



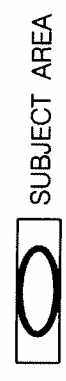
AIR PHOTO (2005)

APPLICANT: TOWN OF MARKHAM
LANGSTAFF AREA

FILE No: SD 03116183 (DM)



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION



DATE: 06/03/21

FIGURE No.3

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DRAFT

LANGSTAFF LAND USE STUDY

PHASE 1

TOWN OF MARKHAM

STATUS REPORT

MAY 15, 2006

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

On October 14, 2003, Markham Council considered a report from Development Services outlining the Terms of Reference for the Langstaff Land Use Study Phase 1. Staff was authorized to proceed with consultant selection and commencement of the study in accordance with the study terms of reference and in February 2004, a proposal was submitted in response by The Butler Group (Consultants) Inc. in association with Kent Harvey Consultants Inc., Keir Corp., and Joe Lobko Architect. The consultant team was subsequently retained to undertake an update and make recommendations on a future course of action for the Langstaff Study Area.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update of changes in the land use context affecting the Langstaff Study Area, to reassess the market feasibility for various land use options, and to provide recommendations about a course of action to revitalize this area.

Since the initiation of this study, the Region of York Transit Plan Consortium has advanced their plans to provide for a substantial transit plan in this area. More specifically, it is now apparent that the Region is planning to acquire most of the lands located between Yonge Street on the west and the CN railway on the east. This potential acquisition plan was approved by Regional Council in late 2005.. Negotiations and acquisitions cannot be finalized until approval of the Environmental Assessment for this project. However, if approximately one-third of the study area becomes regional property for purposes of a regional maintenance and storage facility associated with rapid transit and possible air rights development, it will have substantial implications for the future planning of the Langstaff Study area.

1.2 Background

The Langstaff area is a mixed-use enclave of small scale industrial, open storage and residential uses. The area is bounded by Highway 407 to the north, the Holy Cross Cemetery to the south, Bayview Avenue to the east and Yonge Street on the west. Although part of the Thornhill Planning Community, it is physically isolated from the rest of the community and remote within the context of the Town of Markham as a whole. It is bounded to the north by the Town of Richmond Hill and to the west by the City of Vaughan.

The Langstaff Development Feasibility and Urban Design Study completed in February 1995 recommended a mixed commercial and residential land use option resulting in an amendment to the Thornhill Secondary Plan in 1997. The Secondary Plan designates the Langstaff area for Retail Warehouse use between Yonge Street and the CNR tracks and for Urban Residential (medium density), based on the concepts of new urbanism, from the CNR tracks east to Bayview Avenue.

Since that time, there have been a number of changes in context, land use and policy that have influenced the anticipated redevelopment of this area. These are further discussed in Section 2.2. The required land assembly and subsequent redevelopment has never materialized in accordance with the new Official Plan. This detailed review of the current planning policies and circumstances will provide the information required to determine the market feasibility of the previous development options and update the current opportunities and constraints required to revitalize the area, suggesting, where necessary, changes to the current policy framework.

The study is to be undertaken in two phases, this being Phase 1 is the update, review and evaluation of opportunities and constraints facing the Langstaff Study Area. If substantial changes are required, it is intended that Phase 2 will recommend specific policies and changes to the Land Use Schedule to be incorporated into a revised secondary plan, including an Urban Design Plan with Development Guidelines.

2.0 LANGSTAFF DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY & URBAN DESIGN STUDY - 1995

2.1 Findings and Recommendations

The 1995 study identified a number of opportunities and constraints to redevelopment, which are summarized below. The isolation and lack of supporting infrastructure was stated as a constraint to redevelopment of the area given the significant financial commitment to upgrade services to urban standards and provide connectivity to the adjacent communities. At that time, the level of transit and transportation improvements identified would increase accessibility to and from the area as well as its overall exposure and visibility in the long term. Furthermore, it was felt that the area's isolation assisted in buffering it from any potential or perceived effects to nearby stable low density residential lands. The existing land use and ownership patterns were concluded to be conducive to phased land assembly and redevelopment while recognizing that certain key parcels would be critical to the plan's success even within a comprehensive planning and strategic framework.

It was recommended that due to excellent exposure and access, the western section of the study area be redeveloped for commercial uses around a reconfigured internal road system (Langstaff/Church Street/Ruggles Avenue) to be accessed primarily off Yonge Street. Retail Warehouse uses were proposed including contemporary business park uses permitting offices and industrial facilities.

The residential community was proposed east of the railway to Bayview Avenue and proposed as a separate yet integrated village with a total of approximately 2,500 dwelling units with a projected population of approximately 5,000-7,500 persons in medium, low density and mixed commercial/residential forms. Notwithstanding the projected population, a school was not required in this area.

This plan included vacant lands owned by the cemetery located along the Bayview Avenue frontage, which have subsequently been committed for future cemetery use. The Plan also provided for Public Open Space of active parkland in addition to the environmental protection of the Langstaff woodlot adjacent to Bayview. The plan provided for approximately 9.5 ha (23.5 acres) of active parkland as well as preservation of the Langstaff woodlot comprising an additional 4.6 ha (11.5 acres). The parks plan encompassed the Langstaff woodlot as a cornerstone of the open space system and a connecting linear park located on the north side of Langstaff Road over to Cedar Avenue, intended for a variety of active recreational facilities. Two other parks were proposed in the residential community east of the CN Railway tracks.

Other community facilities such as day care, libraries and retail facilities were to be integrated within the residential developments as required. However, it was not anticipated that a significant number of new facilities such as schools or a fire station would be required to support the level of development envisaged.

2.2 Changes to the Area Context and Implications

Since the introduction of the Langstaff Redevelopment policies into the Thornhill Secondary Plan, a number of changes in land use and infrastructure have occurred or are under review that will affect the development capability and feasibility potential identified in the Official Plan for this area.

These changes include:

- The construction of Highway 407 and realigned Langstaff Road, including the resultant changes in access and grade separation;
- The proposed transitway along the north side of Highway 407 in this location;
- A proposed relocation of the GO Station from its current site south of Highway 407 to a new Richmond Hill Intermodal Station north of Highway 407 west of the tracks with a new underpass access connecting Markham and Richmond Hill;
- Environmental Assessments by the York Rapid Transit Plan Consortium for a Yonge Street Transitway and Highway 7 Transitway including a preferred location for a maintenance yard facility south of Langstaff Road, west of the CN railway line and east of Langstaff (formerly known as Church Street) and Quick Start project (Viva) which began in 2005;
- Redevelopment of the former Jail Farm lands in Richmond Hill as a retail warehouse centre as part of the Bayview Glen Regional Centre mixed use, high density node;
- Expansion of the existing cemetery use on lands fronting Bayview Avenue by the Catholic Archdiocese, eliminating their potential for residential use.

Other changes to planning policy and legislation or studies may also influence the planned redevelopment of the Langstaff area include:

- The Town's approved Strategic Plan and Corporate Goals;
- The Langstaff Sewer and Watermain Design Study which is being finalized;
- The Avenue Seven Corridor Study which will lead to a strategy for Highway 7 that identifies key development areas, including Langstaff, for transit supportive development opportunities;
- Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment 43 regarding the Regional Centres and Corridors policies;
- Provincial policy relating to Planning Reform, brownfields, growth management and financial incentives, and "Places to Grow", the Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

2.3 Reasons Why Langstaff Area Has Not Redeveloped

The Langstaff Study was conducted between the fall of 1993, and February 1995, and Council adopted an amendment to the Thornhill Secondary Plan in June 1997. Despite some review, Council determined not to approve an implementing zoning by-law at that time.

It has now been over eight years since the adoption and approval of the Secondary Plan for the Langstaff Area. Notwithstanding landowner support for the new Secondary Plan, no significant redevelopment has taken place, and there have been no applications submitted by landowners in support of the new vision for the Langstaff Area. There have however been some open storage temporary use applications in the area. Council has refused these applications and staff has been directed to proceed with any outstanding charges.

It is noted that in December 2005, a landowners group comprising approximately 4.7 ha (11.6 acres) located between Yonge Street and the railway line submitted an application for an amendment to the Town's Official Plan. The intent of this application features a mix of medium and high density residential uses, retail, offices, and a hotel. It is not known what impact this application will have on the Region's plans for the area.

Notwithstanding the above-noted applications, in our opinion, there are a number of reasons why redevelopment in accordance with the Town's Official Plan has not occurred and these can be summarized as follows:

2.3.1 Market

The market has not responded positively due to the large amount of land assembly required to establish viable residential blocks east of the CN railway line, the presence of large amounts of outside storage by existing industrial operators and a general low level of property standards and maintenance, the lack of infrastructure including the absence of sanitary sewers and stormwater facilities; and competition from other greenfield areas in Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan.

The lands west of the CNR line were designated for retail commercial big box uses. As a result of the development of the power centre in close proximity on the north side of Highway 7 in the Town of Richmond Hill, most if not all of the retail market demand in this general area has been satisfied. Most of the same observations regarding constraints on the residential option would also apply to the retail commercial lands.

2.3.2 Holy Cross Cemetery

In 1994, Holy Cross Cemetery took no position on the redesignation of their lands at the east end of the study area near and adjacent to Bayview Avenue for higher density residential uses. These vacant lands were considered to be high quality residential lands where no assembly was required, immediate access was available to Bayview Avenue and the lands were compatible with all abutting properties. Since then, Holy Cross Cemetery has expanded their cemetery east of the CN railway line and constructed a significant columbarium building. A site plan for the full development of all their lands for cemetery purposes has also been submitted to the Town. In our opinion, these lands formed the best opportunity for immediate residential development and if developed for residential use would have formed a strategic gateway for the rest of the Langstaff area.

It was felt that if this residential development were initiated in the east, then a gradual phasing of lands for additional redevelopment of the existing industrial lands could progress westerly.

The failure to seize on this significant opportunity as well as the expansion of the cemetery uses clearly impacted the market. The full development of all of the cemetery lands from Yonge Street to Bayview Avenue now significantly isolates the remaining lands in the Langstaff area, and places a major constraint on their redevelopment for medium density residential uses.

2.3.3 Highway 407 and Hydro Corridor

At the time of the formulation of the Secondary Plan, construction on Highway 407 and the hydro corridor had not commenced. While the consultant team used the best modeling available, the full impact of the new grades of Highway 407 as well as the extensive land area involved including the hydro lands has acted as a significant barrier. These facilities further isolate the Langstaff area as an island and have added additional practical constraints such as highway noise as well as market constraints to successful redevelopment to-date.

With the grade of Highway 407 being higher near Yonge Street and obscured due to a lower grade and the woodlot near Bayview Avenue, there is little exposure for the existing land uses in the Langstaff area at the east and west ends however, exposure to the centrally located lands along the 407 is quite good.

2.3.4 Access Issues

With no direct access to the Langstaff area from the north or the south, access to the area is problematic. While technically access is available from Yonge Street and Bayview Avenue via Langstaff Road, it is both confusing and circuitous. Langstaff Road, itself has not been improved to a standard urban road cross-section that would promote both vehicular and pedestrian access to a residential neighbourhood. Designed as an industrial collector, it does not currently provide for an inviting, direct access to an identifiable development area.

At the time of construction of Highway 407, an underpass was provided under the highway to provide for a future extension of Cedar Avenue to connect with Highway 7 to the north in the Town of Richmond Hill. This easement was successfully put forward by the Town of Markham at that time. Unfortunately, the Cedar Road extension has not occurred and this lack of connection has contributed to the perceived isolation of the Langstaff area.

Any proposed land use concept for new land uses in the area would require road improvements internally and to adjacent lands. Additional detailed commentary on the future opportunities and constraints for redevelopment are also found in Sections 5.0 and 7.0.

2.3.5 Servicing

Municipal services are limited in the study area. There are no existing storm sewers within the study area as all drainage is by road side ditch or by sheet flow over open areas.

The existing sanitary sewers are located mainly on the west side of the study area west of the CN railway and drain into the York Region Central Collector trunk.

An existing 200 mm watermain services the area and the study area lies within Regional Pressure District #6. All municipal services were in need of upgrading and extension in order for development to proceed in the Langstaff area.

3.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and Growth Management

The March 2005 PPS included changing the implementation standard to be 'consistent with' provincial policy statements. Other changes to the Planning Act limited OMB appeals on certain applications and allowed more time for decision-makers to review applications.

As well, the PPS 2005 has provided a number of proposed changes related to growth management and intensification, revitalization of brownfields, transit supportive land use patterns, ensuring an adequate supply of land and opportunities for a range and mix of industrial, commercial and other employment uses, providing housing and jobs in proximity, focused investment in priority growth areas, and concentrating travel intensive uses on transit corridors, among others.

With a new focus on intensification, redevelopment, infill, transit supportive land uses, brownfield clean-up, and economic development opportunities, areas such as Langstaff will require a reevaluation about what is required to revitalize this area and what form it should take. Intensification of use and urban revitalization in this area over the long term is opportune given its strategic location in proximity to an evolving transportation hub consistent with emerging provincial policies as well as regional and municipal objectives and policies.

The Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway is depicted as an “Urban Growth Centre” in Places to Grow: A Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, November 2005. Urban Growth Centres will become the focus of further urban growth as major mixed use and employment centres, that will support major transit infrastructure. The Richmond Hill/Langstaff Urban Growth Centre will be planned to achieve a minimum gross density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare by 2031. Transit is a main provincial priority in urban parts of the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the long term vision (30 years) includes an extension of the subway system into Vaughan and Richmond Hill, building transitways along the 407 and the York Region BRT and improved GO Transit Rail capacity, all of which will influence the redevelopment of the Langstaff area.

3.2 Official Plan for the Regional Municipality of York

The Region of York Official Plan was first approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on October 17, 1994. The Official Plan outlines a regional structure based on the identification of a greenlands system, established urban boundaries, a system of centres and corridors and proposed networks of transportation and public works. The centres and corridors proposed for urban centres are intended to make efficient and compact use of urban areas by focusing mixed-use development in areas that can be serviced by transit.

The Plan provides for a series of regional centres to make efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure, create greater identity and include a broad mix of compact uses and the focus of business, government, entertainment and culture with complementary medium and high density residential development.

Four regional centres identified in the urban areas of Markham, Richmond Hill, Newmarket and Vaughan are strategically located with access by major roads and transit. The regional centre located in Richmond Hill at Highway 7 and Yonge Street is just north of Highway 407 and the Langstaff Study Area.

Both Yonge Street and Highway 7 are regional corridors and the other three regional centers are located in Vaughan at Highway 400 and Highway 7, in Markham at Warden and Highway 7 and in Newmarket at Davis Drive and Yonge Street.

Each local municipality has already prepared detailed tertiary plans for these centres and it is proposed that the Bayview Glen Centre in Richmond Hill will ultimately accommodate approximately 20,000 people and jobs. These corridors will provide higher order rapid transit to connect Regional Centres with links to centres and corridors throughout the GTA and promote close live-work opportunities.

The Region of York prepared Official Plan Amendment (No. 43) to advance the Region's desired urban structure of well-planned, concentrated built-up areas in Regional Centres and Corridors serviced by rapid transit. Encouraging and promoting higher density transit supportive growth has been a management objective of both the Region of York and the Town of Markham for the last decade. Regional Council has undertaken a number of steps to foster transit supportive growth including:

- Adopting a draft Centres and Corridors Strategy identifying the four key actions required to guide development;
- Approved a Transportation Master Plan and related York Region Transit Plan (YRTP);
- Preparation of a detailed policy framework to advance the Region's desired urban structure (draft ROPA 43).

The amendment was adopted by Regional Council on December 16, 2004, and came into effect on January 7, 2005. ROPA 43 includes more specific policy support for municipalities implementing higher density, transit supportive development in Centres and Corridors. In Markham specifically this supports the creation of Markham Centre and the Highway 7, Yonge Street, and the proposed Markham North/South urban transit corridors as well as the local municipalities' responsibility in determining Key Development Areas for infill and intensification along these Regional Corridors.

In conformity with the draft Regional amendment, Markham Council directed staff to develop a strategy for the Highway 7 Corridor's future urban structure and transit service that will address land use, transportation and related financial matters.

Staff is currently reviewing the Regional transportation and infrastructure impacts of intensification at key development areas along the Avenue Seven Corridor, which has included some modeling of development assumptions for the Langstaff area. The Avenue Seven Corridor is an established regional employment and residential growth corridor with infrastructure capacity to support future growth. The Town is developing a comprehensive strategy for guiding and managing the evolution of the future urban structure, infrastructure improvements, and transit services within the Corridor. The strategy will align Avenue Seven policies with the Provincial and Regional policy frameworks and identify "key development areas", including Langstaff, where infill and intensification will occur over time.

It will also establish transit supportive land use and built form criteria in support of detailed Secondary Plans for these key development areas providing greater specification and directions regarding land use, density of development, infrastructure needs and built form. An estimated capacity target for 2031 of 8,330 population (approximately 4,000 units) and 4,092 employment for the Langstaff key development area, mostly taken up after 2021, once the YRTP transit system and possibly the subway extension are fully in place, was assumed by staff for analysis purposes.

In connection with the Regional Official Plan and managed growth strategy, the Region is nearing completion of the South Yonge Street and Highway 7 Environmental Assessment Studies evaluating the public transit improvements in the Yonge Street Corridor from Steeles Avenue to 19th Avenue in Richmond Hill and in the Highway 7 Corridor extending between east and west regional boundaries.

These Environmental Assessments conducted over the past two years are being finalized and documented in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment requirements. Final rounds of public consultation were undertaken in September 2004, to examine such things as transportation solutions, rapid transit technology, transitway routes, station locations and property requirements, urban design and other impacts.

The Quick Start program was initiated in 2005, with bus service along Yonge Street and Highway 7 incorporating rapid transit elements in service.

3.3 Official Plan for the Town of Markham

The Langstaff Development Feasibility and Urban Design Study, 1995, resulted in amendments to the Thornhill Secondary Plan, the Official Plan covering this area. The Secondary Plan also known as Amendment No. 1 to the Town of Markham Official Plan (revised 1987) encompassed all the lands between Yonge Street in the west and Highway 404 in the east and between Steeles Avenue in the south and Highway 407/Highway 7 in the north. The Thornhill Secondary Plan was approved on June 6, 1997. The Langstaff Area formed a small component in the north-west corner of the entire secondary plan that had previously been planned for industrial uses and was redesignated to various commercial (retail warehousing) and residential development related to multiple housing forms.

The Langstaff Study area was primarily designated RW – Retail Warehouse Area west of the CNR tracks and Medium Density Housing (99 units per net ha) east of the CNR tracks with large areas of Open Space designation and two smaller pockets of Community Amenity Area (higher density residential with limited commercial- 173 units per net ha) designated along the Bayview Avenue frontage. The buildings in this area were intended to be landmarks that form a gateway to the proposed residential community. By capping the total number of proposed residential units at 2,500 a new school was not required.

The proposed road pattern provided for a more complete network of streets throughout the area in addition to the proposed extension of Cedar Avenue north to Richmond Hill. This road system provided for improved internal circulation eliminating some of the 'dead-ends' as well as enhanced property configuration for redevelopment and phasing. In addition to new road construction and upgrades, the Plan also called for the extension of full urban services throughout the area as redevelopment proceeded to bring the area up to municipal standards.

The cemetery lands remain in their Institutional Cemetery designation and act as a significant physical barrier to the existing low density residential community to the south. Commercial, multiple residential and mixed use designations are found further south of the Langstaff area fronting onto Yonge Street and to a lesser extent along Bayview Avenue.

Extensive urban design guidelines were incorporated into the plan for both the residential and commercial uses in order to promote comprehensive, intensified, pedestrian oriented urban development in the form of a neo-traditional community.

3.4 Zoning

Lands in the Langstaff Study Area are covered by Zoning By-law No. 2511 approved by the OMB on January 2, 1979. Lands are generally zoned for a mix of dry industrial uses, highway commercial uses and low density residential uses that largely reflect the historic development pattern of the area. Lands are primarily zoned R. IND. – Rural Industrial, some of which are preceded by an H to indicate a Holding provision. These lands permit a wide array of industrial uses that do not require municipal water supply or sewers and include such things as wholesaling, manufacturing, printing and processing, accessory retail sales and outside storage.

Lands fronting onto Bayview Avenue are zoned (H) HC1 – Highway Commercial General Zone with some (H) HC1 and SC1 – Special Commercial lands along the Yonge Street frontage. The Highway Commercial zone permits retail stores, personal service shops, restaurants, banks, repair shops, nursery and garden supplies, places of worship among others. The Special Commercial zone permits many of the Highway Commercial uses and also includes others such as bowling lanes, animal hospitals, health centres, hotels and motels, and day care centres.

The Thornhill Secondary Plan applies a holding symbol on lands within the district to ensure that adequate infrastructure is available to service the lands or to ensure an orderly sequence of land use and development. As such, the conditions for removal of the (H) holding symbol are set out in the Implementation section of the Secondary Plan.

Some INST. – Institutional Zone lands are also found along the Yonge Street frontage and permit places of worship, public and semi-public institutions and religious institutions. Lands on the east side of Langstaff (former Church Street section) have been rezoned to more contemporary industrial zones - M (CS) Select Industrial with Controlled Open Storage and M – Select Industrial from their previous Rural Industrial zone. These zones permit an array of industrial uses, warehousing, assembly and repair either with or without open storage.

Lands on either side of Sussex Avenue north of Holy Cross Cemetery are zoned R1 – Residential Zone. The permitted uses in the R1 zone include single family detached dwelling, place of worship, elementary school, parks and public utilities. Most of the non-converted houses are found in this enclave.

A number of site-specific rezonings have occurred over the years to lift the holding provisions and expand or change the permitted use or to provide for outdoor storage for various uses, primarily automotive storage.

Appendix 2 indicates a generalized permissions list of uses found in the Langstaff Study Area zones. The broad mix of dry industrial uses combined with commercial, institutional, low density residential and open storage creates a number of land use incompatibilities within the area and has resulted in property deterioration and property maintenance issues. Further, the existing zones found in the area have duplications of use throughout so that there is no clear distinction among the land use zones and permissions.

A number of the permitted uses are not allowed in many of the more contemporary employment zones throughout the municipality nor would low density residential uses be permitted within a largely industrial area. A combination of historic growth circumstance and servicing constraints has led to an incongruent and potentially conflicting mixture of zones and uses in the Langstaff Study area. Neither the land use permissions nor the development standards reflect the current uses and standards of commercial or industrial zones found elsewhere in the Town's employment areas.

There would appear to be many examples in the Langstaff area of apparent contraventions of the Property Standards By-law and potentially also Zoning By-law infractions, although these could only be verified through zoning enforcement officials. The Town's Property Standards By-law (By-law No. 248-1999) enables the Town to enforce a reasonable minimum visual and safety standard for property maintenance including buildings, fences, lighting, landscaping, storage and yards.

The By-law requires that yards be kept clean and free of rubbish or other debris, that fences be kept in good repair and free of unsightly markings or defacements, that buildings be maintained in a structurally sound condition and in good repair, that lawns, hedges and bushes be trimmed and that inoperative vehicles be removed.

The Town's Property Standards Officer may make an order as required pursuant to Sections 15.2 and 15.7 of the Building Code Act to bring the property into conformity where there are by-law infractions. If the order is not obeyed, the Town has the option to intervene and complete the repairs or demolish and clear the property. Costs incurred by the Town associated with demolition or repair may be collected from the property owner as if they are outstanding property taxes.

Similarly, the Town can also enforce compliance with the provisions of the zoning by-law for use permissions and development standards. Although some uses may appear to be non-compliant there are a number of legal non-conforming uses throughout Langstaff and these would have to be checked by enforcement officers against provisions in the appropriate zoning by-laws. As mentioned previously, there have been numerous amendments to the original Zoning By-law No. 2511.

The relative isolation of the area and its evolution from a residential hamlet to industrial area on private services, has lead to an incoherent zoning regime over the years and has possibly resulted in less rigorous enforcement of the legal zoning permissions and property standards. However, in order to upgrade the area, all of the current zoning permissions and standards should be reviewed, consolidated or revised and the existing zoning and property standards enforced.

4.0 LAND USE

Land use in the Langstaff area has evolved over the years to include many space extensive industrial uses with open storage and automotive uses. Although there is little manufacturing due to the lack of municipal services, particularly sanitary sewers and storm water management, there are industrial type uses throughout the area which include stone/concrete works and landscaping businesses, automotive/recreational vehicles sales, service, and storage, as well as construction and contractors yards with heavy equipment storage.

There is a small two storey commercial office building on the south-east corner of Yonge Street and Langstaff (former Church Street section), which includes a daycare centre. On the west side of Langstaff (former Church Street section) east of Yonge Street is a small church. A number of the houses found in the area have been converted to administrative or sales offices associated with the industrial/commercial use of the property. It is difficult to know which houses are being used as residential dwellings, although most of those residences appear to be located on Essex Road in the centre of the former Village of Langstaff.

Examples can be found throughout the area whereby the residential detached dwelling occupies the front portion of the lot while the rear portion is used for open storage, in some instances for new automobiles. Although it is difficult to estimate, it would appear that there may be approximately 30 dwellings that are occupied for residential purposes.

Many of the properties are of a uniform rectangular size and shape, although some consolidation of properties has taken place for the large-scale businesses such as the Stone Works and the Deep Foundations operations. The industrial uses have evolved in an ad hoc manner over the past 50 years and land ownership patterns are, for the most part, small, single-use business owners and operators. The property fabric is highly fragmented throughout the area and dominated by small landholdings, although a few large operators have acquired adjacent lands as their businesses expanded and grew over the years.

There is some vacant property found throughout the area, but it is somewhat difficult to distinguish because of the extensive open storage nature of many of the uses found here. In addition, some service businesses are operated from residential dwellings such as a pet grooming service. Three buildings of industrial multiples are located at the rear of properties containing residential dwellings along the west side of Essex Avenue.

These small units house a number of commercial/industrial uses and enclosed storage operations.

The GO station is located on the north side of Langstaff Road along with the surface parking lot at the east end of the study area just east of the CNR tracks. GO intends to relocate the station north to Richmond Hill where it will be part of an intermodal station servicing the Yonge and Highway 7 transit corridors as well as GO transit and the proposed 407 transitway. The GO bus service is also located along Langstaff Road with a bus stop on the south side of Langstaff Road just east of the CNR tracks.

In conjunction with the proposed transit corridors along Yonge Street and Highway 7, the environmental assessments evaluated maintenance and storage facility operations needed for the rapid transit vehicle fleet. Construction of a new facility was the preferred option and the preferred site in the Langstaff Industrial Area best satisfied “the criteria for location of a central maintenance and storage facility because:

- both the Yonge and Highway 7 rapid transit corridors can be accessed without deadheading;
- it is reasonably close to the centre of the region’s local service network;
- the surrounding land use is compatible with the maintenance activities proposed on site;
- the area required for the ultimate maintenance and storage needs could be acquired within the industrial zoning limits;
- earthworks, slopes and retaining walls to grade the existing topography to the required levels are reasonable;
- access and egress for transit vehicles is remote from the heavily-trafficked sections of Yonge Street and Highway 7;
- mitigation of any noise and visual intrusion effects is feasible;
- although the site requires acquisition of several parcels, some are government owned and the remainder are owned by only a few private companies or individuals;

- the future impact on the creek at the west end of the site can be mitigated when the LRT storage yard is constructed;
- the site can be serviced easily from existing mains and no major utility relocations are required.”

The site required by the Region would be approximately 11 ha (27.18 acres) of which half would be needed in the short term for the Quick Start program and bus maintenance and storage requirements as well as for local bus service operated by York Region. As previously noted, the Region may expand its acquisition programme to include all lands located between Yonge Street and the CN railway.

The proposed site for the bus maintenance yard is situated on the south side of Langstaff Road just west of the CN railway. The buildings will include enclosed bus, and ultimately LRT vehicle, storage and shop with offices above. The site is estimated to ultimately employ about 300-400 people in multiple shifts. About half of the site or less would be developed in the first phase to accommodate buses.

The early introduction of bus rapid transit (BRT) services in mixed traffic in the Yonge Street Corridor will require operational bus maintenance and storage facilities at the earliest practical time after approval of the Environmental Assessment and acquisition of property.

It is expected that the initial phase of construction will begin as soon as land acquisition and design and contract tendering are complete. It is noted that initiation of the bus maintenance yard is subject to the approval of the Environmental Assessment by the Minister of the Environment. Therefore, at this time the Region does not have a scheduled construction start date.

Proposals are underway to initiate the Environmental Assessment (EA) studies for the proposed Highway 407 Transitway proposed between Highway 403 to Markham Road. It is thought that these EAs will be undertaken in segments starting with central segments, however, it is not known at this time when and which sections will be studied first, nor is there any projected timeframe for the construction of the transitway along this corridor.

Proposals in the Town of Richmond Hill located north of the Langstaff Industrial area call for intensification of mixed residential and commercial uses in this Regional Centre. The Bayview Glen Secondary Plan proposes an integrated mixed use community comprised of low, medium and high density residential uses together with employment land use designations including Gateway Mixed Use, Community Commercial and multi-use corridor.

This strategic location is identified as a transportation gateway intended to accommodate an intermodal transportation facility including enhanced GO Transit service with a station relocated from Langstaff to Richmond Hill Centre, a proposed busway adjacent to the CN railway and local and regional transit connections and transfer points.

The original amendment for the Plan Area expected to accommodate 3,500-4,000 dwelling units and estimated employment from 10,000-18,000 jobs has expanded upward in recent regional publications on the Centres and Corridors Strategy. The Gateway Centre focused at the intersection of Highway 7 and Yonge Street is expected to attract the highest densities with a combination of office, employment, residential and institutional uses. Lands along the southern boundary bounded by Highway 7 to the south just north of the Langstaff Study area are intended to develop with a range of employment uses including retail warehousing, warehousing, offices, institutional uses and community shopping centre. Much of this area is currently occupied with retail warehousing, high density residential and administrative offices of York Region.

The lands occupied by the Holy Cross Cemetery stretch along the south boundary of the Langstaff Study Area from Yonge Street in the west to Bayview Avenue in the east. Most of these lands are developed for cemetery purposes with the exception of the vacant lands fronting onto Bayview Avenue. The Toronto Catholic Cemeteries control approximately 15.56 ha (38.5 acres) of vacant land at the east end of the study area.

Plans are currently with the Town for site plan approval. Plans call for the expansion of the cemetery plots to include all of the vacant lands west of Bayview Avenue south of Langstaff Road (easterly end). Vacant lands north of Langstaff Road and west of Bayview Avenue also owned by the Toronto Catholic Cemeteries, including the lands covered by the Langstaff woodlot, are noted for future development for cemetery purposes.

Lands south of the cemetery are developed for primarily low density residential uses interspersed with supporting community facilities and comprise part of the Thornhill Community. The Langstaff industrial area is well buffered from the residential community by the cemetery. Due to the physical separation and lack of any direct road connections to the south through the cemetery, there is very limited impact between the industrial lands and the low density residential neighbourhoods.

Lands west of Yonge Street in the City of Vaughan are largely developed with low density residential uses internally with retailing and commercial uses along the Yonge Street frontages interspersed with some higher density residential uses.

5.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The Langstaff Study area has been identified as an area for future redevelopment potential over the long term. However, with the number of factors influencing the area over the last 10 years, a residential option and retail warehouse as provided for through the current Secondary Plan and Official Plan designations may no longer be viable as provided for in the existing Official Plan.

5.1 Land Ownership and Market Conditions

Land ownership patterns and the utilization of various land parcels in the study area have been investigated for the purpose of determining significant ownership changes or assembly patterns and to review land use changes.

5.1.1 Private Ownership

The Langstaff Study Area contains approximately 90 individual land parcels that are held by approximately 60 owners. Of these owner groups, several control multiple parcels with the largest contiguous assembly comprising approximately 3.04 ha (7.5 acres). Many of the parcels are very small (approximately 0.4 ha or 1.0 ac.), closer in size to residential lots relative to typical business/industrial parcels and many are in fact derived from former residential parcels.

Ownership of land is predominantly held through unrelated corporations, the majority of which are managers of commercial businesses located on the land. Other owners are investors with land or buildings that are leased to single or in some instances, multiple occupants. Many businesses in the area are of very long standing (30 to 40 years) and have modest (if not dated) facilities. This modest asset base has possibly contributed to the ability of these businesses to weather economic cycles over the years.

5.1.2 Public Ownership

There is a significant public sector holding of lands within the area. The largest overall package of lands comprises +/- 5.06 ha (12.5 acres) of discontinuous lands held by the Province of Ontario. The public sector lands are typically unoccupied and unimproved parcels and most are vacant. They exist as a result of land assembly carried out for the Hwy 407 transportation corridor and appear to be surplus or remnant pieces with little strategic purpose for the Province. Direct control of these lands rests under three Provincial agencies, the Ministry of Transportation (MOT), Ministry of Government Services (MGS) and Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC).

The implication of these vacant lands represents a concern to the long-term vitality of the area in that if they continue to be unused, they provide no business activity or employment nor do they contribute to the tax base. From another perspective however, they might represent a modest strategic asset should they be determined surplus and might contribute to future assembly patterns.

5.1.3 Background Economic Conditions

During the period 1994 –2004, business activity in the area has proved to be stable in most cases but there are some minor land use developments. Many of the users and owners are heavy industrial types with requirements for outdoor storage.

These firms are suppliers of goods, services and equipment to industry and they have benefited from massive growth within the GTA following recovery from an economic downturn after 1994. They have also benefited from being located at an ideal transportation crossroad as Langstaff is a highly accessible and central location. This condition was improved by construction Hwy. 407 so there has been little pressure to relocate.

5.1.4 Recent Changes

There has been very little physical change to the area in 10 years and certainly no new construction or capital improvements of any significance. Some land owners have removed buildings and vegetation and have adopted a land use strategy that achieves modest investment return for minimal improvement costs. A number of these parcels have been adapted for use as automobile holding compounds. The sites required virtually no infrastructure or improvement. It is noted that these uses have been established illegally.

5.1.5 Impact of Highway 407

Following the completion of Highway 407, the accessibility of and exposure to Langstaff lands changed substantially. The CNR corridor represents a dividing line between two distinct areas.

Lands west of the CNR corridor are now obscured from Highway 407 views due to grade separations. The exposure of this area to Yonge Street has been reduced due to the access ramps connecting Yonge Street to Highway 407. These lands are further encumbered by the visual impact of the Hydro corridor and its towers, which cross Yonge Street at Highway 407.

The Langstaff lands lying east of the CNR corridor have gained a benefit from direct exposure to Hwy. 407, which is located virtually at the same, grade level. While the views into the site are limited, depending on the approaches, this new exposure may contribute some incentive for future high density residential development. A substantial amount of new development has occurred along all sections of Highway 407 in many municipalities, including Markham. Highway exposure is a highly valued quality impacting new or redevelopment opportunities.

5.2 Infrastructure and Community Services

5.2.1 Transportation

The study area affords excellent proximity and accessibility to provincial and regional road networks and higher order transit systems both now and in the future.

The visibility of the area is somewhat hampered at the westerly end, with Highway 407 being at a higher elevation, but is excellent further to the east. Views into the site from abutting roads are minimal both from Bayview Avenue where the cemetery lands front and from Yonge Street. Lack of a local through road network from these major arterials has further restricted visibility into this area from its perimeters. Although regional access is superior, local access is diminished by the relative isolation of these lands and the lack of connecting infrastructure that would join them physically to surrounding communities.

There are currently no north/south road networks connecting the cemetery lands to the south with Richmond Hill to the north. The rerouted Langstaff Road is the only east west road in the study area but is circuitous since its realignment to accommodate the 407. The former Cedar Avenue connection between Langstaff Road and Highway 7 was closed with the construction of Highway 407.

An agreement among the Ministry of Transportation, the Regional Municipality of York, and the Town of Markham will provide for the future construction of a connection under Highways 407 and 7 at Cedar Avenue to link the study area to the lands to the north in Richmond Hill, providing alternate access to the provincial and regional road systems.

Local roads within the study area are not built to municipal standards and lack sidewalks and curbs adding to the chaos of the area's appearance. The three small dead end streets that run north south through the industrial area are narrow and congested with the movement of trucks and heavy equipment which conflict with the residential traffic generated from the few remaining homes in the area. The largely warehousing, storage and distribution functions of this industrial area generate considerable vehicular movements, particularly of trucks and heavy equipment associated with contractors' yards and construction operations.

The area's emergence as a transportation hub has and will continue to precipitate a number of changes that will influence the direction of redevelopment of these lands. The existing Langstaff GO Station is to be relocated to the new Langstaff Intermodal station north of Highways 7 and 407. The new station will be developed as a transit gateway with a rail station, a bus terminal servicing York Region and GO, a "Kiss n' Ride" passenger drop off facility and major commuter parking lot. The existing GO station parking lot in the Langstaff study area would be retained with construction of a pedestrian link to connect it with the new station.

Land has been reserved along the west side of the rail tracks between 16th Avenue and Langstaff Road to accommodate the future busway for the Yonge Street Corridor transitway vehicles to access the intermodal station. These vehicles will access the intermodal gateway station from Yonge Street via Langstaff Road to the south. The proposed Highway 7 Corridor transitway vehicles will access the station north of Highway 407 along the same right-of-way which passes under Highway 7 on the west side of the railway tracks.

The preferred option for the vehicle maintenance and storage facility in the Langstaff area just south of Langstaff Road immediately west of the railway tracks is also part of the transportation hub function that will dominate the land use in the westerly portion of the study area given its size and function. It may also affect the traffic handling capacity of Langstaff Road for other unrelated uses on the remaining lands in the area west to Yonge Street should these lands not be acquired by York Region.

Langstaff Road crosses the CNR tracks at a level crossing which is also a constraint to traffic handling capacity of the road should it not be grade separated in the future, as recommended in the previous study.

5.2.2 Municipal Services

There are no existing storm sewers in the study area. The stormwater runoff from the area flows overland in a south westerly direction following the natural topography. The water is intercepted and conveyed to streams via road-side ditches and culverts. The Pomona Mills Creek, a tributary of the East Don River, flows through the western portion of the study area from the north to the south-east.

The area is mostly unserviced in terms of sanitary sewers. The existing sanitary sewers are located only in the west side of the study area, west of the CNR tracks and consist of three branches. The first is located on Ruggles Avenue and flows southward. The second is located in an easement along the south limit of the study area from the CNR railway to Ruggles Avenue and flows westerly. These two branches connect and drain into the existing York Region Central Collector trunk sewer. The third branch is located along Langstaff Road (formerly Church Street) and connects directly to the trunk, which runs parallel to and east of Yonge Street.

The previous study examined the flows to the trunk sewer as stated below:

“The present flow contributing to the trunk sewer is estimated to be approximately 1,010 m³ per day. A breakdown of the areas and sanitary flows based on existing land use is shown as follows:

Land Use	Area (Ha)	Sanitary Flow (m³/day)
Residential	9.15	370
Industrial	6.9	625
Commercial	1.35	15
Total	17.40	1,010”

MacViro calculated the existing sanitary flows in the Regional trunk systems previously for York Region based on estimated densities and assumed standard rates.

At the time it was discovered that the existing peak flows theoretically exceeded the capacity at a number of sections along the North Don trunk downstream of the point connection with the Central Collector. The existing land use was assumed in calculating sewage flows and no allowance had been made for redevelopment intensification of any kind.

The remainder of the study area is on septic tanks, and therefore, limited to dry industrial uses, storage and warehousing. In order to implement any upgraded redevelopment scheme, the area will require completion and expansion of the sanitary and stormwater services to municipal standards.

There is an existing piped water distribution system servicing the area with 200 mm watermain. The Regional 1050 mm trunk watermain is connected to the local distribution system at the intersection of Langstaff and Essex Avenue. The study area lies within Regional Pressure District #6 which operates at a top water level of 245.35 m. Any potential redevelopment or intensification of use within the area would require the examination and potential upgrading of the services to current municipal standards.

The Town initiated a servicing study for the area in August 2005, to identify potential solutions for water and sanitary sewer servicing. A public information centre was held on January 23, 2006, and it is expected that a final report will be released in May/June of 2006.

The previous planning study addressed the issue of communication technology infrastructure. It was noted that the Thornhill/Unionville area of Markham was well served by a newly installed fibre optic ring provided through Bell Canada and the Langstaff area was contained within this ring via existing connections to the north along the then, Highway 407 right-of-way, to the east along Bayview Avenue and to the west along Yonge Street. Redevelopment in the Langstaff area could, therefore, be afforded a high level of service provided that communications technology is appropriately planned and incorporated as essential infrastructure into any future land use scheme for the area.

5.2.3 Community Services

It was determined in the previous study that a residential cap of 2,500 units would preclude the need for a new school facilities within the community. Several other factors may now have lead to the determination that residential redevelopment on all or portions of the study area may no longer be viable or appropriate. In any case, the area itself is lacking any community services at this time other than the existence of the small church located on Church Street. All of the community facilities that would service a residential community in this area are located further south or east in the community of Thornhill. Although there are several schools and other community services and facilities located within the residential area south of the cemetery, they have no direct physical connection to this area nor are there any opportunities to afford such a connection in the future with the expansion of the cemetery uses easterly to Bayview Avenue.

The issue is further complicated by the proximity of municipal boundaries with the City of Vaughan to the west and the Town of Richmond Hill to the north, municipalities that may not likely accommodate the needs of any residents that may be generated within this area of an adjacent municipality even should capacities exist. If any residential redevelopment of the Langstaff area is contemplated, the respective school boards would have to be contacted as would other community service providers to determine existing capacity levels and upgrades and new facility requirements as a result of any projected population increases.

The need for additional community services for a stand-alone high density residential neighbourhood would have to be studied in more detail and would be dependent on the mix, tenure, and total number of apartment units.

5.3 Existing and Proposed Land Use

The Langstaff area is highly fragmented with numerous property ownerships, containing various space extensive, open storage and industrial uses of a dry nature. Further, the area cannot undergo any significant urban intensification with the existing servicing constraints and current substandard road pattern providing poor circulation not only within the area itself, but also with any adjacent lands.

The area, however, is emerging as a major transportation hub proximate to higher order transit facilities, provincial, regional and local road networks, and urban intensification opportunities along transit corridors and within the Richmond Hill Centre. The existence and growth of a large, power centre to the north in Richmond Hill has essentially eliminated the possibility of similar and additional large scale, big box retail uses on the westerly lands in the Langstaff area.

The proposed transit vehicle storage and maintenance yard has further diminished the possibility for retail uses on the westerly portion of the Langstaff lands as most of the lands will be taken up by this large regional maintenance facility. The market and land needs for similar uses are no longer available in this location for retail warehouse uses.

The proposed expansion of the cemetery to include lands adjacent to Bayview Avenue also eliminates a positive market force for these lands to have reverted to a residential community. The gateway proposed at Bayview Avenue, currently a well recognized and desirable residential address, leading to the “neo traditional” community has been precluded by an alternate and passive use. Loss of the gateway, with its potential landmark buildings, renders the remaining potential of the area for ground-oriented residential redevelopment even less desirable with its increasing isolation from an existing community and identity. Further, the noise constraints that may be generated by the proposed vehicle maintenance facility including their 24 hour operations, in addition to those generated by Highway 407, may further inhibit residential development in proximity to the lands nearby.

6.0 LAND OWNER CONSULTATION

A preliminary information meeting was held on December 2004, with several industrial landowners in the study area. This meeting consisted primarily of a sharing of information.

The landowners were not aware of any large-scale private sector interest in redevelopment or land assembly at this time. Furthermore, the landowners felt that municipal servicing was the primary constraint to business investment and future redevelopment even for commercial/industrial uses.

While the terms of reference suggest an open house/public meeting be conducted in the near future, no meeting has been held to-date. Further discussion on this matter is found in the Conclusion section of this report.

7.0 EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

The following options have been evaluated on the basis that the Regional transit initiative for a bus maintenance yard will proceed at least on a portion of the lands west of the railway. Redevelopment as previously contemplated by the Secondary Plan would continue to be reliant on private sector investment. The recent application for an OPA by existing landowners has not been studied at the time of writing of this report. It is not known whether or not some redevelopment for the mix of proposed retail, office, hotel and medium and high density residential uses could occur in conjunction with the Regional transit plans. Additional study of a revised option including possible air rights development over future regional facilities may be appropriate once the Environmental Assessment has been approved.

7.1 Status Quo

The 'status quo' option is essentially the existing land use pattern, which includes a mix of dry industrial, open storage and automotive uses on limited municipal services in addition to the new maintenance facility. The zoning by-law would not need to be changed while the Official Plan would reinstate the original Industrial designation for the area.

Advantages:

- No municipal expenditures required to upgrade services to promote intensification
- Area provides an employment base for a mix and range of employment lands
- Can still accommodate the proposed maintenance yard which will result in some property consolidation, clean up and future employment
- Property standards and zoning infractions could still be investigated and enforced

Disadvantages:

- Area will not be significantly upgraded due to lack of sanitary service and is an underutilization of urban lands in proximity to transit, emerging centres and corridors within a central regional context
- Generates minimal employment/assessment for the municipality
- Area is unsightly with uncontrolled open storage and lacks full municipal services required for intensification of use
- Area is visible from Highway 407 and will become more visible through the creation of the transitway on Yonge Street and development of the intermodal station accessed from Langstaff Road and is not in keeping with the prestigious and high quality character of Markham's more contemporary business parks and employment areas
- May cause land use conflicts with the proposed maintenance facility if the area deteriorates further.

7.2 Residential/Commercial Use

The previous planning analysis had examined the area's opportunities and constraints and proposed a land use scheme that introduced a mixed medium/high density "neo-traditional" residential community on the lands east of the railway progressing out to Bayview Avenue and retail warehousing on any remaining lands west of the railway fronting on to Yonge Street. These amendments were incorporated into the Official Plan. The plan would need to be changed to reflect the proposed Regional Maintenance Facility west of the railway and would essentially eliminate retail warehousing opportunities in this area.

Advantages:

- Provides residential and commercial intensification in conformity with Smart Growth principles and in proximity to transit
- Cleans up an industrial remnant of land area that was inadequately serviced
- May provide opportunities for affordable housing in a central location
- Provides for some employment uses

Disadvantages:

- Loss of employment lands for operations that may be difficult to relocate in traditional business parks
- Diminished market opportunity in intervening years for retail warehousing
- Reduced land available for proposed uses with the cemetery expansion and maintenance yard and therefore will lack critical mass for cohesive development
- Increased isolation/detachment from adjacent neighbourhoods and supporting community services with a smaller developable residential area that no longer extends to Bayview
- Increased traffic and mixing of residential and commercial/industrial traffic may necessitate the grade separation of Langstaff and the CN railway

- Requires significant land consolidation and servicing costs
- Environmental constraints/land use compatibility issues with the proposed maintenance yard, Highway 407, interim industrial uses and new residential.

7.3 Upgraded Employment Area

A third option would look at how the entire area could be upgraded to a more contemporary employment area of a general industrial nature for manufacturing, processing, wholesaling and warehousing within wholly enclosed buildings with no or limited outdoor storage, offices, and service commercial uses that would support the employment uses, such as banks, restaurants, hotels etc. This would require a revamping and review of the outmoded and undesirable uses that exist in the current zoning regime and a redesignation of the lands in the Official Plan to an employment/industrial designation with higher development standards.

In order to provide an incentive towards upgrading of the area, the Town could consider the use of Section 28 of the Planning Act to implement a Community Improvement Plan for the area to provide for possible tax grants or other financial incentives to property owners for various upgrades that are in keeping with the Town's objectives for the area for employment revitalization. A Community Improvement Plan could include a number of things such as:

- a) a program of financial incentives;
- b) a marketing program;
- c) a capital works program;
- d) streetscaping/ landscape improvements; and
- e) assistance for Town, Regional or Provincial approvals.

It is noted that a Community Improvement Plan could apply to all of the options.

The reuse and revitalization of an employment option for these lands would support the transit initiatives proposed for the area while recognizing the environmental constraints imposed by some of the nearby existing and proposed features such as Highway 407 and the future transit vehicle storage and maintenance yard. It also builds on its strategic location immediately adjacent to a Regional Centre, two proposed transit corridors and the proposed Langstaff Intermodal Gateway Station. Further, it recognizes the relative isolation and separation of these lands from adjacent contiguous residential communities.

The initial phase of the transit vehicle maintenance facility will kick start the area with new development on full municipal services, adding to the employment base of the area and providing for consolidation and upgrading of properties.

The size and magnitude of this operation will provide a catalyst for other employment uses to emerge in the area as it becomes upgraded and as the transit plans are realized.

Advantages:

- attract new industrial and commercial uses, assessment and employment opportunities to high visibility/ accessibility location
- intensification of use in proximity to a transportation hub, transit corridors and regional centres, and other regional/provincial transportation networks supporting the principles of Smart Growth
- facilitate the reinvestment and private property maintenance in the area and upgrade/expand municipal infrastructure
- improve the physical and visual quality of the area
- improve environmental health and safety in what may be considered a greyfield area
- removed sufficiently from low density residential neighbourhoods so as not to result in any negative off-site effects through employment revitalization and intensification
- provides Markham with an improved inventory, range and mix of employment lands in keeping with provincial policy

Disadvantages:

- land assembly may be slow due to the property fragmentation, however, this is a factor affecting any scenario for redevelopment
- Town needs to invest in capital works to upgrade the area to municipal standards on full urban services and to possibly advance the road expansion of Cedar Avenue northerly to Richmond Hill in order to improve access and traffic capacity to the area which will affect capital budget costs
- Town may also need to assist with other landscaping improvements, Community Façade Improvement, or marketing strategy to assist with revitalization efforts.

7.4 High Density Residential Option

Some interest has been expressed by landowners located in the east portion of the study area for a high density residential option. In support of such a request, it is noted that the PPS, Places to Grow and the Region of York Official Plan all promote residential intensification and transit-supportive development. Furthermore, the Langstaff Gateway has been recognized as a potential growth node particularly given the Regional efforts to provide extensive new transit services to the area.

Given the amount of land assembly required and the need to provide full municipal services to this area, higher densities may be warranted in some form of stand-alone high density residential neighbourhood.

Advantages:

- may stimulate further private sector land assembly and redevelopment interest
- could assist in implementing Provincial, Regional and Town goals for housing intensification

- close proximity of the existing GO Station and proposed transit improvements make the area attractive for certain types of apartment units
- good transportation access to Highway 407, Highway 7 and arterial roads
- good access to retail commercial facilities in Richmond Hill, particularly if Cedar Avenue extension is completed

Disadvantages

- may require significant expenditures for additional community services
- traffic noise from Highway 407 may cause adverse impacts
- area requires significant clean-up before residential can be introduced
- depending on densities and height, high rise apartments may not be compatible with adjacent lower density neighbourhoods.
- neighbourhood is physically separated from other residential communities
- residential uses may not be marketable given existing hydro facilities, bus maintenance facility, and Highway 407 to the north

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

It is quite evident that the private market forces have not responded positively to-date to implement the 1997 Secondary Plan. This Plan was based on the recommendations approved as part of the Langstaff Development Feasibility and Land Use Study conducted in 1993-95. While there has been some minor consolidation of land holdings, the lack of municipal servicing, market demand, land assembly complications, compatibility of existing land uses, lack of exposure and access, and the lack of interest from Holy Cross Cemetery has resulted in very little physical change to the Langstaff study area. It is not apparent at this time that successful redevelopment will occur in the foreseeable future based on the direction provided in the Secondary Plan.

Furthermore, unless municipal servicing is brought to the area by the Town and a road connection via Cedar Avenue to Richmond Hill is constructed, the status quo will likely prevail for the mid to long term.

The most significant new factor that has emerged is the Regional interest in establishing a bus maintenance yard, associated transit improvements and possible long term fixed rail transit yard in the area between Yonge Street and the CN railway.

In recent discussions with Regional staff, the current direction would appear to be an assembly of all lands located in this area resulting in approximately one-third of the study being government-owned and controlled. Regional Council has approved an acquisition programme. It is also expected that the Minister of the Environment will make a decision on the Environmental Assessment for the bus maintenance facility in 2006.

If the MOE approves the Environmental Assessment, it could be expected that all of these lands could be acquired within a one-two year time frame through negotiation and/or expropriation. This undertaking has significant repercussions for both the planning and timing of development for these lands.

If a complete acquisition is successful, it would result in a clean slate in terms of decisions on future land use, servicing options, and transportation access. Under total Regional control, the above-noted decisions would primarily be a Regional-Town negotiation with little third party or private sector intervention. Another aspect of this scenario is that long term development as air rights or other public/private partnerships could result in additional high density mixed use development. Based on this assumption, it is appropriate that as much flexibility as possible be built into the Secondary Plan. Review of the landowners application for an OPA should occur with joint Town and Regional staff involvement.

In our view this scenario is very positive and will result in substantial public sector investment in this area. The practical result is that the west half of the study area will be cleaned up and all of the existing private sector uses would be eliminated. The current alignment of Langstaff Road could be re-located or possibly eliminated altogether. Future municipal servicing could take many directions.

With approval of the Environmental Assessment, a significant portion of this part of the study area would be assembled and consolidated.

Based on the complete assembly scenario, it is highly likely that a change to the Secondary Plan would be warranted for this section of the study area. Our initial thinking is that the Retail Warehouse designation would be replaced with a general High Density Mixed Use designation. This type of designation could permit, subject to more detailed review and amendment, a wide range of high density offices, mixed office/retail, high density residential and institutional uses. Notwithstanding the location adjacent to transit, the Town would need to be satisfied that residential uses are compatible with either the bus maintenance yard, possible long term fixed rail yard, and Highway 407. In addition, further discussions with area landowners would appear to be prudent and any Regional acquisition will need to be co-coordinated.

It is probable that a Regional land assembly would also have significant repercussions for the east half of the study area. While many of the constraints on this area will still exist, such a significant public sector investment could trigger a corresponding interest from the private sector particularly if municipal servicing is advanced. The east half of the study area would also significantly benefit if the extension of Cedar Avenue to Richmond Hill were undertaken in the short term (ie. within the next five years). It is apparent that the future land use scenario for this area will still need to be reviewed. As indicated by the options discussed in Section 7.0, the most probable scenario is for either mixed use development or a modern upgraded business park. This decision requires further study and public input.

At the present time, it is evident that the existing Urban Residential (medium density) designation in the Secondary Plan will need to be replaced in order that successful regeneration and redevelopment occurs. It is cautioned that this may still be a long term (10-20 years) development horizon.

If for some reason the Environmental Assessment is not approved, and/or there is a lesser Regional involvement in land assembly and redevelopment, it could continue to add to the delay of redevelopment for the whole area.

Based on the above-noted analysis and observations, it is probable that the terms of reference for the present study will need to be modified. In our view, public participation may be both premature and confusing, depending on what happens with the Regional strategy. It may be more appropriate to delay the public consultation component until later in 2006 until the results of the Environmental Assessment and municipal servicing study are known. If the Regional strategy includes comprehensive acquisition of the westerly one-third of the study area without any private sector involvement, the land use study in terms of private sector consultation would be focused on the east half.

As previously indicated, additional work will need to be conducted on land use, densities, transportation and municipal servicing. This work could be initiated over the next several months, but it will need additional specialist consultants and/or Town staff to assist

Yours very truly,

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APPENDIX 1

Real Estate Activity and Value Comparisons by CBRE

Langstaff Study Area - Real Estate Activity & Value Comparisons

Within the subject Langstaff corridor of lands we have tracked all transactions for the last 50 years and analyzed the data for trends and market shifts. It is interesting to note that the number of transactions of any significance (there are many which are internal transactions for minimal considerations) in relation to the number of land parcels, is small (see Fig. ____). Given the dramatic changes in the economy and resulting impact on the real estate values in 1990, we have limited the transactions analyzed to those that occurred from this date going forward (which eliminates only a few transactions in any event).

As a result of the limited data, and that several transactions reflect the value of buildings and land as opposed to pure land value, it is difficult to formulate any clear trends or movements in value. However, the following conclusions could be made and used as guidelines:

- There are many long term owners of property in the area who are not actively working their property to maximize value and appear satisfied on continuing to hold until the area rapidly matures and increases in value.
- The average size of property traded is 0.79 acres which is an indication of the fractured ownership of small, relatively unimproved land holdings that are almost all being traded on pure land value.
- There have been few if any consolidations of property within the study area. Only one owner has multiple land holdings of any significance, that being Deep Foundations (owns +/-7 acres).
- Properties on Ruggles and Essex Avenues have generally been traded at higher average values than those on Langstaff Road (those being the streets with by far the most transaction activity). Ruggles and Essex Ave properties have traded on an average of \$613, 100/acre. Only one out of seven transactions having taken place prior to 2000 (in 1996). Langstaff road properties have traded on average at \$469,300/ acre.
- Of the 21 relevant transactions tracked, 16 of them occurred in 2000 or later, which could point to a trend of increased liquidity in the area and desire of owners to sell.
- These land values do not indicate any trend to increasing value over time between 1990 and 2005, which lends itself to the conclusion that they are in their own economic pocket whose dynamics are very limited.

Markham / Richmond Hill Overview

Generally speaking the trend and market conditions in the Industrial and Office markets in the Markham/Richmond Hill area (see below) do not bear a direct correlation to what is happening with the Langstaff corridor of lands. For example, the current value of Industrial land in good areas in Markham and Richmond Hill can fetch up to \$800,000 acre and are frequently \$600,000 and acre. However these are typically for several acres of undeveloped property at a state that is:

- a) already pre-assembled in large parcels, and
- b) can connect to municipal services and roads.

Land for office development is even more valuable and varies in accordance with amount of density buildable on the site. Good developable office building sites can trade for well over \$1,000,000 million an acre.

Regional Market Rental Trends – Industrial / Business Park Activity; Highway 407 Corridor

1. Industrial Rental Perspective

GTA Overview -The GTA witnessed significant activity in 2004 with the overall availability rate decreasing to 4.3 % in the fourth quarter. Increased activity translated into a year-to-date total of just over 6.4 million s.f. for the GTA. The overall asking sale prices land price per acre held steady at \$322,833 /ac.

The average asking rental rate held relatively steady at \$4.99 s.f. which was slightly down from the fourth quarter 2004 at \$5.04 s.f. Premium industrial space with ample parking, amenities and location features can expect slighter higher asking rental rates. Taxes and operating costs remained unchanged between quarters holding at \$2.21 s.f. and \$2.72 respectively.

New construction increased over 2004 with 585,000 s.f. in new inventory added to the Central Industrial market of which a single building (for Cinram in Scarborough) accounted for 500,000 s.f.

The overall market rates for the GTA Central industrial market are as follows:

Inventory	272.1 million s.f.
Availability	4.05%
Absorption	1.67 million s.f.
Net Rental Rate	\$4.31 s.f.
Sale Price (buildings)	\$60.13 s.f.

Markham / Richmond Hill

More specifically the industrial market statistics in Markham/Richmond Hill, within the GTA Central market area for the 3rd quarter of 2004 are as follows:

Inventory	45.4 million s.f.
Availability	4.25%
Absorption	1.39 million s.f.
Net Rental Rate	\$6.55 s.f.
Sale Price (buildings)	\$72.17 s.f.

With respect the Markham/Richmond Hill area the availability rate increased to 4.25% from 4.0% in the previous quarter. Absorption was significant given that the previous quarter witnessed negative absorption of 171,200 s.f. and the net rental rate increased by 0.6% from the previous quarter. The average asking sale price however dropped by 10% and 77% of the available space was 50,000 s.f. or less, while 9% was 100,000 s.f. or more. Interestingly the average number of days on the market for completed transactions was 314 days which is a 35% increase from the previous quarter. Overall in the last 5 years the net rental rates and sale prices have been fairly stable and are today very close to the same numbers as in 2000.

2. Office Rental Perspective

The GTA witnessed steady leasing activity with overall absorption of 188,311 s.f. The suburban office market however experience a slight set-back with negative 312,478 absorption in Q4 2004 due to rising sublet opportunities in the North and East suburban markets. The overall Vacancy rate marginally declined to 14.4% in Q4, however this is only really applicable to the downtown core.

Tenants remained focused on cost containment and space optimization, negotiating attractive financial terms for office space in advance of their lease expiries

Almost all markets across the GTA have office space under construction with 58% of the new space to be built in the Central office market and 42% to be built in the Suburban markets, all with expected completions dates in 2005 and 2006.

The overall market rates for the GTA North office market are as follows:

Inventory	12 million s.f.
Vacancy Rate	
A Class	17.4%
B Class	9.8%
Absorption	-164,000 s.f.
Under Construction	0 s.f.
Net Rental Rate	
A Class	\$15.75
B Class	\$13.78

Markham / Richmond Hill

More specifically the office market statistics in the Markham/Richmond Hill area within the GTA Central market for the 3rd quarter of 2004 are as follows:

Inventory	9.4 million s.f.
Vacancy Rate	13.5% = 1.7 million s.f.
Absorption	137,628 s.f.
Under Construction	215,000 s.f.

Net Rental Rate

A Class	\$16.44
B Class	\$11.49
C Class	\$8.78

With respect the Markham/Richmond Hill area there was one new significant new construction project at 150 Commerce Valley Drive 655 (pre-leased to CGI) and several buildings changed ownership. Overall the area has experienced positive absorption every quarter this year with a YTD total of 480,000 s.f. However, sublet space accounts for 31% of the availabilities and has forced landlords to remain financially competitive. Over the last 3 years there has been a slow but steady decrease in vacancy rates with very little new product brought to the market.

APPENDIX 2
EXISTING ZONING PERMISSIONS

Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single family detached dwelling - place of worship* - elementary school* - parks - public utilities
Commercial (HC1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - art or antique shops - bakeries - business and professional offices, public buildings* - clubs, fraternal and those operated for profit* - display and sale of designed or prefabricated model homes - dressmaking and tailoring establishments - libraries* - newspaper offices, printing, stationary and blue printing establishments* - nursery and garden supply sales establishments - personal service* and repair shops* - photography studios* - place of worship and religious institutions* - plumbing , heating air conditioning, electrical, radio and TV sales, repair and service establishments* - public and private parking areas - retail stores*, banks*, restaurants* and lunch counters - upholstering, furniture sales and repair establishments*
Commercial (HC2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - automobile garage, service station - automobile, boat, trailer sales* - drive-in restaurants - open storage* of new materials in the side or rear yard in association with and incidental to retail sales outlet* - veterinary hospital*
Institutional Zones (INST.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - places of worship* - public and semi-public institutions* - religious institutions

Rural Industrial Zones (R. IND.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wholesaling, manufacturing, processing, packaging, bottling, printing*, repairing* or warehousing* which is conducted wholly within enclosed buildings, which is not dangerous ... and which does not require municipal water supply or sanitary sewers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retail sales accessory to the principal industrial use on the same LOT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open storage* in the rear yard only
Special Commercial – SC1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - animal hospital or veterinary establishment* - art or antique sales* - bakeries* - banks or financial institutions* chartered under the laws of Canada - Brewer's Retail Stores** - Bowling lanes - Catalogue sales stores - Clubs – fraternal or commercial* - Day cares centers - Furniture, carpet or appliance sales and repair** - Health centers - Home improvement centers** - Hotels and motels - Ice cream parlours**, where only ice cream and other similar and related dairy products are prepared and sold for consumption both inside and outside the building(s) on the premises - Liquor and wine stores** - Personal service shops* - Pet stores** - Photography studios* - Photocopying service* - Professional and business offices* - Restaurants* - Book stores, camera stores, sporting goods stores and stationary stores, including sales of office equipment, if such uses occupy not less than 500 sq. m GFA per store**
Select Industrial with Controlled Storage [M (CS)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industrial - Warehousing* of goods and materials

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assembly of manufactures goods - repair and servicing* of goods - data processing centers and computer related functions, including related education/administration centers, and including related market research, analysis and service facilities and related supporting sales and including data and documentation processing centers and related marketing, sales and service and other supporting uses - research laboratories - printing establishments* - other industrial* and similar uses
	- Open Storage* of goods and raw materials subject to provisions
	- Private clubs and health centers*
	- Residential – no residential uses shall be permitted except for 1 dwelling unit for a caretaker employed on the premises concerned
Select Industrial (M)	As per above without open storage plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - manufacture within enclosed buildings of goods
R. IND. site specifics	- sale and repair of snowmobiles
	- contractor's yard and associated office and open storage or accessory equip. and materials
	- outdoor storage and sale of new and used cars*
	- outdoor storage area for the sale of new and used motor vehicles*
	- open storage yard* for concrete and stone products and similar materials including an associated business office located within a building with a max. GFA of 120 m sq. and accessory retail sales
	Adult Entertainment Parlour