

INFORMATION SHEET

“STANDING UP FOR UNIONVILLE”

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TOPIC: DEVELOPMENTS ON NORTH SIDE HWY 7 NEAR VILLAGE PKWY
(New Topic Title – Previously known as Times Group Development - Corner Village Pkwy/Highway 7)

LAST UPDATE: September 16, 2012

URA CONTACTS:

Jeff Morris (jfymorris@aol.com) Committee Chair
Dave Gibbons, Peter Miasek, Roy O'Neil, Alick Siu -committee members

BACKGROUND:

Three new developments are planned for the lands north of Highway 7 near Village Parkway. At the NE corner, 1820266 Ontario (Times Group) is the developer. At the NW corner, Unionville Development Corp (Lee Developments) is the developer. Just west of Lee, 2124123 Ontario is the developer. The size of the Times and Lee properties are 4.44 hectares each, while the size of the western property is 2 hectares.

The Times and Lee properties were both subject to an OMB decision in 1994, which stipulated identical land use and density on both properties. The development on these properties did not proceed in 1994 as the required sewer and water infrastructure was not available and could not economically be extended. In 2008, with construction of services finally imminent, definitive development plans began to emerge.

Times

In October, 2011 Times submitted a complete Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment as summarized below:

	OMB Ruling 2004 (Times and Lee Properties)	Current Markham Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw (OPA-15)	Times Proposal
North Portion	21 single family residential homes	residential detached homes	parkland conveyed to Town
Central Portion	28 townhouses plus 4 Semidetached	Up to 50 townhouses (3 story)	96 townhouses
South Portion	181 apartment units (condos)	Up to 181 apartment units in building(s) with max height 6 stories	444 apartment units in two 8-story buildings and 3680 sq ft of commercial space
Total Units	234	Approx 250	540 + commercial
Parking (est)	1.5/apt+2/TH+2/Res+0.25 visitors = 471	-	1.1/apt+2/TH+0.15visitors = 783
E-W Streets	-Buchanan extended eastward to connect with Fitzgerald -one new street between Buchanan and Hwy 7	-	As per OMB
N-S Streets	-one new street at eastern edge of property	-	As per OMB

Lee

In mid 2011, Lee submitted a request to Markham’s Committee of Adjustment for an increase of 2 metres in height for their approved condo unit and an increase in the number of condo units from 181 to 230. Local residents (not URA) spoke strongly against this request and the C of A ultimately rejected the application. Lee have now indicated they will be filing an application with identical unit counts and densities as Times (see above table).

2124123 Ontario

This property is about half the size of the others. In 2008, the developer applied for OP and Zoning Bylaw amendments and approval of a draft plan of subdivision. The development plans are scaled down but identical in density to Times, namely North portion – set aside for acquisition by public school board, Central portion – 36 townhouses, South portion – 249 condo units in an 8 story building.

CURRENT ISSUES:

In 2009, the City developed a draft Precinct Plan for the north side of Highway 7. This was never finalized, largely because Lee Developments decided to stick with their original OMB approved street layout and land use/density, rather than apply for changes. Nevertheless, it is informative to note that the precinct plan had envisioned the following number of units for the Times property: about 13 single family residences, about 70 townhouse units and 4 apartment (condo) units of 4 to 6 stories. (unknown number of units).

City Staff issued a preliminary report on the Times application on Dec 6, 2011. The report indicated “the proposed built form and density are generally consistent with the Town’s emerging policy directions for the subject lands”.

Concerns/comments made were

- Want an updated traffic study that explicitly addresses all of the approved proposed and potential developments in the vicinity. To be reviewed by City and Region
- East-west roads need to align with Lee’s plan
- Times needs to acquire strip of land just east of the proposed park, to avoid isolating it
- Insufficient servicing allocation for the extra 306 units
- Built form (height, massing, detailed design, relationship to Hwy 7) needs review

A public meeting on the Times proposal was held in conjunction with a URA meeting on February 6, 2012. Most residents spoke against the proposal, due to its higher number of units.

Staff issued a report on the 2124123 Ontariodevelopment on March 18, 2008. Concerns raised included coordination with other developments and the discrepancy between the 8 storey condo and the secondary plan limit of 5.

Both Times and 2124123 Ontario have appealed to the OMB (cases PL 120371 and PL 120483). Lee has indicated they will file an appeal as soon as legally able (Nov 22, 2012). The OMB has indicated it will hear all three appeals as one hearing. URA requested and was granted party status for the Times matter. In July, 2012, URA submitted the following preliminary list of issues to the other parties:

1. Is the number of residential units appropriate, recognizing this will put pressure on all community infrastructure?
2. Is the application compliant with the draft 2009 Precinct Plan issued by the City?
3. Will this application become a precedent for all other developments on the north side of Hwy 7?
4. Will there be serious traffic impacts (cumulative) from this and other potential developments on the north side of Hwy 7?
5. Is there sufficient protection of existing neighbourhood character and property values?
6. Will the new road network lead to serious traffic infiltration into the established neighbourhood to the north?

The City will be conducting a public meeting on these developments in September, before developing their own position on these appeals in mid October.

HOW TO LEARN MORE:

Contact committee members.

URA OFFICIAL POSITION:

URA opposes these applications and recommends that the City also oppose them until the above issues are addressed.

NEXT STEPS:

Participate in public meeting and encourage the City to oppose these applications. Once the City has determined its position, determine URA strategy for the OMB appeal.