

INFORMATION SHEET

"STANDING UP FOR UNIONVILLE"

www.unionvilleratepayers.com

TOPIC: **TIMES GROUP application**

LAST UPDATE: January 19, 2011

URA Advisory: (original 3 plus all who attended February 10, 2010 review)

Harry Eaglesham (Chair), Peter Miasek (Vice Chair), Mike Gannon, Monica Gaudet, Gord Mah, Reid McAlpine, Jeff Morris, Ian Munro, Alick Siu, Harald Stillich, Mary Stillich, Richard Talbot, Peter Walther

BACKGROUND:

The property consists of most of the land bounded by Highway 7 on the north, Warden on the west, Sheridan Nurseries on the east and the Rouge River valley on the south. The land area is 88.31 acres. The original Times application consisted of a broad range of higher density uses including a series of residential buildings ranging from 6 to 20 storeys representing 4,777 residential units; a 14-storey office building (250,000 sq ft); 120,000 sq ft of retail and other commercial uses; a 2.1 acre elementary school site and a 1.48 acre place of worship.

TIMELINE

2007 - application submitted by landowner Lonsmount Developments (Murphy Hull)

2008 – land purchased by the Times Group

2009 - revised submission by Times, two public meetings, Times appeals to the OMB, 12 parties to the appeal including URA, preliminary issues list submitted, meetings with Town and Times to clarify issues and provide guidance on resolution.

2010 - ongoing meetings with URA, Town and Times; Times presents revised application to URA Advisory (see above list of attendees); OMB oversees negotiations between Town and Times; final settlement.

What were URA's issues?

The overall issues were lack of conformity with the original Markham Centre Plan and Vision and consistency with the six plans and studies which are underway to modify the original plan.

Specific issues were: Building heights, Density, Retail impact, Employment targets, Traffic impact and infiltration, Access to rapid transit, Project phasing, Built form including architectural standards, Public amenities, Schools and places of worship, and the Warden Avenue/ Highway #7 Intersection plan.

URA wished to see issues with the application "**resolved within Markham**" as opposed to "**resolved by the OMB**". Times revised their application to try and resolve issues of all parties to the OMB appeal. This was presented to URA's Advisory on February 10, 2010.

The Outcome:

1. *Building Heights, Density, Built Form/Architecture:* The final plan reduces density (modestly), the number of high rise towers, spaces the towers according to the Town's guidelines, and moves them off of Highway 7 to preserve the original vision of Highway 7. Architecture was not part of the OMB process and this is a matter between the Town Council and the Times Group.

2. *Retail:* Times wishes to develop an interim retail plaza next to Sheridan Nurseries. The Town originally opposed this, but subsequently approved it in principle. They are still negotiating the detailed design of this plaza.

3. *Traffic Impact, Infiltration, Phasing and Access to Rapid Transit:* The plan will be phased over time and criteria will be developed that tie the phasing to transportation projects (e.g. opening of Birchmount/Village Parkway). The entire project is expected to be built over a 15 year period.

4. *Public Amenities:* Times has offered a \$6.0 M contribution for "community benefits" such as the early creation of parks and valleylands which would be beneficial to the existing community.

5. *Employment:* The approved plan doubled the level of employment from the original submission.

6. *Compliance with original plan & the ongoing six studies:* The original plan for Markham Centre (OPA-21 approved in 1997) needs updating. The community has lost confidence in the vision and there is fear that Markham Centre will not be a positive complement to our existing neighbourhood. The character of the new neighbourhood is more important than the detailed specifications. Town staff (at the urging of URA) has recommended that the studies be completed and a new plan developed in 2011.

How to learn more:

- Refer to URA Markham Centre Information Sheet
- Contact members of the URA Times Group Advisory (see above)
- See Town website:

http://www.markham.ca/markham/aspc/markhamcentre/AboutMarkham_Site/home.asp