

Presentation to Council May 18, 2022

To: The Mayor and Members of Council

Re: Public Council Meeting of May 18, 2022
Draft Official Plan Amendments OPA183 and OA184

Markets On Main Street Inc. is a planning consulting firm acting on behalf of Zexin Inc., the owner of 189 Centre St E (N/W corner of CN Rail line and Centre St E).

We strongly object to draft OPA 184 Neighbourhoods for the reasons set out below.

In the past we have made several submissions to the Official Plan Update expressing the reasons why this property should be included in the Newark Local Area plan. To date we have not received any indication that our submissions have been taken into consideration or alternatively any reasons why our submissions are inappropriate.

We now find that draft OPA 184 proposes to include the Zexin land within the Neighbourhood policies of the Plan and therefore not within the Newark Local Area policies. We feel that to exclude this land from the Newark Local Area amendment would be inconsistent with the PPS, the Growth Plan, the Regional OP and the stated intent of the City's Official Plan Update. We therefore strongly object to draft OPA 184 as currently written.

POLICY BASIS FOR WHY THIS PROPERTY SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN NEWARK LOCAL AREA:

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT 2020

1.1.3.2 Land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:

f) are transit-supportive, where transit is planned, exists or may be developed

1.4.3 d) promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed.

1.4.3 e) requiring transit-supportive development and prioritizing intensification, including potential air rights development, in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations.

1.6.7.4 A land use pattern, density and mix of uses should be promoted that minimize the length and number of vehicle trips and support current and future use of transit and active transportation.

A PLACE TO GROW - GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE 2020

Guiding Principles

- Support a range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and affordable housing, to serve all sizes, incomes, and ages of households.

- Prioritize intensification and higher densities in strategic growth areas to make efficient use of land and infrastructure and support transit viability.

2.2.1 Managing Growth

2. c) within settlement areas, growth will be focused in:
 - iii. locations with existing or planned transit, with a priority on higher order transit where it exists or is planned.

2.2.4 Transit Corridors and Station Areas

2. For major transit station areas on priority transit corridors or subway lines, upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, will delineate the boundaries of major transit station areas in a transit-supportive manner that maximizes the size of the area and the number of potential transit users that are within walking distance of the station.

3. Major transit station areas on priority transit corridors or subway lines will be planned for a minimum density target of:

- c) 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare for those that are served by the GO Transit rail network.

6. Within major transit station areas on priority transit corridors or subway lines, land uses and built form that would adversely affect the achievement of the minimum density targets in this Plan will be prohibited.

9. Within all major transit station areas, development will be supported, where appropriate, by:

- planning for a diverse mix of uses, including additional residential units and affordable housing, to support existing and planned transit service levels.

10. Lands adjacent to or near to existing and planned frequent transit should be planned to be transit-supportive and supportive of active transportation and a range and mix of uses and activities.

5.2.5 Targets

3. For the purposes of implementing the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, upper- and single-tier municipalities will, through a municipal comprehensive review, delineate the following in their official plans, where applicable:

- a) delineated built-up areas;
- b) urban growth centres;
- c) major transit station areas

York Region OP

5.3. Intensification

5.3.5 That intensification areas are planned and designed to meet: the York Region Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines; and

the Region's implementation guidelines for Regional Centres and Corridors.

Note: A Major Transit Station area includes lands within 500-800 radius of the station
The target density is 150 residents and or jobs per hectare.

5.4 Regional Centres and Corridors

5.4.6 That comprehensive secondary plans for Regional Centres and key development areas along Regional Corridors be prepared by local municipalities and implemented in co-operation with the Regional and related agencies. These secondary plans shall include:

- d. a concentration of the most intensive development and greatest mix of uses within a reasonable and direct walking distance of rapid transit stations and or planned subway stations.

Objectives of Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

The essence of the key directions are three-fold, we need to update our Official Plan to:

- 2) Establish an urban structure that: directs growth to centres and corridors

Note: The Richmond Hill Go Station area is designated as a Major Transit Station. Centre St is a collector road and bus route.

The following is a summary of the proposed key directions for the Official Plan update provided by category in accordance with questions arising from in the 2019 Official Plan Update Initiation staff report:

Maintain 2010 urban structure framework, with minor changes in accordance with the following "Big Moves":

- Align with Regional Major Transit Station Area direction.
- Clarify the purpose and intent of the intensification hierarchy.
- Clarify the roles of Centres and Corridors within the hierarchy.
- Appropriately designate intensification areas and implement Regional MTSA minimum density direction.
- Support the provision of future high-order transit.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Within the Newark Local Area as recently mapped, most of the properties are currently developed and occupied with stable uses including industrial buildings north of Major Mackenzie, apartments and houses south of Major Mack. Most of the few undeveloped properties are used for GO related parking. The development of new higher density residential uses while maintaining the GO parking will be difficult to coordinate, difficult to finance and will be unappealing to future apartment buyers. It is very unlikely to happen within the foreseeable future. There is therefore very little potential for short term intensification of either residents or

workers within the defined area. On that basis the potential intensification which is the primary objective of this update is unlikely to be achieved any time soon.

The Zexin property is imminently suited to higher density residential development.

- It is within 500 m walking distance of Richmond Hill GO Station.
- It is served by existing bus transit on Centre St E.
- It is vacant and ready for development.
- Higher density residential development would allow for the construction of a noise, vibration and crash wall along the edge of the CN ROW and make development of the land feasible.

OPA 184 proposes to designate the lands on the both the north and south sides of Centre Street west of the CN Rail line as Neighbourhood to be developed with “The Missing Middle Housing” i.e. triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses and walkup apartments. The achievable densities for these uses are hardly consistent with the objectives of intensifying development around and making efficient use of the public investment in a Major Transit Station.

The proposed densities are also very unlikely to support the dislocation of existing industries, the remediation of industrial lands for residential purposes and the costs of redevelopment of those properties. The additional density that could be created on the high-rise apartment sites south of Major Mack is incidental.

With regard to the Zexin property the narrow width of the site makes low density residential development (as anticipated by the Neighbourhood designation) very inefficient and may be economically prohibitive.

The proposed northern boundary of the Newark Local Area at Centre street is inappropriate. Centre street is less a barrier to pedestrian crossing to the GO Station than crossing Major Mackenzie. The target area for a Major Transit Station of 500m to 800 m should include the lands on the north side of Centre Street. The achievement of a suitable transition from higher density development on these lands to the existing low density housing further north is not an insurmountable problem and is routinely resolved through the rezoning and site plan approval processes.

Conclusion

The proposed designation of the Newark Local Centre should include those lands on both sides of Centre St west of the CN Rail line and provide for higher densities which can realistically result in the redevelopment of these properties. The proposed Neighbourhood designation on the properties in draft OPA 184 should be withdrawn.

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Attachments:

- Reducing the Cost of Housing in RichmondHill by Zexin Inc. May 25, 2021
- Letter to Official Plan Update Sep 13, 2021
- Letter to Official Plan Update Oct 12, 2021

- Observations & Analysis A Brief by: Zexin Inc. Jan 26, 202
- Letter to Official Plan Update Jan 27, 2022