

Technical Memorandum

Commercial Areas

1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

Commercial areas within the City of Brampton (“City”) serve an important functional and economic role through the provision of employment opportunity and by serving the everyday needs of the community. The 2006 Official Plan establishes a “Retail Hierarchy” intended to apply to lands that accommodate most of the commercial and retail activity within the City. This 2006 Official Plan therefore establishes clear policy direction to implement a range of “commercial” oriented zones through the zoning by-law. The Draft Brampton Plan contemplates “commercial” areas principally through three land use designations, being the Mixed-Use, Mixed-Use Employment and Neighbourhood designations.

1.2 PURPOSE

This Memo focuses on an approach to implementing the neighbourhood supportive commercial uses within the Neighbourhood designation of the Draft Brampton Plan. An approach to implementing the commercial policies of the Draft Brampton Plan in the Mixed-Use and Mixed-Use Employment designation are assessed through separate memorandums. Therefore, the purpose of this Memo is to inform an approach to zoning commercial lands within the City that aligns with the policy framework of the Draft Brampton Plan.

2 Draft Brampton Plan

2.1 COMMERCIAL USES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGNATION

Various land use designations proposed under the Draft Brampton Plan contemplate a range of commercial oriented land uses. This Memo focuses on aligning the new comprehensive zoning by-law with the policies of the Neighbourhood designation as it relates to commercial zoning.

2.1.1 Neighbourhood Designation

The Neighbourhood land use designation includes existing and planned community areas comprised mostly of residential uses, but also local-serving commercial, institutional, and retail uses. It is the stated intent of the Draft Brampton Plan that the Neighbourhood designation is intended to support the notion of 15-minute neighbourhoods (e.g., being able to access daily needs, services, and amenities within a 15-minute walk, bike or public transit ride) plan evolution and foster livability. Some redevelopment and intensification are contemplated within the Neighbourhood designation, principally directed to the Neighbourhood Centres. The Draft Brampton Plan provides that the planned location of Neighbourhood Centres is to be delineated

through the secondary planning process. The Neighbourhood designation is shown on Schedule 2 – Designations. The policies of the Neighborhood designation also plan for land uses and a built form scale that achieve compatibility and transition with surrounding areas.

A broad range of permitted uses are contemplated within the Neighbourhood designation, including residential, community services and facilities, institutional uses (such as places of worship and day cares), parks and open spaces, and neighbourhood supportive commercial uses. Neighbourhood supportive commercial uses are intended to be local serving, accessed primarily by walking, and cycling, be well connected to adjacent land uses, and are of a scale and intensity that do not rely on automobile traffic from outside the immediate area.

Permitted uses within the Neighbourhood supportive commercial areas include retail uses, personal service, daycares, restaurants, pharmacies, grocers, and small-scale recreational uses. The Draft Brampton Plan also defers to the Secondary Plans for more specific direction on permitted uses and intended built form outcomes, with the implementing zoning by-law establishing more specific regulations for lot and building requirements. The Draft Brampton Plan also establishes policy direction regarding commercial uses that may be permitted as accessory or secondary to a principal residential use secondary or within the Neighbourhood designation. This includes home occupation and live-work opportunities, for example.

The policies of the Draft Brampton Plan direct the implementing zoning by-law to establish requirements for specific built form outcomes. This includes regulations that address land use transition, public and private realm relationships, and active frontages including encouragement of ground related non-residential uses where those uses are permitted.

3 Analysis

3.1 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The following policy considerations are noted from the proposed Neighbourhoods designation as it relates to neighbourhood supportive commercial uses:

- The Draft Brampton Plan permits a broad range of commercial uses, with the policies largely deferring to either the applicable secondary plans or the implementing zoning by-law to establish more specific regulation. The permitted uses contemplated by the Draft Brampton Plan are sufficiently broad enough that aligning the permitted commercial uses under the Neighbourhood designation is not anticipated to introduce conflict with the 2006 Official Plan.
- The permitted building typology identified within the Neighbourhood designation is low-rise, except where subject to certain overlays, such as the Secondary Urban Boulevard or Corridors overlay, where the permitted building typologies include low-rise plus and mid-rise, for example.
- In many cases, the Draft Brampton Plan defers to the more detailed policy of Secondary Plans to provide land use planning direction regarding permitted uses and intended built form outcomes for areas contemplated as neighbourhood supportive uses.

3.2 APPROACH

The following approach is offered to align the comprehensive zoning by-law with the Draft Brampton Plan and to inform the implementing zoning regime for neighbourhood supportive commercial uses within the Neighbourhood designation.

3.2.1 Zone Structure

It is recommended that a commercial zone category be established by the new comprehensive zoning by-law. The commercial zone category should include a “hierarchy” of zones that permit various scales of commercial and retail-oriented uses based on the intended form and function of the zone itself. Specifically:

- **Local commercial:** Permits lower scale commercial uses that serve the everyday needs of adjacent residential uses and neighbourhoods. Local commercial uses are not intended to generate significant volumes of human or vehicular traffic, and are envisioned to be mainly accessed by pedestrians, transit, or active transportation.
- **General commercial:** Permits commercial uses that are larger in scale and intensity than uses permitted in the Local Commercial zone. The range of permitted uses are intended to serve a broader geographic area and likely to precipitate increased volumes of vehicular traffic given the more regional function of the uses.
- **Highway commercial:** Permits uses that are largely automobile oriented, such as servicing, sales, and rentals, for example. Other uses may also be permitted, such as hotels, micro-manufacturing, and self-storage facilities, for example.
- **Recreational commercial:** Uses permitted under Recreational Commercial are specific to uses that are contemplated as being privately owned but are recreational in nature. This includes driving ranges, golf courses, and commercial campsites, for example. The Recreational Commercial zone form an important component of implementing the Draft Brampton Plan’s parks policy framework, which is assessed under a separate memorandum.

It is likely that the range of commercial oriented zones can be informed by Zoning By-law 270-2004, with modest updates that focus on expanding the range of permitted uses, while also taking into consideration provisions that will facilitate implementation of the Draft Brampton Plan policy. This also achieves a policy objective of the Draft Brampton Plan that recognizes the role of secondary plans in establishing more specific policy direction regarding permitted uses and built form. It is anticipated that the new mixed-use zone structure can function to implement the Draft Brampton Plan where there is planned evolution of existing commercial lands into a more mixed-use format.

It will also be important to consider the extent to which the existing commercial zones can be modified, without introducing interpretation and administration challenges (e.g., where a Special Section modifies the parent commercial zone). This will need to be considered as the review of the Special Section occurs subsequent to future iterations of the draft comprehensive zoning by-law.

3.2.2 Permitted Uses

The permitted uses contemplated by the Draft Brampton Plan are very broad and therefore the implementing zoning framework will need to identify more specific land uses. The exception to this is with regards to home occupation and live-work opportunities, where the Draft Brampton Plan establishes more specific direction to the implementing zoning by-law. The zone structure should permit a sufficiently broad range of uses to ensure the intent of the policy is implemented. As noted previously, this is not anticipated to introduce conformity challenges given the broad nature of permitted uses that are contemplated by the Draft Brampton Plan. Identifying the permitted uses and associated definitions has been informed through review of more contemporary municipal zoning practice, and it is expected that they will be further refined through consultation with City staff and the public.

3.2.3 Built Form

Policies of the Draft Brampton Plan emphasize the intent for desirable built form outcomes, specifically as it relates to compatibility and transition to surrounding land uses. It is recommended that the lot and building requirements of the existing commercial zones under Zoning By-law 270-2004 be modestly updated in this regard. This may require modest updates to the existing standards for commercial oriented zones under Zoning By-law 270-2004, such as reduced minimum yard requirements or heightened landscape requirements, for example.

4 Recommendations

This Memo has presented a proposed approach to align the new comprehensive zoning by-law with the Draft Brampton Plan. The following summary of recommendations is offered to achieve this:

1. It is recommended that a parent commercial zone category, consisting of multiple zones, be established under the new comprehensive zoning by-law to align with the Neighbourhood designation policies of the Draft Brampton Plan. The commercial zones should largely be informed by Zoning By-law 270-2004, given that they have likely been established through more detailed secondary plan policy.
2. It is likely that several zones are required to recognize secondary plan land use designations, and to implement the intended hierarchy of commercial land uses in order to align with the Draft Brampton Plan. Through this process, a streamlining of the existing commercial oriented zones under Zoning By-law 270-2004 should be considered.
3. Further, the existing commercial oriented zones should be updated to achieve more desirable built form outcomes. Careful consideration will need to be given to ensure that any substantive updates to the commercial zones do not frustrate future interpretation and administration, particularly in regard to where Special Sections may apply on a site-specific basis.
4. Generally, it is not recommended that commercial lands be “rezoned” through the new comprehensive zoning bylaw. Although the Draft Brampton Plan contemplates the evolution of some commercial land uses within the Neighbourhood designation to a more mixed-use

format, the policy directs that additional area or site-specific study is required to provide an appropriate basis to inform the zoning. However, it is anticipated that the mixed-use zone structure established by the new comprehensive zoning by-law will function to implement the evolution of commercial areas as contemplated by the Draft Brampton Plan over time.