



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Commercial Floorspace in Mixed Use Areas – Status Report

Date:	October 5, 2007
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	Pg070073

SUMMARY

In June 2007, Council directed the Chief Planner to report to Planning and Growth Management Committee by the end of the third quarter on the status of a review of the amount of commercial floorspace that should be required in redevelopments on properties that the Official Plan designates for Mixed Use.

Work is proceeding on the review, but it will take some time to complete. It is anticipated that staff could report in Spring 2008.

Financial Impact

This report will have **no** financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

On June 11, 2007, when it considered the Long Term Employment Lands Strategy, Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to:

- re-examine the interpretation of the Mixed Use designation and assess the need for replacement of all existing commercial/employment space, and in the absence thereof assign a minimum percentage of commercial/employment space to be built on the lands; and
- review:
 - a) the feasibility of requiring that all applications to demolish and rebuild, for proposed residential use, on lands previously used for retail commercial purposes, provide that the previous total square footage of commercial retail space remain used only for commercial retail purposes; and

- b) the feasibility of establishing a maximum residential portion for mixed use properties, with specific criteria, as well as the guidelines and rationale for those criteria;
- consult with interested Members of Council as part of these reviews; and
- report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the status of these reviews by the end of the third quarter of 2007.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Much of the retail development in the City is in Mixed Use Areas. The Official Plan's section on the Future of Retailing provides the following rationale for this:

“Retailing will continue to be an important part of the economy, however, the retail patterns that exist today are very different from those of 15 to 20 years ago and there is every reason to expect that those patterns will continue to evolve over the next 30 years. The Plan therefore provides the flexibility for owners of retail properties to adapt to changing circumstances. Most existing and proposed major retail areas, shopping malls and commercial districts are within designated *Mixed Use Areas*. Many plazas, malls and arterial roads which previously had permissions for only commercial uses, are designated as *Mixed Use Areas* to permit residential uses as an alternative to or to support existing retail space that is not faring well and to implement the reurbanization goals of the Plan. Major shopping centres can continue to expand for retail purposes or develop as areas of mixed use. New shopping streets will emerge as *Avenues* develop and mature.”
(*Official Plan*, Page 3-33)

COMMENTS

Staff have begun the analysis needed to respond to Council's direction. It includes the following topics and issues:

1. An overview of the evolution of retailing, the spatial distribution of its various forms in the City, and its relationship to the Official Plan and zoning.
2. A review of redevelopment of former commercial sites to identify trends and relate them to the issues at hand.
3. A review of the Avenues studies to see how they have dealt with the mix of commercial and residential floorspace.
4. A review of the distribution of Mixed Use areas, particularly as they relate to population and demand for commercial space.

As the analysis proceeds staff will also consult with interested Councillors, as directed by Council.

This work will take some time to complete. Spring 2008 is the target date for reporting back to Planning and Growth Management Committee.

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SIGNATURE

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