

November 8, 2023

## Memorandum

**Memo To:** Mayor West and Members of Council

**Copy To:** Darlene Joslin, City Manager  
Stephen Huycke, Director, Legislative Services/City Clerk

**From:** Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services

**Subject:** **Response to Committee Members Comments and Questions  
Regarding Official Plan Amendment 18.6 (Village Local Centre)**

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At its meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, the Committee of the Whole considered Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.6 for the Village Local Centre. At the meeting, Members of Committee sought additional information related to the population and employment projections for the Local Centre, and posed several specific comments and questions to City Staff respecting the amendment. The purpose of this memo is to provide additional information or clarification on those matters below, including the provision of population and employment projections for the Village Local Centre appended to this Memorandum as **Attachment 1**.

### **1. Consideration for higher density where Major Mackenzie Drive intersects with Yonge Street beyond what is set out in OPA 18.6 to support future rapid transit along Major Mackenzie Drive.**

- OPA 18.6 proposes to re-designate lands along the east and west sides of Yonge Street, north of Crosby Avenue and south of Major Mackenzie Drive, from “Downtown Local Centre” to “Regional Mixed Use Corridor”. This change is proposed in recognition of the different contexts that exist along Yonge Street, north and south of the Village Local Centre, where the Yonge Street right-of-way widens and where there are opportunities for intensification to occur taking advantage of larger, underutilized blocks;
- As part of the last phase of the Official Plan update, the City will be reviewing the existing height and density permissions set out in the Official Plan with respect to the Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation, and where the corridor intersects with Major Transit Station Areas. This review will explore whether greater heights and densities are warranted in the Official Plan along the corridor. Staff anticipate reporting back to Council with an Official Plan Amendment respecting the MTSA’s and Corridors in Q4 2024/Q1 2025; and
- The policies of the City’s Official Plan already recognize Major Mackenzie Drive as a planned long-term public rapid transit corridor, however, the timing of future transit improvements along Major Mackenzie Drive are expected to take place

after planned improvements along Yonge Street and to a lesser degree. In that regard, the City's OP designates lands along Major Mackenzie Drive as "Local Mixed Use Corridor", and directs that it function as a smaller-scale, urban main-street connecting Local Development Areas (LDAs). This corridor is planned to provide opportunities for east-west regional connections and the movement of people, goods and services by way of future public rapid transit expected to be implemented over the long term. The Local Mixed-Use Corridor designation is generally consistent with the York Region Official Plan, 2022; it envisions a more limited range and mix of land uses along the Major Mackenzie Corridor in recognition that the character of development will not be uniform across all its segments.

**2. Consideration to approve the proposed modifications sought by Mark Yarrington, KLM Planning on behalf of Kingsmen Major Mackenzie Inc. and the Major Mackenzie Landowners Group, (Municipal Addresses: 52 58, 60, 66, 74 and 76 Major Mackenzie Drive West).**

- As background, a letter regarding the above noted properties was submitted to the City on October 30, 2023. In the letter, the applicant expressed concerns with the proposed maximum heights and densities in OPA 18.6, and the details respecting the completion of Elizabeth Street South;
- More specifically, the applicant requested that Council direct Staff to revise OPA 18.6 so that the height and density on the subject lands be established through future site-specific Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment planning applications;
- In support of its request, the applicant has highlighted that site-specific permissions would allow the subject properties to develop to their full potential with respect to height and density, given their location, opportunities, and lack of constraints;
- Several modifications to the height and density policies of OPA 18.6 were proposed as follows, with the applicant's proposed wording changes to the OPA highlighted in bold:
  - "4.3.1.1(8). The maximum site density within the Village Local Centre is shown on Schedule E1 (Density Allocation). **Notwithstanding, for lands municipally known as 52, 58, 60, 66, 74 and 76 Major Mackenzie Drive West, maximum site density will be established through a site-specific planning act application process involving an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment.**"
  - 4.3.1.1(9)(a) A minimum density of 1.5 FSI for development located within Development Blocks abutting Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive to which a maximum density of 3 FSI or higher is assigned on Schedule E1. ). **Notwithstanding, for lands municipally known as 52, 58, 60, 66, 74 and 76 Major Mackenzie Drive West, maximum site density will be established through a site-specific planning act application process involving an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment.**"

- “4.3.1.1(11)(b) For properties south of Wright Street and Dunlop Street, a maximum building height of 9 storeys, along with a maximum base building height of 3 storeys. **Notwithstanding, for lands municipally known as 52, 58, 60, 66, 74 and 76 Major Mackenzie Drive West, maximum building and maximum base building heights will be established through a site-specific planning act application process involving an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment.”**

Based on a review of the applicant’s letter, Staff note the modifications proposed appear to operate as an exception to the policies of the Official Plan. Exceptions to the City’s Official Plan are set out in Chapter 6 of the Plan. Exceptions represent unique circumstances where permissions have been previously granted by a planning authority (i.e. Ontario Land Tribunal or Council decision) and do not conform to the objectives, policies and requirements of the Official Plan adopted by Council and approved by the Region.

City Council does not have the authority to fetter a future Council’s discretion. The proposed modification wording would only allow Council to approve a site-specific Official Plan Amendment application and Zoning By-law Amendment application on these lands.

Moreover, the modifications proposed are not appropriate in Staff’s opinion as it would enable the height and density of development on the subject lands to be guided through site-specific development applications that have yet to be submitted, rather than through the comprehensive policies of OPA 18.6. This would limit Council’s ability to guide and evaluate those future Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications in the context of the Village OPA policies. At the time of writing, no development applications have been submitted.

### **3. Has the City done any parking assessment in the area as it relates to both private parking, and public parking?**

- Public parking in the Village Core area will be studied as part of the upcoming Municipal Parking Strategy in 2025 which is identified as an action item as part of the TMP. This study will investigate public parking needs city-wide and will include the Village Core area;
- The proposed policies in OPA 18.6 requires that the existing supply of public parking in the Village Core be maintained should redevelopment occur;
- On-street parking on Yonge Street is currently permitted during off-peak hours and supports local businesses in the area; and
- Opportunities to secure more public parking in the Village Core district for local businesses may be explored as part future development, cash-in-lieu or potential capital projects such as the future Civic Precinct project.

**4. Has there ever been consideration of a transit or traffic bypass in this area of Richmond Hill? If not, can one be considered in the future? Can a Newkirk Transit By-pass along Newkirk Road be considered?**

- Staff will discuss with York Region Transit (YRT) to explore the feasibility of a transit bypass using Newkirk Road during peak hours when Yonge Street is most congested that connects to Newkirk GO station as well;
- Staff notes that the existing bus route along Yonge Street should not be removed since it does contribute to providing better access to local businesses along Yonge Street, and a detour away from Yonge Street may not be supportive of that objective. As per the vision of the secondary plan “The Village Local Centre is envisioned to be a “Village within the City” that is vibrant, walkable, accessible, and green” that creates a “niche market main street area that is a vibrant, locally and regionally attractive destination for dining, shopping, cultural activities, commercial uses and an entertainment hub.”
- Although several north-south local streets are proposed as part of OPA 18.6, local roads should not primarily serve as a detour to Yonge Street for vehicular traffic since it would create infiltration to local neighborhoods;
- The best approach for vehicles to bypass traffic is to use parallel arterial roads, including Bayview Ave and Bathurst St, and to a lesser extent, Newkirk Road which is an industrial collector that can also be considered for the diversion of traffic from Yonge St. The TMP recommends Newkirk road to be widened to 4 lanes (2 lanes each direction) with active transportation improvements which can be used to accommodate additional vehicular capacity;
- Opportunities to widen local roads or build new vehicle bypasses to Yonge street in the Village area are limited due to the stable neighbourhoods in the area that are not likely to redevelop. It is important to note that the City is optimizing the network to provide operating conditions that remain functional, but cannot “build our way out of congestion” with road expansion and a portion of growth will need to be accommodated by sustainable modes of transportation;
- In order to help improve traffic conditions along Yonge Street, truck restrictions and diversions to Newkirk can be explored;
- Staff notes that transit along Newkirk road is currently supported by the Newkirk-Red Maple Bus line

**Conclusion:**

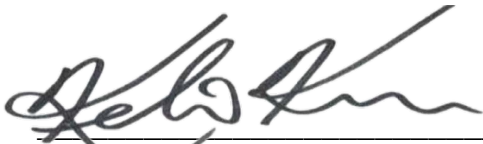
As noted by City Staff at the November 1<sup>st</sup> Committee of the Whole Meeting, adoption of OPA 18.6 is an important milestone that would allow the City to meet its conformity requirements under the *Planning Act* and York Region Official Plan. In addition, adopting the amendment would allow the City to move forward with planning for capacity in infrastructure through the Transportation Master Plan and Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan and, altogether, inform the update of the City’s Development Charges By-law which is required to be completed by early 2024. The

updating of the DC By-law would allow the City to begin collecting back what is needed to provide for growth in these key areas.

Accordingly, the purpose of this memorandum is to respond to the questions and comments raised by Members of the Committee regarding OPA 18.6, and to reiterate Staff's recommendation set out in staff report SRPBS.23.028 to adopt OPA 18.6 as follows:

**Recommendation(s):**

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.23.028 be received.
- b) That Council adopt Official Plan Amendment 18.6 (attached to SRPBS.23.028 as Appendix A), and that the City's Official Plan be amended in accordance with the modifications set out in OPA 18.6; and
- c) That following adoption of the Official Plan Amendment 18.6 by City Council, a copy of the amendment be forwarded to York Region as the approval authority for consideration and approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelvin Kwan", written over a horizontal line.

Kelvin Kwan  
Commissioner of Planning and Building Services

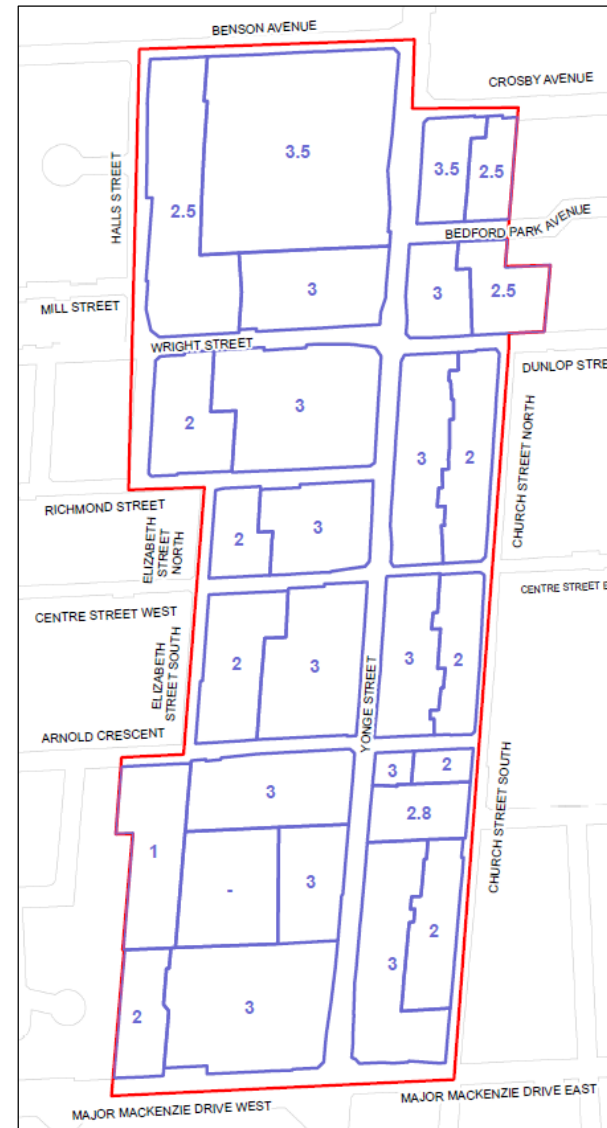
**Attachments:**

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.

- "Attachment 1" - Village Local Centre Statistics

# Attachment 1 - Village Local Centre Statistics:

- Expected growth (at build-out):
  - 10,000 population
  - 3,700 jobs
  - Target ratio of 7 residents to 3 jobs
- Minimum target of 160 people and jobs per hectare



## Legend

- ▭ Village Local Centre Boundary
- ▭ Boundary of density category area with maximum FSI