

June 20, 2023

Mayor and Members of Council
City of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill

via email: clerks@richmondhill.ca

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

**RE: Official Plan Amendment 18.8 Oak Ridges Local Centre (City File MOPA-23-0003)
Yonge and Bloomington Ltd.
13723 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. (“MGP”) is the land use planner to Yonge and Bloomington Ltd., the owner of the lands at the southeast corner of Yonge Street and Bloomington Road, known municipally as 13723 Yonge Street (“Subject Lands”). The Subject Lands are 2.64 hectares (6.5 acres) in size and have frontage on Yonge Street and Bloomington Road. By way of background, the City approved Official Plan Amendment No. 273 in July 2012 which applies to the property in its entirety to permit a 9,011.6 sq. m commercial plaza on the Subject Lands.

We have reviewed the City’s draft Official Plan Amendment 18.8 for the Oak Ridges Local Centre (the “Draft OPA”). This letter provides our initial high-level comments and concerns with the Draft OPA however we continue to review the document and may provide additional comments shortly.

Firstly, we are supportive of expanding the Oak Ridges Local Centre to include the Subject Lands. However, the Draft OPA proposes to include only the Yonge Street portion of the Subject Lands in the Local Centre designation. The staff report notes that boundary expansions are not proposed within the City’s Greenway System and intensification is directed outside of and away from hazard lands. The Subject Lands do not include any Greenway System or Hazard Lands. As such, we believe it is appropriate and good planning to designate the entirety of the Subject Lands as Local Centre.

Secondly, the staff report and Draft OPA speaks to creating a gateway at the Yonge and Bloomington intersection through the inclusion of a new policy (4.3.2.2.2) that states:

“Development shall provide opportunities for the establishment of a gateway focal point through a combination of architectural design, signage, landscaping, and/or public art, at the intersection of Yonge Street and Bloomington Road, that celebrates the identity and character of the community of Oak Ridges as one that values its local environment, and also functions as an entrance to the City”.

Furthermore, we note that the Draft OPA proposes to establish a minimum building height of 2 storeys to a maximum of 6 storeys and a maximum density of 2.0 Floor Space Index. Given the Subject Lands location at an identified gateway intersection, it is our opinion that the lands should be differentiated from those in the surrounding area through a modest increase in building heights and density to permit buildings up to 12 storeys and a density of 4.25 floor space index for the 2.5 acres at the corner of Yonge Street and Bloomington and 8 storeys and 2.75 floor space index for the balance of the Subject Lands. Limiting the height to 6 storeys will not facilitate nor deliver much needed housing supported by the Province, particularly adjacent to higher order transit, being the VIVA Bus Rapid way on Yonge Street, together with the close proximity to the newly construction GO train station at Bloomington Road and Highway 404 and will seek to hinder the deserved gateway prominence of the intersection. The density targets in this strategic growth area should be more permissive and in line with the communities growing need for intensification of housing within the City.

In addition, we understand that policy modifications are proposed that would require a minimum two storey building heights and furthermore that heights be guided by a 45-degree angular plane. We understand that the intent of the Draft OPA is to create a “modern main street” and 1 storey commercial plazas would not meet this intent. OPA 273 was approved for the Subject Lands to permit a commercial plaza up to 9,011 sq.m largely concentrated on the eastern portion of the Subject Lands. Therefore, we request that the policy be modified to permit single storey building heights for the Subject Land.

The Draft OPA continues to rely on angular plane as an appropriate measure to minimize impacts on adjacent residential communities. It should be noted that the City of Toronto has recently instituted policy changes to relax its application of the 45-degree angular plane. In lieu of the angular plane, Toronto is imploring building step backs to provide appropriate transition to neighbourhoods to avoid the resulting accordion building design adjacent to neighbourhoods. It is our position that the City should follow suit and move away from the application of angular plane to allow for the more efficient use of lands while providing appropriate transition to existing neighbourhoods.

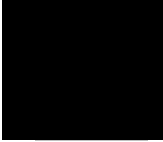
Lastly, proposed Schedule F2 proposes a planned collector street with a note stating that the alignment is to be confirmed. This proposed collector street appears to run in a north south direction before turning east and running in an east-west direction along a portion of the south property line and presumably connecting to Bloomington Road through a north-south road. It is not clear where this road is being proposed. However, in any event, we have not been provided with any background information to support the need for a new collector road through the Subject Lands. Furthermore, if a collector road is required, we request that the north-south portion of the road to Bloomington be shared equally among any adjoining landowners. It is not appropriate to put the east-west portion of the road on the Subject lands as there is an existing right of way abutting the southern property line of the Subject lands, being utilized for services, which in our opinion, is the appropriate location for a future roadway.

Conclusion

On behalf of our client, we appreciate the opportunity to provide initial comments on the Oak Ridges Centre Draft OPA and reserve the right to provide more detailed comments as

the process continues. We kindly request to be notified of any future public or Council meetings regarding this process and look forward to working with the City. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours very truly,
Malone Given Parsons Ltd.



Lauren Capilongo, MCIP, RPP

cc: Yonge and Bloomington Ltd.