

October 8, 2019

MGP File: 15-2437

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

via email: regional.clerk@york.ca

Attention: Chairman and Members of Regional Council

Dear Chairman Emmerson and Members of Regional Council:

**RE: Committee of the Whole, October 10, 2019
Agenda Item E.2.3 Employment Area Conversion Process Update
Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc.
Sheraton Lands, City of Richmond Hill**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. ("MGP") is the planning consultant to Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc. ("Sheraton"), who own approximately 7.59 hectares of land located at the northeast corner of Highway 7 and Leslie Street ("Sheraton Lands"), within the City of Richmond Hill.

We are writing in response to York Region's October 10th, 2019, Committee of the Whole Agenda Item E.2.3. "Employment Area Conversion Process Update".

MGP previously submitted a letter to York Region dated May 1st, 2019 (see attached) requesting confirmation that the Sheraton Lands are not considered Employment Lands and do not require an Employment Land Conversion. The basis for this assertion is that the Sheraton Lands no longer meet the definition of Employment Lands and are more appropriately considered mixed-use given the existing land uses on the site and permissions in the City's Official Plan which allow residential uses.

Request

We have yet to receive a formal response from Regional Staff to our letter. Furthermore, our request is not included in the list of Proposed Employment Area Conversion Requests by Municipality (Attachment 2) to the Staff Report. As such, we are writing to ensure that our request is formally considered by Regional Staff as the Employment Land Conversion process continues.

Sheraton Lands Provide an Opportunity to Create a Mixed-Use Growth Area

As stated in our May 2019 letter, the Sheraton Lands currently contain a mix of land uses including the Sheraton Parkway Hotel and Convention Centre, a Best Western Hotel, the Shoppes on the Parkway (retail uses) and two residential apartment towers. The effect of this mix of uses is that despite the Employment Land designation, the Sheraton Lands are more appropriately characterized as a mixed-use area.

Secondly, the Sheraton Lands offer an opportunity to locate increased density and a mix of uses adjacent to existing rapid transit. The Sheraton Lands have direct frontage along Highway 7, which is identified on Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan as a Priority Transit Corridor. Highway 7 is designated in the York Region Official Plan as both a Regional Corridor and Rapid Transit Corridor, where a significant amount of intensification is planned. In addition, the Sheraton Lands are well within a 200-metre walking distance of two York Region Bus Rapid Transit station stops. The entire Sheraton Lands therefore meet the Province's definition of a Major Transit Station Area ("MTSA").

The Region in its April 11th, 2019 Report on Planning for Intensification Background Report identified draft MTSA areas. The Sheraton Lands and surrounding properties are shown to be included in the West Beaver Creek MTSA.

It is based on these attributes that we continue to believe that the Sheraton Lands represent an opportunity in the Region to create a mixed-use growth area. As such, we continue to request that the Region identify the Sheraton Lands as a mixed-use growth area through the Region's ongoing Employment Land Conversion Process.

Request to Meet with Regional and City Staff

We request a meeting with Regional and City staff to discuss the creation of a mixed-use growth area and determine if this will trigger the need for an employment land conversion request. Should it be required, we will prepare and file the formal request prior to the Region's November 29th, 2019 deadline.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments in greater detail, please contact me at 905.513.0170 or DGiven@mgp.ca.

Yours very truly,

Malone Given Parsons Ltd.



Don Given, MCIP, RPP

cc. Jason Kaptyn, Kaptyn Realty
Patrick Lee, City of Richmond Hill
Gus Galanis, City of Richmond Hill
Kelvin Kwan, City of Richmond Hill

Attachment: Malone Given Parsons Ltd. Letter to York Region, Dated May 1st, 2019

May 1, 2019

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Sandra Malcic, Director of Long Range Planning
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street,
Newmarket, Ontario M5G 2E5

via email: Sandra.malcic@york.ca

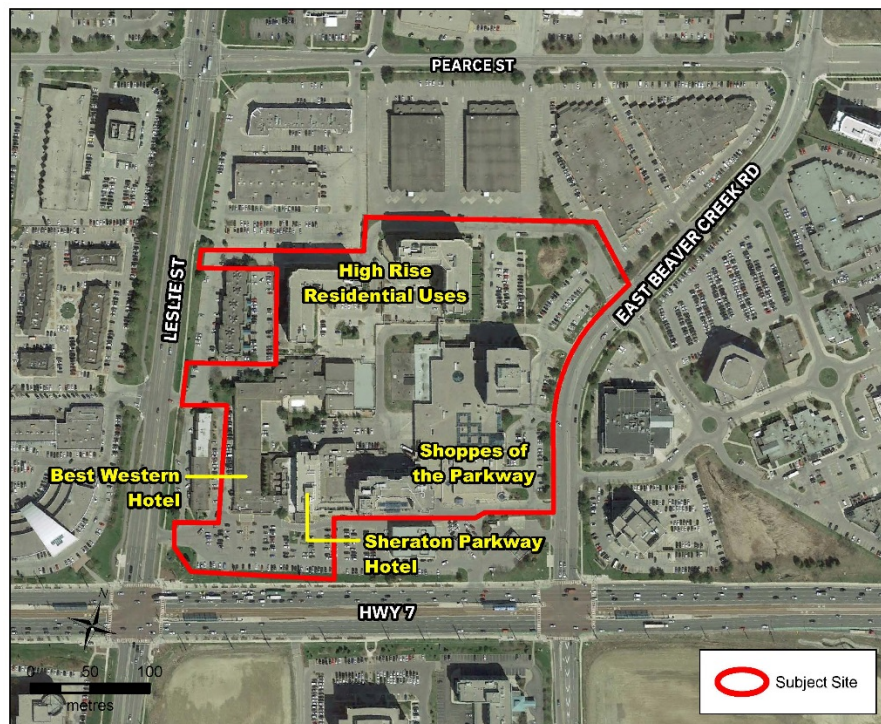
Dear Ms. Malcic:

**RE: Employment Area Conversion Criteria
Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc. c/o Captain Realty Inc.
Northeast Corner of Highway 7 and Leslie Street, City of Richmond Hill**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. is the Planning Consultant to Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc. ("Sheraton"), who own approximately 7.59 hectares of land located at the northeast corner of Highway 7 and Leslie Street ("Sheraton Lands"), within the City of Richmond Hill (see Figure 1).

We are writing in response to York Region's deadline to receive all landowner conversion requests by May 1st. The purpose of this letter is to clarify that a request for Regional Employment Land conversion is not required.

Figure 1: Sheraton Parkway Lands



Future Vision for the Sheraton Lands

Sheraton's ultimate vision for the quadrant is to regenerate the area by strengthening the existing mixed commercial-residential complex on the lands. The vision is to replace the Best Western Hotel with a larger, full-service prestige hotel with retail, convention and banquet facilities and apartment residential units.

This will support the existing rapid transit along Hwy 7 and immediately adjacent to the Sheraton Lands and will assist both the Region and City in delivering the planned density of a minimum of 250 people and jobs per hectare in the proposed Regional Major Transit Station Areas (being Draft MTSA 25 and 26).

What are Employment Lands?

As noted in the March 7, 2019 Committee of the Whole Report regarding the Proposed Employment Area Conversion Criteria, Employment Lands are defined in the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and the Growth Plan (2017) as *"areas in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices and associated retail and ancillary facilities"*. Residential and major retail uses are prohibited in employment areas.

The Sheraton Lands Should be Considered Mixed Use

Currently, the Sheraton Lands contain a variety of land uses including the Sheraton Parkway Hotel and Convention Centre, a Best Western Hotel, the Shoppes on the Parkway (retail uses) and two residential apartment towers. Historically, the residential permissions on the Sheraton Lands were secured through the approval of an Official Plan Amendment No. 91 in 1994. The effect of this approval established the framework for the quadrant in that the Sheraton Lands are not employment lands, but rather, an appropriate location for mixed-use development.

In 2010, the City embarked on the preparation of a new Official Plan. Through that process, the Sheraton Lands were designated Employment Corridor, subject to site-specific exception 3 which permits residential uses.

It is our opinion that despite the Employment Corridor designation in the City's Official Plan, when the policy framework is holistically evaluated, coupled with the existing residential uses, the effect is a framework consistent with that of a mixed-use designation.

Confirmation That the Sheraton Lands Will Not Require an Employment Conversion

Given all of the above, it is our opinion that the Sheraton Lands no longer meet the definition of Employment Lands and are more appropriately considered mixed-use given the existing land use permissions for residential uses.

As such, it is our opinion that the Sheraton Lands should not be considered Employment Lands as part of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review ("MCR") nor is the submission of a request for conversion required. As such, we have not provided any evaluation of the Sheraton Lands' compliance with the Region's employment area conversion criteria.

We respectfully request confirmation that the regional request for an employment land conversion is not required for the Sheraton Lands.

Draft Provincially Significant Employment Zone Mapping

It should be noted that the Sheraton Lands are included in the Province's proposed provincially significant employment zone ("PSEZ"). On behalf of Sheraton, Malone Given Parsons Ltd. submitted a request to the Province on February 28, 2019, to remove the Sheraton Lands from the proposed PSEZ. This request was based on the rationale that the Sheraton Lands should not be categorized as an employment area given the existing residential uses and land use permissions.

Initial discussions were also held with City staff and, in principle, staff are generally supportive of Sheraton's request for removal from the PSEZ.

Should the Region agree that the Sheraton Lands are not employment lands and should the PSEZ be formalized with the inclusion of the Sheraton Lands, we subsequently request that the Region support the removal of these lands from the PSEZ as part of the Region's MCR process.

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 the Growth Plan.

We would be pleased to meet with Regional staff to discuss this in greater detail. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments in greater detail, please contact me at (905) 513-0170.

Yours very truly,

Malone Given Parsons Ltd.



Don Given, MCIP, RPP

DGiven@mgp.ca

cc: Captain Realty Inc.
Honourable Mayor Dave Barrow, City of Richmond Hill
Paul Freeman, Chief Planner, York Region
Paul Bottomley, York Region