



The Village of Richmond Hill Business Improvement Area (BIA)

November 24, 2023

City of Richmond Hill City Council

Sent Via email: clerks@richmondhill.ca

Re: New OPA Review regarding the Village Centre

Dear Mayor & City Council Members,

The Village of Richmond Hill Business Improvement Association (BIA) has been diligently addressing the challenges posed by the enduring impact of COVID-19 over the past few years, with a primary focus on the revitalization of our city's downtown area. As you are undoubtedly aware, numerous properties within our jurisdiction have undergone demolition, regrettably leaving unsightly remnants on the main street of our downtown district. Furthermore, a substantial portion of these properties exhibit noticeable signs of aging. While we acknowledge the efforts put forth by the Economic Development Department to instigate much-needed improvements to these properties (CIP), it is evident that these actions constitute a short-term measure.

The overall state of downtown Richmond Hill is currently in a dire condition, resulting in the migration of many businesses away from this locale. This trend can be primarily attributed to the paucity of new developments, which, in turn, stems from the restrictions imposed by the existing secondary and official plans. Over the past decade, the city has made several attempts to propose potential solutions; regrettably, many of these propositions have lacked a comprehensive feasibility analysis. Consequently, most plans have faced substantial opposition from our association's members.

This prevailing sentiment also extends to the present proposal for the official plan.

Consequently, we advocate for the following changes to both the official and secondary plans:

- a. We respectfully request an increase in allowable density from the currently proposed range of 3 and under to a minimum of 4 within the originally designated areas.
- b. We kindly request an increase in allowable density from the currently proposed range of 3.5 and under to a minimum of 5 within the initially designated areas.
- c. We express our desire to expand the total number of stories from the initially proposed 9 to a range of 12-15 stories, and from the suggested 15 to 20 stories.



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- d. We humbly implore an enhancement of the angular plane restrictions so as not to unduly obstruct the development of the total number of stories mentioned in item c.

A densely populated downtown area undoubtedly holds the potential to invigorate businesses and serve as a beacon for attracting even more enterprises to our city. Many of our members and property owners eagerly seek to establish a collaborative partnership with the City of Richmond Hill, with the overarching objective of investing in the development of properties within the village core. This collaborative effort aims to rejuvenate an area that has languished in neglect over the recent decades.

In conclusion, the BIA staunchly endorses an official plan that facilitates the construction of new projects in place of the currently underutilized lands, which currently serve as little more than waste collection sites. Furthermore, we ardently advocate for the replacement of many aging buildings with new, innovative developments.

We sincerely appreciate your attention to these critical matters.

Sincerely,

The Village of Richmond Hill Business Improvement Area