



# BOUSFIELDS INC.

SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Project No. 1965

September 16, 2020

Regional Chair Emmerson and Members of Regional Council  
Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Chair Emmerson and Members of Council:

***Re: Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (the "MCR")  
Employment Land Conversion, Region of York Request # M11  
Southwest Quadrant of Highway 7 and Highway 404  
City of Markham (the "City")  
Partial Employment Conversion Request  
Wemat Group of Companies ("Wemat")***

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We are the planning consultants to Wemat, the owner 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**"), which is approximately 18.5 hectares in size and is divided into two parcels of land, separated by Commerce Valley Drive East.

## **Wemat's Request**

We respectfully request that Regional Council not adopt the Staff Recommendation to designate the Subject Site entirely for "Employment" in the MCR, and instead approve a partial conversion of the lands for mixed-use in accordance with the the planning and economic submission that was filed with the Region and City.

Alternatively, we would request that Regional Council defer its decision in order to allow the City to further review the proposed partial conversion, consistent with City Council's decision to do so.

## **Background**

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 MCR. Since that time, we have

actively participated in the City's Employment Land Conversion review process, including making presentations to the City's Development Services Committee (the "**Committee**") and the Development Services Sub-Committee for Employment Land Conversions (the "**Sub-Committee**") on a number of occasions.

At the Special Committee meeting of February 11, 2020, City Council deferred consideration of the partial conversion request for the Subject Site to allow for an opportunity for our Team to continue meaningful dialogue with City Staff and provide a revised concept plan for proposed development. Since that time, we have continued to engage with City Staff.

The Subject Site is arguably one of the most prominent undeveloped parcels in the City, and indeed the Region. Despite continuing and aggressive efforts to market it for purely employment uses since it was removed from its designation in 1995 under the 1978-enacted Parkway Belt West Plan, the land has sat vacant for over half a century, with the exception of the existing single-storey commercial uses and 8-storey office buildings at 50 Minthorn Boulevard and 230 Commerce Valley Drive East respectively.

### **The Concept**

It is our opinion that there exists an important opportunity for a mixed-use development on the Subject Site. It is in an exceptional location, and should be developed in the best urban form, based upon the fundamental planning objective of creating complete communities.

Future development should take advantage of the size and context of the Subject Site. It should encourage efficient, transit-supportive mixed-use development that achieves an appropriate balance of employment, commercial and residential uses.

Wemat's vision for the Subject Site enhances employment viability and contemplates the retention of a significant level of employment uses, in addition to new uses. It will also include a mix of residential types, tenures and affordability, and address principles of sustainability, cost-effective use of infrastructure, and the promotion of active transportation.

The Subject Site has the potential to contribute to complete community-building, accommodating an iconic development at the gateway to Markham and York Region. It would be a mistake of great consequence to squander the opportunity it offers.

**Conclusion**

The Subject Site is an ideal candidate for a partial conversion, which will attract investment to the Region and City. Wemat's request satisfies the employment land conversion criteria of the *Growth Plan* and the Region's Proposed Employment Area Conversion Criteria. It will meet the intent and purpose of policies for employment land conversions and development within proximity to major transit station areas.

Thank you for consideration of our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours very truly,  
**Bousfields Inc.**



Kate Cooper MCIP, RPP

cc. Ms. Dagmar Teubner, Wemat Group of Companies  
Mr. Michael Melling, Davies Howe LLP  
Mr. Ed Sajecki, Strategy Corp