

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY REPORT
Hilton Markham Suites Hotel Limited
Applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit a high-density mixed-use development at 8500 Warden Avenue, Markham Centre (Ward 8)

File No. PLAN 20 128653

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Manager, Central District

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report titled “PRELIMINARY REPORT, Hilton Markham Suites Hotel Limited, Applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit a high-density mixed-use development at 8500 Warden Avenue, Markham Centre (Ward 8), File No. PLAN 20 128653”, be received.

PURPOSE:

This report provides preliminary information on applications for Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment (the “Applications”) submitted by Hilton Markham Suites Hotel Limited (the “Owner”). This report contains general information on the applicable Official Plan policies and the identified issues and should not be taken as Staff’s opinion or recommendation on the Applications.

BACKGROUND:

Location and Area Context

The 4.12 ha (10.18 ac) subject lands are located on the southwest corner of Warden Avenue and Highway 7 (the “Subject Lands”), as shown on Figure 1, and have approximate frontages of 219.9 m (721.5 ft) along Highway 7 and 193.3 m (634.2 ft) along Warden Avenue. To complete the overall development of the lands, the Owner proposes to include the approximately 2,105 m² (22,659 ft²) City-owned surplus lands (the “Surplus Lands”) along the south side of the Highway 7 right-of-way (see Figure 3), which will be discussed later in this report.

The Hilton Markham Suites hotel, conference centre and spa (the “Hotel”) and its 650 space surface parking lot currently occupies the Subject Lands, which includes the 10-storey main hotel building and an ancillary five-storey building along Warden Avenue (long-term stay). A fifth storey enclosed bridge connects both buildings. Figure 3 shows the surrounding land uses.

Process to date

Staff deemed the Applications complete on December 3, 2020.

The next steps in the Planning process include the following:

- Holding the statutory Public Meeting at a future date, when appropriate;
- Consideration of a Recommendation Report by the Development Services Committee (“DSC”);
- In the event of an approval, adoption of the site-specific Official Plan Amendment and approval of the site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment by Council;
- Submission of a future Site Plan Approval application.

Proposed Development

Figure 4 shows the conceptual site plan for the proposed development and Figure 5 shows a conceptual rendering. The Owner proposes to demolish the Hotel’s existing conference centre and the five-storey long-term stay building, but retain the 10-storey main hotel building. The Owner also proposes to construct a new three-storey conference centre at the northeast portion of the Subject Lands (Block B), incorporate the long-term stay suites into Block A, and redevelop the remaining Subject Lands with a high-density, mixed-use development (the “Proposed Development”), shown conceptually on Figures 4 and 5. The Proposed Development consists of 3,552 residential units organized in five blocks, as follows:

Block #	Podium Height	Building Height	Proposed Uses
Block A: (Buildings A1, A2, and A3 along Courtyard Lane)	one to seven storeys	55-storeys each	Retail, office, and residential
Block B (along Highway 7)	N/A	Three-storeys	Conference centre, including retail uses, with pedestrian bridge connection to the Hotel
Block C (along Warden Avenue)	Five-storeys (office)	45-storeys	Retail, office, and residential
Block D (along Clegg Road)	one-storey	55-storeys	Residential
Block E (along Clegg Road)	one-storey	55-storeys	Residential

In addition to Table 1, the Owner proposes a publicly accessible amenity space in front of the Hotel along Highway 7 (which the Owner intends to use as skating rink/green area/seasonal Christmas market), a 0.2 ha (0.48 ac) public park at the northwest corner of Courtyard Lane and Clegg Road, and the following on the Subject Lands:

Total Gross Floor Area (“GFA”)	336,934 m ² (3,626,846 ft ²)
Residential GFA	270,888 m ² (2,915,910 ft ²)

TABLE 2: Proposed Development Standards	
Office GFA	14,917 m ² (160,571 ft ²)
Retail GFA	6,775 m ² (72,713 ft ²)
Conference Centre GFA	7,989 m ² (86,996 ft ²)
Hotel GFA	36,365 m ² (391,442 ft ²)
Density	8.17 times the area of the Subject Lands (Floor Space Index – “FSI”)
Density (with the Surplus Lands)	7.78 FSI
Amenity Space (Skating Rink/Green Area/Seasonal Christmas Market)	1,125 m ² (12,110 ft ²)
Public Park (southwest portion of the Subject Lands)	0.2 ha (0.48 ac)
Parking	2,651 spaces (in 2 ½ levels of underground across the Subject Lands)
Bicycle Parking	1,191 (all underground)

Staff will continue to work with the Owner to refine the Proposed Development through a separate future Site Plan Approval application(s), should Council approve the current Applications.

The Disposition of the Surplus Lands

As noted earlier, a sliver of City-owned surplus land of approximately 2,105 m² (22,659 ft²) in size, as shown on Figure 3, currently exists along the Highway 7 frontage of the Subject Lands. As depicted in Figure 4, a portion of the proposed publicly accessible amenity space, as well as a portion of Block B (the proposed conference centre) are shown to encroach on the Surplus Lands. Through the review of the Applications, the Owner and the City will negotiate and determine the disposition of the Surplus Lands in the context of the Proposed Development and whether the Surplus Lands could be consolidated with the Subject Land, to the satisfaction of the City.

Figure 4 also depicts an encroachment of Block C into the Warden Avenue right-of-way. This encroachment applies to east facing balconies located within the elevated 5-storey office podium at the 6th-10th levels of the Block C building. This proposed encroachment will require further review and consultation with City and York Region staff.

Provincial Policies

In considering the Applications, Staff will assess consistency with the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”), conformity with the 2019 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the “Growth Plan”), and conformity with the York Region 2010 Official Plan (the “Regional OP”).

2014 Markham Official Plan (the “2014 Official Plan”)

The 2014 Official Plan designates the Subject Lands “Mixed Use High Rise.” This designation represents priority locations with the greatest level of development intensification. Unless specified in a secondary plan or site-specific policy, the “Mixed Use High Rise” designation permits a maximum building height of 15-storeys and a maximum density of 3.0 FSI.

However, the policies of the 2014 Official Plan also provide that until an updated secondary plan is approved for the Regional Centre-Markham Centre lands, the provisions of the 1987 Town of Markham Official Plan (the “1987 Official Plan”), as amended, and the Markham Centre Secondary Plan (“OPA 21”), as amended, shall apply to the Subject Lands.

The 1987 Official Plan

The Subject Lands are designated “Commercial – Community Amenity Area” in the 1987 Official Plan. The planned function of the “Community Amenity Area” designation is to provide for a multi-use, multi-purpose centre with a diverse range of retail, service, community, intuitional, and recreational uses. Office development and medium and high-density housing at appropriate locations are also provided for in this designation.

OPA 21

The Subject Lands are designated “Community Amenity – Major Urban Place” in OPA 21. Lands designated “Community Amenity Area – Major Urban Place” are intended to be developed with a high concentration and intensity of residential, commercial, employment and supporting uses.

The draft Official Plan Amendment (“draft OPA”) submitted by the Owner in support of the Applications proposes site-specific height and density provisions that reflect the Proposed Development.

Zoning

The Subject Lands are zoned “Markham Centre Downtown Two *20” (MC-D2*20), “Markham Centre Downtown Two *20 (Hold)” [MC-D2*20(H10)] and “Markham Centre Downtown Two *21 (Hold)” [MC-D2*20(H11)] under By-law 2004-196, as amended by By-laws 2013-65 and 2013-67 (see Figure 2).

The draft Zoning By-law Amendment (“draft ZBLA”) submitted by the Owner in support of the Zoning Amendment application proposes to amend certain site-specific use permissions and development standards contained in By-laws 2013-65 and 2013-67 including, but not limited to, building height, density, setbacks, and special parking provisions.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

The following summarizes the matters raised to date for consideration. These matters, including other matters identified through the circulation and detailed review of the Proposed Development will be addressed in a final recommendation report to DSC:

- 1) Staff are reviewing the submitted Planning Justification Report, draft OPA, and draft ZBLA, prepared by Bousfields Inc. Staff will provide further comments on these documents, if necessary, in a future Recommendation Report.
- 2) The Proposed Development will be reviewed in the context of the existing policy framework and with regard to the Markham Centre Secondary Plan (MCSP) Update Study process. A Recommendation Report will not be brought forward until the draft development concept for the MSCP Update process is endorsed by Council.
- 3) The appropriateness of the Proposed Development will be reviewed in the context of the following:
 - a) compatibility with existing and planned surrounding land uses
 - b) the appropriateness of the proposed density and building heights
 - c) appropriate parkland to service future residents, visitors, and users including parkland dedication and the payment of “cash-in-lieu” of parkland
 - d) amenity and open space areas
 - e) the need for affordable housing, purpose built rental, senior-focused housing, and family friendly units
 - f) built form and massing, building location/orientation, and transitions
 - g) building setbacks and proposed encroachments
 - h) preliminary sun and shadow analysis and wind analysis
 - i) traffic impacts, road network, access arrangement, parking and transportation demand management
 - j) municipal servicing
 - k) the quantity and potential need to incorporate community amenity uses, such as daycares
 - l) water table and ground water impacts
- 4) The Owner proposes 2,651 parking spaces to support the Proposed Development; whereas the By-law requires 4,604 parking spaces. This represents a shortfall of 1,953 parking spaces. The Owner submitted a Transportation Impact Study that includes a parking justification, which is currently under review by the City’s Transportation Planning Staff.
- 5) Review of all technical studies submitted in support of the Proposed Development including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) Stormwater Management and Functional Servicing Brief
 - b) Preliminary Hydrogeological Investigation
 - c) Noise Study
 - d) Phase One Environmental Site Assessment
 - e) Phase Two Environmental Site Assessment
 - f) Transportation Impact Study, including Parking Study
 - g) Urban Design Brief
 - h) Shadow Impact Study

- i) Wind Study
- 6) The Subject Lands are located within and governed by the Toronto/Buttonville Airport zoning regulation area. NavCanada must satisfactorily review the impacts of the proposed building heights on Buttonville Airport. Building heights in excess of the maximum height permitted by the airport zoning order would require Transport Canada to lift the current height restrictions. Should Council approve heights above the Airport Height Restrictions, the site specific zoning amendment will include an H - Holding Provision limiting building heights to the current Airport Height restrictions until these restrictions have been lifted by Transport Canada.
- 7) The Proposed Development will have regard for any requirements of external agencies including, but not limited to, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (the "TRCA") and York Region.
- 8) The review and confirmation of any outstanding financial obligations including, but not limited to, tree replacement/compensation; public art; and consideration of density bonusing and community benefit contributions under Section 37 of the *Planning Act*.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Proposed Development will be reviewed in the context of the City's strategic priorities, including safe, sustainable and complete communities.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Applications have been circulated to various departments and external agencies and their requirements will be addressed as part of a future staff recommendation report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Biju Karumanchery, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning & Urban Design

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

ATTACHMENTS:

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

Figure 5: Conceptual Rendering

AGENT:

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