

DEPUTATION REQUEST

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

OCTOBER 15, 2020

Subject: South of Highway 7 between Huntington Road and Highway 427 – City of Vaughan V25

Spokesperson: Robert Lavecchia

Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable): 1406979 Ontario Inc.

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

The attached letter is in response to recommendation 3. c) of the Region of York Staff Report titled Proposed Employment Area Mapping and Employment Conversions. Specifically the letter addresses Region of York Employment Conversion Requests #V25 in the City of Vaughan.

I would like to register to make a deputation at tomorrow's meeting.

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

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File: P-2197

October 14, 2020

City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON
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**Attention: Mr. Paul Freeman,
Chief Planner**

**Re: Proposed Employment Area Mapping and Employment Conversions
1406979 Ontario Inc.
Part of Lots 4 and 5, Concession 9, South of Highway 7 (Adjacent) between Huntington
Road and Highway 427 (ID V25)
City of Vaughan, Region of York**

Dear Mr. Freeman,

On behalf of our clients, 1406979 Ontario Inc. (affiliate of the ZZEN Group), owner of the subject lands, I wish to provide the below as it relates to the Region of York staff's recommendation that the above noted lands be designated employment land in the Region's Official Plan. Our client (the "Owner"), made a request to participate in the Region's Official Plan Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and that the lands not be designated as employment lands, as is now required under the 2019 Growth Plan. This request is to allow our client and the City of Vaughan to develop alternative mixed-use land use permissions through the upcoming MCR of the City of Vaughan Official Plan.

The lands subject to the request (the "Subject Lands") are located on the south side of Regional Road 7 (formerly Highway 7), east of Old Huntington Road and immediately west of the future Ministry of Transportation (the "MTO") owned transit station site located on the southwest corner of Regional Road 7 and Highway 427. The lands have a total developable area of approximately 10 hectares and are currently designated as *Employment Commercial Mixed Use* in the City of Vaughan Official Plan. This designation currently permits Office, Hotel, Cultural Entertainment and small-scale Retail uses only in mid-rise buildings. The subject lands are at the approximate periphery of the larger Vaughan Enterprise Zone (the "VEZ") employment area that abuts the western boundary of the City of Vaughan and Region of York.

As noted by Regional staff, the Growth Plan 2019 now requires upper tier municipalities, such as the Regional Municipality of York, to designate employment lands in the Region through an MCR of the

Region's Official Plan. Further, the Growth Plan requires private landowner request to redesignate employment land for a purpose other than employment, an employment land conversion, to be assessed with specific criteria during the MCR of the Region's Official Plan. The Owner is currently seeking to maintain the current number of projected jobs on the Subject Lands while providing for additional residential land uses as deemed appropriate. The Growth Plan provides the clarity that, maintaining employment uses while adding residential and retail uses, regardless of the number of jobs maintained, is still to be considered an employment land conversion. This letter is intended to clarify the proposal, provide the context and attempt to address staff's negative assessment.

It is important to note that City of Vaughan's Council has reviewed the request together with the assessments of Regional and City staff and have made a decision that the conversion request on the Subject Lands should be approved in their meeting of May 27, 2020. In this regard, the local municipality has determined that the proposed request is appropriate for the local context and that all concerns raised by staff can be addressed through the development review and City MCR processes.

In addition to the specific assessment criteria provided in the Growth Plan, Regional Council endorsed additional criteria on March 7, 2019 as recommended by Regional Staff. The employment conversion request on the Subject Lands is assessed through these Regional criteria individually below:

- *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 are not within Keswick Business Park, Queensville, Highway 404 or the Highway 400 North Employment Areas.

- *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 not surrounded by lands designated for traditional employment uses. The lands opposite of Regional Road 7 and Highway 50 are partially vacant or occupied by large and small format retail and hotel uses, and designated for a mix of employment and commercial retail uses. The land use permissions on the vacant lands to the north and west do not permit any incompatible employment uses. The lands to the south are designated for prestige employment uses and are also owned by the Owner, which provides for significant flexibility in addressing land use compatibility. Further to the south, is a cemetery that the Region's preliminary employment area mapping shows as employment area despite being designated as Open Space in the City of Vaughan Official Plan. To the east of the subject lands is the MTO transit station and transit way which will provide for inter City and Regional transit connection and provides a significant opportunity to leverage this public investment in infrastructure. There are both employment and residential uses beyond these immediately adjacent uses. Therefore, the Subject Lands are not surrounded by lands designated for traditional employment uses and the vacancy of abutting lands provide additional opportunities to provide transition and compatibility.

- *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 proposed conversion would not compromise the Region of York or City of Vaughan's supply of large sized employment area sites. Manufacturing, warehouse distribution and logistics are not permitted uses on the lands subject to the conversion request or on any directly abutting lands and are not appropriate uses for a Regional Intensification Corridor. The Subject Lands are proposed to support a mix of uses included employment uses in a manner that responds to and implements the Regional Intensification Corridor along Regional Road 7.

- *The conversion will 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 would not destabilize or adversely affect the current or future viability of the immediate employment area. The lands are bounded on three sides Huntington Road, Regional Road 7 and the future transit station and no expansion or existing or future businesses will be prejudiced. A broad range of employment uses are not permitted on the subject lands and the mix of permitted employment uses can be better implemented with a full range and mix of uses which includes residential. The lands subject to the conversion request are of a size and configuration that allows for appropriate buffering of employment uses from non-employment uses to be provided. In addition, the abutting lands to the south are also owned by the Owner allowing for additional buffing and transition between any proposed uses.

- 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 proposal for a full range and mix of uses is compatible with surrounding uses and the intent of the Regional Intensification Corridor. No sensitive uses would be proposed to directly abut an incompatible use and policies to mitigate against land use conflicts can be implemented though the development review process and City MCR.

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

As noted above, the employment potential on the Subject Lands is limited as the only employment uses permitted are Office, Hotel and Cultural Entertainment uses. In addition, the lands subject to the

conversion request are a small portion of mixed-use employment lands along a Regional Intensification Corridor where large scale noxious employment uses are not permitted or suitable.

- *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.*

The Subject Lands are not directly adjacent to a 400-series highway but is within proximity to the existing Regional Road 7 and 427 interchange. The MTO expropriation for the transit station and transit way have provided more than 300m of distance between the subject lands and the Highway 427 thoroughfare lanes. There is no proximity to an intermodal facility, airport and the Subject Lands do not have direct access to a rail corridor. The Owner is proposing to maintain employment uses on the Subject Lands that will make use of the future transit station and Highway 427 transit corridor and interchange. It is important to further note that the Subject Lands do not permit the industrial land uses, such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution uses, which benefit from the public infrastructure noted in this criterion.

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

The proposed conversion would not compromise planning policy objectives but would rather help to implement the Regional Intensification Corridor policies on currently vacant lands. The inclusions of residential uses in the mix of uses permitted will add viability to the development of the lands and implement the intensification policies within the horizon of the Region's Official Plan and is desirable.

- *Cross-jurisdictional issues have been addressed.*

While the Subject Lands are within proximity to Highway 50, which is the boundary between the Region of York and Peel, there have been no cross-jurisdictional issues that have been raised. The proposed conversion would help to develop a cross jurisdictional mixed use corridor along Highway 7 and will be coordinated through the development review process.

In addition to satisfying the above criteria, it is our opinion that the proposal to include residential uses in combination with major office use in this location will provide for an appropriate mixed-use corridor and support the achievement of complete communities. The proposal will support the future transit station with jobs and population in its vicinity and the extension of the established transit corridor along Regional Road 7, reducing private automobile dependent trips.

The redevelopment of the subject lands for a mix of uses will also provide for the critical mass and emphasis required for the long-term viability of the transit station lands and leverage the investment in public infrastructure. In the longer term, a mix of uses will improve viability for the future Regional Transit Centre which we understand will include a regional bus terminal and the potential for future light rail connections. It is important to note that MTO has already secured the transit station lands and

protected for the north-south transit way along Highway 427 to its currently planned northerly terminus at Major Mackenzie Drive.

In addition to being transit supportive, higher density mixed-use development at this location will also be supportive of the neighbouring business parks. It is anticipated that restaurants, fitness centres, theatres, and other general retail uses would provide an ancillary function to the existing and future employment and residential population in the area.

We believe that the high-rise residential projects that have been approved along Regional Road 7 just east of Highway 27, and the high-rise residential projects approved just west of Highway 50 in the City of Brampton, suggest that this proposal is contextually appropriate and that compatibility amongst uses can be provided. This node would be consistent with other high-density nodes established along the Regional Road 7 Intensification Corridor and at key transit station locations.

In conclusion, we believe this employment land conversion request meets the applicable Provincial planning objectives and meets the Regional criteria for assessing these requests. We respectfully request that Regional Council consider the above opinion and approve the conversion request. In addition, we request that Regional Council respect the decision of Vaughan Council to approve the request. We look forward to further discussing this request further with City and Regional staff. Please advise if you require any further information at this time.

Yours very truly,
KLM Planning Partners Inc.



Robert Lavecchia, B.U.R.P.I.
SENIOR PLANNER II

cc: Joseph Sgro, ZZEN Group
Sam Speranza, ZZEN Group
Sandra Malcic, Region of York
Paul Bottomley, Region of York