

Municipal Address: 600 and 650 Highway 7 East and 9005 Leslie Street

Subject Lands: Part of Block 1, Plan 65M-2287

Landowner: Parkway Hotels & Convention Centre Inc. (650 Hwy 7 East Inc., 9005 Leslie St Inc.)

Dear Honourable Council Members & Ms. Simone,

I am a long-time resident (18 years) of the condominiums (9015/9017 Leslie Street) adjacent to the above-mentioned subject lands, and I am writing to you today to voice my objection to the above-mentioned development application to amend the Official Plan.

I have lived in the Richmond Hill and Markham areas for over 37 years, of which 24 years have been along the Highway 7 corridor, and can therefore attest to the increasingly deplorable traffic conditions prior to, during and after various condominium developments along Highway 7 between Bayview Ave in the West (Richmond Hill) to McCowen Road in the East (Markham), as well as before, during and after the completion of York Region's VIVA transit system operating along Highway 7.

In addition to the list of issues already outlined in the letter from our 9015/9017 Board of Directors, I would also like to draw your attention to the following:

1. Major construction in such close proximity as the one proposed will result in **many years of severe air, dirt, and noise pollution**, thereby severely affecting 9015/9017 residents' physical and mental health.

For example:

- diesel engines in construction machinery releases carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons will have long-term effects on our lungs,
- cement/concrete making emits sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide will have long-term effects on our lungs and respiratory systems,
- dust pollution from debris, rubble, wooden dust, silica dust, and other toxic fibers will have long-term effects on our lungs, respiratory systems, and eyes,
- daily exposure to construction noise (80-90 dBA) will have long-term effects on our hearing and can also cause increased blood pressure, and
- noxious vapours from the immense amounts of oils, glues, thinners, paints, treated wood, plastics, cleaners, and other hazardous chemicals that will be used will also have long-term effects on our lungs and respiratory systems.

Not to mention, the sudden notice in late March from the City of Richmond Hill of the above-mentioned development application to amend the Official Plan, and the Council Public Meeting on May 16, 2023, being the only public consultation meeting before Council decides to approve / deny the amendment, health concerns have already begun as this has been a major stressor for all residents since receiving the notice.

2. With many years of **intrusive construction vibration and noise** from demolition of existing structures, excavation of 6 levels of underground parking, constructing loads of foundations, to building out the 9 towers will not only severely impact human health and safety, but it will

also affect the foundational stability and integrity of the 9015/9017 buildings and the City of Richmond Hill building due to its proximity.

3. With nine 35+ to 40+ storey towers in such close proximity, two of which are connected with the largest footprint is only 17m south of the 9015 condominium building, and one tower sandwiched between the City of Richmond Hill building and the 9015 condominium building, will not only blanket 9015/9017 residents (particularly the east & south sides) as well as the City of Richmond Hill (west side) with a great concrete wall, blocking natural airflow, daylight, view of the sky and view of green space, but it will also intrude on our privacy forcing us to keep our window coverings closed 24/7. This will rob us of our right to privacy, peaceful living, and enjoyment.
4. According to the Master Concept Plan, page 30 (inserted below), there will be only **one large garbage area consolidating garbage from 9 towers**. The width span of this garbage & main loading area appears to be over 30m and is wider than the south end of the 9015-condominium building. Despite being on the lower ground floor level, the ventilated **odour of decaying garbage** (between City garbage pickups) from the 9 towers (3460 dwelling units) **concentrated in one area** will be extremely unbearable and present physiological and psychological stress to 9015/9017 residents, especially to those residing on the southside of the 9015-condominium building only 17m away.

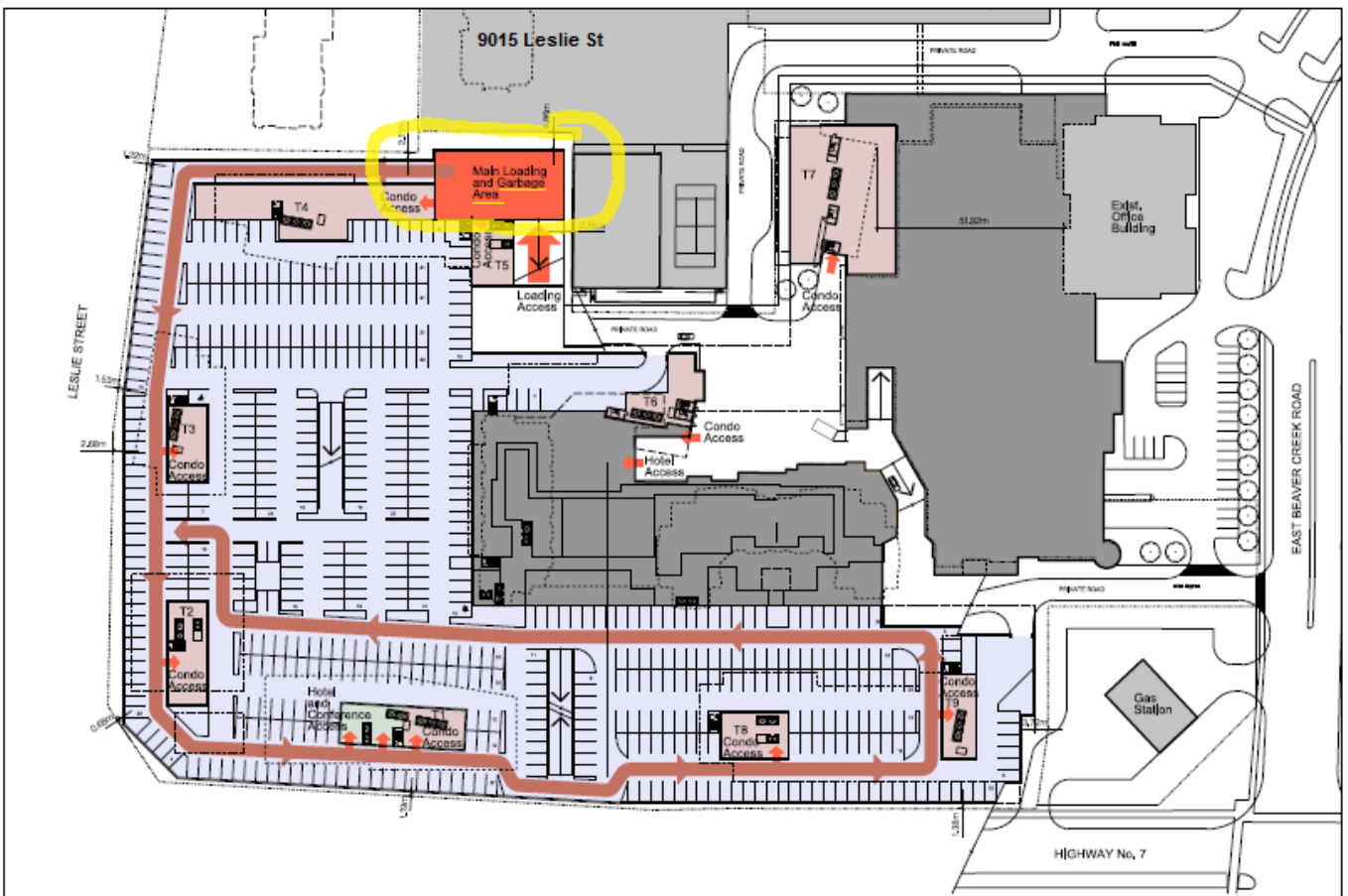


Figure 15: Lower Ground Service and Access Diagram

5. Surprisingly, a development of such large scale does not require an Environmental Assessment to be submitted, and submission requirements such as Functional Servicing Report, Noise Report, Construction Management Plan, Traffic Control & Mitigation Plan, Arborist Report, etc. were also not required to be submitted with the Official Plan Amendment application for the City's review prior to Council approval.

Why are landowners / developers exempted from demonstrating how they plan to mitigate crucial environmental factors such as air, noise, light, dirt, water, and soil pollution, and even wildlife migration paths, until after they have received approvals for the amendment to proceed with their proposed development plan? It is unbelievable that these vital factors which are just as important as proposed density, overall heights, and layout plans, are not assessed and evaluated as part of the submission process of the Official Plan Amendment application prior to Council deciding.

6. In many areas along Highway 7 in Richmond Hill (and in Markham), what was once green space have turned into concrete jungles of high-rises. We do not need another dense concrete development at one of the busiest junctions and core artery (Highway 7 & Highway 404) of the Region. What we do need is more public green space – not another 4291 vehicles polluting gas emissions affecting human health and our living environment.

Furthermore, this development plan is in direct contradiction to **SRPRS.20.003** –York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (Part 1): Requests for Employment Area Conversions, document dated Feb 26, 2020, Part 1: Evaluation of Private Landowner Employment Conversion Requests using York Region Conversion Criteria, with pass/fail scoring, pages 40-44, **ID #111**, for which they **failed a number of criteria**, including **criteria #13** - **"The proposed site is not visible from or adjacent to 400-series highways, or is not located in proximity to existing or planned highways and interchanges, intermodal facilities, airports and does not have access to rail corridors."**

Was the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) consulted given its proximity to Highway 404? Is this development not subject to MTO guidelines?

7. Although the **Transportation Impact Study** dated March 1, 2023, presents good points for parking demand management, incentive programs and benefits to support the **decrease of parking spaces from 4601 to 4291**, at the end of the day, it will still be **adding an additional 4291 vehicles to our surrounding roadways**.

Despite the analysis in the Transportation Impact Study, it is an obvious fact for those who travel in this area that traffic conditions are already very congested along Highway 7, Leslie Street, East Beaver Creek Road (Commerce Valley Dr.), and East Pearce St (Norman Bethune Ave), especially during rush hours. With 3460 new dwellings and 4291 available parking spaces, that is adding an extremely large amount of vehicular traffic to our surrounding streets every day – this is not sustainable.

Furthermore, please note the following issues:

- a) Page 9, Section 2.5 - **Traffic data collection was conducted on Thursday November 17, 2022**. Remembrance Day was on November 11, 2022, and is a federal holiday for public services. Thus, the collected traffic data may not be a true representation of the regular traffic flow, as public service employees often use the opportunity to take vacation when there are overlapping federal or statutory holidays. The City of Richmond

Hill as well as the City of Markham offices are both located on Highway 7, and thus the traffic flow may have been less than normal on the date of data collection.

- b) Page 10, The traffic volumes shown appears to be missing westbound data on Hwy 7 between Leslie St & Commerce Valley Dr (East Beaver Creek Road), as well as missing northbound data on Leslie St between Hwy 7 & Private driveway (to the north). Table 2-2 on page 11 also appears to be missing some data sets, for example for Item #9 - Hwy 7 & Leslie St (signalized) is missing EBR and WBR data sets.
- c) Pages 14-15, Section 3.0 - Future Background Traffic Conditions shows the **post full build-out (2028) 5-years (2033) and 10-years (2038)** growth rates per annum (Table 3-1) with "The future background conditions **include** the summation of existing traffic volumes, corridor growth **due to new developments within broader area, and site traffic volumes generated from other new developments within the surrounding area**".

Table 3-1 indicates the **Highway 7 corridor to be only 0.7%** growth rate per annum as compared to 1.0% - 1.2% growth rate in the other 3 corridors (with 1% per annum to be a conservative number). These forecasts do not appear to have taken surrounding area developments into consideration, such as:

- The 243 acres **Downtown Markham Development project** currently underway, 5km east of us (on Highway 7 between Warden Ave and Kennedy Road) will have 10,000+ residents at full build out, plus daily non-resident commuters to/from 3.7 million+ sq. ft. of offices and 2.2 million+ sq. ft. of retail shops.
- **Pavilia Towers**, 2km west of us (on Highway 7 between Leslie St and Bayview Ave) will have a total of 768 dwelling units when the 2nd tower is completed in Q4 of this year (2023)

For example, on pages 10-32, Eastbound traffic data on Highway 7 between Leslie St & Commerce Valley Dr. (East Beaver Creek Road) are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>(PM)</u>	<u>AM</u>
2022	(1625)	1524
2028	(1689)	1584 = increase of (64) 60 vehicles in 6 years (full build-out)
2033	(1746)	1637 = increase of (121) 113 vehicles in 11 years
2038	(1804)	1692 = increase of (179) 168 vehicles in 16 years

An **increase of (64-179) vehicles in the PM** rush hours and **60-168 vehicles in the AM** rush hours along Highway 7 between Leslie St & Commerce Valley Dr. (East Beaver Creek Road) within the **next 16 years** appears grossly understated and misleading given the scale of some of the development projects mentioned in c) above. Assuming only 5% of the 10,000 Downtown Markham residents travel through this intersection during rush hours daily, that alone is already an addition of 500 vehicles on Highway 7 between Leslie St & Commerce Valley Dr. (East Beaver Creek Road).

Having lived and commuted through these intersections during rush hours for over 24 years, and seeing all the new developments that are taking place in the surrounding areas, I find the analysis of traffic volumes, growth rates, etc. shown in this report to be extremely low, uninformed, and misleading. Was York Region consulted, with regards to corridor growth along Highway 7 & Leslie Street?

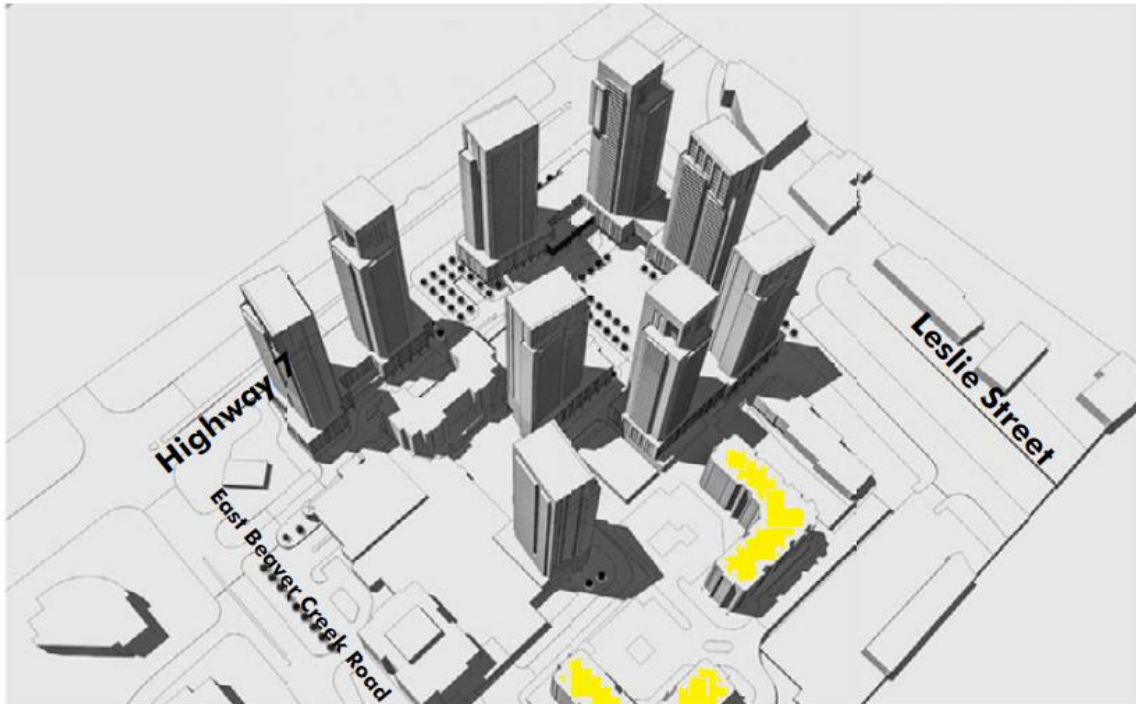
8. The Transportation Impact Study, Section 6.4.4, page 56 speaks of the **Covid-19 pandemic** and the continued work from home situation. It reads “...since the lockdown in March 2020, the City experienced a **significant decrease in peak hour travel on both private vehicles and other trips in general... This trend has continued into February 2023, at the time of the preparation of this Study.**” This statement evidently confirms that the traffic data collected, analyzed, and presented in the report is **clearly underestimated**.

Furthermore, the statement “Based on various reporting from the media, this working from home trend for office workers may continue even when the pandemic is over as both employees and employers have invested significantly in remote working equipment and infrastructures...” to suggest insignificant increases to existing traffic rates is misleading and uninformed.

For many medium/large size organizations, the money spent on office infrastructure and multi-year office space leases far exceed the amount used to facilitate working from home. Employers are progressively requiring employees to return to work at the office, albeit allowing some flexibility for hybrid work arrangements. Thus, the peak hour travels will progressively increase back to pre-pandemic levels eventually. Which again, despite the report trying to reduce the impact of this development, 3460 new dwellings and 4291 parking spaces will have a significant impact on our surrounding roadways and on our health.

9. The Transportation Impact Study suggests that limiting the number of available parking spaces will **encourage residents to not own cars and use public transit, walk, or cycle**. Although an idyllic way of sustainable living, the reality is buyers who can afford to purchase these condominiums (likely in the \$1M+ range) and who have a valid driver's license, will undoubtedly own at least one vehicle and therefore add to the traffic congestion already rampant in the surrounding roadways. It is unreasonable to assume future residents will give up vehicle ownership anywhere outside of the Toronto downtown core in lieu of using the public transit systems, to get to work (employment, medical appointments, etc.), to shop (groceries, retail, etc.) and to play (vacation, visiting people, etc.).
10. The 35+ storey towers will pose a safety risk for planes flying out of the nearby Buttonville airport as I have witnessed many times planes flying overhead and come within very close distances to our buildings. I would be surprised if Transport Canada does not have any concerns with the plan.
11. Aesthetically, the proposed nine 35+ storey towers stick out like a sore thumb (literally and materially as shown in the bird's eye view and massing model views inserted below).
Note: The 9015/9017 condominium buildings (13-storeys) have been highlighted in yellow.

The Master Concept Plan on page 19, speaks of the transition / relationship to existing context, and alludes to consistent form with its surrounding by matching the height of the new tower podiums with the shortest section of the existing hotel's height (6-storeys). Contrary to this illusion, the Master Concept Plan was clearly designed in silo, with no consideration of the surrounding areas outside of its boundaries (i.e., 9015/9017 buildings, City of Richmond Hill building). It was obviously designed to maximize land occupancy and profit margins. The Master Concept Plan clearly does not fit consistently within the fabric of the existing landscape, environment, adjacent buildings, and neighbourhood.



Birdseye view from north-west



VIEW From WEST

Lastly, on page 65 of the Transportation Impact Study, it suggests using incentive programs to **“Decrease traffic congestion and improve air quality and health by reducing vehicle emissions.”** That is a contradictory statement - since the best way to do this is to **not add to the problem to begin with!**

As a final note, due to language barriers as a large percentage of 9015/9017 residents are not native English speakers, both 9015/9017 Leslie Street Board of Directors have already submitted written correspondence on behalf of all residents. We are all concerned and oppose the development plans, and we trust that as responsible council members and public servants, you will do your due diligence to consider the well being of existing residents in 9015-9017 Leslie Street buildings and the surrounding area residents and businesses, over the financial gains and benefits of the developer/landowner.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Betty Leung

CC: City Planner: Simone Fiore – Senior Planner – Site Plans (simone.fiore@richmondhill.ca)