

## **Subject: Comments and Issues re Kingdom Developments proposal for Markham Centre**

Reid and Stephen - the URA would like to offer some comments on this development proposal. We thank Kingdom for their presentations to DSC on May 24, 2020 and two Community Information Meetings (June 24, 2020 and March 9, 2021). Kingdom went beyond the norm in giving us three opportunities to understand and discuss the proposal, and as a result we are pleased to be able to offer more than the usual degree of commentary.

### **1. The Proposal as we now understand it:**

- Phase 1, along Highway 7, will have 3 buildings, the highest being 8 storeys. It will consist of 330 units, retail on Sheridan St, a party room and gymnasium. The courtyard will have an above ground parking lot plus a play area. This requires only a minor variance to meet zoning.
- Phase 2 is to consist of 4 buildings (6, 25, 25, and 4 storeys) with a public park, and 3 roof top gardens. 600 total units. Requires OPA and ZBA.
- Phase 3 will have 2 x 45 storey towers plus buildings of 4 and 9 storeys. Requires OPA and ZBA.
- Phase 4 has not yet been detailed, and the space will be used initially as a sales office.
- The total number of units for Phases 1 to 3 will be 2000 (up from 1225 in 2014), with 1696 above (interior to the building) and below ground parking spaces. They have allocated 20 affordable units in phases 1 and 2.

### **2. Comments and Concerns:**

- We have no concerns with Phase 1 and the required minor variance.
- We have concerns with the height and density of Phases 2 and 3 when compared with the preliminary concept Markham Centre Secondary Plan (coming back to DSC on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.)
  - Phase 2 has unknown FSI and a height up to 25 storeys vs FSI of 4 and height of 5-19 storeys.
  - Phase 3 has unknown FSI and a height up to 45 storeys vs FSI of 5 and 15-25 storeys
- The Kingdom proposal is akin to the "Business as Usual" approach cited in the staff presentation for Markham Centre to DSC of February 8, and would contribute to all of the attendant negatives:
  - insufficient amenities and parks
  - overwhelmed transportation system
  - too many tall buildings
  - falls short of guiding principles
- The extension of Sciberras Drive across the Rouge River is important to disperse road traffic from this development. However, the crossing seems very challenging from a TRCA approval perspective. We recommend a sensitivity analysis be run

on necessary transportation improvements if the road crossing proves not to be feasible.

- The provision of zero purpose-built rental units and 20 affordable units in Phases 1 + 2 (930 units) seems low. In contrast, the Times development west of Verdale (3020 units) will have 300 purpose-built rental units including 60 affordable rental units. This requires further discussion.
- For Phase 1, we would like the street level retail to be designed compatible with Child Care, which is extremely scarce in the area. The proposal has adequate ground level parking and access to a play area based on Kingdom's designs.

### **3. Conclusions**

- We look forward to reading the professional opinions of staff when their report comes to DSC, but in the meantime would like to offer the following conclusions.
- Except for Phase 1, the URA cannot support this development as currently proposed:
  - We need to understand the FSI in Phases 2 and 3, for comparison with the preliminary concept Secondary Plan.
  - Phase 3 is not supportable as proposed.
- We understand both the importance of the Sciberras Road extension across the Rouge River from a traffic management viewpoint, but also the need for environmental protection of this stream per TRCA. We urge the City and TRCA to work together for an acceptable solution. As a minimum, a pedestrian/cyclist bridge is needed.
- It would be appreciated if Phase 1 retail could be designed compatible with Child Care, as per above.
- Purpose built rental and affordable housing needs closer review, as per above.