
Subject: Study to review Limiting Office Uses and the Introduction of New Uses on Main Street between Albert Street and Park Drive (File No. ZBA24.007)

Staff Report No. DS-045-24

Department: Development Services Commission

Date: September 25, 2024

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council refer all public and agency comments pertaining to this subject to staff for inclusion in a future report regarding the disposition of this matter.

Report Highlights

- On June 5, 2024, Council passed a motion to direct Staff to research and study options for prohibiting office use in the first storey or at grade of a commercial or mixed-use building located within 10 metres of the public right-of-way, abutting Main Street within the area between Albert Street and Park Drive and that staff report back to Council with the appropriate recommended actions to these directions.
- It is Council's strong desire to promote these areas as a pedestrian-friendly destination and vibrant commercial district that focuses on pedestrian-oriented uses at-grade.
- The objective of Council is to facilitate a vibrant and animated downtown where residents can actively explore, live, shop, work and play along downtown Main Street.
- Staff have completed an initial research and field work and recommend exploring additional zoning changes to help achieve Council's vision for a pedestrian oriented Main Street.
- Staff have launched an online survey to obtain community input for consideration.

- Staff will bring back a Recommendation Report at later date following review and consideration of all information and community feedback.

1. Purpose

A Zoning By-law Amendment has been initiated by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, arising from the Council direction on June 5, 2024. The Planning Act requires that a statutory public meeting be held to introduce Zoning By-law Amendments and solicit comments from interested members of the community and public agencies. This public meeting and information outlined in the subject report for 'Study to review Limitation of Office Uses and the Introduction of new uses on Main Street between Albert Street and Park Drive (File No. ZBA24.007)' fulfill the Planning Act requirements.

Comments from the public and other departments and agencies will be received for further review and consideration. A subsequent report assessing the merits of the planning applications will be presented to Council at a later date following receipt and evaluation of agency and public comments obtained through the public meeting process and afterwards.

This report will:

- Provide background information on the amendment.
- Provide initial analysis and Staff findings.
- Share comments internal departments, external agencies and the community.

2. Background

2.1. Council Motion June 5, 2024

On June 5, 2024 Council passed a motion that "*staff be directed to research and study options for prohibiting office use in the first storey or at grade of a commercial or mixed use building located within 10 metres of the public right-of-way, abutting Main Street within the area between Albert Street and Park Drive*"

The area on Main Street subject to this motion is shown in '**Attachment 1 – Location Map**' as attached to this report.

Council motion from June 5, 2024, is attached as '**Attachment 2 – Council Member Motion**' to this report.

The objective of this motion is to encourage desirable pedestrian-oriented uses at grade that invites residents and visitors to actively explore, live, shop, work, and play along downtown Main Street and encouraging people to experience it on foot or bicycle. It is the Council's vision is that downtown Main Street becomes a vibrant and animated commercial destination that focuses on pedestrian-oriented uses at-grade.

Pursuant to this request Development Planning Staff have completed initial research and have initiated the subject Statutory Public Meeting to share initial findings and considerations for zoning amendments, and to request feedback from the Council and community.

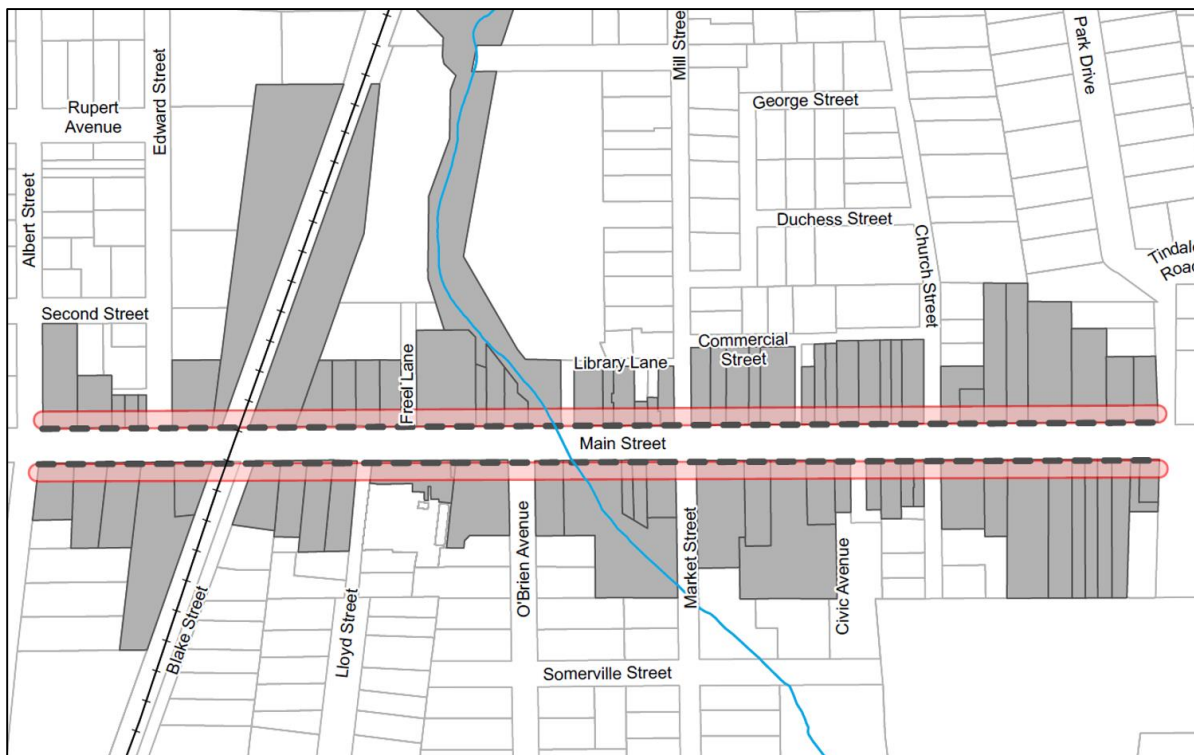
2.2. Area located between Albert Street and Park Drive along Main Street - “Subject Area”

The Subject Area captures all properties with frontage on Main Street between Albert Street and Park Drive. This cross section is comprised of 79 properties (approximately 98 at-grade units).

The proposed ‘Office Use’ prohibition and/or limitation would impact the area within the 10-metre setback from the Main Street right-of-way at grade (typically first storey).

The 10-metre setback from the Main Street (Public Right-of-Way) is identified in red on **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1 – Map of Subject area



3. Analysis

3.1. Applicable Provincial and Regional Policies

This section will establish the current and relevant policy environment that forms part of the review of the proposed zoning amendments. The overview will include Provincial

Plans and policies, York Region Official Plan, and the Town's current Official Plan and Secondary Plan.

3.2. Provincial Planning Statement 2024 and Provincial Policy Statement 2020

On August 20, 2024, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued the Provincial Planning Statement 2024, taking effect on October 20, 2024, to provide a streamlined province-wide land use planning policy framework. The PPS 2024 replaces both the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019.

Until the PPS 2024 is in effect, the current PPS 2020 and the Growth Plan 2020 remains in effect. However, an overview of applicable policies in the new PPS 2024 that are applicable to the subject amendments are being provided for consideration.

PPS 2024

Section 2.4.2 of the PPS 2024 includes policy direction on development within the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) and establishes minimum density targets for residents and jobs and encourages municipalities to promote development and intensification. The subject area is located within the Stouffville MTSA.

Section 2.8 of the PPS 2024 provides policy direction to municipalities on supporting a modern economy for municipalities. Municipalities are encouraged to promote economic development and competitiveness by providing opportunities for a diversified economic base which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses. The policies also encourage "... *intensification of employment uses and compatible, compact, mixed-use development to support the achievement of complete communities*".

Staff will continue to review the proposed zoning amendments in light of the Provincial direction in the new PPS 2024.

PPS 2020

PPS 2020 established policies that set out how municipalities should manage, and direct land uses to achieve efficient development and land use patterns.

Section 1.1.1 of the PPS includes policy direction for achieving strong and healthy communities. The policy directions include, promoting efficient development and land use patterns; accommodating a range of affordable and market-based mix of residential types and units as well as employment and commercial uses; and optimizing transit supportive development.

Section 1.3 speaks to the importance of employment and economic development. The section discusses need for a mix and range of economic activities and also encouraging employment uses that support liveable and resilient communities.

Section 1.7.1 (d) states that 'long-term economic prosperity should be supported by maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets.

A complete review of all the applicable policies in the PPS 2020 will be undertaken in the course of reviewing the proposed zoning amendments.

3.2.1. A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshow, 2020

As noted above, the new PPS 2024 replaces the "A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe ("**Growth Plan**")". Until the PPS 2024 is in effect, the current Growth Plan 2020 remains in effect

The Growth Plan was established as a long-term plan outlining the Province's vision for building complete communities, and is intended to guide decisions relating to population and employment growth in order to, amongst other objectives, optimize the use of existing and future infrastructure and protecting resources.

Section 1.2.1 of the Growth Plan (2020) directs the vast majority of growth to be directed to settlement areas and establishes policies that would support the achievement of complete communities that are designed to support healthy and active living and meet people's needs for daily living throughout their lifetime; and flexibility to capitalize on new economic and employment opportunities as they emerge.

Section 2.2.2. of the Growth Plan reinforces the need to focus on more efficient use of land and resources, with at least 50% of growth occurring through intensification of the delineated built boundary. Further 2.2.2.3(d) requires that municipalities ensure lands are zoned to support complete communities.

Section 2.2.4 of the Growth Plan speaks to Major Transit Station Areas. These are mandated to have higher minimum resident and job densities. These areas are to be supported by a diverse mix of uses.

Section 2.2.5(3) of the Growth Plan states, 'retail and office uses will be directed to locations that support active transportation and have existing or planned transit.'

A complete review of all the applicable policies of the Growth Plan will be undertaken in the course of reviewing the proposed zoning amendments.

3.2.2. York Region Official Plan (2022)

The York Region Official Plan (ROP) provides new guidance on planning and development to support complete communities within the Region that shall be dense and walkable, where most amenities are in close proximity to infrastructure and services.

Section 2.3 states that complete communities are those that are designed to be accessible, dense and walkable, where most amenities are in close proximity and meet people's needs for daily living through their lifetime. Complete communities provide for a

full range of uses including local community centres, schools, places of worship, greenspaces and other uses to increase greater human interaction and create a sense of community. Social services that provide for the needs of individuals and families should be provided to a range of ages, and basic needs for social supports should be provided in complete communities.

A complete review of all of the applicable policies of the York Region Official Plan will be undertaken in the course of reviewing the proposed zoning amendments.

3.2.3. Town Official Plan, 2024 – Adopted by Council May 2024

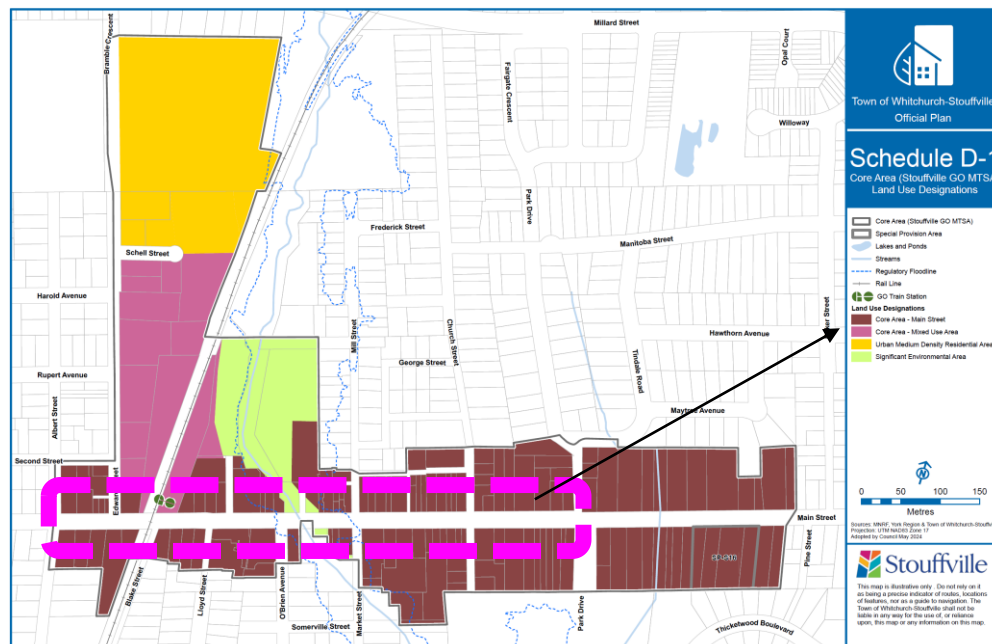
The Town’s New Official Plan 2024, adopted by Council in May 2024, is not yet in force and effect, as it is still subject to approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The subject area is located within the Stouffville GO Major Transit Station Area [MTSA] (Core Area) and designated as follows:

- Core Area – Main Street; and
- Core Area – Mixed Use

The lands fronting Main Street, located between Albert Street and Park Drive are primarily designated Core Area – Main Street as shown on Schedule D-1 (See **Figure 2** the subject area bounded by pink dashed line). The GO station and lands abutting Edward Street are designated Core Area – Mixed Use, as such, this designation is less applicable to the development of office uses that are located within 10 metres of Main Street.

Figure 2 - Schedule D-1 – Core Area (Stouffville GO MTSA Land Use Designations)



The Stouffville GO MTSA (Core Area) is intended to serve as a focal point for promoting a mix of uses, along with community services through appropriate redevelopment and expansion. This includes evolving as a notable commercial district, where there is a strong residential community, fully integrated with entertainment and cultural facilities, offices, and restaurants that compliment and support a host of smaller scale retail and personal service commercial uses.

The Core Area – Main Street designation permits a broad mix of uses, including mid-rise buildings in the form of apartments and mixed use buildings, restaurants, retail and personal service commercial uses, personal services uses, professional and medical offices, financial establishments, recreation and entertainment uses, and institutional and cultural use.

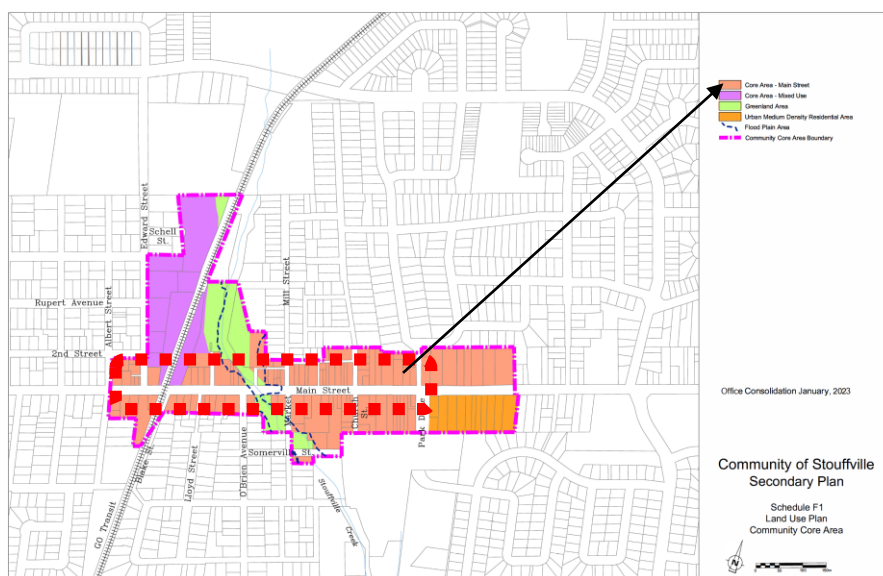
While professional and medical offices are permitted, standalone office uses are explicitly prohibited within buildings that have frontage on Main Street, in the new Official Plan. This includes buildings where the sole use is for offices. The intent of this prohibition is to require the development of mixed use buildings along Main Street, where residential and office uses may be permitted above the ground floor with high activity uses that animate the streetscape.

A complete review of all of the applicable policies of the Town Official Plan will be undertaken in the course of reviewing the proposed zoning amendments.

3.2.4. In-Effect Current Official Plan, 2004 (January 2023 Office Consolidation)

The New Adopted Official Plan policy framework is generally consistent with the current Official Plan, 2004 (2023 Office Consolidation), currently in force an effect. The lands fronting Main Street are primarily designated Core Area – Main Street as shown on Schedule F-1. The subject area is bounded by red dashed line in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 - Schedule F1 Land Use Plan Community Core Area



The Core Area - Main Street designation recognizes the existing community core as a major focal point for commercial and community uses and provides for its enhancement, including some redevelopment and expansion, and the opportunity for a range of residential uses.

Permitted uses within the designation include retail and service commercial uses, offices, mixed uses, institutional and residential uses. New development and redevelopment shall reinforce the Core Area character as a pedestrian shopping area in a traditional setting and pedestrian traffic generating activities, particularly retail and service commercial uses and institutional should generally be located at grade level. Office and/or residential uses located above the ground floor.

A complete review of all of the applicable policies of the Town Official Plan will be undertaken in the course of reviewing the proposed zoning amendments.

3.3. Background Study and Research – completed to date

Staff has completed an initial research and Study of the subject area based on in person surveys, Google search and information received from other staff, and provide the following information.

3.3.1 Breakdown of Present Office Uses in Downtown Stouffville

Presently there are 98 at-grade units fronting Main Street between Albert Street and Park Drive. Based on information available at the present time 27 units are being considered “Office Uses”.

The Zoning By-law defines both ‘Office Use’ and ‘Medical Office’ use. See section 3.3.2 below for the definitions. Staff note ‘Medical Office’ is considered a subcategory of the ‘Office Use’ definition (see underlined portion in the definition of Medical Office).

Table 1 below provides a full breakdown of the uses in the subject area.

Table 1

Present Use/Status	Breakdown of Use
27 Office Uses Total <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 16 ‘Office Uses’ ● 1 ‘Medical Office’ Uses 	Realty x 4, Insurance x 4, Wealth Management x 3, Accountant x 2, Law x 2, Travel Agency. Health and Wellness Service Clinics with Varied Practitioners x 4, Dentist x 3, Chiropractor, Epilepsy Services, Physiotherapy, Ultrasound and X-Ray

15 Services	Barber/Salon x 4, Tattoos x 2, Mail Service x 2, Spa, Daycare, Dog Daycare, Gym, Photographer, Dry Cleaner and Alterations, Cell Phone Repair.
17 Retail Store Uses	Hearing Aids x 3, Cannabis and Accessories x 2, Florist x 2, Home Goods/Décor x 2, Pharmacy, Butcher, Clothing, Fabric, Furniture, Glasses, Monument, Tiles.
17 Restaurants	Restaurants x 12, Café x 3, Bar, Bubble Tea Shop.
16 Vacant Units	Vacant Units x 16
6 Other Uses	Place of Worship, Senior Citizens Home, Single Detached Dwelling, Funeral Home, Veterinary Clinic, Financial Institution.

3.3.2 Considerations that May Influence Present and Future Main Street Use Occupancies

There are number of variables that may serve as positive and negatives factors for attracting desired pedestrian-oriented uses in the downtown.

a. Main Street Reconstruction

A renovated Main Street will be an incentive for new businesses. While running a business during reconstruction of Main Street when scaffolding may be up and portions of the sidewalk could be closed, may be challenging but in the long term will provide an environment and streetscape for businesses to be more attractive to be located on Main Street.

b. Civic Square Expansion

A larger civic square should serve as a draw to the downtown for the community. This meeting point should synergize with existing and emerging cafes, take-out establishments, and the like.

c. Economic Cycle

Ontario is presently in a challenging economic cycle:

1. Interest rates, local property prices and rental prices are comparably high to the past making start up and reinvestment costs less obtainable for new businesses.

2. As result of inflation the community has less disposable income to spend on non-essential needs (i.e., restaurants, coffee, retail, etc.).
3. Since COVID-19 restaurants have had difficulty finding, retaining and paying higher sought wages. Further as result of less disposable patron income restaurants have had challenges succeeding.

d. Change of Use – Parking Requirements

All new uses must comply with the Zoning By-law including Parking Requirements. Most properties have parking constraints and would require zoning relief from the Town or to pay Cash-in Lieu of Parking.

e. Evolving Traditional Business Practices

Work-from-home culture and online meetings have become increasingly common since COVID. As a result, many traditional business office uses (which can be accomplished easily through digital means) have seen a decline in in-person meetings. As a result, using traditional brick-and-mortar spaces for Office uses may change. Staff opine that if societal trends continue many traditional business offices may ‘naturally’ transition to the work-from-home model or virtual models and/or smaller and less expensive office space that would meet their business demands. As a result, this would be a tailwind to produce opportunities for other uses to step in that require or invite in-person attendance.

f. Review of Office Use Permissions Along Downtown Main Streets in Ontario Municipalities

Staff have evaluated the use permissions on 12-character main streets comparable to Main Street Stouffville. The review included Unionville (Markham), Main Street (Markham), Kleinburg Village (Vaughan), Downtown Aurora, Downtown Newmarket, Downtown Port Perry, Downtown Uxbridge, Downtown Oakville, Port Credit (Mississauga), Downtown Milton, Downtown Cobourg and Downtown Orangeville.

Staff did not find examples of limitation on office use except in Unionville, Markham.

3.4. Town’s Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO and proposed zoning Amendment

3.4.1 Current Zoning and permitted uses in the Subject Area

Majority of the properties located within the subject area are primarily zoned Commercial Residential Mixed - Community Core Area (CM1). The Commercial Residential Mixed - Community Core Area (CM1) zone permits a wide range of uses including the ‘Office’ use as displayed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Animal Grooming Centre	Group Home
Apartment Building	Hotel
Assembly Hall	Library
Business Services	Long Term Care Facility
Club	Office
Combined Live Work Use	Park
Connected Live Work Use	Personal Service Establishment
Commercial Recreation Use	Place of Amusement
Commercial School	Place of Worship
Convenience Store	Restaurant
Day Care Centre	Retail Store
Dry Cleaning Establishment	School
Dwelling Above a Commercial Use	Senior Citizens Home
Financial Institution	Service Establishment
Fitness and Recreation Facilities	Studio
Funeral Home	Veterinary Clinic

The Zoning By-law defines both 'Office Use' and 'Medical Office' use, see section 3.3.2 below. Staff note 'Medical Office' is considered a subcategory of the 'Office Use' definition (see underlined portion of Medical Office definition).

3.4.2 Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment

Under the present scope of this study and proposed amendments, the use limitation would apply to both new 'Office Uses' and 'Medical Office.'

Town's Zoning By-law, defines both uses as follows:

Office Use: *a building or part of a building designed, intended or used for the practice of a profession, the carrying on of a business, the conduct of public administration, or, where not conducted on the same site, the administration of an industry. Offices shall not include retail sales, industrial uses, financial institutions, places of amusement or places of assembly.*

- Examples of 'Office Uses' may include but are not limited to real estate, insurance, wealth management, accounting, law, and travel agency (when operating as the principal use on the property).

Medical Office: *a premise, office or part of an office designed, intended, or used for the practice of medicine by a medical practitioner and/or drugless practitioner, and may include medical laboratories and ancillary pharmacies and shall not include unrelated retail sales. (2020-060-ZO)*

- Examples of 'Medical Office' uses may include but are not limited to health and wellness service clinics with varied practitioners, dentistry, chiropractic,

physiotherapy, ultrasound and x-ray services (when operating as the principal use on the property).

Council motion

Staff have carefully reviewed the Council motion *to prohibit Office Use in the first storey or at grade of a commercial or mixed-use building located within 10 metres of the public right-of-way, abutting Main Street.*

The existing setbacks of buildings vary from property to property along Main Street, and the intended limitation of Office Use for up to 10 metre from Main Street, may cause challenges with the intended implementation and interpretation of the setback from Main Street. Should Council pursue the motion, staff is of the opinion that the setback to Main Street for the purpose of limitation of Office Use, should be measured on a standard basis and therefore staff propose that the 10-metre setback be established from the front wall of the building/structure abutting Main Street (public Right-of-Way).

It is the intent of Council motion to limit Office uses that do not generate foot traffic. Medical Office use falls under the jurisdiction of Office Use under the current Zoning By-law provisions. Staff consider that the Medical Office Use be exempted from the prohibition as Medical Office uses typically generate foot traffic and pedestrian activity and provides an essential service to the community which require brick and mortar locations. As part of creation of a viable and complete community, staff is of the opinion that the Medical Office Use be exempted from any limitation and be permitted under the current zoning permissions, to continue to allow for more opportunities and greater flexibility to be established as per the needs and demands of the community.

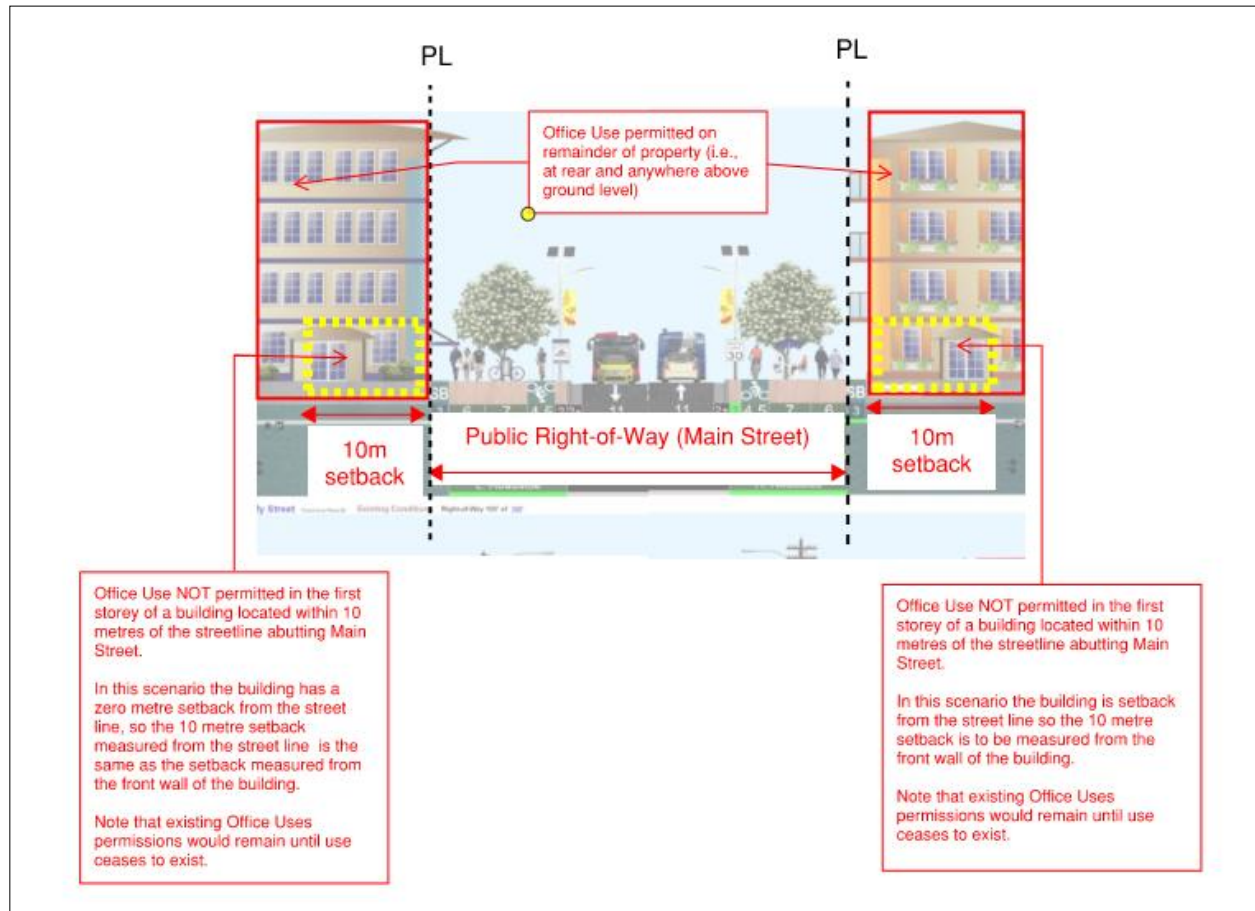
To carry out the intent of Council's motion Staff propose the following draft zoning amendments for consideration and feedback.

“New ‘Office Uses’ shall be prohibited within the ground floor of a building fronting onto Main Street, within the area located between Albert Street and Park Drive along Main Street as follows:

- i) 10 metres set back from the front wall of the main building or structure and shall have a clearly defined separation of uses.*
- ii) Medical Office use will be exempt from this prohibition.”*

See Figure 4 below to visually illustrate the proposed office prohibition and limitation.

Figure 4 - Cross section outlining proposed zoning amendment and the subject area



It is important to note that should the proposed draft zoning amendment be approved by Council, 'Office Uses' would remain permitted beyond the 10 metre setback from the front wall of the building abutting Main Street, on the ground floor only (i.e., generally the rear of the building) and anywhere on the second floor or above, as visually illustrated in Figure 4 above.

3.4.3 Prohibition of Office Use and continuation of Legally Existing Office Uses

If the proposed zoning amendments are approved by Council, any 'legally existing' 'Office Use' as of the day of the passing of the zoning by-law by Council, would be considered a **Legal Non-Conforming Use** on the property and would be able to continue and maintain the 'Office Use' permission until the use ceases to exist.

Staff emphasize that existing 'Offices Uses' will continue to maintain their legally existing 'Office Use' permission provided they continue to operate. No legally existing 'Office Use' would be evicted as result of the proposed zoning amendment and if the By-law is passed by Council.

Following information is provided for greater clarity on use permissions.

- a) MAINTAINING THE OFFICE USE PERMISSION: Legally existing Office Use, as of the day of the passing of the zoning by-law (if passed by Council), that maintain a principal 'Office Use' function will be able to continue the property's 'Office Use' permission.
- Scenario: If an existing business office functioning in the subject area such as a Real Estate Office or a Dental office exists on the day of the passing of the zoning by-law, the uses can continue to operate and exist. If the owner sells/leases the building to another 'Office Use' such as Insurance Office or another Real Estate Office or a Medical office, this would represent continuity of the 'Office Use' permission and the property would maintain the 'Office Use' permission.
- b) LOSING THE OFFICE USE PERMISSION: If the proposed zoning amendment is approved, and Council passes the zoning By-law, as noted above legally existing Office Uses will continue to be permitted. However, the Office Use permission would be lost upon a 'change of use' or ceasing of the Office Use on the property.
- Scenario: If a legally existing Real Estate Office converts to a Restaurant or if any legally existing Office Use ceases to exist, the Office Use permission would be lost and will be removed from the permissions and cannot be reestablished on the property, as per the proposed amendment.
- c) REQUESTING A NEW OFFICE USE PERMISSION: If the proposed zoning amendment is approved, and Council passes the zoning By-law, should a property owner requires a 'new' 'Office Use permission' within the area subject to the zoning amendment, the property owner would need to make the appropriate Planning Act Applications to request the Office use permission.
- Scenario: For a property located within the subject area and subject to the proposed zoning amendment, which currently does not have an Office use established on the property, for which the owner wishes to establish a new Office Use, the Owner will require planning approvals by the Town to permit new Office Uses within the area subject to the zoning amendment.

3.4.4 Other Zoning Amendments being considered by Staff

In addition to the proposed zoning amendments related to limitation and prohibition of Office Use, staff are currently exploring, permitting new uses and incentivizing uses that would potentially generate pedestrian activity and animation along Main Street within the downtown area, as desired by Council. The new use permissions that are being currently explored and considered, would be permitted on the entire property within the subject area.

1) New Pedestrian Oriented Use Permissions

Some land uses and themes that are currently being reviewed by staff, for adding or incorporating into the list of current land use permissions within the subject area, are listed below.

- a. Experiential Uses with options for associated restaurants and/or retail (i.e., include but not limited to board game café, axe throwing, escape room, etc.)
- b. Craft Your Own Operation (i.e., include but not limited to make your painting, pottery, furniture, food or beverage, etc.)
- c. Craft Brewery or Craft Cidery with option for associated restaurant and/or retail
- d. Art Gallery
- e. Museum
- f. Take-out Restaurant (Restaurant use is permitted but Take-out Restaurant permission is currently not permitted in the zoning by-law. The Take-out restaurant permission would allow commercial spaces with constrained or limited seating to accommodate restaurants)
- g. Pop-up Shop and/or Market (i.e., retail uses with more than one vendor)
- h. Explore more easily enabling small scale quick service and concession style take-out food (i.e., ice cream/gelato, bubble tea, coffee, baked goods, poutine, etc.)
- i. Provide greater flexibility in accommodating 'Co-Location of Uses' (i.e., allow combination of synergistic uses such as an activity combined with retail and/or restaurant uses and café in a boutique concept e.g. café and restaurant combined with specialty items retail such as art items, gift items, specialty shoes, jewelry, etc.)

2) Streetscape Animation

In addition to adding new uses, staff are exploring regulation changes to incentivize desired uses, reduce red tape and assist business owners in animating the streetscape.

A key objective the Council motion is to provide a recipe for a more vibrant and animated streetscape. Staff would like to make it easier for businesses to as-of-right encroach onto the right-of-way (sidewalk fronting the store) for the purpose of outdoor display of products, placing items such as street furniture (i.e., patios and seating), sale racks, and decorations (i.e., planters, signate, etc.), beverage and dessert dispensers, to help animate the right-of-way. Staff will discuss with other Town departments with respect to the viability of creating an as-of-right permission while still being considerate of clearance required for safe path of travel on public sidewalks and to properly maintain the streetscape on a seasonal basis.

3) Parking Relief

Staff note a substantial deterrent for changing uses is the requirement to meeting parking standards. Along this portion of Main Street existing on-site parking is extremely minimal and limited (some properties cannot accommodate any parking spaces). There are limited circumstances in which property owners are able to meet parking requirements or provide additional parking due to existing building and site constraints. As result for a 'change of use' a property owner has the option to pay a cash-in-lieu of parking payment (between \$5,389 and \$8,084 per space) or seek parking relief through a Minor Variance Application or Zoning By-law Amendment (depending on magnitude of request(s) application fee can be between \$3,726 and \$27,594 with approval not being a guarantee).

Staff do note that there is a Downtown Area Parking Reduction that allows for a 60% parking reduction for all uses except for residential uses and office uses. Despite this, relief is usually required to accommodate a change of uses. With this in mind Staff have listed some parking options that could be further considered and explored by Staff and Council. They may include:

- a. Cash-In-Lieu of Parking Fee Reduction – Presently between \$5,389 and \$8,084 per space.
- b. Further Reducing Area or Use Parking Requirements – Presently 60% area parking space reduction.
- c. Parking Relief for Small Gross Floor Area Foot Traffic Oriented Uses (i.e., concession style takeout) - Require no parking requirements for desired uses under a certain square footage (specifically to enable small scale quick service and concession style food take-out (i.e., ice cream, bubble tea, etc.) that tend to draw foot traffic opposed to cars requiring parking).
- d. Grandfather Existing Parking when Changing between Permitted Uses – Allow a change from one permitted use to another within the confines of any existing building, need not provide additional parking. The existing parking spaces would be considered the minimum required parking. Any increase in floor space through additions or expansion would need to provide additional parking or cash-in-lieu of parking.
 - This has been applied in different variations in Unionville, Newmarket, Aurora and Milton.
- e. Evaluate Existing On-Street Parking and Free Parking Lots Supply Usage to Determine Capacity and Resilience to Support Parking Requirement Reduction Now and in the Future.

3.5. Survey

Staff are very interested in learning what uses are desired by the community and what regulations changes may encourage the occupancy of more pedestrian oriented uses in the future.

To this effect Staff have launched a **survey** encourage the community to participate in the survey to help inform future changes. The survey can be located on the project page which can be found at <https://www.cometogetherws.ca/> .

4. Internal Departments, Agency and Public Comments

This section provides a summary of the public agency comments and correspondence received as of the date of submitting this report for inclusion in the September 3, 2024, public meeting agenda.

4.1. Agency and Departments Comments

At the time of writing this report the following Agency or Department comments have been received.

York Region

- No comments

Enbridge Gas

- No comments

Fire and Emergency Services

- No comments

Economic Development

Economic Development is supportive of the Councillor Motion. Comments are as follows:

- There is a significant opportunity to improve the vibrancy of Stouffville's Historic Downtown. It is the unique "Mom and Pop" restaurants, bakeries, ice cream shops and specialty retail stores that drive foot traffic to Historic Downtowns.
- Downtown Stouffville can and will be a top destination of choice for residents and all who visit when the optimal mix of businesses is achieved. We know from inquiries on available properties for sale Downtown that multigenerational, high foot traffic businesses want to enter Stouffville.
- A more vibrant Downtown creates: an elevated quality of life for residents and their families, an atmosphere of a thriving community, additional jobs a sense of community and unity.

Policy Planning

Policy Planning has indicated that limiting 'Office Uses' on the ground floor is the general intent of the Official Plan. High activity uses that animate the streetscape, such as commercial, retail and restaurant uses should be on the ground floor, while office uses

should be accommodated above, as they are not considered high activity uses that animate the street.

Development Planning

Following are high-level comments from Development Planning at this time:

1. Staff will continue to investigate and seek direction from Council whether the intent is to prohibit 'medical office uses.' Staff also note that residents have sought clarity on a variety of uses (i.e., which specific uses are included and why other uses are not included).

Staff note medical practitioners are in high demand. Staff is concerned that the proposed limitation could affect attracting medical practitioners in the future.

Additionally greater density is expected downtown in proximity to the GO Station which is a Major Transit Station Area. Staff considers importance of locating medical services within walking distance to form part of complete community and to avoid reliance on private automobile ownership.

2. Staff believe that additional zoning changes (discussed above in section 3.3.4) to add new uses and to encourage desired uses with parking relief and mechanisms to animate the streetscape animation should be included to incentivize and support desired occupancies.
3. Staff will review survey feedback provided from residents and property owners to further identify what uses and changes are desired by the community.
4. Staff believe the Main Street Reconstruction is an opportunity to design the desired right-of-way cross section that lends itself to the Town objective of an active and animated Main Street with a strong sense of place.
5. Staff believe the Civic Square Expansion will help make downtown Main Street a destination which should in turn serve as an incentive for pedestrian-oriented businesses to be established.

4.2. Comments from the Public

Staff have received numerous inquiries from residents and business owners located within the subject area. At the time of writing this report the following comments, concerns and questions have been shared with Staff.

1. To date Staff have corresponded with 9 business owners, property owners and representatives ("stakeholders").
 - a. Six (6) stakeholders believe that the 'Office Use' change is too restrictive.

- b. Two (2) stakeholders were supportive and noted that there too many offices and duplication of types of office businesses and are of the opinion that this has reduced foot traffic in the downtown area.
 - c. One (1) stakeholder being a business owner was neutral/no concern.
 2. Residents are concerned that existing 'Office Uses' will be evicted if approved.
 - a. Staff Note: All legally existing 'Office Uses' will maintain the permission until the use ceases. See discussion related to Legal Non-Conforming Use in section 3.3.3 above
 3. Residents have sought clarity on to how 'Office Use' is defined. Residents would like clarity on the scope and what specific businesses are captured under the Office Use definition.
 - a. Further to this there is concern and unclarity that 'Medical Office' uses are included in the scope of 'Office Use.' Residents encourage further notice / touch points with property owners to ensure residents and potentially impacted businesses are fully informed.
 4. Residents want clarity on how and where the 10 metres distance measured from the public right-of-way.
 5. Residents are seeking clarity as why change is being proposed now and what does it solve?
 6. Residents are questioning why 'Office Uses' are being targeted but other uses are not also included in this prohibition.
 7. Business believe Office Uses and Medical Offices uses do generate foot traffic and further to this their staff and patrons frequent/support local retail and restaurants during the day.
 8. Residents believe if Offices Uses are eliminated the downtown may become a ghost town during the week and only be occupied in evening and weekends.
 9. Residents believe that not all existing downtown buildings are conducive to become retail or restaurants.
 10. Residents are concerned that if approved, it becomes riskier to try changing use from Office should new use not succeed.
 11. Residents are concerned that if approved this may result in more building vacancies.

5. Financial Implications

None.

6. Alignment with Strategic Plan

1. A Town that Grows
A Town that grows in support of complete communities
2. A Healthy and Greener Town
Increase Offerings and Opportunities for Active Living
3. An Engaging Town
Increase Community Engagement & Outreach
4. A Safer Town
Make Our Community Safer

7. Attachments

1. Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
2. Attachment No. 2 – Council Member Motion

8. Related Reports

None

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For further information on this report, please contact the Department Head: Dwayne Tapp, Commissioner of Development Services at 905-640-1910 or 1-855-642-8697 ext. 2431 or via email at dwayne.tapp@townofws.ca