



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: June 19, 2012

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY REPORT
Markham Suites Nominee Inc.
8500 Warden Avenue, Markham Centre
Application for zoning by-law amendment to permit a high
density residential development
File No. ZA 12 111347

PREPARED BY: Scott Heaslip, Senior Project Coordinator
Central District, ext. 3140

REVIEWED BY: Richard Kendall, Manager
Central District, ext. 6588

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report dated June 19, 2012 titled "Preliminary Report, Markham Suites Nominee Inc. 8500 Warden Avenue, Markham Centre, Application for zoning by-law amendment to permit a high density residential development," be received.
2. That a Public Meeting be scheduled to consider the application.
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary information on a rezoning application to permit a high density residential development at 8500 Warden Avenue (the Hilton Suites property) and to seek authorization to hold a statutory Public Meeting. This report contains general information in regards to applicable Official Plan or other policies as well as other issues and the report should not be taken as Staff's opinion or recommendation on the application.

BACKGROUND:

Subject Property and Area Context

The subject property has an area of 3.84 hectares (9.5 acres) and is bounded by Town owned lands and Highway 7 to the north, Warden Avenue to the east, Clegg Road to the south and Courtyard Lane to the west. The property is occupied by a 10 storey, 496 room hotel and associated convention centre (Hilton Suites Markham/Toronto Conference Centre and Spa). 99 of the hotel rooms are long term stay suites located in a separate 5 storey building along the Warden Avenue frontage of the property. Parking is provided in surface parking lots and a parking structure, including surface parking areas extending beneath the long term stay building and the conference centre.

Official Plan and Zoning

The subject property is designated “Commercial” in the Town’s Official Plan and “Community Area – Major Urban Place” in the Markham Centre Secondary Plan (OPA 21). Lands designated “Community Amenity Area – Major Urban Place” are intended to develop with a mix of residential, commercial employment and supporting uses, at a high density and intensity of development.

The property is zoned “Select Industrial and Limited Commercial” (M.C.(90%)) by By-law 165-80, as amended. This zoning permits the existing uses on the property, but does not permit residential uses.

Proposal (Figure 4)

The applicant is proposing the following developments:

1. The conversion of the hotel’s long term stay wing – the separate 5-storey building along the Warden Avenue frontage of the property - to residential condominium use. The 99 existing long term stay suites would be upgraded to incorporate full kitchens. Resident parking is proposed to be located in the existing surface parking lot beneath and surrounding the building.
2. A new condominium apartment building along the Clegg Road frontage of the site comprising two 21-storey towers and an 8-storey podium, accommodating approximately 475 apartment units. Resident parking for this building is proposed to be provided in a new one-level underground parking garage.

Visitor parking is proposed to be shared with the hotel and conference centre.

Requested approvals

The applicant has applied to amend the Town’s zoning by-laws to permit the proposed developments.

The following site-specific amendments would be required:

1. Incorporate the subject lands into the designated area of the Markham Centre Zoning By-law (By-law 2004-196), and zone them “Markham Centre Downtown Two.”
2. Incorporate site specific use permissions and development standards reflecting the proposed development, including the conversion of the long term stay wing of the hotel to residential use.

It should be noted that in 2004, the applicant applied to amend the Town’s zoning by-laws to permit two 12-storey condominium apartment buildings accommodating a total of 272 dwelling units along the Clegg Road frontage of the subject lands. Staff reported to Council in 2006 recommending approval of this application, however the applicant did not follow up with staff to finalize the zoning by-law amendment for approval by Council.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Potential Benefits of Approval of Proposal

The proposed development would provide the following benefits:

- The property is proximate to the Highway 7 and South Town Centre Boulevard VIVA route, and is an appropriate location for higher density residential uses.
- The hotel and convention centre uses are being retained.
- The proposed buildings on the north side of Clegg Road replace an existing surface parking lot, improving the urban appearance of this street.

Identified Concerns/Issues with Proposal

The following is a brief summary of concerns/issues raised to date. These matters, and any others identified through the circulation and detailed review of the proposal, will be addressed, as necessary, in the final staff report to Committee:

Modeling forecasts for Markham Centre - Modeling undertaken for Markham Centre in support of the Town's growth management strategy, and shared with local ratepayers organizations, recognized a potential doubling of residential unit counts from the 10,000 originally contemplated in the Markham Centre Secondary Plan to approximately 20,000. While the modeling for the Warden West Precinct included the 272 units previously proposed for the subject lands, it does not reflect the additional units identified in this submission and does not include the conversion of the long term stay suites to condominiums. Should Council approve this application, the modeling forecasts for Markham Centre would need to be updated to reflect the additional residential units.

Precinct Plan - The Markham Centre Secondary Plan requires landowners within certain defined areas to work together to prepare "precinct plans" to guide the distribution of land use and density, street and block patterns, built form, building height, etc. The subject lands are within the Highway 7/Flaska Drive Precinct, which comprises the area bounded by Highway 7, Warden Avenue, Cedarland Drive and South Town Centre Boulevard. Given that the remainder of the lands in this area are either fully developed (Liberty), or approved for development (H & W), it would be appropriate to have the applicant update the precinct plan to incorporate their proposed development and address the proposed built form, height and massing within the larger precinct context.

Built form - The applicant has not applied for site plan approval for the proposed developments. The project plans will need to be further developed to address the Town's normal expectations and requirements, including:

- Potential upgrades to the long term stay building to ensure it will be appropriate for condominium apartment use, in particular to address the grade relationship of the building to the ground, especially along the Warden Avenue frontage
- Compliance with the Town's urban design objectives/principles and built form criteria
- Building design that is bird-friendly
- Incorporation of sustainable development practices including LEED and TDM measures, and connection to District Energy, where appropriate

The applicant will need to confirm that the height of the proposed condominium apartment building does not exceed the maximum height permitted under the Buttonville Airport Zoning Order.

The proposed developments will also need to be presented to the Markham Centre Advisory for evaluation against the Performance Measures document.

Service connections - The Building Code requires each property to have separate service connections to municipal infrastructure (storm, sanitary, water). Before the long term stay wing can be severed from the hotel, the existing service connections will need to be reconfigured to separate them from the service connections to the hotel.

Driveway location - The hotel currently has two driveways onto Clegg Road - one approximately 60 metres west of the intersection with Warden Avenue, and one further west, close to the intersection with Courtyard Lane. The applicant is proposing to retain the east driveway and eliminate the west driveway. Given the greater number of vehicles that will be using the east driveway in the future when the proposed developments are occupied, staff have suggested to the applicant that this driveway should be relocated further west of the intersection with Warden Avenue and coordinated with the driveway into the future development on the south side of Clegg Road. This would require significant changes to the conceptual site plan, but would provide opportunities to potentially provide a more prominent and functional driveway entrance to the hotel and enhance the built form relationship to the Clegg Road/Warden Avenue intersection. Staff will continue to work with the applicant to refine their project.

Holding Provisions - The requested zoning by-law amendment would need to incorporate holding provisions to secure a number of items, including:

- Servicing allocation (allocation has not been assigned by the Town and the Markham Centre Landowners Group to the proposed developments)
- Approval by the Town of a traffic impact study and a TDM (transportation demand management) plan
- Execution of a Section 37 agreement
- Approval by Town of plans for servicing reconfiguration
- Site plan approval

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

Not applicable at this time.

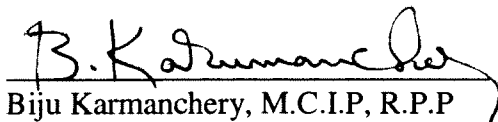
ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

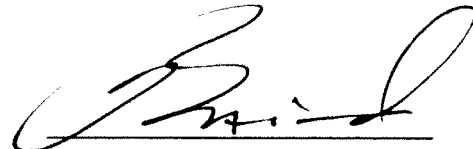
The proposed development needs to be reviewed in the context of the Town's "Building Markham's Future Together" strategic initiatives including Transportation and Transit (transit oriented development in proximity to the VIVA rapidway), Environment (sustainable development) and Growth Management (intensification).

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The proposal has been circulated to other Town departments and public agencies for review and comment.

RECOMMENDED BY:


Biju Karmanchery, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Senior Development Manager


Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner, Development Services

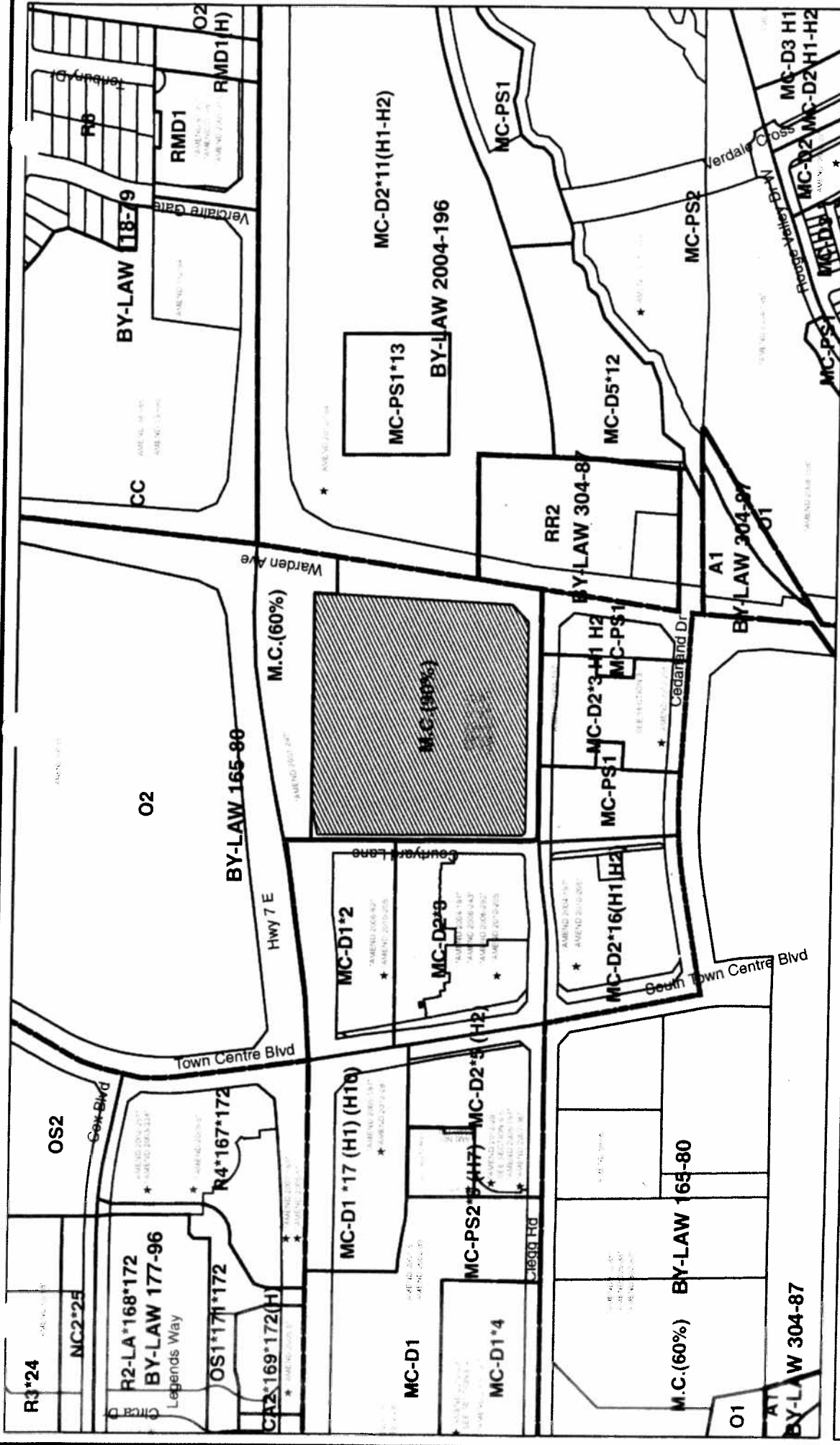
ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1 - Location Map
Figure 2 - Area Context/Zoning
Figure 3 - Air Photo
Figure 4 - Conceptual Site Plan

APPLICANT/AGENT:

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File path: Amanda\File 12 111347\Documents\Preliminary Report



AREA CONTEXT / ZONING

APPLICANT: MARKHAN SUITES NOMINEE INC.
8500 WARDEN AVENUE

FILE No. ZA. 12111347 (SH)

 SUBJECT LANDS

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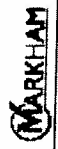


AIR PHOTO (2011)

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MARKHAM DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

 SUBJECT LANDS

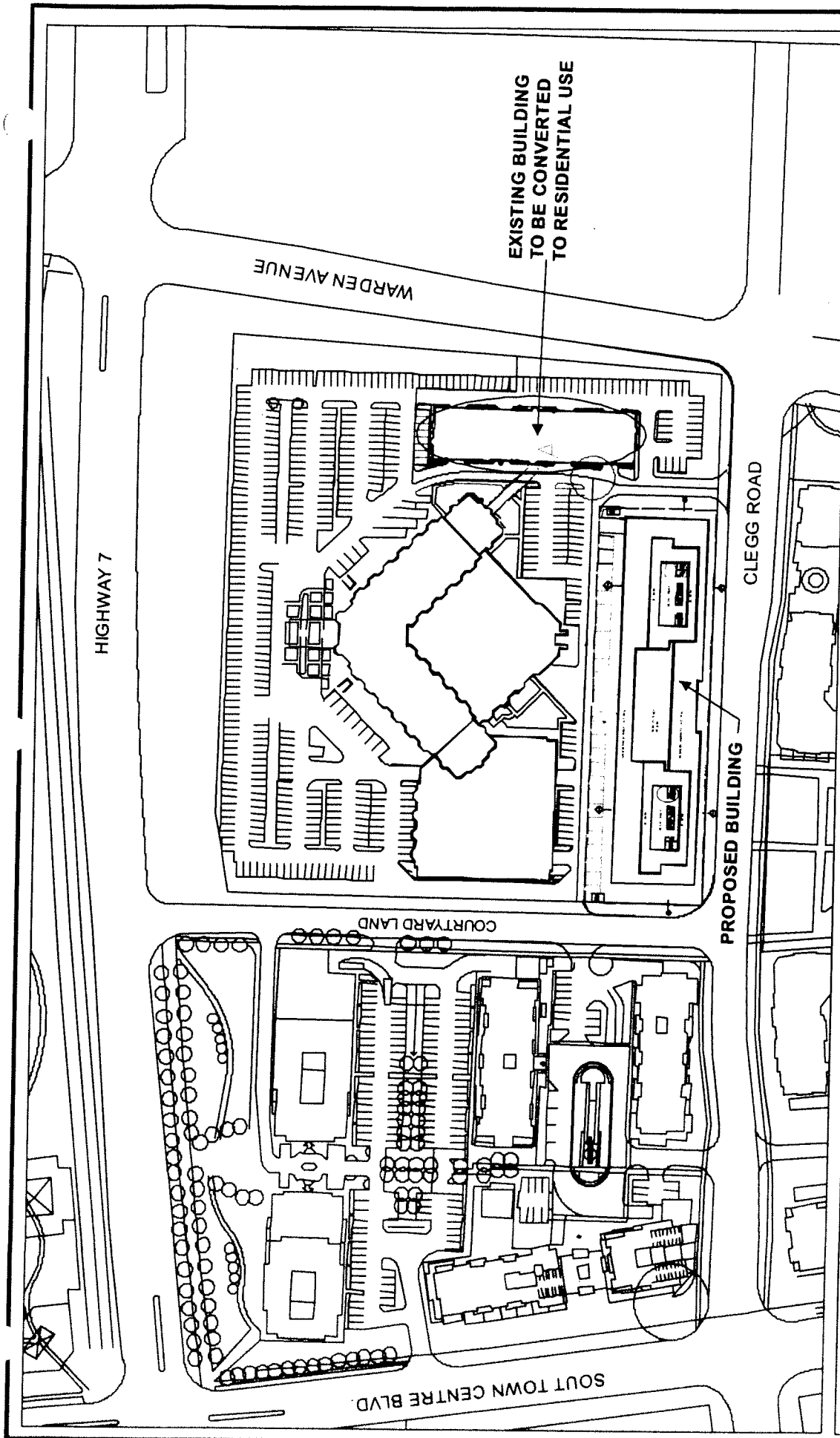


DATE: 05/28/2012

Checked By: SH

Drawn By: CPW

FIGURE No. 3



SITE PLAN

APPLICANT: MARKHAN SUITES NOMINEE INC.
8500 WARDEN AVENUE

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