

March 23, 2022

Project No. 17117

City Clerk
Attention: Nancy Martins, Administrator
Planning and Housing Committee
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Ms. Martins,

**Re: PH32.5 Preliminary Assessment of Employment Area Conversion Request
for 4711 - 4751 Steeles Avenue East (No. 026)**

On July 5, 2021, Urban Strategies Inc. submitted a request, on behalf of the owner, to re-designate the lands known municipally as 4711-4751 Steeles Avenue East from *General Employment* to *Mixed Use Areas*. We were disappointed to learn that staff's preliminary assessment concluded these lands should be retained as *Employment Areas* and continue to be designated as *General Employment Areas*.

Staff have identified a list of issues with this conversion request, including the cumulative impact of multiple conversion requests on the overall viability of the Employment Area and its planned function, as well as the ability to provide a stable and productive operating environment for existing and new businesses and their economic activities. Staff also indicated that conversion of the properties may present compatibility issues with surrounding existing and permitted uses. Additionally, staff pointed out the need for convenient access to community facilities and services required for complete communities.

In response to the preliminary assessment, we wish to highlight the following:

- **The properties are part of an emerging mixed-use node.** The subject properties are the only quadrant surrounding the Milliken GO station not designated for a mix of uses supportive of the current and future transit infrastructure. A Mixed-Use designation for the lands would allow for the implementation of "15-minute City" type development encouraging a pedestrian and transit friendly node. Conversion would also be consistent with the outcome of the Steeles Redlea Regeneration Area Study, which resulted in the conversion of lands immediately west of the subject properties. There has been significant public investment in pedestrian infrastructure to mitigate

the grade separation of Steeles. A broader range of uses on these lands would support pedestrian activity.

- **The site has characteristics that further differentiate it from others in the cluster.** We appreciate the need to consider the potential cumulative impact of multiple requests in an employment area. However, the subject properties are distinct from the others. They have adjacency to Milliken GO Station, and, unlike 3447 Kennedy Road, 29 Redlea Avenue and 681 Silver Star Boulevard, they are not adjacent to active industrial uses and instead are adjacent to commercial lands that provide a buffer to industrial uses.
- **The site is less suitable for commercial uses and not appropriate for industrial uses.** The recently constructed Steeles underpass makes the bulk of the site less desirable for retail uses, and the site's proximity to existing and planned residential uses make it inappropriate for industrial uses.
- **Compatibility concerns can be mitigated.** Adverse emissions are not anticipated, and noise and vibration impacts can be adequately mitigated through the design of future mixed-use buildings.
- **Intensification of the site will not have a significant impact on the road networks.** Access to the employment lands to the south also will not be affected.
- **There is infrastructure in the area to support future residential development.** A range of community services and facilities exist near the site, and future development would provide opportunities to enhance these facilities with additional open space and other amenities.

We would ask that staff reconsider their decision to retain these lands as employment, and we kindly request a meeting with staff to discuss their concerns.

Yours very truly,
URBAN STRATEGIES INC.



Emily Reisman, RPP, MCIP
Partner

c: Councillor Nick Mantas and Phil Meretsky