

January 09, 2025

City of Markham

Planning and Urban Design Department – Official Plan Review Team
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON, L3R 9W3

Attention: Markham Official Plan Review Team
Duran Wedderburn, Manager, Policy

RE: 8400 Woodbine Avenue, Markham
Markham Official Plan Review Comment Letter
TBG Project No. 24231

On behalf of our client, EMIX Ltd., we are pleased to submit this letter to provide formal comments on the City of Markham Official Plan Review. EMIX Ltd. owns the lands located at 8400 Woodbine Avenue (the “subject site”), in the City of Markham. The subject site is located south-west of the intersection of Highway 7 and Woodbine Avenue and is approximately 1.25 hectares in size (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Subject Site



Source: VuMap (2024).

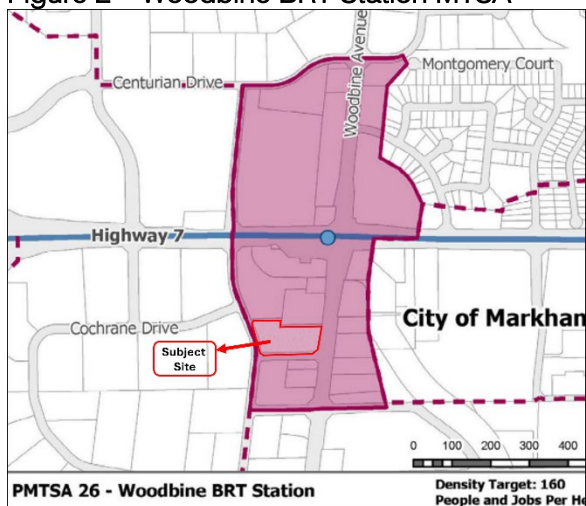


POLICY CONTEXT

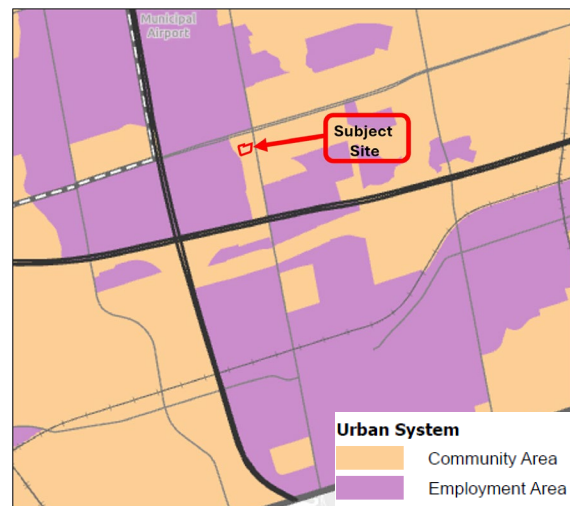
The subject site is designated *Commercial* in the City of Markham Official Plan (2014) (Map M3). The Site is also located within an *Intensification Area* (Map M2). The first draft of the Markham Official Plan was provided for public review in 2011 and the final version was adopted by Markham Council on December 3, 2013. Portions of the Markham Official Plan remain under appeal. The *Commercial* designation permits a range of uses, including but not limited to, retail, service, and office uses (Policy 8.4.1.3). It directs for intensification of such uses along the Woodbine Corridor (Policy 2.4.5 & 2.4.7). Dwelling units are prohibited in the *Commercial* designation (Policy 8.4.1.5). Biglieri Group has completed a review of the available aerial mapping of the subject site over the past ten years, and since 2014 there is no evidence of any commercial/employment intensification having occurred under the *Commercial* policy framework of the Markham Official Plan (2014).

More recently, the York Region Official Plan review (“OP Review”) was completed between 2021 to 2024, and received approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in November 2022. As directed by the PPS (2020) and the Growth Plan (which were in effect at that time of the York Official Plan Review) York Region’s OP Review turn its attention to the designation of *employment areas*. The Subject Site was designated Community Area in the York Region Official Plan (2022) and was not included in an *Employment Area Zone*. It is adjacent to *Highway 404 and Highway 407 Employment Area Zone*. The York Region Official Plan also delineated Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) within the Region. The subject site is located within PMTSA 26 – Woodbine BRT Station (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Woodbine BRT Station MTSA



Source: Appendix 2 – York Region Official Plan (2022)



Source: Map 1A – York Region Official Plan (2022)

OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW COMMENTS


As noted above, the *Commercial* policy framework of the Markham Official Plan (2014) has not resulted in any intensification along the Woodbine Corridor since its approval. Further, based on our review of the policies associated with *Strategic Growth Areas* (SGAs) and *MTSAs* in the new Provincial Policy Statement (2024) (the “PPS”), Biglieri Group is of the opinion that all non-*Employment Area* lands within PMTSA 26 should be designated *Mixed Use* through the Markham OP review. MTSAs are a sub-category of SGAs, where growth and development is encouraged to be focused (Policy 2.4.1.1). The PPS supports the achievement of complete communities, intensification, and mixed use development through accommodating significant population and employment growth in SGAs (Policy 2.4.1.2). The PPS specifically states that “*Planning Authorities should support redevelopment of commercially-designated retail lands (e.g., underutilized shopping malls and plazas), to support mixed-use residential* (Policy 2.4.1.3.e). Lastly, per Policy 2.4.2.3(b) development and intensification within MTSAs should be promoted by supporting the redevelopment of surface parking lots, to be transit-supportive and promote the achievement of complete communities. As such, we would request that the subject site be designated in a *Mixed Use* Land Use category through the City of Markham Official Plan Review process.

Our client's lands are affected by the ongoing City of Markham Official Plan Review process, and they therefore have an interest in the process. Accordingly, we would request that we be kept apprised and notified of any materials, meetings, and decisions with respect to the Official Plan Review process and added to the list of interested parties.


We trust that you will find the enclosed documentation satisfactory. However, should you require any additional information or further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully,

THE BIGLIERI GROUP LTD.



Michael Testaguzza, RPP, MCIP
Partner



Morgan Baker, B.U.R.Pl., B.Sc.,
Planner

cc. Christian Hepfer, EMIX Ltd.