

**Preliminary Evaluation Report -
Official Plan and Zoning Amendment Application UDOZ-99-06 and
Site Plan Application UDSP-99-021 - Medallion Properties Inc. -
3415 Weston Road (Southeast Corner of Finch Avenue West and
Weston Road) - North York Humber**

(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The North York Community Council recommends:

- (1) **the adoption of the following Resolution by Councillor Mammoliti, North York Humber:**

WHEREAS the Finch Avenue West and Weston Road area has been experiencing difficult times (vacant stores, bank moved out); and

WHEREAS the City now has an application for the redevelopment of the Canadian Tire site which is of significant size and magnitude; and

WHEREAS this application could be the catalyst needed to spark other redevelopment, reinvestment and economic interest in this area. As part of the Community Improvement Plan as proposed by the City Planning Division, I would ask the Economic Development Division to investigate ways to encourage investment or identify other means to help the business community in the area; and

WHEREAS as part of the Community Improvement Plan, community facilities need to be evaluated as to capacity and growth opportunities; and

WHEREAS the Community members have had considerable contribution to the proposed plan through urban design charettes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the recommendations in the report (October 26, 1999) from the Director, Community Planning, North District, be adopted, and that the Community Improvement Plan and any associated studies, be started immediately with a report back from the City Planning Division and the Economic Development Division on funding that may be needed to undertake specific studies.

- (2) **the Toronto Transit Commission be requested to be part of the planning process and to comment on how best to provide transit services to the site; and**
- (3) **the applicant clearly indicate how he intends to meet the City's social housing objectives within their plan.**

The North York Community Council also reports, for the information of Council, having requested the Director, Community Planning, North District, to report on the feasibility of

community spaces such as libraries, community centres, recreation facilities and shelters being included within the proposed development.

The North York Community Council also submits the following report (October 26, 1999) from the Director, Community Planning, North District:

Purpose:

This report provides a preliminary evaluation of applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments and site plan approval for the redevelopment of the Finch West Mall for medium and high rise residential development and commercial uses. A total of 1,235 residential units are proposed for the 4.94 hectare (12.23 acre) site. Retail, service, office and cinema uses total approximately 50,000 m². The total gross floor area of the proposal is 147,624 m². This Preliminary Report can be considered now that Ontario Hydro has responded to the applicant's request for road access onto Hydro lands (see Appendix 1).

Financial Implications:

There are sufficient funds and staff resources in the Community Planning Division operating budget to undertake the study leading to a Community Improvement Plan.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) the applicant file a plan of subdivision to be processed concurrently with the Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications
- (2) staff undertake a Community Improvement Plan for the area shown on Schedule D to this report in accordance with the policies in Section 11 and Map B.11 of the Official Plan where the goal for such a Plan is to achieve a functional, attractive and well maintained living and working environment;
- (3) staff, in consultation with the local Councillors, continue with an appropriate community consultation program;
- (4) staff, when the Community Improvement Plan is brought forward, review with the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and report on the financial implications of the recommendations arising from the Plan which may include plans for the rehabilitation, redevelopment or conservation of areas identified for improvement, retaining consultants for special studies, or undertaking improvements to municipal lands, services, maintenance or infrastructure; and
- (5) staff bring forward a proposed Community Improvement Plan and prepare a Final Report for the Finch Weston Mall application based on the findings of the Plan and provide Notice of a statutory public meeting(s) at the appropriate time.

The Proposal

The subject site is located at the south east corner of Finch Avenue and Weston Road and is the present site of the Finch Weston Mall containing a Canadian Tire store and a Macdonald's.

The application proposes amendments to the Official Plan and zoning by-law, and site plan approval, in order to permit the phased redevelopment of the Finch West Mall with medium and high rise residential development and new commercial uses, as shown on Schedule "C".

The site is to be divided by a new public road system, running east from Weston Road, which separates the site into two precincts. The proposal requires the use of the Ontario Hydro right-of-way for access and will require subdivision approval.

The southern portion of the site, identified as Weston Court, is proposed to be the residential precinct. It consists of 7 buildings, ranging in height from 4 storeys to 28 storeys. The northern portion of the site, identified as Weston Centre, is proposed to be the commercial precinct. It consists of 2 buildings, one 15 storeys, the other 16 storeys. This area will include retail and service shops, multi-storey offices, big box retailers, entertainment uses and other commercial facilities. The applicant proposes to phase the development, with Weston Court (the residential portion) proceeding as the market absorbs the units, over an approximate 7 to 10 year period. The commercial precinct, Weston Centre, will proceed during that time, depending on the demand for new commercial space.

Block H in the southeast portion of the site, has been identified by the applicant as a potential site for a community centre or other public use which could be purchased by the City within the first five years of the development being approved. After that time, if not purchased by the City, the applicant proposes that the block be used for the construction of residential units (approximately 85).

Seventy-five per cent of the units are proposed to be condominium or freehold ownership. Three buildings (325 units) are proposed as senior citizens rental housing.

A PetroCanada gas station is located at the corner of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road and is not included as part of this application. However, the plan has been designed to incorporate the PetroCan gas station should those lands redevelop.

The pertinent statistics are as follows:

	Weston Court	Weston Centre	Totals
Site Area	2.45 ha (6.06 acres)	2.49 ha (6.17 acres)	4.94 ha (12.23 acres)
No. Buildings	7 (4 mixed use housing/retail, 3 housing)	2 (1 mixed use retail/office, 1 mixed use retail/ housing/ cinema)	9
No. Residential Units	967	268	1,235

Gross Floor Area – Residential Units	76,371 m ²	21,160 m ²	97,531 m ²
Gross Floor Area – Retail	1,292 m ²	18,400 m ²	19,692 m ²
Gross Floor Area – Commercial Office	None	15,744 m ²	15,744 m ²
Gross Floor Area – Cinema	None	6,410 m ²	6,410 m ²
Gross Floor Area – Service	402 m ²	None	402 m ²
Gross Floor Area – Community Facility/Housing*	7,845 m ²	None	7,845 m ²
Total Gross Floor Area	85,910 m ²	61,714 m ²	147,624 m ²
Floor Space Index	3.51 FSI	2.47 FSI	2.98 FSI

*The applicant proposes that this site be developed for housing if not purchased by the City for a community centre or similar public use within the first five years of the development being approved. The proposal shows approximately 85 units.

Official Plan

The subject site is designated Commercial and is a sub-centre (see Schedule A). The policies of Part C.5 Commerce apply and office, retail and service commercial uses are permitted. The maximum permitted density is 1.0 fsi however, Council may approve rezonings to densities not exceeding 1.5 fsi where the development meets compatibility criteria. Part C.5 - Section 3 contains policies for development within sub-centres. It is Council's intent to encourage the development of multi-use sub-centres as focal points for the activity of surrounding residential areas. Sub-centres are characterised by a concentration of residential, retail, and service commercial, and office uses. An amendment to the Official Plan is required in order to define the boundaries of a sub-centre. A range of density is permitted from 1.0 fsi to a maximum of 3.0 fsi. With maximum density and heights within the sub-centre to be specified in the zoning by-law.

Map 3 of The Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan identifies a potential GO commuter rail station in the vicinity of the intersection of Weston Road and Finch Avenue West. Any planning is to identify and protect for a future station.

Zoning

The site is zoned C2 (Local Shopping Centre) which permits shopping centres, parking lots, institutional uses and all commercial uses in a C1 General Commercial zone except hotels, motels, custom workshops, commercial bath houses, car rental agencies, undertaking establishments and car washing establishments (see Schedule "B").

COMMENTS

a) Official Plan

The application meets the criteria of a sub-area and warrants a Context Plan Study. The proposed 2.98 fsi is within the range provided for in a sub-centre in the Official Plan and will be evaluated in terms of urban design, built form and impacts on hard and soft community services and amenities. The applicant is to submit a plan of subdivision which will address transportation, site layout and servicing issues identified in this report.

b) Built Form/Height

The applicant is proposing 9 buildings on the site, with the potential for an additional building where the community centre block is identified (see Schedule C). The heights of these buildings are 4 storeys (for the stacked townhouses), 9 storeys (apartment blocks) 15 storeys (retail/housing/cinema) and 16 storeys (retail/office commercial). One 28 storey building (for housing/retail) is proposed to be located on the southern tip of the site. The proposed built form and heights are to be examined in the context of emerging urban design principles, open space and transportation infrastructure in the surrounding area.

Preliminary discussions with local Councillors and residents at a design charette indicated that "humanising" the Weston Road frontage of the site, through redevelopment would be desirable. The proposal contemplates replacing the existing undeveloped hillside which runs parallel to Weston Road with a row of retail stores which would step down to Weston Road. The applicant is proposing a one way northbound driving and parking lane to service these retail uses.

c) Ontario Hydro Right-of-Way

An Ontario Hydro right-of-way cuts through the south east portion of the Finch Weston intersection and abuts the subject lands. In order to facilitate the development proposal, the applicant identified an access road over these lands (see Schedule C), and has been in discussions with Ontario Hydro on the terms and conditions of the road. Ontario Hydro has agreed in principle to allow the road (see letter dated September 30, 1999 in Appendix 1). A plan of subdivision is required to implement the development as proposed. The road is to be dedicated to the City of Toronto. More detailed engineering drawings are under review to address the steep gradients of the proposed road where it intersects with Weston Road.

d) Phasing

The Official Plan requires that development is to have regard for the timing and extent of necessary infrastructure and community services.

The applicant indicates that the first phase of development will be the moving of the McDonald's restaurant to a new building in the commercial precinct. Development would then shift to the residential precinct. Buildings in the residential precinct would be constructed as the market absorbs the units which the applicant estimates will take 7 to 10 years.

Staff will report on the details of phasing, the capacities of municipal infrastructure and community services, the agreements required with the landowner and the impacts of 7 to 10 years of construction on the community.

e) Transportation

A preliminary transportation assessment has been submitted on behalf of the applicant and is under review by municipal City transportation staff. The site is at the intersection of two significant arterial roadways both served by transit routes and the Canadian Pacific Rail overpass and an interchange with Highway 400 are in close proximity to the subject site.

The current concept contemplates what has been termed "a parking lane" on Weston Road. The transportation assessment will address the implications and how appropriate the introduction of such a parking lane would be as it relates to the operations, right-of-way and the function and role of Weston Road through this section. The concept also proposes a public road through the Ontario Hydro right-of-way connecting to the existing signalized intersection of Weston Road and Lanyard Road. All issues arising from the design of the road, the connection to the intersection and implementation will be assessed as part of the review. Issues along the Finch Avenue frontage which are similar will be reviewed. Parking requirements for the project will be assessed in the context of the transportation review.

f) Servicing

The site drains into Emery Creek, which is part of the Humber Trunk System. Increased population and commercial uses generated by further redevelopment in the area are to be evaluated in terms of sufficient reserve capacity.

g) Parks

The applicant is proposing 5 percent parkland dedication in the residential precinct in the form of an "island" in the area surrounded by the internal roadway (see Schedule C). The proposed configuration and location of parkland dedication is not acceptable to the Parks Department.

In addition to the statutory requirement, the applicant is proposing to create playing fields on the Ontario Hydro right-of-way in close proximity to Emery Collegiate. The developer proposes that these facilities are to be maintained by the City. The need for playing fields, as well as the long term financial implications of maintaining such facilities, is to be examined by City staff during the evaluation of the development applications.

A community centre block, shown as Block H is proposed for this site (see Schedule C). It is 7,845 m² in area and located adjacent to the above noted proposed playing fields. The applicant is prepared not to develop this block for a period of five years in order to allow the City to purchase the land and construct a community centre facility. If the City does not purchase the land within the five year period, the applicant is proposing that the block be developed for a condominium of approximately 85 units. The need for a new community centre in this location, the timing and financial implications and the potential for use of Section 37 of the Planning Act are to be reviewed by City staff.

h) Schools

The Toronto District Catholic School Board indicates that St. Jude Catholic School (JK – 8) cannot accommodate any children emanating from this development. Similarly, St. Basil the Great College Catholic Secondary School cannot accommodate additional pupils (see Appendix 2). The Toronto District School Board is to provide comments.

i) Environment

The Toronto Public Health Department requires that an environmental site assessment be completed in accordance with the 1996 MOEE Guideline for Use at Contaminated Sites. The proposed development is in close proximity to major roads and a rail corridor and an Acoustical Study is required to identify noise impacts and control measures (see Appendix 3).

A PetroCan gas station is located on the south east corner of Finch Avenue West and Weston Road. Although not part of the proposal, the applicant's design provides for the potential redevelopment of this site. Should it redevelop, an Environmental Site Assessment would be required for this site as well.

j) Archaeological Significance

The lands located to the south east of the Weston Road and Finch Avenue West are associated with an archaeological site that is registered with the Province of Ontario. The Phase I Archaeological Assessment however, finds that the area and the site have been disturbed by existing development to the extent that further archaeological study is not warranted.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The subject site is located at the intersection of two major arterials; Finch Avenue West and Weston Road and is a route to Highway 400 which is one kilometre to the east. Some of the land uses in this area are in transition and experiencing changes due, in part, to economic instability. The proposal to redevelop the Finch Weston Mall is a significant application and may be a catalyst for the rejuvenation of the community at this intersection. The subject development application contemplates the redevelopment, over a period of years, of the south-east quadrant of the Finch and Weston Road intersection. It does not attempt to plan or propose a redevelopment

scheme for the other three quadrants of the intersection. This development proposal will however, affect the timing and extent of redevelopment and rejuvenation of the larger area.

The Official Plan contains provisions relating to community improvement and Council may, by by-law, designate the whole or any part of the areas identified in the Official Plan as a Community Improvement Project area. A Community Improvement Plan provides for a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the planning and implementation of improvements to municipal services while making the most efficient use of all available resources.

In carrying out a Community Improvement Plan, Council may rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the municipality, sell, lease or dispose of land or make grants or loans to the owners of lands and buildings within the area for rehabilitation in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan. A Community Improvement Plan encourages partnerships with the private sector in, for example, the renovation of obsolete buildings and inefficient land uses.

There have been preliminary consultation meetings held with local Councillors, the applicant and stakeholders in the community to identify expectations concerning desired future land uses and potential improvements to private and public lands. The Community Improvement Plan process will build on input received to date.

Rejuvenation of the Four Quadrants of Finch and Weston

This application may be the stimulus needed for the revitalization of these significant four quadrants. It is at the intersection of two major arterials and is a route to Highway 400 which is located one kilometre to the east. The Humber Creek tributaries, the associated City open space system and parks and the Ontario Hydro right-of-way are amenities for the area which could be further enhanced with improved pedestrian access and linkages. A future commuter rail station is identified adjacent to this intersection.

Of the four quadrants that make up the Finch Avenue and Weston Road intersection, three are primarily industrial/commercial and one is residential (see Schedule A). The subject site is located in the southeast quadrant, which is occupied by the Finch West Mall. The quadrant also contains the Ontario Hydro right-of-way, Emery Collegiate and a municipal arena and park. South of that is a low density residential neighbourhood. A light industrial area extends from east of Emery Collegiate north to Finch Avenue. The southwest quadrant is a residential area which includes low to medium density residential development separated by a ravine and Park from four high rise apartment buildings located close to Weston Road. The four high rises are behind strip commercial plazas which have frontage on Weston Road and Finch Avenue. A bank, which has closed, is located at the southwest corner of Finch Avenue and Weston Road. The quadrants on the north side of Finch Avenue are developed with a mix of light and heavy industrial uses and include the new Fire Station, the former Fire Station (now surplus) and the City Works and Parks Department yards.

The southwest quadrant is unlikely to experience significant redevelopment of the residential uses, however the opportunity exists to improve the multiple access points to Weston Road

through a comprehensive transportation and pedestrian access plan. Intensification along arterial frontages is encouraged and some level of redevelopment may be possible for the strip plazas that front onto Weston Road and Finch Avenue.

The industrial and commercial uses on the north side of Finch Avenue may have redevelopment or intensification potential along the Finch Avenue frontage due to the large lot sizes and low intensity of existing development. There is potential for the extension of the ravine and park system on lands in public ownership. The relatively new industrial/commercial multi-unit complex on the northwest quadrant would not be expected to redevelop in the foreseeable future.

Municipal objectives to be satisfied through a redevelopment at this scale shall include matters related to:

- (a) the layout and organization of the public realm – streets, parks and public building sites
- (b) the building siting and organization
- (c) the building massing and height
- (d) pedestrian amenity
- (e) to eliminate deficiencies in municipal servicing and infrastructure where it is physically and economically feasible

Based on the above, a Community Improvement Plan which, among other matters, consists of a street, park and block plan for the layout of the public realm and redevelopment blocks will be prepared that includes:

- (i) built form envelopes
- (ii) setback and/or build-to lines
- (iii) the location, dimension and character of interior and exterior publicly accessible private open spaces
- (iv) the general location of public pedestrian routes
- (v) the general locations of principle pedestrian entrances
- (vi) the general location of parking facilities and service access
- (vii) the location and dimension of any arcades, canopies and other weather-protected routes
- (viii) the location of public street- related uses
- (ix) the general location for public art

The next steps are as follows:

- approval of Preliminary Report which identifies issues and sets a direction for processing the application
- community consultation to identify expectations and receive input
- preparation of the Community Improvement Plan to clarify municipal objectives and to evaluate the feasibility of the application
- Final Report on the Community Improvement Plan
- Final Report containing a complete analysis of all the issues and the results of community consultation on this application

Conclusions:

This report provides a preliminary evaluation of applications for Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments and site plan approval for the redevelopment of the Finch West Mall for medium and high rise residential development and commercial uses. It is recommended that Council authorise the undertaking of a Community Improvement Plan to provide for a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the planning and implementation of improvements to municipal services, while making the most efficient use of all available resources.

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(A copy of the Schedules and Appendices referred to in the foregoing report is on file in the office of the City Clerk, North York Civic Centre.)

Staff presentations were made by Lynn Poole, Planner, Community Planning, North District and Rob Dolan, Director, Community Planning, North District.

The following persons appeared before the North York Community Council in connection with the foregoing matter:

- Mr. Peter Cheatley, on behalf of the applicant; and
- Mr. Michael Kirkland, Architect, on behalf of the applicant, who also filed a copy of the site plan and various perspectives of the proposed development.

