

LORNE ROSS PLANNING SERVICES INC.

36 Saratoga Drive, Scarborough, ON, M1P 4J1  
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COPY

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Mr. Paul Bain  
Project Manager, OP Review  
Metro Hall, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
55 John Street  
Toronto ON M5V 3C6

2013-785

RECEIVED

FEB 21 2013

City of Toronto  
City Clerk's Office  
Information Access

**RE: EMPLOYMENT POLICY REVIEW  
MARKHAM ROAD – FINCH TO STEELES**

Dear Mr. Bain:

The Staff report of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 titled "Planning for a Strong and Diverse Economy" proposes a comprehensive set of new Official Plan land use designations, policies and mapping for the City's Employment Districts.

I am writing on behalf of my clients M & R Holdings/Bradgate Investments/ Markham Steeles Realty Inc to suggest that the proposed Core Employment designation along Markham Road between Finch and Steeles does not reflect the established character of existing and zoned land uses, is not necessary to preserve Core Employment uses to the rear of the frontage properties, and would not capitalize on the opportunity to create jobs, assessment and services appropriate to this portion of Markham Road.

Character of Markham Road – Finch to Steeles

Markham Road is not a quiet industrial collector road providing essentially heavy truck and employee vehicle access deep in the heart of an industrial area where one bumps across rail sidings at level crossings far removed from public view,.

Markham Road is a major arterial road with seven lanes of traffic, grade separations over rail lines and full cloverleaf interchange connections to both 401 and 407. It is a former Provincial Highway carrying inter-regional traffic within and through Toronto, Markham and well north into York Region and points beyond. Due to the limited number of east west road connections across the Rouge River to/from Durham Region, an additional large volume of commuting traffic from Durham Region enters the city along Taunton Road-Steeles Avenue and uses Markham Road to access their destinations in the City. In comparison to a typical industrial collector road, over 55,000 vehicles per day pass by the properties on Markham Road between Finch and Steeles.

The visibility and accessibility created by this volume of passing by traffic makes Markham Road a 'main street' on people's mental maps of the city. It is an opportunity to provide goods and services to thousands of people in stark contrast to what takes place on out of the way industrial collector roads. Not many people know what happens on streets like Maybrook, Tiffield or Turbina. But over 60,000 people a day are reminded that Canlan's quadruple ice arena is located at Markham Road south of Steeles, a new Hyundai dealership just opened on Markham Road at the second light north of Finch,

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Goodlife Fitness just opened a major new 1,670m<sup>2</sup> health club facility plus 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of related office two lights south of Steeles, and Agincourt Mazda opened its new dealership a few years ago at Finch and Markham. The congregations of five places of worship gather at their facilities along this part of Markham Road and a sixth is apparently fund-raising for a new facility at Markham and Select.

If you are chasing down the best dosa, idlis or uthappam in eastern Toronto, you'd find yourself turning into the driveway at 3001-3031 Markham Road to get into the lineup at the Nilgiris restaurant.

This eclectic mix of retail, restaurant, auto sales, recreational and employment uses represents the existing character of Markham Road between Finch and Steeles. A series of photos as well as my composite map are attached to illustrate what is 'on the ground' in this area.

### Markham Road – A Special Street in the Toronto Official Plan:

Markham Road and Victoria Park are the only continuous north-south streets in Scarborough designated as part of the "Surface Transit Priority Network" in the Toronto Official Plan [reference Map 5, Toronto OP]

Markham Road from Progress north across Steeles Avenue is also the only north-south street in Scarborough designated as a "Higher Order Transit Corridor" [reference Map 4, Toronto OP].

Properties located along a road of this size and significance should be afforded an opportunity to attract a wider range of businesses and employment uses that those permitted by a "Core Employment Area" designation.

### Limitations of a Core Employment Designation

A chart comparing the permitted land uses in each of the three proposed new employment designations is attached. The proposed Core Employment Area designation does not provide a range of land uses that reflects and capitalizes on the real world characteristics of Markham Road as an inter-regional arterial road/highway and as a main street:

- It does not provide for places of worship even though five places of worship have developed in the last decade and one additional congregation is raising funds to develop its lands at Select and Markham;
- It does not provide for recreational activities even though Goodlife Fitness has only recently completed construction and the Canlan four pad arena and the driving range have provided recreational services for years;
- It does not appear to provide for auto dealerships notwithstanding that both Agincourt Hyundai and Agincourt Mazda have recently opened brand new dealerships on Markham Road;

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- It provides for only “small scale” restaurants and services “directly serving businesses and employees” as if these were the only people using Markham Road;
- It provides for retailing only as “ancillary” to an established business, again, failing to capitalize on the market potential of a major inter-regional road/main street.

These use restrictions may be appropriate for lands which truly are located out of sight in the rear of deep industrial district. The policies may make sense on two lane industrial collector roads like Turbina, Maybrook and Tiffield. They do not however make sense for the stretch of Markham Road between Finch and Steeles.

The October Staff report describes the Core Employment Area designation as appropriate for “...areas where there is often heavy truck traffic and industries which could impact sensitive uses.” This description simply does not fit Markham Road between Steeles and Finch. It is not a location attractive to heavy industry. Given the existence of ‘sensitive uses’ already located on this frontage, new ‘heavy’ industry would clearly benefit from locations in the rear of this district rather than along this frontage. A prospective ‘heavy’ industrial use must have regard not only for existing ‘sensitive’ uses such as the five places of worship existing along this section of Markham Road, but also for sites with as-of-right zoning for ‘sensitive’ uses. Day care centres and places of worship are permitted as-of-right on all M, MDC, MG and SDC lands abutting Markham Road and day care uses are permitted as-of-right on the AG zone on the west side of Markham Road between Select and Passmore.

A Core Employment designation of these frontage properties is not necessary to achieve the City’s objective of preserving a sufficient land supply for the future needs of industrial and other large-scale wealth producing uses that cannot locate in any other part of the City.

### Conflict with Existing As-of-Right Zoning

The proposed Core Employment Area designation also fails to recognize the uses permitted as-of-right by the existing M zoning which applies to +/- 90% of this frontage. As-of-right permitted uses include places of worship, day care and recreational uses. Seven properties have developed in accordance with these permitted uses but are proposed to be designated Core Employment. The new Hyundai and Mazda dealerships have exceptions permitting their use. The proposed Core Area designation sets up a conflict not only with existing land uses along Markham Road but also with the uses permitted as-of-right in the Zoning By-law.

### Planning Vision for Markham Road- Move Forward or Move Back

If the city planning ‘vision’ for the future of Markham Road is that these uses will disappear over time and be replaced by Core Employment Area uses (i.e. warehousing, manufacturing plants, ‘media facilities’, major offices and ‘vertical agriculture’), I suggest the vision just does not recognize the reality ‘on the ground’ nor the potential

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development opportunities available for sites on a seven lane major arterial road carrying over 55,000 vehicles per day. Places of worship do not sell their land for warehousing. Goodlife Fitness will not be replaced any time soon by a manufacturing plant. I doubt Canlan's arena will be replaced by 'vertical agriculture'.

For Markham Road between Finch and Steeles the Retail Employment designation would be more consistent with the established character of the area and existing uses and would set out a vibrant future for this 'main street' and Higher Order Transit Corridor. Retail Employment designations are already proposed to recognize established commercial developments at Steeles-Markham and on three corners of the Markham-McNicoll intersection. The Retail Employment designation should be extended along both sides of Markham Road to form a continuous Retail Employment corridor.

One of the key bases for applying a Retail Employment designation is that the uses permitted will not adversely affect the functioning of nearby Core Employment Areas. Many of the shops and stores, restaurants, places of worship and recreational businesses have existed for several years on this part of Markham Road with no apparent deleterious effect on industrial development on the 'back streets' of this district. New recreational uses such as Goodlife Fitness provide services to employees of the district in a convenient location. In fact, they can provide even better services to area employees because they can cater to the passing by trade as well. New dealerships such as Agincourt Hyundai and Agincourt Mazda, three new places of worship and new retail-restaurant campuses have been recommended by Staff and approved by Council in the last decade, with full knowledge that these uses are next to/close to industrial activities.

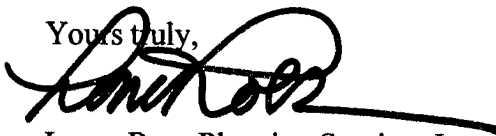
The October Staff report states that Retail Employment designations are appropriate "...on major roads where they may benefit from visibility, transit service and an improved public realm". This describes Markham Road between Finch and Steeles.

A full range and scale of commercial uses on Markham Road can provide excellent service to the employees within this district by capitalizing on the inter-regional traffic: being able to serve both local and passing-by trade improves the service/selection/quality available to each.

Conclusion:

A Retail Employment designation rather than a Core Area designation recognizes many existing uses, does not set up an immediate conflict with the existing zoning, provides a 'vision' for future development that capitalizes on the function of the street as a 7 lane inter-regional highway and transit corridor and will not adversely affect the functioning of nearby Core Employment Area based on the track record of similar uses already existing on this frontage.

Yours truly,



Lorne Ross Planning Services Inc.

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CC: Ulli S. Watkiss, Clerk, City of Toronto  
Mr. Chin Lee, Councillor, City of Toronto  
Mr. Raymond Cho, Councillor, City of Toronto

PDF copy via email to  
Roslyn Houser, Goodmans LLP  
Paul Minz, M & R Holdings

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Chart of Uses Permitted under three proposed new Employment Designations.

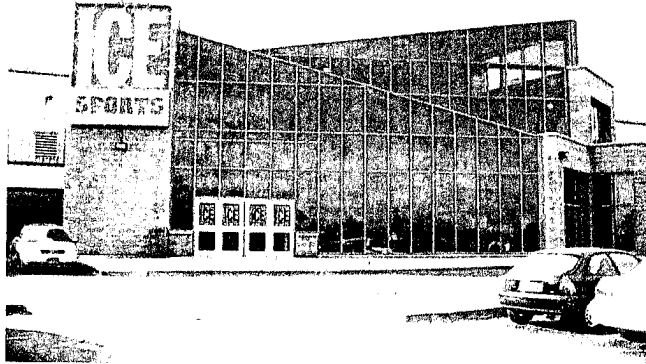
|   | <b>Core Employment</b>                 | <b>General Employment</b>   | <b>Retail Employment</b>   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Land Uses</b>  |  | Permits all Core Employment uses.                                 | Permits all Core Employment and General Employment Uses.         |
| Offices   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Research and development facilities   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Manufacturing   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Warehousing   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Distribution of goods   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Utilities   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Post secondary business and trade training facilities                                   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Arts training facilities and studios  | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Media facilities  | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Vertical agriculture  | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Hotels  | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Parks   | Permitted                              | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Small scale service uses directly serving business such as banks, couriers, copy shops. | Permitted subject to max gfa in By-law | Permitted subject to max gfa in By-law                            | [See "Full range..." policy below]                               |
| Small scale ancillary retail outlets.   | Permitted subject to max gfa in By-law | Permitted subject to max gfa in By-law                            | [See "Full range..." policy below]                               |
| Recreation and entertainment uses   | Not Permitted                          | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Restaurants   | Permitted, small scale only            | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Post secondary colleges and universities  | Not Permitted                          | Permitted   | Permitted  |
| Places of Worship   | Not Permitted                          | Permitted subject to policies re traffic, parking and no schools. | Permitted subject to policies re traffic, parking and no schools |
| Large scale stand alone retail stores   | Not Permitted                          | Permitted by rezoning subject to 8 policies.                      | [See "Full range..." policy below]                               |
| Power Centres   | Not Permitted                          | Permitted by rezoning subject to 8 policies.                      | [See "Full range..." policy below]                               |
| Full range and scale of retail and service uses.  | Not Permitted                          | Not Permitted   | Permitted  |

Source: draft Official Plan Amendment, Staff Report, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. 2012.

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**Photos of recreation, place of worship, commercial uses Markham Road between  
Finch and Steeles**



Entrance to Canlan four pad ice facility, Markham at Passmore.

Agincourt Hyundai's new dealership at Markham and Nashdene.



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Agincourt Mazda's new dealership, Markham and Finch.



Recently completed place of worship, east side of Markham south of Nashdene.

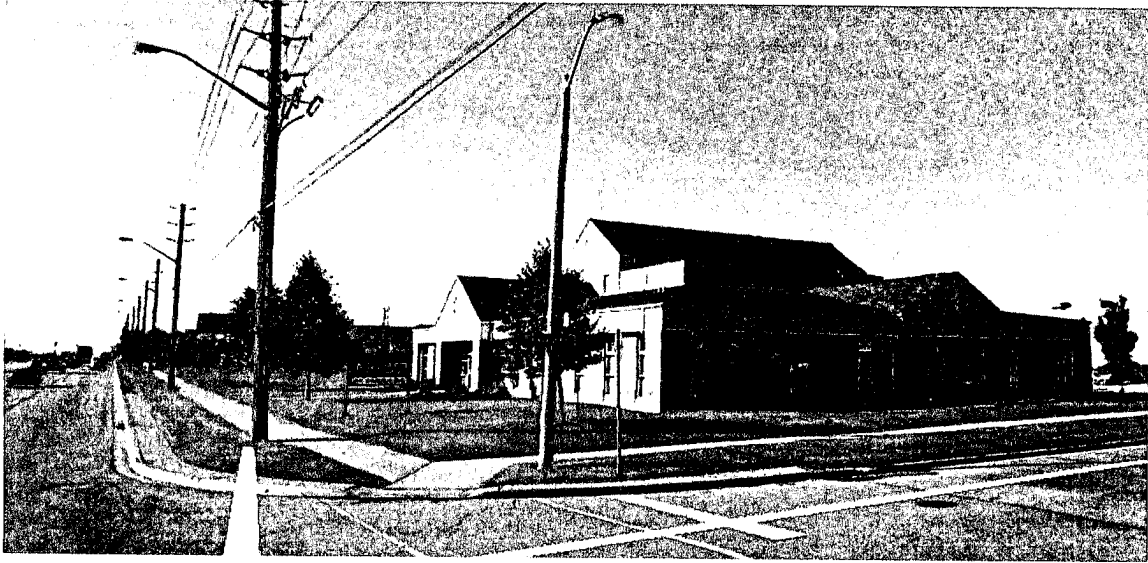




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**New Life Gospel Church, Markham at Turbina.**



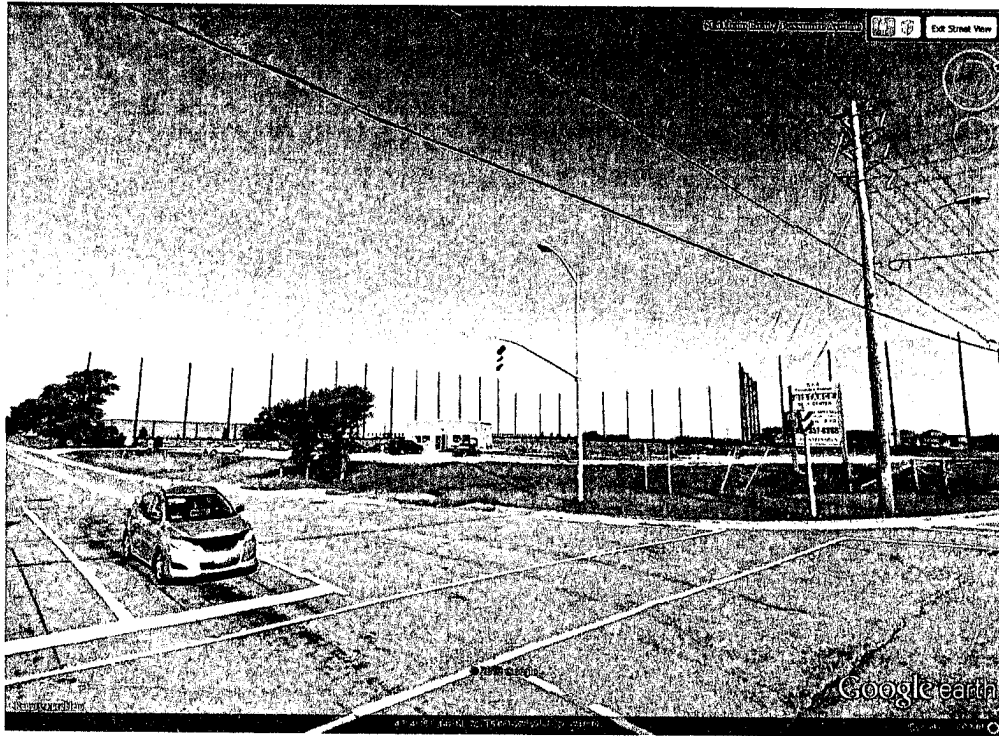
**New restaurants and shops, Athia Temple, east side at Nashdene.**



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Recreational use, driving range, Markham at Passmore.



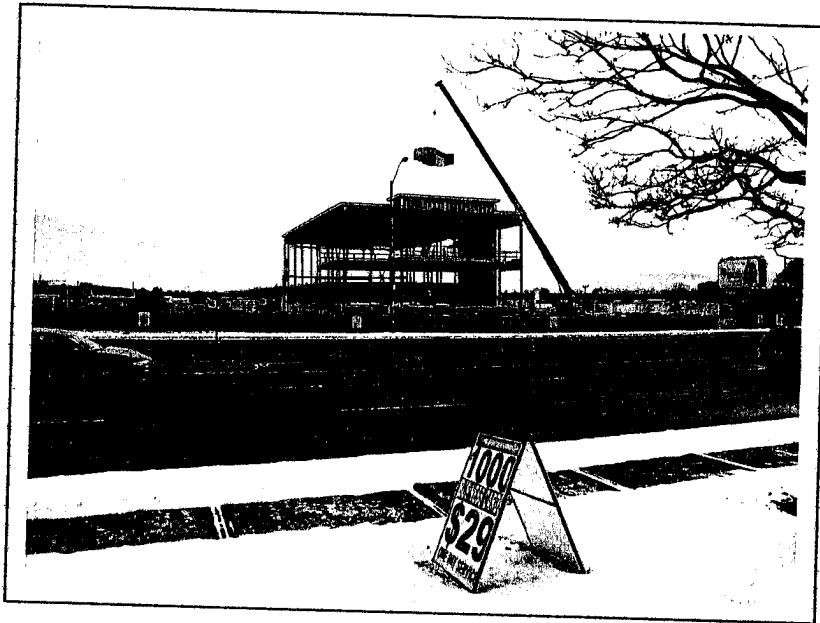
Goodlife Fitness.



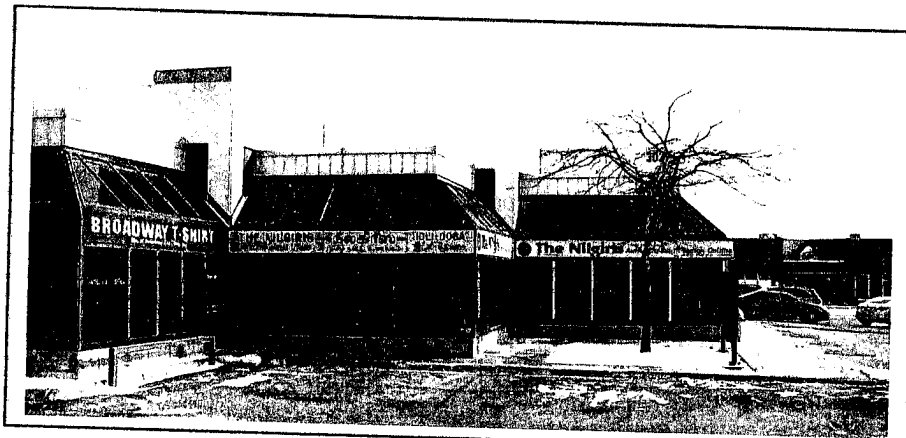
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Temple under construction, east side south of Nashdene.



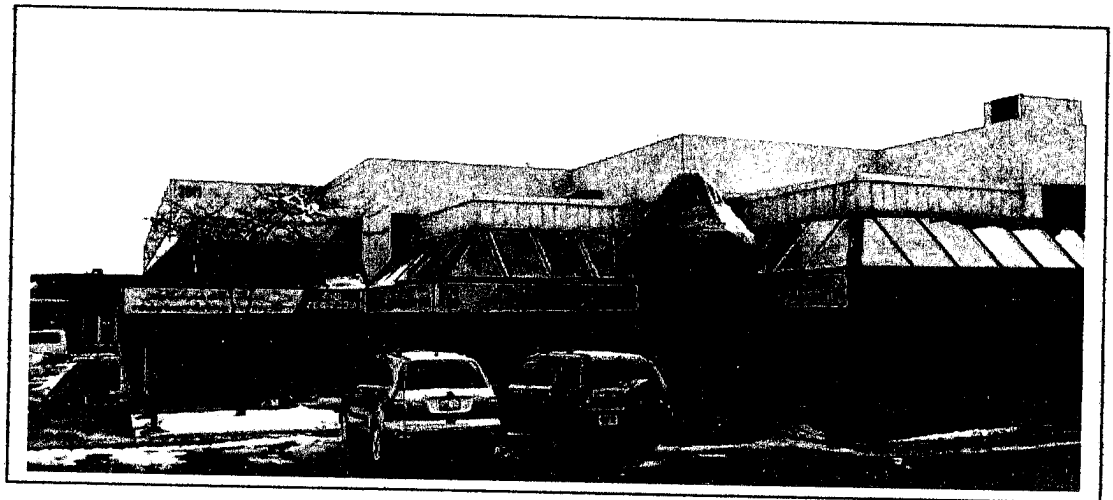
Shops, restaurants and temples: 3001-3031 Markham



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Shops and Temple 3001-3031 Markham



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Section of Map 8, Proposed Designations – Markham Road, Steeles to Finch  
 Marked to show existing and under construction land uses.

