

Aurora has 360 acres for business park

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interaction," Mr. Cohen said.

Which is why the town wants to ensure another section of land near Hwy. 404, south of Major MacKenzie Drive, maintains its industrial zoning and why Mr. Cohen suggests other municipalities do likewise.

While development in commercial business parks along Hwy. 404 in Markham and Richmond Hill has been thriving for years, Newmarket and Aurora are carefully working to strike a balance between commercially zoned lands and space needed to handle rampant residential growth in both towns.

VARIED BUSINESSES

A trip from the tip of the highway at the newly expanded Green Lane exit in Newmarket reveals a handful of varied businesses fronting Hwy. 404.

In a section near Davis Drive, there's everything from an RCMP detachment to a composting facility, school board offices to an electronics manufacturing plant.

One of the newest additions to the area is uniform specialists Cintas.

Cintas manager Todd Willford said locating near the highway has been ideal.

"Obviously, we see the growth potential in Newmarket," Mr. Willford said.

"The presence off the 404 is huge. A lot of people use Hwy. 404. It gives us a presence and recognition."

Proximity to the highway also provides easy access for Cintas drivers and employees, Mr. Willford added.

While success stories such as Cintas

are a welcome addition to the town's commercial tax base, Newmarket's assistant planner, Jason Unger, said there has been a lull of late.

With worldwide electronics manufacturer Solectron opening a plant recently, it marked the last development by Hwy. 404 in the past few years.

"We don't have any current site plan applications," Mr. Unger said.

That's not to say Newmarket wouldn't welcome more newcomers, such as Cintas and Solectron, to the area.

"Council has designated lands out there (Hwy. 404). Anything that conforms to the town's Official Plan can be considered desirable," Mr. Unger said.

It's a sentiment shared by Aurora's long-range planner, Jim Kyle.

The town plans to set its anchor in one significant project, rather than a number of smaller buildings.

QUITE A BIT OF LAND

Mr. Kyle said the town has received confirmation insurance giant State Farm will build its new Canadian regional office along Hwy. 404, north of Wellington Street near Leslie Street. Construction is expected to begin next year.

Mr. Kyle said while it is the only development application for land abutting Hwy. 404 in Aurora, he insists time is on the town's side.

"There is quite a bit of land (near Hwy. 404 in Aurora) left for development," Mr. Kyle said.

Aurora has set aside 360 acres of land near Hwy. 404 for its business park, Mr. Kyle said.

"(A business park along Hwy. 404) is going to be a long-term thing. It's not going to be built out over night."

Apartments, condos planned for 'new' Thornhill Square

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this as infill development, except we hope to be able to establish a new village ambiance in old Thornhill."

He said the smaller portion of the mall under the office tower will be reconfigured, with a new retail pad built closer to John Street. Shopper's Drug Mart will occupy the majority of this space.

"We're looking for a second retail tenant there, a Second Cup or a Blockbuster Video, but no one has signed on yet."

The exterior of the existing office building will be re-clad and be "in harmony" with the mall's new design and architectural elements will link Santorini's restaurant, the residential development and the retail area.

Markham recently passed a set of design guidelines for the project, aimed in part at opening up pedestrian access to the Thornhill Community Centre and St. Luke's.

The townhouses will be built on top of the existing parking structure, in what developers call a "stacked" format, with a walk-up to the living area using a common hallway.

The townhouses will be on a new north-south roadway run-

ning from John to Green Lane and allowing townhome owners to access the mall on foot, as well.

Plans for the easterly portion of the site include two apartment buildings, one six or seven stories; the other nine, totaling more than 200 units.

Mr. Daurio hopes some of those units will be affordable for seniors and young families, he said.

'We're lovers, not fighters. We have been getting support from the ratepayers and from the town.'

But residents like Ms Chapnik worry the potential 1,000 new residents — bringing with them from 300 to 400 more cars — will be more than the area can handle.

"How can they put that many people into this area? Will there be ample parking? What about the traffic in and out?"

"We have trouble getting in and out now and what's going to happen on Green Lane and Bayview Avenue? These are very important questions

which must be answered."

Mr. Daurio and Mr. Larry agree these are valid concerns and they need to be worked out.

"The numbers may have to be reduced and there are parking concerns," said Mr. Daurio.

"But there has been reasonably good reaction and we are continuing to work with the developers."

Mr. Larry said he intends to work with the community to ensure everyone is on-side.

"We have met with four ratepayer groups and will continue to do so," he said.

"We're lovers, not fighters. We have been getting support from the ratepayers and from the town."

A mandatory public meeting is planned for late October or early November to deal with the proposed zoning change from commercial to residential, said town planner Ron Blake.

"We think this is going in the right direction but there are still a few things that need to be resolved," he said.

"After that meeting, there will likely be at least one more community consultation."

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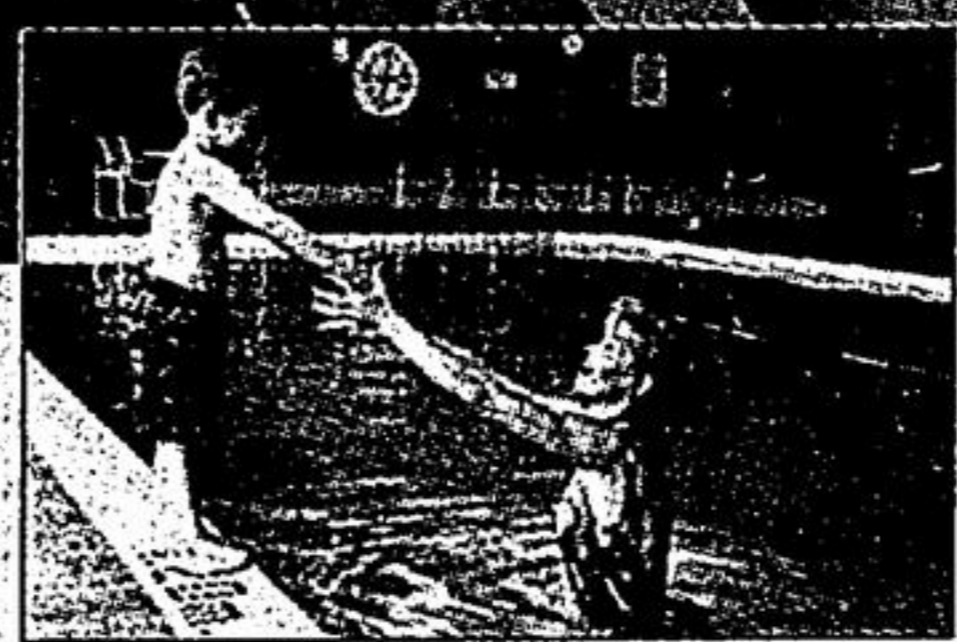
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