



**WESTON  
CONSULTING**

planning + urban design

Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON  
L3Y 6Z1

March 11, 2020  
File 5390-1

**Attn: Regional Members of Council  
York Region**

**Re: Region of York Municipal Comprehensive Review  
Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions (CW Item H.2.3)  
7250 Keele Street, City of Vaughan**

Weston Consulting is the planning consultant for York Region Standard Condominium Corporation No.1311, the owner of the lands municipally known as 7250 Keele Street in the City of Vaughan (herein referred to as the 'subject property') (see Figure 1). Further to our submission letters and meetings with Regional Staff to inform the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process, the purpose of this letter is to express the owner's interest to explore opportunities, including the re-designation of the subject property by the local municipality to grant additional permissive uses, such as retail uses on the subject property.

**Subject Property**

The subject property is located on the south-west corner of Keele Street and Snidercroft Road, approximately 350 metres south of Highway 407, and features a lot frontage of approximately 326 metres on Keele Street and 242 metres on Snidercroft Road, with a total area of 8.54 hectares (21.1 acres). The subject property is home to Improve Canada, a unique establishment which functions as a home improvement business centre, focused on home improvement products and services, where products are displayed and offered for sale, but there is no retail carry out or distribution of products permitted on the subject property.

The subject property is located within a pocket of employment lands generally bound by the Canadian National Railway lands to the west and south, Highway 407 to the north and a hydro-corridor to the south-east. The area surrounding the subject property consists of the following uses as indicated below:

**North:** Snidercroft Road abuts the property to the north, with low-rise office and warehouse uses beyond.

**West:** A warehouse used for plastic fabrication abuts the subject property to the west with additional manufacturing uses beyond.

**South:** Canadian National Railway lands abuts the subject property to the south.

East: Keele Street abuts the property to the east, with service commercial uses and office uses beyond.



**Figure 1: Subject Property**

### **Improve Canada and Context**

Weston Consulting is not requesting the introduction of non-employment uses, rather the introduction of additional permissive employment uses, to aid the existing businesses within Improve Canada. It is our opinion that the introduction of more permissive uses can be assessed through the development of the Region's employment policy framework and at the local municipal level.

The subject property is not currently utilized as a traditional employment use, i.e. manufacturing, warehousing or office uses, and the existing use has been operating for several years. Therefore, the introduction of more permissive uses, including the benefit to permit retail purchasing and sales on this particular property, is intended to encourage

economic activity and will enhance the existing viability of the current businesses located within Improve Canada. It is our opinion that the introduction of these permissive uses will not destabilize the surrounding area or hinder the attraction of a broad range of employment opportunities to the area. There is also significant economic opportunity and potential for each home improvement company located within the Improve Canada to increase jobs and economic growth in various locations across the GTA where the manufacturing, assembling and warehousing facilities are located.

### **Staff Report Recommendation**

We have reviewed the Planning for Employment and Employment Conversion Staff Report, dated March 12, 2020, and its associated attachments, including Attachment 5 -York Region Site Specific Employment Area Conversion Assessment Summary for Request V29 as it relates to the subject property. Staff are recommending that the lands not be converted to non-employment uses and that the lands be designated as employment in the Regional Official Plan. However, in discussions with Regional and Local Staff and as indicated in the Summary of Assessment of the Staff Report, there is recognition that there would be opportunity and support at the local municipal level to re-designate the property to another employment designation, such as *Employment Commercial Mixed-Use*, which would allow for increased flexibility of additional retail uses. Weston Consulting was advised that there is opportunity to work with City Staff, with Regional support, to determine an appropriate land use designation that would increase the amount of retail permissions on the subject property, tied to Improve Canada, that does not require a conversion.

Weston Consulting met with a Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), on January 17, 2020, who expressed the Ministry's support of the introduction of additional permissive uses, such as retail purchasing and sales, for the Home Improve site, recognizing that small businesses and the retail sector plays a significant role in creating jobs and supporting a vibrant economy across the region. The MMAH encouraged that discussions for these permissions be undertaken with the appropriate level of government (i.e. Local and Regional Planning Staff).

### **Conclusion**

This correspondence is being submitted to request that the subject property be considered to allow for the introduction of permissive uses, including retail uses on the entire floor area of each individual condominium unit currently operating within Improve Canada. We respectfully request consideration to continue to explore opportunities, including a re-designation of the subject property by the local municipality to include full retail uses or increased flexibility of additional retail permissions than what is currently permitted in the *Prestige and General Employment* designation. It is our opinion that greater retail uses would increase the viability of the existing Improve Canada site, without negatively affecting surrounding employment uses.

While the subject property is recommended to be maintained as employment, we look forward to continuing to work with regional and local staff to explore opportunities to accommodate our request to increase the amount of retail permissions on the subject property, tied to the Improve Canada, that does not require a conversion.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact the undersigned (ext. 245) or Paul Tobia (ext. 290) should there be any questions regarding the content of this submission.

Yours truly,

**Weston Consulting**

**Per:**



Sandra K. Patano, BES, MES, MCIP, RPP  
Associate

cc. York Region Standard Condominium Corporation No.1311  
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