

December 19, 2024

**BY EMAIL [APrasad@markham.ca](mailto:APrasad@markham.ca) & DELIVERED**

City of Markham  
Development Services Department  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, Ontario  
L3R 9W3

Attn: Mr. A. Prasad, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner of Development Services

**RE: Special Meeting of Council - City of Markham Official Plan Review (Jan.23.2025)  
Former Toronto Buttonville Airport Lands - City of Markham, Region of York**

Dear Mr. Prasad.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my input on the City's timely Official Plan Review now underway in keeping with the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. (PPS, 2024). As I will be out of the country for the upcoming January 23<sup>rd</sup> public meeting, this represents my professional opinion on the best and highest use of the former Toronto Buttonville Airport lands ('former airport lands').

As you know the city's Official Plan Review process provides a unique opportunity for Markham's citizens to provide input and engage in discussions so as to inform and support the City's future planning initiatives. The PPS, 2024 relates;

***"Municipal official plans are the most important vehicle for implementation of the Provincial Planning Statement and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning. Official plans should coordinate cross-boundary matters to complement the actions of other planning authorities and promote mutually beneficial outcomes."***

The former airport lands represent a central 'profile' parcel of land within the GTA urban landscape, with 'centre ice' characteristics. As a unique and large land area, now vacant, at some 70 ha. ± (175 acres ±), it is contiguous, and highly accessible and serviceable.



It is my opinion that the City ought to consider designating the former airport lands as a 'profile' **'Medical Health & Science Precinct'** to advance health innovations to support city, regional and GTA health services. I envision a new **'Markham-Richmond Hill Hospital'** as anchor element, surrounded by school(s) of medicine conducting health and science research and education with related health services. As well, this 'Precinct' ought to be additionally served by strategically located commercial facilities (i.e. hotels and conference centres) and even residential uses so as to support the localized and walkable needs of health workers, and that related businesses that will also serve, within this valued 'Precinct'.

The need is real. Ontario's recent initiative entitled, *Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care (2023)* is designed to help increase access to family doctors, reduce wait times, hire more health care workers, and ensure faster care for all, including mental health care. Essentially, this research demonstrates that people want more hospitals, long-term care beds, access to diagnostic testing, and health care workers that are closer to their homes.

*"As we put our plan into action, you will be better connected to care when you need it most and where it's most convenient – in your community, closer to home, no matter where you live. You will be able to get the care you need more quickly when it can have the greatest impact to your health. And we will make all parts of the health care system more flexible and responsive to your needs, making it easier for you to navigate at every stage of your life."*

The need for public hospital capacity to meet the growing demands of our elder population and the growth in the under 65 population, is also well documented per *The Hospital Crisis (No Capacity, No Plan. No End)* Toronto – The Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, Sept. 2023.

Of interest, the community surrounding the former airport lands is already in transition in this capacity; viz., the Mon Sheong Foundation seniors long term care facility at Woodbine Ave. and Apple Creek Blvd., now under construction.

This centralized **'Medical Health & Science Precinct'** would provide a unique opportunity to implement new PPS, 2024 policies in support of a modern economy. A compatible mix of related and interdependent mid-high density institutional, office and retail commercial, with hotel towers, et al, with encompassing parks and environmental amenities proximate to the Rouge River valley would promote healthy living, working and playing.



To better service the **‘Medical Health & Science Precinct’**, a **‘Major Transit Station Area’** (‘MTSA’) ought to be created by re-routing the YRT’s VIVA Highway 7 High Order Transit Service northward, looping through this new ‘Precinct’. Combined with; ready access to the 400-series Highway system; the future widening of 16th Avenue; and the capability of existing arterial roadways in place, accessibility to this new ‘Precinct’ is excellent. In addition, the former airport lands represent a unique aviation heritage, and Ontario’s provincial air ambulance – Ornge – could have ready access to the proposed health facilities.

By aligning growth management strategies for cohesive city and regional development across municipalities, the currency of an updated Official Plan becomes a valued tool in the delivery public infrastructure and public health services.

The former airport lands represent a readily available local and regional ‘gem of an opportunity’ to cohesively fill a ‘gap’ in the need for accessible health care and service needs. The strategic opportunities that this large-scale vacant land area represents is unique to the city and region and its attributes ought to be fully realized. In addition, the future planning and development of a **‘Medical Health & Science Precinct’** would be more complementary to the existing variety of business and institutional uses that currently surround this ‘profile’ property.

We look forward to ongoing participation in the City’s Official Plan Review process and request being copied on any future public notices, updates, reports, Committee and Council Agenda related Items, and any Council decision or actions related to the City’s Official Plan Review.

Thank-you in advance for your further consideration of my submission.

Yours truly,  
Pound & Stewart Associates Limited

Philip Stewart MCIP, RPP  
/la ltr\_Dec.19.2024

cc. Mayor F. Scarpitti & Members of City Council, City of Markham (email via City Clerk)

cc. Mayor D. West & Members of City Council, City of Richmond Hill (email via City Clerk)



cc. Hon. D. Ford, Premier of the Province of Ontario (via email)

cc. Hon. S. Jones, Deputy Premier & Minister of Health, Province of Ontario (via email)

cc. Hon. V. Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade of Ontario (via email)

cc. Hon. B. Pang, MPP, Province of Ontario (via email)

cc. The Regional Municipality of York (Regional Chair & Council (email via Regional Clerk)

cc. Official Plan Review Team, City of Markham (via)

