed Planning Report, the Region of York planning policy specific to the Buttonville lands, and the decision of the Province to remove Buttonville from its Provincially Significant Employment Zone Designation, it is clear that a new Regional designation of the lands as Employment is not appropriate. The lengthy history of planning on site, contemplating a mix of uses including residential and job-creating uses, should be continued.

We request that we be notified and circulated on any reports, meetings or information sessions from the Region with respect to this matter.

Yours truly,

AIRD & BERLIS LLP



Hon. Peter Van Loan

PVL

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