



Staff Report for Council Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 16, 2023

Report Number: SRPI.23.044

Department: Planning and Infrastructure

Division: Development Planning

Subject: **SRPI.23.044 – Request for Comments – Official Plan Amendment Application – Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc., 650 Hwy 7 East Inc., and 9005 Leslie Street Inc. – City File OPA-23-0003**

Owners:

Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc., 650 Highway 7 East Inc., and 9005 Leslie Street Inc.

600 Highway 7 East, Suite 102

Richmond Hill, ON

L4B 1B2

Agent:

Malone Given Parsons Ltd.

140 Renfrew Drive, Suite 201

Markham, ON

L3R 6B3

Location:

Legal Description: Part of Block 1, Plan 65M-2287

Municipal Addresses: 600 and 650 Highway 7 East, and 9005 Leslie Street

Purpose:

A request for comments concerning a proposed Official Plan Amendment application to permit a high density mixed-use residential/commercial development on the subject lands.

Recommendation:

- a) **That Staff Report SRPI.23.044 with respect to an Official Amendment Application submitted by Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc., 650 Highway 7 East Inc., and 9005 Leslie Street Inc. for lands known as Part of Block 1, Plan 65M-2287**

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(Municipal Addresses: 600 and 650 Highway 7 East and 9005 Leslie Street), City File OPA-23-0003, be received for information purposes only and that all comments be referred back to staff.

Contact Person:

Simone Fiore, Senior Planner – Site Plans, phone number 905-771-2479 and/or
Sandra DeMaria, Manager of Development – Site Plans, phone number 905-771-6312

Report Approval:

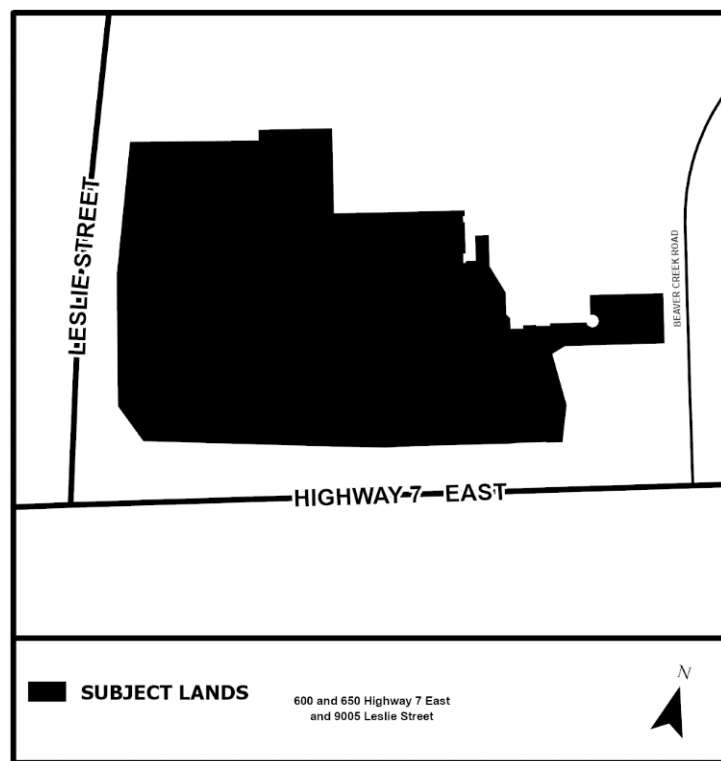
Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Infrastructure

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, City Manager

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.

Location Map:

Below is a map displaying the property location. Should you require an alternative format call person listed under the “Contact Person” above.



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Background Information:

The subject Official Plan Amendment application was received and deemed complete by the City on March 3, 2023. The application and supporting materials were subsequently circulated to relevant City departments and external agencies for review and comment.

At the Council meeting of February 26, 2020, Council considered Staff Report SRPRS.20.003 entitled “*York Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review (Part 1): Requests for Employment Area Conversions*” which amongst other matters, outlined the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) Process which responds to evolving employment land trends within the Region as well as emerging policy changes which were considered as part of the update to York Region’s Official Plan 2022. The report considered a number of employment land conversion requests received by the City and the Region, one of which was from Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc.’s to permit a mixed-use development on their lands within the City’s **Employment Corridor** of the Beaver Creek Business Park.

As part of its consideration of Staff Report SRPRS.20.003, Council adopted a motion that the Region accept said report as the local municipal input into the MCR and employment land conversion evaluation process. As part of the recommendation, City Council advised the Region of their interest in considering a municipally initiated conversion of employment lands to permit a mixed-use development on the subject lands and were supportive of the conversion request (refer to Appendix A). The subject lands have since been removed from the Region’s **Employment Area** designation and are now designated **Community Area** under the Regional Official Plan.

To facilitate the above recommendations of Council and explore alternative development options, City staff are currently undertaking the Official Plan Update. In this regard, the *Official Plan Update Key Directions Report* (2021) was endorsed by Council at its meeting of February 9, 2022. The report forms the foundation for future amendments to the City’s Official Plan and guides the next phase of the City’s Official Plan Update process while responding to Council’s Strategic Priorities and supporting the City’s commitment to address climate change.

The Key Directions Report identifies the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 area where the subject lands are located as an emerging Local Centre. This is discussed in greater detail in the later sections of this report. While the Official Plan Update is still underway, the applicant has submitted the subject application to propose a site specific exception for the lands in order to permit a high density, mixed-use development on its land holdings. In this regard, the applicants are proposing that the subject application be considered in advance of the City’s Official Plan update.

The purpose of this report is to seek comments from Council and the public with respect to the applicant’s development proposal, pursuant to the statutory Public Meeting and associated notice requirements of the *Planning Act*.

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Summary Analysis:

Site Location and Adjacent Uses

The subject lands are comprised of three contiguous parcels located at the northeast corner of Highway 7 and Leslie Street and have a total lot area of approximately 5.05 hectares (12.49 acres) with direct frontage on Highway 7, Leslie Street, and East Beaver Creek Road (refer to Map 1). The lands support the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel and Suites, the Best Western Parkway Hotel Toronto North, the City of Richmond Hill Municipal Offices, the Shoppes of the Parkway, two high rise residential buildings, commercial buildings, and at-grade and underground parking to service the existing uses on the property.

Abutting uses include existing industrial/commercial uses to the north, East Beaver Creek Road to the east (beyond which are existing commercial uses including office buildings and a restaurant campus), Highway 7 to the south (beyond which are existing commercial buildings located in the City of Markham) and Leslie Street to the west (beyond which is a commercial shopping centre (Times Square)).

Development Proposal

The applicants are seeking Council's approval of its Official Plan Amendment application to permit a high density mixed-use residential/commercial development on its land holdings. The proposed development is to be comprised of nine towers ranging in height from 35 to 42 storeys with some of the towers on six storey podia and a total of 3,460 dwelling units to be located on a new private road network. The proposed development also seeks approval to permit an expansion to the existing hotel operations, a conference centre area expansion and new commercial/retail space. A 0.4 hectare (0.99 acre) strata park is proposed internal to the site with a 'breezeway' connecting to Leslie Street (refer to Maps 4 to 6). The existing office building, retail mall, conference centre, and Sheraton hotel are proposed to remain.

Outlined below is a summary of the pertinent statistics of the applicant's development proposal based on the plans and drawings submitted to the City:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| • Total Lot Area: | 5.05 hectares (12.49 acres) |
| • Proposed Strata Park: | 0.4 hectares (0.99 acres) |
| • Number of Buildings: | 9 |
| • Proposed Gross Floor Area (GFA): | 280,490 sq. m. (3,019,169.23 sq. ft.) |
| ○ Residential GFA: | 265,572.3 sq. m. (2,858,596.45 sq. ft.) |
| ○ Hotel GFA: | 6,383.3 sq. m. (68,709.27 sq. ft.) |
| ○ Conference Centre GFA: | 3,329.8 sq. m. (35,841.69 sq. ft.) |
| ○ Commercial GFA: | 5,204.6 sq. m. (56,021.85 sq. ft.) |
| • Proposed Density (FSI): | 5.5 |
| • Proposed Building Heights: | |
| ○ Tower 1: | 35 storeys |
| ○ Tower 2: | 42 storeys |
| ○ Tower 1 and 2 Podium: | 6 storeys |

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○ Tower 3:	35 storeys
○ Tower 2 and 3 Podium:	6 storeys
○ Tower 4:	35 storeys
○ Tower 5:	42 storeys
○ Tower 4 and 5 Podium:	6 storeys
○ Tower 6:	35 storeys
○ Tower 6 Podium:	6 storeys
○ Tower 7:	35 storeys
• Proposed Dwelling Units:	3,640
• Proposed Hotel Units:	111
• Proposed Parking Spaces:	4,921

The proposed buildings are strategically situated towards the edges of the subject lands, with frontage generally on Highway 7 and Leslie Street and the northern boundary of the lands. Proposed Towers 3 through 5, and 8 and 9 are to include ground floor retail uses and Towers 1 and 2 propose residential and hotel uses that include an expanded conference centre. A pedestrian bridge is proposed between Towers 1 and 2 to connect the proposed hotel/conference centre to the existing Sheraton Hotel. Tower 6 is proposed to connect to the existing Sheraton hotel and provide additional hotel lobby space on the ground floor and Tower 7 is to provide amenity space on the ground floor. Parking is proposed within 6 levels of shared underground parking which is to span the entirety of the subject lands. Vehicular access to the site is proposed via Highway 7, Leslie Street and East Beaver Creek Road.

It should be noted that at the time of the preparation of this report, related Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan applications have not yet been submitted to the City in conjunction with the subject Official Plan Amendment application.

Supporting Documentation/Reports

The applicant has submitted the following documents/information to the City in support of the proposed development:

- Planning Justification Report;
- Draft Official Plan Amendment;
- Topographic Plan of Survey;
- Conceptual Site Master Plan;
- Site Plan;
- Underground Parking Plans;
- Floor Plans;
- Roof Plans;
- Site Statistics;
- Massing Views;
- On-Site Circulation Plans;
- Green Space Site Plan;
- Tower Orientation and Views Plan;

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- Service Access Route Plan;
- Phasing Plans;
- Transportation Impact Study; and,
- Master Plan Urban Design Brief.

Official Plan Amendment Application

The applicant's Official Plan Amendment application seeks to redesignate its land holdings from **Employment Corridor** to **Key Development Area** and to remove the existing Exception 3 in the City's Official Plan in order to:

- add 'hotel', 'convention centre', and 'banquet hall' as permitted uses;
- permit a minimum density of 2.5 FSI and a maximum density of 6.0 FSI;
- permit a minimum building height of 4 storeys and a maximum building height of 42 storeys; and,
- permit a maximum base building height of 6 storeys.

The applicants are also proposing revisions to **Section 4.4 (Key Development Areas)** of the City's Official Plan in its entirety. More specifically, the applicants are proposing to include the subject lands in the Key Development Area policies by adding "Highway 7" to the list of areas under **Section 4.4**. Lastly, site specific Exception 3 permits residential apartment uses where there are existing hotel uses, provided they are integrated vertically within a hotel building. As noted above, the applicants are looking to remove this exception. A copy of the applicant's draft Official Plan Amendment can be found in Appendix B.

Planning Analysis:

Staff has undertaken a preliminary review and evaluation of the applicant's development proposal based on the policy framework contained within the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020) (the "PPS"), the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2020) (the "Growth Plan"), the new Regional Official Plan (2022) (the "ROP") and the City's Official Plan (2010) (the "Plan"). In this regard, staff advises that the Plan is consistent with the PPS and conforms with the Growth Plan and the ROP that were in force at the time of its approval. Since the Plan's approval, the PPS and the Growth Plan were updated in 2020 and the ROP was updated in 2022. In this regard the City is currently undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Reviews (MCR) to update the Plan as necessary in order to align with more recent Provincial and Regional planning direction. Below is a more detailed outline of the applicant's proposal relative to the current ROP and Plan.

York Region Official Plan 2022

The subject lands are designated **Community Area** and are located along a **Regional Corridor** in accordance with Map 1 (Regional Structure) and Map 1A (Land Use Designations) and further identified as being located on a **Rapid Transit Corridor** in accordance with Map 10 (Rapid Transit Network) of ROP. Lands designated **Community Area** are intended to support a full range and mix of urban uses which are intended to accommodate a significant portion of planned growth within the Region. **Regional Corridors** are intended to serve as

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locations for the highest densities and mix of uses, as determined by the local municipality, with consideration for local community context and character. Further, development within **Regional Corridors** is to be urban in form and designed to be compact, mixed-use, oriented to the street, pedestrian and cyclist friendly, and transit supportive.

Additionally, the subject lands are located within the boundary of Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) 14 associated with the Leslie-Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station, as illustrated in Appendix 2 - York Region Major Transit Station Areas of the ROP (2022) which has a proposed density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare. MTSA's are planned and designed to support existing and planned transit infrastructure and represent a key component of the Region's intensification and growth management strategy. MTSA's are intended to support a range and mix of land uses, supporting higher density, mixed-use and transit-oriented development.

The subject development application has been circulated to York Region for review and comment; however, formal comments have yet to be provided at the time of writing this report. Among other matters, the Region will be required to provide written confirmation as to whether the proposed Official Plan Amendment may be exempted from Regional approval and delegated to the City for final consideration. A more detailed review and evaluation of the proposed amendment in the context of the applicable policies in the ROP will form part of a future recommendation report to Council.

City of Richmond Hill Official Plan

The subject lands are presently designated **Employment Corridor** in accordance with Schedule A2 - Land Use (refer to Map 2) of the Plan. Additionally, the site is located along Highway 7 which is identified as a **Regional Rapid Transit Corridor** on Appendix 5 – Public Rapid Transit of the Plan.

The **Employment Corridor** permits major office and office uses, hotels, convention centres and banquet facilities, and automotive service commercial, community uses and linear parks and urban squares in accordance with specific criteria. The proposed development does not conform with the existing permitted uses and policies of the Plan. Staff note that the lands have a site specific exception which permits residential apartment uses where there are existing hotel uses, provided they are integrated vertically within a hotel building. As noted above, the applicants are looking to remove this exception as part of their subject Official Plan Amendment application.

Furthermore, City initiated Official Plan Amendment ("OPA") 18.3 (Vision and City Structure), which was adopted by Council on June 27, 2022 and the Region on September 9, 2022, and is now in full force and effect, identifies the area of Highway 7, East Beaver Creek Road and Leslie Street (including the subject lands) as a **Local Centre**. Generally, Local Centres permit a mix of uses including, community uses, parks and urban open spaces, apartments, medium density residential, office, commercial, and retail uses.

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As noted previously, the *Official Plan Update Key Directions Report* (2021) was endorsed by Council at its meeting on February 9, 2022. The Key Directions Report highlights proposed changes to the East Beaver Creek, Highway 7, and Leslie Street area and identifies the area as an emerging Local Centre intended to support a mix of uses. Local Centres are identified as transit supportive, complete communities with a unique character. Furthermore, the Key Directions Report identifies that this existing area may be considered one of the City's most complete communities because of the current mix of employment, residential and commercial uses, notwithstanding the lack of community services required to support a community.

The Key Directions Report includes a number of recommendations for the new East Beaver Creek Local Centre and directs that development within the centre:

- redesignate the lands from **Employment Area** and **Employment Corridor** designations to a designation that supports a mix of uses with the area predominantly continuing to support employment uses;
- provide a civic presence relative to the City's municipal administrative building with an open space facility;
- provide amenities that support the existing and future residents and continue to provide services that support the broader employment area;
- provide a gateway function at the southeast corner of the City; and,
- is compatible with the functioning Buttonville Airport and existing employment uses within and in the adjacent area.

Staff note that the Key Directions Report and OPA 18.3 identify the subject lands as a **Local Centre**. **Section 3.1.3** of the Plan establishes an urban structure framework to depict and guide the physical make-up of the City over the long-term planning horizon, and includes the following intensification hierarchy:

- Richmond Hill Centre;
- Key Development Areas and Regional Corridors;
- Local Centres;
- Local Development Areas and Local Corridors;
- Neighbourhood Infill; and,
- Secondary Suites.

The majority of the City's population growth and intensification is to be accommodated within the network of centres and corridors that are supported by existing or planned higher order public transit. As noted in the Key Directions Report, the redesignation of this area as a **Local Centre** will enable the City to do more detailed secondary planning in order to create area-specific policies and plans to guide future development which will also serve to implement the Region's MTSA criteria, including the required density targets.

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed development relative to the policy direction provided in the Key Directions Report and OPA 18.3, it appears the residential and commercial uses would be aligned with the direction of the overall vision of this broader area. However,

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further analysis is required to determine if it is appropriate to consider the subject application in advance of the Official Plan update, and to determine if the heights and densities proposed by the applicant are appropriate.

A more detailed review and evaluation of the proposed amendments in the context of the applicable Plan policies and changing policies anticipated through the City's Official Plan Update will be completed following the receipt of comments from Council, the public, City departments and external agencies and will form part of the future recommendation report to Council.

Zoning By-law

The subject lands are currently zoned **High Performance Commercial Industrial (MC-1) Zone** under By-law 150-80, as amended (refer to Map 3) with several site specific exceptions to accommodate the diverse range of buildings and uses on the subject lands. The **MC-1 Zone** permits a range of industrial and commercial uses, including but not limited to, warehousing, assembly and manufacturing of goods and materials, printing establishments, research and development, data processing centres, banks and financial establishments, technical and commercial schools, restaurants, parking garages, business and professional offices, and hotels subject to specific criteria. The proposed high density, mixed-use development is not permitted by the current zoning. As such, the applicant will be required to submit a Zoning By-law Amendment application in order to implement its development proposal.

Department and External Agency Comments:

The subject Official Plan Amendment application and the associated background studies and reports submitted in support of the same have been circulated to various City departments and external agencies for their review and comment. The following is a summary of the comments received as of the time of writing this report.

Park and Natural Heritage Planning Section

The City's Park and Natural Heritage Planning (PNHP) Section has reviewed the subject application and has provided comments with respect to parkland dedication (refer to Appendix C). In this regard, staff advise that the development, as currently proposed, generates a parkland dedication requirement of more than 500 square metres of parkland pursuant to the City's in force parkland dedication policies and the Parkland Dedication By-law 132-22. The 2022 Parks Plan contemplates a community park given the lack of parkland in the immediate area. On this basis, PNHP staff advise that the City will be seeking conveyance of a community park as part of the development.

Given the parkland conveyance requirement for this proposed development is larger than the proposed 0.4 hectare (1.0 acre) strata park, PNHP staff are requesting a larger community park block to be conveyed that is similar in size to other community park blocks in the City (i.e. in the range of 0.75 hectares (1.85 acres) in size). PNHP staff further advise that the public park shall be designed to maximize frontage on a public street and community parks specifically shall have frontage on an arterial or collector street. Staff note that the proposed

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park as currently contemplated is to have frontage on an internal private road network with a pedestrian access to Leslie Street via an “open three storey breezeway”. PNHP staff advise the applicant to redesign the park to maximize its frontage onto a public street.

As noted above, the proposed park is to be stratified. PNHP staff note that the Plan stipulates that Council can give consideration to the acceptance of stratified parkland if it can be demonstrated that the public has a reasonably similar level of access to that parkland which typically takes the form of a linear park or urban square. In this regard, PNHP staff advise that the applicant shall consider providing a community park that is not stratified to be conveyed to the City as part of Phase 1 in order to fulfill the parkland dedication obligations.

Development Planning Division

In consideration of the policies of the Plan which are relevant to the evaluation of the proposed development, staff provides the following preliminary comments.

- the subject lands are designated **Employment Corridor** and are specifically located within the City's Beaver Creek Business Park;
- in accordance with **Section 4.8.2** of the Plan, the **Employment Corridor** designation does not permit the proposed high density, mixed-use development;
- the lands have been removed from the **Employment Area** designation of the ROP and are now designated **Community Area** which permits a full range and mix of urban uses which are intended to accommodate a significant portion of planned growth within the Region;
- the lands are located within the boundaries of Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) 14 associated with the Leslie-Highway 7 BRT Station which has a proposed density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare;
- the City is currently undertaking an Official Plan update and through the Council approved Key Directions Report and the implementation of OPA 18.3, the subject lands and the broader area have been identified as a **Local Centre**;
- staff acknowledge that the Highway 7, Leslie Street, and East Beaver Creek Road Block Plan area is being planned for intensification and a range of uses and that the whole area is to be designed and planned comprehensively through the Official Plan update to ensure appropriate services and infrastructure are provided for future development (i.e. parkland, public road networks, etc.);
- further review and analysis is required to determine if the proposed **Key Development Area** designation is more appropriate for the subject lands and broader area, as opposed to the existing **Local Centre** designation;
- the applicant will be required to provide additional community parkland that fronts onto a public street to be conveyed to the City as part of their parkland dedication requirements;
- comments from Transport Canada related to the Toronto/Buttonville Airport Zoning Regulations are critical in determining the allowable heights for the subject lands;
- the applicant must satisfactorily address comments and/or requirements identified by City departments and external agencies that have been requested to review the proposed development. In this regard, it is noted that the application is still under review by a number of City departments and external agencies;

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- staff will continue to review the proposed development to determine the appropriateness of the applicant's request to amend the Official Plan, especially as it relates to the redesignation of the subject lands, and with respect to the proposed the height, density and built form; and,
- future Zoning By-law Amendment, Site Plan and draft Plan of Condominium applications will be required to facilitate the proposed development.

A comprehensive review and evaluation of the subject Official Plan Amendment application will be conducted following the receipt of comments and feedback from City departments, external agencies, Council and the public. This detailed review will be completed in advance of and addressed as part of a recommendation report to be prepared for a future Council meeting.

Other City Department and External Agency Comments

Comments have been received from the City's Financial Services Division, Rogers Communication, Alectra Utilities, Enbridge Gas, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. These departments and external agencies have no objections to the application and/or have provided comments to be considered by the applicant during a more detailed implementation stage of the approval process.

The development proposal is still under review by the City's Development Engineering Division, Urban Design and Heritage Section, Building Services Division – Zoning Section, Fire and Emergency Services Division, the Regional Municipality of York, Transport Canada, Bell Canada, and the City of Markham.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

The recommendation of this report does not have any financial, staffing or other implications.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

The recommendation of this report does not have any direct implications with respect to Council's Strategic Priorities. An overview of how the subject applications are aligned with the Strategic Plan will be included in a future recommendation report to Council following a comprehensive review and evaluation of the applicant's development proposal.

Climate Change Considerations:

The recommendation of this report does not have any direct implications with respect to Council's Climate Change Considerations at this time. An overview of how the subject applications support Council's climate change mitigation and/or adaptation measures to reduce carbon emissions will be included in a future recommendation report to Council following a comprehensive review and evaluation of the applicant's development proposal.

Conclusion:

The applicants are seeking Council's approval to amend the City's Official Plan in order to permit a high density mixed use residential/commercial development on their land holdings.

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The purpose of this report is to provide Council and the public with an overview of the development proposal and to discuss the regulatory regime governing the evaluation of these planning applications. This report has been structured for information purposes only, with a recommendation that all comments be referred back to staff for consideration.

Appendix Contents and Maps:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A, Extract from Council Meeting C#06-20 held February 26, 2020
- Appendix B, Applicant's Draft Official Plan Amendment
- Appendix C, Memo from Park and Natural Heritage Planning, dated April 5, 2023
- Map 1, Aerial Photograph
- Map 2, Existing Official Plan Designation
- Map 3, Existing Zoning
- Map 4, Proposed Master Site Plan
- Map 5, Proposed Massing Model Views (1 of 2)
- Map 6, Proposed Massing Model Views (2 of 2)

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.23.044 - Request for Comments - Official Plan Amendment - 600 and 650 Highway 7 and 9005 Leslie Street.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appendix A.pdf- Appendix B.pdf- Appendix C.pdf- Map 1 - Aerial Photograph.docx- Map 2 - Existing Official Plan Designation.docx- Map 3 - Existing Zoning.docx- Map 4 - Proposed Master Site Plan.docx- Map 5 - Proposed Massing Model Views (1 of 2).docx- Map 6 - Proposed Massing Model Views (2 of 2).docx
Final Approval Date:	Apr 26, 2023

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

Gus Galanis - Apr 26, 2023 - 10:14 AM

Kelvin Kwan - Apr 26, 2023 - 10:18 AM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 26, 2023 - 11:17 AM