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City of Toronto
Planning and Growth Management Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Attention: Ms. Nancy Martins, Committee Administrator

Dear Ms. Martins:

Re: City of Toronto
Official Plan Review: Employment Uses Policies
2304009 Ontario Inc. ("Metro Zen")
189 Milner Avenue
Ward 42 – Scarborough-Rouge River

We are the solicitors retained on behalf of 2304009 Ontario Inc. ("Metro Zen") owners of the property municipally known as 189 Milner Avenue (the "Property"), which is located near Markham Road and Highway 401 in Ward 42 (Scarborough-Rouge River). The Property is approximately 3.14 hectares in area and at present contains two vacant buildings. The Official Plan identifies the site as an Employment District on Map 2; Urban Structure Map and designates the Property as Employment Areas (Section 4.6, Land Use Plan Map 22). The former City of Scarborough Employment Districts Zoning By-law No. 249892 zones the property as Industrial (M). The new citywide Zoning By-law No. 569-2013 zones the lands as an Employment Industrial Zone (E 0.7) which permits manufacturing, warehouse, wholesaling and office uses.

Immediately to the north of the Property is a Senior Citizens’ apartment and residence development together with a place of worship. To the south of the property is a large self storage development. To the west of the property is a place of worship and to the east are offices and a hotel on the east side of Markham Road. Therefore although the area is generally designated as an Employment area the existing abutting uses contain uses other than employment.
In May of 2012 our client’s land use planner, Mr. Martin Rendl wrote a letter to Council requesting that the designation of the site should be converted to a Mixed Use Area to permit residential and commercial uses. In July of 2013 Metro Zen provided more detailed information describing the form of a proposed future development intended for the Property. Attached to our submission is a copy of the detailed submissions provided to staff of the City of Toronto for review during their consideration of the Employment Uses Policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan. The following is a short summary of the submission.

Proposed Future Development

Metro Zen proposes to develop the Property for an integrated mixed use development that is estimated to provide between 386 to 596 new jobs. The vision for the Property is centered on spirituality and mediation to care for the mind, traditional medicines to care for the body, hotels and convention space for visitors, accommodating the needs of an aging population, and a business incubator centre. The development has been conceived and designed to meet the needs of ethnic communities in the areas of health, spirituality, care for the aged and economic development. The overall development concept consists of several integrated components totaling approximately 116,450 square metres including the following specific uses:

1. A 950 square metres **Mediation Centre** to be operated by the Isha Foundation as one of its 150 worldwide sites. The Isha Foundation uses a customized system of yoga to create physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through a meditative process.

2. A 23,000 square metres high end **hotel**. The hotel will serve visitors to the site to use the Mediation Centre or to be treated at the Ayurvedic Centre. It will also contain 5,500 square metres of convention centre space together with 5,500 square metres of complementary commercial space.

3. A 24,000 square metres for the **Dharmshala Hotel**. The Dharmshala Hotels are budget-hotels for spiritual/religious tourists and backpackers on a budget. The hotel will provide basic accommodation and communal kitchens and dining in close association with the Mediation and Ayurvedic Centre/Health Facility.

4. Two 15,000 square metres **Avkash Sanstha Seniors Retirement homes**. These buildings will provide culturally appropriate facilities, support and fellowship for aged members of the South Asian community.

5. A 19,000 square metres **Zen Innovation Centre**. The centre is designed to address the capacity and resource challenges faced by recent graduates and immigrants to Canada. The Zen Innovation Centre is a co-working space and incubator for employment and business creation. The co-working spaces as proposed in the Zen Innovation Centre have proven popular with freelancers, entrepreneurs, independent professionals, startups or persons who seek an alternative to the isolation of working in a home office.
6. A 8,500 square metres **Ayurvedic Centre**. The Ayurvedic Centre is a space for practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine. Ayurveda is a system of traditional medicine native to India and a form of alternative medicine. It is estimated that 80 percent of persons in India use some form of traditional medicines, including traditional medicines like Ayurveda.

As you will note from reviewing the list of proposed uses many of the uses conform to the land use policies for development in Employment Areas, however the uses proposed such as the seniors retirement facilities require approval of an amendment to the Employment Area policies to permit limited residential uses as part of the mixed use development.

The mixed use development proposed for the Property is located within a precinct bounded by Markham Road, Milner Avenue and Executive Court. This precinct is currently developed with a range of land uses. As discussed above the adjacent land uses consist of a mix of Institutional, senior’s residential apartments as well as employment uses. We respectfully submit that the almost 30 year history of non-employment uses in this precinct coexisting with employment uses in the area demonstrate that permitting a mixed use development on this site will not undermine business activity in the larger employment area. As noted above it is estimated that the proposed development could supply between 386 to 596 new jobs. We believe that the jobs that will be created on this site will assist the City in meeting its growth forecasts by accommodating significantly more employment than could be accommodated based on the present designation. A more detailed explanation of the jobs to be created is found in the attached material. In addition I am attaching a letter of support from UFCW Locals 175 & 633 confirming support for this proposed development and the resulting jobs that will be created on this site.

We note when reviewing staff’s November 2013 report regarding the Property that it raises concerns related to whether the existing or planned hard services and transportation capacity could support the proposed mixed use development. As part of the July submissions filed with staff our client provided preliminary assessments regarding traffic and servicing to address the concerns raised by staff.

Regrettably staff are recommending that City Council retain the Property as an **Employment Areas** and designate them as **Core Employment Areas**. We respectfully submit that Council designate the lands for **Mixed Use Development** in order to accommodate this unique and desirable form of development to meet the present and future needs of Toronto’s varied ethnic population. We submit that many of the proposed employment generating uses can only be accommodated and successful if part of a larger mixed use development as proposed for this Property.
I will be in attendance at the Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting scheduled for November 21, 2013 to make a deputation on behalf of Metro Zen and would be happy to answer any and all questions.

Yours truly,

Mary Flynn-Guglietti

cc: Pannirshelvan Kannuthurai, Metro Zen (Canada) Inc.
    Trevor McIntyre, IBI Group
    Neno Kovacevic, IBI Group
    Martin Rendl
    Paul Bain, Project Manager, City Planning
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
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