



Corporate Report

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DATE: October 23, 2007

TO: Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee
Meeting Date: November 12, 2007

FROM: Edward R. Sajecki
Commissioner of Planning and Building

SUBJECT: **Official Plan Amendment 40 - Upper Hurontario Street
Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design
Guidelines – Addendum Report**

- RECOMMENDATION:**
1. That the following recommendations of the report titled “Official Plan Amendment 40 - Upper Hurontario Street Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design Guidelines - Report on Comments” dated November 14, 2006 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be adopted in accordance with the following:
 - a) that the proposed policy 4.15.4.1.3 in Section 7 of OPA 40 be amended to read as follows:

“Notwithstanding Section 4.15.4.1, existing single-storey financial institutions, free-standing restaurants and drive-throughs, which are not substantially screened from Hurontario Street by a building, will be permitted as they exist on the day these policies come into effect provided, however, that the reconstruction or alteration of these uses may be permitted if the proposal results in a visual or functional improvement of the site which achieves the intent and policies of the Gateway District Policies.”

- b) that the proposed policy 4.15.5.3.b, Site 2, Special Site Policies, in Section 10 of OPA 40 be amended to read as follows:

“The reconstruction or alteration of the existing car wash at the south-east corner of Hurontario Street and Derry Road East may be permitted if the proposal results in a visual or functional improvement of the site which achieves the intent and policies of the Gateway District Policies.”

- c) that the first bullet point in the proposed policy 4.15.3.2 in Section 13 of OPA 40 be amended to read as follows:

“built-form at the corners of these intersections should have prominence, occupy a majority of the streetline and be a minimum of three (3) storeys. The reconstruction of the service stations at the south-east and south-west corners of Hurontario Street and Derry Road East/West for motor vehicle commercial purposes may be permitted if it results in an improvement of the site by meeting the spirit and intent of this Plan by providing, for example, a building which appears to have the massing, height and built-form of two-storeys.”

2. That the lands owned by Orlando Corporation and Benson and Marjorie Madill, at the north-west and south-east quadrants of Hurontario Street and Highway 401, be identified as Special Sites in Official Plan Amendment 40 to permit one row of parking between the building(s) and Hurontario Street, subject to the following:

- that a generous landscape buffer be incorporated along the streetline to screen vehicle parking areas;
- that the building be located close to the Hurontario Street frontage;
- that the building be designed with the main front entrance facing Hurontario Street; and
- that a visual and functional pedestrian link be incorporated between the building entrance and the public sidewalk to encourage transit usage.

BACKGROUND:

City Council, on December 13, 2006, considered the attached report (Appendix 1) titled “Official Plan Amendment 40 - Upper Hurontario Street Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design Guidelines - Report on Comments” dated November 14, 2006 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building and adopted the following:

“That the recommendations in the report titled Official Plan Amendment 40 - Upper Hurontario Street Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design Guidelines - Report on Comments' dated November 14, 2006 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be deferred to a future Planning and Development Committee meeting to allow staff to prepare a further report in response to a request for exemption to the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design Guidelines by Mr. Leo Longo, Aird and Berlis, Solicitors for Orlando Corporation, owners of lands at the north-west and south-east corners of Hurontario Street and Hwy. 401; this report should provide Committee with a comparison between what would be permitted under the existing zoning and what is expected of the applicant under the proposed Gateway District Policies, if approved. CD.04.HUR”

COMMENTS:**1. Concerns of Orlando Corporation**

Orlando Corporation (“Orlando”) is concerned with the impact of OPA 40 on their lands located in the north-west and south-east quadrants of Hurontario Street and Highway 401, as shown on Appendix 2. These lands were rezoned in 2000 and 2004, respectively, to permit industrial and office development and a wide range of accessory commercial uses, including free-standing restaurants and financial institutions, along with provisions for drive-through facilities.

Orlando requests that these lands be treated in a manner which recognizes the zoning standards and uses that were negotiated and approved by City Council as recently as 2004. The zoning by-law permits parking between the front of the buildings and Hurontario Street, and free-standing restaurants, convenience restaurants and take-out restaurants. OPA 40 will prohibit these uses.

The Planning and Building Department has reviewed with Orlando the recommendations of the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor Study, the urban design policies and the new zoning by-law in conjunction with preliminary development proposals for their two sites. The first site consists of separate parcels located on the west side of Hurontario Street, north of Highway 401. This site also includes the lands owned by Benson and Marjorie Madill, for which a development application has not been submitted. Given that the Orlando and Madill parcels at this location are interdependent, they have been treated as one site for the purposes of this report. The second site is located on the east side of Hurontario Street, south of Highway 401.

Representatives of Orlando have indicated that they have no interest in developing free-standing buildings or drive-through facilities on these lands. However, they have indicated that, as per the existing zoning by-law, but contrary to the recommendations of the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor Study, they would like to maintain some parking along the Hurontario Street frontage.

This frontage parking area, consisting of a double-loaded aisle, would serve visitor and executive parking, and the drop-off functions for the building. Planning and Building Department staff agree with this limited frontage parking for the subject lands, subject to the following conditions:

- that only one row of parking be allowed along the Hurontario Street frontage;
- that a generous landscape buffer be incorporated along the streetline to screen vehicle parking areas;
- that the building be located close to the Hurontario Street frontage;
- that a visual and functional pedestrian link be incorporated between the building entrance and the public sidewalk to encourage transit usage; and
- that the building be designed with the main front entrance facing Hurontario Street.

Orlando has agreed to these provisions, except the requirement for the main front entrance to face Hurontario Street, which they find too restrictive. Both the Planning and Building Department and

Orlando agree that allowing the frontage parking will encourage additional buildings to be designed with entrances facing the street. However, Orlando feels that although frontage parking may encourage a front entrance, they do not want this requirement mandated on their future developments. Orlando believes that future tenants may not want this requirement, as it may be problematic in the design and operation of business activities. Consequently, they would rather maintain building design flexibility to respond to their future tenant needs. Instead of the main front entrance requirement, Orlando proposes, as a compromise, that a decorative architectural feature be designed on the Hurontario Street building elevation.

A decorative architectural feature in lieu of the main front entrance will not meet the Planning and Building Department's concerns or the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor Development Policies in proposed OPA 40. Building designs with the main front entrance facing Hurontario Street is a critical feature in maintaining the vision for the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor and supports a tenant's ability to easily access transit facilities along a major transit corridor. Transit is a priority for Hurontario Street and building form and function must be designed to support the City's transit initiatives.

Recent developments along the corridor demonstrate that main front entrances can be developed as part of a variety of building types and uses. Orlando has the advantage of understanding the City's vision for the corridor in advance of entering into any tenant agreements. The Planning and Building Department strongly encourages Orlando to recognize the significance of the locational requirements and opportunities associated with their land holdings. In doing so, they could reconcile their concerns by developing a variety of options which they could present to prospective tenants which promote direct building access to transit facilities, and a distinguished character for the corridor.

Comparative Concept Plans

Appendices are provided to conceptually illustrate the various development scenarios comparing how development might occur as per the existing zoning and how lands could develop under the

recommendations of the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor Study, as requested by Planning and Development Committee.

Appendix 3, prepared by Planning and Building staff, conceptually illustrates how the subject lands could be developed in accordance with the existing zoning by-law. The existing zoning allows free-standing restaurants and financial institutions, parking areas surrounding the buildings, and buildings with entrances facing the interior of the site. However, as mentioned above, Orlando is not interested in developing the lands for free-standing buildings and, therefore, they have not been included in Appendix 3.

Appendix 4 (a) and (b), prepared by Planning and Building staff, conceptually illustrate how the subject lands could be developed as recommended by the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor Study. These concepts illustrate Hurontario Street lined with offices and other employment uses that frame the street, and incorporate main front entrances to access and support higher - order transit along the Hurontario Street Corridor. Building designs with the main front entrance facing Hurontario Street create an attractive and desirable streetscape, provide a prestige image, and support convenient access to the transit stops.

Appendix 5 (a) was produced by Orlando and illustrates their desired developments for the subject lands showing one row of parking along the Hurontario Street frontage with the main front entrance of the buildings either facing the side streets or internal to the site. The Hurontario Street building elevations would not have a main Hurontario Street entrance. Orlando proposes that a decorative architectural feature (i.e., raised square arch) be added to the street elevations, which as mentioned earlier in the report does not support the vision for the corridor.

While a decorative architectural feature could add interest to the street elevation, staff believe that locating the main entrance to face the side streets or internal to the site, will move the activity away from Hurontario Street. This form of development will not contribute to the streetscape, and will prevent any direct and convenient pedestrian link between the building and transit facilities.

Appendix 5 (b) was prepared by Planning and Building Department staff, based on the Orlando perspective in Appendix 5(a), and illustrates the subject lands developed with one row of parking along the Hurontario Street frontage, the main entrance of the buildings either facing the side streets or internal to the site and a decorative architectural feature (i.e., raised square arch) on the Hurontario Street elevation.

Appendix 6, was prepared by Planning and Building Department staff and conceptually illustrates a revision to Appendix 5 (a) showing the Orlando proposal with the addition of main front entrances facing Hurontario Street. Planning and Building Department staff acknowledge one row of parking along Hurontario Street; however, the overall result from the addition of main front entrances is a prestigious, high quality image, attractive and interesting buildings, and transit - supportive development. Front entrances to individual buildings facing Hurontario Street enables:

- creation of a desirable and distinctive streetscape;
- opportunities for greater pedestrian activity and life along the sidewalk;
- the development of accessory retail uses;
- street-related pedestrian links between the municipal sidewalk and the building entrances;
- orientation of the most active and architecturally detailed building elevation to the public road;
- orientation of offices, secondary entrances and fenestration to the street;
- integration of the private and public realms;
- focus visual interest onto the street;
- avoidance of blank walls, loading and service areas on the street;
- a distinguished character to the building façade; and
- a direct and convenient connection to the transit stops.

In view of the foregoing, it is recommended that the requirement for front entrances to face Hurontario Street be maintained for the subject lands.

2. Proposed Amendments to Official Plan Amendment 40

The relevant Hurontario Street Corridor Development Policy in Official Plan Amendment 40 states:

“Locate parking facilities at the rear and/or side of buildings instead of between the front of the building and the public street.” In order to permit a row of parking between buildings and Hurontario Street on the Orlando lands at the north-west and south-east quadrants of Hurontario Street and Highway 401, it is suggested that the lands be identified as special sites to permit one row of parking between the building(s) and Hurontario Street, subject to the following:

- that a generous landscape buffer be incorporated along the streetline to screen vehicle parking areas;
- that the building be located close to the Hurontario Street frontage;
- that a visual and functional pedestrian link be incorporated between the building entrance and the public sidewalk to encourage transit usage; and
- that the building be designed with the main front entrance facing Hurontario Street.”

The recommendations of the report (Appendix 1) titled “Official Plan Amendment 40 - Upper Hurontario Street Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design Guidelines - Report on Comments” dated November 14, 2006 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building remain valid and should be adopted.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Not applicable

CONCLUSION: The long-term land use and urban design vision for the Upper Hurontario Street Corridor remains valid and should be retained, but with some modifications to the urban design policies for existing and proposed development on specific sites adjacent to Hurontario Street.

ATTACHMENTS:

APPENDIX 1: Corporate report “Official Plan Amendment 40 - Upper Hurontario Street Corridor - Review of Land Uses and Urban Design Guidelines - Report on Comments” dated November 14, 2006 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building

APPENDIX 2: Location Map

APPENDIX 3: Existing Zoning By-law Development

APPENDIX 4: Vision for Upper Hurontario Street Corridor (a) and (b)

APPENDIX 5: Orlando Proposal (a) and (b)

APPENDIX 6: Planning and Building Department Proposal

Original Signed By:

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Commissioner of Planning and Building

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