
October 22, 2021

Mayor and the Members of Council
City of London
300 Dufferin Street
London, ON
N6A 4L9

Re: Masonville Secondary Plan
For Council Meeting on October 28, 2021

Dear Mr. Mayor and the Members of Council:

We appreciate the major work that went into the preparation of the Secondary Plan, and that the Project was commenced in January 2019. We also appreciate the major effort the City has made to complete the Masonville Secondary Plan (“MSP”). Although there was a good discussion at the PEC meeting earlier this week, and notwithstanding that it is being recommended to Council for adoption, we still have some major concerns with the proposed MSP.



Westdell Development Corp., is the principal of Richmond Hyland Centre Inc., the owner of the commercial centre, known as Hylands Centre.

This centre occupies the entire northwest quadrant of the Fanshawe-Richmond intersection that is included in the Secondary Plan planning area. We purchased the property a little over 3 years ago, and have been ongoing with improvements to the commercial centre. We have constructed the Starbucks building, an office building at the very corner of the property at the intersection of Richmond and Fanshawe Park Road, and are well underway with a new bank on site.

OUR COMMENTS, CONCERNS AND REQUESTS:

1. **UNCERTAINTY** – We are concerned that the Secondary Plan would be too rigid and constrain redevelopment opportunities by not being able to predict the uncertainties that the future holds, as well as recognize the complexities in managing the operation and renewal of a large commercial centre, comprising of:
 - a) Several tenants and leases with different time periods. The Tenants have protection in their leases with rights to extend the lease, of which we cannot control. Some of these renewals go out 20 years and there is nothing we can do to prevent them from fully exercising these options;

- b) The need to keep businesses open while renewal projects are constructed;
- c) Predicting the way and how people will shop? On-line, small stores, big box etc. We are still seeing tremendous demand for in person shopping.

The above is not unique to us, as other commercial quadrants of the Masonville area are in the same situation. Therefore, we request that the Secondary Plan recognize these complexities and provide for a breadth of scope and flexibility. To ensure flexibility as one way of dealing with uncertainty, we ask that the Secondary Plan utilize the term “should” as much as possible and not the word “shall”.

- 2. **PUBLIC PARK LAND** - The MSP requires 0.5 ha in Section 3.7 – Parks, to be provided as a MINIMUM in the northwest quadrant. This area of 0.5 ha = 5000 m² = approximately 54,000 sq. ft. Our existing commercial plaza comprises approximately 169,000 sq. ft. The proposed Park minimum represents a significant 32% of our existing commercial floor space.

While we do not disagree that park space should be provided, we believe the park space needs can be met in a variety of ways. We request that there be an expressed opportunity included in the policy to provide the open space and parkland in a variety of ways, such as roof-top green space and privately owned public spaces, (POPS) as well as public spaces.

We proposed the following wording to replace Section 3.7 (iv). ***“New Park space is required in the northwest quadrant of the Study Area and its overall size should be approximately 0.5 ha and comprise public spaces and private spaces, such as POPS and roof top amenity areas.”***

- 3. Section 3.8 - Housing Mix and Affordability – the comment is that a 25% minimum of all housing should to be affordable, however, there is no explanation of how this would apply to the Masonville area? What would be the implications? There needs to be an explanation in quantitative terms as to what this means and what role the public sector and private sectors are to play.

We thank you for the opportunity to continue to comment on the MSP.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Westdell Development Corporation



David Traher
VP Planning & Development