

Report to: Development Services Committee Meeting Date: September 12, 2022

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Application for Zoning By-law Amendment submitted by the Regional Municipality of York to facilitate the development of a road operations and snow management facility at 10988 –

10990 Warden Avenue (Ward 2) File No.: PLAN 21 119856

PREPARED BY: Daniel Brutto MCIP, RPP, CPT, ext. 2468

Sr. Planner II, West District

REVIEWED BY: Clement Messere, MCIP, RPP, ext. 2191

Development Manager, West District

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the staff report, dated September 12, 2022, titled "RECOMMENDATION REPORT, Application for Zoning By-law Amendment submitted by the Regional Municipality of York to facilitate the development of a road operations and snow management facility at 10988 to 10990 Warden Avenue (Ward 2), File No.: PLAN 20 119856", be received;

- 2) THAT the application submitted by the Regional Municipality of York to amend Zoning By-law 304-87, as amended, be approved and the draft Zoning By-law attached hereto as Appendix 'A', be finalized and brought forward to a future Council meeting to be enacted without further notice;
- 3) THAT in accordance with the provisions of subsections 45 (1.4) of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13, as amended, the Regional Municipality of York shall through this Resolution, be permitted to apply to the Committee of Adjustment for a variance from the provisions of the accompanying Zoning By-law, 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.

Meeting Date: September 12, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends approval of the Zoning By-law Amendment application submitted by the Regional Municipality of York ("York Region") to facilitate the development of a road operations and snow management facility (the Southeast District Maintenance Yard and Snow Management Facility – the "Facility"), as shown on Figures 4 and 5.

The statutory Public Meeting was held on November 30, 2021, and no comments were made by members of the public. However, the Development Services Committee had questions related to what municipalities the Facility would serve, whether the Facility would replace the existing Richmond Hill site, whether fuel would be kept on site, whether there are any active surrounding development proposals, conveyance of the valley lands on the Subject Lands and landscaping treatment. Written comments were received by the City from an area landowner (Romandale Farms Ltd.) on April 20, 2022. A summary of how these matters have been addressed and considered is provided in the Discussion section of this report.

Staff opine that the draft Zoning By-law (Appendix 'A') is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, conforms to all applicable Provincial, Regional and Municipal Plans, represent good planning and is in the public interest. Staff recommend that the draft Zoning By-law, attached as Appendix 'A', be brought forward to a future Council meeting once the Zoning By-law has been finalized.

PURPOSE:

This report provides an overview, evaluation and a staff recommendation with regard to the Zoning By-law Amendment application (the "Application") submitted by York Region (the "Owner").

Process to Date

- October 2021 Application deemed complete and circulated for review
- November 2021 Preliminary Report to the DSC
- November 30, 2021 Statutory Public Meeting
- March 2022 Revised plans/studies submitted for review

The 120-day period set out in the Planning Act before the Owner can appeal the Application to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) for a non-decision ended on January 28, 2022. Accordingly, the Owner is in a position to appeal the Applications to the OLT.

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

- a) The draft Zoning By-law attached hereto as Appendix 'A', will be finalized and brought forward to a future Council meeting.
- b) The accompanying site plan application (SPC 21 119856) meets the requirements for delegation to the Director of Planning and Urban Design, or designate, in accordance with Delegation By-law 2002-202, as amended.

BACKGROUND:

Location and Area Context

The approximately 22.57 ha (56 ac) subject lands consist of two properties (10988 and 10990 Warden Avenue) that are situated approximately 515 m north of Elgin Mills Road with 230 m frontage along Warden Avenue (the "Subject Lands"), as shown in Figure 1. The Subject Lands are primarily used for agricultural operations, except for two regional salt domes located in the north east corner (the "Existing Public Use"), as shown in Figures 2 and 3. Three headwater drainage features exist on the Subject Lands with a Provincially Significant Wetland ("PSW"). The Existing Public Use, which did not require a Zoning By-law Amendment, received Site Plan Approval in 2018, and supplements the York Region North District Road Maintenance Facility in Richmond Hill. Figure 3 identifies the surrounding existing land uses.

PROPOSAL:

The Application seeks to permit outdoor storage and accessory office uses and site-specific development standards to facilitate the development of the Subject Lands, as reflected in the draft Zoning By-law (See Appendix 'A'). The Facility is required to meet the immediate needs of York Region's Roads Operations and to accommodate the long-term growth and transportation and safety needs of the Region's Southeast District to serve Markham and portions of Stouffville and Richmond Hill (See Figures 4/4A/4B/4C/4D and 5). Proposed private water and wastewater would service the Facility.

The Application also facilitates the realignment of the headwater drainage features, protects a PSW and the 30 m vegetation protection zone, earmarks lands for future development/phases, and protects for a new north-south collector road identified in the City's Future Urban Area ("FUA") Conceptual Master Plan ("CMP") (See Figure 6). *Passive House* is a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which reduces the building's ecological footprint and results in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling. Portions of the Facility are intended to achieve LEED Silver certification with Buildings A and B (office and garage) as one of Canada's first Passive House public works building.

Public Consultation

No comments were received by the public at the November 30, 2021, statutory Public Meeting. However, the DSC had the following questions:

- a) What development applications have been received to date in this area?
- b) Would the valleylands be be conveyed to the City?
- c) What landscaping is proposed along the northern property line?
- d) What municipalities the Facility would serve?
- e) Would the Facility replace the existing Richmond Hill facility?
- f) Would fuel be kept on site?

Written comments were received from Romandale Farms Ltd., an area landowner, on April 20, 2022. The Discussion Section of this report summarizes how these matters were addressed.

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PLANNING POLICY ANALYSIS:

The Application is subject to provincial, regional, and municipal planning policies, as summarized below.

Provincial Policy Framework

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 ("2020 PPS")

The 2020 PPS provides direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development and includes building strong healthy communities with an emphasis on efficient development and land use patterns, wise use and management of resources, and protecting public health and safety. In summary, the Application is consistent with the 2020 PPS as it ensures transportation corridors are safely maintained in a strategic location of the settlement area that meets the current and projected needs of the City and Region. Furthermore, the implementing site-specific Zoning By-law would:

- a) protect the natural heritage features by zoning them Open Space to prohibit development
- b) utilize the Holding provision to protect an area of archeological interest and for future infrastructure corridors, such as the planned north-south collector road

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 ("Growth Plan 2020")

The Growth Plan 2020 provides a framework for implementing the Province's vision for building strong, prosperous communities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe to 2051 by building compact, vibrant and complete communities, developing a strong competitive economy, protecting and wise use of natural resources, and optimizing the use of existing and new infrastructure to support growth in an efficient form. The Application conforms to the Growth Plan 2020 as it supports and assists with safely maintaining infrastructure of the planned growth of the Greater Golden Horseshoe within the built up area. Furthermore, the Application is informed by the North Markham Future Urban Area Sub Watershed Study with identified key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features including their vegetative protection zones. The implementing site specific Zoning By-law would:

- a) utilize the Open Space One Zone to prohibit development within the Greenbelt Plan Area and prohibit development within key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features including their vegetative protection zones
- b) utilize the Holding Provision to protects an area of archeological interest and protects for future infrastructure corridors, such as the planned north-south collector road

The Greenbelt Plan, 2017 (the "Greenbelt Plan")

The Greenbelt Plan provides specific land use policies on where urban growth will not occur in order to provide for the permanent protection of agriculture and the natural environment. The Natural Heritage Network lands associated with the Berczy Creek along the western property line of the Subject Lands fall within the Greenbelt Plan Area. The Application conforms with the Greenbelt Plan given it has identified key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, including their vegetative protection zones, and the

implementing site specific Zoning By-law prohibits development within the Greenbelt Plan Area using the Open Space One Zone.

Regional Policy Framework

York Region Official Plan, 2010 ("YROP 2010")

The YROP 2010 includes policies that guide land-use planning consistent with the requirements of the Growth Plan 2020 to encourage high quality urban design, attractive buildings, landscape, and public streetscapes. Map 1 of the YROP 2010 designates the Subject Lands "Urban Area" with a small portion along the western property line within the Greenbelt Plan Boundary.

The Application represents a public infrastructure investment that supports job creation, economic vitality, and the Region's transit corridors. Through its review, key natural heritage and hydrologic features and their vegetative protection zones are identified with protection of the PSW outside of the Regional Greenlands System. The Application integrates green infrastructure with one of the first Passive House public works buildings in Canada and it intends to obtain LEED Silver certification and is compatible with the planned function of the FUA. Therefore, the Application conforms to the YROP 2010.

Draft York Region Official Plan, 2022 ("YROP 2022")

York Region Council, in June 2022, adopted the YROP 2022 that was forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. When approved, the YROP 2022 will replace the YROP 2010. Map 1 of the YROP 2022 designates the Subject Lands "Urban Area", "Regional Greenlands System" with a small portion along the western property line within the Greenbelt Plan Boundary.

City of Markham Policy Framework: Markham Official Plan, 2014 ("2014 Official Plan")

The 2014 Official Plan sets out policies to guide future development and manage growth by providing a policy framework for Council decisions on the use of land, the provision of the municipal services required to support growth, and the phasing of development. The 2014 Official Plan designates the Subject Lands "Future Employment Area" and "Greenway". The Application conforms to the 2014 Official Plan based on the following policy considerations:

- a) Section 1.4.1 outlines the City's strategic priorities, including the protection of the natural environment and provision for municipal services.
- b) Section 2.2.1 establishes the goal to protect the natural environment and agricultural lands and Policy 2.2.5.2 states "To manage growth and development through monitoring, phasing and the concurrent delivery of public infrastructure and community services."
- c) Policy 5.1.1.1 d) seeks to ensure the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and forecasted employment needs and Policy 5.1.5.2 requires a supportive land use planning environment for the operational needs of industry.
- d) Policy 7.1.1.1 requires the City to work in cooperation with York Region and the Province to develop a sustainable and accessible transportation system for users of all ages and abilities and: a) effectively and safely accommodates the demand for

- person trips within and beyond Markham and increases travel choices, with particular emphasis on pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders; and b) supports an efficient, safe and integrated road and rail network for goods movement and service delivery; and c) supports energy efficient means of travel for both people and goods.
- e) Section 8.1 states "To ensure that the City and other senior government agencies and service and utility providers are able to deliver mandated services and facilities in an orderly and cost efficient manner, certain services and facilities are provided for in all land use designations unless otherwise stipulated in a specific land use designation or policy."
- f) Policy 8.1.1 permits "municipal service including an underground service, and utility, operation and maintenance facility" in all designations.

Though the "Future Employment Area" designation and its associated policies (Section 8.12) require the approval of a secondary plan prior to any development approval for urban uses, when read in its entirety, the intent of the 2014 Official Plan is clear respecting the Facility - not to delay, but provide flexibility to ensure it can locate strategically to serve their catchment areas in a timely and cost effective manner. It recognizes the importance of these types of facilities in serving the existing and the anticipated growth in the population/employment base. It places a strong emphasis on maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system, which the Facility helps achieve.

Zoning

By-law 304-87, as amended, zones the Subject Lands "Agriculture One (A1)" and "Open Space One (O1)" (see Figure 3). Public uses are permitted in any zone; however, certain uses by a public authority are not permitted including, but not limited to, open storage and offices. The Application seeks to permit the Facility's outdoor storage and accessory office components. The implementing site-specific Zoning By-law would:

- i) require the outdoor storage component to be screened from public view
- ii) prohibit development within the City's Greenway System including the Rouge Watershed Protection Area and Greenbelt Plan using the Open Space zone
- iii) protect an area of archeological interest and the core linkage enhancements (ecological corridor) identified within the City's Greenway System using a Holding provision
- iv) protect for future infrastructure corridors, such as the planned north-south collector road using a hold provision and the widening of Warden Avenue.

DISCUSSION:

Matters raised by the public and DSC members

- 1. The DSC questioned if there have been any development applications received to date in this area
 - To date, there are no active development applications on or within the area of the Subject Lands.
- 2. The DSC suggested the valleylands be conveyed to the City
 - The valleylands form a part of the City's Natural Heritage Network, which is a component of the City's Greenway System. The 2014 Official Plan (Policy 3.1.2.4) seeks the conveyance of lands to the City within the Natural Heritage Network as part

of the development approval process to ensure the long term stewardship and maintenance of natural heritage lands.

Staff do not recommend the conveyance of the valleylands into City ownership at this time because they are landlocked and with the majority remaining in existing agricultural operations. Staff recommended to the Owner to restore all non-vegetated lands within the Greenway System as part of the Application approval. While the Application does propose to restore the PSW buffers, the Owner advised that the restoration of the non-vegetated lands at the rear of the Subject Lands should be reviewed in the future when the abutting lands are developed. While Staff do not object to the Owner's response, Staff continue to opine that the acceleration of the valleyland restoration works would support both Regional and Municipal environmental objectives. As such, Staff recommend that the conveyance of valleylands to City ownership be reviewed at a future date.

3. The DSC suggested a mix of deciduous and coniferous landscape be included along the northern property line

The submitted revised landscape plan as part of the Site Plan application includes a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees along the north property line that assists in screening the Facility from public view, which is included as a 10 m wide landscape strip standard in the draft Zoning By-law (Appendix 'A').

- 4. Through a written submission, Romandale Farms Ltd., raised the following questions:
 - a) How the Facility can proceed in advance of the completing of the secondary plan?
 Refer to the Planning Policy Analysis section.
 - b) Given that a realigned headwater drainage feature is a natural heritage feature, why is the zoning classification proposed for *General Industrial* and not for *Open Space*?
 - The realigned headwater drainage feature in the central portion of the Subject Lands is proposed to be zoned Open Space One (O1), which prohibits urban development (see Appendix 'A').
 - c) How is the Facility going to be serviced? How can the Region's application be approved prior to the completion of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment?
 - Private water and wastewater services are currently proposed, but through the Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking, the City will require the Facility to connect to municipal services once they are made available.
 - The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks ("MECP") confirmed that the Facility is exempt from the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act* (the "EA Act") and the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment.
 - d) What contaminants are anticipated by the Region and the review agencies for the Facility?
 - The Environmental Impact Statement states, "Due to the proposed storage of contaminated snow and road salt and increased impervious surfaces (roads, parking areas, and buildings), runoff may contain elevated chloride levels, among other chemical contaminants." Mitigation strategies to address this

impact are documented in the submitted Environmental Impact Statement and Stormwater Management Report. Staff have accepted these reports and through the Site Plan process their recommendations will be secured through the Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking.

- e) What background studies and reports did York Region provide to support the permission for the Existing Public Use? For instance, did York Region ever submit the requisite Environmental Impact Statements required to support the Existing Public Use?
 - Given the Existing Public Use's distance from any natural heritage features (over 120 m), an Environmental Impact Statement was not required by the City.
 - In support of the Existing Public Use Site Plan, submitted were a Stormwater Management Brief, Salt Management Plan, Tree Inventory and Planting Plan, Site Grading Plan, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, Survey Plan, and Site Plan.
- f) How the Proposal fits into the plan for jobs in the FUA Employment Block? How is it possible to establish given that a secondary plan has not been approved?
 - Refer to the Planning Policy Analysis section.
 - The Facility accommodates over 30 on-site and 40 contract jobs for York Region employees.

Matters raised by City Staff and Public Agencies

1. The Future Employment Area collector road network has been considered

The FUA CMP anticipates that a future north-south collector road will bisect the Subject Lands and an east-west collector road will be located to the north of the Subject Lands (See Figure 6). The future alignments of the collector roads are subject to the completion of the Master Environmental Servicing Plan ("MESP") and Municipal Class Environmental Assessment ("MCEA"). Staff have worked closely with the Owner to identify potential alignment alternatives and site plan options to ensure the Application adequately considers the future collector roads. This work involved communications with the MECP, who confirmed that the Facility is exempt from the EA Act requirements and the MCEA.

Regarding the future north-south collector road conceptually shown bisecting the western half of the Subject Lands, the Application includes a number of considerations, including:

- a) No proposed permanent structures in proximity to the conceptual alignment in the FUA CMP
- b) The draft Zoning By-law (Appendix 'A') includes a Holding provision on the area surrounding the conceptual alignment that states no person shall erect or alter any building or structure on the Subject Lands until the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for the north-south collector road (from Elgin Mills Road to 19th Avenue) within the Employment Block of the North Markham Future Urban Area, has been approved by the MECP.
- c) The Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking will include a clause that requires the Owner to remove any structures or facilities at their cost, should the preferred alignment confirmed through the MCEA interfere with them.

2. The limits of development have been established based on an accepted Environmental Impact Study ("EIS") and Headwater Drainage Assessment ("HDA").

The EIS prepared by Dougan and Associates has determined the limits of development in accordance with the 2014 Official Plan. The draft Zoning By-law prohibits development within the City's Greenway System including the Rouge Watershed Protection Area, Greenbelt Plan, and the Natural Heritage Network by zoning these lands Open Space One Zone (See Appendix 'A').

The HDA prepared by Niblett Environmental Associates Inc. identified three headwater drainage features ("HDF") on the Subject Lands (See Figure 3). One of the three segments (HDF BE2-H4), which is located on the eastern portion of the Subject Lands, is characterized as Conservation under the TRCA's Headwater Drainage Feature Assessment protocol. The Conservation management designation for this segment requires the reach to remain on the landscape, but allows for realignment to occur. The realignment will result in a net gain of approximately 0.05 ha vegetated area and is proposed to be zoned Open Space One (O1), which prohibits urban development (see Appendix A)

The other two segments are classified as Mitigation that allows for replication and realignment, while maintaining existing hydrological and ecological functions (Niblett, 2016). Mitigation features are not required to remain as 'open' features.

3. TRCA and York Region approval required for the accompanying Site Plan application The Subject Lands are located within a TRCA Regulated Area. The TRCA does not object to the Application in principle.

A permit is required from the TRCA prior to any development taking place on the subject property pursuant to Ontario Regulation166/06 – Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses.

The Subject Lands abut Warden Avenue, a Regional right-of-way. Prior to undertaking any work adjacent to or within the right-of-way, York Region must be in receipt of a Site Plan Approval/Site Plan Endorsement and a Road Occupancy Permit.

- 4. <u>Cultural Heritage matters will be secured through the Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking</u> There was a barn on the Subject Lands which was listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (See Figure 3). Council supported its removal subject to certain conditions related to the new construction approvals (See Appendix 'B'). Staff will seek to secure the following conditions through the Site Plan process and the Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking:
 - A commitment to salvage selected elements of the barn to incorporate into one of the proposed new buildings on the Subject Lands (i.e. the office) or possibly as decorative landscape features
 - b) A commitment to advertise the availability of the barn structures/materials (that are not needed for a) for possible re-use elsewhere to avoid the materials going to landfill

- c) Agreeing through the Site Plan process to provide a Markham Remembered interpretive plaque describing the history of the lands, to be installed in a visible location on the property
- d) That a Heritage Impact Assessment copy be provided to the Markham Museum archives

5. Stage 4 Site-Specific Archeological Assessment Required

The Stage 3 Archeological Assessment completed recommends that a Stage 4 Archeological Assessment be completed for a site-specific area identified in the central portion of the Subject Lands where no development is proposed (See Figure 4). A total of 6,652 Euro-Canadian artifacts characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century and one pre-contact Indigenous lithic artifact were recovered. Seven potential cultural features were also documented. The Subject Lands, therefore, meets the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport criteria of a site type with further cultural heritage value or interest and a Stage 4 Archeological Assessment is required.

To ensure the site-specific area is protected from development, the draft Zoning By-law (Appendix 'A') includes a Holding provision that states no person shall erect or alter any building or structure on the Subject Lands until the completion of a Stage 4 Site-Specific Archeological Assessment and implementation of any recommendations from the Study to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Director of Planning and Urban Design.

6. The proposed ecological corridor will be protected

The 2014 Official Plan identifies a Core Linkage Enhancement (Berczy-Bruce Ecological Corridor) that is intended to protect and enhance east-west ecological connectivity in the Rouge Watershed, as reflected in the FUA CMP "Proposed Ecological Corridor (Under Study)" designation (Figure 6). As part of the North Markham Subwatershed Study, preliminary work has been undertaken to review the precise alignment of the Core Linkage Enhancement that may require certain portions of the Subject Lands be protected from development in the draft Zoning By-law. Staff anticipate that a final recommendation regarding the Core Linkage Enhancement will be provided as part of the preparation of the Secondary Plan and MESP for the FUA, which is expected to be initiated in 2023.

To this effect, the draft Zoning By-law includes a Holding provision on a 30 m-wide strip of land at the south end of the Subject Lands closest to the proposed ecological corridor that states no person shall erect or alter any building or structure on lands subject to the Holding provision until a technical study, such as a MESP, has been completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Urban Design, to identify the recommended alignment ecological corridor.

7. <u>Urban Design matters are under review through the accompanying Site Plan application</u> Staff continue to review matters related to the building elevations, landscaping and screening through the Site Plan process, which will be secured through the Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking. The draft Zoning By-law in Appendix 'A' includes a

limitation to building height, a minimum landscape strip width, and the requirement to screen the outdoor storage from public view.

CONCLUSION:

The Application facilitates the development of a road operations and snow management facility known as the Southeast District Maintenance Yard and Snow Management Facility (See Figures 4 and 5). The Application is required to permit the outdoor storage and accessory office components of the Facility described in this report. Based on the analysis and discussion within this report, staff opine that the Application is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, conforms to all applicable Provincial, Regional and Municipal plans, represents good planning, and is in the public interest. Staff recommend that the draft Zoning By-law, attached as Appendix 'A', be brought forward to a future Council meeting once the Zoning By-law has been finalized.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Application has been reviewed in the context of the City's Strategic Priorities of Safe Sustainable and Complete Community.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Application was circulated to internal City Departments and External Agencies. Their requirements have been reflected in the draft Zoning By-law in Appendix 'A'. Other requirements identified through the Site Plan application, will be secured through the Site Plan Agreement/Undertaking.

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, Development Services

Meeting Date: September 12, 2022

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Area Context/Zoning

Figure 3: Aerial Photo Figure 4: Site Plan

Figure 4A: Buildings AB and D Site Plan

Figure 4B: Building C Site Plan Figure 4C: Refueling Facility Plan

Figure 4D: Snow Management Facility Site Plan

Figure 5: Block Plan

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Figure 6: FUA Community Structure Plan

Figure 7: 2014 Official Plan Map 3 Extract - Land Use

Appendix 'A': Draft Zoning By-law Amendment

Appendix 'B': Resolution Extract of Council Meeting No. 1 dated January 28, 2020

APPLICANT/AGENT:

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