



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: September 12, 2022

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION REPORT, Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc., Application for Zoning By-law Amendment to permit three industrial warehouse buildings at 1 Steelcase Road West, File No. PLAN 21 143519 (Ward 8)

PREPARED BY: Hailey Miller
Planner I, West District (Ext. 2945)

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

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report dated September 12, 2022, titled, “Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc., Application for Zoning By-law Amendment to permit three industrial warehouse buildings at 1 Steelcase Road West, File No. PLAN 21 143519 (Ward 8)”, be received;
2. THAT the amendment to Zoning By-law 108-81, as amended, be approved and the draft site-specific implementing Zoning By-law, attached as Appendix ‘A’, be finalized and enacted without further notice;
3. THAT in accordance with the provisions of subsection 45(1.4) of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13, as amended, the Owner shall, through this Resolution, be permitted to apply to the Committee of Adjustment for a variance from the provisions of the Zoning By-law attached as Appendix ‘A’ to this report, before the second anniversary of the day on which the By-law was approved by Council;
4. AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends approval of the Zoning By-law Amendment application submitted by Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc. to permit three industrial warehouse buildings on the lands municipally known as 1 Steelcase Road West.

In 2013, Markham Council approved site-specific Official Plan Amendment No. 207 (“OPA 207”) and site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment 2013-45 (“By-law 2013-45”), related to development applications filed by a previous landowner (Liberty Development Corporation), who did not proceed with their approved development. Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc. proposes to return the subject lands to the original “Select Industrial (M)” zoning prior to 2013, with site-specific development standards related to building height, landscaped open space, open storage, and parking.

Staff opine that the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is appropriate and represents good planning. The proposed development maintains and enhances the employment uses existing on site,

and is in keeping with the surrounding area, predominantly comprised of industrial, commercial, and office uses.

PURPOSE:

This report recommends approval of the Zoning By-law Amendment application (the “Application”) submitted by Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc. (the “Owner”), to facilitate the development of three industrial warehouse buildings (the “Proposed Development”) on the subject lands.

Process to Date

Applications submitted in support of the proposal include a Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan application.

- Staff deemed the Application complete on November 29, 2021.
- The Owner submitted a Site Plan application (File SPC 21 143512) that is currently under review.
- The Development Services Committee (the “DSC”) received the Preliminary Report on April 11, 2022.
- The statutory virtual Public Meeting was held on May 10, 2022.

The 90-day period set out in the *Planning Act* before the Owner can appeal the Application to the Ontario Land Tribunal (the “OLT”) for a non-decision ended on February 27, 2022. Accordingly, the Owner is in a position to appeal the Application to the OLT.

Next Steps

If the DSC chooses to support the Application, then the planning process will include the following next steps:

- Detailed review of the Site Plan Control application by Staff.
- Issuance of Site Plan Endorsement by Staff.
- Execution of a Site Plan Agreement by the Owner.
- Issuance of Site Plan Approval by Staff.

BACKGROUND:**Subject Lands and Area Context**

The 12.1 ha (29.9 ac) subject lands are located at the southwest corner of Steelcase Road West and Woodbine Avenue (the “Subject Lands”), as shown on Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Subject Lands have approximate frontages of 425 m along Steelcase Road West, 275 m along Woodbine Avenue, and 500 m along Idema Road. One two-storey 64,182 m² industrial building currently occupies the Subject Lands. Surrounding land uses include predominantly industrial, commercial, and office uses as shown on Figure 2.

History of Previous Approvals

In 2012, 2145312 Ontario Inc. (Liberty Development Corporation) submitted Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications (Files OP and ZA 12 115839) to permit a phased mixed-use commercial/office development that consisted of three office buildings (15, 16, and 17 storeys), a 17-storey hotel, a three level parking structure, a two-storey retail building, and two free-standing restaurants. These applications were approved in 2013, but Liberty Development Corporation did not advance the proposal. Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc. subsequently acquired the Subject Lands.

PROPOSAL:

The Owner proposes to revert the zoning of the Subject Lands to the previous “Select Industrial” (M) zone with site-specific exceptions. This would facilitate the development of three industrial warehouse buildings with a Gross Floor Area (“GFA”) of 70,727 m² (761,300 ft²) (the “Proposed Development”) and demolish approximately 35,340 m² (380,397 ft²) of the 64,182 m² (690,849 ft²) existing industrial building. The two-storey portion of the existing industrial building will be retained and upgraded with façade changes and interior alterations (Building 1). The Owner proposes six vehicular accesses from Steelcase Road West and Idema Road with no access from Woodbine Avenue. Table 1 summarizes the Proposed Development.

TABLE 1: Key Statistics - Proposed Development	
GFA	Building 1: 31,284 m ² (336,738 ft ²) Building 2: 18,060 m ² (194,399 ft ²) Building 3: 24,576 m ² (254,308 ft ²)
Number of Industrial Units	Building 1: Two units Building 2: Two units Building 3: One unit
Building Height	17 m
Landscaped Open Space	Woodbine Avenue: 6 m Idema Road: 3 m Steelcase Road West: 2.1 m
Parking Spaces	583

The Subject Lands are located in proximity to the Woodbine Avenue and Steeles Avenue gateway, as identified in the City’s Gateway Master Plan. As part of the Proposed Development, and through consultation with City Staff, the Owner proposes a public art wall to be located between Building 2 and 3, as shown on Figure 8. The proposed art wall will front along Woodbine Avenue and will screen the internal loading area, which will be discussed further in the Discussion section of this report.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION:

A statutory virtual Public Meeting was held on May 10, 2022. There were no comments from the public with respect to the Application. The following is a summary of the matters raised by the DSC members:

- a) The massing of Building 2 and 3 proposed along Woodbine Avenue should be “broken-up” by adding architectural features on the corners of the buildings;
- b) With respect to the proposed public art wall:
 - i) Confirm how the proposed public art wall will be commissioned and managed;
 - ii) Suggest the extension of the public art wall length between Building 2 and 3;
 - iii) Suggest making the public art wall more visible, showcasing it as much as possible, rather than locating it behind extensive plantings.

The Discussion section of this report outlines how these matters have been addressed or considered.

PLANNING POLICY AND REGULATORY CONTEXT:

The Application is subject to a planning policy framework established by the Province, York Region, and City of Markham under the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990. The following describes how the Application meets the respective policies and regulations:

Provincial Policy FrameworkThe *Planning Act*

Section 45(1.3) of the *Planning Act* restricts a landowner from applying for a Minor Variance Application to the Committee of Adjustment within two years of the day on which a Zoning By-law comes into effect. It also permits Council to pass a resolution to allow an Applicant to apply for a Minor Variance(s) within two years of the passing of a By-law.

The Owner has requested that Council grant exemption from subsection 45(1.4) of the *Planning Act*, which will permit applications for Minor Variances within two years of enactment of the draft Zoning By-law Amendment, attached as Appendix 'A'. The Proposed Development may be further refined through the Site Plan Approval process, which could trigger the need for a Minor Variance request. Staff will have the opportunity to review the appropriateness of any requested Minor Variances should such applications be made in the future. This provision is included in the Resolution of Council.

Regional Policy FrameworkYork Region Official Plan (the "2010 ROP")

Map 1 of the 2010 ROP designates the Subject Lands 'Urban Area', which permits a wide range of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Staff are satisfied that the Proposed Development conforms to the 2010 ROP.

Official Plan2014 Markham Official Plan ("2014 Official Plan")

The 2014 Markham Official Plan designates the Subject Lands "Commercial" and permits a broad range of commercial uses including large format retail, complementary retail, service, and office uses, restaurants, banquet halls, financial institutions, light manufacturing, and processing and warehousing. The Proposed Development conforms to the 2014 Official Plan.

Existing and Proposed Zoning By-law

By-law 108-81, as amended, zones the Subject Lands "Business Corridor" (B.C.) (H1)(H2)(H3). Site-specific By-law 2013-45 rezoned the Subject Lands from "Select Industrial" (M) to "Business Corridor" (B.C.)(H1)(H2)(H3). The existing zoning was intended to facilitate a previous development concept that was not pursued. The Owner submitted the Application to return the Subject Lands to the original "Select Industrial" (M) zone under Zoning By-law 108-81, as amended.

The "Select Industrial" (M) zone permits uses including, but not limited to, warehousing, manufacturing, data processing, research laboratories, printing establishments, and other industrial uses. The Application also proposes site-specific development standards related to maximum building height, minimum landscaped open space, and open storage to facilitate the Proposed Development. The Owner additionally proposes the following site-specific parking rates:

- i) Net floor area of each premises up to 1,200 m²: 1 parking space per 40 m² or portion thereof of net floor area.
- ii) Net floor area of each premises between 1,200 m² and 6,000 m²: 1 parking space per 100 m² or portion thereof of net floor area.
- iii) Net floor area of each premises in excess of 6,000 m²: 1 parking space per 215 m² or portion thereof of net floor area.

The proposed parking rates would result in a 14-space parking reduction, which City Transportation Staff support. All other uses will be subject to the minimum parking rates required under the City's Parking Standards By-law (28-97). Appendix 'A' shows the draft Zoning By-law Amendment.

DISCUSSION:

The following section identifies how the matters raised through the review process, including those raised at the statutory Public Meeting, have been resolved or considered.

a) Streetscape Along Woodbine Avenue

The DSC discussed the potential to break-up the massing of Building 2 and 3 by enhancing the corners of the buildings. In response, the Owner revised their building elevations to include enhanced architectural features on the corners of Building 2 and 3 to create greater visual interest along Woodbine Avenue (see Figure 5).

b) Landscaped Open Space

The Owner proposes reduced landscaped open space buffers, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Landscaped Open Space Requirement Comparison		
	Zoning By-law 108-81	Proposed Zoning By-law
Landscaped Open Space	Woodbine Avenue: 9 m Idema Road: 6 m Steelcase Road West: 6 m	Woodbine Avenue: 6 m Idema Road: 3 m Steelcase Road West: 2.1 m

Woodbine Avenue: The Owner's first submission proposed a 3 m landscaped buffer along Woodbine Avenue. Through consultation with Staff, the Owner increased the buffer to 6 m, which provides sufficient space for enhanced landscape along Woodbine Avenue. The Owner also proposes an increased buffer for a portion of Woodbine Avenue in front of the proposed public art wall (see Figure 4) that would contribute to the streetscape and pedestrian experience.

Idema Road: The proposed landscaped open space buffer along Idema Road ranges from 3 m to 14.4 m. While the Owner proposes a minimum 3 m landscaped buffer, a large portion of the Idema Road frontage provides for a landscape buffer greater than the By-law requirement.

Steelcase Road West: The proposed landscaped buffer along Steelcase Road West ranges from 2.1 m to 3.7 m. The existing site currently provides 0 m landscape buffers in the location of the retained portion of the existing building (Building 1). The proposed 2.1 m landscape buffer represents an improvement to the existing site condition.

Staff support the reduced landscape buffers and will continue to work with the Owner thorough the Site Plan application process to ensure the buffers are appropriately enhanced.

c) Public Art Wall

The Subject Lands are located within proximity to the Woodbine Avenue and Steeles Avenue gateway in Markham's Gateway Master Plan, which identifies important gateways, provides design frameworks for creating noteworthy entry points into Markham, and offers design direction for gateway development.

The Owner agreed to provide a public art wall located between Building 2 and 3, and along Woodbine Avenue. At the statutory Public Meeting, the DSC suggested that the proposed landscaping in front of the public art wall be revised to ensure views to the public art wall are not obstructed. In response to this comment, and through consultation with Staff, the Owner revised their plans to show low-height plantings. In addition, parking stalls originally located in front of the art wall have been removed. Overall, this will contribute to a better sense of place, and create an enhanced streetscape and pedestrian experience along Woodbine Avenue.

Final details, including the implementation and management of the public art wall, will be finalized through the on-going Site Plan Approval process, in consultation with the City's Public Art Coordinator.

d) Transportation Review

Transportation Engineering Staff are satisfied with the recommendation of the Transportation Impact Study (TIS) and parking analysis, which proposed a 14-space parking reduction.

e) Site Plan Application is Under Review

The Owner submitted a Site Plan application (File SPC 21 143512) in November 2021, to facilitate the Proposed Development and is currently addressing comments from the second submission including, but not limited to, building elevations, landscaping, proposed public art wall, and sustainability measures. In accordance with the City's Delegation By-law, approval of this SPA is delegated to the Director of Planning and Urban Design, or a designate.

York Region Approval

The Subject Lands front Woodbine Avenue, which is under York Region's jurisdiction. The Owner has agreed to York Region's land conveyance request for the future road improvements along Woodbine Avenue. York Region advises "no objections" to the approval of the Application. York Region will continue to review the associated Site Plan Control application.

MTO Approval

The Subject Lands are located within MTO's permit control area. MTO has confirmed that they have no objection to the Application.

TRCA Approval

A portion of the Subject Lands are located within the TRCA's Regulated Area. TRCA has confirmed that while further review of the Proposed Development is required through the associated Site Plan Control application, the TRCA have no objection to the approval of the Application.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the discussion above, Staff recommend adoption of the proposed Zoning By-law amendment attached as Appendix 'A'.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Application is being evaluated in the context of the City's strategic priorities, including Growth Management and Municipal Services.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Application has been circulated to various City departments and external agencies and are currently under review.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Stephen Lue, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Acting Director, Planning and 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 – Aerial Photo (2020)
Figure 4 – Conceptual Site Plan
Figure 5 – Conceptual Elevations Building 1
Figure 6 – Conceptual Elevations Building 2
Figure 7 – Conceptual Elevations Building 3
Figure 8 – Location of Public Art Wall

APPENDICES:

Appendix 'A' – Draft Zoning By-law Amendment

OWNER:

Steelcase Road West Holdings Inc. C/O Gus Tsoraklidis
99 Bay Street Unit 4900
Toronto, ON, M5L 1G2
Tel: 905-798-7387

APPLICANT/AGENT:

IBI Group C/O Catriona Moggach
55 St. Clair Avenue W, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON, M4V 2Y7
Tel: 416-596-1930