



BOUSFIELDS INC.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Project No. 1965

March 11, 2020

Committee of the Whole
Planning and Economic Development
York Region
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

***Re: Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review, Employment Land Conversion
Southwest Quadrant of Highway 7 and Highway 404, City of Markham
Partial Employment Conversion Request
Wemat Group of Companies***

We are the planning consultants to the Wemat Group of Companies ("**Wemat**"), the owners of the property bounded by Highway 7 to the north, Leslie Street to the west, Highway 404 to the east and Minthorn Boulevard to the south (the "**subject site**").

The subject site is approximately 18.5 hectares in size and is divided into two parcels of land, separated by Commerce Valley Drive East. The east parcel is currently vacant. The west parcel is occupied by single-storey commercial uses and an 8-storey office building with frontage on Highway 7 (50 Minthorn Boulevard and 230 Commerce Valley Drive East).

A partial employment land conversion request was submitted to the Region on behalf of Wemat on May 1, 2019 in response to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive. Since that time, we have actively participated in the City of Markham's Employment Land Conversion process, including presentations on a number of occasions to Markham's Development Services Sub-Committee for Employment Land Conversions. We continue to be involved in that process.

As part of the partial conversion request, a preliminary concept plan was prepared for the subject site. It presented an overall vision for what could be realized in the long term: a transit-supportive mixed-use development that achieves an appropriate balance of employment and residential uses. The vision considered compatibility with the existing land use context and the evolution of the area, having regard for the anticipated number of jobs that could be expected on the subject site as well as its location along Highway 7 and within a *major transit station area*.

The proposed vision also took into account a number of development principles centered around the creation of a true mixed-use community with a differing residential types and tenures, and a variety of non-residential uses, together taking advantage of the recent investment in Regional transportation infrastructure. The vision included specific elements of sustainability in its built form and infrastructure (e.g., green roofs, district energy), encouraged active transportation within and around the subject site through planned and existing local and Regional transit networks, all in accordance with Provincial and Regional policy.

Employment viability was a key consideration, with the proposed concept including the retention of a significant level of employment uses and the introduction of new retail and service employment. Specifically, a technical investigation was undertaken by IBI Group, which found that the proposed development concept would be able to provide upwards of 58,000 square metres of office gross floor area on the subject site, accommodating over 2,300 office jobs and over 400 retail and hotel jobs, for a total to over 2,700 new jobs on the subject site.

This would be about 10% of the entire forecasted office employment growth for the City of Markham.

The proposed development concept also took into account the location of the non-residential uses, ensuring that the configuration and organization of the employment blocks would protect nearby current and future employment uses.

It remains our opinion that the subject site is an ideal candidate for a partial conversion. It is strategically located in the City of Markham and the Region of York, with excellent transportation and transit infrastructure to support mixed-use growth. It presents a unique and significant opportunity to develop the lands for a complete community, with a range and mix of both non-residential and residential uses. It will kick-start development of lands that have remained vacant for decades, and will assist in attracting investment to the City and Region.

The proposal for a mixed-use community is consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2014), conforms with the *Growth Plan* (2019), conforms with the York Region Official Plan, meets the intent and purpose of City of Markham Official Plan, and represents good planning.

The request satisfies the employment land conversion criteria of the *Growth Plan* and York Region's Proposed Employment Area Conversion Criteria. It meets the intent and purpose of these policies with respect to employment land conversions and development in proximity to *major transit station areas*.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Louis Tinker of our office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the foregoing.

Yours very truly,

Bousfields Inc.



Kate Cooper MCIP, RPP

cc. Ms. Dagmar Tuebner, Wemat Group of Companies
Mr. Michael Melling, Davies Howe LLP
Mr. John Matheson, Strategy Corp