



WESTON CONSULTING

planning + urban design

Planning and Regulatory Services
Policy Planning Division
City of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

June 26, 2022
File 6796-1

Attn: Policy Planning Staff

**RE: Draft Official Plan Amendment OPA 18.4 - Neighbourhoods
10533 Leslie Street (York Montessori School)
City of Richmond Hill**

Weston Consulting is the planning consultant for 2402828 Ontario Inc., the registered owner of the property municipally known as 10533 Leslie Street in the City of Richmond Hill (York Montessori School, referred to as the "Subject Property"). The purpose of this letter is to provide comments on the draft Amendment 18.4 to the City of Richmond Hill Official Plan.

Description of Subject Property

The Subject Property is located east of Leslie Street and south of Elgin Mills Road East in the City of Richmond Hill. The site has an approximate lot area of 3,089 square metres (0.3 hectares), lot depth of 38.5 metres, and a lot frontage of 80.7 metres along Leslie Street. The property is currently occupied by a Montessori school consisting of 3 buildings with a child care capacity of 150 children.

The Subject Property is embedded in the southwest quadrant of the Elgin Mills Cemetery. The Cemetery wraps around the northern, southern and eastern lot lines of the Subject Property. To the west of the property beyond Leslie Street is a low-rise residential subdivision.

Background

In July 2021, Weston Consulting submitted a comment letter on the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review of the City's Official Plan. The letter filed to the City at the time requested a land-use redesignation from *Major Open Space* to *Neighbourhood*, with site-specific exceptions, in order to recognize the existing Montessori school and maintain the potential for future expansions to the operation. This comment letter should be read in conjunction with the letter dated July 27, 2022.

In addition to the letter comment letter submission, we have been actively consulting with staff on our request and have had numerous meetings to date, with the latest one being on June 20, 2022.

Draft OPA 18.4 – Neighbourhoods

Weston Consulting has reviewed the *Neighbourhood* policies contained within Amendment 18.4 of the Richmond Hill Official Plan. Specifically, draft policy 4.1.1.(4) which relates to private elementary and secondary was reviewed. Based on our review, we understand that the draft policy has eliminated the minimum size requirement of 2.5 hectares for these establishments. We are in support of this modification and request that it be carried forward.

We further note that draft policy 4.1.1(4)(a) continues to require private elementary and secondary schools provide a minimum of two access points. In our opinion this requirement does not provide adequate flexibility and may not be suitable and appropriate for all sites. As such, imposing this requirement on all private elementary and secondary schools is seen as restrictive. Furthermore, in our opinion, policy 4.1.1(4)(b) which requires that Transportation Studies be submitted, puts the necessary safeguards in place to ensure that a single access point, if permitted, meets design and safety criteria and is appropriate and justifiable for certain private schools, based on size and program. With the inclusion of policy 4.1.1(4)(b) regarding Transportation Studies, the requirement of a minimum of two access points is seen as being unnecessary.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, we request that draft policy 4.1.1(4)(a) be reconsidered to allow greater flexibility for private elementary and secondary schools. Should the current daycare use evolve to become a private elementary/secondary school, Transportation Studies would be submitted to demonstrate that a single access point is appropriate.

We further request that the comments contained herein be considered as part of the MCR/Official Plan Update process.

We request to be notified of any further studies, revisions, approvals and/or notices applicable to the MCR process and reserve the right to provide further comments as more information becomes available. Should you have questions or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned (ext. 308) or Steven Pham (ext. 312).

Yours truly,

Weston Consulting

Per:



Alfiya Kakal, HBA, MPI, RPP
Senior Planner

- c. Nadia Bayrami, York Montessori School
Ryan Guetter, Weston Consulting