

# DEPUTATION REQUEST

SPECIAL REGIONAL COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

**Subject:** 2920 16th Avenue - Condor Properties - ID M9

**Spokesperson:** Don Given

**Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable):** Condor Properties, the owner of 2920 16th Avenue which is subject to Employment Conversion M9

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**Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:**

A verbal deputation in support of the conversion of 2920 16th Avenue located at the northwest corner of 16th Ave and Woodbine Ave.

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September 15, 2020

MGP File: 19-2785

York Region Chairman Wayne Emmerson and  
Members of Regional Council  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

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

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

Dear Chairman Emmerson and Members of Regional Council:

**RE: York Region Council Special Meeting, September 17, 2020  
Agenda Item F.1 Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions  
Condor Properties Ltd.  
2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Northwest Corner of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Woodbine Avenue, City of  
Markham**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. is the planning consultant to Condor Properties Ltd., who own approximately 24.18 hectares located at the northwest corner of 16th Avenue and Woodbine Avenue (“Condor Lands”), within the City of Markham.

We are writing in response to the September 17, 2020, York Region Council Special Meeting Agenda Item F.1, a staff memorandum titled “Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions” dated September 10, 2020.

Page 2 of “Attachment 1” indicates that staff do not recommend the Subject Lands for conversion for employment uses, as shown below in Figure 1.

*Figure 1. York Region Council Special Meeting September 17, 2020 Agenda Item F.1 “Planning for Employment and Employment Conversions”, Attachment 1, Page 2*

Staff Report ID	Submitted By	On behalf of	Address	Municipality	Staff Recommendation	Local Municipal Council Position
M9	Malone Given Parsons	Condor Properties Ltd.	2920 16th Avenue	Markham	Not recommended for conversion to non-employment uses. Designate as employment in the Regional Official Plan.	Supported

**Request**

**We are writing to request that the eastern portion of the Subject Lands designated for Employment uses at 2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the City of Markham be converted to a Mixed-Use land designation, so that a variety of employment and residential uses can be developed on the site.**

Figure 2. Subject Lands and Area Subject to Employment Conversion



### Markham Council Supports the Conversion

At the February 25, 2020 Markham Council meeting, Council adopted the recommendations of the February 11, Development Services Committee which recommended:

*“That Council support the following employment land conversion requests, subject to entering an agreement with the City of Markham for submissions of Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications contemplating the provision of affordable purpose-built rental and seniors housing and the retention of employment uses, prior to the ultimate consideration of the conversion request by York Region Council:*

A. *Condor Properties Ltd., 2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue”*

Condor is in the process of submitting Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to the City of Markham per the recommendation that was adopted by Markham Council.

We believe that it is prudent that York Region approves this employment conversion request as it represents good planning and is in the public interest.

We previously submitted a letter dated May 1, 2019 to the Region that outlined how the conversion request is consistent with the Provincial and Regional employment conversion criteria. A copy of the submitted letter is enclosed as Attachment 1. In support of our request, we are reiterating the following merits of the conversion.

### Employment Conversion Rationale

*The proposed conversion would permit a mixed-use development that is in keeping with the shifting trends in employment:*

With shifts in employment trends over the past two decades, the concentration and isolation of employment uses from other land uses have fallen out of favour in preference of mixed-use developments where people to live, work, and play in the same neighbourhood. The Subject Lands would generate a limited number of jobs in the event the lands are developed exclusively for employment uses.

The proposed employment land conversion is desirable and will enable the development of the lands in a more intensive and efficient manner. An employment land conversion would enable the development of the lands for residential, commercial, and office uses which would generate a higher employment density than that of low-density employment industries, such as warehousing or a logistics facility. The employment conversion would therefore bring additional jobs into the Region and further strengthen the local economy.

*The proposed conversion is compatible with the surrounding uses:*

The Subject Lands are adjacent to non-employment uses. The adjacent lands north of the property across Markland Street designated “Business Park Employment” and “Commercial” were subject to an employment conversion in April 2015 and Regional Council approved the conversion to permit residential, hotel, and commercial uses on those lands. Further, commercial uses are present to the east across Woodbine Avenue and residential uses to the south across 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As such, the lands are not surrounded by lands designated for employment uses.

The conversion to permit residential and commercial uses is compatible with the surrounding uses and will introduce high quality employment uses such as office uses as well as residential uses. Further, appropriate buffering through roads, open space/parks, and mixed uses has been considered in the Preliminary Concept Plan with respect to protecting the environment and mitigating any potential land use conflicts.

*Current road construction projects will enhance the traffic flow of the Subject Lands:*

The future Highway 404 overpass connecting Markland Street in Markham with Orlando Avenue in Richmond Hill, as well as the reconfiguration of the Highway 404 interchange at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue will allow for greater traffic efficiency and movement.

*The Subject Lands can be accommodated by existing servicing infrastructure:*

The Subject Lands are within the urban boundary and have been since the 2005 consolidation of the 1987 Markham Official Plan. The Subject Lands can be accommodated and serviced by existing infrastructure on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Woodbine Avenue, and Markland Street. The availability of existing servicing on-site points to the suitability of the Subject Lands for immediate development.

*The proposed conversion will accommodate forecasted employment growth:*

Applying the City of Markham’s employment density of 50 jobs per hectare, as identified in York Region’s 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario Land Budget published in November 2015, approximately 300 jobs can be expected to be accommodated on the portion of the Subject Lands requested for conversion. These jobs are intended to be retained and accommodated on the Subject Lands and the adjacent property to the east, municipally known as 2960 16<sup>th</sup>

Avenue. The two properties will be developed collectively as a mixed-use development with office, commercial, and residential uses. The retention of employment uses on the Subject Lands ensure that sufficient employment lands are maintained to accommodate forecasted employment growth.

*The proposed conversion will not destabilize or adversely affect current or future viability and/or identity of the employment area:*

The conversion does not hinder the operation or expansion of existing or future businesses as the proposed mixed-use development of the Subject Lands will retain employment uses and office space that businesses can utilize, as shown in the attached Preliminary Concept Plan.

Additionally, the conversion does not adversely affect lands abutting or in proximity to the conversion site for employment purposes over the long term. The development proposal maintains employment jobs on the Subject Lands and the proposed mixed-use community will be developed in a manner compatible with the existing office uses to the north.

The conversion does not adversely affect the ability to attract a broad range of employment opportunities and maintenance of clusters of economic activities. There are existing site limitations to attracting a broad range of employment opportunities given the parcel size and configuration, environmental constraints, and accessibility issues from Highway 404 that limit the employment potential of the site. The refusal to convert the employment lands would result in the independent development of the adjacent property to the east, leaving the Subject Lands orphaned with constrained access from public roads. This would compromise the viability of the Subject Lands for economically productive uses.

The conversion of the Subject Lands to permit residential and commercial uses will enable the development of the site with the adjacent property in a manner that mitigates existing issues on the Subject Lands. Furthermore, the two sites will retain employment uses and accommodate the City's projected growth.

**Conclusion**

The Subject Lands are constrained by environmental features, inefficient site layout, and accessibility issues, that make the property unsuitable for employment uses. The comprehensive development of the property with the adjacent lands to the east represents good planning that optimizes the economic potential of the lands by mitigating the constraints present if the Subject Lands are considered in isolation. The proposed employment land conversion request for the eastern portion of the Subject Lands to permit additional residential and commercial uses will not adversely affect or impact on the City's ability to meet intensification targets, density targets, or employment targets contained in the Growth Plan.

On behalf of Condor Properties Ltd., we therefore request that the Subject Lands be considered as part of the Region's ongoing Municipal Comprehensive Review and that the Region permit the employment land conversion to a mixed use designation upon completion of the MCR.

Should you have any questions with respect to this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at 905.513.0170 x 109 or DGiven@mgp.ca.

Yours very truly,

**Malone Given Parsons Ltd.**



**Don Given, MCIP, RPP**

cc: Paul Freeman, Chief Planner, York Region  
Paul Bottomley, Manager, York Region  
Frank Scarpitti, Mayor, City of Markham  
Don Hamilton, Markham Regional Councillor  
Jack Heath, Markham Regional Councillor  
Joe Li, Markham Regional Councillor  
Jim Jones, Markham Regional Councillor  
Arvin Prasad, Development Services Commissioner, City of Markham  
Sam Balsamo, Condor Properties

Attachment 1: Employment Land Conversion Request letter, submitted by Malone Given Parsons Ltd.  
dated May 1, 2019.

Attachment 2: Preliminary Concept Plan, prepared by Malone Given Parsons Ltd. dated February 5,  
2020.





Don Given  
905 513 0170 x109  
DGiven@mgp.ca

May 1, 2019

MGP File: 19-2785

**Sandra Malcic, Director**  
Long Range Planning  
York Region  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

via email: [sandra.malcic@york.ca](mailto:sandra.malcic@york.ca)

Dear Ms. Malcic,

**RE: 2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Markham  
Employment Land Conversion Request**

**Request:**

**That the eastern portion of Subject Lands designated for Employment uses at 2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the City of Markham be converted to a Mixed-Use land use designation, so that a variety of employment and residential uses can be developed on the site.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and input into York Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review process. Malone Given Parsons (“MGP”) are the planning consultants to Condor Properties Ltd. (“Condor”), who own approximately 16.6 gross hectares of land northwest of Woodbine Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue (“Subject Lands”), municipally known as 2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the City of Markham (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Subject Lands



## **Executive Summary**

Condor Properties Ltd. (“Condor”) is the owner of approximately 16.6 hectares of land municipally known as 2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north side of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Cachet Woods Court and Woodbine Avenue, in the City of Markham (“Subject Lands”). The Subject Lands were operated as the Buttonville Golf and Country Club until the course was closed in 2006 and the lands are reserved for employment uses, designated “Business Park Employment” and “Greenway” in the City of Markham Official Plan, 2014. Condor is requesting an Employment Land Conversion during York Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review (“MCR”) process for the eastern portion of the Subject Lands indicated in Figure 1 to a Mixed Use designation. The requested conversion would permit residential and commercial uses on-site.

As a result of environmental features, approximately 54% of the Subject Lands are not suitable for development. These constraints split the developable area of the Subject Lands into a smaller western portion and a larger eastern section which is requested for conversion. Further, these environmental features heavily impact the layout, configuration, and accessibility of the site. Traffic arriving from the nearby Highway 404 exchange on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the eastern portion of the site will have accessibility issues with the eastern lands due to the lack of a signalized intersection.

The eastern portion of the Subject Lands, in conjunction with the adjacent parcel to the east municipally known as 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, are envisioned to be comprehensively developed as a mixed-use block with residential, commercial and employment uses. The comprehensive development of the two properties would negate the identified site accessibility issues and accommodate the City’s anticipated growth by permitting the development of employment and residential uses on lands that have remained vacant since the 2006. The western portion of the Subject Lands are intended to be retained for additional employment uses and developed at a later date.

The conversion of the eastern portion of the Subject Lands to include residential and commercial permissions would retain employment jobs on the site. A non-conversion of the Subject Lands would relegate large portions of the site to an economically unproductive future as the independent development of the adjacent property to the east, 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, would leave the site with further accessibility issues and minimized development potential. The Employment Land Conversion request is consistent with and complies to all applicable provincial, regional and municipal planning policies, including the PPS and the Growth Plan and therefore it is appropriate to convert the Subject Lands to permit residential and commercial uses.

### **1.0 Subject Lands, Site History and Context**

The Subject Lands are approximately 16.6 hectares in size and bounded by Markland Street to the north, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the south and Cachet Woods Court to the west. The lands were operated as the Buttonville Golf and Country Club until the course was closed in 2006. The lands have remained vacant and undeveloped since the closure.

An existing residential subdivision, office uses, and a shopping centre (King Square Shopping Centre) is located north of the site. A vacant parcel is adjacent to the east and further east across Woodbine Avenue is a commercial plaza. To the south are residential townhomes as well as small businesses fronting onto 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and to the west are a gas station, a funeral home, an office building, and a vacant parcel.



The economic landscape of the Region is in the process of a shift. The trend of economic activity moving to the suburbs has reversed and there is a growing concentration of jobs going back to the downtown core. This shift is reinforced by the slower growth in the kinds of economic activity that have historically been more dispersed throughout the region. Advancement in technologies, automation and telecommuting has also redefined the workspace.

The changing economic landscape makes land use planning for employment uses challenging. Proper planning for employment uses is key to achieving Provincial, Regional and Municipal objectives of efficiently using infrastructure and encouraging transit-supportive development. Conventional methods of planning for employment uses has traditionally been to promote single-use employment blocks. This is evident in suburban office parks that have no residential uses and are dominated by low to mid-rise corporate office buildings with large surface parking lots with limited amenities for workers. They are largely auto dependent and the public realm is characterized by office buildings separated by large distances, with few destinations reachable on foot. Young workers especially are preferring amenity rich work environments with good access to public transportation so that they have the option of decreasing their auto dependency. The traditional suburban employment areas are becoming less attractive to these employees and in turn, employers are finding it harder to attract the best talent, especially when competing with downtown Toronto.

Market demand on employment lands in York Region has largely been driven by growth in knowledge/creative based economies (including sectors such as professional services, finance, insurance, real estate, culture, health and education). To date, these sectors have mostly been accommodated within prestige employment areas. In order to continue to retain and attract talented workers, there is recognition that talent is being increasingly drawn to amenity-driven employment areas that offer a broader land-use mix. Developing the type of employment area that is going to attract talent is going to require a more integrated urban structure relative to traditional employment areas. Permitting non-employment uses will allow the Subject Lands to adapt to a changing employment market where young educated workers are prioritizing workplaces that are increasingly accessible and closer to amenities. The success of downtown Markham, where a vibrant mix of uses activates the area from morning to night, is pedestrian friendly, and is transit-supportive, demonstrates that this type of development is possible in a suburban setting. This type of development can attract a range of residential and non-residential investments which in turn supports the economic resiliency of the City and Region.

## 2.0 Site Constraints

The developable area of the Subject Lands is constrained by the valley system in the centre of the site. A preliminary analysis of the environmental features on the Subject Lands indicate approximately 46% percent of the lands (~7.6 hectares) are suitable for development (see Figure 2). Additional information regarding site limitations and the breakdown of environmental constraints such as natural heritage features, woodlands, and watercourses on the Subject Lands are contained within Appendix 1.

A detailed assessment of on-site environmental features will have to be conducted through an Environmental Assessment to refine the boundaries of environmental features and assess the developable area of the Subject Lands and will be undertaken as required to support a future development application.

Figure 2. Anticipated Developable Area



As a result of environmental features, the Subject Lands are divided into two developable portions: a smaller western portion (1.7 hectares) and the larger eastern portion (5.9 hectares). While the developable area on the west is accessible via Cachet Woods Court, the eastern portion has minimal access onto public roads apart from a small access onto 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The eastern portion has no other direct access onto a public road as indicated by an analysis of the surrounding parcel fabric seen in Figure 3.

There is insufficient space for access from Markland Street onto the site. Access onto the Subject Lands from Markland Street will require an access agreement with the adjacent landowner to the north, 136 Markland Street, or via the adjacent site to the east, 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which is also owned by Condor

Figure 3. Site Access from Markland Street



In addition to accessibility constraints from 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Markland Street, it is noted that York Region is currently undertaking a transportation Environmental Assessment Study for 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to identify possible road improvements. The study indicates that 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be widened from four lanes to six lanes by providing an additional lane in each direction. Preliminary road design sheets indicate that a signalized intersection is not planned along 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue frontage of the Subject Lands. Access onto the property from 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue will only be provided via a Right-in/Right-out intersection. Eastbound traffic arriving via the nearby Highway 404 interchange onto 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue will not have dedicated access to the eastern developable portion of the Subject Lands as that would require an advanced left from a signalized intersection. As such, the proposed road widening of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue further constrains the accessibility of the Subject Lands.

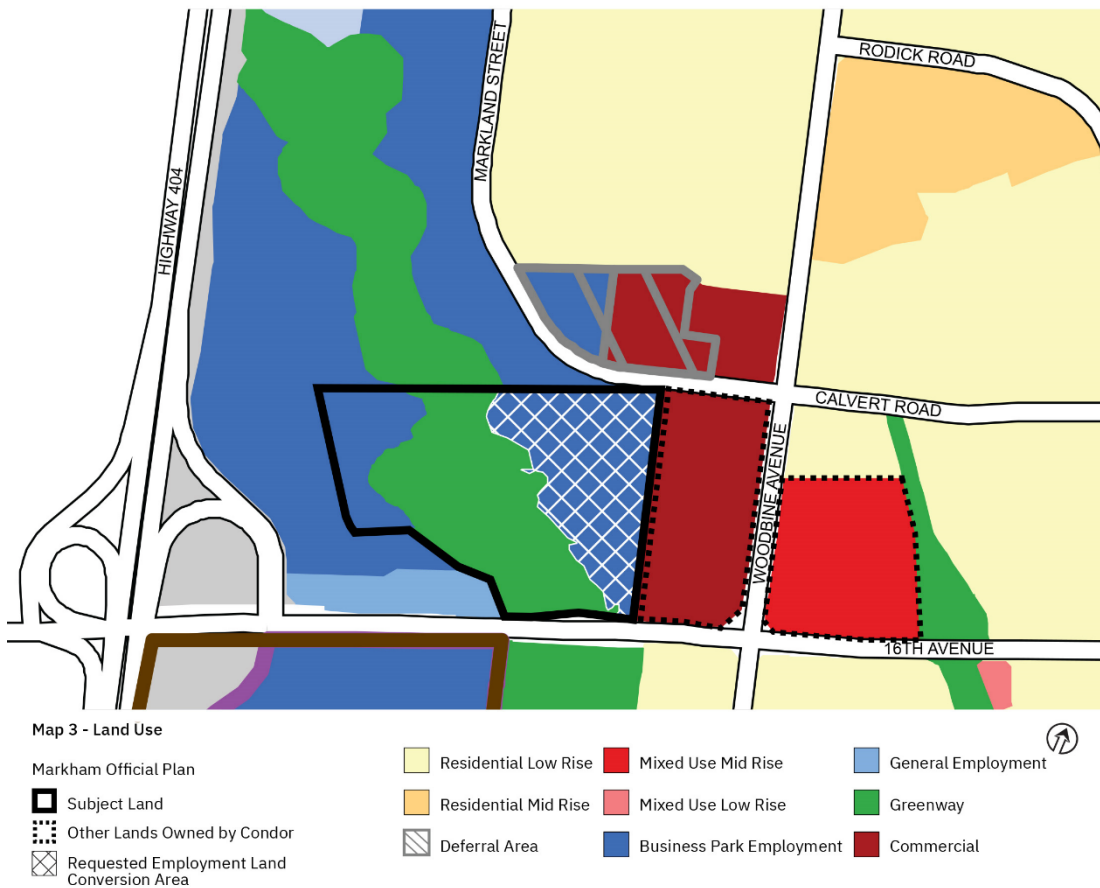


### 3.0 Land Use Planning Policy

Under the York Region Official Plan, the Subject Lands are located within the Urban Area and the Greenlands System. The urban area permits a wide variety of residential and employment uses while lands designated Greenlands are generally reserved for conservation uses and do not permit development.

The City of Markham Official Plan 2014 designates the lands “Employment Area” and “Greenway System” per Map 1 – Markham Structure, and “Business Park Employment” and “Greenway” per Map 3 – Land Use. Employment uses are limited to the portion of the Subject Lands designated employment while development is restricted on lands within the greenway designation. Lands adjacent to the Subject Lands are designated for a variety of uses including Residential Low Rise, Commercial, Mixed Use Mid Rise, General Employment, and Business Park Employment. The Markham Official Plan Land Use designations for the surrounding area are seen below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Markham Official Plan - Map 3: Land Use



The lands designated “Deferral Area” with an underlying “Business Park Employment” and “Commercial” designation in Figure 4 were requested employment conversions approved by Regional Council on April 23, 2015. The deferred lands designated “Business Park Employment” were approved to permit low and mid-rise residential uses while the lands designated “Commercial” were approved to permit a mix of uses, including hotel, apartments, and retail. The Region’s approval of these employment conversion requests set a precedent for the Subject Lands and provide an opportunity for a mixed use development with employment and residential uses.

The property on the northeast corner of Woodbine Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue designated Mix Use Mid Rise (9253 – 9255 Woodbine Avenue) has been developed exclusively for commercial uses as a commercial plaza with no residential uses.

Condor is the owner of the Subject Lands and the adjacent lands to the east (2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue). The comprehensive development of the Subject Lands and 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a mixed use site at the intersection of two major arterials with transit would create the flexibility to plan for commercial uses along the arteries and provide residential uses adjacent to the valley; a unique and rare recreational amenity in the City. The conversion would help achieve the intensification, housing, and employment policies of the City and Region by optimizing transit investments through the provision of high quality housing and jobs adjacent to planned transit corridors. It would also enable a range of mix of uses and activities that are transit-supportive and supportive of active transportation in conformity with policy 2.2.4.10 of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

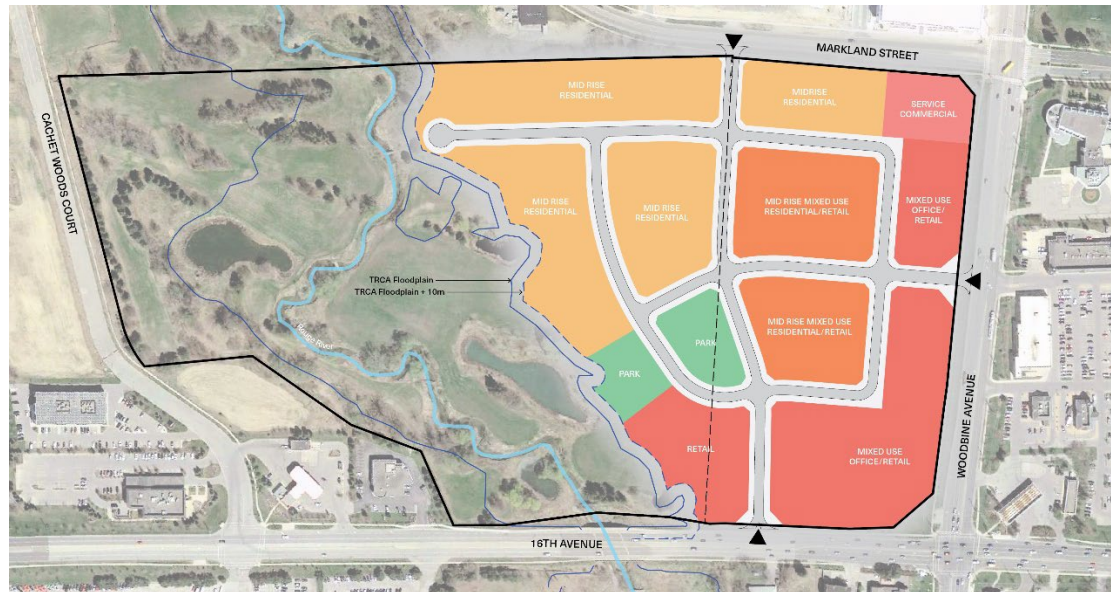
York Region's Transportation Master Plan designates the portion of Woodbine Avenue adjacent to the Subject Lands for Viva curbside service by 2026. The provision of Viva bus rapid transit would make Woodbine Avenue a priority transit corridor under the Growth Plan and require the area to be planned for a minimum density target of 160 residents and jobs per hectare. The conversion would support the achievement of this target by permitting the development of comprehensively planned mixed-use block with residential and employment uses at a density in conformity to the Growth Plan. Additional information regarding the planned development of the subject and adjacent lands are provided in Section 4 of this letter.

Under the City of Markham Zoning By-law 304-87, the lands are zoned Commercial Recreation (CR) and Open Space (O1). A zoning by-law amendment will be submitted at a later date as part of the development process for the Subject Lands.

## 4.0 Comprehensive Development Plan

Condor Properties Ltd. are the owners of 2920 and 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The eastern portion of the Subject Lands in conjunction with the adjacent property to the east are envisioned to be comprehensively developed as a mixed use block with residential, office, and commercial uses. The development of the western portion of the Subject Lands for employment uses will be initiated at a later date. In consultation with Condor Properties Ltd., MGP has prepared a Preliminary Concept Plan illustrating the envisioned development of the eastern portion of the Subject Lands and 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Preliminary Concept Plan



The proposed development of the two properties as an integrated mixed use block provides a range of high quality employment, commercial, and residential uses. Mixed use office and retail development is located along Woodbine Avenue for employment uses. A portion of the lands along 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue are proposed for exclusive retail use, and a service commercial use, such as a gas station, is proposed at the intersection of Markland Street and Woodbine Avenue. Park space is located at the centre of the block to ensure accessibility and also adjacent to the valley system to highlight the unique natural amenity on the site. Residential uses are proposed through the remainder of the site and provide a range of housing forms and unit types to meet the housing needs of the City and Region's residents. Access onto the site will be provided via entrances on Markland Street, Woodbine Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This Preliminary Concept Plan represents the envisioned development of the lands but is subject to revision and refinement through the development application process.

The development applications that are anticipated to be submitted to the City of Markham after the consideration of the employment land conversion request are the following: Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, and Site Plan Application.

It is noted that Condor reserves the right to independently develop 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue should the requested employment conversion be denied. However, doing so may compromise the viability of the Subject Lands for employment uses as the eastern portion of the site would lack dedicated access and only be accessible via a small Right-in/Right-out access on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## 5.0 Employment Land Conversions

Condor Properties Ltd. is seeking an employment land conversion for the eastern portion of the Subject Lands designated Business Park Employment under the Markham Official Plan to a Mixed Use designation to permit additional residential and commercial uses. Employment uses are proposed to be retained when the Subject Lands are comprehensively developed with the adjacent property.

### 5.1 Provincial Criteria for Employment Land Conversions

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, requires that the conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses be done through a Municipal Comprehensive Review. The conversion of employment lands may only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the criteria set out in Section 2.2.5.9 of the Growth Plan are met. The following table outlines the provincial criteria used by York Region to assess employment area conversions and how the Subject Lands fulfill those requirements.

Growth Plan Criteria:
<p>1) ) <i>The lands are not required over the horizon of the Growth Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated (Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 b);</i></p> <p>The Subject Lands will partially retain the Region’s designated employment jobs for the property. The remainder will be accommodated on the adjacent property to the east, 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, when the two properties are proposed to be comprehensively developed as a mixed-use development with high quality residential, commercial, and employment uses.</p> <p>With the rise and rapid growth of highly automated and low density employment industries such as logistics and warehousing, it is probable that the Subject Lands generate a limited number of jobs in the event the lands are developed for exclusive employment uses. An employment land conversion would enable the development of the lands for residential, commercial, and office uses would generate a higher employment density than that of a warehouse or logistics facility. While an employment use would not meet the Growth Plan’s 160 residents and jobs combined per hectare density target for lands adjacent to the planned bus rapid transit corridor on Woodbine Avenue, the proposed development would achieve the required target. Consequently, the employment conversion would bring additional jobs into the Region and further strengthen the local economy.</p>
<p>2) <i>The Region and local municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth, including sufficient employment land employment growth, to the horizon of the Growth Plan (Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 c);</i></p> <p>The York Region 2017 Vacant Employment Land Inventory Report indicates that the Region has 2,588 hectares of vacant employment land. The Subject Lands represent 0.64% of the Region’s vacant employment land inventory.</p> <p>Applying the City of Markham’s employment density of 50 jobs per hectare identified in York Region’s 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario Land Budget published in November 2015, the portion of the Subject Lands requested for conversion can be expected to accommodate approximately 300 jobs.</p> <p>These jobs are intended to be retained and accommodated on the Subject Lands and the adjacent property to the east, municipally known as 2960 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The two properties</p>



will be developed collectively as a mixed use development with office, commercial, and residential uses. The retention of employment uses on the Subject Lands ensure that sufficient employment lands are maintained to accommodate forecasted employment growth.

As noted previously, the City of Markham and York Region are also actively acquiring additional lands for employment purposes. The conversion of the Subject Lands to permit additional residential and commercial uses will not impact the Region's supply of employment lands to meet forecasted employment growth.

- 3) *Non-employment uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets and other policies in the Growth Plan (modified Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 d);*

Non-employment uses on the Subject Lands would not adversely affect the viability of the employment area or the achievement of density targets in the Growth Plan. With shifts in employment trends over the past two decades, the concentration and isolation of employment uses from other land uses are no longer preferred. On the contrary, employment, commercial, and residential uses are compatible land uses that collectively thrive and benefit from each other in a mixed-use environment.

The refusal to convert the employment lands would result in the independent development of the adjacent property to the east that would leave the Subject Lands orphaned with constrained access from public roads as outlined previously in Section 2. This would compromise the viability of the Subject Lands for economically productive uses. The proposed comprehensive development of a mixed-use block with employment uses is intended to be developed at a density in conformity with the policies of the Growth Plan and the York Region Official Plan.

- 4) *There are existing or planning infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the non-employment uses (e.g. sewage, water, energy, transportation) (modified Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 e);*

The development of the Subject Lands for employment and non-employment uses can be accommodated and serviced by existing infrastructure on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Woodbine Avenue, and Markland Street. The availability of existing servicing on-site further represents the suitability of the Subject Lands for immediate development.

- 5) *There is a need for the conversion (Growth Plan 2.2.5.9 a);*

It is understood that the economic landscape and nature of employment lands have changed significantly over the past two decades. Published studies including the 2015 "York Region Employment Trends Review" by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. and "Planning the Next Greater Golden Horseshoe" by the Neptis Foundation have indicated shifts in employment trends amidst the decline of established industries and the rise of new knowledge intensive sectors. With these economic changes also comes changes in employer preferences and demands. Historically dominant employment forms such as business parks reserved exclusively for employment uses have fallen out of favour in preference of mixed-use employment districts that provide living and leisure accommodations in close proximity. The proposed employment land conversion is desirable and will enable the development of the lands in a more intensive and efficient manner.

Furthermore, economic shifts and technological advances such as automation have greatly decreased the number of workers required in historically dominant employment sectors in

the Region such as manufacturing while warehousing and logistics have seen explosive growth in the form of new large distribute centres at the urban edge. The envisioned mixed-use development with proposed office uses would provide high quality jobs at a significantly higher employment density than automated logistics facilities.

The need for the conversion on the Subject Lands is best represented by the fact that the site is uncompetitive when compared to other employment lands across the Region. The Subject Lands have limited accessibility onto arterial roads and are further constrained environmental features that result in an inefficient site configuration. Further, the prohibitively expensive rents that new employment facilities command ultimately make the lands uncompetitive in comparison to existing employment lands built at a time with significantly lower development and land costs. The conversion provides for a more efficient use of land and supports the urban structure and planning objectives of the Regional and local municipalities.

## 5.2 Regional Criteria for Employment Land Conversions

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, requires that the conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses be done through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Regional Council recently endorsed new criteria for employment area conversions requests through the Municipal Comprehensive Review on March 21, 2019. In addition to the Growth Plan criteria required to permit employment conversions, the Region will only permit an employment land conversion if they meet the following criteria identified in the table below. The table outlines the new criteria and how the Subject Lands fulfil the respective requirements:

### York Region Criteria:

6. *The following employment areas will not be considered for conversion as they have not yet had the opportunity to develop due to servicing constraints or have recently been brought into the urban boundary to accommodate employment land employment growth to 2031: Keswick Business Park, Queensville, Highway 404 (ROPA 1), ROPA 3, and Highway 400 North (ROPA 52).*

The Subject Lands have been within the urban boundary since the 2005 consolidation of the 1987 Markham Official Plan and are not constrained from developing as a result of servicing issues.

7. *The conversion will not be considered if the entire perimeter of the site is surrounded by lands designated for employment uses.*

The Subject Lands are adjacent to non-employment uses including lands designated Greenway and Commercial under the 2014 Markham Official Plan. The adjacent lands north of the property across Markland Street designated “Business Park Employment” and “Commercial” were subject to an employment conversion in April 2015 and Regional Council approved the conversion to permit residential, hotel and commercial uses on those lands. Further, commercial uses are present to the east across Woodbine Avenue and residential uses to the south across 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As such, the lands are not surrounded by lands designated for employment uses.

8. *Conversion of the site would not compromise the Region's and/or local municipality's supply of large sized employment area sites (i.e. 10 ha or greater) which allow for a range uses including but not limited to land extensive uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and logistics.*

The Subject Lands are divided into two developable portions that contain approximately 7.6 hectares of developable employment area and should not be considered a "large sized employment area site". The proposed conversion does not compromise the City's large sized employment area sites.

9. *The conversion does not destabilize or adversely affect current or future viability and/or identity of the employment area with regards to:*
- a. *Hindering the operation or expansion of existing or future businesses*
  - b. *Maintaining lands abutting or in proximity to the conversion site for employment purposes over the long term*
  - c. *Attracting a broad range of employment opportunities and maintaining clusters of business and economic activities*
  - d. *Providing appropriate buffering of employment uses from non-employment uses*

The proposed conversion will not adversely affect the viability and identity of the employment area:

- a. The conversion does not hinder the operation or expansion of existing or future businesses as the proposed mixed-use development of the Subject Lands will retain employment uses and office space that expanding businesses can utilize as illustrated in the Preliminary Concept Plan.
- b. The conversion does not adversely affect lands abutting or in proximity to the conversion site for employment purposes over the long term. The development proposal maintains employment jobs on the Subject Lands and the proposed mixed-use community will be developed in a manner compatible with the existing office uses to the north.
- c. The conversion does not adversely affect the ability to attract a broad range of employment opportunities and maintenance of clusters of economic activities as the lands. There are existing site limitations to attract a broad range of employment opportunities given the parcel size and configuration including additional environmental constraints and accessibility issues from Highway 404 that limit the employment potential of the site. While the Subject Lands are unsuitable for pure employment uses, the conversion of the lands to permit residential and commercial uses will enable the comprehensive development of site with the adjacent property in a manner that mitigates existing issues on the Subject Lands. The two sites will be developed in a manner that retains employment uses and accommodates the City's projected growth. The conversion of the Subject Lands will reinvigorate economically unproductive lands that have remained vacant and provide office and commercial space that will attract businesses and services into the area.
- d. The conversion does not adversely affect the provision of appropriate buffering of employment uses from non-employment uses. The Preliminary Concept Plan proposes appropriate buffering through roads, open space/parks, and mixed uses in conjunction with employment uses.

*10. The conversion to a non-employment use is compatible with the surrounding uses such as existing employment uses, residential or other sensitive land uses and will mitigate existing and/or potential land use conflicts.*

The conversion to permit residential and commercial uses is compatible with the surrounding uses and will introduce high quality employment uses such as office uses as well as residential uses. Further, appropriate buffering has been considered in the Preliminary Concept Plan with respect to protecting the environment and mitigating any potential land use conflicts.

*11. The site offers limited development potential for employment land uses due to factors including size, configuration, access and physical conditions.*

The Subject Lands offer limited development potential for employment uses due to environmental constraints and resulting parcel size and configuration. The developable area of the site is heavily limited by natural encumbrances and accessibility to the site from the nearby 404 interchange is limited.

*12. The proposed site is not adjacent to 400-series highways or is not located in proximity to existing or planned highways and interchanges, intermodal facilities, airports and does not have access to rail corridors.*

While located in proximity to Highway 404, it is noted that the developable portions of the Subject Lands have poor visibility and accessibility from the both Highway 404 and the surrounding road network because of valley system and functional transportation design limitations. The Subject Lands do not have any significant developable frontage on public roads that would provide access to the majority of the developable area located on the eastern portion of the Subject Lands. Appendix 2 provides an analysis of on-site access.

Enabling convenient access from the highway onto the site to enable employment uses would likely require a signalized intersection on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue in close proximity (approximately 200 metres) to the signalized intersection at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Woodbine Avenue. The placement of two adjacent signalized intersections along a regional arterial road would not meet Regional transportation design standards. The poor accessibility of the Subject Lands from the Highway 404 access along 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue make the site a poor candidate for the development of employment lands.

While Buttonville Airport is located nearby, it is planned to be closed in the near future. The airport lands are proposed to be a Provincially Significant Employment Zone under the 2019 Growth Plan and the redevelopment of the site is reserved for employment uses, further providing additional employment lands within the City and Region.

*13. The proposed conversion to a non-employment use does not compromise any other planning policy objectives of the Region or local municipality.*

The conversion does not compromise any other Regional or Local planning policy objective. The comprehensive development of the subject and adjacent lands will provide residential and employment uses that accommodates the projected population and employment growth in the Region.

*14. Cross-jurisdictional issues have been addressed.*

There are no cross-jurisdictional issues as the lands are not adjacent to another municipality.

**Conclusion:**

2920 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a vacant site with development potential that can contribute to the local economy and employment vitality of the Region and City. Achieving this economic potential requires additional land use flexibility to permit additional uses prohibited in traditional employment areas. The proposed employment land conversion request for the eastern portion of the Subject Lands to permit additional residential and commercial uses will not adversely affect or impact on the City's ability to meet intensification targets, density targets, or employment targets contained in the Growth Plan. The conversion would enable the achievement of the Province's minimum density targets for priority transit corridors by permitting high quality employment, commercial, and residential uses at an urban density supportive of the planned transit investments along Woodbine Avenue and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The requested conversion conforms with the employment land conversion criteria of both the Province and newly introduced policies of York Region. Further, the proposed employment conversion supports and contributes to the achievement of the broader planning policies and objectives of the Province, York Region and the City of Markham.

The Subject Lands are constrained by environmental features, inefficient site layout, and accessibility issues, that make the property unsuitable for employment uses. The comprehensive development of the property with the adjacent lands to the east represents good planning that optimizes the economic potential of the lands by mitigating the constraints present if the Subject Lands are considered in isolation.

We therefore request that the Subject Lands be considered as part of the Region's ongoing Municipal Comprehensive Review and that the Region permit the employment land conversion to a mixed use designation upon completion of the MCR.

We reserve the right to make further submissions once the revised Growth Plan is available and when we understand the implications of the changes within.

Should you have any questions with respect to this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at 905.513.0170 x 109 or DGiven@mgp.ca

Yours very truly,

**Malone Given Parsons Ltd.**



**Don Given, MCIP, RPP**

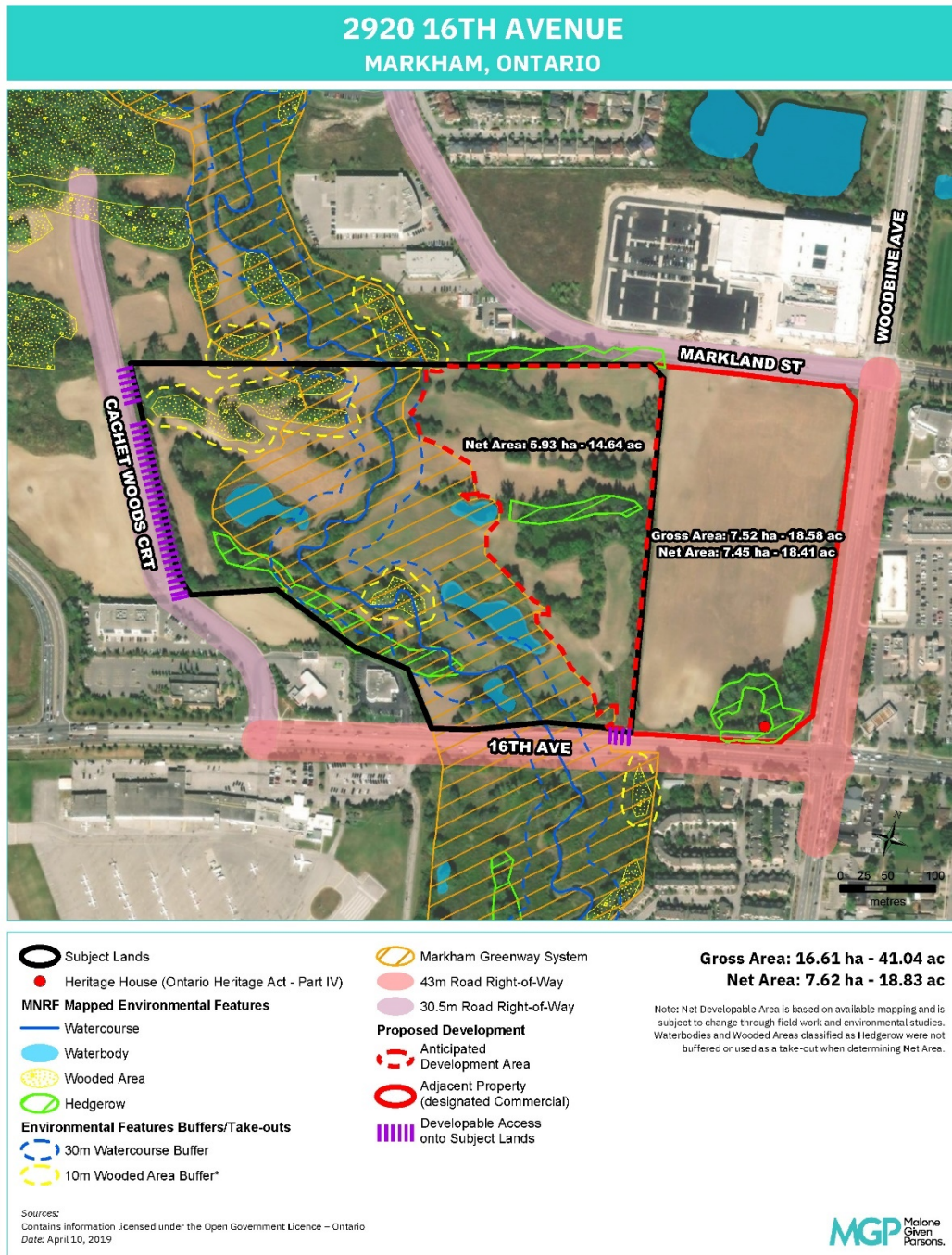
cc: Paul Freeman, Chief Planner, York Region  
Paul Bottomley, Manager, York Region  
Arvind Prasad, Development Services Commissioner, City of Markham  
Marg Wouters, Senior Manager, City of Markham  
Sam Balsamo, Countrywide Homes

Appendix 1. Environmental Features on Subject Lands





Appendix 2. Developable Access on the Subject Lands





# PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN CONCEPT

2920-2960 16th Avenue  
MARKHAM, ONTARIO

- 2920 - 2960 16th Ave (Condor)
- 136 Markland Street (King's Square)

- Proposed Land Uses**
- Mixed Use High Rise
  - Mixed Use Mid Rise
  - Residential Mid Rise
  - Residential Low Rise
  - Proposed Addition to Greenway

- Existing Land Uses**
- Commercial
  - Business Park Employment
  - Greenway

- Site Access Point
- EA Approved and Funded Mid-Block Hwy 404 Crossing
- Lands Subject to an Employment Conversion Request
- Lands Requiring Official Plan Amendment to Permit Residential
- Approved Hwy 404 & 16th Avenue Interchange Improvements
- Conceptual Building Footprint

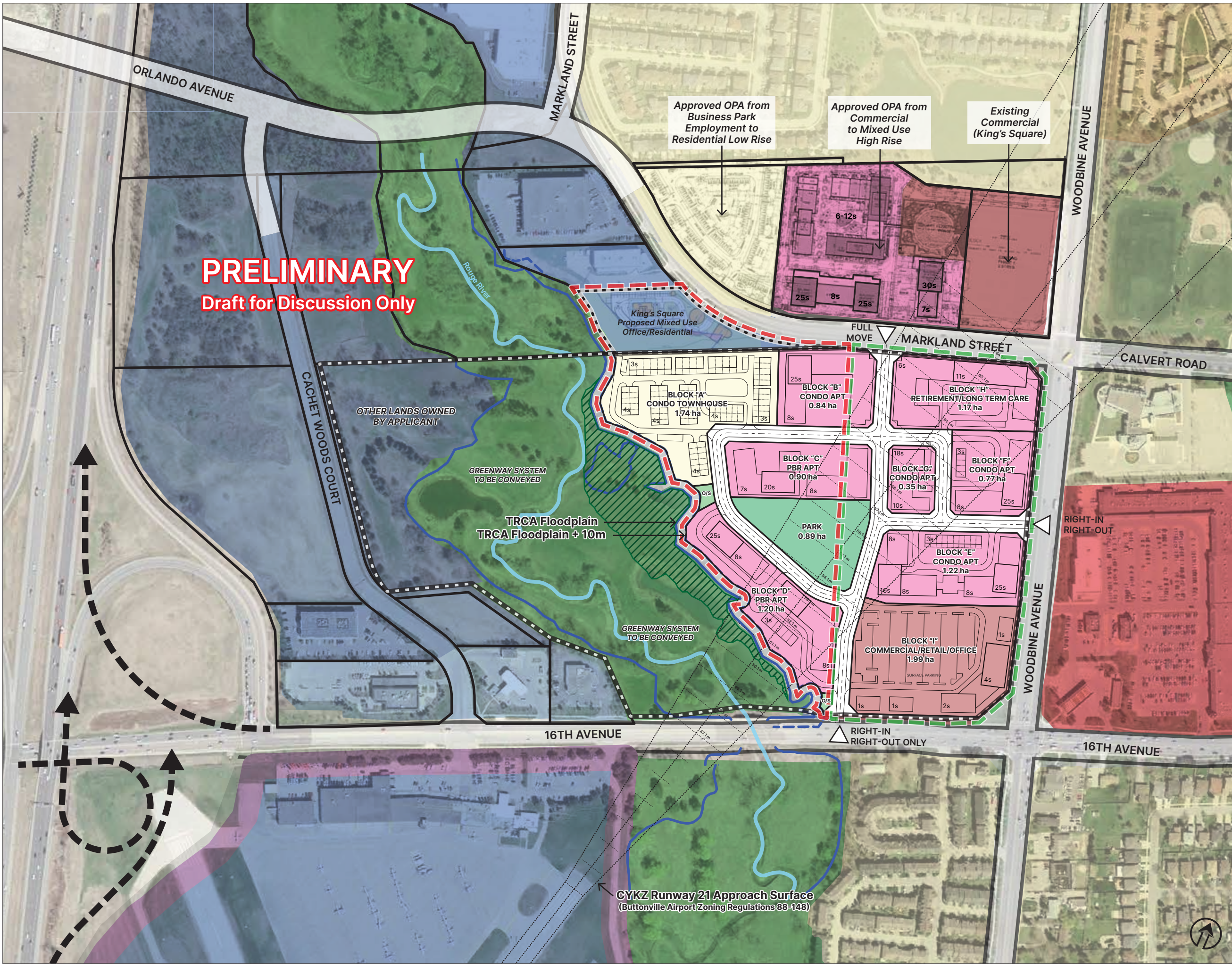
**Development Statistics**

Block	Base/Podium	Tower	FSI	GFA	Units
<b>Residential</b>					
Block A - Condo Towns	3 floors	4 floors	1.06	18,500	149
Block B - Condo Apt	8 floors	25 floors	5.63	47,500	550
Block C - PBR Apt	8 floors	20 floors	5.00	45,000	520
Block D - PBR Apt	8 floors	15 floors	3.61	43,300	480
Block E - Condo Apt	9 floors	20 floors	4.62	56,500	630
Block F - Condo Apt	8 floors	25 floors	4.62	35,500	415
Block G - Condo Apt	9 floors	19 floors	7.53	26,700	300
Total Res Condo					2,044
Total Res PBR					1,000
<b>Total Residential</b>			<b>3.89</b>	<b>273,000</b>	<b>3,044</b>
<b>Commercial</b>					
Block H - Retirement/LT	6 floors	11 floors	3.73	43,500	-
Block I - Comm Retail	1 floor	4 floors	0.45	8,800	-
<b>Site Total</b>			<b>2.49</b>	<b>325,300</b>	

\* GFA is approximate  
\*\* unit estimates rounded to nearest 10

NOTE  
"Markham Official Plan Map 3 - Land Use" underlay with modifications (north of Markland at Woodbine) shown to reflect current permissions. Refer to official copy.

Proposed King's Square Site Plan shown for reference only. Drawing not to scale.



**PRELIMINARY**  
Draft for Discussion Only



