



July 20, 2023

Chun Chu, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planning, Planning Policy
City of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek Road
Richmond Hill, ON, L4B 3P4

Via email: chun.chu@richmondhill.ca

Dear Ms. Chu:

**RE: AMENDMENT 18.5 TO THE RICHMOND HILL OFFICIAL PLAN, YONGE STREET AND CARRVILLE/16TH AVENUE KEY DEVELOPMENT AREA COMMENTS
HILLCREST MALL, 9350 YONGE STREET, RICHMOND HILL
OUR FILE: 1607Z**

On behalf of our client, Hillcrest Property Holdings Inc. and Montez Core Income Fund Limited Partnership, (the 'Owner'), we are pleased to provide the following comments on the proposed changes to the City of Richmond Hill Official Plan Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Key Development Area policies (OPA 18.5).

Hillcrest Mall, 9350 Yonge Street (the 'Subject Lands') has been subject to an Official Plan Amendment Application (D01-20009), a Zoning By-law Amendment Application (D02-20018), and most recently a Site Plan Application (D06-21055). Applications D01-20009 and D02-20018 were appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) on March 23, 2022. On February 22, 2023, Council adopted staffs recommendation to support the revised Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment, subject to conditions. We continue to engage with City staff regarding the proposed development as it relates to POPS, private roadway and urban design matters.

We provide the following comments on the proposed changes to Official Plan Amendment 18.5 – Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area:

OP (2023 Consolidation)	OPA 18.5 Changes	Comment
<p>4.4.1 Land Use</p> <p>4. It is a long-term objective of this Plan that <i>intensification</i> of existing <i>major retail</i> uses occur through redevelopment into a more compact built form. New <i>major retail development</i> shall be permitted in the Key Development Areas only where it can be demonstrated that the use is to be integrated into the base of buildings as part of mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Expansions to Hillcrest Mall in the Yonge Street and 16th Avenue KDA shall be encouraged to integrate new <i>development</i> in a mixed-use format.</p>	<p>[No change, renumbered to 4.4.1(3)]</p>	<p>'Major Retail Development' is not a defined term, however 'Development', 'Major Development', and 'Major Retail' are. These defined terms have conflicting size thresholds, so we would recommend 'Major Retail Development' be defined or follow existing defined terms per the Official Plan to provide clarity.</p>
<p>4.4.2 Design: Walkable Streets and People Places</p> <p>2. Within the Key Development Areas, parking for new <i>major retail development</i> shall be required to locate below grade or in structured parking integrated at the rear or side of a building.</p>	<p>[Policy (2), no change, renumbered to 4.4.3 Yonge Street and Bernard Avenue Key Development Area, as policy (2)]</p>	<p>'Major Retail Development' is not a defined term, however 'Development' and 'Major Development' are. Please provide a definition for Major Retail Development.</p> <p>Consideration should be provided to existing uses, allowing for the reconfiguration of surface parking.</p>

	<p>4.4.2.1 MIX OF LAND USE</p> <p>It is the policy of Council that:</p> <p>To achieve the City’s economic development objectives and to best leverage transit investment, it is important for this KDA to support both residents and jobs at a ratio of 7 residents to 3 jobs within the KDA, through the implementation of the following policies.</p>	<p>A ratio of 7 residents to 3 jobs is a very specific target and we would request the City provide details on how it derived this exact ratio. The Yonge/Bernard KDA provided aspirational targets over the entire KDA (i.e. 4,000 residents and 1,300 jobs). We would suggest similar aspirational targets over the entire KDA be provided versus a specific ratio as is provided. The Hillcrest Mall already provides hundreds of jobs, and any new development proposed should consider the existing employment.</p>
	<p>2. As the Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Avenue KDA redevelops over time, the proportion of gross floor area associated with <i>commercial, retail, office, major office,</i> or community uses shall retain a minimum of 15% of the overall total gross floor area in the KDA. Accordingly, the following policies apply in the KDA:</p> <p>a. <i>Development</i> on lands with existing <i>retail, commercial</i> or <i>office</i> uses shall maintain or increase the existing amount of <i>gross leasable floor area</i> devoted to <i>retail, commercial</i> or <i>office</i> uses to enhance and support the existing retail, commercial and office focus of the area.</p>	<p>This policy does not contemplate renovations or deductions to the existing mall space. It simply notes that any development is anticipated to maintain or increase the amount of gross leasable floor area devoted to retail, commercial or office. We would recommend flexibility be permitted to ensure the overall commercial function, but still allow for variations in the gross floor area should the need arise that there would be a slight loss due to changes in tenancies or right-sizing of retail units. A simple amendment to the policy could replace ‘shall’ with ‘should’ to denote the policy intent, but still allow flexibility.</p>

	<p>b. To activate at-grade street frontages, <i>development</i> shall provide <i>commercial, retail</i>, or community uses at grade along arterial, collector, and local streets as shown on Schedule C2 (Public Realm).</p>	<p>This policy should be revised to recognize the need for lobby space, utilities, services, etc. In some cases, development will be bounded on all sides by roads, so there should be a priority identified so that lobby space, utilities and services can be appropriately placed.</p>
	<p>c. An east-west corridor in the northwest and northeast quadrants of the KDA, as identified in Schedule C3 (Active Transportation) will be designed as a generally continuous market promenade. <i>Development</i> along the market promenade shall provide <i>retail</i> and <i>commercial</i> uses at grade, and where feasible, on floors above grade within the base building.</p>	<p>We request the deletion of the Market Promenade in its entirety.</p> <p>Alternatively, we request that the proposed Market Promenade should be located further north at the existing signal along Yonge Street as we do not agree with the proposed location of the Market Promenade on the Hillcrest Mall lands. The current location does not have a signal, and is in close proximity to the intersection of Yonge and Carrville. There is also potential to conflict with existing transit routes running along Yonge Street.</p>
	<p>e. <i>Retail, commercial</i> or community uses are required to front onto existing or planned public parks or urban plazas</p>	<p>We recommend the Policy be amended to add 'where contemplated' and should be 'encouraged' rather than 'required'. We also request clarity as to whether the park or public roads take priority with respecting fronting retail, commercial or community uses.</p>
	<p>[New Sidebar]</p> <p>When determining maximum permissible total gross floor area for the site, the calculation is based on multiplying the development portion of the site area (inclusive of any lands that may be dedicated to a public authority for public</p>	<p>We recommend also including areas for POPS when determining the maximum FSI.</p>

	<p>infrastructure, such as a right-of-way or park) by the maximum Floor Space Index (FSI) allocated to the site or portion of the site.</p>	
	<p>4.4.2.1 Interim Development</p> <p>7. The City supports the retention and expansion of the existing <i>retail</i> and <i>commercial</i> uses in this KDA, and as such, non-residential “interim development” that is not permanent in nature or duration and is two storeys or less shall be permitted as additions to the existing building(s) or as stand-alone building(s). Such non-residential interim development shall be permitted provided that it is in accordance with policy 3.4.1(37)(c) and it:</p> <p>a. Does not preclude the orderly development of the remainder of the lands on the <i>site</i>, by demonstrating that the parks and urban open space system, as well as the public streets as shown conceptually on Schedule C2 (Public Realm) can be implemented; and</p> <p>b. Does not include underground structures.</p>	<p>Consideration and additional language should be provided to ensure that the expansion or retention of these commercial uses in the KDA does not require structured parking and can be accommodated through a reconfiguration of existing surface parking.</p>

	<p>4.4.2.3 PUBLIC REALM</p> <p>The Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area will provide for a high quality public realm that encompass a wide range of publicly accessible spaces, including sidewalks, streets, parks, natural areas, trails and paths. The KDA will be served by a more connected and multi-modal transportation system. Creating smaller development blocks with the introduction of new streets will improve circulation and access to amenities and destinations. In addition, the introduction of new parks and trails in the KDA will complement existing parks and urban open space, while offering active and passive recreational opportunities. Over time, this KDA will facilitate the development of a continuous network of publicly accessible spaces for the pedestrian and cyclist.</p>	<p>Please include Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) in the list of high quality public realm areas, as these areas are also publicly accessible.</p>
	<p>4.4.2.3 Public Streets</p> <p>1. Proponents of <i>development</i> shall implement the street network and active transportation network as conceptually shown on Schedule C2 (Public Realm), to support a fine-grained street network along with more connections for cyclists and pedestrians.</p>	<p>Please ensure that publicly accessible private drives are included in this.</p>

	<p>4.4.2.3 Active Transportation Connections</p> <p>8. <i>Development</i> shall provide safe, comfortable and attractive pedestrian and cycling connections within the KDA and to adjacent Neighbourhoods, as conceptually shown on Schedule C3 (Active Transportation), and where appropriate, supplement those connections by:</p> <p>c. Providing sidewalks on both sides of all new street as identified on Schedule C2.</p>	<p>Please expand to note or clarify what types of streets require sidewalks on both sides, as typically private roads do not provide for sidewalks on both sides.</p>
	<p>4.4.2.3 Active Transportation Connections</p> <p>10. The City will work with development proponents and York Region to explore opportunities to provide a multi-modal crossing to connect the market promenade across Yonge Street over the long term.</p>	<p>We request the deletion of the Market Promenade in its entirety.</p> <p>Alternatively, we request that the proposed Market Promenade should be located further north at the existing signal along Yonge Street as we do not agree with the proposed location of the Market Promenade on the Hillcrest Mall lands. The current location does not have a signal, and is in close proximity to the intersection of Yonge and Carrville. There is also potential to conflict with existing transit routes running along Yonge Street.</p>
	<p>4.4.2.3 Open Space</p> <p>11. A series of public gathering spaces will be created to enhance and complement existing public spaces. These spaces will serve as focal points</p>	<p>Please ensure that Open Space also includes POPS or stratified parklands.</p>

	<p>within the Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Avenue KDA. Over time, these spaces will contribute to creating a continuous network of public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists. As such, <i>development</i> shall provide public parkland as conceptually shown in Schedule C2 (Public Realm), and which are described generally as follows:</p>	
	<p>b. An urban square is planned in the northwest quadrant of the KDA. This urban square will provide access to outdoor recreational facilities within walking distance of residents and workers in this KDA, while drawing visitors to this area. Its proximity to Hillcrest Mall and frontage on Carrville Road will make it highly accessible and provide opportunities for social connections;</p>	<p>Please provide a definition or clarity for what constitutes an 'urban square', or amend wording to note Urban Plaza, as per Policy 3.4.4(14), allowing privately-owned publicly accessible spaces.</p>
	<p>Draft Schedule C1 – Yonge Street and Carrville/16th Avenue Key Development Area Density Allocation</p>	<p>Overall, the City is proposing the Hillcrest Mall lands to have an FSI of 3.07 in the Draft KDA Policies.</p> <p>As a portion of the Hillcrest Mall lands is intended to be developed in the future, we would recommend the City include policy language to identify higher densities along the major corridors away from low density residential and avoid individual FSIs within potential development blocks as these may change in the future.</p>

		We request policy clearly note that there is an ability to deploy density provided within the overall Hillcrest Mall lands as necessary, to facilitate the future development of the property as generally envisioned through the master plan concept shared with City Staff.
	Draft Schedule C2 – Yonge Street and Carrville/16 th Avenue Key Development Area Public Realm	Proposed north/south and east/west local connection on the Hillcrest Mall lands in Schedule C2 should be denoted as a private road. Discussions regarding this access are currently ongoing with City staff.
	Draft Schedule C3 – Yonge Street and Carrville/16 th Avenue Key Development Area Active Transportation	We request the deletion of the Market Promenade in its entirety. Alternatively, we request that the proposed Market Promenade identified on Schedule C3 should be located further north at the existing signal along Yonge Street as we do not agree with the proposed location of the Market Promenade on the Hillcrest Mall lands. The current location does not have a signal, and is in close proximity to the intersection of Yonge and Carrville. There is also potential to conflict with existing transit routes running along Yonge Street.

We trust these comments and requests for revisions are helpful. Should staff wish to discuss any of the above comments, we would welcome the opportunity.

Thank you,

Yours truly,
MHBC

Oz Kemal, BES, MCIP, RPP
Partner