

SUBJECT: **PRELIMINARY REPORT**
Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications submitted by Springhill Homes Inc. to permit two high rise apartment buildings at 7128, 7170 and 7186 Highway 7 East (Ward 5)

File PLAN 20 119576

PREPARED BY: Stephen Corr MCIP, RPP, ext 2624
Senior Planner, East District

REVIEWED BY: Stacia Muradli, MCIP, RPP, ext 2008
Acting Manager, East District

RECOMMENDATION:

- That the report titled “PRELIMINARY REPORT, Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications submitted by Springhill Homes Inc. to permit two high rise apartment buildings at 7128, 7170 and 7186 Highway 7 East (Ward 5) (File PLN 20 119576)”, be received.

PURPOSE:

This report provides preliminary information on Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications submitted by Spring Hill Homes Inc. to permit high density development at 7128, 7170 and 7186 Highway 7. This report contains general information in regards to the proposal, applicable official plan or other policies as well as other issues. The report should not be taken as staff’s opinion or recommendation on the applications

BACKGROUND

Subject Land and Area Context

The 1.6 ha (3.96 ac) “subject property” is located on the north side of Highway 7, south side of Arthur Bonner Avenue, east side of Cornell Centre Boulevard and west side of William Forster Road (Figures 1 to 3). The subject lands contain three existing single detached dwellings, one of which, the Francis Pike House circa 1875, is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Surrounding land uses include townhouses and stacked townhouses to the north and northwest and a woodlot to the northeast. Vacant lands located to the east and west are anticipated for future high rise development in accordance with the Cornell Secondary Plan. Vacant lands to the south, across Highway 7, are proposed to be developed as a commercial shopping centre as per an active site plan application under review with the City. Development Services Committee has endorsed this shopping centre in principle, but final approval is incumbent on the property owner making further submissions to finalize the technical review prior to site plan approval. A future high rise residential building (up to 12 storeys) is intended to be located to the southeast, on the south side of Highway 7, on lands which recently received draft plan of subdivision and zoning by-law amendment approval in July 2020.

The applications have been deemed complete:

The applications were deemed complete on August 11, 2020.

Next Steps:

- The Statutory Public Meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 3, 2020.
- A future recommendation report respecting the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications will be brought forward to DSC;

Proposal

Spring Hill Homes Inc. is proposing Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to permit development of the subject site with two residential apartment buildings, comprising four high rise towers linked by two 'U' shaped podiums (2 towers per building). The proposed apartment buildings are entirely residential and will contain a total of 977 apartment units. The conceptual plan is shown in Figure 4, and conceptual elevations are shown in Figure 5.

The concept plan proposes a transition with the low rise residential to the north by limiting building heights to three-storey podiums along the Arthur Bonner Avenue frontage. The height of the podiums increase to six storeys, towards the Highway 7 frontage, with the four 18 to 24 storey towers (two towers per building), situated above and also oriented towards Highway 7. The proposed development includes three levels of underground parking, a centrally located 813 sq m terra firma public park fronting on Arthur Bonner Avenue, and preservation of the Francis Pike House. The concept plan indicates the Francis Pike House is to be used as a day care. Access to the site and underground parking garages is at two locations, both from Arthur Bonner Avenue.

Other Applications Required to Facilitate this Proposal

A site plan control application is required to initiate the detailed technical review prior to any development on the subject lands. The applicant has not indicated when the site plan application will be submitted. Staff are therefore evaluating the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications in the context of the conceptual plans submitted.

Additionally, the subject lands were part of a draft approved plan of subdivision in 2010 to create this development block under City File SU 04-028274. Spring Hill Homes Inc. has made an application to the Legal Services Department to prepare a subdivision agreement for these lands, and will need to clear the 2010 draft plan of subdivision conditions to register this block on a plan of subdivision.

Conformity with Provincial Policy and Region of York Official Plan

The proposed development conforms to the applicable provincial policy framework as well as the land use designation and policies of the Regional Official Plan.

The Region of York is the approval authority for the Official Plan Amendment, however City staff are consulting with the Region as to whether the approval authority will be delegated to the City. This will be confirmed at the Statutory Public Meeting.

Official Plan and Zoning

2014 Official Plan

The subject lands are designated 'Mixed Use Mid Rise' in the 2014 Official Plan as partially approved on November 24, 2017 and further updated on April 9, 2018. This designation contemplates apartment buildings, multi-storey mixed use or non-residential buildings, stacked townhouses and townhouses. The Official Plan provides for minimum building heights of 3-storeys, maximum building heights of 8 storeys and a maximum Floor Space Index (FSI of 2.0) in this designation.

Notwithstanding the above designation, the 2014 Official Plan also indicates that the subject lands are located within a Key Development Area (KDA) for Cornell Centre, which requires a new Secondary Plan. The policies of the 1987 Markham Official Plan and 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan remain applicable until this new secondary plan is approved for Cornell Centre.

2015 Cornell Centre Draft Secondary Plan Update

In accordance with the KDA policies noted above, DSC received draft land use concepts for the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan update on February 17, 2015 and later on September 22, 2015. Additionally, DSC received a draft secondary plan amendment for Cornell Centre at the Statutory Public Meeting on October 20, 2015 that provided proposed land use designations for the Cornell Centre, inclusive of the subject lands. The draft secondary plan proposes to designate the subject lands 'Residential High Rise'. This designation contemplates stacked townhouses (except on the Highway 7 frontage), apartment buildings and buildings associated with day cares or public schools. This designation permits commercial retail and personal service uses on the ground floor of a building, but does not specifically require it. The contemplated built form requires a minimum FSI of 2.5, with heights ranging between 8 to 12 storeys for buildings not in a podium and tower format and 4 to 18 storeys for buildings having a podium and tower format.

1987 Official Plan and 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan (OPA 168)

As noted, the 1987 Markham Official Plan and 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan remain the applicable policy framework until a secondary plan update is approved for Cornell Centre. These documents designate the subject lands 'Urban Residential' and 'Avenue 7 Corridor – Mixed Residential', which contemplates apartment buildings, and multiple unit buildings (stacked townhouses). Apartment buildings are required to be mixed use, in which residential uses on the ground floor cannot exceed 45% of the total gross ground floor area. The contemplated built form is minimum building heights of 4 storeys to 8 storeys, maximum building heights of 12 storeys and a minimum FSI of 2.5.

The proposed Official Plan amendment requests increased building heights up to 24 storeys, and permission to have an entirely residential building without requiring any ground floor commercial uses.

Zoning

The subject lands are zoned 'Community Amenity Two Exception 411 (Holding) (CA2*411(H))' under By-law 177-96, as amended. This permits apartment dwellings and a number of non-residential uses within the first and second floors of a multi-storey

building. The current zoning reflects a former site-specific development proposal for the subject lands and provides development standards to implement the built form contemplated by the Cornell Secondary Plan described above. The current zoning permits buildings with a height range of eight to twelve storeys, a minimum FSI of 2.5, as well as site specific building setbacks and parking standards.

The proposed zoning by-law amendment requests permission for increased building heights up to 24 storeys, site specific reduced parking standards and building setbacks, and to not require non-residential uses on the ground level of an apartment building.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

The following is a brief summary of concerns, issues raised to date and matters for consideration. These matters, and others identified through the circulation, public consultation and detailed review of the proposal, will be addressed in a final staff report:

- Appropriateness of the proposed development, including but not limited to, the compatibility of built form, building heights and setbacks, landscape buffer requirements, reduced parking, scale and massing particularly in relation to the stacked townhouse and townhouse developments north of the subject lands;
- Assessing the appropriateness of the proposed official plan amendment requesting not to require non-residential uses on the ground floor of the building;
- Assessing the proposed official plan and zoning by-law amendments to permit increased building heights up to 24 storeys, compared to the maximum 12 storeys permitted in the current and applicable Cornell Secondary Plan and maximum of 18 storeys contemplated in the 2015 Draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Update;
- Assessing the appropriateness of size, configuration and location of the public terra firma park proposed to be conveyed to the City;
- Assessing any issues resulting from the review of technical studies including, but not limited to, stormwater management and servicing reports, tree preservation plan, grading and drainage plans;
- Confirmation of 37 community benefit and public art contributions for the increased height and density proposed through the zoning by-law amendment, to the satisfaction of the City of Markham;
- The applicant is advised that ideally a site plan control application is submitted in conjunction with the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments. This will initiate the technical review and therefore identify any potential constraints to development while evaluating the proposed architectural elevation elements, bird friendly compliance, achieving LEED Silver (as a minimum), location and provision of landscaped areas, etc. It will also confirm any other financial obligations including but not limited to, cash in lieu of parkland dedication, tree replacement/compensation, to the satisfaction of the City of Markham and Region of York, or any other agencies, as necessary

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposal will be reviewed in the context of Growth Management, Transportation and Municipal Services.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The applications have been circulated to various departments and external agencies and are currently under review. Requirements of the City and external agencies will be reflected in a future recommendation report and/or as conditions of approval.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Biju Karumanchery R.P.P, M.C.I.P
Senior Development Manager

Arvin Prasad R.P.P, M.C.I.P
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

- Figure 1: Location Map
- Figure 2: Area Context/Zoning
- Figure 3: Aerial Photo
- Figure 4: Site Plan
- Figure 5: Elevations

Agent:

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