
TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: M. BANFIELD, RPP, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**NOTED: A. MILLER, RPP, GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH
MANAGEMENT**

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: EMPLOYMENT LAND CONVERSION EVALUATION

DATE: MAY 25, 2020

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this Memorandum is to advise members of Council of the evaluation of the employment area land conversion proposals received by the City as part of the new Official Plan process. A total of 17 proposals were received prior to the Friday December 20, 2019 deadline and are shown on the map in Appendix "A". Staff are in support of the conversion or re-designation of 12 sites as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and preparation of the new Official Plan. Staff do not support the conversion of the remaining 5 proposals at this time. These 5 proposals could be considered for conversion through a site specific development application whereby staff would have the opportunity to undertake a more detailed review. This may allow these sites to be converted at a later date.

BACKGROUND

Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) currently underway to support the preparation of a new Official Plan, the City of Barrie has considered proposals for the conversion of sites designated for industrial-type employment land uses in the existing Official Plan.

As per the May 21, 2019 Land Needs Assessment Report (LNAR) prepared for the City by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., it was identified that Barrie needs additional industrial employment land to accommodate future job growth to the year 2041. As such, the City would need to make available additional employment area land by expanding the Settlement Area boundary. In addition to the projected additional land need, there are several existing industrial employment land parcels within the current Settlement Area boundary of the City which may no longer be suitable for industrial employment uses, meaning the need for additional employment land could actually be more than the amount identified in the LNAR. To address this, Council directed staff to explore opportunities for converting industrial employment lands within the current settlement area boundary to allow for conversions to non-industrial uses (e.g. residential, commercial, mixed-use).

CONVERSION CONSIDERATION CRITERIA

The Growth Plan provides a policy framework that protects employment areas and ensures that there is an adequate supply of land within these areas to accommodate job growth.

Growth Plan policy 2.2.5.9 states that:

The conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses may be permitted only through a municipal comprehensive review where it is demonstrated that:

- a) There is a need for the conversion;
- b) The lands are not required over the horizon of this Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated;

- c) The municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan;
- d) The proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan; and
- e) There are existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the proposed uses.

Further, Growth Plan policy 2.2.5.10 states:

Notwithstanding policy 2.2.5.9, until the next municipal comprehensive review, lands within existing employment areas may be converted to a designation that permits non-employment uses, provided the conversion would:

- a) Satisfy the requirements of policy 2.2.5.9 a), d) and e);
- b) Maintain a significant number of jobs on those lands through the establishment of development criteria; and
- c) Not include any part of an employment area identified as a provincially significant employment area.

As part of the process established to evaluate potential conversion candidates, the City established additional criteria beyond those identified in the Growth Plan policy stated above. The additional criteria reflect the Barrie-specific context and are as follows:

Location & Site Characteristics

- The site is located on the fringe of an Employment Area (on the edge of a broader area designated for industrial uses as per the current Official Plan);
- The site is an island parcel not attached to other employment lands;
- The site is constrained due to size, configuration, or physical conditions (e.g. grade, natural heritage) that do not make it feasible for industrial employment uses permitted in Barrie's current Official Plan designation or zoning category;
- The site does not offer any potential for future expansion of industrial employment uses onto it from adjacent employment lands; and
- The site has been vacant for 10 years or more.

Compatibility

- Conversion will not introduce incompatible land uses to the surrounding employment area lands and will not create future land use conflicts; and
- Conversion will allow non-employment uses on the site to integrate well within the surrounding area.

Policy Conformity

- The conversion of the site is consistent with the preferred growth vision for Barrie, as defined in General Committee Report item 19-G-315, by:
 - Assisting in the achievement of a Designated Greenfield Area density of 62 Persons and Jobs per hectare (Designated Greenfield Area sites only);
 - Assisting in the achievement of the City's intensification target of 50% (Built-Up Area sites only);
 - Will not adversely affect the achievement of the City's intensification target and density target; and
 - The site can accommodate a mix of residential and population-related employment intensification.

Servicing

- There are existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the uses (proposed on the lands subject to the conversion as provided in the approved Master Plans for the City); and
- The difference between the anticipated traffic (trip) generation as an employment land use as compared to the anticipated traffic (trip) generation as the converted land use (although a full traffic study was not required).

A concept plan was required to be submitted by each proponent to illustrate the proposed non-industrial uses for the site should a conversion be supported.

Each submission was evaluated based on the information provided in the submission and against the Growth Plan policy framework and the stated evaluation criteria. The following chart is a summary of the analysis results.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

SUPPORTED	SUPPORTED WITH MODIFICATIONS	NOT SUPPORTED AT THIS TIME
50 Wood Street	90 Mapleview Drive West	50 Welham Road
268 Essa Road	92 Davidson Street	375 Bayview Drive
521 Huronia Road	410 Bayview Drive (Park Place)	611 Huronia Road (Cedar Links)
594 and 622 Essa Road	Huronia Road and Mapleview Drive East (North of EP Only)	571 Huronia Road
780 Essa Road	Huronia Road and Mapleview Drive East – Parcel furthest east (North of EP Only)	334 Mapleview Drive East
North East Corner of Essa Road and Mapleview Drive West		
Harvie Road and Bryne Drive		

ANALYSIS

Based on a review of each submission against the criteria above, staff have determined that 7 sites can be supported as a conversion from industrial employment lands. An additional 5 sites can be supported based on certain constraints or with modifications/considerations to the proposals received. Staff have determined they do not support the conversion of 5 sites from industrial employment lands at this time, however a more detailed review, through a site specific development application may allow these sites to be converted at a later date. A brief description of each proposal is provided below.

Sites Supported

50 Wood Street

The majority of the subject property is required to accommodate the day-lighting of Hotchkiss Creek and associated flood control facility, a stormwater management facility for Highway 400 and a stormwater management facility for the subject property and adjacent lands to the south (Osmington). As such, only a small portion of the subject property, approximately 22% comprising approximately 2 hectares, is able to accommodate employment or non-employment uses. In addition, the access to the subject property is through an existing residential neighbourhood. Staff support the re-designation to non-employment uses. A development application has been submitted on this property and a public meeting has been set for Monday June 22, 2020.

268 Essa Road

Isolated parcel. The 2011 Growth Management Strategy and The Land Needs Assessment already recommended Conversion and as such the LNAR had not shown an allocation of industrial jobs to the property.

521 Huronia Road

Isolated parcel. The 2011 Growth Management Strategy and The Land Needs Assessment already recommended Conversion and as such the LNAR had not shown an allocation of industrial jobs to the property. A development application has been submitted on this property and is being reviewed for completeness and processing.

594 and 622 Essa Road

Staff support the re-designation to a mix of non-industrial employment and residential uses based on the conversion criteria. The concept plan illustrates how this project would achieve the City's vision along an intensification corridor, provide significant opportunity for intensification in the built-up area, while seamlessly integrating into the adjacent land uses, which include institutional (Church), residential (future high density, existing low and medium density), and commercial (grocery, pharmacy).

780 Essa Road

The property's size, shape, and location constrain the use of the lands for industrial purposes. Specifically, the property is triangular in shape and smaller in size at 0.57 hectares, which limits the ability to develop industrial uses, particularly space extensive industrial uses, or uses that require large areas for truck turning/loading or open storage.

The property has a dwelling on it currently, and the continued use of the lands for residential purposes, or the redeveloped into a mixed use residential/commercial development would be more appropriately integrated with nearby sensitive land uses than a wide variety of industrial employment uses. Staff support the re-designation to non-employment uses.

664, 674 and 692 Essa Road, 320 Maplevue Drive West

Staff support the proposed mix of non-industrial uses based on the conversion criteria. Conversion of the lands to non-employment uses will allow them to seamlessly integrate into the surrounding area. The concept proposes high-density residential and mixed-use buildings along the entire frontage of the Essa Road intensification corridor while locating population related employment (commercial) buildings to the entirety of the Maplevue Drive West frontage, as Maplevue Drive West is a major commercial corridor within the city. The concept further locates medium and high-density residential development interior to the site abutting two churches.

Harvie Road and Bryne Drive

This property has two existing land uses: residential and employment lands. The proposal essentially results in a swap of these two designations and results in a minor expansion of employment lands. The proposed new residential lands create a logical expansion from the adjacent residential neighbourhood directly to the west, and provide a greater range of housing types transitioning in scale and intensity from the west to the east. Additionally, the proposed relocation of the employment lands to the eastern half of the subject lands, will provide for a better transition and connection to the commercially designated lands to the south and increases the viability of employment lands along the Highway 400 corridor. Staff support the proposed land swap and re-designation.

Sites Supported with Modifications**90 Maplevue Drive West**

The proposal illustrates only non-industrial employment uses, similar to other sites that have developed along Maplevue Drive West. Staff support the proposed uses through a re-designation to a non-industrial employment category, and as such, this does not constitute an employment land conversion.

92 Davidson Street

The site is a triangular parcel south of Hwy 400 and adjacent to residential. Staff support a conversion to non-industrial employment uses but the proposed townhouse development, as submitted with their conversion proposal, would need to be revised to include a mix of land uses at the time the site develops.

410 Bayview Drive

The site is north of an Environmental Protection feature and adjacent to other employment uses. Staff support a conversion to the new proposed Strategic Employment and Economic District (SEED) designation (a new OP designation that would permit residential uses in a phased approach with non-industrial employment uses) along the EP ribbon and Non-Industrial Employment on the north half of the proposed site.

Huron Road and Maplevue Drive East (North of EP Only)

The property is split by an Environmental Protection feature. The portion of the site north of the Environmental Protection lands is not conducive to employment uses. Based on the size of the parcel, the necessary setbacks from natural heritage features, developing an industrial employment land use and accommodating areas for loading, truck turning movements and access onto Maplevue Drive will be challenging. Conversion is only recommended for the portion of the site north of the Environmental Protection Area.

Huron Road and Maplevue Drive East (North of EP Only) – Parcel furthest East

The property has an Environmental Protection feature that splits the site. The 2011 Growth Management Strategy and the 2018 Land Needs Assessment recommends conversion. Staff supports conversion for the portion of the site north of the Environmental Protection Area.

Sites Not Supported at This Time**50 Welham Road**

The conversion criteria are not satisfied for this proposal, in particular the location and site characteristics criteria. The subject lands are contiguous to a large area of employment land and are 26 ha in size which is of sufficient size to support employment land uses. Staff are not satisfied that a residential proposal is compatible with adjacent employment uses and do not support a re-designation at this time as the conversion criteria are not satisfied.

375 Bayview Drive

The conversion criteria are not satisfied for this proposal, in particular the location and site characteristics criteria. The site is not an island parcel as it does abut General Industrial lands to the south and east. The site is not constrained due to size, configuration or its physical conditions. These lands could reasonably be developed for employment area uses. Staff do not support a re-designation at this time as the site does not satisfy the conversion criteria.

611 Huronia Road

The site is of a sufficient size to accommodate substantial industrial employment area use development without constraint and may be adjacent to a freight supportive corridor proposed to be identified in the new Official Plan. The industrial employment lands in this area are bordered by environmental protection designations that provide natural separation to lands designated for residential purposes. The site does not satisfy the conversion criteria in particular the location and site characteristics criteria.

571 Huronia Road

City Staff do not support the conversion of this site at this time due to concerns of the additional traffic generated at the corner of Mapleview Drive and Huronia Road by a conversion and is part of a larger industrial employment area in the City. The industrial employment lands in this area are bordered by environmental protection designations that provide natural separation to lands designated for residential purposes. The site does not satisfy the conversion criteria in particular the location and site characteristics criteria.

334 Mapleview Drive East

City Staff do not support the conversion of this site at this time due to concerns of the additional traffic generated with direct access Mapleview Drive by a conversion and is part of a larger industrial employment area in the City. The industrial employment lands in this area are bordered by environmental protection designations that provide natural separation to lands designated for residential purposes. The site does not satisfy the conversion criteria in particular the location and site characteristics criteria.

CONCLUSION

Through this process, based on the sites that can be supported based on the evaluation criteria, a total of approximately 43 hectares of employment area land are proposed to be converted to non-industrial uses. Staff provided this information to Watson and Associates to prepare an Addendum to the Draft LNAR to both reflect the chosen growth option of 50% intensification from Council's decision on Staff Report PLN031-19, as well as assess the land needs impact of the conversion sites. The Addendum to the Draft LNAR will be provided to Council in early June when an update on the Official Plan is provided in a memorandum from Staff.

Through their analysis, Watson and Associates have concluded that the conversion of 43 hectares of employment area land will result in an additional 53 hectares of new employment land needing to be added to the settlement area boundary. This 53 hectares of new employment area land accounts for additional land needed for infrastructure (e.g. roads) and is in addition to the amount already required as per the Draft LNAR report (May 2019). As a result of the conversions Barrie needs a total of 170 hectares of new employment area land. All of the additional employment area lands needed will come from an expansion to the settlement area boundary in the secondary plan areas and will require appropriate servicing and associated infrastructure.

The employment area land conversions have also had an impact on the amount of additional community area land needed to accommodate the forecasted population growth. The Watson and Associates LNAR Addendum has concluded that the amount of additional community area land – land which will accommodate residential and non-industrial job growth will be reduced to 134 hectares. The additional 134 hectares of community area land will be created through an expansion to the settlement area boundary in the secondary plan areas. This reduction in need for additional community area land will affect the previously stated plans of residential developers in the Secondary Plan Areas to expand the existing settlement boundary.

In total, the settlement area boundary is expected to expand by a total of 304 hectares.

The preferred approach to deal with the recommended conversions would be to re-designate the affected parcels through the work being undertaken on the preparation of the new Official Plan. Those new designations would come into effect after the City's new Official Plan is approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. These conversions would be subject to public consultation and input through the rest of the new Official Plan approval process.

Should any of the property owners wish to proceed with a stand-alone Official Plan amendment to proceed in advance of the new Official Plan, that avenue is available as described by Growth Plan policy 2.2.5.10 above. Staff would accept and process complete applications as is the usual development review process for planning applications. Individual public meetings and recommendation reports would be presented to Council in due course. This option is available to all of the properties described above regardless of the position of Staff's support at this time.

NEXT STEPS

The timeline of the new Official Plan has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic situation that limits public gatherings and as such the release of the draft Official Plan will not take place in early June 2020 as originally anticipated. At this time staff anticipate release of the draft Official Plan in fall 2020, subject to evolving COVID restrictions. Property owners that have elected to pursue site specific amendments to support their development proposals will follow the development review and public planning process.

Staff will explore opportunities to strategically designate employment area lands adjacent to Highway 400 and along railway corridors to provide opportunity for new large scale pure industrial development that will contribute to the prosperity of Barrie for years to come. The settlement area boundary expansion lands for both employment and population-related uses, will be required to follow Provincial policy as outlined in the Growth Plan and Provincial Policy Statement and will be presented in the new Official Plan.

APPENDIX “A”

MAP OF EMPLOYMENT LAND CONVERSION REQUESTS

