



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: March 7, 2022

SUBJECT: INTERIM REPORT, Applications by 1107656 Ontario Inc. (Times Group) for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit six (6) high rise apartment buildings along the west side of South Park Road, south of Highway 7, File No. PLAN 20 128679 (Ward 8)

PREPARED BY: Rick Cefaratti, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner, West District, (Ext. 3675)

REVIEWED BY: Clement Messere, MCIP, RPP
Acting West District Manager (Ext. 2191)

Stephen Lue, MCIP, RPP
Acting Senior Development Manager, (Ext. 2520)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Report entitled “INTERIM REPORT, Applications by 1107656 Ontario Inc. (Times Group) for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit six (6) high rise apartment buildings along the west side of South Park Road, south of Highway 7, File No. PLAN 20 128679 (Ward 8)”, be received; and,
2. That pursuant to Section 34(17) of the *Planning Act*, no further notice is required for the changes in the zoning by-law since the May 11, 2021, statutory Public Meeting.

PURPOSE:

This report provides information to address a resolution resulting from the statutory Public Meeting held on May 11, 2021 regarding Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications (the “Applications”) submitted by 1107656 Ontario Inc. (Times Group) (the “Owner”), to permit six (6) high rise apartment buildings (the “Proposed Development”) on the subject lands. This report does not include a staff opinion or recommendation with respect to the Applications. Staff will prepare a recommendation report for a future Development Service Committee (“DSC”) meeting.

Process to date:

1. Staff deemed the Applications complete on November 2, 2020. The *Planning Act* sets out the 120 day period after which an applicant can appeal an application to the Ontario Land Tribunal (the “OLT”) for a non-decision. This period ended on March 2, 2021, and the Owner is in a position to appeal the Applications for a non-decision to the OLT.

2. The DSC received the Preliminary Report on March 8, 2021.
3. The City held the statutory Public Meeting on May 11, 2021.
4. The Ward Councillor hosted a Community Information Meeting on October 27, 2021, when the Owner presented a revised Concept Plan that includes a proposed grocery store.

BACKGROUND:

Site and Area Context

The 6.6 ha (16.3 a.) subject lands are located on the west and southwest sides of South Park Road, between Highway 7 East and Highway 407 (the “Subject Lands”), as shown on Figures 1, 2, and 3. The Subject Lands contain no vegetation and are currently undeveloped. Figure 3 shows the surrounding land uses.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

At the May 11, 2021, statutory Public Meeting, the DSC received the Preliminary Report along with the oral and written communications, and adopted the following resolution:

“That the Applications by 1107656 Ontario Inc. (Times Group) for Official Plan and Zoning By-law 177-96, as amended, be referred back to staff for an interim report to Development Services Committee on the matters raised at the statutory public meeting, including:

- a. Overall population projected for the Leitchcroft community;*
- b. Co-location of the proposed future school block with municipal facilities or the proposed development;*
- c. Integration of publicly accessible community and commercial amenities such as a grocery store and recreation facilities;*
- d. Reduction in building heights through corresponding increase to the floor area ratio;*
- e. Anticipated retention of on-site jobs in conformity with applicable land use policies; and,*
- f. Incorporation of an automated vacuum collection system as part of the community waste management plan.”*

Staff advise as follows:

1. Overall population projected for the Leitchcroft community
Table 1 illustrates the total projected population that includes the current proposal:

| Table 1: Overall Population Projection | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unit Type | Existing No. of Units | Proposed No. of Units | Population |
| Semi-detached | 12 | 0 | 47 |
| Townhouse | 699 | 0 | 2,056 |
| Apartment | 3,304 | 2,603 | 11,814 |
| Total | 4,015 | 2,603 | 13,917* |

* The total projected population is derived by applying the following persons-per-unit (PPU) multipliers by unit type:

- 3.84 (Semi-detached)
- 2.94 (Townhouse)
- 2 (Apartment)

2. Co-location of the proposed future school block with municipal facilities or the Proposed Development

City staff have held discussions with York Region District School Board staff, who have advised that they are amenable to considering co-locating community facilities and services to accommodate the existing and future residents of Leitchcroft within the future school block (see Figure 4). The City of Markham's 2019 Integrated Leisure Master Plan supports the opportunity for co-locating community facilities together with school buildings.

3. Integration of a grocery store

The Owner assembled additional lands at the south west corner of Saddlecreek Drive and Highway 7 East. The Owner presented a conceptual site plan at the October 27, 2021 Community Information Meeting that includes a four-storey commercial building with a grocery store and additional opportunities for other retail and office uses (see Figure 5).

With the integration of the additional lands at the southwest corner of Saddlecreek Drive and Highway 7 East, the DSC must determine whether or not a second Public Meeting is warranted due to these changes. Staff recommend that a second Public Meeting is not required.

4. Reduction in building heights

The Owner advised that a formal resubmission of the plans and associated documents and studies will be made following this DSC meeting that would consider the following revisions to the Proposed Development, as shown on Figures 4 and 5:

- a) Reduce maximum building heights on the north block (Block 46) from 36-44 storeys to 34-42 storeys
- b) Reduce the total number of residential units for both north and south blocks (Block 46 and Part of Block 49) from 2,669 to 2,603
- c) A re-alignment of the proposed access/egress road (between the school block and Block 46) with the intersection of Gandhi Lane and South Park Road
- d) Integration of the additional lands at the southwest corner of Highway 7 and Saddlecreek Road

5. Anticipated retention of on-site jobs in conformity with applicable land use policies and opportunities to retain Employment uses

The March 8, 2021, Preliminary Report includes the applicable Official Plan policies as related to the Subject Lands and some of the matters to be addressed as part of the consideration of the Applications.

The Owner proposes to amend the 2014 Official Plan to re-designate the Subject Lands from “Business Park Office Priority Employment” and “Residential Mid Rise” to “Residential High Rise”. Recently, the Owner included additional non-contiguous lands that are conceptually shown on Figures 4 and 5 to include commercial uses. Consideration will be given to the appropriateness of re-designating the existing employment to accommodate the newly proposed commercial uses (i.e. grocery store, offices and other retail).

The Subject Lands were included as one of a number of employment land conversion requests considered by Markham Council prior to the adoption of the 2014 Official Plan. At that time, Markham Council approved the conversion in principle. York Region and the Owner reached a settlement in 2012 to confirm that the planning permissions for the Subject Lands could be determined through Markham’s Official Plan, or an application for site-specific local Official Plan Amendment (“OPA”).

Although under appeal at the Ontario Land Tribunal, Sections 9.6.4 and 9.6.5 of the 2014 Official Plan include site-specific policies relating to the Subject Lands (and all the other employment conversion sites). The site-specific policies deferred a land use designation for the Subject Lands until Markham Council decides on the Owner’s OPA application, Markham Council has subsequently allowed consideration of non-employment uses on designated employment lands and endorsed additional criteria when considering applications for conversion, as follows:

- a) compatibility with adjacent uses
- b) achieving an increase in number of jobs that would otherwise be provided under the “Employment Lands” designation on the site, or at a minimum no net reduction in jobs on the site
- c) proximity to transit and provisions for a VIVA terminal
- d) achieving better public amenities including Section 37 community benefits
- e) provision for affordable or seniors housing

The Owner provided the following information regarding projected employment targets for the Proposed Development:

| Table 2: Employment Targets for the Proposed Development | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Land Use | Proposed Space | Job/Space Ratio | Total Jobs |
| Office | 10,000 m ² | 1 job/17.5 m ² | 571 |
| School | Unknown | 50 jobs/school | 50 |
| Daycare | 750 m ² | 1 job/46.5 m ² | 16 |
| TOTAL | | | 637 |

Table 2 does not include any employment opportunities directly attributed to the proposed high rise residential towers, such as concierge, security, and property management, which would add to the job yield. These figures will require an update to include the proposed additional grocery store, associated retail, and service uses.

Matters related to the anticipated retention of on-site jobs in conformity with the applicable land use policies and opportunities to retain employment uses will continue to be reviewed as part of the processing of the Applications and will be addressed in a final Recommendation Report to DSC at a later date.

6. Incorporation of an Automated Vacuum Collection (“AVAC”) system as part of the community waste management plan

The Owner advised that they are amenable to consider the incorporation of an AVAC system and its related infrastructure. This waste collection system transports waste at high speed through underground pneumatic tubes to a collection station to facilitate separation and recycling of waste. The incorporation of an AVAC system within the Proposed Development will result in substantial changes to the plans. Prior to moving forward with any revision, the Owner seeks City commitment and coordination on the AVAC infrastructure location, within the public right-of-way and the Subject Lands.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Applications are being evaluated in the context of the City’s strategic priorities. Including Growth Management and Municipal Services.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Applications have been circulated to various City departments and external agencies and are currently under review.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Biju Karumanchery, MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning and Urban Design

Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1 – Location Map

Figure 2 – Area Context/Zoning

Figure 3 – Aerial Photo (2020)

Figure 4 – Revised Conceptual Site Plan

Figure 5 – Four Storey Commercial Building and Grocery Store