

EVALUATING LAND USE ISSUES IN PLACES OF WORSHIP:

A CASE OF HINDU TEMPLES IN THE GTA

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EVALUATING LAND USE ISSUES IN PLACES OF WORSHIP:

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Abstract

In Canada, every citizen has the right to pursue their cultural and religious heritage. Temples in the GTA are becoming an ideal place for Hindu communities to express their values in a foreign environment. As a result, they serve a vital function for the community on many levels, including psychological, social, and symbolic. This paper explores how Hindu faith group deal with land use planning issues related to locational constraints and zoning bylaws provisions when they establish temples in their communities. The research is based on a literature analysis of various scholarly works on places of worship and land use provisions as well as views and experiences of members from temple organizations and planners from the City of Toronto on the development process of temple construction. In addition, the paper includes case studies of two Hindu temples in the GTA and looks at the legislative and policy frameworks for places of worship. The research aims to underline the importance of temples in broader social undertakings, such as preserving the Hindu religion and culture for future generations. These research findings provide suggestions for a process for locating temples that meets the needs of both Hindu communities and other residents, and minimizes conflicts related to land use designations such as employment lands.

Key words: *places of worship; Hindu faith groups; Hindu temples; land use issues,*

employment land; industrial land

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1.0 Introduction

“Multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-national populations are becoming a dominant characteristic of cities and regions across the globe and this is causing a profound disturbance to the values, norms and expectations of many people” (Sandercock, 1998: 164). Canada, in the last few decades, has become a remarkably diverse ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious country because of global migration (Myer et al., 2001). Changing trends in immigration and multiculturalism policies have been attracting large numbers of new ethnic groups into Canada, and particularly into major Canadian urban centers (Qadeer & Chaudry, 2000). These new ethnic groups have brought diverse cultural practices into many cities in Canada. It can be challenging for cities to provide these groups with appropriate space in which to perform their cultural practices.

Sandercock discusses the different ways in which ethnic groups perceive, use, claim and appreciate urban spaces (Sandercock, 1998). With these differences, minority populations often experience difficulties in land use. As identified by Isin and Siemiatycki, “land use issues” in global cities “have become particularly acute flashpoints of tension for diverse immigrant and ethno-racial groups” (Isin & Siemiatycki, 1999: 10). As such, ethnic families in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), like many other cities, often face cultural barriers in celebrating religious and cultural practices (Toye, 2007). In most cases, the major issues between the ethnic communities and municipalities is the use of land for places of worship

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A City of Toronto Council and Committees report defines places of worship as “lands or buildings used for religious assembly and worship by an association which is a charitable organization permanently organized for the advancement of religion and for the conduct of religious worship, services or rites” (City of Toronto, 1998: 8). Thus, places of worship include churches, mosques, Hindu temples, Chinese temples, and Gurudwara. They often contain other auxiliary operational uses such as auditoriums, cafeteria, child care facilities, schools, meeting rooms, administrative offices, and residential units. Because the services they provide are broad in terms of public benefit, it is appropriate that they are given a place within the community. However, faith communities face difficulties in fulfilling zoning and land use requirements covered under municipal jurisdiction while practicing cultural and religious rituals in their communities (Agrawal & Hathiyan, 2007). As immigrant communities grow, this is becoming a more pressing issue.

Will Kymlicka believes, that multiculturalism, by allowing individuals to retain and articulate their cultural and religious identities is not only just and fair but it also assists in “the integration of immigrants and minorities, removing barriers to their participation in Canadian life and making them feel more welcome in Canadian society, leading to a stronger sense of belonging” (Kymlicka, 2010: 7). Qadeer recognizes that Canadian multiculturalism policy requires “planning instruments be both sensitive to and responsive to the social needs of particular communities and therefore, calls for people-centered approaches” (Qadeer, 1997: 482). Though federal policies guarantee religious and cultural rights, these are not always reflected in the policies and practices of the provincial or local governments (Agrawal &

Hathiyani, 2007). The City of Toronto though appears to have integrated immigrant groups into the mainstream culture quite well (Croucher, 1997). However, challenges posed by the land use issue are particularly apparent when minority faith groups wish to establish places of worship in lands near to their community. Though land use policies support places of worship in many land use designations, in practice, Isin and Siemiatycki found that the criteria established by provincial statute for assessing the appropriateness of new land use are often “inherently static, emphasizing conformity with existing uses, official plans, bylaws, and avoiding undue negative impacts on neighbouring properties” (Isin & Siemiatycki, 1999: 12).

Scholarly works on this issue are helpful in understanding location and land use obstacles faced by communities in establishing places of worship. The issue is more prominent in employment lands/areas¹ due to the growing trend of establishing places of worship there. This paper will provide an overview of current zoning bylaws and land use issues in establishing place of worship in employment lands. It will also explore the current municipal and provincial policies related to these location choices. Further, this paper will discuss how locating places of worship in employment lands can have negative consequences for the faith communities. Finally, this paper will describe ethnic communities’ (and particularly, the Hindu community’s) specific cultural needs when choosing locations for religious structures. Ultimately, this paper intends to provide suggestion for the appropriate location of Hindu Temples that meets the

¹ Employment Areas are places of business and economic activity. Uses that support this function consist of: offices, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, research and development facilities, utilities, media facilities, parks, hotels, retail outlets ancillary to the preceding uses, and restaurants and small scale stores and services that serve area businesses and workers. (City of Toronto, 2010: Section 4.6.1)

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needs of Hindu communities without challenging the needs of other residents and intended functions of employment areas.

The main research questions this paper answers is:

- What are the land use issues related to the location of temples in the employment lands in the GTA?

The research also addresses the following supporting questions:

- What obstacles do places of worship face in fulfilling the needs of community due to its current location in employment lands? and
- What planning measures are needed to encourage communities to locate temples in land use designations other than employment zones?

2.0 Literature Analysis

2.1 Origin and Importance of Temple

Hinduism is a way of life that has been practiced from ancient times. Temple architecture in the Hindu tradition is connected to astronomy and sacred geometry and is a representation of the macrocosm (universe) as well as the microcosm (the inner space) (BAPS, 2007). In Hindu settlements, temples are always placed at the centre of the town because they are considered vital for the religious and social welfare of the community (Anand, 2004). They are generally at the heart of places of pilgrimage. A Temple is not only a building of stone but each component of it reflects pulsating consciousness which is perceived, experienced, and enjoyed by its devotees (BAPS, 2007).

Historically, temples have been the focus for all aspects of everyday life in the Hindu community, and the place where community members carry out religious, cultural, educational, and social practices (Anand, 2004). Temples are not only the place where the community nurtures heritage, tradition, family and humanitarian values, festivals, art and architecture, and environment, but also where community members are taught love and respect, team work, tolerance, and unity in diversity (BAPS, 2007). Because temples provide a key meeting and learning place, they can help build a sense of community in all who come there (McCann, 1995). By supporting community members' integration, temples can help improve their well-being.

2.1.1 Physical Importance of Temples

Temples play a multifaceted role in promoting Hindu values and culture. “Quite eclectic” as observed by Lista, a majority of temples “satisfy the divergent needs of an ethnically, regionally, ritually and linguistically diverse Hindu community (Lista, 2011: 9). Their broad service and welfare efforts are creating cohesiveness in a fragmented society (Anand, 2004). They offer free food, clothes, scholarships, transit, religious lessons, yoga, and classical dance to community members. As a result, temples are helping the City to create a livable place (Greene, 2010).

According to Lista, Hindu temples serve to “communicate a sense of presence in the social and geographic fabric of the nation” (Lista, 2011: 11). In “*A Case Study of Five Hindu Temples in Southern Ontario*”, Gillian McCann stated that the aim of Vishnu Temples in Richmond Hill is to “maintain a centre to engage in cultural activities, to be a common meeting ground, to acquaint other Canadians with the Hindu heritage, to stimulate the interest of the younger generation in their culture, and to promote multiculturalism (McCann, 1995: 43). Many other temples also provide meeting rooms and multipurpose spaces for hosting large events such as a marriage ceremony. They are venues to celebrate a wide variety of festivals. Some of the festivals such as *Diwali* (festival of light) and *Holi* (festival of colour) are more popular; people from other faith groups also celebrate these festivals. In this regard, Hindu temples are centres for cultural activity, community support, and social interaction (Lista, 2011). A recent study done by the Town of Oakville recognizes the diverse needs of places of worship and, as a

result, has included policies that meet facility requirements of a wider range of faith groups (Town of Oakville, 2011). The study identifies the importance of places of worship as “an asset to all communities” because they contribute to “a higher quality of life and are a vital part of complete communities” (Town of Oakville, 2011: ii).

2.1.2 Social Importance of Temples

Places of worship as social space, allow faith groups to come together to do good with and for the community (Greene, 2010). Besides fulfilling cultural and religious needs, these places provide a strong sense of belonging to them and help build social integration (Reitz et al, 2009). They also serve the community by offering various social and charitable works (Anand, 2004). Because places of worship allow community members to develop social connections, they need to be located close to where people work or live. Reitz & Banerjee highlight the importance of social integration of community members. They argue that integration helps people “achieve individual economic, social or cultural goals...[G]roups that are well integrated into society become resources for the constructive resolution of conflicts” (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007: 18). Social integration builds social cohesion amongst the members allowing them to engage in advancing the common good of the broader society (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Also, religious and cultural places help communities to cope with the stresses of adjustment in a foreign land (Anand, 2004). Despite the fact that temples have the key role of making a society stronger, the Hindu temples in Toronto have encountered the prejudices of Canadian society (McCann, 1995).

In his theory of “justice as fairness,” John Rawls suggests that basic social structure has to be arranged in such a way that no social group advances at the cost of another (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2014). Hindu faith is based on rituals that are dedicated to community service. Their religious activities are tied with social undertakings and due to their potential to serve in a larger societal framework, need to be preserved for future generations (Bartlett & Baber, 2005). According to Rawls’ theory a societal framework in which each individual is free and equal, has equal opportunity, and has cooperative arrangements is more likely to benefit all (Garrett, 2005). Unfortunately, The City of Toronto does not typically regulate the establishment of Hindu temples in order to achieve these wide-ranging social benefits. Rather, the City focuses on maximizing tax revenues and ensuring efficient traffic flow (Greene, 2010).

2.1.3 Cultural Importance of Temples

Hindu temples are helping to integrate people into the community and allowing them to practice their culture. In Hindu community, temple has been the focus for carrying out religious, cultural, educational, and social practices. According to the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) code of conduct, planners are responsible to respect “the diversity, needs, values and aspirations of the public” (CIP, 2015). Planners need to reflect their willingness to promote the individual rights of the least advantaged people and of future generations and to respect and support different communities’ cultural values (Beatley, 1994). It is crucial for planners to grant others the freedom to explore religious and spiritual options (Garrett, 2005). Therefore, besides regulatory frameworks, religious and cultural issues are to be addressed by practical

consideration of the cultural needs and values of a particular community. If this is done, then the temples in Canada will pass on a rich cultural and religious legacy both to those in the Hindu community and to all Canadians.

2.1.4 Economic Importance of Temples

Considering that places of worship provide a public benefit, should they be given special consideration in the city's zoning plan? Should a municipality allow places of worship to be established in employment zones, considering that this will result in decreased tax revenue? Some of these questions have been addressed in the American context. In the United States, churches have been receiving official federal income tax exemption since 1894 and all 50 US states exempt places of worship from paying property tax (Pros and Cons, 2013). A major argument for this privilege is that places of worship deserve such tax exemptions because they provide crucial social services and make a positive contribution to the community.

Places of worship offer various social services including free meals, shelters for the homeless people, educational programs, care programs, senior homes, and immigration services. Those services benefit the community as a whole, particularly low income people. Proponents of this policy argue that the value of these services is far more than such organizations receive in tax exemptions and subsidies (Dilulio, 2011). These social activities relieve government from providing services that it would, otherwise, be obliged to undertake. The Commission of the Reform of Ontario's Public Services has suggested that the slow decline

of the province's manufacturing base has undermined the provincial government's long-term ability to finance public services (Ministry of Finance, 2012). In this regard, places of worship provide a significant contribution to the general public by providing the broad educational, cultural, recreational, social and religious needs of existing and future residents, workers, and visitors (City of Toronto, 1998). They can also attract businesses that provide goods and services for weddings and funerals, and provide office space to non-profits, counselors and charities (Dueck, 2013).

2.2 Growth and Land Use Issues

Leonie Sandercock argues that "perhaps the most visible characteristics of the cities are struggles over space, which are really two kinds of struggle: one a struggle of life space against economic space, the other a struggle over belonging. Who belongs where and with what citizenship rights, in the emerging global cities?" (Sandercock, 1998: 3). This struggle is widely apparent when faith groups try to establish places of worship. The issue that has troubled many immigrant communities in municipalities within the GTA has been land use and zoning restrictions (Isin & Siemiatycki, 1999). The issue is mainly over ethnic communities' attempt to use lands for places of worship.

Faith groups and immigrant communities in Canada have sought to claim their urban citizenship rights spatially (Isin & Siemiatycki, 1999). When they make new social spaces, these groups become new catalysts for societal change. This process has brought a significant change

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in the social, economic, and even political landscapes of many North American metropolitan regions (Wang & Zhong, 2013). The construction of temples within the community serves in educating and raising funds for various charitable works (Anand, 2004). Although Hindu communities have shown a strong commitment to their faith in practicing their religious norms and values through the use of temples, many of them are not able to afford land in and around their community, mainly because of rising land prices. Furthermore, the diversity in size and use of places of worship may impose subsequent negative impacts such as traffic and parking problems on surrounding neighbourhoods.

According to a City of Toronto Council and Communities report, religious institutions in Toronto are becoming larger and are performing more varied functions over time. The pattern of establishment is based on the different locational needs created by larger facilities and expansion of services. In earlier periods, places of worship were typically located in residential communities during the subdivision process and the average lot size was 1 acre (City of Toronto, 1998). Because these institutions were intended to serve the local population, they were located in residential neighbourhoods. Later, when residential communities grew, places of worship were established as infill development within or at the periphery of the residential community. Eventually, places of worship began to be established outside of residential areas. They were increasingly located in commercial strips and abandoned industrial buildings because of the shortage of land in residential communities as well as the low land prices in industrial and commercial locations (City of Toronto, 1998). As congregations became regional in nature, larger sites were needed to accommodate more parking and expanded building

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facilities. At that time, accessibility and the traffic capacity of abutting roads were the primary site selection considerations.

In recent years, places of worship continue to be regional institutions and increasingly draw even larger numbers of people. They have become cultural and ethnic centres for their congregations, providing a wide range of functions, services and accessory uses (City of Toronto, 1998). Site selection for these institutions is mostly driven by low land cost, accessibility, traffic congestion, parking availability, and a large supply of vacant land. Because lands in employment zones fit all those criteria, it is no surprise that places of worship are increasingly established in such industrial lands.

Of Canada's 6.8 million immigrants in 2011, the Census metropolitan area (CMA) of Toronto had the largest share (37.4%) of Canada's immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2014). About 2,537,400 immigrants lived in Toronto, which accounts for 46% of Toronto's total population (Statistics Canada, 2014). Recent immigration trends were a key factor in determining the presence of some religions in Canada. In 1971, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist made up only 2.9% of immigrants, but they accounted for 33.0% of immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2014). The province of Ontario alone is home to 73.6% of the Hindu, 55.2% of the Muslim and 44.6% of the Buddhist population in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2014). The vast majority (88.7%) of Ontario's Hindu population lived in the CMA of Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2014). This massive increase in population of faith groups has accounted for the tremendous rise in the number of places of worship in the GTA.

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During 1986 to 1994, places of worship grew at a rate of 6 percent in North York. The majority (46 percent) of this growth occurred in industrial zones (City of Toronto, 1998). In 1993, the number of places of worship including faith groups in industrial zone/employment districts in Toronto was only 71 (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). In 1998, out of 1,175 places of worship, 224 (19 percent) were located within industrial zones. In 2008, this number had increased to 311: a 338 percent increase in just a 15 year period (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). The City of Toronto reported that 22% of Toronto's places of worship are located in industrial areas (City of Toronto, 2009). In 2009, the percentage of Hindu temples in employment districts was 11.2% (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). According to GaramChai, which provides the list of Hindu and Indian Temples in Canada, there are 66 Hindu temples in the GTA (GaramChai, 2014). The average gross floor area of places of worship in industrial zones/employment districts is 2899 m² and land size ranges from 1 acre to 15 acres with an average size of 4.5 acres (City of Toronto, 1998).

Despite that increase in number, Ley (2008) notes that places of worship are less spatially tied to the walking proximity of their congregation than ever before. This is primarily because they are located in employment districts, which have, by design, no residences in them (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). As a result, planners and municipalities have begun to be pressured by demand for worship sites by ethnic groups whose needs do not necessarily fit the conventional models (Greene 2010). Therefore, high priority is given to locate the places of worship in employment districts mainly because of low land prices and less conflicting surrounding land uses.

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Places of worship are not increasingly located in employment areas because their communities prefer those areas, but because of the economic constraints faced by faith groups (Town of Oakville, 2011). The common denominator in almost every case is cheap land price and availability of a large parcel of vacant land. In the GTA, much of this growth has taken place in inner suburban districts including the Highway 400 Corridor, Dufferin Keele South, and Don Valley Parkway Corridor (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). The city's peripheral areas, which have high vacancy rates in employment districts, offer cheap land prices suitable for faith groups looking to build places of worship. For instance, Scarborough in 2009 had a high (7.8%) industrial vacancy rate and the cost of per square foot of industrial land was \$65.44 in comparison to downtown Toronto's industrial vacancy rate of 2.7% and average land cost of \$92.05 per square foot (Hackworth & Stein, 2012).

The suburban industrial lands provided large floor areas, greater flexibility in spaces, and more room for parking than alternative mixed-use or commercial areas (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). Because faith groups must rely on membership donations to finance their activities, cost is an important factor in selecting locations for places of worship (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). Another major difficulty faced by these groups is fulfilling municipal parking requirements. These requirements can increase the cost of building new facilities and can push that cost beyond the financial capacity of many faith groups. In some cases, faith groups also need to face technical issues with infrastructure requirements for sewage and water lines.

2.3 Policy Precedents in the GTA

In 1998, the term "church" was replaced in Toronto City zoning documents with the term 'Place of Worship' in order to reflect the City's multi-denominational character (City of Toronto, 1998). Since then, this term is used throughout the City's planning documents and policies. Recently, the City of Brampton's Official Plan review also suggested that the term 'church' be replaced with "places of worship" (City of Brampton, 2008). Almost every municipality in the region has policies and regulations that identify the importance of places of worship in Official Plans and Secondary Plans. In general, they are supportive of the use and establishment of places of worship in Industrial Zones/Employment zones.

Responding to land use issues generated by the establishment of places of worship in employment zones, North York became the first local municipality in GTA to revise its Official Plan and zoning bylaws to allow places of worship in industrial areas (Hackworth & Stein, 2012). The City of Brampton's Official Plan requires that worship reserve sites be identified in plans of subdivision and be retained for acquisition by faith groups for a period of three years (City of Brampton, 2008). The City permits places of worship in the residential, central area, regional retail, neighbourhood retail, convenience retail, business corridor and industrial designations, in accordance with the specific policies for each land use designation (City of Brampton, 2008). The City of Toronto also has a number of policies that identify the importance of places of worship in its Official Plan (City of Toronto, 2010). These policies deal with the general issues of

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places of worship but not with the specific solution to meet the unique demand presented by particular faith groups such as Hindu.

Religious groups have been establishing places of worship in industrial sites in the GTA for many years. In 2005, the City's adoption of the Smart Growth strategy and its "intensification" directives created conflict in the use of such sites (Greene, 2010). The City, on the one hand has to increase the amount of land for new jobs and generate revenue. Faith groups, on the other hand, have to relocate places of worship in the built-up areas of the city. However, many of these groups are not able to afford land in residential-commercial neighbourhoods due to escalating land prices. Therefore, they are compelled to buy land in employment lands, where land is less expensive and there are fewer problems with traffic and parking. This shift has created a massive increase in the number of places of worship in the employment districts. Furthermore, the diversity in size and use of places of worship need to be taken into broader consideration while dealing with other land use impacts in determining appropriate locations for places of worship (Town of Oakville, 2011).

The City's intention to relocate places of worship in built-up areas has not stopped the massive increase in the number of places of worship in the employment districts. Planning law also plays a part in not allowing places of worship in other land use designations. It provides property owners the opportunity to object to new land uses in a neighbouring property if they feel the new development is not in their favor. Qadeer identified this very participatory nature of planning as a convenient means for some local groups to resist the accommodation of

others, often turning the planning process into tools of NIMBYism and ethno-racism (Qadeer, 1997).

Religious practice and commitment shape people and influence their lives and actions both at work and at home. Religious institutions provide community members with opportunities to meet together for a shared purpose. For this reason, establishing a place of worship is a priority for ethnic communities. Religion has become far more important to all religious communities than today's city planners have realized (Greene, 2010). As a result, meeting the needs of faith groups is challenging for planners and municipal governments. This is because, in practice it is not easy to find appropriate locations for places of worship as many sites do not meet both the community's preferred location criteria and the city's zoning regulations.

3.0 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative method to examine the issues specific to the Hindu community and Hindu temples in the GTA. The research is exploratory. It answers some precise questions and it suggests directions for further research. For this research study, two temples in the GTA were selected as case examples. Case studies allow the researcher to gain firsthand experience of theoretical issue in a tangible and manageable context. A case study is “a research design that entails a detailed and intensive analysis of a single case or at most two or three cases for comparative purposes” (Bryman & Teevan, 2005: 381). The temples selected for this paper’s case studies are located in suburban employment area in Etobicoke and urban area in Richmond Hill. The first temple is BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir located in 61 Claireville Dr, Etobicoke. The temple complex is a part of the Rexdale community and shares a boundary with the city of Vaughan to the north, the city of Brampton to the west, and the city of Mississauga to the southwest. This temple was selected because of its location in a very spread out neighbourhood located in an entirely suburban industrial area. The temple, which was constructed according to guidelines outlined in ancient Hindu scriptures, is the largest of its kind in Canada. The temple is the “testament to multiculturalism” in the GTA as well as “to the proud local Indo-Canadian community” who built the temple through donations and the help of more than 400 volunteers (The Star, 2007). The temple is also a global spiritual organization within the Swaminarayan branch of Hinduism. Another reason for selecting this temple was the researcher’s familiarity with the temple and its services.

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The second temple selected as a case study is Vishnu Mandir located in 8640 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill. The temple is adjacent to Richmond Hill centre and shares a boundary with the town of Newmarket to the north, the city of Markham to the east, North York to the south, and the city of Vaughan to the west.

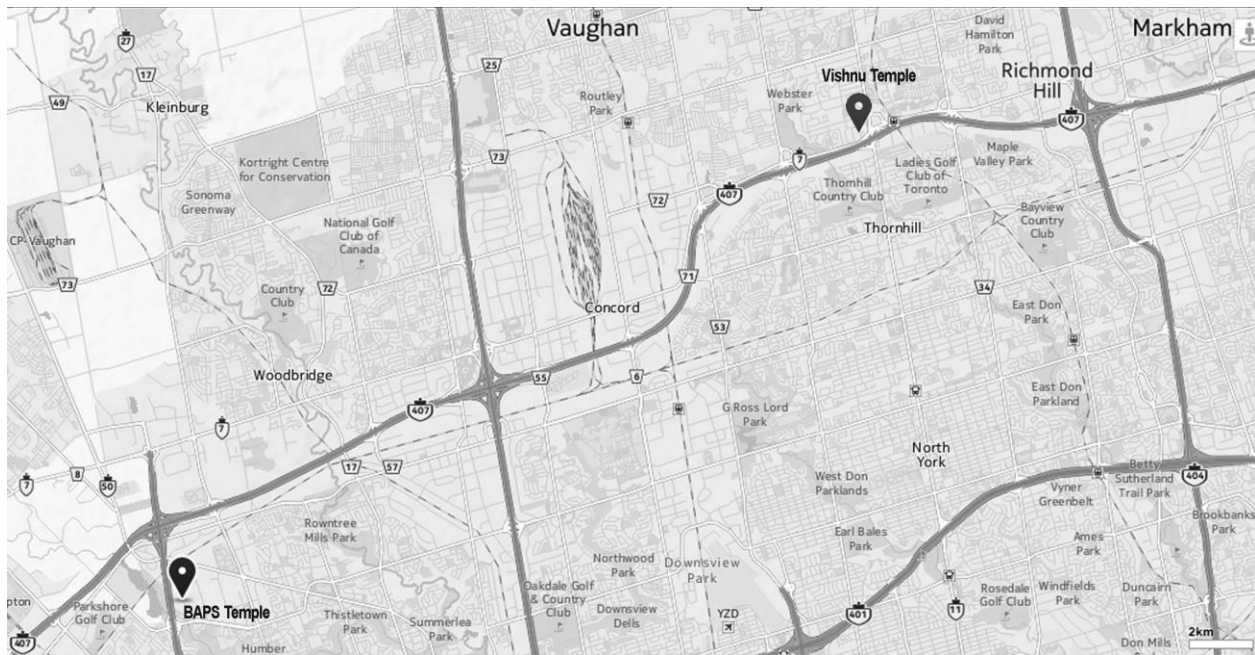


Figure 1: Location Map of Temples

Source: ca.maps.yahoo.com

The reason that this temple was selected for a case study is that, at the time of its construction, it was one of the largest temples in the GTA and it includes several community services including a seniors' home, a Montessori school and a museum. Because these two temples are located in two different cities, in entirely different settings, they will help to shed light on a variety of location and accessibility issues.

This study's critical research approach is based on interviewing primary stakeholders — two members of Hindu temple organizations, and two planners from the City of Toronto. The

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informants are interviewed in person as well as by phone using a semi-structured interview.

The informants provided general comments about their experiences, religious needs, land use issues, neighbourhood constraints, and other related information. This approach fits well into the context of this paper because the informants are directly involved in the development process — one as a service provider and the other as a user. The information provided by the informants required thorough analysis to gain a firm understanding of the planning issues. The interview questions prepared for this research study were open ended, in order to gather as much relevant information as possible. The informants were notified of the research objective prior to the start of the interview. The research findings were grouped into specific headings that answer the research questions and analyze land use practice and policies.

The research also includes a thorough municipal legislative and policy review. The research conducted a review of the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), Toronto Official Plan (2010), Richmond Hill Official Plan (2010), Growth Plan (2006), and other policy documents. These documents collectively provide a broad policy framework for the location of places of worship, while zoning bylaws and other specific plans and policies shed light on other approaches to places of worship. The policy review helps outline a variety of effective policy approaches.

The literature review, case studies, policy review, and interview findings were thoroughly analyzed for this research. Attention was particularly given to issues surrounding the location of temples in employment lands. This research provides a critical understanding

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about location and land use issues faced by Hindu communities in performing their religious practice. These findings are helpful in assessing the necessary policies and planning tools that can help address the religious needs of the Hindu cultural group. Similarly, this study addresses the land use requirements for locating temples in locations within all land use designations. This research is the first of its kind and allows an opportunity for future research that covers broader issues of religious practice of Hindu faith groups.

4.0 Legislative and Policy Frameworks for Places of Worship

Canada is the first Western country to adopt an official Multiculturalism Policy, which plays a positive role in immigrants' integration and social cohesion (Kymlicka, 2012). The Multiculturalism Act of 1988, recognized in section 27 of the Constitution, is evidence of Canada's commitment to multiculturalism as an official policy (Lista, 2011). Section 15(1), "Equality Rights," of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ensures its citizens an equal protection and equal benefit of law "without discrimination, based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability" (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982). Therefore, discrimination against ethnic groups at any level should be discouraged, and they should be provided with equal opportunity in cultural as well as social well-being.

4.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2014)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2014) is a policy document that provides direction and sets regulations for land use planning and development in the Province of Ontario. The PPS states that its key objectives are to build strong communities, wise use and management of resources, and protecting public health and safety (PPS, 2014). The PPS supports adequate employment opportunities for City residents and directs that employment lands be protected and preserved for current and future uses. However, it states that employment lands can be

converted to non-employment uses after a comprehensive review, if the lands are not needed for employment purposes over the long-term and if there is a need for conversion to other uses (PPS, 2014: section 1.3.2.2). Some of the policies of the PPS need to be considered in the context of the municipality and are not necessarily applicable to a specific site or development proposal. The policies may be complemented by locally-generated policies regarding matters of municipal interest (PPS, 2014).

4.2 Growth Plan (2006)

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006) is a regional growth management policy of southern Ontario. Introduced under the Places to Grow Act (2005), the plan identifies areas for intensification, urban growth, strategic employment, and settlement. The Growth Plan includes policies intended to protect employment lands. It strengthens the application of the PPS to employment lands. The plan also has land use restrictions to mitigate undue negative environmental, economic and human health impacts. The Growth Plan allows municipalities to permit conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses through a municipal comprehensive review, if the conversion will not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment (Growth Plan, 2006: Section 2.2.6.5). However, any such planning decisions are required to conform with the Growth Plan and in case of conflict between the PPS and the Growth Plan, the Growth Plan prevails.

4.3 City of Toronto Official Plan (2010)

The Official Plan contains “goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and effects on the social, economic and natural environment” (City of Toronto, 2010: 1-2). It is based on strategies that embrace social equity and inclusion, environmental protection, good governance and city-building. Section 4.6.1 of Official Plan defines Employment areas as places of business and economic activity. It protects the Industrial Zone/Employment Districts for economic activity in order to maintain and grow the City’s tax base by attracting new and expanding existing employment opportunities (City of Toronto, 2010: Section 2.2.4). The City has also identified the importance of places of worship in its Official Plan and included a number of policies that are supportive of the use and establishment of places of worship (City of Toronto, 2010). Section 2.3.1 of the Official Plan recognizes that places of worship are an important part of community members’ daily lives, and that they play an important role in creating healthier neighbourhoods (City of Toronto, 2010). Section 3.2.2.3 encourages adequate and equitable access to community services and local institutions and supports shared use of places of worship across the city as multi-service facilities. Section 4.1.1 specifies that “low scale local institutions” such as places of worship play an important role in the “rhythm of daily life” of physically stable neighbourhoods. Places of worship as public institutions are considered a major contributor to high quality of life in the City and are permitted in most land use designations (City of Toronto, 2010: Section 4.8).

However, the Official Plan also identifies places of worship, recreation facilities, and large scale retail stores as having adverse effects on employment lands, because they do not directly support the primary employment function of these areas. Section 4.6 states that these uses draw large numbers of worshippers, and shoppers from broad catchment areas, which can have a serious impact on local traffic movement and Official Plan policy. Section 4.6.2 provides locational limitations for places of worship in Employment Areas and allows them only on the major streets (City of Toronto, 2010). The Official plan establishes development criteria in Industrial Zones/Employment Areas that includes avoiding excessive traffic on the road network, creating an attractive streetscape and screening parking, loading and service areas (City of Toronto, 2008).

4.4 Town of Richmond Hill Official Plan (2010)

The Official Plan of Town of Richmond Hill (2010) is a planning policy framework that provides a direction for growth by integrating diverse community while protecting natural environmental systems and employment lands. One of the guiding principles of the plan is to promote economic vitality through balanced and diverse range of employment opportunities. Section 3.1.8.2 (e) in the Richmond Hill Official Plan exempts places of worship from dedicating lands for parks or public recreational purposes (Richmond Hill Official Plan, 2010). The Official Plan identifies places of worship as a community use (Section 4.1.1.2 (h)) and Section 4.1.1.1 allows such uses within the settlement area, with the broadest range of community uses directed to the centres and corridors (Richmond Hill Official Plan, 2010). Places of worship in

neighbourhood designations are permitted if it is located at the intersection of two arterial streets or at the intersection of an arterial street and a collector street ((Richmond Hill Official Plan, 2010: Section 4.1.1.3 (b) (iii)). Places of worship are also permitted in neighbourhood commercial land designations. Section 8.6.2.5.3 (Richmond Hill Official Plan, 2010) specifically talks about the provision of places of worship in the residential areas and subsection (d) allows amendment to the Zoning bylaw under the following criteria:

- I. Such uses shall be located at intersections of arterial streets or at the intersection of collector and arterial streets. Mid-block sites may be considered where they abut other institutional or commercial uses and where shared facilities such as parking may be available;
- II. Traffic and parking studies shall be submitted which demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Town that such a use in that location will not adversely impact the existing or proposed traffic network;
- III. The impact on adjacent residential areas is minimized through the provisions of adequate parking, landscaping, setback and buffering provisions in the Zoning By-law;
- IV. All such *developments* are to be subject to site plan control and architectural design control.

Places of worship in employment corridor designations also are permitted based on the above policies and criteria. In the Official Plan, Secondary plans are given the same criteria for permitting places of worship.

4.5 Zoning Bylaws

A Zoning Bylaws is a legal document that provides guidelines for land use management and future development. The Zoning Bylaws generally permit places of worship in industrial zones but some municipalities permit them under certain conditions that fulfill the parking and service requirements, transit accessibility, and location along major streets. In 2013, the city of Toronto proposed to adopt a City-wide Zoning bylaw for the amalgamated City of Toronto, which permits places of worship in the Residential (R), Residential Detached (RD), Residential Semi-detached (RS), Residential Townhouse (RT), Residential Multiple (RM), Commercial Residential (CR), Commercial Residential Employment (CRE) and Employment Office (EO) zones with qualifications pertinent to each zone (Watkiss, 2013). The parking space requirement for the use of places of worship has also been amended. Also in Richmond Hill, Places of worship are permitted in all land use designations including Residential, Industrial and Commercial provided that sites are on an arterial street and impact on adjacent residential developments is minimized through the provision of adequate parking, landscaping, setback and buffering (Town of Richmond Hill, 2011).

4.6 Other Policies

The City of Toronto' Site and Area Specific Policy permits places of worship in certain areas, by lifting the Holding (H) provisions in the Zoning By-law, that satisfy the traffic and parking requirements. Similarly, the City of Toronto has recently recommended the amendment in the Heritage Grant Program to exclude commercial and industrial heritage

properties designated under Parts IV and/or V of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow the Heritage Grant Program to focus grants on tax-exempt properties such as places of worship (City of Toronto, 2014). Richmond Hill's Cultural Plan recognizes places of worship as a venue for cultural celebration for visible minorities and the Cultural Mapping Project has included places of worship as heritage properties.

Ontario's Provincial Assessment Act, Section 3 exempts the property tax for land of a religious organization if the land is owned by the organization and occupied and used solely for religious purposes and supporting recreational uses (Assessment Act, 1990). Other municipalities have also exempted development charges for places of worship and do not have any policy to control land prices for such use (Hoernig, 2006). Many reserve lands for places of worship are provided by municipalities in their secondary plans and subdivisions but because they can be expensive, religious communities are often not able to afford those lands. The increasing number of places of worship located in employment lands represents a threat to existing and future manufacturing employment. The employment area policy (Section 4-11) is the only section that provides prescriptive direction on the location of places of worship (City of Toronto, 2010).

5.0 Case Studies

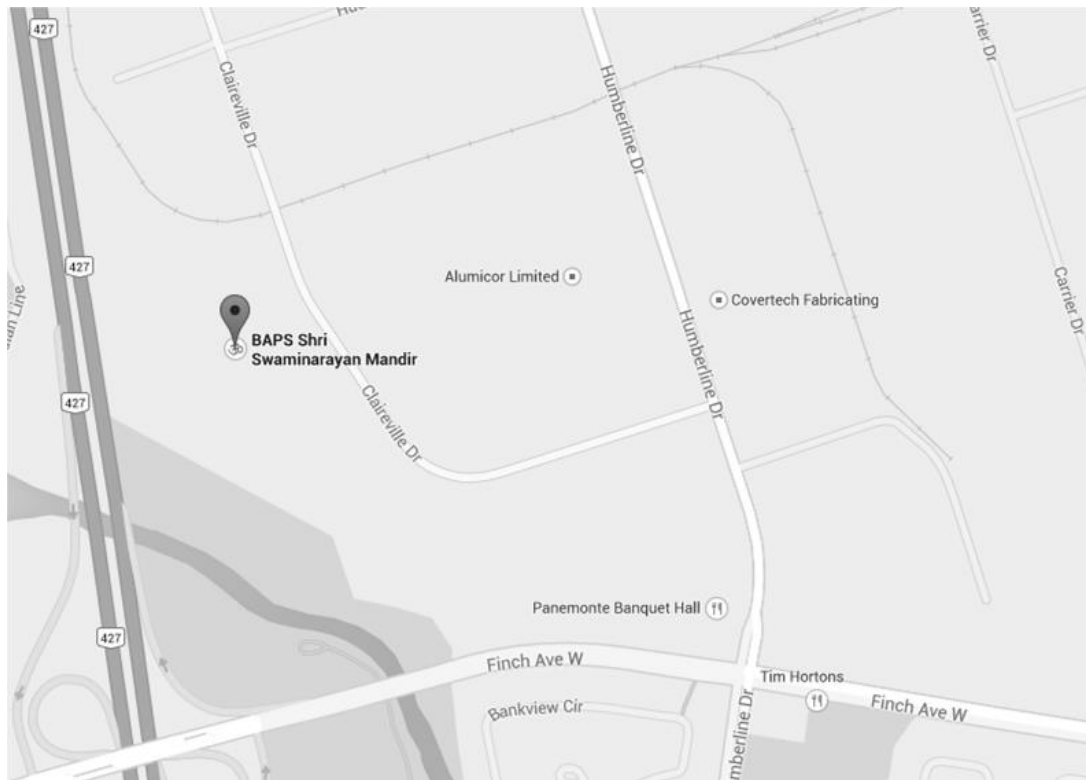
5.1 BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Temple, Toronto

Many ask, "How can you mix spirituality and social service"

We ask, "How can you separate the two"

Those who wish to sincerely serve society must be spiritually pure and only those who are spiritually pure can sincerely serve society! (BAPS)

In July 2007, Canada's largest Hindu temple - the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Temple was opened in Toronto. The monumental \$40 million holy temple is located in a suburban industrial neighbourhood of Toronto (CityNews, 2007). A dusty, barren patch of land by highway 427 and Finch Street was transformed into an architectural marvel that contained the essence of India's timeless spirituality, traditions, ancient architecture and glorious heritage (BAPS, 2007). Prime Minister Stephen Harper attended the opening, and declared Canada's new "architectural wonder" a symbol of country's ethnic and religious pluralism. The temple was constructed through the funds from congregates and volunteer work of more than 2000 builders (Lista, 2011). The temple was built entirely of marble following the ancient Hindu architecture. The temple is depicted as an authorized and contained space of cultural diversity and a cause for celebration (Lista, 2011). Located in the northwest corner of Toronto's city limits, the 7 hectare temple complex is a part of the Rexdale community. According to the 2006 census, the city Mississauga (49%), the city of Brampton (57%) and the city of Toronto (47%), all exhibit presence of high number of visible minorities' population.



(www.google.ca/maps)

Figure 2: Location Map-BAPS

The temple complex is demarcated by Finch Avenue to the south, Highway 27 to the east, Steeles Avenue to the north and Highway 427 to the west. It shares a boundary with the city of Vaughan to the North, the city of Brampton to the West, and the city of Mississauga to the southwest. The location of this temple is seemingly incongruous in many senses, particularly in considering its visibility, proximity, and publicness (Lista, 2011). The neighbourhood in which this temple is located is entirely suburban and spread out, which makes foot travel time impractical. However, the temple is accessible by TTC bus service or personal vehicle. Describing its location, Christopher Hume writes, “A dreary suburban site in the northwest corner of the city makes the temple all the more remarkable. It addresses the area with such sincerity that it puts the rest of the stuff that lines the highway to shame. Most

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Torontonians may not value this part of the city, but these people do” (Hume, 2008). Its sprawling geography, reliance on the personal automobile, and limited opportunities for public gatherings, all make this place less connected for the people living in nearby neighbourhoods or around the surrounding cities (Lista, 2011).



Figure 3: BAPS Shri Swami Narayan Temple

Source: hdwalls.xyz

BAPS offer spiritual activities and serve communities, families and individuals through a number of services and activities for children and youth development, family unity, heritage preservation, festival promotion, and community works. BAPS has inspired thousands of people to serve their neighbours and communities, regardless of race or religion (BAPS, 2007). BAPS celebrates Indian heritage through various traditional events and educational programs. These activities encourage younger generations to experience the beauty and richness of the Indian heritage and to develop a sense of identity and pride.

5.2 Vishnu Mandir, Richmond Hill



Figure 4: Location Map-Vishnu Mandir

www.google.ca/maps

Vishnu Mandir, a spectacular temple radiating spiritual power and aesthetic gracefulness, is located at the north-west intersection of Highway 407 and Yonge Street. The temple occupies a prime location since it is at the major intersection of regional corridors and is adjacent to the Richmond Hill Centre, which is one of the regional centres of York Region. The temple was set up by Vedas Cultural Sabha Inc. in 1981. The temple was moved from a small schoolhouse in Scarborough to the elegant building at its current location. The temple is a hub of activity and socializing for people of all ages. It functions as a community centre and provides a place to celebrate various occasions. The temple also plays a role as a bridge between the Hindu community and the larger Canadian community in general (McCann, 1995).

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The Vishnu Mandir sees itself as taking a leadership role in relations between the Hindu and other communities (McCann, 1995).



Figure 5: Vishnu Mandir

Source: hdwalls.xyz

Vishnu Mandir provides services such as a library, museum, day care centre, senior homes, global outreach programs, music academy, family counseling, women's club, and home for battered women. Temple representatives conduct tours of the temple for classes from high schools and universities as part of their effort to foster understanding between communities. It also offers 6 scholarships for first year university students (McCann, 1995). The temple teaches Hindu youth about Hindu history, culture, and philosophy and promotes the Hindu value of *seva* — a selfless service to others (Vishnu Mandir (a), 2015). It also runs music and dance class, French class, Hindi class, and values education. It also provides services to senior citizens who meet the income criteria set for the Affordable Housing Program by the Regional Municipality

of York. The temple has a Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization, which is North America's first museum dedicated to giving visitors the dynamic aspects of Hinduism, its evolution and integration into many world cultures (Vishnu Mandir (b), 2015). The wall of peace in the temple is dedicated to inter-religious peace and harmony and celebrates the pluralism of both India and Canada. This wall depicts the busts of personalities who contributed to world peace. Similarly, the temple has a Soldier's memorial dedicated to Canadian soldiers who sacrificed their lives during Canada's peace keeping efforts. Besides these activities, the temple runs and supports various other religious, educational, and charitable services. It extends its services by participating and volunteering in various community outreach programs outside the temple and to the broader community. The temple also provides weekly free meals to visitors. It is also actively involving in awareness raising programs such as organ and tissue donations.

6.0 Interview Findings

Interviews with the members of Hindu temple organizations and planners from the City of Toronto were conducted in person as well as by phone. Interviews provided primary information on the informants' experiences related to development process, land use issues, specific needs of temples, and neighbourhood constraints. The information from planner (as a service provider) and the temple organization (as a user) were grouped into specific headings that answer the research questions and analyze land use practice and policies.

6.1 Member of the Temple Organization's

Perspective

Interviews were conducted with two members of temple organizations, both of whom had practical experience with the development process. Both temples are located in the GTA — one from a suburban area and the other one from industrial/employment land. The interviewees answered ten questions (see Appendix 1) related to the location, planning process, barriers for development and operation, and community services. The research findings are as follows:

6.1.1 Location Decision

Both the respondents interviewed indicated that the major criterion for temple land selection was the availability of a land parcel that could fulfill temple requirements. The

interviewees suggested that their considerations included the affordability of the land, the availability of ample parking space, a peaceful surrounding environment, and access to major highways. They preferred locations that are easily accessible to visitors from surrounding cities since the temples were not intended for a particular neighbourhood or ethnic group, but rather for the broader communities of all religions. However, interviewee one indicated that they initially looked for land that was centrally located along one major street in the GTA, with access to transit. They found such land for sale, but could not afford it. Interviewee two stated that their temple's current location was their first choice and they bought it at once when the head of the organization approved the location.

6.1.2 Barriers for Development and Operation

Both temples did not encounter any major development restrictions and/or public protests. However, interviewee one said that they had to face a small amount of community objection when they tried to build a 50 feet tall Hanuman statue in front of the temple. City and fire department representatives were also very much opposed to this statue. He also said that some neighbours objected at times when an amplified sound system was used for some outdoor activities such as *yagya*². People also objected when the temple attempted to add a seniors' home, arguing that that would devalue their property. In some events, neighbours also called police; however, they had permission from city officers for those events. But he said that this was not a matter of harassment. In his experience, people have changed a lot from

² *Yagya* is a consciousness based vedic performance in which specially trained people chant vedic mantras and pour obligations to fire (World of Yagyas).

previous years and the society has become more tolerant of the norms and values of all religions. Now, it is not that difficult to conduct such events and get permission for *kirtan*³ and *yagya*.

In response to the question about barriers in fulfilling visitor's need, the interviewees' major concern was the limited availability of public transportation. Easy and efficient transportation would increase the visitor numbers. Interviewee one said that the temple even provided free service to get people from the subway station, but later it was cancelled due to uncertainty about the number of visitors expected to attend.

6.1.3 Limitations in Providing Community Services

Although both the temples provide various services and facilities which are open to any interested individuals but the majority of participants are, however, from Hindu communities. Temples welcome large numbers of visitors and devotees each day, especially on weekends and holidays for the activities that are targeted for spiritual, social, physical, and community benefits along with the promotion of Hinduism. However, such services are limited in comparison to the potential both the temples are capable of offering services to the larger number of participation from other communities. Interviewee one indicated that even in the daycare and senior homes that exist to serve people from all communities, the majority of

³ *Kirtan* is powerful singing of mantras based on ancient chants.

users are from Hindu communities. According to him, temples located in targeted communities are beneficial because they provide efficient service delivery, and conveniently located daily activities. He further stated that it would be ideal to have branches in all communities. This is not practical, though, because of the cost and because there are not enough people in these communities to sustain temple activities. He further stated that collaboration with other temples is another alternative, but felt that this would also not solve the problem, because of the nature of the specific service each temple offers.

6.1.4 Unfamiliarity to Planning Process

The interviewees had different experiences of dealing with the planning department and the municipality during rezoning and the planning application process. Both interviewees seemed unaware about the planning policies and zoning restrictions that are supportive or unsupportive of the development of temples in their locations. Interviewee one found the planning process to be very frustrating and prejudiced against ethnic communities. In his experience, city planning staff seemed to create problems when, he felt, the issues could be easily dealt with. However, he also admitted that temple representatives also generated problems due to the discrepancies in the planning application. In contrast to that, the interviewee two stated that they found the planning department very supportive at every stage of development. They did not face any barriers regarding the planning process and everything went smoothly.

Overall, members of temple organizations reaffirmed the suitability of the current temple locations and indicated that they are not facing substantial challenges to fulfill their visitors' needs. Though both temples lack large Hindu communities in the surrounding neighbourhoods, their visitor numbers are overwhelming. They were certain that they serve larger communities and, most importantly, were proud to be promoting Hinduism and preserving Hindu culture for future generations.

6.2 City Planner's Perspective

The two planners interviewed provided some useful insights into how the planning department deals with the development of places of worship. Planners from the City of Toronto and York Region (Upper Tier Municipality for Richmond Hill) were approached to participate in the interview; however planners who had experience dealing with places of worship in the York Region were unavailable due to the limited timeframe of the research. Hence, both the planners were selected from City of Toronto — Planner one provided information on zoning regulations around the places of worship and Planner two spoke about the provisions and considerations for places of worship in the Official Plan. Both interviewees were asked ten questions (See Appendix 2) related to the role of the planning department, planning policies, land use issues and impacts, and recognition of services. Interviews with planners revealed the following information:

6.2.1 Reactive Role of Planning Department

The interviews with planners revealed that the City has no particular approach when dealing with the development of places of worship. Each application is dealt with separately and evaluated for consistency with prevailing policies and bylaws. According to Planner two, the reason for this is that each application has specific requirements and hence cannot be generalized. According to Planner one, the City does not choose where the places of worship go and how many of them are required in an area and hence cannot provide incentives or support for encouraging places of worship in particular locations or land use areas. However, because the City recognizes the importance of places of worship, it allows tax breaks by reducing development charges and exempting places of worship from property tax.

6.2.2 Inexplicit Planning Policies

According to Planner two, the City of Toronto Official plan provides broad direction to promote the cultural significance of all faith groups. It allows places of worship in any land use designation except public parks, railway tracks, hydro corridors, and some parts of employment areas. Places of worship are recognized as an institutional land use and, according to Planner one, zoning bylaws specifically talk about the locations where places of worship could be established. He also stated that the old zoning bylaws were flexible in allowing places of worship in employment land but the new bylaws are more restrictive. Even though the Official Plan allows places of worship in residential zones, new zoning bylaws do not permit this. A rezoning application is required to locate a place of worship in a residential zone. He further

stated that new zoning bylaws have dedicated land for places of worship. However, it is not possible to target the needs of specific faith groups due to varied rituals, requirements, and priorities.

Unlike other municipalities such as the City of Brampton and Town of Richmond Hill, the City of Toronto does not have policies in the Official Plan that specifically deal with places of worship. For this, Planner two stated that many areas in the City offer little room for the development of new places of worship as most of the places are already occupied by other uses. Planner one stated that City of Toronto has 'free zone' concept, so there is no land allocated specifically for places of worship. According to him, all the lands that consist of places of worship are zoned to places of worship use later after their establishments in those lands. He further stated that faith groups have to identify their preferred location for places of worship, since the City cannot tell which land is appropriate for each faith group. He thinks this as a more practical way to deal with each case in specific way.

6.2.3 Land Use Issues and Impacts

Planners need to consider land use issues in the location and impacts to the surrounding neighbourhoods before allowing places of worship in any location. Planner one stated that the major issues the City considers are service requirements, site locations, compliance with the land use designations, traffic impacts, and undue negative impacts to the neighbourhoods. According to Planner two, however, the issues are largely defined depending upon the part of

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the city in which they are located; for instance, the issues introduced by locating a place of worship in a residential neighbourhood would be different from the issues generated by locating a place of worship in a mixed use neighbourhood. In this regard, both the planners saw employment/industrial lands, although they are cheaper, as not appropriate places to locate places of worship because they are not easily accessible and they are prone to pollution. Planner one also indicated that permitting places of worship in these lands could represent an enormous financial burden to the City because the surrounding environment may require cleaning. Also, industries have to invest a lot of money to deal with set standards of environmental compliance.

In Planner two's view, places of worship are very sensitive due to the nature of services they provide. Also, there can be issues related to extended hours of operation. He shared his experiences in which places of worship even opposed the uses in the surrounding lands which are normally allowed by the bylaws and hence created problems for other developments. Planner one suggested that there is very low vacancy rate in employment lands and lands are limited, so they need to be retained for potential business in the future.

According to Planner one, places of worship are supposed to serve only local communities; however they have been attracting large numbers of people from all around due to their regional scale and the services they provide. Because of this, they can create traffic problems. He further stated that it presents a great threat to lose employment land for its designated use because this is likely to produce a chain reaction to the surrounding lands.

According to him, in the early 90s, places of worship were allowed in employment lands because of the recession. However, this is no longer allowed in industrial zones. According to Planner two, in 2006, the Official Plan prohibited places of worship in employment land except along some major roads and highways since there were already 400 places of worship in the employment lands. Planner one's opinion, however, is that zoning bylaws that restricted the establishment of places of worship in employment lands took a long time to pass.

According to Planner one, the protection of property rights is a primary theme of zoning in Toronto. He thinks that the utopian idea of promoting places of worship in all land uses sounds “cheesy” and feels that it cannot be practiced in reality because the City has to defend the overall rights of the neighbourhoods. He further stated that the City in no way can compel residents to tolerate undue problems that could be created by places of worship such as loss of privacy, negative effects in neighbourhood environment, and decreased property value.

According to Planner two, places of worship can, over time, continue to add services and facilities which are not included or allowed in the original development application. In his experience, such additions are likely to bring many other issues which were not previously considered.

6.2.4 Inconsistent Community Services

The City recognizes that places of worship often provide social and community services for residents. Services such as day cares, senior homes, winter programs, public forums, food

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banks, as well as various other social, educational, and awareness programs support community well-being. However, according to Planner one, those services serve the local community. Therefore, it makes little sense to locate places of worship in employment zones, where there is an absence of communities. He also expressed concern that some places of worship are discriminatory because they do not provide services to other faith groups. He further suggested that some places of worship are not established for a spiritual purpose. Rather, they offer retail and other services for businesses; however, they are allowed for retail and services because of their alleged religious purpose.

Overall, in the planners' view, places of worship should not be allowed in employment lands. Locating them in employment lands not only creates negative impacts to the designated use of employment lands but also prevents these places of worship from properly serving their communities. In their view, because places of worship have no tax base, the City loses revenue from lost development charges and property tax if it does not retain the land for employment/industrial uses. Both expressed their opinion that places of worship should be located in appropriate places and religious groups should not blame the Planning act or zoning bylaws for difficulties in finding appropriate locations for places of worship, because their primary goal is to protect the neighbourhood's interest, not the interest of a specific person or faith group.

7.0 Recommendation and Conclusion

In Canada, all citizens have the right to sustain their cultural heritage. As the number of Hindus in Canada has grown, it has become increasingly imperative that Hindu traditions and faith be maintained in a western world for future generations (Waghorne, 1999). Temples are increasingly becoming the ideal institution to express Hindu values in a foreign environment. Thus, temples serve a vital function for the Hindu community. They also show flexibility in addressing the changing needs of their constituency (McCann, 1995). BAPS Swaminarayan Temple, for instance, has grown from an “indigenous, local Hindu tradition” into a highly organized, codified and centralized organization (Lista, 2011). Vishnu Temple is providing services to the community, such as childcare and seniors’ home, and also builds a bridge to Canadian culture through monuments and awareness programs. Both the temples discussed in this paper are working to raise Hindu cultural values through different programs to cultivate a spirit of self-respect in the Hindu way of life and respect for the people of all colors, creeds, races and religions (Lista, 2011).

The research conducted for this study suggests that the current trend in which places of worship are established in employment districts—places that have no residential uses—offer less connection to their communities or particular neighborhood in Toronto. At the same time, this practice might create adverse impacts on the economy of the GTA by making it more difficult for new industries to locate in employment districts (Agrawal, 2009). Places of worship are very important in building strong communities and it is imperative to locate them so that

they can facilitate the maximum participation of community members. But, when they are located in industrial zones, there is reduced opportunity for community participation.

Though places of worship in the City have had a relatively long history of struggling with local planners over the issues of location and zoning restrictions (Hackworth & Stein, 2012), the temples studied for this paper did not experience this kind of conflict. However, city planners need to recognize that places of worship continue to evolve and will continue to have different land use requirements. Also, land use policy relating to places of worship should consider the specific needs of religious groups within all land use designations. In Will Kymlicka's opinion, we need to rethink "the place of religious diversity within multiculturalism," and develop "effective mechanisms for advice, consultation, and decision-making that stakeholders can turn to," so that we can proactively manage issues as they arise (Kymlicka, 2010: 18). An appropriate direction, as suggested in *'Town of Oakville places of worship land use study'* (Town of Oakville, 2011), could be embracing a balanced approach for determining location of places of worship, while meeting the needs of faith communities, residents, and intended functions of employment areas. Policies at the municipal and provincial levels also need to be revisited to reflect this issue.

Places of worship provide a range of services not only to their members, but also to the rest of the community. As expressed in the interview with the members of temple organizations, temples are primarily concerned with the maintenance of Hindu values and culture. In addition to that temples have set up heritage and religion classes to teach family

values and counseling services to youth to minimize the risk of their involvement in drug, alcohol, and sexual abuse (McCann, 1995). For these reasons, families, from infants to the elderly, are increasingly involved in temple activities. Therefore, places of worship, as identified by *'Places of Worship Policy Review'* (City of Brampton, 2008), are an important part of the “social safety net”. For this recognition, temple locations are appropriate in the areas where there is greater opportunity for community involvement.

The research conducted for this study suggests that prejudice is not a central problem — only one interviewee had expressed negative experience in planning application process. Planners do, however, need to consider Hindu community members' cultural background, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with the set standards and rules and regulations of new place. Expert advice and assistance in the development process might be useful to guide people who are less knowledgeable with the regulation and the process.

In the GTA, as previously mentioned, religious congregations tend to occupy warehoused or storefronts in light industrial zones due to affordability issues. Rising land prices threaten to push places of worship further out of downtown or suburbia to vacant industrial lands (Dueck, 2013). Recent research done by Calgary's City Soul Project prompted some correction to planning practice so that the benefits of places of worship are integrated into all phases of development around the City's urban core (Dueck, 2013). In Toronto, some people have demanded similar bylaws that allow places of worship in close proximity to neighbourhoods, rather than in industrial zones (Dueck, 2013). The City of Brampton supports

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the development of places of worship in new residential areas through their site reservation process and minimizes traffic and parking issues through their policies (City of Brampton, 2008). This approach could ensure the affordability of land for places of worship and address other regulatory issues faced by temples in all over the GTA. Therefore, planning tools need to support the location of places of worship adjacent to communities by incorporating site-specific zoning.

Similarly, this research study suggests that locating places of worship in employment lands can generate issues for the intended use of those lands and also offer less connectivity to the targeted communities. However, faith groups often locate places of worship in employment lands not because they prefer these locations, but because faith groups cannot afford land in other areas. Other factors to consider include the lack of specific planning laws that allow people to protest places of worship in their neighbourhoods. People generally do not want undue negative impacts in their neighbourhoods mainly due to increased traffic, noise pollution, and sometimes reduced property values. Therefore, in order to establish consistent development standards, minimize land use conflicts, and achieve cohesive development, it is necessary to establish consistent zoning standards and development regulations regarding places of worship.

Places of worship have an evolving role in their communities; their use has been shifting from neighbourhood based single use to regional based multi-use. When they function as regional religious centres, it is imperative to place them in the areas in which they can benefit

the most participants possible. Therefore, the location should be conducive to neighbourliness as well as strategically planned to avoid the issues between places of worship and other land uses. In order to achieve this goal, municipalities should provide appropriate development standards that encourage the establishments of places of worship in the areas that can potentially serve larger communities.

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Questions for Member of Temple Organizations

1. Could you please tell me why this location was selected for the development of the temple?
2. Is this the desired location for the temple?
3. What factors were conducive for this location?
 - a. Land availability
 - b. Transportation facility
 - c. Cost of land
 - d. Parking Space
 - e. Neighbourhood
 - f. Other_____
4. If this is not a desired location, did you try to establish the temple in any other location?
What were those proposed locations and why it wasn't successful at those locations?
5. If yes, did you encounter any development restrictions related to the temple? What were those restrictions?
6. What policies or zoning bylaws did you find supportive or unsupportive for the development of the temple in this location?
7. What kinds of community facilities and services your Temple offer? And why?
8. Are the facilities aimed for local or regional users?
9. Were there any barriers that you experienced in fulfilling visitor's needs in this location?
If yes, what were those barriers and could you elaborate with examples?
10. How would you rate your experiences when dealing with the planning department and the municipality during the rezoning or site plan application process? Please specify with examples?

Appendix 2

Interview Questions for Municipality Planners

1. Could you please describe the role of your department in the development of places of worship?
2. What municipal planning policies do you have in place for places of worship?
3. What are the issues related to places of worship that municipality considers before their establishment in a particular location?
4. Does the municipality have designated lands for places of worship?
5. What is the current occupancy of those lands?
6. What are the main factors contributing to select places of worship in other land uses rather than designated ones?
7. Is there any incentive or support municipality provides for encouraging places of worship in particular location or land use?
8. Are the places of worship recognized for their social or community services for the public? If yes, what are the roles of these services for the community well-being?
9. What are the economic impacts of allowing places of worship I employment land?
10. Does the municipality have secondary plan or future strategies to address the issues of places of worship?

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