



EDUCATION CENTRE – AURORA

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October 19, 2021

By Email

Clement Chong - Project Manager
Office of the City Manager - Strategy, Innovation and Engagement
City of Richmond Hill

Dear Mr. Chong

Re: Draft Amendment to the Richmond Hill Official Plan – Richmond Hill Centre

Board staff have reviewed the DRAFT Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan dated October 7, 2021 and have the following comments:

There is currently insufficient elementary pupil capacity in existing local area schools to serve the additional population envisioned for the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan. Red Maple Public School serves the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area and is currently near its capacity and the Board has implemented interim accommodation measures such as redirecting portions of the Red Maple Public School catchment area to other schools outside the community.

It is anticipated that students generated from future new developments in Richmond Hill Centre (RHC) will need to be accommodated outside of the community until a new elementary school is available to serve the community.

Section 1.6.2 - Schools

- We are generally satisfied with the identified conceptual locations for potential future elementary school(s). However, the City should consider a phasing strategy which includes a defined threshold of units that can be developed until the school board confirms there are available pupil places. This approach can help ensure the school sites will be available in a timely manner to coincide with the need for a new elementary school.
- Paragraph three of this section which states:

The City will promote that schools within the RHC be built to an urban standard that optimizes the use of land, consistent with the policies or requirements of the respective School Board.

While the School Board recognizes the high density characteristics of RHC and the desire for a school which reflects the more urban built-forms of this community, any alternate standards for a school which is smaller in size than a typical school will require collaboration and support from the City and landowners such as agreements for alternative funding arrangements.



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- Paragraph four of this section states:

Strategies to optimize use of land may include but are not limited to:

- a) Integrating schools within development;*
- b) Building multi-storey schools;*
- c) Minimizing parking and pick up/drop off areas; and*
- d) Co-locating schools with compatible community uses such as daycare facilities.*

While we appreciate the suggested strategies to achieve a reduced school site, integrating schools within a development (such as within a residential high-rise tower) is currently not feasible from an operational and funding perspective (including construction, maintenance and renewal). Based on extensive discussions with other school boards, Ministry of Education staff, consultants and other municipalities, integrating schools within a residential building requires significant contributions from other funding sources not available to school boards and operations of such schools pose immense challenges that require support from beyond the School Board. Therefore the strategy of “integrating schools within development” should not be included as a potential means to achieve a smaller school site at this time.

The Board’s current school site size criteria for higher density areas is five acres and located central to the majority of residential population to better serve the new community and increase opportunities for active transportation for school related travel. The school board is open to exploring the feasibility of reduced school site sizes with landowners, the City and other community service agencies and will continue working with the Ministry of Education to identify alternative funding model for schools in high density communities.

If further clarification or discussion is required, please contact us directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert Luk".

Gilbert Luk
Manager
Property and System Operations