



## **Staff Report for Council Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** February 26, 2020

**Report Number:** SRPRS.20.003

**Department:** Planning and Regulatory Services

**Division:** Policy Planning

**Subject:** **SRPRS.20.003 –York Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review (Part 1): Requests for Employment Area Conversions**

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### **Purpose:**

To provide Council with an overview of the Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review and more specifically to provide Staff recommendations on the employment area conversion requests within the City that have been submitted to the Region as of November 2019.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- a) That SRPRS.20.003 be received;
- b) That the Region consider SRPRS.20.003 as local municipal input into the Region’s evaluation process, and that City Council advise the Region of the following:
  - i. That City Council supports the conversion request submitted by Cedartrail Developments Inc. (refer to ID# 40.1 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), for the principle reasons set out in the report;
  - ii. That City Council supports the conversion request submitted by Congio Enterprises Inc. (refer to ID# 41.1 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), for the principle reasons set out in the report;
  - iii. That City Council does not support the conversion request submitted by Baif Developments Ltd. (refer to ID# 123 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), for the principle reasons set out in the report;
  - iv. That City Council supports the proposed use expansion as requested by Toronto Montessori Schools & 1355314 Ontario Inc. (refer to IDs #72.1 and 73.1 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003) but rather than facilitating the requested expansion through an employment lands conversion, staff work

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- with the applicant to facilitate the applicant's request through the best available alternative means;
- v. That City Council supports the proposed permissions for automobile dealerships to locate on employment lands as requested by Orlando Corporation (refer to ID#88 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), however, staff recommend that rather than facilitating the request through an employment lands conversion, staff work with the applicant to facilitate the applicant's request through the best available alternative means;
  - vi. That City Council does not support the conversion request submitted by Upper City Corporation (refer to ID# 127 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), for the principle reasons set out in the report;
  - vii. That City Council supports the proposed permissions for automobile dealerships to locate on employment lands as requested by Richmond Hill Honda (non-geographic request), however, staff recommend that rather than facilitating the request through an employment lands conversion, staff work with the applicant to facilitate the applicant's request through the best available alternative means;
- c) That York Region be advised of Council's decision at its meeting on September 18, 2019 supporting a request for employment land conversion by Rice Commercial Group for 1577-1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East (refer to ID# 29.1 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003);
- d) That in response to Items #1, #2 and #3 of Council's Member Motion dated November 20, 2019, whereby City Staff were directed to investigate the following employment land conversions, City Council be advised as follows:
- i. That in response to Item #1, City Staff have evaluated the conversion request submitted by 1835942 Ontario Inc. & Stonecourt Construction affecting the lands municipally known as 10481 Yonge Street and 10537 Yonge Street (refer to ID#92 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003) and recommend that Council support the conversion request for the principle reasons set out in the report, and that the Region be advised of Council's decision;
  - ii. That in response to Item #2, City staff have investigated the appropriateness of an employment land conversion affecting lands within the Newkirk Business Park south of Elgin Mills Road and north of Centre Street East for mixed-use development (refer to Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), and recommend that the lands not be converted for the principle reasons set out in the report; and

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- iii. That in response to Item #3, City Staff have investigated the appropriateness of an employment land conversion within the Newkirk Business Park in the vicinity of the Newkirk GO Station for mixed-use development (refer to MIC-Area #1 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003), and recommend that Council support a conversion for the principle reasons set out in the report;
- e) That the Region be advised of Council's interest in considering a municipally initiated conversion of employment lands within the south-eastern part of the Beaver Creek Business Park (refer to MIC-Area #2 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003) for mixed-use development for the principle reasons set out in the report and in doing so are also supportive of the conversion requests submitted by Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc. (refer to ID#111 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003) and Crestpoint Real Estate Inc. (refer to ID# 156 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003);
- f) That the Region be advised of Council's interest in considering a municipally initiated conversion of employment lands for the lands located on the east side of Leslie Street and south of Major Mackenzie Drive in the Headford Business Park (refer to MIC-Area #3 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003) for the principle reasons set out in the report and in doing so are also supportive of the conversion request submitted by Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association (refer to ID# 153 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003); and
- g) That the City Clerk forward a copy of this staff report to York Region as input to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process.

### Contact Person:

Brian DeFreitas, Senior Planner (Policy) Planning and Regulatory Services, Tel.: 905-771-5431 and/or

Sybelle von Kursell, Manager of Policy, Planning and Regulatory Services, Tel.: 905-771-2472.

### Report Approval:

**Submitted by:** Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Regulatory Services

**Approved by:** Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager (Acting)

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

### Summary

This staff report provides a summary of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process, and summarizes requests for employment area conversions within the City that have been submitted to the Region through the MCR. The deadline for

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conversion request submissions was November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019. In addition, this report responds to Items #1, #2 and #3 of the Member Motion adopted by Council at its meeting on November 20, 2019, which among other matters, directed City Staff to investigate employment land conversions respecting the following lands:

- Item #1 – “Yonge Street north from the former Quebecor site at 10481 Yonge Street north to 10537 Yonge Street”;
- Item #2 – “Lands in the Newkirk Business Park south of Elgin Mills Road”;
- Item #3 – “The Newkirk GO Station lands from Major Mackenzie Drive northward to Centre Street East”

A separate staff report, SRPRS.20.004, responds to Item #4 of the Member Motion regarding a settlement area expansion near Gormley GO Station and provides additional information regarding the Region’s MCR process related to Major Transit Station Areas and Prime Agricultural areas.

### *Why is Council’s direction on employment conversions important?*

This report specifically seeks Council’s direction on site-specific requests for employment area conversions submitted by private landowners, as well as municipally-initiated employment conversion requests recommended by City Staff. The Region is requesting that each local municipal council provide input on conversion requests within their community to inform the Region’s evaluation process.

It is important to note that any lands supported for conversion, as well as any lands protected from conversion, play a significant role in the Region’s land needs assessment work being undertaken through the MCR. The Lands Needs Assessment is a comprehensive growth management analysis required by the Province to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate the Region’s forecasted growth in conformity with the Growth Plan. Accordingly, all conversion requests affecting lands within the City will be considered carefully and comprehensively by the Region through its MCR process.

### *Why is the Region’s MCR important?*

The Region’s Official Plan (ROP) provides overarching policy direction to local municipalities in York Region on many important regional and provincial policy objectives which include, among other matters, direction for managing growth, intensification and planning around transit station areas, employment, housing, natural heritage and infrastructure. The Region’s MCR will culminate in an update of the ROP that will include updated population and job growth forecasts to 2041 and related intensification targets for each lower-tier municipality, as well as other policies to ensure conformity to the Provincial Plans and consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement.

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### *What does the Region's MCR mean for Richmond Hill?*

Since the adoption of the City's Official Plan in 2010, many Provincial planning policy documents have been updated and require updates to the Region's OP to conform with those changes. Similarly, Richmond Hill must update its OP to ensure the Plan conforms with updates to the ROP within one year of the approval of the ROP. In light of these requirements, City staff have embarked on a process to update the City's OP to ensure conformity with updates to the ROP and the policies set out in Provincial Plans (refer to SPRS.19.053).

### *Why is the Region evaluating employment area conversion requests?*

Employment areas play a vital role to the Region's economy. These areas are major drivers of economic activity in York Region given the range of employment uses offered, the type and number of jobs they produce, and the specific locational opportunities employment areas provide to key industries such as manufacturing, research and development. Protecting employment areas from conversion is therefore essential to ensure a sufficient supply of lands exist for a range and mix of employment uses in key areas, such as areas along provincial highways and other goods movement corridors. The Growth Plan 2019 directs single and upper-tier municipalities to designate and set density targets for employment areas within their Official Plans, and to assess requests for employment area conversion. Designating employment areas is a new responsibility the Region of York must address during the time of its MCR.

Planning for employment areas and the evaluation of employment area conversions are key policy areas that will influence the Region's MCR and the update to the ROP and in turn provide direction to local Official Plans.

### *How is the Region evaluating employment area conversion requests?*

The Region is assessing employment area conversion requests in two phases. Phase 1 involves a site-specific evaluation of each conversion request against conversion criteria established by the Region. This criteria has been endorsed by Regional Council (see Appendix B) and preliminary evaluations have been completed by the Region ([refer to October 10, 2019 York Region Report: Employment Area Conversion Process Update, Agenda Item E.2.3](#)). The Region is seeking local municipal input on preliminary requests under Phase 1. Phase 2 involves additional analysis and broader discussions with local municipal staff and considers some of the conversion requests within the broader context of the Regional and local urban structure, implications on the Region's land needs assessment, and implications on infrastructure.

### *Staff Evaluation of Employment Area Conversion Requests*

As of the writing of this report, a total of 12 conversion requests have been submitted to the Region on behalf of private landowners affecting lands within the City. Of those, City Staff recommend that 6 site-specific requests be supported by Council and 5 requests

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not be supported. One of the requests was already considered by Council through a resolution at the September 18, 2019 Council meeting. Three of the 6 requests that are being recommended are located in areas recommended by Staff for a municipally initiated conversion.

The evaluation provided by Staff on the employment conversion requests presented in this report will be forwarded to the Region and will represent local municipal input to inform the Region's evaluation process. Recommendations on which site-specific conversions will or will not be considered for approval is expected to be brought forward to Regional Council in Q1 2020.

## Background:

### Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review Process

York Region is undertaking its MCR process to update its Official Plan to respond to recent provincial policy changes. Under the current Provincial policy framework, a municipal comprehensive review is defined as a new official plan, or official plan amendment, which is initiated by an upper-tier or single-tier municipality under the provisions of the *Planning Act*, which comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan and the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement.

The *Planning Act* requires all Lower Tier Official Plans to conform to the Upper-Tier Official Plan. Accordingly, local municipalities will need to bring their official plans into conformity with the ROP once it has been approved by the Province. The updated ROP is scheduled for adoption by Regional Council in Q4 2020.

### Provincial Policy Framework (Provincial Plans)

York Region initiated its MCR in May 2014; however, in May 2016, the Province of Ontario released draft Provincial Plans highlighting proposed updates to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan. At the time of the release of these updates, York Region halted work on its Regional MCR, recognizing that the updates to the Provincial Plans had been recently released and that the Province would not approve a Regional Official Plan Amendment under the 2013 Growth Plan regime. Updated Provincial Plans were released in May 2017, and took effect on July 1, 2017. Accordingly, with updated Provincial Plans in place, the Region's MCR process was resumed to address the new Provincial Plan requirements.

On May 2, 2019, the Province announced its *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan (Bill 108)* wherein it advised that the Growth Plan for the GGH had been updated as one of many initiatives to increase housing supply. The Growth Plan (2019) ("Growth Plan" or "updated Growth Plan") requires that all decisions made by an authority on or after May 16, 2019 which affects a planning matter conform to the Plan.

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Updates to the Growth Plan have resulted in redefined requirements for municipal comprehensive reviews that apply primarily to upper-tier and single-tier municipalities. The following matters set out in Table 1 highlight key policy directions of the Growth Plan that are to be considered and/or addressed by upper and single-tier municipalities at the time of undertaking an MCR. Most notable to this report are the requirements applicable to employment areas whereby the Region is now required to designate employment areas in its Official Plan and assess requests for employment land conversion.

**Table 1: Summary of Key Policy Directions under the Growth Plan 2019**

<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Key Provincial Plan Policy</b>
Population and Employment Forecasts	Updated population and employment forecasts for single and upper-tier municipalities to 2041
Intensification	Region must plan for a residential intensification target of 50% of new residential units to be located within the built boundary
Designated Greenfield Area & Density Target	Region must plan for 50 residents and jobs per hectare within the whole of the Designated Greenfield Area (but not including employment areas)
Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA's) and Strategic Growth Areas (SGA's)	Region must delineate and designate Major Transit Station Areas and may identify Strategic Growth Areas in the ROP, plan to achieve prescribed Growth Plan densities for Major Transit Station Areas located in Priority Transit Corridors, and set density targets for Strategic Growth Areas if identified
Employment	Region must designate employment areas in the ROP, including Provincial Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ's); assess requests for employment land conversions, and prepare a Regional Employment Strategy
Infrastructure	Increased policy direction on coordinating infrastructure investment with growth planning
Climate Change	Comprehensive approach required for addressing mitigation and adaptation; climate change policies are required in official plans
Agri-food and Natural Heritage Systems	Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to be identified and mapped by the Province

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Land Needs Assessment Methodology	Land Needs Assessment required to be completed by Region in accordance with Provincial methodology
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### **Regional Policy Framework (York Region Official Plan, 2010)**

The current York Region Official Plan (ROP) was approved in 2010 and establishes a planning horizon to the year 2031. As noted above, since the approval of the ROP 2010, there have been a number of updates to Provincial policies affecting forecasted population and employment as well as new policy direction for intensification and density targets, which have necessitated the need for a comprehensive update to the ROP. Chief among these changes are the forecasted increases in population and employment projected for York Region under the 2019 Growth Plan, as well as an extended planning horizon, which now extends to 2041.

Under the Growth Plan, York Region’s population and employment forecasts are projected to increase from 1.59 million residents (2031) to 1.79 million residents by 2041, and from 790,000 jobs (2031) to 900,000 jobs by 2041. This translates into an increase of 200,000 residents (+11%) and 110,000 jobs (+12%) between the 2031 and 2041 planning horizon respectively. A key objective of the ROP update is to appropriately plan for and manage this growth.

### **MCR Workplan**

Several key background studies and supporting documents will be undertaken as part of the Region’s MCR workplan to support the review and update to the ROP (see Appendix A). Based on the June 2019 MCR workplan, it is anticipated that updated policies will be drafted throughout 2019, leading to a release of a draft ROP by Q2 2020. The Region anticipates bringing forward a final ROP for adoption by Regional Council in Q4 2020.

### **City of Richmond Hill Involvement in the Regional MCR**

The Region’s MCR process requires extensive collaboration with local area municipalities. To facilitate this collaboration, the Region has established Local Municipal Working Groups (LMWG) comprised of staff from the nine local area municipalities to facilitate ongoing input into the MCR work. Richmond Hill Staff form part of the LMWG and have been attending ongoing meetings to provide input into the MCR process and on specific components of the MCR workplan, including planning for employment areas and the protection of employment areas from conversion.

### **York Region Employment Land Trends and Employment Land Conversion**

#### [Employment Land Trends in York Region](#)

To understand evolving employment trends in York Region, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the Region released its “Planning for Employment Background” Report. The report provides background analysis on employment trends throughout the Region and forms the basis

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for consultation on a proposed employment framework to update the ROP. Key details from this report include:

- The outlook for employment growth in York Region is for relative stability in the manufacturing sector with continued rapid growth in professional and services-based industries, including high-skilled jobs in knowledge and creative sectors;
- The impacts of automation and Artificial Intelligence are related to several factors including overall susceptibility to automation. While automation has the potential to impact all economic sectors, relatively lower-skill and routine-based jobs (e.g. manufacturing) are particularly susceptible to automation;
- Employment areas offer a range of sites for small and large businesses that are generally at lower costs than elsewhere in the Region where a broader range of uses are permitted. Although traditionally home to industrial business uses, employment areas have evolved over time to support a wide range of uses including major office and institutional uses;
- Employment areas are vital to the Region and local municipalities. Growth in employment areas is expected to be driven largely by increasing demand for large sites with good transportation access and which keep in pace with evolving trends, such as office uses in non-office forms locating in industrial flex space and older industrial buildings;
- An appropriate land supply will be required for all types of industry to provide flexibility for employers in high quality locations over the long-term. The Region's strategically located large supply of employment areas, particularly those along major highways and in proximity to intermodal facilities, will continue to be important assets;
- To plan for the changing nature of employment, municipalities around the world are increasing flexibility in employment area designations in strategic locations and implementing strategies to improve built-form; and
- While the composition of jobs is likely to shift toward more advanced forms of manufacturing, the protection of employment areas from conversion will also be important for accommodating employment growth.

### Employment Outlook for Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill is home to a high-tech major office node that is shared with its neighboring municipalities known as the Tor-East employment megazone. This megazone surrounds the interchange of Highways 404 and 407, and includes part of the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Toronto representing approximately 3,600 hectares of land. It is one of only three major office nodes situated outside of Downtown Toronto and represents a significant regional concentration of finance and business services, manufacturing, information and technology. This node has the highest employment density among employment areas in the GGH, owing in part to the office activity occurring in the industrial building stock in the area.

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Moving forward, the Region expects the Tor-East employment megazone will likely continue to accommodate the highest employment area densities in the Region, and will remain important for accommodating a large share of the existing employment base and future office development.

### The Importance of Protecting Employment Areas

Employment areas serve a valuable purpose. Traditionally, these areas have been planned to accommodate heavy industry, and due to their industrial nature and propensity for noise, odor and vibrations, they require separation from sensitive land uses and large parcels of land in proximity to goods movement corridors. Today, employment areas continue to serve this purpose, however in addition to heavy industry, many municipalities continue to plan their employment areas as prestige business parks for major office, warehousing, logistics, and for research and development.

Protecting employment lands from conversion is important to ensure economic competitiveness and to attract investment. Protection also affords the availability of sufficient lands for a variety of employment purposes. Based on these principles, the Growth Plan directs municipalities to protect employment areas and ensure the availability of sufficient land in appropriate locations for a variety of employment types. This includes preserving lands located adjacent to or near major goods movement facilities and corridors, such as highway interchanges as areas for manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics.

Despite the utility and importance of employment areas from a land use and economic perspective, lands within employment areas are often exposed to pressure to convert for non-employment uses. Generally, conversion of employment lands occurs when:

- 1) sites within designated employment areas are redesignated to change the land use designation to allow for non-employment uses on the site (e.g. redesignation from employment to residential or mixed-use residential); and/or,
- 2) non-employment uses are permitted to locate within designated employment areas and where the permission does not result in a change of land use designation. Under this scenario, there is an impact on employment lands because the opportunity for an otherwise permitted employment use to be located on that site is now lost (e.g. no change in land use designation but employment area permissions are expanded to include permission for major retail, places of worship, residential, automotive dealerships in addition to primary employment uses etc.). Under the City's current OP policies, adding a land use that is not already permitted in the employment area policies of the OP constitutes a conversion. In these instances, the introduction of non-employment uses can destabilize the area either through real or perceived land use conflicts or landowners perception of a change in planning direction for the area.

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In either of the above scenarios, it is important to note that there is a permanent loss of opportunity for desired employment to be located on (and in some cases near) lands that were originally planned for employment. More importantly, the opportunity for heavy industry to locate in appropriate areas that are adjacent to goods movement corridors and away from sensitive land uses is significantly reduced when employment lands are converted to allow for non-employment uses. A loss of employment land can also lead to challenges for municipalities to meet their provincial and regional mandated employment projections.

In particular, conversion requests have the potential to affect the Region's and local municipality's ability to maintain an adequate and diverse supply of lands for employment of various sizes and characteristics to meet long-term needs. As such, converting a significant amount of employment area land for non-employment uses that was not originally contemplated to accommodate population could have long lasting effects on the Region's communities by creating issues of compatibility, reducing the overall viability of employment areas, and introducing the need for additional infrastructure.

### A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)

The Growth Plan requires municipalities to plan for employment by ensuring the availability of land in appropriate locations to accommodate forecasted employment, and by designating and setting density targets for employment areas. In addition, conversion of employment areas to allow for non-employment uses may only be considered through a Regional MCR and are to be evaluated based on the minimum criteria set out in the Growth Plan. The minimum criteria are generally set out in Policy 2.2.5(9)(a) through (e). Among other matters, the criteria require that conversions demonstrate: a need for the conversion; that the uses proposed will not adversely affect the overall viability of employment lands; and that a municipality will maintain a sufficient supply of employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth over the long term.

It is important to note that under the Growth Plan the decision-making authority on the approval or denial of conversion requests in Richmond Hill principally rests with the Region of York. Where the Region designates land for Employment purposes, a lower-tier municipality must ensure its Official Plan conforms with the Region's designation. Where the Region determines that a specific area does not warrant the Employment designation within the Regional Official Plan, it is then up to the lower-tier to decide whether or not the Employment designation is warranted at the local level, and the conversion policies of the lower-tier Official Plan would apply. However, in no case can the lower-tier convert lands from employment to a non-employment designation where the subject lands are designated as an employment area in the Regional Official Plan. Legislatively, the *Planning Act* prevents appeals of employment conversions and conversion policies in upper-tier official plans once they have been approved by the Province.

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The recent updates to the Growth Plan introduce Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ's). Provincial PSEZ mapping continues to be in draft, and a final determination is yet to be issued. PSEZ's are identified by the Province to both protect and promote economic prosperity within the GGH. Nonetheless, the Growth Plan does permit consideration of converting some or parts of these areas for non-employment uses at the time of a MCR. The Growth Plan defines Provincially Significant Employment Zones as follows:

*“Areas defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of long-term planning for job creation and economic development. Provincially significant employment zones can consist of employment areas as well as mixed-use areas that contain a significant number of jobs.”*

Accordingly, the Growth Plan 2019 identifies the important role employment areas play in promoting economic competitiveness and includes policies directing upper and single-tier municipalities to designate employment areas in their official plans and protect them for appropriate employment uses over the long-term.

### York Region Employment Conversion Evaluation Criteria

As noted earlier in this report, employment conversions have a direct impact on the Region's supply of employment land. To better understand supply requirements, the Region is undertaking a Land Needs Assessment to determine if additional land for employment purposes is required across the Region to accommodate the 2041 employment forecast.

On March 7, 2019 the Region released conversion criteria (see Appendix B) which apply to all requests for employment conversion. As part of a coordinated effort, the Region has requested that local municipalities also apply the criteria when considering all private landowner and municipally-initiated requests for conversion. The conversion criteria have been organized into five theme areas as follows, which align with the policy direction set out in the Growth Plan regarding the conversion of lands within employment areas:

#### 1. Supply

This theme area speaks to the principle of preserving an adequate and diverse supply of employment land to meet the Region's long-term employment needs. Under this theme, the Region's conversion criteria expands on the Growth Plan's policies by prohibiting employment area conversions in recently designated and largely vacant employment areas and by preserving large-size employment parcels to meet the future needs of businesses with specific locational requirements. This includes protection of lands that are planned beyond the 2041 planning horizon.

#### 2. Viability

This theme area speaks to the ability for an employment area to operate successfully and sustain viability over the long-term. While Growth Plan conversion policies speak to

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preserving the viability of employment areas, more specifically this includes factors such as impacts to existing businesses operations, opportunities for future business investment, linkages between businesses and compatibility of land uses. Regional criteria prohibit consideration of conversion requests if the entire perimeter of the site is surrounded by lands designated and intended to remain designated for employment purposes over the long term.

### 3. Access

This theme area encourages protection of sites in the vicinity of major highways, rail yards and airports. This criteria is consistent with Growth Plan policy that directs employment land uses to areas proximate to goods-movement corridors and interchanges. In addition to these sites being valuable for efficient goods-movement purposes, access to major transportation infrastructure is desirable from an economic development perspective. Accordingly, the proposed Regional criteria would consider the location of a site when assessing requests for employment area conversions.

### 4. Infrastructure

This theme area builds on the Growth Plan criteria, which recognizes the importance of ensuring availability of existing or planned infrastructure, such as sewage, water, energy and transportation as well as public service facilities, prior to converting employment areas. This theme also builds on the ROP policies, which emphasize the importance of providing high quality public services and infrastructure.

### 5. Region-wide Interests

This theme area reflects the Region's responsibility under the Growth Plan to plan for employment areas and assess employment conversions. Together with local municipal partners, it is the Region's responsibility to ensure that Regional and local planning objectives are considered and met. While Growth Plan conversion policies require proponents to identify a need for a conversion, additional Regional criteria under this theme ensure a proposed conversion would not compromise any other regional or local municipal planning objectives and considers potential issues that cross regional boundaries.

### Regional Assessment and Evaluation of Conversion Requests

The Region is evaluating conversion requests in two phases. Phase 1 involves a site-specific evaluation of each conversion request against the Region's criteria. The majority of this work has already been completed by Regional staff and was presented in a report to Regional Council in October 2019<sup>1</sup>. Preliminary meetings with landowners who have requested consideration for conversion have also taken place with Regional and local municipal staff. Phase 2 will consider some of the conversion requests within the broader context of the Regional and local urban structure, implications on the

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<sup>1</sup> Link to October 10, 2019 Region Report, Attachment 2:  
<https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=6ee50593-d3ca-49b1-885d-cb3c906d049d&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=22>

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Region's land needs assessment, and implications on infrastructure. This means that through Phase 2, Regional staff's assessment of conversion requests, which may not have been initially supported, may result in some of those requests being considered differently based on the results of more detailed and additional analysis, and input from local municipalities. Additional details can be found at the following hyperlink: [\(York Region Report: Employment Area Conversion Process Update, Agenda Item E.2.3\)](#).

The evaluation of employment conversion requests presented in this report will be forwarded to the Region and will represent local municipal input into the Region's evaluation process. This feedback will then be assessed by the Region and will be used to inform recommendations on which site-specific conversions will or will not be considered for approval.

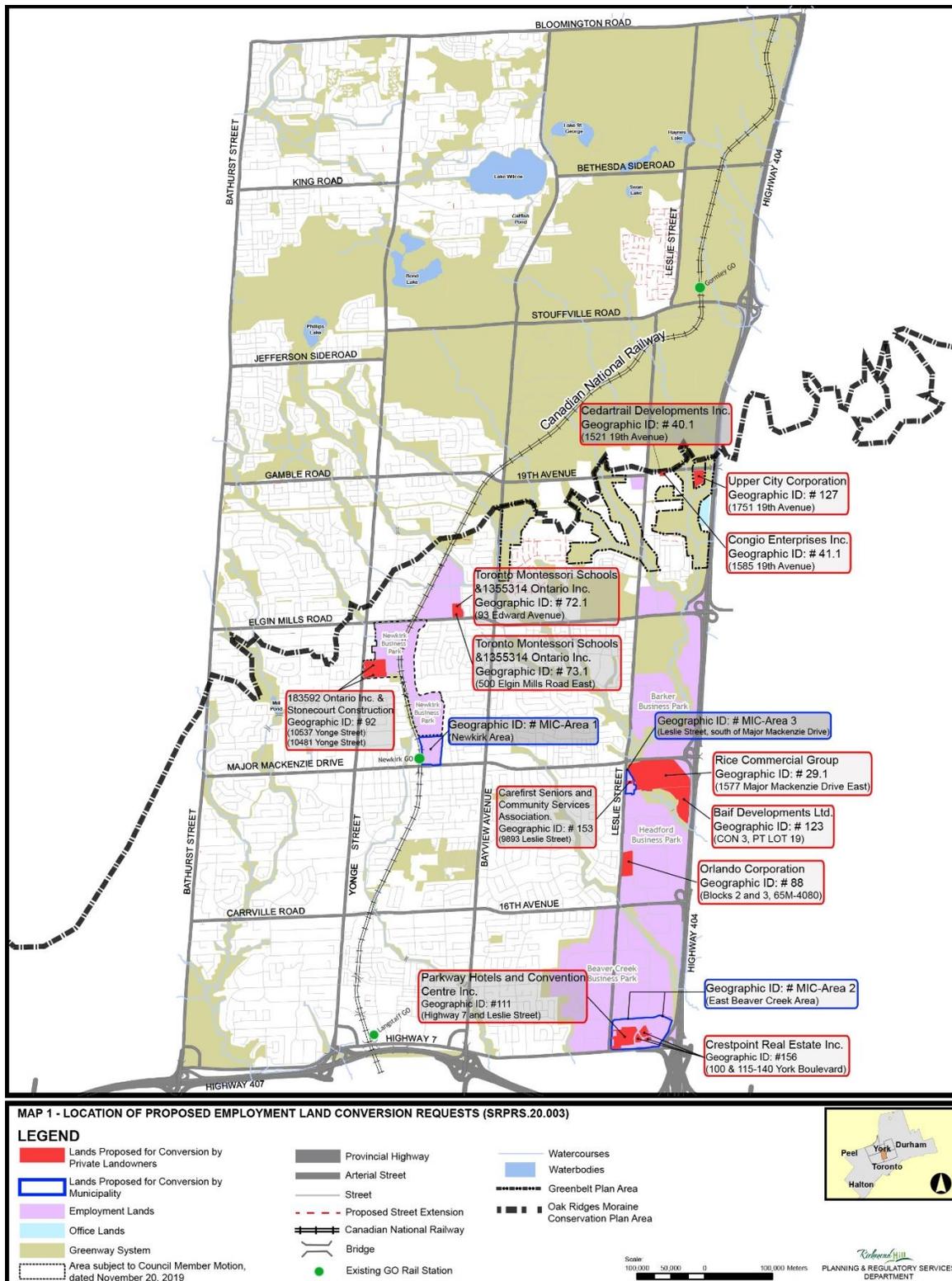
The Region set November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 as the deadline for conversion request submissions given the amount of work and effort required to assess each request, and the potential implications of submissions on the Region's land needs assessment. Accordingly, Regional staff have indicated that conversion requests submitted after this date will be referred to the next Regional MCR.

### Conversion Requests Affecting Lands within the City of Richmond Hill

As of the writing of this report, the Region has received 72 site-specific requests for employment conversions. A total of 12 conversion requests have been submitted to the Region on behalf of private landowners affecting lands within the City of Richmond Hill. Each applicant is requesting a site-specific conversion for its landholdings. Map 1 illustrates the location of the proposed requests across the City.

Once the Region has considered all submitted employment land conversion requests, the Region will identify employment lands in the updated ROP which will be presented to Regional Council for adoption. Upon adoption, the updated ROP is forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval. The Minister's decision is not subject to appeal to the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal.

**Map 1: Location of Proposed Employment Land Conversion Requests in Richmond Hill**



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Table 2 provides a brief summary of each conversion request submitted by private landowners to the Region and a summary of Staff’s evaluation. Evaluations of each request vis-à-vis the Region’s conversion criteria are set out in Appendix C (refer to Part 1 of Appendix C). City Staff’s detailed analyses of each request are also provided in Appendix C (refer to Part 2 of Appendix C).

Staff’s evaluation of each request is based on a comprehensive analysis that, among other matters, takes into consideration Growth Plan policies, the Region’s conversion criteria, and other relevant factors including location, policy context, proposed uses, and the appropriateness of a conversion on the subject lands in consideration of the area context. These evaluations are also informed by discussions that staff have had with some of the landowners, their representatives and Regional staff.

**Table 2: Summary of Private Landowner Requests for Employment Land Conversion in Richmond Hill**

<b>Landowner/Municipal Address/Legal Description/Employment Area/Size/Geographic ID</b>	<b>Location Description</b>	<b>Nature of Conversion Request</b>	<b>Staff Evaluation</b>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Richmond Hill Honda</p> <p><u>Address:</u> 77 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue (current)</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> n/a</p> <p><u>Size:</u> n/a</p> <p>Geographic ID: n/a<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>This conversion request is not associated with a site-specific property or municipal address in the City’s employment areas (see Nature of Conversion Request)</p>	<p>The current municipal address for the existing Richmond Hill Honda site is 77 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The landowner is seeking a conversion to relocate its business within the City’s designated employment areas.</p> <p>The conversion request seeks permission for automotive dealerships, subject to criteria, within key locations of the Employment Area and Employment Corridor designations of the City’s Official Plan</p>	<p>Meets some of the Region’s Conversion Criteria; some criteria are indeterminate (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Conversion request warrants further consideration to explore opportunity to address this site-specific request through policy updates via the Regional Official Plan and the City’s OP Update</p>

<sup>2</sup> Conversion request submitted by Richmond Hill Honda is not associated with a site-specific property or municipal address in the City’s employment areas and is therefore not geographically shown on Map 1 to SRPRS.20.003.

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<b>Landowner/Municipal Address/Legal Description/Employment Area/Size/Geographic ID</b>	<b>Location Description</b>	<b>Nature of Conversion Request</b>	<b>Staff Evaluation</b>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Rice Commercial Group</p> <p><u>Address:</u> 1577 Major Mackenzie Drive East</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Headford Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 17.6 ha</p> <p>Geographic ID: 29.1 (refer to Map 1)</p>	<p>The subject property is located at the southwest corner of Major Mackenzie Drive and Highway 404</p>	<p>To re-designate lands from employment to mixed-use to facilitate the development of high-density residential and commercial uses (including office, retail/service commercial and hotels) on the property</p>	<p>Does not meet majority of Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>See Council Motion of September 18, 2019<sup>3</sup> (refer to Appendix E)</p>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Baif Developments Ltd.</p> <p><u>Address:</u> Concession 3, PT Lot 19</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Headford Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 9.42 ha</p> <p>Geographic ID: 123 (refer to Map 1)</p>	<p>The subject property is located at the current terminus of Vogell Road, south of Major Mackenzie Drive</p>	<p>To re-designate lands from employment to allow for residential and/or mixed-use development on the property</p>	<p>Does not meet majority of Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Do not support conversion request</p>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Cedartrail Developments Inc.</p>	<p>The subject lands are located on the south side of 19th Avenue, east of Leslie Street</p>	<p>To re-designate lands from employment to allow</p>	<p>Meets majority of Region's Conversion Criteria (see</p>

<sup>3</sup> At its Council Meeting on September 18, 2019, Richmond Hill Council supported a Member Motion approving in principle a master concept plan for the subject property (refer to Appendix E of SRPRS.20.003, Agenda Item 14.1). The concept plan proposes a mix of uses on the property, which includes commercial, retail, office, and high-density residential apartment uses. In addition, Council directed City Staff to process privately initiated Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications to permit the proposed uses and development on the property in accordance with the applicant's concept plan, and to report back to Council by the end of March 2020.

To date, no private applications for the subject property have been received. Through this MCR process, however, the conversion of these lands can be considered by the Region and through the OP Review they can be considered by the City.

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<b>Landowner/Municipal Address/Legal Description/Employment Area/Size/Geographic ID</b>	<b>Location Description</b>	<b>Nature of Conversion Request</b>	<b>Staff Evaluation</b>
<p><u>Address:</u> 1521 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> North Leslie Secondary Plan Area</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 0.1 ha</p> <p>Geographic ID: 40.1 (refer to Map 1)</p>	<p>within the North Leslie Secondary Plan area. This application is submitted together with 1585 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p>	<p>for residential uses on the property</p>	<p>Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Support conversion request</p>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Congio Enterprises Inc.</p> <p><u>Address:</u> 1585 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> North Leslie Secondary Plan Area</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 0.4 ha</p> <p>Geographic ID: 41.1 (refer to Map 1)</p>	<p>The subject lands are located on the south side of 19th Avenue, east of Leslie Street within the North Leslie Secondary Plan area. This application is submitted together with 1521 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p>	<p>To re-designate lands from employment to allow for residential uses on the property</p>	<p>Meets majority of Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Support conversion request</p>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Toronto Montessori Schools &amp; 1355314 Ontario Inc.</p> <p><u>Address:</u> 500 Elgin Mills Road East and 93 Edward Avenue</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Newkirk Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 2.7 ha</p>	<p>The subject lands are bounded by Elgin Mills Rd. E to the south, Edward Ave to the west, Community Living York South to the north, and Rose Branch Drive to the east</p>	<p>To expand the current private school facility located at 500 Elgin Mills Road and to permit an outdoor recreation area/sports field at 93 Edward Avenue</p>	<p>Meets some of Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Conversion request not warranted however, further consideration to explore alternative approaches to address the expansion of the</p>

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<b>Landowner/Municipal Address/Legal Description/Employment Area/Size/Geographic ID</b>	<b>Location Description</b>	<b>Nature of Conversion Request</b>	<b>Staff Evaluation</b>
Geographic ID: 72.1 and 73.1 (refer to Map 1)			existing site-specific use should be undertaken
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Orlando Corporation</p> <p><u>Address:</u> Blocks 2 and 3, 65M-4080</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Headford Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 2.54 ha</p> <p>Geographic ID: 88 (refer to Map 1)</p>	The subject lands are located near the intersection of Leslie Street and 16 <sup>th</sup> Avenue and is bounded by Orlando Drive to the north, Brodie Drive to the east, Leslie Street to the west, and a medical centre building to the south	To add motor vehicle retail sales together with a major component of mechanical repairs and servicing, warehousing and office space as permitted uses on the property	Meets some of the Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)  Conversion request warrants further consideration to explore opportunity to address this site-specific request through policy updates via the Regional Official Plan and the City's OP Update
<p><u>Landowner:</u> 1835942 Ontario Inc. &amp; Stonecourt Construction</p> <p><u>Address:</u> 10537 Yonge Street and 10481 Yonge Street</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Newkirk Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 12.5 ha</p> <p>Geographic ID: 92 (refer to Map 1)</p>	The subject lands are located on the east side of Yonge Street at Levendale Road and the future extension of Enford Road	To re-designate lands from employment to allow for residential and/or mixed-use development on the properties	Meets majority of Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)  Support conversion request
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Upper City Corporation</p>	The subject lands are located at the southwest corner of Highway 404 and 19 <sup>th</sup>	To re-designate lands from employment to allow for residential and/or	Meets most of the Region's Conversion Criteria (see

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<b>Landowner/Municipal Address/Legal Description/Employment Area/Size/Geographic ID</b>	<b>Location Description</b>	<b>Nature of Conversion Request</b>	<b>Staff Evaluation</b>
<p><u>Address:</u> 1751 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> North Leslie Secondary Plan Area</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 4.2 hectares</p> <p>Geographic ID: 127 (refer to Map 1)</p>	<p>Avenue and are on the south side of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue</p>	<p>mixed-use development on the property</p>	<p>Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Do not support conversion request</p> <p>Through the City's OP Update process, additional land use permissions for this area can be considered.</p>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc.</p> <p><u>Address:</u> Highway 7 and East Beaver Creek Road</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Beaver Creek Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u> 7.59 hectares</p> <p>Geographic ID: 111 (refer to Map 1)</p>	<p>The subject lands are located at the northeast corner of Leslie Street and Highway 7, west of East Beaver Creek Road</p>	<p>To re-designate lands from employment to allow for residential and/or mixed-use development on the property</p>	<p>Meets some of the Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Support conversion request in conjunction with the municipally initiated conversion for the southeast portion of the Beaver Creek Business Park</p>
<p><u>Landowner:</u> Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association (Carefirst)</p> <p><u>Address:</u> 9893 Leslie Street</p> <p><u>Employment Area:</u> Headford Business Park</p> <p><u>Size:</u></p>	<p>The subject lands are located on the east side of Leslie Street, south of Major Mackenzie Drive.</p>	<p>To allow for a mix of uses on the property including a Long Term Care Facility, medical offices, ancillary retail (pharmacy), and office uses</p>	<p>Meets majority of the Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)</p> <p>Support conversion request in conjunction with the municipally initiated</p>

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Landowner/Municipal Address/Legal Description/Employment Area/Size/Geographic ID	Location Description	Nature of Conversion Request	Staff Evaluation
0.41 hectares  Geographic ID: 153 (refer to Map 1)			conversion request for lands on the east side of Leslie Street and south of Major Mackenzie Drive
<u>Landowner:</u> Crestpoint Real Estate (YYC) Inc.  <u>Address:</u> 100 & 115-140 York Boulevard  <u>Employment Area:</u> Beaver Creek Business Park  <u>Size:</u> 2.65 hectares  Geographic ID: 156 (refer to Map 1)	The subject lands are located in the northwest quadrant of Highway 7 and Highway 404, opposite the City of Richmond Hill's municipal offices	To re-designate lands from employment to allow for a broader mix of transit-oriented uses, including residential on the property	Meets some of the Region's Conversion Criteria (see Appendix C, Part 1)  Support conversion request in conjunction with the municipally initiated conversion for the southeast portion of the Beaver Creek Business Park

The Region has been leading consultation with local municipal staff, land owners and other stakeholders on the proposed requests using the Region's conversion criteria. In early September, late October and in January, staff attended meetings hosted by the Region with the majority of the private landowners to understand their interests with respect to their site-specific conversion requests. The Region has contacted landowners and notification was sent in November 2019 to property owners that are within a 120m radius of each conversion site. Questions and comments on proposed conversion requests are to be directed to the Region. As noted earlier, the Region will consider all requests for conversion through the MCR process. Final assessments and recommendations on each request to Regional Council are anticipated in Q1 2020.

Council Member Motion, November 20, 2019

At its Council Meeting on November 20, 2019 Richmond Hill Council supported a Member Motion directing City Staff to investigate employment land conversions with respect to the following lands:

- Item #1 – “Yonge Street north from the former Quebecor site at 10481 Yonge Street north to 10537 Yonge Street”;

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- Item #2 – “Lands in the Newkirk Business Park south of Elgin Mills Road”;
- Item #3 – “The Newkirk GO Station lands from Major Mackenzie Drive northward to Centre Street East”

The following section of the report responds to each of the aforementioned items set out in Council’s motion. A copy of the Member Motion is attached to this report as Appendix D.

### Response to Item #1

City Staff have evaluated the conversion request affecting the lands municipally known as 10481 Yonge Street and 10537 Yonge Street (refer to ID#92 on Map 1 of SRPRS.20.003). As noted in Table 2 of this report, Staff recommend that City Council support the proposed conversion request. The request satisfies most of the Region’s conversion criteria, and the lands are not located along a major goods movement corridor such as a Provincial 400-series highway which would warrant the need for additional protection as directed by the policies of the Growth Plan.

If approved, a proposed conversion for the lands would allow them to be planned in a manner that is generally consistent with the properties to the north and south along the Yonge Street frontage, which are designated in the City’s OP as Regional Mixed-Use Corridor and Downtown Local Centre respectively. The lands will have access to the planned VIVA bus rapid transit along Yonge Street and both of the aforementioned designations direct for a mix of land uses in a compact, pedestrian and transit-oriented built form supported by public rapid transit. For these reasons, Staff recommend that a conversion be supported by Council.

### Response to Item #2 and Item #3

With respect to Item #2 and Item #3 of Council’s Motion, City Staff have undertaken a comprehensive review of the employment lands within the Newkirk Business Park located south of Elgin Mills Road and north of Centre Street East (refer to Item #2), as well as the lands located north of Major Mackenzie Drive and south of Centre Street East in proximity to the Newkirk GO Station (refer to Item #3). Based on this review, Staff provide the following response in accordance with Council’s direction:

### Item #2

With respect to the lands which are located south of Elgin Mills Road and north of Centre Street East, Staff recommend that these lands be protected from conversion and continue to be planned primarily for employment uses over the long term for the following principle reasons:

- The area provides an estimated 63.7 hectares of designated employment land and supports approximately 172 companies which yield over 2,600 jobs<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>4</sup> Source: York Region Employment Survey 2018 data

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- This area of Newkirk encompasses approximately 59.6 percent of the total area designated for employment within the business park, and accounts for almost half (46.9 percent) of the total jobs within the park. A loss of jobs and designated employment land of this magnitude could have significant negative effects on the business park and on the City's ability to attract new employment to the community, and could potentially alter the viability of the remaining lands designated for employment in Newkirk that exist north of Elgin Mills Road;
- The average parcel size in this area of the business park is estimated at 0.8 hectares (1.99 acres). By comparison, the average parcel size of properties in the East Beaver Creek Business Park is estimated at 1.21 hectares (2.98 acres). Contextually, the properties within this part of the Newkirk Business Park are therefore unique to the City whereby they provide opportunities for small and medium sized businesses that would otherwise not be available in the City's employment lands located along Highway 404;
- While the Newkirk Business Park may not be viewed as attractive for large-scale industrial-type uses like those along the Highway 404 corridor, the area provides opportunities for other employment activities that may value a central location and take advantage of the scale and design of the existing building typologies in the area. It is therefore important to ensure that a mix and range of property sizes for employment be available across the City to support small, medium and large-scale businesses. The employment lands within Newkirk that exist between Elgin Mills Road and Centre Street East contribute positively to this range and mix of property sizes;
- Many of the employment uses and businesses that would be potentially displaced from this area of Newkirk would not be able to locate within the City's employment lands along Highway 404 due to the City's current OP policies. The employment uses in Newkirk are vital to the City and they provide a valuable function to residents. These uses are important and are integral in contributing to a complete community. Newkirk is home to automotive service commercial, automotive repair, outdoor storage, and other service uses including auto body repair shops and automotive garages. The City's OP limits these types of land uses specifically to the area within Newkirk along Enford Road and Industrial Road west of the CN Railway due to their propensity for conflict with other sensitive land uses. If displaced, such uses may choose to settle in other areas of the City thereby potentially creating new land use compatibility issues, or as noted above be forced out of the City completely if the OP policies are not updated to permit them elsewhere;
- Presently, the City is encouraging the renewal of this business park through two Community Improvement Plan grants: (1) Building Renovation to support the intensification of existing buildings; and (2) Tax Increment Equivalent grant to promote new office development. This initiative is consistent with the Region's findings related to current trends to convert industrial buildings for office use and flex space;

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- The City's industrial vacancy rate is presently 0.1%<sup>5</sup>. The area between Elgin Mills Road and Centre Street East as identified by Council represents a significant amount of employment lands within Newkirk. Should these lands be removed from the employment area designation, the City would lose the ability to maintain or relocate the existing business operations over the long term; and
- The proposed conversion fails the majority of the Region's conversion criteria;

In addition to the foregoing, it is important to note that the Newkirk Business Park provides a valuable employment function to the City. Historically, Newkirk has accounted for an estimated 8 percent of the City's total job base<sup>6</sup>. From a land supply perspective, the business park accounts for approximately 16 percent of the City's total available supply of designated employment land. These figures highlight the important role the business park plays as a contributor to the supply of designated employment land, and in the amount of jobs generated for the City.

### Response to Item #3

With respect to the lands in the Newkirk Business Park located north of Major Mackenzie Drive and south of Centre Street East that are in proximity to the GO Station, Staff note that this area is an area with unique circumstances that warrants consideration for a municipally initiated employment land conversion. In particular, there are a number of principle factors that support a conversion at this location. These are summarized briefly below with a detailed assessment provided in Appendix C (MIC-Area #2 in Part 3 of Appendix C):

- The proposed conversion satisfies the majority of the Region's conversion criteria;
- Approximately 67 percent of the area proposed for conversion is presently occupied by surface parking associated with the GO Rail station, resulting in a significant portion of the area being presently underutilized. Through a conversion request, there is an opportunity to "square out" the Newkirk Local Development Area (LDA) designation to include the lands on the north side of Major Mackenzie Drive East, east of the CN Rail corridor;
- If supported by Council and the Region, the lands in the vicinity of the GO Station could be converted to Local Development Area and form part of the Newkirk LDA through the City's OP Review process. This would support the lands in proximity to the GO Station being developed over the long-term for mixed-use, transit-oriented development; and
- A conversion of the lands would be consistent with Council's June 25, 2019 direction to communicate to the Region Council's desire that the area

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<sup>5</sup> CBRE Toronto Industrial Marketview Report, Q3 2019 [https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/invest-and-do-business/resources/misc/EcDev-Fact-Sheet\\_Q3-2019.pdf](https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/invest-and-do-business/resources/misc/EcDev-Fact-Sheet_Q3-2019.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Source: Historic York Region Employment Survey Data 2014-2018

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surrounding the Newkirk GO Station be identified as a Major Transit Station Area;

Beaver Creek Business Park (refer to MIC-Area #2 on Map 1)

Staff have also identified the area within the southern part of Beaver Creek Business Park between Leslie Street, Highway 7, Norman Bethune Avenue and Highway 404 as a candidate for a municipally initiated conversion (refer to Geographic ID# MIC-Area 2 on Map 1). Due to its unique context, this area consists of a broad range and mix of uses in proximity to the VIVA bus rapid transit along Highway 7, and include the existing high-density residential apartment buildings at 9015 and 9017 Leslie Street, as well as the existing and planned residential apartment buildings at 75 Norman Bethune Avenue.

Staff note that high-density residential apartment communities are typically not commonplace within well-established employment areas, however these buildings and the residents which reside in them form part of the area's existing context and are a basis for why the area should be considered as a candidate for conversion. A detailed summary and analysis of the area and why it should be considered for conversion is provided in Appendix C (refer to MIC-Area #2 in Part 3 of Appendix C). In addition, Staff are aware of two conversion requests within the area (refer to Geographic ID #111 and #156 on Map 1). Each request seeks a site-specific conversion to allow for mixed-use development on the property and cite the existing mix of uses, the VIVA bus rapid transit along Highway 7, and the emergence of the area as a Major Transit Station Area as supporting rationale to justify a conversion.

If supported by Council and the Region, the lands bounded by Leslie Street to the west, East Pearce Street/Norman Bethune Avenue to the north, Highway 404 to the east, and Highway 7 to the south could be converted and redesignated to a mixed-use designation. A mixed-use designation would recognize the existing employment and high-density residential uses in the area, and allow for a range and mix of land uses in a compact, pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented built-form to be supported by the existing bus rapid transit along Highway 7. A conversion of these lands would also allow for detailed planning to occur to allow for the inclusion of parks and other community services to be provided to service the existing and future residential population of the area.

Leslie Street, south of Major Mackenzie Drive (refer to MIC-Area #3 on Map 1)

Staff have also identified certain lands along the east side of Leslie Street, south of Major Mackenzie Drive in the Headford Business Park as a candidate for a municipally initiated conversion (refer to Geographic ID# MIC-Area 3 on Map 1). The lands affected include the properties municipally known as 9843, 9853, 9861, 9875, 9893, 9901 and 9947 Leslie Street, and occupy a total land area of approximately 3.0 hectares. The area presently consists of a broad range and mix of commercial, retail, office and institutional uses. There is a single-detached residential dwelling located at the northern end of the area at 9947 Leslie Street. Despite the area's designation as "Employment Area" in the City's Official Plan, many of the existing uses do not reflect traditional employment uses found within industrial areas. In addition, the City is aware of a site-specific conversion request for 9893 Leslie Street (refer to Geographic ID #153) which

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seeks permission for a mix of uses including the establishment of a long-term care facility which is a sensitive land use. Given the size and context of the aforementioned lands, traditional employment uses are unlikely to be developed.

If supported by Council, the Region, and the Province, the lands could be converted to recognize the existing mix of commercial, retail and institutional uses in the area which form part of the existing context so as to allow for the expansion of the uses over the long term while accommodating for additional job opportunities that could potentially occur.

### Next Steps

Local municipalities play an important role in the work and input to the Region's MCR. The Region will continue to engage local municipalities throughout the MCR process on policy development for the ROP. Richmond Hill staff have provided input into the process and form part of the Local Municipal Working Group to the MCR. It is recommended that the Clerk forward a copy of this report and Council's recommendations to the Region for its consideration in the evaluation of requests for employment area conversions.

With respect to the City's Official Plan, the City's OP will need to conform to the changes to the ROP via the MCR process. The designation of employment lands is a new responsibility the Region is required to undertake as part of the ROP Update. Accordingly, the City will monitor the results of the Region's evaluation of employment conversion requests, as well as the emerging policy framework related to employment areas to ensure conformity to Regional policies and the Region's urban structure through the City's OP Update. Subsequent reports on other key areas of the Region's MCR will be brought forward to Council as necessary as more details of these and other policy areas emerge through the MCR process.

### Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

This report has no financial or staffing implications.

### Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

This report responds to Goal 1 (Stronger Connections in Richmond Hill) of the Strategic Plan which directs for the development of stronger connections, including physical networks such as roadways, transit, environmental connections and planning for a connected community by working with other levels of government and agencies to meet the needs of the community.

### Conclusion:

York Region is currently in the process of undertaking a municipal comprehensive review to update the Regional Official Plan (2010). The updated ROP is scheduled for adoption by Regional Council in Q4 2020. With respect to planning for employment lands, the Region is currently in the process of assessing requests for conversion and

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will be reporting to Region Council in Q1 2020. Local municipalities will need to bring their official plans into conformity with the ROP once it has been approved by the Province.

This staff report provides a summary of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process, and summarizes requests for employment land conversion within the City that have been submitted to the Region through the MCR. In addition, this report identifies areas of the City that are candidates for a municipally-initiated conversion as recommended by City Staff, and responds to Council's November 20, 2019 motion which directed that City Staff investigate a conversion of employment lands within the Newkirk Business Park. All conversion requests affecting lands within the City are to be considered comprehensively by the Region through its MCR process.

### **Attachments:**

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. If you require an alternative format please call contact person listed in this document.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – York Region MCR Workplan (June 2019)
- Appendix B – York Region Employment Conversion Criteria
- Appendix C – Summary and Analysis of Conversion Requests in Richmond Hill
- Appendix D – Council Motion dated November 20, 2019
- Appendix E – Extract from Council Meeting C#33-18 (September 18, 2019)

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPRS.20.003 - York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (Part 1) Requests for Employment Area Conversions.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Appendix A - York Region MCR Workplan.pdf</li><li>- Appendix B - York Region Employment Conversion Criteria.pdf</li><li>- Appendix C - Summary and Analysis of Conversion Requests in Richmond Hill.docx</li><li>- Appendix D - Council Motion dated November 20, 2019.pdf</li><li>- Appendix E - Extract from Council Meeting C33-18 September 18, 2019.pdf</li></ul>
Final Approval Date:	Feb 19, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Patrick Lee - Feb 19, 2020 - 12:27 PM**

**Kelvin Kwan - Feb 19, 2020 - 12:29 PM**

**MaryAnne Dempster - Feb 19, 2020 - 3:48 PM**