

2600-2700 Steeles Avenue West, City of Vaughan – Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications – Request for Direction Report

Date: April 6, 2022

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to applications filed in the City of Vaughan to amend the City of Vaughan's Official Plan and Zoning By-law. The applications have been circulated to the City of Toronto in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act* and given the subject site's proximity to the municipal border. The report identifies the comments of City Planning staff and makes recommendations on future steps to protect the City's interests concerning these applications.

The applications are on the north side of Steeles Avenue West and propose the development of four blocks, each containing two 53-storey residential towers connected by a six-storey mixed-use base building containing office, retail, and residential uses. In total, the development would result in 272,413 square metres of residential gross floor area consisting of 4,641 residential units, and 2,569 square metres of commercial gross floor area. The proposal would result in 8,225 square metres of indoor amenity spaces within each building base, 3,951 square metres of outdoor amenity spaces at-grade, 4,717 bicycle parking spaces at-grade and within the five levels of underground garages on each block, and 3,227 vehicle parking spaces within five levels of underground garages on each block.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council forward the report to the City of Vaughan Development Planning Department.
2. In the event that the City of Vaughan approves the applications at 2600-2700 Steeles Avenue West that are not substantially in conformity with the Council of Vaughan adopted Steeles West Secondary Plan, City Council direct the Chief Planner and

Executive Director, City Planning to report back to the Planning and Housing Committee on next steps.

3. Should the applications at 2600-2700 Steeles Avenue West be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, City Council direct the City Solicitor and appropriate City staff to attend and seek party status to support the City's interests.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

DECISION HISTORY

On June 26, 2006, the City of Vaughan adopted OPA 620, the Steeles West Secondary Plan (SWSP), and it was subsequently forwarded and approved by the Regional Municipality of York (York Region) in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act*. Three appeals on the approval of OPA 620 were filed by landowners within the plan area.

On March 5, 2007, Toronto City Council directed the City Solicitor and appropriate City staff to attend the Ontario Municipal Board in support of protecting the City's interests from the issues raised by the appellants, the phasing mechanisms in the SWSP, and wording of policies dealing with the implementation of community services. City Council also directed that the SWSP must be considered in conjunction with the York University Secondary Plan which was under review at the time. The Council meeting minutes can be found at: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/decisions/2007-03-05-cc03-dd.pdf>

Between June 22, 2010 and February 7, 2011, City Council received for information staff recommendations on a series of development applications within the SWSP area. The decision documents can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.NY35.62>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.NY36.64>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.NY3.45>

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.NY3.45>

On June 15, 2015, the Ontario Municipal Board issued a decision and Order, bringing OPA 620 into full force and effect. The Order can be found here:

<https://www.omb.gov.on.ca/e-decisions/pl111184-Jul-15-2015.pdf?msclkid=3e833cc5a5fe11ec84bbd4f351d113c0>

PROPOSAL

The applications would facilitate the development of four blocks, each containing two 53-storey residential towers connected by a six-storey mixed-use base building containing office, retail, and residential uses. In total, the development would result in 272,413 square metres of residential gross floor area consisting of 4,641 residential units, and 2,569 square metres of commercial gross floor area. The proposal would result in 8,225 square metres of indoor amenity spaces within each building base, 3,951 square metres of outdoor amenity spaces at-grade, 4,717 bicycle parking spaces at-grade and within the five levels of underground garages on each block, and 3,227 vehicle parking spaces within five levels of underground garages on each block.

The proposed renderings of the proposal can be found in Attachments 2 and 3, the proposed site plan can be found in Attachment 4, and the proposed landscape plan can be found in Attachment 5.

Reasons for Application

The applicant has filed an Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-law Amendment (file number OP.21.028 and Z.21.057 respectively) with the City of Vaughan. The Official Plan Amendment (OPA) seeks to amend the SWSP to increase the maximum Floor Space Index (FSI) from 2.5 to 13.08, and maximum building heights from 15 storeys to 53 storeys. The Zoning By-law Amendment application seeks to amend the site from an employment area zone category to facilitate the proposed land uses, density, and site specific building performance standards.

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Protocol for Review of Municipal Neighbours' Planning Applications and Studies

On October 24, 2011, City Council adopted the City of Toronto and Neighbouring Municipalities Protocol for the Review of Neighbours' Planning Applications and Studies. The protocol directs staff to report to City Council on major development applications in neighbouring municipalities within one kilometre of the municipal boundary that meet the following criteria:

- The application will add over 10,000 square metres of gross floor area, or over 100 dwelling units, or over 150 additional two-way vehicular trips generated; and,
- The application is of a nature for which City staff seek Council direction, or otherwise have significant City staff involvement or major impacts on the City's services and development.

The intensity of development proposed on this site exceeds the minimum threshold stipulated under the protocol and requires staff to report to Council on the present applications.

Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located on the north side of Steeles Avenue West between Keele Street and Jane Street in the City of Vaughan. Steeles Avenue is the boundary between Toronto and Vaughan.

The location of the subject site can be found in Attachment 1.

Steeles West Secondary Plan

The City of Vaughan's SWSP seeks to leverage public investment in transit and public institutions through increased density. With plans emerging to extend the Spadina Subway to Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, the City of Vaughan sought to structure and scale land uses around future transit stations and support new residential development at higher intensities. The SWSP area's proximity to York University provided a further rationale for supporting a greater range of uses and densities that are complementary and supportive of the evolving and urbanizing campus.

In the City of Vaughan's Official Plan, the site is designated *High-Rise Mixed-Use* with a *Transit Transition* overlay. The SWSP provides further policy direction for the subject site where buildings are to achieve a maximum height of 15 storeys, and a maximum FSI of 2.5 times the area of the lot on the western portion of the subject site, and a FSI of 1.5 times the area of the lot on the eastern portion. Additional height and/or density may be permitted under Section 37 of the *Planning Act* in accordance with the policies of the City of Vaughan's Official Plan. An east-west secondary road is identified bisecting the subject site, as part of the Transportation Network Map of the SWSP. A *Neighbourhood Square/Green Space* is also identified on the subject site.

York University Secondary Plan

In 1991, the Council of the former City of North York approved the York University Secondary Plan (YUSP). The YUSP was completed with significant input from the University's Master Plan process, which was completed in 1988, and with extensive consultation with the broader community.

Over time, the significant physical changes on campus, as well as (the then planned) transit improvements such as the Spadina Subway extension north through York University, warranted an update to the YUSP. On November 30, 2009, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 104, which is the updated in-force and effect YUSP. The updated YUSP establishes a framework to guide transit supportive development that is connected and integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods. The YUSP established precincts, along with minimum and maximum FSIs to provide direction for future build out of the campus.

COMMENTS

The following matters have been identified by City Planning staff with the present applications.

Built Form

City Planning provided input to City of Vaughan and York Region staff as the SWSP was adopted to ensure future development would be compatible with the planning framework south of Steeles Avenue West. Immediately south of the subject site are the lands subject to the YUSP. The area is identified within the Steeles East Precinct and designated *Mixed Use Area* in the YUSP. The YUSP states the Steeles East Precinct is to promote the creation of a mixed-use corridor at a complimentary and compatible scale as the lands on the north side of Steeles Avenue West in the City of Vaughan. Map 10-12 of the YUSP contemplates minimum and maximum densities of 1.5 FSI to 3.0 FSI respectively. Minimum building heights are contemplated at four storeys or 13.5 metres with a maximum height of 60.96 metres.

The proposed FSI maximums and building heights exceed the intensity of development contemplated along this section of Steeles Avenue West. Both the SWSP and YUSP contemplate an overall hierarchy of development intensity and have building heights and densities taper away from the Pioneer Village Subway Station. From the perspective of built form and intensity, the proposal marks a departure from the planning framework for the area. The amendments could therefore impact how the City reviews potential development applications on the south side of Steeles Avenue West within the YUSP if the approved context significant departs from the planned context.

The City of Vaughan is encouraged to consider the planned scale and intensity of development on both side of Steeles Avenue West. This will ensure development on both sides of Steeles Avenue West will be at a complimentary and compatible in scale and intensity.

Community Services and Facilities

The SWSP acknowledges that the lack of community services and facilities within the area is a significant constraint. In an effort to ensure community services and facilities are provided to serve future development in the area, a series of policies were enacted permitting community services and facilities, with specific direction calling for new parks and a new library. These policies will help ensure future Vaughan residents are supported by the social infrastructure required to build and sustain complete communities.

The proposed development includes a significant amount of commercial and office gross floor area; however, no gross floor area is dedicated to community facilities. Although there are nearby services and facilities south of Steeles Avenue West, services may not necessarily be available to Vaughan residents. City Planning acknowledges that the SWSP does recognize the need for and plan for community services that will support population and employment growth unlocked by more permissive land uses and densities. Accordingly, staff advise the City of Vaughan and the applicant to seek opportunities to provide community services and facilities to support the proposed development.

Housing

On September 10, 2020 and March 18, 2021, York Regional Council endorsed the draft Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) delineations to be included in the forthcoming update of the Regional Official Plan. Regional Council endorsed the delineation of the area north of Steeles Avenue West around the Pioneer Village Station as a MTSA. The subject site is within the proposed delineation of the Pioneer Village MTSA. The proposed delineation on the north side of Steeles Avenue around Pioneer Village Station may allow for the provision of affordable housing in new development provided the lands are subject to an Inclusionary Zoning By-law.

On October 18, 2021, the Planning and Housing Committee endorsed the draft delineation of the Pioneer Village Station as a PMTSA south of Steeles Avenue West for consultation, which is identified as an Inclusionary Zoning area and subject to the City's Inclusionary Zoning By-law. Should the draft PMTSA be approved, future development within this PMTSA will require new development on the Toronto side of the municipal boundary to provide for affordable housing.

City Planning advises that the provision of affordable housing should form part of further discussions and future revisions of the proposed development.

Conclusion

City Planning staff have reviewed the City of Vaughan applications and have identified issues through the formal commenting process. The issues relate to the proposed height and intensity of development, ensuring compatibility with the intensities contemplated on the south side of Steeles Avenue West, and advisory comments on the need for community services and facilities to support the proposed development and that the provision of affordable housing be encouraged. Although there are no direct impacts to the City at this point, the amendments may pose potential conflicts with how the City reviews potential development applications on the south side of Steeles Avenue West within the YUSP area. To note Toronto City Council's concerns with the application, it is recommended that City Council endorse the report by City Planning staff. Further, in order to ensure that the City's interests are considered, it is appropriate for staff to attend any Ontario Land Tribunal hearing in the event the application is appealed.

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SIGNATURE

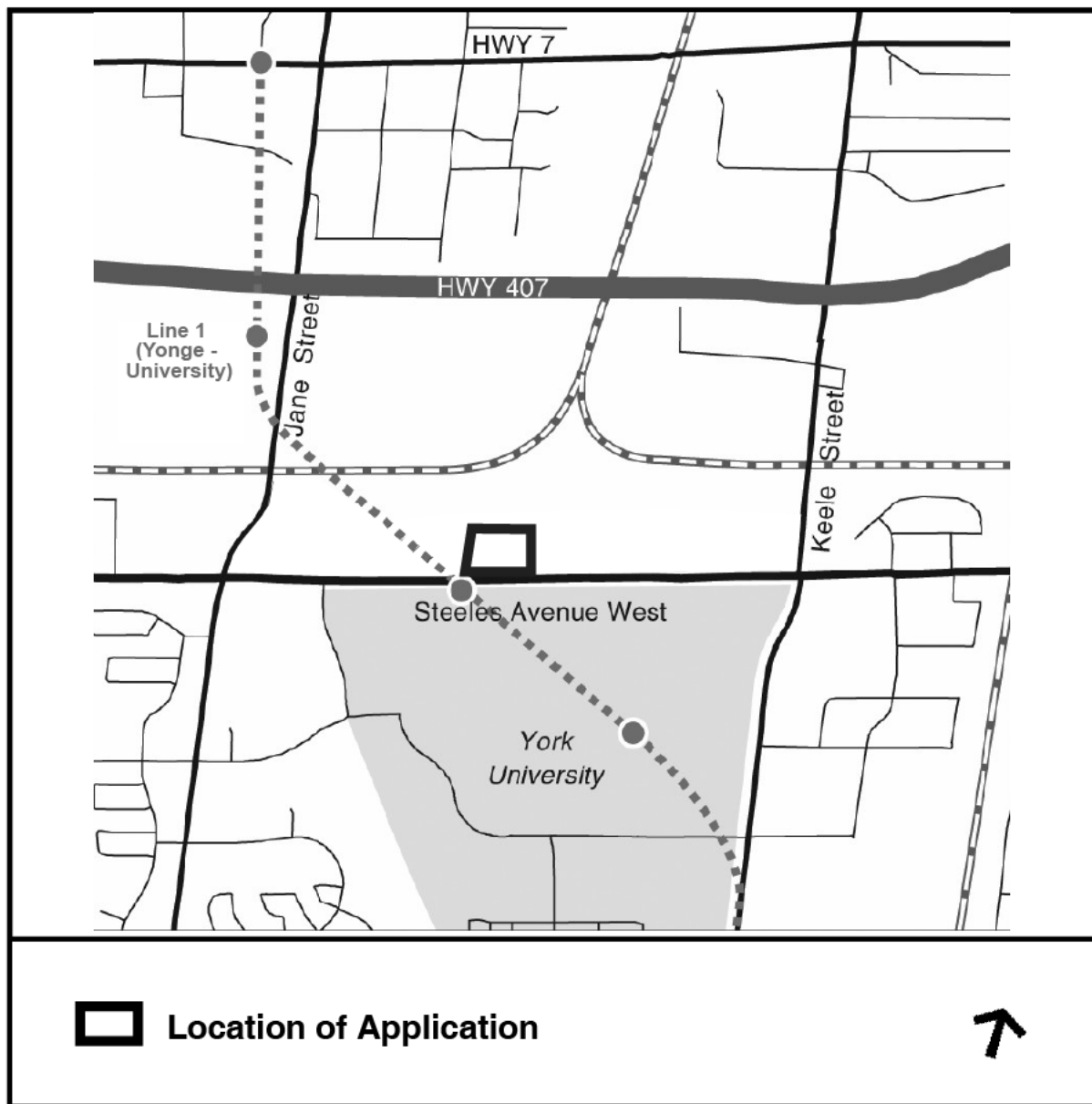
Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings

- Attachment 1: Location of Application
- Attachment 2: Rendering of the Proposal Looking Northwest
- Attachment 3: Rendering of the Proposal Looking Southwest
- Attachment 4: Site Plan
- Attachment 5: Landscape Plan

Attachment 1: Location of Application



Attachment 2: Rendering of the Proposal Looking Northwest



View of Applicant's Proposal Looking Northwest



03/08/2022

Attachment 3: Rendering of the Proposal Looking Southwest

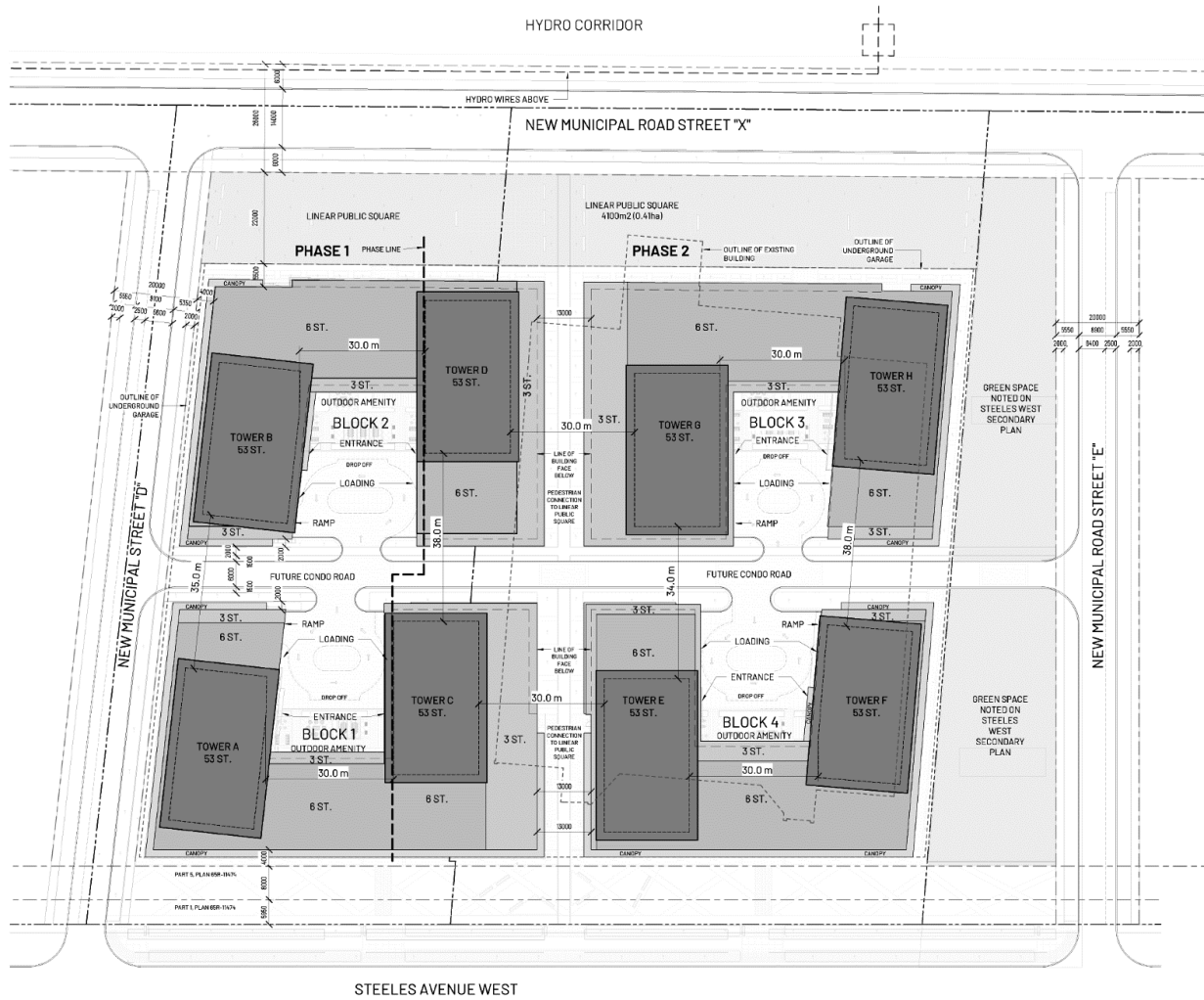


View of Applicant's Proposal Looking Southwest



03/04/2022

Attachment 4: Site Plan



Site Plan



Staff Report for Action - Request for Direction - 2600-2700 Steeles Avenue West

