



3190 Steeles Avenue E., Suite 300  
Markham, Ontario L3R 1G9  
Telephone: 905.477.1177  
Fax: 905.477.7733

October 13, 2015

***Via email to [MRamunno@aurora.ca](mailto:MRamunno@aurora.ca)***

Mr. Marco Ramunno, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development Services  
Town of Aurora  
100 John West Way  
Aurora, Ontario  
L4G 6J1

Dear Sir:

Re: Response to Resident Questions and Comments  
Public Planning Meeting, September 30, 2015  
Town File Numbers: SUB-2015-01; OPA-2015-01; ZBA-2015-02

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I am writing on behalf of Highland Gate Developments Inc. ("HGDI") and pleased to enclose our responses to questions and comments made by residents at the Public Planning Meeting on September 30, 2015 in connection with the above-referenced applications by HGDI. These responses have been prepared with input b from the consulting team for HGDI.

We ask that this material be shared with the Mayor and Members of Council.

A copy of these responses will be provided under separate cover to the Highland Gate Rate Payers Association and to the Highland Green Condominium Corporation (YRCC #692), for the information of its respective members.

A copy of this material will also be posted on our website:  
[www.highlandgateaurora.com](http://www.highlandgateaurora.com), for broad community access.

We trust you will find the enclosed to be in good order. Please contact us if you have questions or require further information.

Yours very truly,

GERANIUM CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl Shindruk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheryl Shindruk, MCP, MCIP, RPP  
Executive Vice President, Land Development

Encl.

Copy: Mr. Patrick Moyle, Chief Administrative Officer

**Responses to Residents' Questions  
Town of Aurora Public Planning Meeting  
September 30, 2015  
Prepared by Highland Gate Developments Inc.**

Questions and/or comments raised by residents at the Town of Aurora Public Planning Meeting on September 30, 2015 are identified in ***bold italicized*** text. The response by Highland Gate Developments Inc. (HDGI) follows below.

***1. “Concerns were expressed regarding the tennis courts proposed in Block 191 (at the east end of the plan).”***

The tennis courts have been removed from the parks plan at the request of Town of Aurora staff, and in response to concerns expressed by the residents.

***2. “Request to replace “online” “duck ponds” on Tannery Creek (downstream i.e., north of Golf Links Drive) as well as restoring other ponds on the site.”***

It should be noted that the majority of Tannery Creek, north of Golf Links Drive and south of Ransom Court, is within lands owned by Highland Green Condominium Corporation.

The duck pond on Tannery Creek was removed to satisfy section 9.2.2 of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) Guidelines for the Implementation of Ontario Regulation 179/06, which encourages the removal of online ponds and restoration of the area.

As outlined in our to the LSRCA’s comments, the ponds within the large park block are proposed to be taken offline as part of the overall restoration plan. A pond and wetland feature are proposed to remain within the park block but will not be connected to the watercourse. Additionally, HGDI is proposing to retain the pond in Block 188 in the southwest corner of the plan. The rest of the man-made ponds will be removed.

***3. “Can the homeowners plant trees behind their homes (on HGDI lands) to buffer noise from the new streets?”***

Homeowners can consult with HGDI to determine the feasibility of adding additional plantings on HGDI lands behind their property, subject to approval by the Town. This request will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. HGDI has already met with a number of homeowners to discuss screening options and is willing to meet with any other resident to discuss this matter.

***4. “What is the width of the buffers?”***

The buffer areas are adjacent to the 17.5 metre street right-of-way. The right-of-ways proposed for this development contain the following components: a boulevard

containing street trees, street lights, fire hydrants and sidewalks; paved travel surface; and bioswales for stormwater management.

The width of the buffer areas vary throughout the plan. In some locations the buffer is as much as seven metres wide. Generally the buffer is wider where existing trees are proposed to be retained; however, the configuration of the buffer is determined by a number of factors including the alignment of the proposed streets and grading requirements.

**5. “Can a different height of streetlight pole be used?”**

The street light design and pole heights will be subject to municipal review and approval. Municipal standards will be adhered to, to achieve a safe lighting level on the public streets.

**6. “Where will the streetlight poles be located?”**

They are proposed to be located on the side of the street where the new homes are proposed to maximize the separation distance between the streetlights and the existing houses.

**7. “Will there be sidewalks on the new streets and, if so, on which side?”**

The sidewalks for the development are proposed on one side of the boulevard in front of the proposed new homes.

**8. “Will all new streets have curbs and storm sewers or only rely on LID strategies like ditches and filtration ponds? How will they drain to the creek?”**

Low Impact Development strategies for stormwater management are proposed. All new streets will have an urban cross-section, which includes curbs on both sides of the pavement area.

Storm sewers and catch basins will be constructed within the pavement area in accordance with municipal standards for the purpose of capturing storm water run-off from the proposed development.

The stormwater run-off will be controlled for quality and quantity purposes in accordance with Town, LSRCA and provincial guidelines.

Stormwater will be filtered through the bioswales before entering the storm sewers.

**9. “Who will maintain the new streets?”**

All new streets will be maintained by HGDI during the Town-specified maintenance period. The Town will assume maintenance of the streets after a Certificate of Acceptance is issued in accordance with the terms and conditions of a subdivision agreement between HGDI and the Town.

The proposed homes are expected to be priced at between \$1 million and \$2 million. Property taxes generated by the homes will pay for services provided by the Town to the homes, including maintenance of the streets.

Altus Group has provided a breakdown of the property taxes that would be paid annually to the Town of Aurora and the Region of York, as summarized in the table below:

	Rate Percent	Assessed Value		
		\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 2,000,000
Town of Aurora	0.344677	3,446.77	4,136.12	6,893.54
York Region	0.406421	4,064.21	4,877.05	8,128.42
Education	0.195000	1,950.00	2,340.00	3,900.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.946098</b>	<b>9,460.98</b>	<b>11,353.18</b>	<b>18,921.96</b>

Source: Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Town of Aurora 2015 Final Residential Tax Brochure

Based on the above, the proposed 184 homes will generate between \$634, 205 and \$1,268,411 in property taxes annually for the Town of Aurora.

**10. “Why is HGDI using open space for stormwater detention purposes?”**

HGDI is not doing so. Stormwater detention from the proposed development will be contained within the municipal right-of-way before being released at the prescribed pre-development flow rates.

**11. “How will snow storage be managed?”**

Municipal boulevards are typically used for snow storage in a municipal right-of-way. Boulevards that do not front on homes will provide additional snow storage, as there are no driveways or sidewalks to impede storage.

**12. “Why is HGDI proposing undersized streets?”**

The proposed streets are not ‘undersized’. Streets and rights-of-way throughout any municipality vary in width.

Based on recent discussions with Town of Aurora staff, the pavement width of the proposed streets on the HGDI lands will be 8 metres where on-street parking is to be accommodated and 6 metres where on-street parking is not permitted. The 6-metre pavement width will serve to minimize the amount of paved surface area and thus reduce the amount of water runoff from the development, while providing for safe two-way travel. A 6-metre pavement width is an accepted pavement width in the Ontario Building Code for a street with two-way traffic.

A target supply of on-street parking, ranging from 0.25 to 0.35 spaces per household has been recommended by the Town’s peer review consultant, Poulos & Chung. This recommendation will be addressed in the final detailed design of the proposed streets.

**13. “Who sets a safe speed limit?”**

The Town of Aurora is responsible for determining the appropriate speed limit on all local public streets.

**14. “Will parking by-laws provide for extra width?”**

Based on recent discussions with Town staff, the proposed width of the public streets in this development where on-street parking is to be provided exceeds the pavement widths being applied in new development elsewhere in the Town (for example, in the new neighbourhoods in the northeast part of the Town).

The Town’s parking by-law will specify the hours and conditions under which on-street parking will be permitted in these areas.

**15. “The proposed condo represents an overdevelopment of the area. It’s pushing the boundaries and will affect the quality of life for residents. The height and massing of the proposed condominium building should be reduced.”**

We believe that a 10-storey condominium is an appropriate use of the clubhouse site because it would be in keeping with the higher density character of abutting lands and balances the lower density of the rest of the proposed development while providing population density to support a future regional rapid transit stop at Golf Links Drive and Yonge Street.

The building site is separated from the nearby existing single family homes by an existing Regional Storm floodplain, watercourse and associated green space.

The proposed height of the building meets the “angular plane” principle outlined in the Town’s Urban Design Guidelines for locating a high density building next to lower density existing neighbourhoods. This is a recognized urban design principle that helps determine the acceptable height of a high rise building in proximity to low rise buildings, and it serves to control the visual impact of the building on nearby streets and ensures adequate separation to reduce the shadow effect.

Considering the low density character of the majority of the plan, the proposed condominium building with modest local commercial uses at grade, delivers an appropriate level of density close to transit and the nearby commercial corridor, while respecting the angular plane principles of the Official Plan.

**16. “No commercial uses should be allowed within the proposed condominium building.”**

Only a modest amount of commercial space is proposed on the first floor of the building, envisioned as local-serving professional service and commercial uses. Its location within the condominium building would be convenient for the residents of the

proposed building as well as existing residents in the immediate area, especially those within walking distance.

The proposed commercial use is supported by its close proximity to the commercial uses in the Yonge Street corridor, which is situated within 200 metres, roughly a two-minute walk.

**17. “The traffic consultant for HGDI demonstrated a failure to understand the existing condition on Golf Links Drive.”**

The Town’s peer review consultant, Poulos & Chung, found no such shortfall in BA Group’s transportation analysis. BA Group has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the operation on Golf Links Drive in the vicinity of the proposed site and the Highland Green driveways. They made numerous site visits during peak times to observe traffic activity and get a broader understanding of the existing conditions.

In response to resident concerns over traffic operations on Golf Links Drive, BA Group spent several days observing traffic and doing traffic counts, including on Golf Links Drive in the vicinity of the Tim Hortons driveway. In addition to the original traffic counts undertaken in December 2014, traffic counts were also undertaken on May 20th, May 21st, August 10th, August 11th, and most recently September 17th 2015. These counts have resulted in BA Group obtaining over 50 hours of video observations to inform their analysis.

**18. “The forecasted traffic increases for Golf Links Drive in the BA Group Report of 625 vehicles are not insignificant.”**

The forecast increase of 625 vehicles on Golf Links Drive is the estimated traffic increase that would occur over a 24 hour period after build out of the development. The existing daily (24 hour) traffic volumes on Golf Links Drive are approximately 3700 vehicles a day in the vicinity of Yonge Street.

This estimated 17 per cent increase in traffic has been reviewed through a capacity analysis, which determined that the intersection of Yonge Street and Golf Links Drive will continue to operate at an acceptable level of service. This finding was confirmed by the independent peer review undertaken by Poulos & Chung on behalf of the Town of Aurora.

**19. “The most direct path between the off-site [parking] lot and condo site is to walk along the driveway for Highland Green. This will result in lots of pedestrians crossing Golf Links in front of the proposed condominium site as they walk between the surface parking lot on the north side of Golf Links Drive located adjacent to Highland Green and the condominium site. This will cause significant traffic hazards on Golf Links Drive.”**

We know that many golfers crossed Golf Links Drive and walked down the rear driveway instead of using the pedestrian underpass. With the golf course no longer operational, the proposed condominium site is proposed to be redeveloped in such a

way that will encourage pedestrians to use the underpass as the primary way of walking between the off-site parking lot and the proposed condominium.

Options for improving the use of the underpass include designing the building to provide a more convenient entrance from the underpass, improving the lighting and design of the underpass, and improving the signage on either end of the walk way to notify users of the alternate route.

Moreover, given that the off-site parking lot is proposed to be used for surplus parking only, with the majority of the parking being accommodated on the new condominium site, the volume of vehicles and pedestrians using the off-site lot is expected to be lower than what occurred when the golf course was operational.

- 20. *“Tim Hortons causes a very significant issue on Golf Links Drive. In addition, there are seven driveways within the first 200 metres of Yonge Street and the extra traffic from the condominium will add additional traffic hazards.”***

Based on BA Group’s observations of the traffic activity on Golf Links Drive, the Tim Hortons drive-thru operation results in an occasional queue of two to three vehicles on westbound Golf Links Drive in the right turn lane during the morning peak period. Both on-site and video observations confirmed that the queues on Golf Links Drive are typically one minute or less in duration. The traffic analysis undertaken by BA Group concluded that the additional traffic generated by the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the existing operation of the Tim Hortons driveway. This conclusion was confirmed by the Town’s peer review undertaken by Poulos & Chung.

- 21. *“Will sun reflection from the proposed condominium be a problem?”***

The façade of the condominium building will be determined through the more detailed site plan process. Minimizing reflection from the building will be a consideration in its design. For that reason, mirrored glass will not be used for the proposed condominium building.

- 22. *“Will all of the streets, sidewalks, lights, etc. be provided by the developer?”***

All of the required municipal infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, lights etc.) will be designed and constructed in accordance with municipal standards and paid for by the developer. After construction is completed, the infrastructure will be maintained by the developer for a minimum of two years prior to being assumed by the Town.

- 23. *“Will the sanitary sewer north of Fairway Drive need to be relocated to facilitate development?”***

Yes. The existing sanitary sewer located within the former 18th hole, north of 46 to 58 Fairway Drive, is proposed to be re-aligned to be within the proposed servicing block (Block 219) and Street ‘J’. The re-alignment of the sanitary sewer will be staged in a



manner that will not cause service disruption to the existing residents on Fairway Drive.

- 24. “How will the Town manage construction traffic (i.e. mud tracking) on existing streets? How will construction be policed to ensure code and bylaws are respected and work hazards minimized.”**

A detailed Construction Management Plan will be prepared to the satisfaction of the Town, prior to construction proceeding. Among other things, the plan will detail mitigation measures related to mud-tracking and erosion control during construction. The plan will be subject to Town approval as part of the detailed design process and will be enforced by the Town. The contractor will be required to abide by the plan at all times.

- 25. “Will there be underground parking at the condominium building?”**

Yes. Two levels of underground parking are proposed for the condominium building.

- 26. “How will such major excavation work be performed without damaging nearby buildings from vibration, construction noises, change of level contours and local access during construction?”**

A detailed Construction Management Plan (“CMP”) will be prepared prior to construction proceeding and will be subject to approval by the Town. The CMP will address such matters as construction vehicle access, street cleaning, vibration monitoring, construction fencing, and communication protocols.

- 27. “The trails plan does not conform to the Aurora Trails Master Plan because it does not provide a continuous off-street trail from Yonge Street to Bathurst Street.”**

The Town’s Trails Master Plan does not require a continuous off-street trail from Yonge Street to Bathurst Street. Section 5.7.3 of the Plan states:

*“One of the objectives of the Aurora Trails Master Plan is to develop a trail network that is off-road where ever possible, recognizing that in some cases an off-road alignment is not possible, even in the long term.”*

The HGDI trails plan proposes a 7.3-kilometre pedestrian network, of which 4.4 kilometres (60 percent) are off-street recreational trails to be constructed throughout the open space system. The northern segment of the trails network, known as the main “Town-wide Spine Trail”, consists of 2.5 kilometres including a potential linkage through the Tannery Creek area, more than 85 percent of which would be off-street.

- 28. “The proposed development does not align with the vision statement of the Official Plan.”**

This matter is addressed comprehensively in the Planning Opinion Report by Malone Given Parsons, dated February 2015. A copy of this report is posted on-line at [www.highlandgateaurora.com](http://www.highlandgateaurora.com).

Briefly, the proposal conforms to the vision statement of the Official Plan in the following ways:

- Of the 101 acre site, over 48% is proposed to be preserved as open space – either as parks, trails or natural heritage areas – and is proposed to be transferred into public ownership by the Town for the use and enjoyment by the community, following the approval and registration of the plan. This is a very substantial conveyance and represents a significant public interest.
- The planned use of the property for housing and parks and trails is compatible and in keeping with the fabric of the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The lot sizes, housing types, streetscapes, architectural styles and street patterns will complement the surrounding established neighbourhood and maintain its quality character.

Moreover, not only does the Planning Act contemplate and permit landowners to file applications to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, but the Town's own Official Plan contemplates redevelopment of these lands. The Private Parkland designation in the Town's Official Plan anticipates that the use of lands so designated may change over time. Section 12.4 of the Aurora Official Plan sets out the policies related to Private Parkland. Policy 12.4.3e) states as follows:

*“When private open space is proposed to be developed for another use, Council may require:*

- i) An evaluation of the environmental impact;*
- ii) Evidence that the proposed use is compatible with the surrounding uses;*
- iii) An Official Plan, Secondary Plan and/or Zoning Bylaw amendment; and*
- iv) A Plan of Subdivision and development agreement, including the approval of the applicable agencies.”*

**29. *“The golf course is designated Greenbelt and should not be considered for development.”***

The former golf course lands are not designated Greenbelt. The western portion of the lands is part of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area and is designated *Settlement Area*, which permits development.

- 30. “In 2005 Highland Green noted that there was an issue for residents of Highland Green being able to walk to Yonge Street without having to cross Golf Links Drive. In 2015, the City installed a sidewalk on the north side of Golf Links Drive that provides a connection to the sidewalk within the Highland Green site. How will the Town resolve issues more quickly for the proposed development?”**

As noted above, development will proceed in accordance with an approved Construction Management Plan, which will set out protocols for dealing with such matters should they arise.

In addition, the developer will post financial securities with the Town which can be used by the Town to address issues, should they arise, and not be addressed by the developer in a timely manner.

- 31. “The Highland Green driveway was blocked recently by construction and no notice had been given to residents of Highland Green. This caused significant stress for the residents. How will construction be managed in the future in order to prevent events like this?”**

Construction activity associated with the proposed development site will be guided by a Construction Management Plan which will be prepared to the satisfaction of the Town of Aurora. The Construction Management Plan will include protocols for providing advance notice and contractor contact information.

- 32. “The scope of the proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaw does not fit within the existing community.”**

The request is to amend the bylaw to zone the majority of the lands R2, similar to the surrounding lands. The proposed exceptions to the R2 zone reflect contemporary building practices, are minor in nature and will result in homes and streetscapes that will complement the existing homes in the neighbourhood. The proposed new homes will “fit with” the existing homes in the area.

The minimum proposed lot width is 50 feet, with several lots having a frontage of 60 feet – the same as what is found in the neighbourhood today. Additionally, there are a number of custom lots that have much wider frontages.

The proposed mix of lots ensures that the new homes will be compatible in type and scale with the existing homes. Approximately, 70% of proposed the lots have frontages that are 50 to 59 feet wide. Approximately, 30% of the proposed lots have frontages that are 60-feet wide and wider.

As for the proposed condominium building, the proposed RA3 Third Density Apartment Residential Exception Zone is appropriate given the context of higher density buildings surrounding it, its proximity to the Yonge Street transit and commercial corridor, and its separation from the nearby lower density uses.

**33. “Over 800 trees and ‘woodlands’ are proposed to be removed.”**

This statement is not true. While approximately 720 trees are proposed to be removed, approximately 2,600 new trees are proposed to be planted. Opportunities to retain additional trees are being identified during one-on-one consultations with neighbouring residents. We will continue to work with our neighbours to retain trees where possible.

No ‘woodlands’ are proposed to be removed. All ‘woodlands’ all proposed to be protected within environmental protection and public open space blocks.

**34. “The trail plan will result in the elimination of 4km of existing trails within the golf course. There is an existing 5 kilometre looped trail within the golf course.”**

This statement is not true. There are no public trails within the former golf course lands, which is private property. Likewise, the existing ‘looped trail’ is in fact the cart path system which is on the same private property. The proposed trail plan will create over 4.7 km of new publicly owned and accessible off-street trails.

Furthermore, by way of this development, there is an opportunity to incorporate the new publicly owned and accessible off-street trails into the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail network, which in the Highland Gate area of Town is fully on-street along Seaton Drive, Murray Drive, and Kennedy Road.

**35. “The grading adjacent to Street ‘C’ is an issue as it includes 2 to 3-metre high retaining walls.”**

The proposed grading in the vicinity of Street ‘C’ is governed by the existing elevation change between Cranberry Lane and Marsh Harbour. This grade change can be adequately addressed by specifying consistent elevation drops across the proposed lots that will result in walk-out and front-split lot types, similar to the existing homes on Marsh Harbour. A 2.0-metre maximum height retaining wall is proposed between Lots 13-16 and Lots 22-25. This wall is not expected to be visible to the existing residents on Marsh Harbour. An additional retaining wall with a maximum height of 3.4 metres is proposed in the rear of Lots 17-20, adjacent to the Open Space Block 188 to accommodate the elevation change to the valley.

**36. “If HGDI wants to retain the integrity of the community, it should abide by the zoning bylaw that was in place in the 1980s.”**

Exceptions to zoning bylaws, particularly zoning bylaws that are over ten years old, are common and are frequently required to account for changes in market preferences for housing, changes in building practices (for example, 9- or 10-foot ceiling heights versus 8-foot that used to be the standard) and in response to site-specific conditions.

The exceptions that are proposed to the R2 zone are minor and will result in new homes that maintain the character of the existing neighbourhoods.

**37. “The proposed development is not needed to meet provincial growth targets and therefore does not need to be as dense as currently proposed.”**

There is no requirement to demonstrate “need” when considering a residential redevelopment of vacant lands within the existing built-up area of an urban area. Further, the intensification targets in the Growth Plan and the York Region Official Plan require a minimum of 40% of all residential development occurring annually for each year from 2015 through to 2031, to be within the built-up area.

The Growth Plan clearly does not place a **maximum** target on intensification, but rather establishes a **minimum** requirement to ensure municipalities achieve a significant amount of intensification each year. Providing additional appropriate growth within the built boundary is encouraged in policy and is good planning, while also ensuring that land is used efficiently. By contrast, an arbitrary reduction in density would not meet the objective of carefully optimizing the use of land and existing infrastructure.

**38. “The Beacon Environmental Natural Heritage Evaluation does not address the loss of infiltration and the impact of loss of groundwater contribution to watercourses.”**

The Beacon Natural Heritage Evaluation makes reference to the water budget, as prepared and provided by the consulting hydrogeologists, Golder Associates and the surface water engineers, SCS Consulting Group on the HGDI consulting team. A considerable amount of work has been completed by Golder Associates and SCS Consulting Group to demonstrate to the Town and the LSRCA that post-development infiltration and run off rates will equal pre-development rates.

This water balance analysis has been reviewed and accepted by the LSRCA, as acknowledged in its September 28th correspondence to the Town. It demonstrates that the development will not result in negative impacts to the natural heritage features on and adjacent to the property, or their ecological function.

**39. “Provide additional clarification of the on-site versus off-site parking supply”.**

The total amount of parking required for the proposed condominium building will be based on the Town of Aurora’s Zoning by-law requirements. Based on the 144 units proposed, this results in a requirement of 216 parking spaces for residents and visitors.

The proposed commercial uses on the proposed ground floor of the condominium building will generate a requirement of approximately 20 parking spaces, based on a working assumption of approximately 5,000 square feet of service commercial. The overall parking requirement will be refined through the site plan application process as the number of units and amount of commercial floor area are refined.

Similarly, the amount of parking located on-site versus off-site is a detail that will also be confirmed through the site plan application process as the building design evolves. It is proposed however that the majority of parking for the condominium site will be located on the site of the condominium building either underground or in a surface

parking area adjacent to the building. This includes parking for residents, visitors, and commercial uses. For example, every residential unit will have at least one parking space located in the underground parking garage (i.e. a minimum of 144 spaces will be provided underground).

An allowance for visitor parking and commercial parking will also be provided on-site. The off-site parking lot on the north side of Golf Links Drive is therefore intended to be utilized as non-essential surplus parking. Surplus parking may include those who require a second parking space, or overflow visitor parking required to accommodate times of peak visitor activity (e.g. Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons).

Use of the surplus parking spaces in the off-site lot is expected to be low and as a result the traffic and pedestrian activity caused by the off-site parking is anticipated to be lower than the use of the off-site parking lot when the golf course was open.