

Canadian Tire aims to take over Target location by spring with multiple service bays

By Brock Weir

Canadian Tire is putting the framework together for their takeover of the former Target store on Bayview Avenue at River Ridge Road.

Earlier this year, Canadian Tire announced its agreement to take over a number of locations left vacant following the failure of the American department store to crack the Canadian market across Ontario ? including the Aurora location.

In its new digs, Canadian Tire plans to convert the vacant store into a nearly 121,000 square foot retail store and auto service centre.

The 17 bay service centre is planned for the west side of the store location, directly adjacent to the existing Cineplex Odeon movie theatre within the plaza, as well as an existing parkette and, a stone's throw to the west, residential townhouses and condos on Civic Square Gate and Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park.

The matter came before Aurora's Committee of Adjustment last week. At first blush, municipal staff recommended a traffic study be imposed on the plan moving forward to measure how a new service plaza would impact existing tenants ? Cineplex in particular ? and traffic flows in the immediate vicinity. An engineering review of the resulting traffic study could be contingent on the plan receiving final approval.

A garden centre is also proposed for the east side of the retail location, but a service centre of this nature is not currently zoned for the plaza ? hence the application before the Committee of Adjustment.

?The existing building was built as a department store in 1996,? said Glen Letman, Aurora's Manager of Planning and Development, in his report to Committee. ?The department store did not have an automotive service centre, which was not listed in the permitted uses. Light service shops are limited to servicing home appliances, electronics, bicycles and similar household items, but not automobiles.

?The intent of excluding automotive service centres is to ensure that the use does not compromise the function of other commercial tenants and to minimize the potential for impacts on surrounding properties. The applicant proposes to locate 18 dedicated parking spaces for the service centre in a dedicated location in front of the service centre office, on the third drive aisle from the front entrance to the movie theatre. No changes are proposed to the adjacent outdoor amenity area.?

Parking studies already carried out, notes the report, indicate traffic will not be an issue. The construction of the garden centre near the Bayview entrance to the plaza will result in a re-alignment of the traffic corridor that connects the plaza in question to the Home Depot plaza immediately to the south, but a parking review carried out on August 7 ?concludes that when Canadian Tire opens, parking demand at peak periods within the study area will be 38 per cent of capacity,? said Mr. Letman.

?The peak parking demand for the movie theatre is generally at a different time of day from the peak demand for Canadian Tire. The traffic study has not yet been reviewed by engineering staff. It is recommended that approval of the minor variance be conditional on an engineering review of the parking review.

Canadian Tire hopes to have the new store open by the spring of 2016.