

January 4, 2023

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RE: ERO 019-5952 Regional Municipality of Waterloo Official Plan Amendment No. 6
Ministry Reference Number: 30-OP-222206
Submission Comments – Power Centre: Highway 85 & King Road, Woolwich
OUR FILE 07132 DQ

MacNaughton Hermesen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited ("MHBC") represent Smartcentres King/85 Developments Limited, with respect to the SmartCentres Waterloo Shopping Centre at King Street North and Highway 85. For context, the SmartCentres properties are located at the south west corner of the King Street North and Highway 85 intersection and are municipally addressed as 330 and 335 Farmers Market Road in the Township of Woolwich (hereinafter the "Subject Lands"). These lands abut the northern settlement area boundary of the City of Waterloo within which are lands identified in Official Plan Amendment No. 6 (ROPA 6) as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone (PSEZ). The property at 335 Farmers Market Road is within 500 metres of the City of Waterloo's Northfield Major Transit Station Area's (MTSA) northern boundary and 1000 metres to the Light Rapid Transit (LRT) stop (ROPA 6, Figure 4b: Northfield Station).

As adopted, the Subject Lands, which are significantly developed, are located within the Urban Area that is contiguous with the City of Waterloo's Urban Area, as identified in ROPA 6 Map 1 Regional Structure. In Map 2: Urban System, the Subject Lands are within both the Delineated Built-Up Area (BUA) and within a Designated Greenfield Area (DGA). The lot with municipal address 330 Farmers Market Road on the north side of Farmers Market Road is within the BUA and contains several commercial buildings, while the lot addressed as 335 Farmers Market Road on the south side of the same road, contains a Walmart store and is within a DGA. Both addresses have existing commercial developments located on them. Only the 3.0 hectares found at 335 Farmers Market Road remains undeveloped at this time, but fronts onto both Farmers Market Road and King Street North, and abuts Highway 85.

The Subject Lands currently contain several retail commercial buildings as well as the area of vacant, developable land with frontage along Farmers Market Road. The Township of Woolwich Zoning By-law 55-86, Zoning Map B-10: Stockyards and Martin Grove, zones the lands as Power Centre Commercial C-6, which limits commercial uses to three (3) types of uses: 1) a Mass General Merchandise Store; 2) retail stores for merchandising Department Store Type Merchandise (DSTM); and 3) Service Commercial uses. Other permitted uses include: a promotion kiosk; train station; buggy shelter(s); and parking lot. There is also a list of prohibited uses.

The following comments and recommendations are submitted to the Province to request that the Province modify the Region of Waterloo Official Plan Amendment No. 6 policies to recognize existing commercial developments on the lands and today's land use trends that support economic growth into the next decade.

Designated Greenfield Areas, 'Gentle Density' and Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ)

ROPA 6, section 2.6 Designated Greenfield Areas indicates that lands within DGAs, such as a portion of the Subject Lands, are to become "15-minute neighbourhoods" through "gentle density", according to policy 2.6.1.5 of ROPA 6:

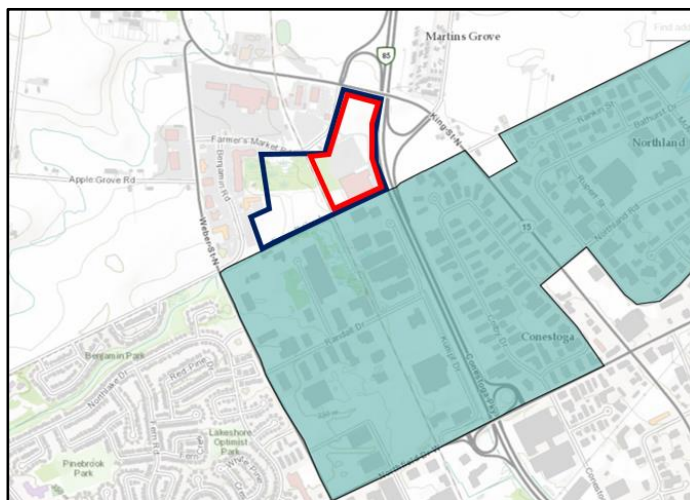
Area municipalities will establish policies in their official plans, or other planning documents, to support the gradual transition of existing designated greenfield areas to become vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods through gentle density in the form of infill, missing middle housing, and additional residential units.

ROPA 6 defines 'gentle density' as follows:

Development or redevelopment in Urban Areas or Township Urban Areas with a slightly higher density than adjacent single-detached (or lower density) neighborhood.

This definition focuses 'density' on population but does not include land use matters pertaining to employment and commercial use intensification. Previous submissions by our client for residential permissions on the subject lands did not yield a positive result (i.e. residential land uses are not permitted on the subject lands). As such, the ROPA 6 policies need to be revised to reflect the fact that gentle density can be in the form of jobs and not just population.

The figure below shows the PSEZ area in the light blue shading, while a portion of the Subject Lands are shown in red outline (the black outline being the DGA boundary). In context of the Subject Lands' location beside a PSEZ and abutting Provincial Highway 85, it is not clear how 'gentle density' would be applicable given that the Subject Lands are also within the Urban Area contiguous with the City of Waterloo.



Further, ROPA 6, policy 2.G.1.5 defers to lower-tier municipalities to determine land uses:

Area municipalities will establish policies in their official plans, or other planning documents, to support the gradual transition of existing designated greenfield areas to become vibrant 15-minute neighbourhoods through gentle density in the form of infill, missing middle housing, and additional residential units.

This policy, and the policies within ROPA 6, 2.G do not provide direction on the economic factors and land uses that support a '15-minute' neighbourhood. While the Growth Plan's definition of 'compact community' speaks to "multi-storey commercial" uses, the Region's adopted ROPA 6 provides no direction.

Recommendation:

1. Add a new policy to section 2J for a site specific policy as follows:

2J.XX "Notwithstanding Policy 2.G.1, for the lands shown on Figure 18 in the Township of Woolwich, located at the south west corner of King Street North and Highway 85 intersection (335 Farmers Market Road), the Township of Woolwich may permit certain additional industrial/commercial uses, including self storage uses. Any development applications on the lands will not be approved until the applicant confirms that municipal water and wastewater system servicing of the lands as required will be accommodated through a cross-border servicing agreement, entered into between the City of Waterloo and the Township of Woolwich, with respect to wastewater treatment capacity, peak flows, effluent constituents, or other technical matters."

CONCLUSION

The Region of Waterloo has been receptive to recognizing the need to plan for the future by deleting policies that restricted opportunities for change, but what continues to be absent is general support for commercial land use changes that fall between employment and commercial uses. More specifically, in this instance, the vacant portion of the subject lands could be developed as a commercial self storage facility that would be compatible with the commercial land uses surrounding it, and employment uses to the south, and would provide a service that would be used by nearby residents. While ROPA 6 policies are written to address and advance Provincial Interests and concepts, in the case of SmartCentres, the policies fail to support the changing needs of the commercial land use sector. In order to ensure lands continue to be viable for future development, alternative, compatible land uses need to be considered on commercial lands to ensure that integration of various uses can be achieved.

We hope that the Province is able to modify the Region of Waterloo Official Plan Amendment Number 6 policies in support of this sector. As noted on the Province's web page describing PSEZs, the PSEZs, "provide opportunities to improve coordination between land use planning, economic development and infrastructure investments to support investment and job creation over the longer-term."

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

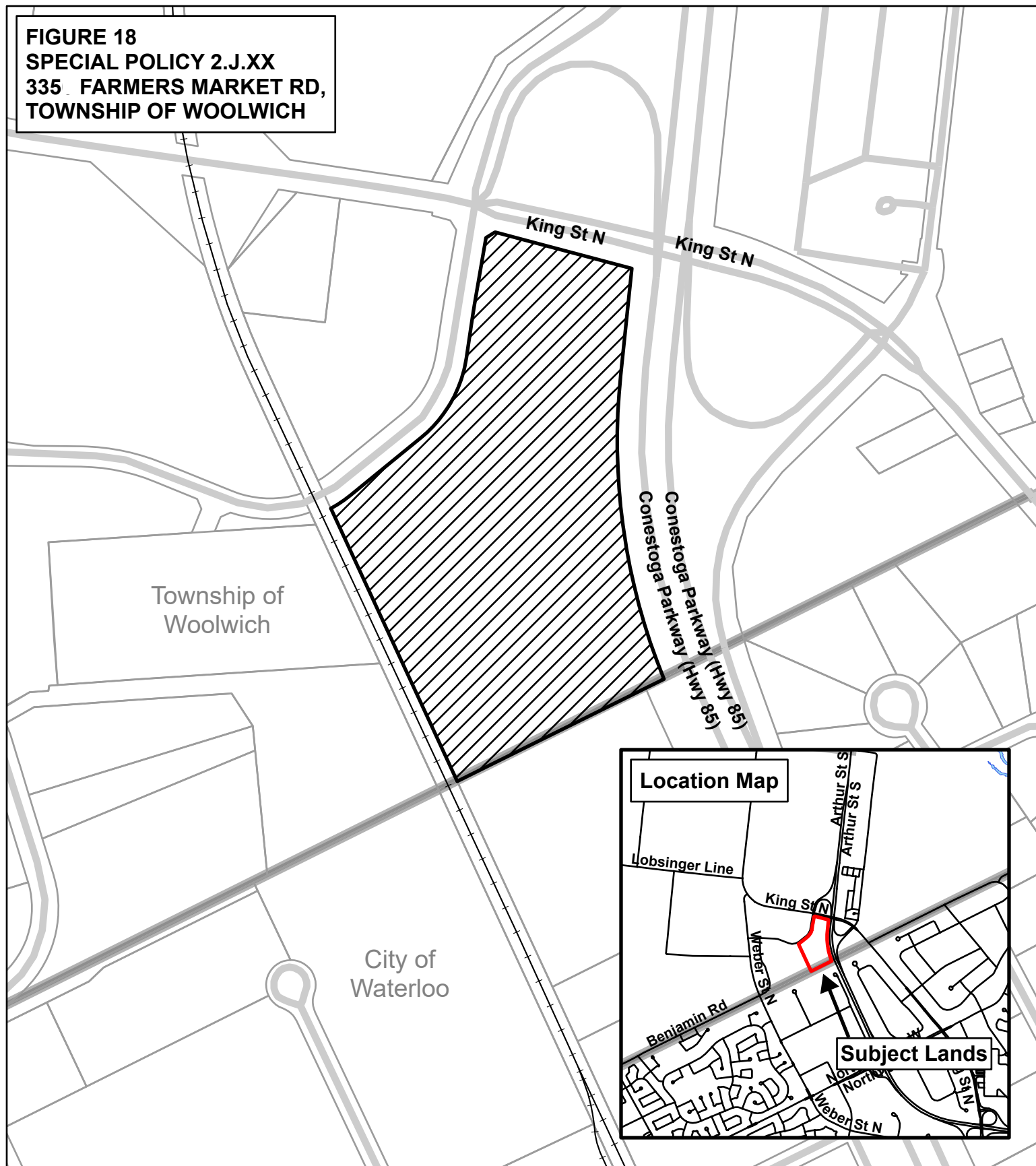
MHBC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oz Kemal', written over the printed name.

Oz Kemal, BES, MCIP, RPP
Partner

cc. *J. Cimer*

FIGURE 18
SPECIAL POLICY 2.J.XX
335 FARMERS MARKET RD,
TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH



Legend

- Lands Subject to Policy 2.J.XX
- Settlement Area Boundary



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