

June 15, 2023  
File No. 21-45

City of Richmond Hill  
Office of the Clerk  
225 East Beaver Creek Road  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

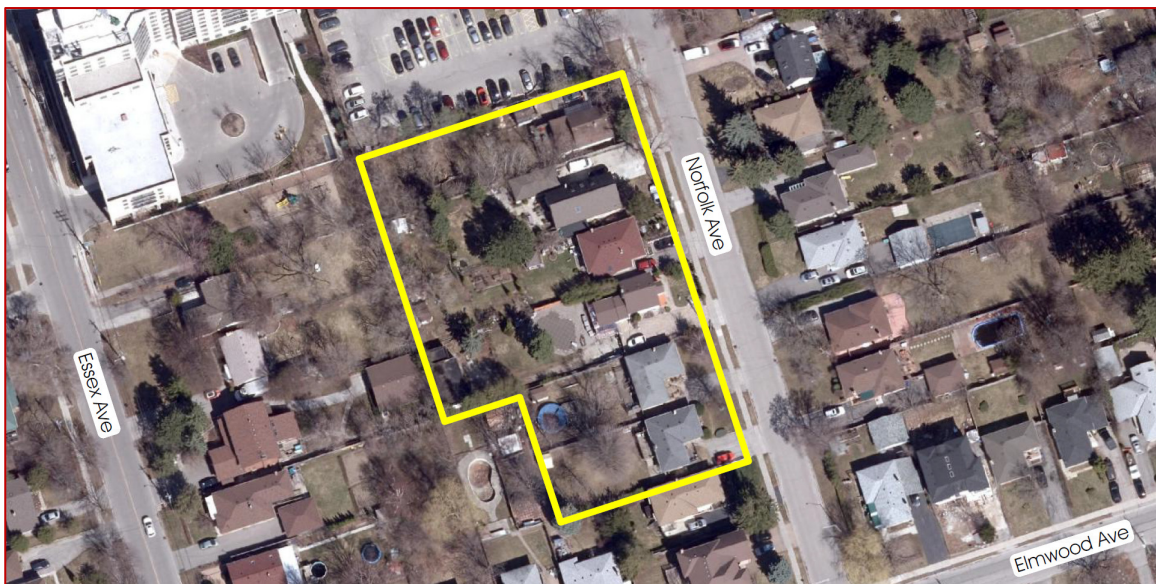
**Reference: Norfolk Developments Inc.  
162 -182 Norfolk Ave  
Official Plan Amendment 18.7 – Policy Modification Request**

Groundswell Urban Planners Inc. has been retained by Norfolk Developments Inc. (the “client”) to submit the following request for modifications to the proposed Draft Official Plan Amendment 18.7 for the lands municipally known as 162, 166, 170, 174, 178, and 182 Norfolk Ave (the “Subject Land”). These modifications to the Draft Official Plan Amendment include the following:

1. That Schedule G1 be revised to permit a maximum FSI of 5.4 for the Subject Land;
2. That a maximum base building height of 6 storeys be permitted for the Subject Land;
3. That a maximum high-rise building height of 16 storeys be permitted for the Subject Land.

**Subject Land**

As presented on Figure 1 below, the Subject Land is located east of Norfolk Ave, and south of Major Mackenzie Dr E. It has an area of 1.36 acres (0.5494 hectares) and consists of existing one-storey detached dwellings.



95 MURAL STREET, SUITE 402  
RICHMOND HILL, ON L4B 3G2  
(905) 597-8204  
www.groundswellplan.com

**Figure 1 – Site Aerial**

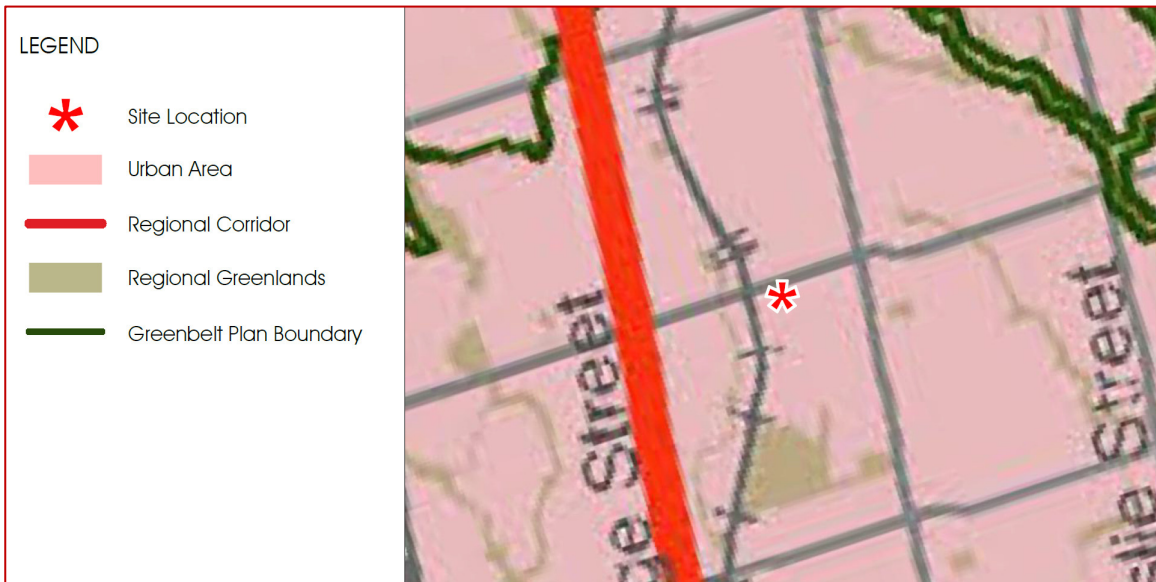


**Figure 2 – Site Context**

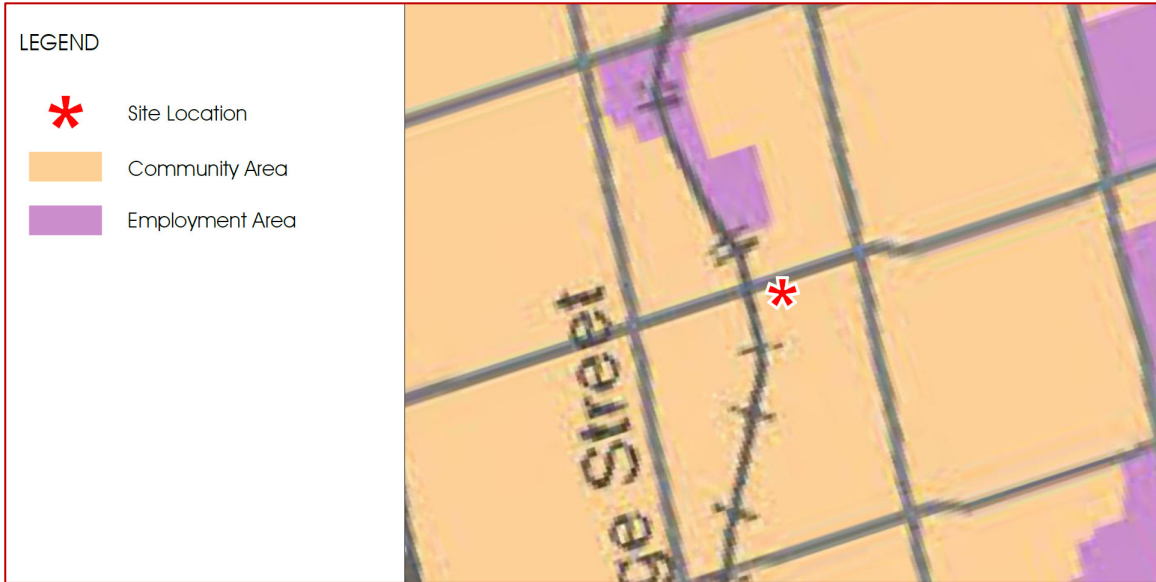
The surrounding areas to the east, west and south of the site feature existing low rise residential uses. Located approximately 152m to the north-west of the subject land is the Richmond Hill GO station. To the north lies employment, commercial and high rise residential uses.

**York Region Official Plan (2022)**

The York Region Official Plan designates the subject land as ‘Urban Area’ under Map 1 and ‘Community Area’ under Map 1A (Figure 3 and 4).



**Figure 3 – Map 1 Regional Structure**

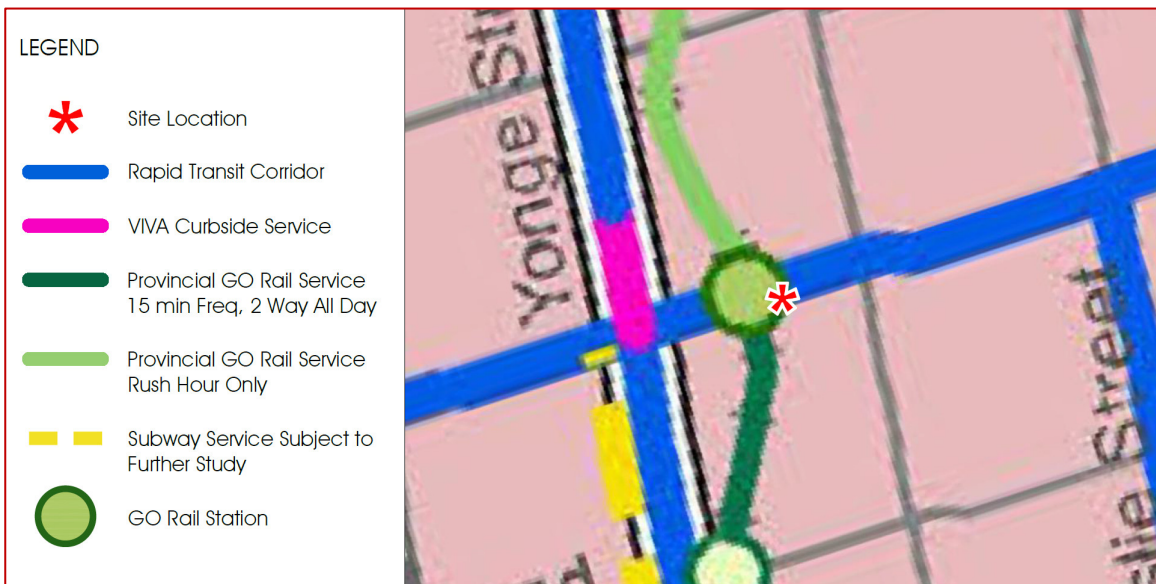


**Figure 4 – Map 1A Land Use Designations**

Community Areas are intended to contain a wide range and mix of housing types, sizes, tenures that include options that are affordable to residents at all stages of life.

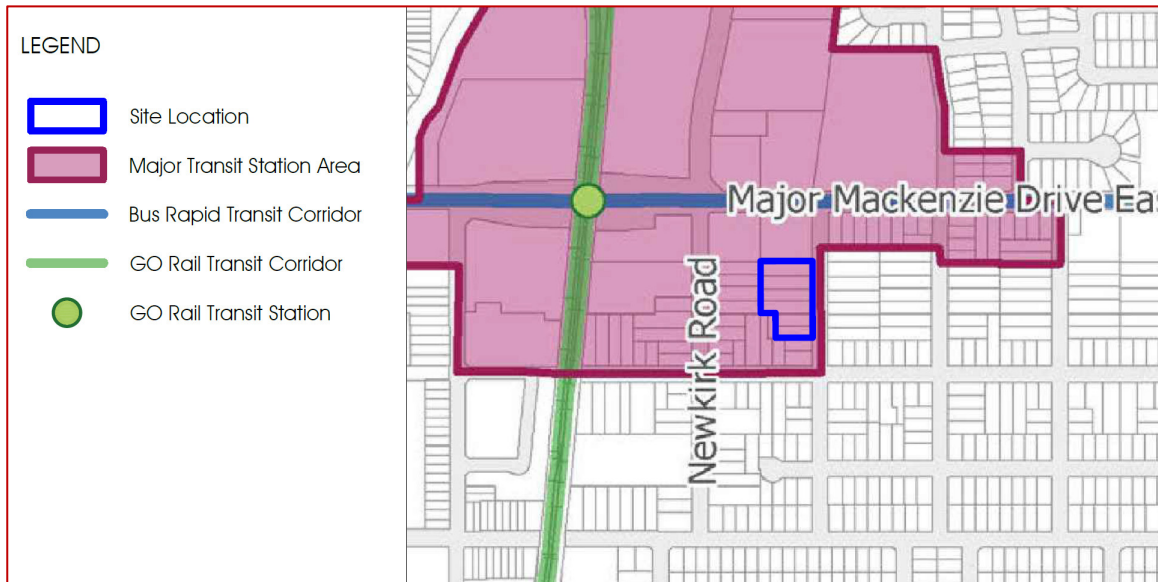
The Region’s Official Plan outlines that strategic growth areas consist of Regional Centres, subway stations, major transit station areas, Regional Corridors, and local Centres and Corridors.

This plan states that development within strategic growth areas shall be prioritized along existing rapid transit corridors on Map 10 and in locations with existing water and wastewater capacity (Figure 5).



**Figure 5 – Map 10 Rapid Transit Network**

The subject lands are located within the Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) of the Richmond Hill GO Station, as shown on Figure 6 below.



**Figure 6 – PMTSA 50 Richmond Hill GO Station**

The subject land and surrounding area are located within a higher order transit area, specifically along a Rapid Transit Corridor within the Richmond Hill GO PMTSA which is intended to achieve more intensive and mixed-use land development supported by public transit services. The subject land is located within an area that can support higher density development that meets the criteria for intensification and represents an adequate opportunity to utilize existing transit and infrastructure.

### **City of Richmond Hill Official Plan (2023 Consolidation)**

The City of Richmond Hill's Official Plan Schedule A2 (Figure 7), designates the subject land as 'Local Development Area', along with abutting lands to the north, south and west designated same. Surrounding designations include 'Neighbourhood' to the east and further south, 'Employment Corridor' and 'Employment Area' to the north, and 'Local Development Area' to the west. The subject site is also located right outside the designated 'Local Centre' shown in Figure 8.



**Figure 7 – Schedule A2 Land Use**



**Figure 8 – Schedule A1 City Structure**

Policy 4.5 of the City’s Official Plan, describes Local Development Areas (LDAs) as ‘areas where a cluster of land uses or public transit services interact with a Local Corridor providing a local destination.’ LDAs will promote various intensification scales that will be less than ‘Key Development Areas (KDAs)’ and ‘Regional Corridors’, but more than ‘Local Corridors’. There are three (3) LDAs along Major Mackenzie Dr, where the subject lands are located within the Newkirk LDA. The Newkirk LDA will focus on the intensification of employment and residential uses, and pedestrian-oriented access to transit.

High density residential is permitted on lands within the LDA designation. For the Newkirk LDA, the permitted maximum density of a development block is 2.0 FSI. An additional 0.5 FSI may be permitted if office, commercial or retail uses are provided in mixed-use developments.

The maximum building height within the Newkirk LDA is 15 storeys, while the maximum base building height is 4 storeys. However, it should be noted that policy 4.5.10 states that “development abutting the Neighbourhood designations shall have a maximum height of 3 storeys except where it abuts existing mid-rise or high-rise residential buildings in the Neighbourhood designation...”.

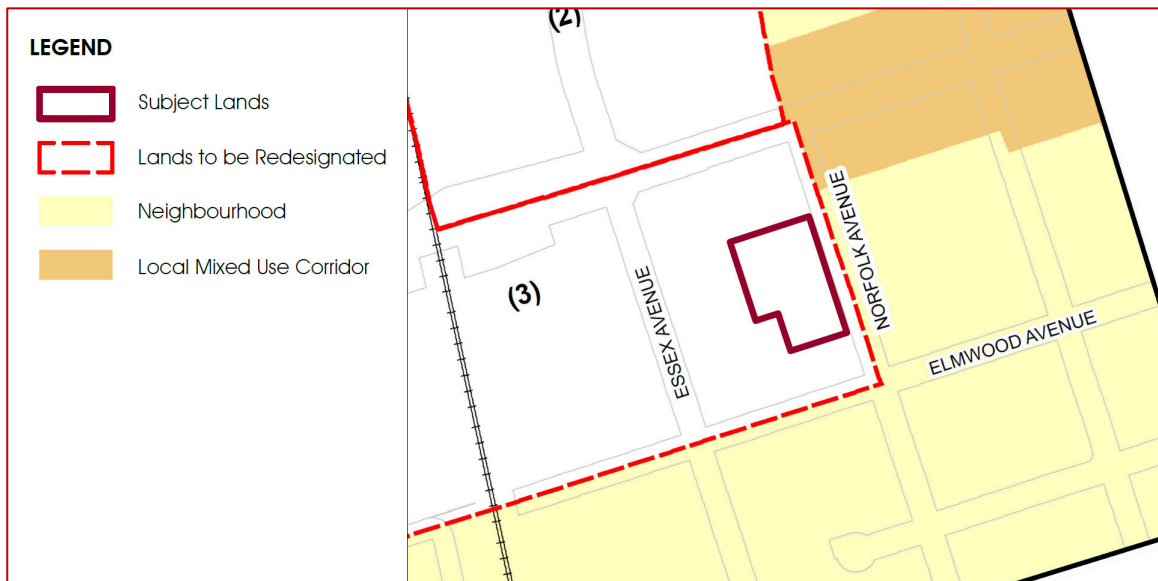
The City’s intensification hierarchy is presented on Figure 9 below.



**Figure 9 – Richmond Hill Intensification Hierarchy**

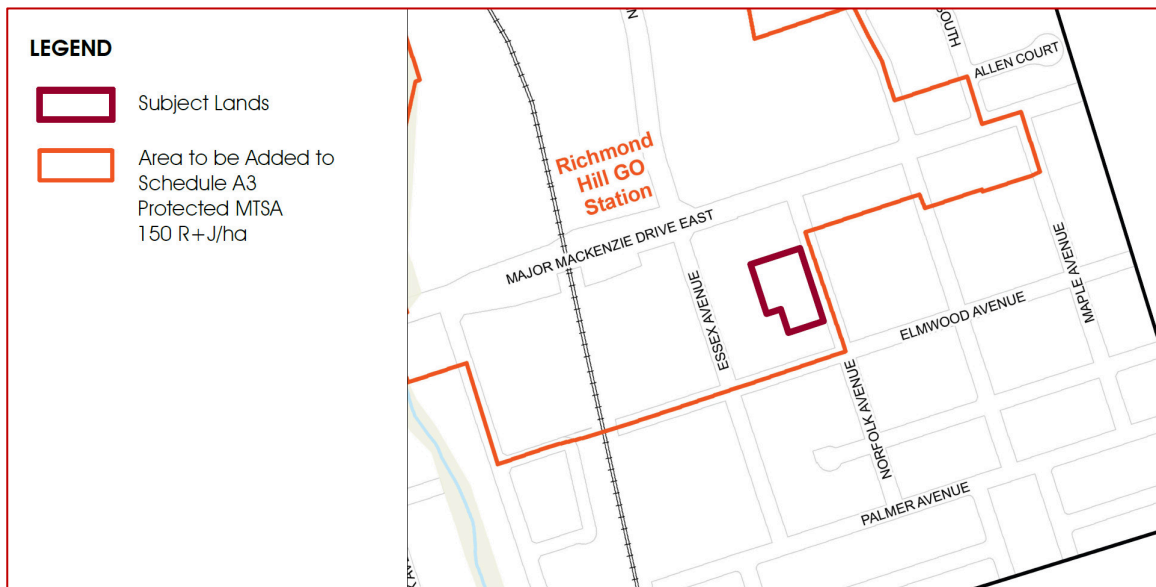
**City of Richmond Hill Draft OPA 18.7**

The City of Richmond Hill is currently in the process of updating their Official Plan. In the Draft OPA 18.7, Schedule A2 of the current Official Plan is being amended to define the Newkirk Local Centre boundary that is demonstrated in Schedule 1 (Figure 10).



**Figure 10 – Schedule 1**

The subject land is to be redesignated from 'Local Development Area' to 'Local Centre'. This amendment comes from the York Region Official Plan (2022) which identifies the Newkirk Local Centre to be within a protected major transit station area (PMTSA). Properties within this redesignated area will require a minimum density target of 150 resident and jobs per hectare (shown on Figure 11).



**Figure 11 – Schedule 2**

York Region uses PMTSAs to assist in the intensification of land. This intensification supports existing and planned transit infrastructure, increases housing types, and can promote a more walkable city. The prioritization of these developments helps to create complete communities.

The redesignation of the subject land from LDA to Local Centre, means that it is now further prioritised on the City’s intensification hierarchy. The vision for the Newkirk Local Centre is to develop an affordable, mixed-used, livable, and transit-oriented community.

According to policy 3.1.3.6 of the current Official Plan, development within these areas shall “accommodate the highest densities and widest range of uses within the City...”. Figure 12 of Draft OP Schedule G1, presents the proposed maximum FSI.



**Figure 12 – Schedule G1**

The majority of the subject land is proposed to have a maximum FSI of 1.75, while the southern portion has a maximum FSI of 1.5.

New policies have been proposed in the Draft OPA such as Policy 4.3.3.2 which permits the use of high density residential. Policy 4.3.3.1.b describes that the Southern Character Area, where the subject land is located, “*shall be a predominantly low-rise and mid-rise residential area, functioning as a transitional area towards the existing low-rise residential neighbourhoods to the south and east of the Newkirk Local Centre.*”

Policy 4.3.3.1.12 outlines the permissible development heights:

- A minimum building height of 3 storeys;
- A maximum street wall height, after which a step back for the remaining storey(s) is required, as follows:
  - i. 3 storeys for development that abuts the Neighbourhood designation; or
  - ii. 4 storeys, in all other areas;
- A maximum base building height of 4 storeys for high-rise buildings;
- In the Southern Character Area, a maximum mid-rise building height of 10 storeys;
- A maximum of 4 storeys where abutting low-density residential development within the Neighbourhood designation; and
- In accordance with the angular plane policy 3.4.1(55) of this Plan, building heights may progressively increase away from lands within the Neighbourhood designation.

These new policies are to assist in increasing density in the area surrounding the Richmond Hill GO station. However, while the designation of the subject land is higher on the intensification hierarchy, the new policies in the Draft OPA do not reflect this intensification. In the current Official Plan, lands within the LDA designation have a maximum FSI of 2.0 and a maximum height of 15 storeys, or a maximum height of 3 storeys where the development abuts a Neighbourhood designation. In the Draft OPA, the maximum FSI is 1.75 for where the subject land is located. The maximum height is 10 storeys, or 4 storeys if abutting low-density residential development.



Providing for a maximum building height of 16 storeys and a maximum FSI of 5.4 for the subject land will allow for appropriate opportunities for intensification within the area and will help achieve the Provincial and Regional goals for enhancing the urban system and creating complete communities that accommodate the varying needs of residents through the provision of diversity in housing options.

## **Conclusion**

We respectfully request that through the City's Official Plan update, the proposed policies of OPA 18.7 for the Newkirk Local Centre be revised to permit a maximum base height of 6 storeys, and a maximum height of 16 storeys for the southern character area inclusive of the subject lands.

Furthermore, we request that the policies of the OPA including Schedule G1 be revised to increase the permitted maximum FSI for the southern character area, including permitting a maximum 5.4 FSI for the subject land.

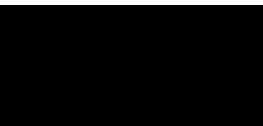
As outlined above, the subject lands are within the limits of the PMTSA of the Richmond Hill GO Station and adjacent to the rapid transit corridor of Major Mackenzie Drive, promoting their connectivity through affordable mass transit options. The request for revisions to the proposed heights and densities for the subject lands, seeks to establish land use permissions that support the opportunity to provide contextually appropriate intensification and revitalisation for lands that are connected to existing transit infrastructure.

The proposed increased maximum heights and densities supports the Provincial objectives and mandates which seek to improve the supply of housing, by promoting the opportunities to provide a greater number of residential units and greater diversity in unit types and sizes, to accommodate the varying needs of people at all stages in life. Permitting more density around major transit stations and along transit networks encourages greater usage of these existing infrastructure investments, promotes increased ridership, and reduced vehicle dependency.

Thank you for your consideration of the request for the subject land, we look forward to your comments and are pleased to respond to any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

**GROUNDSWELL URBAN PLANNERS INC.**



**Brad Rogers, MCIP, RPP**  
**Principal Planner, President**  
[brad@groundswellplan.com](mailto:brad@groundswellplan.com)

95 MURAL STREET, SUITE 402  
RICHMOND HILL, ON L4B 3G2  
(905) 597-8204  
[www.groundswellplan.com](http://www.groundswellplan.com)