

DEPUTATION REQUEST

SPECIAL REGIONAL COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

Subject: Conversion Request - York Blvd (#RH10)

Spokesperson: Tim Smith

Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable): Crestpoint Real Estate (YYC) Inc..

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

Comment on the Region's preliminary employment conversion recommendations in relation to the proposed conversion request for 100 & 115-140 York Boulevard (#RH10).

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

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September 16, 2020

Project No. 17117

York Region Council
c/o Mr. Christopher Raynor
Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of York
Regional Corporate Services Department Administrative Centre
17250 Yonge Street, 4th Floor
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6Z1

Dear Chairman Emmerson and Regional Council Members,

**Re: September 17, 2020 Special Council Meeting
Employment Area Conversion Request #RH10
100 & 115-140 York Boulevard, Richmond Hill**

Urban Strategies Inc. represents Crestpoint Real Estate (YVC) Inc. ("Crestpoint"), the owner of the lands known municipally as 100 & 115 – 140 York Boulevard, in Richmond Hill (the "subject site"). This correspondence follows previous submissions (November 2019 and June 2020) in relation to an employment conversion request for the subject site.

We understand, from attending the Public Information Centre held on June 16th, that further assessment of site-specific requests is ongoing and will consider the positions of local municipal staff and councils. We suggested at the time that it would be beneficial for the Region to meet with all landowners within MIC-Area 2 and Richmond Hill Planning staff to discuss the opportunities and issues associated with further land use conversions within the existing East Beaver Creek mixed-use node. We remain hopeful that such a meeting will take place. In the meantime, this letter is a further response to Regional Planning staff's current recommendation not to convert the subject site to permit mixed-use development (including residential uses). In addition, we will summarize our rationale for the proposed conversion in a deputation at the September 17th Special Council Meeting.

Regional Planning staff's current recommendation appears to be based on two conclusions from their assessment:

1. The site is in proximity to Highways 407 and 404, contributing to the Region's and local municipality's economic development potential and supporting goods movement. Converting this site is contrary to Regional and Provincial planning objectives.

Response: We acknowledge the strategic importance of protecting employment lands with good access and visibility from provincial highways. However, this conclusion fails to acknowledge that the commercial uses on the subject lands and in the immediate surroundings, in contrast to industrial and office uses further north in the East Beaver Creek Business Park, generally are not dependent on close proximity to Highways 401 and 404. Furthermore, it is Crestpoint's intention to retain office employment on the subject lands as

they consider opportunities for intensification and redevelopment, which may include residential uses but which also may include additional office uses. Staff's conclusion also does not acknowledge fundamental Regional and Provincial planning objectives to encourage transit-supportive, mixed-use development in Major Transit Station Areas. Conversion will facilitate intensification that maintains and potentially increases employment on the subject lands; whereas maintaining the employment area designation will restrict the sites to low-density employment uses, given site constraints to accommodating additional office buildings.

2. The site is part of a larger contiguous employment area, and the introduction of non-employment uses has the potential to destabilize the employment area and/or negatively impact the viability of existing or future surrounding employment uses by putting pressure for future conversions in the adjacent parcels.

This conclusion fails to acknowledge that the subject properties are located within a distinct mixed-use area within the larger East Beaver Creek Business Park, one defined predominantly by low-density commercial uses but which notably includes apartment buildings and Richmond Hill City Hall. There is no evidence that this unique mix of uses has destabilized the larger employment area or threatens the viability of existing or future employment uses in the surroundings. The City recognizes, in supporting our conversion request, as well as request #RH11, that there is an opportunity to designate all of the area between Leslie Street and the 404, north of Highway 7 and south of East Pearce Street / Norman Bethune Avenue (MIC-Area 2), as a mixed-use district that is compatible with the larger employment area. Official Plan policies could ensure the district evolves with a balance of transit-supportive employment and non-employment uses.

It remains our opinion that the proposed conversion supports overarching Provincial and Regional policy objectives to achieve transit-supportive, mixed-use intensification around rapid transit stations while not compromising the protection of strategically important employment lands. The Provincial and Regional conversion criteria are met. Re-designation of the subject lands is not only appropriate but also necessary to encourage revitalization of this important mixed-use node. The site and neighbouring lands have the potential to intensify with both residential and employment uses, supporting local and regional objectives related to economic development, housing diversity, complete communities and place-making.

Thank you for considering our request and for the opportunity to participate in the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Yours very truly,



Tim Smith, MCIP, RPP
Principal
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