

Report to Planning and Environment Committee

To: Chair and Members
Planning & Environment Committee
From: John M. Fleming
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner
Subject: GSP Group Inc.
560 and 562 Wellington Street – Status update and request to undertake further study
Meeting on: April 30, 2018

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken with respect to the application of GSP Group Inc. relating to the property located at 560 and 562 Wellington Street:

- (a) the following report **BE RECEIVED** for information; and,
- (b) Staff **BE DIRECTED** to undertake a review of the existing plans, policies, and guidelines applying to the properties surrounding Victoria Park and to consider a comprehensive plan for the properties surrounding the Park.

Executive Summary

Summary of Recommendation

Staff recommend that this report be received for information, and that Staff be directed to undertake a further review of the existing plans, policies, and guidelines applying to the properties surrounding Victoria Park in order to advance Municipal Council's referral of this Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment application back to Staff.

Purpose and the Effect of Recommended Action

The purpose and effect of the recommended action is to provide an update on the status of discussions with the applicant for the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street, in response to the direction by Municipal Council to refer the matter back to Staff in May, 2017, and to direct Staff to further review the existing plans, policies, and guidelines applying to the properties surrounding Victoria Park to consider a comprehensive plan for the properties surrounding Victoria Park. Such an analysis may provide greater clarity and context for evaluating the proposal at 560 and 562 Wellington Street

Rationale of Recommended Action

As directed by City Council, Staff have been working with the applicant in response to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street for the preparation of a revised development proposal that conforms to the planning policies. Although the applicant has made substantial changes to their development proposal in order to better align with the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Official Plan, and The London Plan, a gap still exists between the development proposal and the land use policy framework.

It is recommended that Staff be directed to undertake a review of the existing plans, policies, and guidelines for the properties surrounding Victoria Park to consider whether there is a need to develop a comprehensive plan for the lands surrounding Victoria Park. Given that the planning regime for the properties surrounding the Park is varied and lacks a cohesive vision, further study of the policy framework and the context of the lands surrounding Victoria Park will determine whether there is a need to develop a comprehensive policy, design guideline, and plan to knit together these lands following

a public participation process. Such an analysis may provide greater clarity and context for evaluating the proposal at 560 and 562 Wellington Street.

Analysis

1.0 Background

1.1 Planning history of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street

The site at 560 and 562 Wellington Street is currently occupied by a 2-storey office building, a 5-storey office building, and associated surface and underground parking. An Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application was submitted in February, 2015 which proposed to demolish the existing buildings and construct a 25-storey mixed-use apartment building on the subject site. That application was circulated and residents of the surrounding area expressed significant concern with the requested development. A Public Information Meeting was held on April 22, 2015. In June, 2015, the applicant requested that the file be placed “on hold”, to allow the applicant an opportunity to review the feedback they had received in response to their requested development and consider possible changes to the design to resolve some of the issues.

The applicant submitted a revised proposal in December, 2016, which proposed a 22-storey mixed-use apartment building with a reduced podium height, a slightly increased setback to the residential neighbourhood to the east, and modifications to the material and building design to attempt to better respond to the context of the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District. The revised proposal continued to receive significant concern from residents in the surrounding area.

Planning Staff prepared a report that was considered by City Council at its meeting of May 16, 2017, recommending the requested Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment be refused, as the proposed development was not consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement; did not conform to the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan; did not meet the location criteria for the Multi-Family High Density Residential land use designation in the Official Plan; represented over-intensification of the subject site; did not pass all of the criteria in a Planning Impact Analysis described in the Official Plan; and was not consistent with The London Plan.

At this meeting, City Council referred the application back to Staff to continue to work with the applicant to revise the application for consideration at a future Public Participation Meeting. Council identified that the revised development must be more in keeping with and conform to the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Official Plan, and The London Plan.

2.0 Update on Application

2.1 Update on discussions with the Applicant and request for further study

Further to the City Council direction to refer the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment back to Staff, Staff have continued to work with the applicant for the submission of a revised application that is more in keeping with and conforms to the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Official Plan, and The London Plan. Although the applicant has made substantial changes to their development proposal a gap remains between the policy framework and the revised development proposal. In an effort to continue discussions with the applicant on a revised development proposal, Planning Staff are of the opinion that further study of the properties surrounding Victoria Park and the associated policy context is required which may allow Staff to consider the revised development proposal and inform the need for a comprehensive plan for the properties surrounding Victoria Park.

3.0 Request for Further Study

3.1 Planning Context Surrounding Victoria Park

The lands surrounding Victoria Park have a varied policy context, with planning policies for different properties surrounding the Park being directed by different policy and guideline documents. The lands surrounding the Park have not been considered in a comprehensive framework of their shared relationship to the Park, despite the role of Victoria Park as a prominent City-wide park for the City of London.

All properties surrounding Victoria Park are subject to the Official Plan and the Council-adopted London Plan, a portion of which is in-force and effect and a portion of which is under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. Official Plan designations for properties surrounding Victoria Park vary, with Low Density Residential, Multi-Family Medium Density, Community Facility, Downtown Area, Office Area, and Main Street Commercial Corridor designations applying to the properties surrounding the park. The London Plan Place Types for properties surrounding Victoria Park include Downtown, Neighbourhood, and Rapid Transit Corridor. These Official Plan designations and The London Plan Place Types are further guided by additional plans, policy layers and guidelines that apply to certain properties surrounding the Park, including:

- West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan – This Heritage Conservation District Plan applies to properties on the eastern and western edge of Victoria Park.
- Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan – The Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan applies to properties on the southern edge of Victoria Park
- Downtown Design Study and Guidelines – This document applies to the lands to the south of Victoria Park and the northeast parcel at the intersection of Dufferin Avenue and Wellington Street.
- Our Move Forward: London's Downtown Plan – The Downtown Plan applies to the lands to the south of Victoria Park and the northeast parcel at the intersection of Dufferin Avenue and Wellington Street.
- Woodfield Neighbourhood Specific Policy Area – This Specific Policy Area applies to the lands on the northern and eastern edge of Victoria Park and the parcel on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Richmond Street.

Maps showing the varied planning framework surrounding Victoria Park can be found in Appendix "A".

Despite this varied planning framework, a study has not been completed to comprehensively consider the lands surrounding Victoria Park based on their relationship to Victoria Park.

3.2 Need for Further Study

This varied context makes it challenging for Staff to comprehensively consider applications for developments surrounding Victoria Park, such as the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street West. Based on the existing policy framework these developments are considered on a "one-off" basis in the absence of a broader framework to guide development around the Park. Existing zoning permissions vary from 10 metres to 90 metres in height in areas around the Park, creating an inconsistent context for development around the Park. A rapid transit corridor along the western edge of the Park may also result in development pressure that would benefit from a comprehensive plan. While Staff appreciate that each property surrounding the Park must also be considered within its context to the other surrounding properties that do not front onto Victoria Park, consideration must also be given to each property surrounding the Park to help establish a compatible built form that considers the context of the Park as a whole.

The intention is for Staff to hire a consultant to assist with the study of the land surrounding Victoria Park.

The findings from the study of the lands surrounding Victoria Park would help to inform discussions with the applicant on the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street, and would also help to provide a framework for evaluating any future development proposed on any of the properties surrounding Victoria Park. The study of these lands may result in the creation of a comprehensive plan for the properties surrounding the Park, subject to public participation, that would allow Staff to better guide development around the Park in a holistic manner by considering the relationship between any proposed development and Victoria Park and the surrounding context.

Such a study could consider matters including, but not limited to, the following:

- Existing Official Plan policies
- The London Plan policies
- Heritage Conservation District plans, policies and guidelines
- Possible development around the park and its potential impact on adjacent low-rise residential neighbourhoods
- Clearly delineating where development may be supported beyond a low or mid-rise height
- A method for synthesizing the multiple overlapping plans, policies, and guidelines

4.0 Conclusion

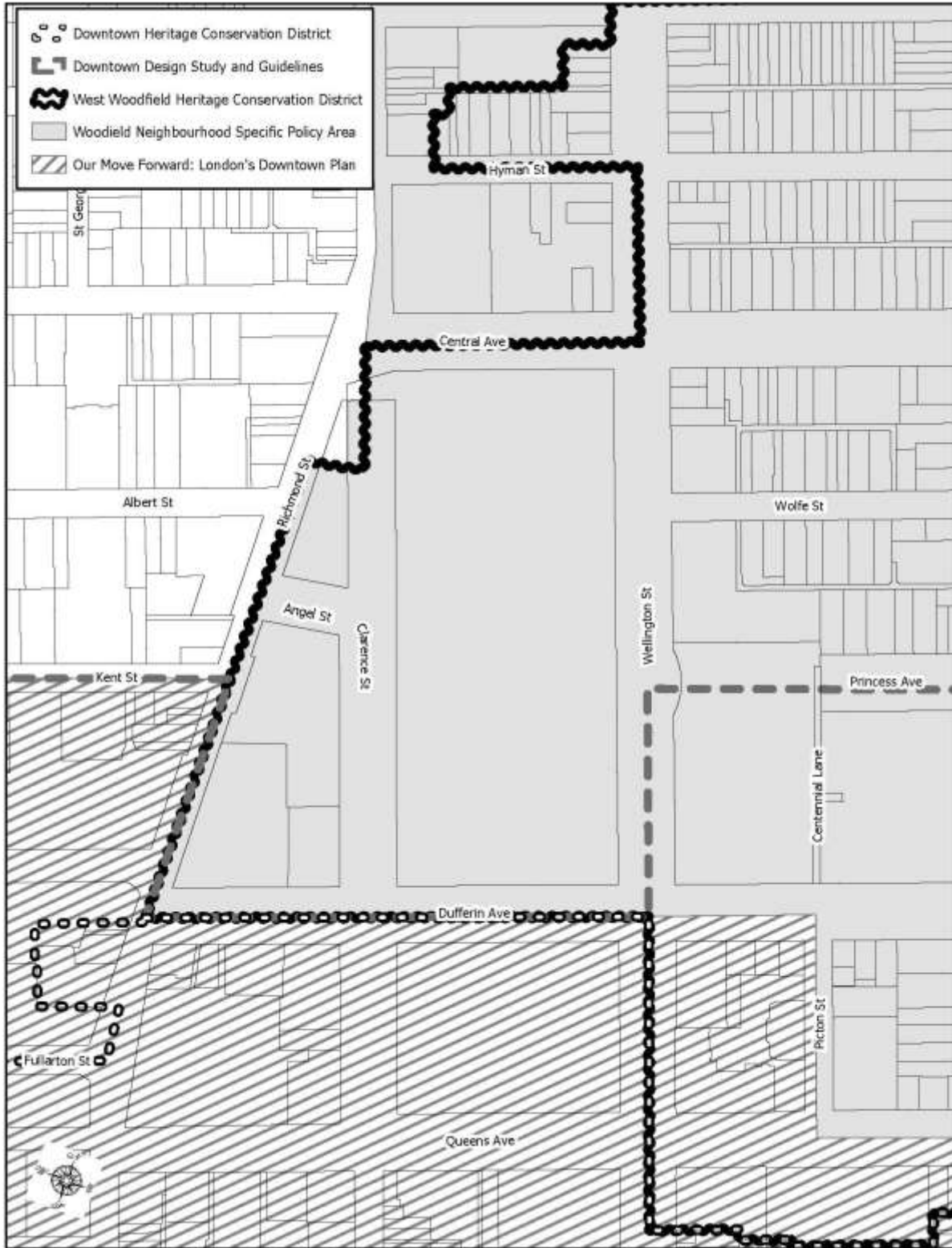
Following Council direction, Staff and the applicant have continued to discuss a revised development proposal, as part of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street, which is more in keeping with and conforms to the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Official Plan, and The London Plan. Although the applicant has made substantial changes to their development proposal in order to better align with the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Official Plan, and The London Plan, a gap still exists between the development proposal and the land use policy framework. It is recommended that Staff be directed to review the existing plans, policies, and guidelines applying to the properties surrounding Victoria Park to determine whether there is a basis to consider the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application at 560 and 562 Wellington Street and evaluate the need to develop a comprehensive plan for the properties surrounding Victoria Park to guide future development applications for properties surrounding the Park.

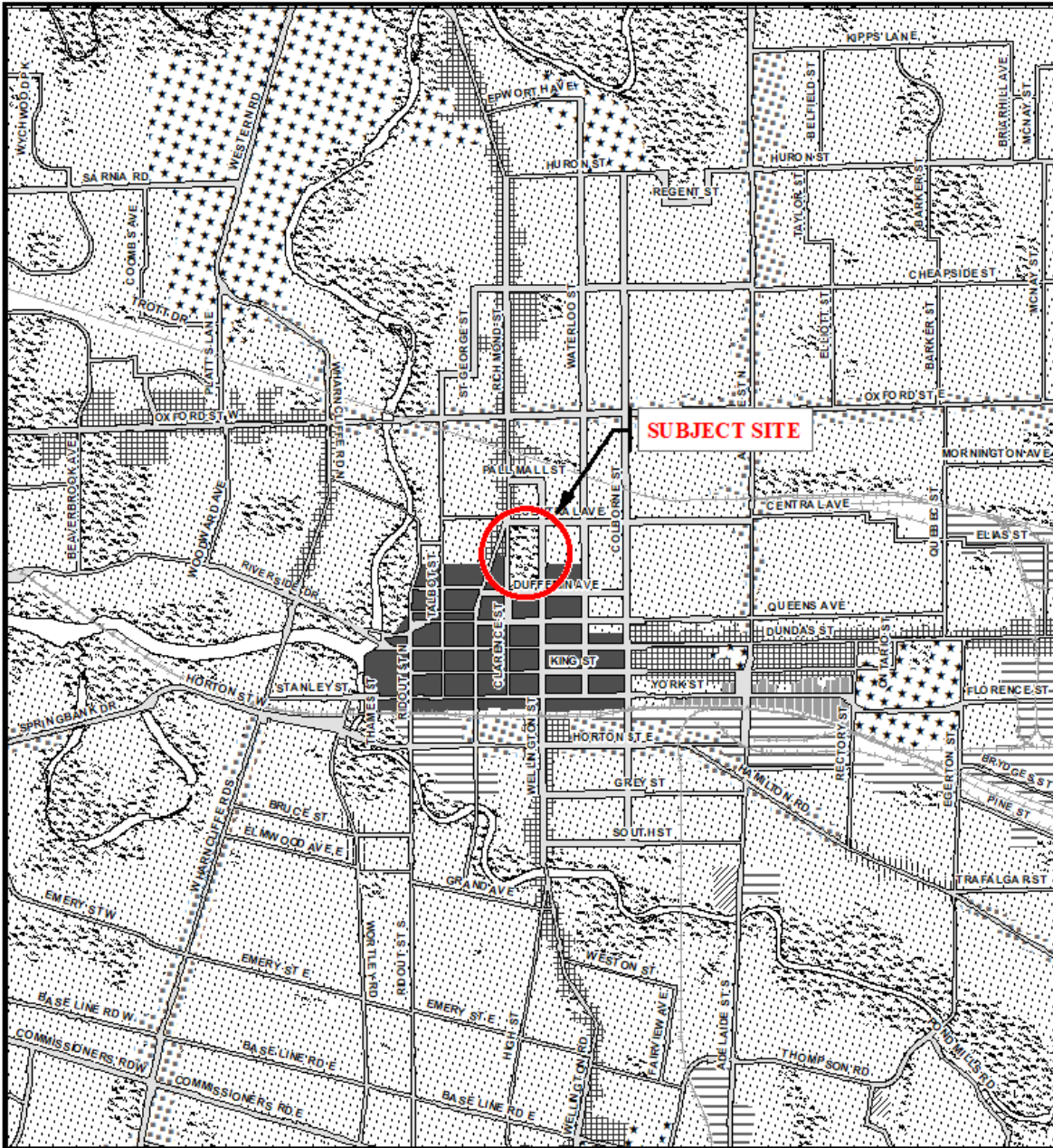
Prepared by:	Michelle Knieriem, MCIP, RPP Planner II, Current Planning
Submitted by:	Michael Tomazincic, MCIP, RPP Manager, Current Planning
Recommended by:	John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

April 23, 2018
MT/mt

Appendix A – Relevant Background

Additional Maps





Legend

Downtown	Future Community Growth	Environmental Review
Transit Village	Heavy Industrial	Farmland
Shopping Area	Light Industrial	Rural Neighbourhood
Rapid Transit Corridor	Future Industrial Growth	Waste Management Resource Recovery Area
Urban Corridor	Commercial Industrial	Urban Growth Boundary
Main Street	Institutional	
Neighbourhood	Green Space	

This is an excerpt from the Planning Division's working consolidation of Map 1 - Place Types of the London Plan, with added notations.

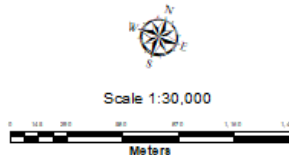
At the time of the printing of this map, the Rapid Transit EA is in progress. This map shows the Rapid Transit Corridors and Urban Corridors to recognize potential alignments. These Place Types will be modified to align with the results of the EA process for the final version of The London Plan.

CITY OF LONDON

Planning Services /
 Development Services

**LONDON PLAN MAP 1
 - PLACE TYPES -**

PREPARED BY: Planning Services

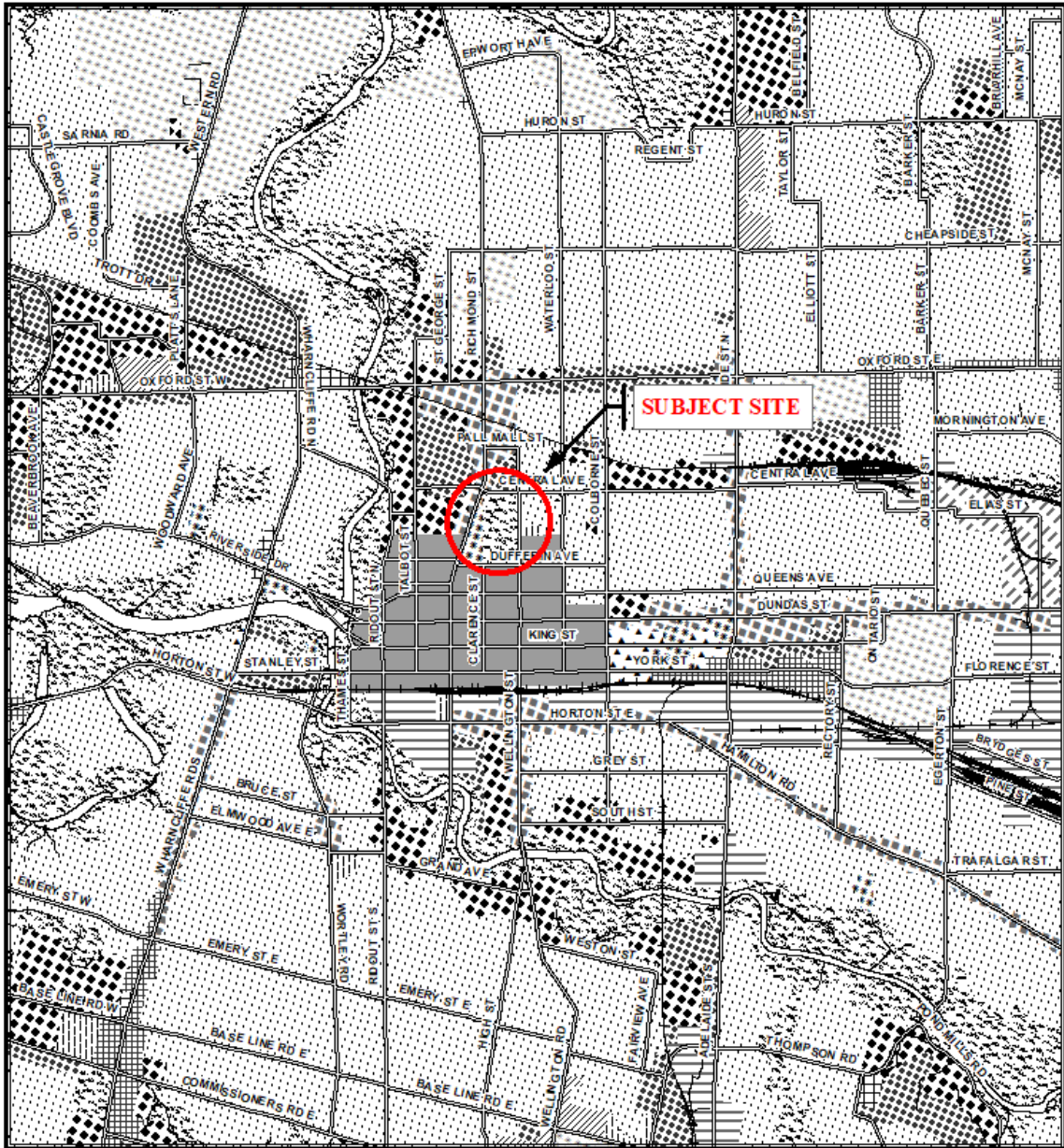


File Number:

Planner: MK

Technician: MB

Date: April 23, 2018



Legend		
Downtown	Multi-Family, Medium Density Residential	Office Business Park
Wonderland Road Community Enterprise Corridor	Low Density Residential	General Industrial
Enclosed Regional Commercial Node	Office Area	Light Industrial
New Format Regional Commercial Node	Office/Residential	Commercial Industrial
Community Commercial Node	Regional Facility	Transitional Industrial
Neighbourhood Commercial Node	Community Facility	Rural Settlement
Main Street Commercial Corridor	Open Space	Environmental Review
Auto-Oriented Commercial Corridor	Urban Reserve - Community Growth	Agriculture
Multi-Family, High Density Residential	Urban Reserve - Industrial Growth	Urban Growth Boundary

<p>CITY OF LONDON Planning Services / Development Services OFFICIAL PLAN SCHEDULE A - LANDUSE -</p> <p><small>PREPARED BY: Graphics and Information Services</small></p>		FILE NUMBER:
		PLANNER: MK
		TECHNICIAN: MB
		DATE: 2018/04/23

Additional Reports

Application by GSP Group Inc. re properties located at 560 and 562 Wellington Street (OZ-8462)(Public Participation Meeting May 8, 2017): City Council considered the Staff recommendations in this report and directed Staff to continue to work with the applicant to develop a revised proposal that is more in keeping and conforms with the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Official Plan, and The London Plan