

Submission to Richmond Hill City Council re: development proposal: City Files OPA-23-0010 and ZBLA-23-0014

Submitted by: Richmond Hill resident Michael Theodores – September 23, 2024

Introduction:

As a long-time resident of Richmond Hill – residing just a block west of the proposed high-density development proposal being discussed by Council on September 24, 2024 – I have prepared this submission to express serious concerns about the size and scope of the project.

This submission will touch on reasons why Council should recommend that the developer prepare a revised proposal that respects the current zoning of this proposed area along with:

- The poor service levels provided by the nearby Richmond Hill GO station
- Heavy traffic on the Major Mackenzie core that could worsen with the planned 396 parking spots along with a commercial element to the building.

Candid concerns raised by Richmond Hill planning department

I read with interest the report that the Richmond Hill Development Planning Division prepared for the September 24, 2024 Council meeting re: the developer's proposal and was gratified to see they listed several of the very same concerns I had with respect to:

- The proposed height of the two towers (12 and 20 storeys)
- The height of the proposed development compared to the largely low-rise neighbourhood that exists to the East, West, North and South, and
- The location of the project that barely is included in the protected major transit station area (PMTSA) **and** outside of the Newkirk Local Centre.

The full report was included in Council's meeting material and what follows are screen captures – with added yellow highlights – to flag comments from the report that resonated the most with me and will likely resonate with Council members too.

Page 6: See screen cap below – yellow highlights added

City of Richmond Hill Official Plan

The subject lands are designated **Local Mixed-Use Corridor** in accordance with Schedule A2 - Land Use of the City's Official Plan (the "Plan") (refer to Map 4). Major Mackenzie Drive is identified as a **Local Corridor** in Schedule 'A1' of the Plan and a **Future Rapid Transit Corridor** in Appendix – 5 of the Plan. The **Local Mixed-Use Corridor** designation is intended to function as a smaller-scale, urban main street connecting to the **Local Development Areas (LDAs)** and provides opportunities for an east-west regional connection and the movement of people, goods and services by way of planned, long-term public rapid transit within the City. **The Local Mixed-Use Corridor** designation is intended to accommodate a more limited range and mix of land uses and activities in a compact, pedestrian-oriented built form. These uses include medium density residential uses such as low rise townhouses including traditional back-to-back, stacked townhouses, and walkup apartments generally up to a maximum building height of 4 storeys.

Page 7: See screen cap below – yellow highlights added

It should be noted that while the subject lands fall within the Richmond Hill GO Station **PMTSA #50**, they are not located within the **Newkirk Local Centre** and are therefore not subject to the policies of OPA 18.7. During the review of OPA 18.7, it was identified that not all of the properties within **PMTSA #50** would be included in the **Newkirk Local Centre** designation. This was done to focus growth closest to the GO Station in order to develop a complete community. It is expected that lands within **PMTSA #50** that are outside the **Newkirk Local Centre** designation, such as the subject lands, may still contribute to the overall residents and jobs target for **PMTSA #50**, however at a lesser scale, such as within a medium density built form. Furthermore, through the MCR, it was determined that the **Newkirk Local Centre** boundary as approved was sufficient to meet the prescribed density targets set by the ROP, allowing for varied levels of intensification across **PMTSA #50**.

Page 7: See screen cap below – yellow highlights added

On the basis of the preceding, the **Local Mixed-Use Corridor** policies are the determinative policies applicable to the subject lands which permits a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 1.5 and a maximum building height of four (4) storeys, in accordance with **Policies 4.7.1.4** and **4.7.1.5** of the Plan. Notwithstanding that the **Local Mixed-Use Corridor** does not contemplate high density development as proposed, **Section 3.1.4** of the Plan sets out design criteria for all development which includes specific policies for high-rise residential buildings. High-rise buildings are defined in the Plan as structures with a height of 9 storeys or greater. **Section 3.1.4** of the Plan states that,

Page 8: See screen cap below – yellow highlights added

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a 45 degree angular view plane which is measured from the adjacent low density residential property limits located in the **Neighbourhood** designation and in the case of a street separating the **Neighbourhood**, the angular plane is measured from that side of the street abutting the **Neighbourhood** designation. Additionally, new development shall be designed to minimize the impact related to the privacy of adjacent low density residential areas through appropriate buffering, setbacks, built form treatments and landscape. It should be noted that the proposal does not meet the angular plane policies of the Plan.

Page 8 – see screen cap below – Yellow highlights added

Notwithstanding the preceding, staff notes that the **Local Mixed-Use Corridor** is anticipated to accommodate some level of intensification along Major Mackenzie Drive with consideration to the character of the corridor varies in terms of building forms, land uses and intensification of land uses as noted in **Policy 3.1.3.5**. However, high-rise, high density development as proposed, is not contemplated along this particular section of Major Mackenzie Drive East. In this regard, the proposed development contemplates a built form, as well as heights and densities well beyond those permitted in the **Local Mixed-Use Corridor** designation.

Staff do not support the scale and intensity of the proposal that is seeking up to 20 storeys in height with a density of 5.0 FSI. High-density development, at this scale and intensity goes beyond the heights and densities recently approved through OPA 18.7 closest to the GO Station and is therefore not appropriate given the newly established context and policy framework applicable to the subject lands that is representative of the most current thinking and direction of Provincial legislation.

The subject lands are situated in an area where the Plan envisions more moderate levels of development intensity, with a focus on maintaining the corridor's established character and ensuring compatibility with adjacent land uses. The proposed high-rise built form exceeds the anticipated scale of development for this portion of the corridor, potentially disrupting the intended transition in building heights and density and the harmonious integration with the surrounding neighborhoods to the north and south. Therefore, the proposal does not align with the strategic vision for this section of Major Mackenzie Drive East, which aims to balance growth while preserving the distinctive attributes and character of the corridor.

Page 9: See screen cap below – Yellow highlights added

across the City including secondary plan and tertiary plan areas. In accordance with **Policy 3.1.5.6** of the Plan, high density residential development shall provide a minimum of 5% of units that contain 3 or more bedrooms. **The applicant has not provided for an affordable housing component and is therefore expected to explore options for incorporating affordable housing components in its proposal.** However, it should be noted that the proposed development includes a variety of unit types ranging from 1-bedroom to 3-bedroom units which would contribute to a diversified range of housing typologies within the City. The development proposal conforms with the minimum of 5% of units that contain 3 or more bedrooms by providing 5.1% of the total units with 3-bedroom units.

Page 9: See screen cap below – Yellow highlights added

Based on the preceding, the proposal raises significant concerns regarding the failure to comply with the maximum permitted height and density, angular plane and high-rise building policies and lack of transition to the surrounding neighbourhood as required by the Plan. A more detailed review and evaluation of the proposed amendments in the context of the applicable Plan policies will be completed following the receipt of comments from Council, the public, City departments and external agencies and will form part of the future recommendation report to Council.

Zoning By-law

The subject lands are presently zoned Residential Second Density (R2) Zone under By-law 66-71, as amended (refer to Map 3). Permitted uses under the R2 Zone category include a range of uses, including but not limited to, single detached dwellings, parks, playgrounds, nonprofit making organizations, churches, schools and day nurseries among other uses. The proposed high density development is not permitted under the R2 Zone category.

Key takeaways from planning review of proposed development

It's clear based on a read of the initial planning department's review of this proposed development that there several – not a handful – of concerns. They include:

- Proposing towers of **12 and 20 storeys** on a block that only allows up to **four storeys**
- It is **not** located in the **Newkirk Local Centre**, which allows for higher storeys and density
- It has a floor space (FSI) of **5.0** in an area that allows for only an FSI of **1.5**
- It is a **high-density** development proposal situated in an area that is largely surrounded by residential homes and in which more **moderate** intensification is appropriate
- The **angular plane** doesn't conform to the current Official Plan
- It **doesn't** include an **affordable housing component**

As you can see, we aren't talking about a few minor concerns. The planning department has issues with the size and scope of the project based on its location along with other details – such as the percentage of affordable housing planned – that are missing.

Traffic assessment outstanding

I would add one other very important concern that Council needs to be aware of from a planning perspective: the impact the level of traffic that the high-density project could have on nearby side streets and on Major Mackenzie Drive East.

The entrance-exit is proposed for a side street (Maple Ave.) and residents and visitors to the commercial operations will likely favour using Major Mackenzie Drive East to move in and out of the property.

The problem is that there is no traffic-pedestrian signal currently at Maple Ave. and Major Mackenzie Drive East – unlike the block that is situated a block away west (Sussex Ave.) or for the next two blocks East (Colborne and Bayview).

The proposed development envisions **three levels** of underground parking, totaling **396 parking spaces**. This would be in place of the driveways of **eight** low-rise homes – **three** on Maple Ave.

Already, Major Mackenzie Drive East is a very busy arterial road, with traffic bottlenecks common as early as 2:30 p.m. on weekdays. As the planning department's review noted, traffic is not only generated by residents from Richmond Hill and beyond but is also a popular route for businesses (freight, construction, etc.). It is also a key route for emergency services (fire, police and ambulances).

With no traffic-pedestrian signal currently or proposed by the developer, the entry to Maple Ave. from Major Mackenzie Drive East – using a left turn – will likely result in increased traffic bottlenecks on Major Mackenzie Drive East.

Additionally, Maple Ave. only has a single lane South and one for traffic travelling North. So, traffic bottlenecks on Maple entering or exiting Major Mackenzie Drive East are a real possibility.

Pedestrian safety should also be a concern as the current pedestrian signals are a block away in each direction and this is a school zone with Walter Scott Public School a block away East.

The screen cap below of one of the maps that were included in the material for Council's review shows the distance to either Sussex Ave. or Colborne that do have traffic-pedestrian signals that do serve to moderate flows of traffic or assist pedestrians in walking safely across Major Mackenzie Drive East.



An excerpt from a September 12, 2024 email I received from Senior Planner Giuliano La Moglie provided the following:

...the ‘City’s Development Engineering Staff had not yet completed their technical review. As a result, the report does not include any analysis or discussion regarding the proposed access to the subject lands from Maple Avenue. Please note this will be addressed in a future recommendation to Council.

I think Council should keep this in mind and request that the technical review be provided the next time the development proposal comes before it – including discussion about whether a traffic-pedestrian signal is warranted. **If it is, it should be at the developer’s expense – not borne by the taxpayer.**

Discussion about Richmond Hill GO train

A key selling point of a very aggressive proposal such as this one is the nearby Richmond Hill GO station. It’s actually a tactic that developers across the province use when bringing their proposals before Council, and then marketing them to the public once approved.

Unfortunately, the Richmond Hill GO corridor has very limited service compared to other GO corridors. It only offers **four Southbound trains** in the morning (ending at 8:13 a.m. for the Richmond Hill GO station) and **five Northbound trains** in the afternoon-evening (ending at 6:45 p.m. from Union Station). **And no service is provided on weekends or Holidays** (see screen cap of full schedule below).

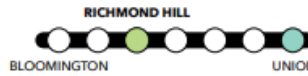
Monday to Friday (except holidays) Du lundi au vendredi (sauf les jours fériés)													
SOUTHBOUND / EN DIRECTION SUD							NORTHBOUND / EN DIRECTION NORD						
Route Number Numéro du trajet	Zone→ Trips Number Numero du parcours	Richmond Hill 98	Bloomington GO	Richmond Hill 78	Richmond Hill 50	Richmond Hill GO	Thornhill GO	Langstaff GO	North York 5	Old Cummer GO	North York 5	Orléans GO	Union Station
61	61070	05 00	05 06	05 20	05 32	→	→	06 00					
	5006	05 57	06 03	06 13	06 19	06 27	06 31	07 08					
	5008	06 57	07 03	07 13	07 19	07 27	07 31	08 08					
	5208	07 27	07 33	07 43	07 49	07 57	08 01	08 38					
	5010	07 57	08 03	08 13	08 19	08 27	08 31	09 08					
61	61280	09 05	09 13	09 28	09 46	→	→	10 30					
61	61320	10 10	10 17	10 32	10 48	→	→	11 25					
61	61370	11 10	11 17	11 32	11 48	→	→	12 25					
61	61400	12 10	12 17	12 32	12 48	→	→	13 25					
61	61440	13 15	13 22	13 37	13 53	→	→	14 30					
61	61490	14 20	14 28	14 43	15 01	→	→	15 45					
Route Number Numéro du trajet	Zone→ Trips Number Numero du parcours	Toronto 2	Union Station	North York 5	North York 5	North York 5	Thornhill GO	Langstaff GO	Richmond Hill 50	Richmond Hill GO	Richmond Hill 78	Richmond Hill 98	Bloomington GO
61	61261	09 40	→	→	→	10 10	10 28	10 42	10 55				
61	61341	11 40	→	→	→	12 13	12 31	12 45	13 00				
61	61381	12 40	→	→	→	13 18	13 36	13 50	14 05				
61	61421	13 40	→	→	→	14 23	14 41	14 55	15 10				
61	61441	14 45	→	→	→	15 40	16 00	16 17	16 35				
	5323	15 45	16 13	16 18	16 26	16 32	16 42	16 53					
	5325	16 45	17 13	17 18	17 26	17 32	17 42	17 53					
	5127	17 15	17 43	17 48	17 56	18 02	18 12	18 23					
	5327	17 45	18 13	18 18	18 26	18 32	18 42	18 53					
	5329	18 45	19 13	19 18	19 26	19 32	19 42	19 53					
61	61721	19 40	→	→	→	20 15	20 33	20 47	21 00				
61	61771	20 40	→	→	→	21 13	21 29	21 43	21 55				
61	61811	21 40	→	→	→	22 13	22 29	22 43	22 55				
61	61841	22 40	→	→	→	23 13	23 29	23 43	23 55				
61	61901	00 40	→	→	→	01 07	01 20	01 33	01 45				
61	61961	02 40	→	→	→	03 07	03 20	03 33	03 45				

I know this service well as I’ve been a GO rider for about 20 years. I have also corresponded frequently over that time with the executive office re: occasional service issues and also re: future service plans – including several times this year (I was even commended in recent correspondence as being a ‘tireless advocate’ for the Richmond Hill GO service).

While doing research this spring for the current *More Homes, More People* consultation that I am participating in, I came across an updated Metrolinx report re: **GO Rail Station Access** dated February 2023. It can be accessed on [this website page](#).

The report includes discussion about the Richmond Hill GO corridor beginning on Page 127 and I was surprised to learn that Metrolinx is forecasting that ridership on this line to **decrease – not increase** – through 2041 (see screen cap of Page 133 on the following page).

Richmond Hill Line
Region of York
City of Richmond Hill



Links: [table of contents](#) | [off-site table](#)

Richmond Hill GO			
Station Classification			
Station Access Type (2019)	Mixed Modal	Station Categorization Framework	Medium
Station Access Type (2041)	Mixed Modal	Station Service Model	B - Limited Service
Parking Typology (2041)	Manage	Retail Typology	Access Station
GO Rail Ridership		Current (2019)	Forecast (2041)
Daily Riders' Home Station		2,675	2,100
Daily Riders' Destination Station		200	50
Daily Total Footfall (Boardings + Alightings)		5,375	4,075

Metrolinx highlighted despite expectations for significant population growth in Richmond Hill and the region, the reasons for the forecast on Page 128 included the expansion of the Yonge North Subway Extension – which will offer superior service using a duplicate transit path – along with continued high freight activity by CN Rail which owns the track north of the Doncaster Diamond in Thornhill (see screen cap below)

Richmond Hill Line



LEGEND

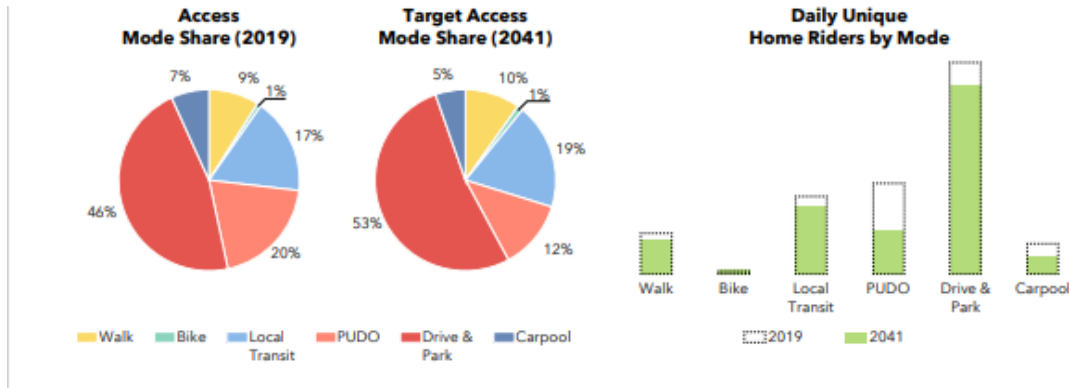
- Existing barrier-free path of travel
- Average parking utilization (pre-COVID-19 pandemic)**
 - Equal or higher than 95%
 - 86%-94%
 - Equal or less than 85%
 - No dedicated GO parking facility
- Station within Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) or Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA)

Corridor Context

- The City of Richmond Hill and York Region are expected to experience a significant increase in population and employment by 2041.
- Currently, there are no plans to increase service levels on the Richmond Hill GO corridor.
- Overall ridership is projected to decline due to a lack of all-day, two-way service, expansion of other GO services, and the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE).
- There is an opportunity to create a couplet station with the proposed YNSE stations near Langstaff GO, integrating station access requirements to enhance customer experience.
- The corridor experiences high freight activity as it is shared with CN Rail.

After discovering this report, I reached out to Metrolinx’s executive team to see if this report was the most current report and also if Richmond Hill planners and Council were aware of it last year. It was confirmed that this was the case and that the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff GO station was the priority with the expansion of the Yonge North Subway Extension.

Equally interesting was the profile of a GO rider at this station (see screen cap below). Anecdotally, I have only seen a trickle of riders disembark from the train and either walk to a nearby mid or high-rise apartment or condo in the area or to smaller homes in the nearby established areas.



The Metrolinx report shows that only 9% of riders using this station walk to it. The majority either drive to the station or are picked up or dropped off (known as PUDO) while a fair amount (17%) use transit.

The reality is that the Richmond Hill GO train only appeals to a narrow segment of the population – one that works in downtown Toronto, largely in close vicinity to Union Station. And, once the TTC subway expands to Richmond Hill, it will provide a superior rival to the GO Train as service will be more frequent and will offer more stops within York Region and Toronto. Hence, why Metrolinx is expecting a hit to future ridership – something I commented in a submission to Richmond Hill Council last June and which has now been supported.

In recent correspondence I've received from Metrolinx, it was acknowledged CN's ownership of the track north of the Doncaster Diamond impacts service levels and that there were no major imminent infrastructure plans for the track as the Yonge North Subway Expansion remains the key focus to provide enhanced transit to Richmond Hill and other areas within the region.

Meanwhile, a CN representative provided added clarity in a return email about why CN values this track so much and why residents are often caught at the pass at Weldrick or Elgin Mills. It's a very lucrative line that extends north and even travels to Western Canada (see screen cap below).

On Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at 09:58:42 AM EDT, GLD-Permits <permits.gld@cn.ca> wrote:

Good Morning,

From Doncaster diamond, CN tracks goes north till Simcoe, Bala sub,MP88.39 which then splits into two directions. One side of the tracks runs till Nipissing, Newmarket sub,MP224.19 and the other to Thunderbay, Caramat sub,MP129.9 which then runs west to Winnipeg and other western provinces.

Thank you.



CN GLD - PERMITS
Public Works | Engineering – Eastern Region

What's New at CN | Quoi de neuf au CN

Based on this latest forecast, Council needs to be very cautious in reviewing and supporting any high-density projects that come before it in the Newkirk Local Centre-PMTSA area. And, it should ask the developer that if the GO station is the key reason the level of intensification is being proposed, why **396 parking spaces** are being proposed.

Existing YRT bus service-No timeline for Major Mackenzie BRT

Similar to the Richmond Hill GO train, bus service on the Major Mackenzie core is substantially worse when compared to other areas, such as Yonge Street and Highway 7. The latter are both served by the Viva rapid bus service.

While Viva service is more frequent and has dedicated bus lanes from Newmarket all the way through to Thornhill, bus service on Major Mackenzie Drive East is less frequent, often involves a transfer to another bus (such as a North-South route) and has to fight the same traffic as cars.

I reached out to the YRT for an update on the timeline for bus rapid transit (BRT) which I've seen referenced in various documents and it was confirmed no such service is planned before 2041 (see screen cap below).

So, similar to the Richmond Hill GO train, there are no material transit improvements on the horizon that would validate the level of intensification that is being called for.

RE: Questions re: YRT transfers/BRT expansion

From: Transitinfo (transitinfo@york.ca)

To: miketheobiz@aol.com

Date: Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 03:54 p.m. MDT

Good afternoon Michael,

This email is a follow-up to your inquiries regarding the implementation of future York Region Transit (YRT) service along Major Mackenzie Drive, in the City of Richmond Hill and YRT fares.

In the 2022 York Region Transportation Master Plan, it identifies Major Mackenzie Drive, Jane Street, and Leslie Street as potential candidates for rapid transit corridors, with additional studies pending for McCowan Road. This plan is designed to address our transportation infrastructure up to the year 2051, accommodating anticipated growth and evolving commuter needs.

While these corridors are earmarked for future bus rapid transit services, specific timelines for their development have not been established at this point. YRT is committed to continually assessing ridership trends and will adapt services accordingly, which may include frequency adjustments and the introduction of express services to better serve our customers.

In addition, YRT removed zone tickets in 2017 to make our fare policy and collection consistent across the Region and to align with other Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) transit systems. Effective February 26, 2024, Ontario's One Fare Program will allow transit riders to only pay once when connecting to and from the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), GO Transit, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, MiWay and York Region Transit (YRT) using a PRESTO card. Transfers are valid for two hours for trips started on local transit systems. You may visit [here](#) for more information about the One Fare Program.

We appreciate you taking the time to share your inquiries with us.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Kai C. | Customer Relations Coordinator
Strategic Initiatives and Programs, Public Works Department

Update on Major Mackenzie Drive East development applications

Kudos to **Ward 1 Council Carol Davidson** who has a handy link to '[Development Applications](#)' on her website (I discovered this information is also on the City of Richmond Hill's website but more difficult to locate).

I reviewed the three links provided on Councillor Davidson's website and noted the proposals below that are located between Yonge and Bayview on Major Mackenzie Drive East.

First, you will see a proposed project that is actually closer to the Richmond Hill GO station – at **286 Major Mackenzie Drive East**. It is proposing an 8-storey residential apartment with 90 units and 199 parking spots. The FSI is 1.17 (see screen cap below).

286 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST	RICHMOND HILL ECUMENICAL HOMES CORPORATION (C/O PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LTD.)	A request for approval of a Site Plan Application to facilitate the construction of an 8 storey residential apartment building (rental tenure) comprised of 90 dwelling units, 199 parking spaces, a gross floor area of 6,511.50 square metres (70,089 square feet) and an FSI of 1.17 on the subject lands.
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Provided below are screen caps of other proposed projects that range from two to five storeys along with stacked townhouses.

64 AND 72 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST, 115 AND 119 CHURCH STREET SOUTH	RICHMOND HILL RE-DEV CORPORATION	Re-Application: A request for approval of a revised Site Plan application for one six storey building terracing down to three storeys (50 units), the retention of the existing single detached dwelling along Church Street, the retention of a single detached dwelling relocated from Major Mackenzie Drive to Church Street, and a new semi-detached dwelling along Church Street.
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110 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST	FERIDON RASTI AVAL	A request for approval of Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Applications to permit the construction of a two-storey medical building on the subject lands.
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185, 191, 197, 203, 209 AND 215 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST	MULTIPLE	A revised request for approval of Zoning By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision, Draft Plan of Condominium (common element) and Site Plan applications to permit a residential development comprising of 30 townhouse dwelling units to be constructed on the subject lands.
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546 MAJOR MACKENZIE EAST	2006366 ONTARIO LTD.	Site Plan Application to permit a multi-unit residential building consisting of three (3) residential units.
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152, 160, 166, 172, 178 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST AND 123 RUGGLES AVENUE	2575563 ONTARIO INC.	A request for approval of Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan applications to permit the construction of a medium density residential development comprised of 35 back to back townhouse dwelling units on the subject lands.
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152-178 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST AND 123 RUGGLES	XU HAN, FEI HAN, TUO LIN	A request for approval of Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan applications to permit the construction of a medium density residential development comprised of 35 back to back townhouse dwelling units on the subject lands
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I also included a more robust project at **1070 Major Mackenzie Drive East** (Bayview and Major Mackenzie Drive land that includes Walmart and Food Basics along with many restaurants and small businesses).

1070 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE EAST	CALLOWAY REIT (BAYMAC) INC. & CANADIAN PROPERTY HOLDINGS (ONTARIO) INC.	A request for approval of a Site Plan application to facilitate the construction of a 9 storey retirement residence consisting of 242 units, an FSI of 2.95 and 72 parking spaces on the western portion of the subject lands.
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The point of this discussion and for including these summaries is that it demonstrates that infill activity **is** planned on the Major Mackenzie Drive East core between Yonge and Bayview. The proposed project before you doesn't have to singlehandedly address the population growth that Council is under pressure to meet at the expense of shattering existing zoning in place.

What these proposed projects have in common is that they represent more respectable levels of growth, including the proposed project at 286 Major Mackenzie Drive that is far closer to the Richmond Hill GO station.

Unfortunately, this particular project is similar to an aggressive one that came before Council last May on a side street (Norfolk Ave. – see screen cap below). Similar to this proposed project, the planning department had several issues with re: to its size and scope and how it would impact the low-rise housing that lies to the East and South.

162 Norfolk Avenue	Norfolk Development Inc.	A request for approval of Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications to facilitate a proposed residential development comprised of 2 towers, 14 and 16 storey in height, on a 6 storey podium, containing a total of 406 dwelling units. The proposal contemplates a total gross floor area of 27,989.0 square metres (301,271.0 square feet), a floor space index (FSI) of 5.4, and 388 parking spaces.
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Closing thoughts

With the many concerns the Richmond Hill Planning Department cited about this proposed development – combined with my own discussion about the Richmond Hill GO train, YRT bus service and increased traffic congestion in the area – I believe Council is in an excellent position to ask the developer to scale back the proposed project to reflect the current zoning in place which reflects the largely low-rise neighbourhoods that exist.

It's clear a project proposing 12 and 20 storeys wouldn't **blend** in with the largely low-rise neighbourhood – it would **tower** over it. It also stands to contribute to the traffic congestion that already exists on Major Mackenzie Drive East, and could spill over nearby side streets.

While Councils across the province – including here in Richmond Hill – are under great pressure to address very aggressive population targets and also housing stock and affordability, **a single project can't or shouldn't be expected to do this.**

As per earlier discussion, there are multiple development proposals on file that are located on Major Mackenzie Drive East between Yonge and Bayview. All of them – except for one on Newkirk Ave. – are more respectful of existing zoning and nearby neighbourhoods.

This is a project that in both size and scope is more fitting for Yonge Street or Highway 7 which have similar nearby high-density projects and which are served by more frequent and seamless transit.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

-Michael Theodores