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**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**CITY PLANS PANEL**

9<sup>th</sup> June 2016

**PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION (PREAPP/16/00210) - THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF A 7 STOREY OFFICE BUILDING AT LEEDS CITY OFFICE PARK, MEADOW LANE, LEEDS 11**

**APPLICANT – CANADA LIFE LTD.**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**City and Hunslet**

No

Ward members consulted

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**RECOMMENDATION: This report is brought to Plans Panel for information. The Developer will present the details of the scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of proposals for a fourth office building at Leeds City Office Park (building 4). The site is located on the route of the proposed High Speed 2 (HS2) rail proposal as it comes into Leeds Station.

**2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

2.1 The site of the proposed building provides 172 surface car parking spaces for existing Building 3 on the Leeds City Office park and measures 0.6 hectares. The office park is located to the west of Crown Point retail park and is bounded by Great Wilson Street to the north and Meadow Lane to the west. It is occupied by three office buildings, associated surface car parking and associated landscaping.

2.2 The site does not fall within a conservation area and is not located within the vicinity of listed buildings. However it is located in an area that is set to see considerable

change due to the provision of HS2 and the regeneration of the 22 acre former Tetley Brewery site which is located on the opposite side of Great Wilson Street.

- 2.3 The wider site context is predominantly commercial in character with buildings ranging in height between single storey units, the two-three storeys of the rest of Leeds City Office Park, two storey pavilion offices at New Lane, and six-seven storey offices at City Walk. The other key characteristic of the area is the significant highway network connecting the city centre and the M621 motorway network to the south.

### **3.0 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The proposed building 4 would be located on the car park for building 3 in the south western corner of the office park and would be 7 storeys high, with a total floorspace of 14,950 sq.m. and would incorporate ground floor car parking. Land immediately to the east of the proposed building is also likely to be used for surface car parking resulting in a total provision of 162 parking spaces for the existing building 3 (7,100 sq.m.) and the proposed building 4. The existing vehicular access arrangements would remain. 85 of the car parking spaces would be allocated to the new building in line with the Council's maximum parking guidelines for office use in this part of the city centre (1 space per 175 sq.m. of floorspace) and the remaining 77 spaces would be provided for existing building 3.
- 3.2 In addition to the main office use the new building would also provide ancillary space for a gymnasium (only to be available for the office workers within the office park) and a supporting commercial use such as a coffee shop.
- 3.3. An enhanced east-west pedestrian connection would be provided between Kidacre Street and Meadow Lane to the north of the proposed building 4.

### **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 The site has an extensive planning history, including various applications for site infrastructure and signage. However the most relevant planning permissions are summarized below.
- 4.2 Outline proposal to erect four detached office blocks with car parking and landscaping – Application reference 99-20/39/95/OT. Approved 30/4/1998.
- 4.3 Three storey office building with basement car parking – Application reference 20/617/97/FU. Approved 11/5/1998.
- 4.4. Three storey detached office. Application reference 20/448/01/RM. Approved 9/4/2002.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 5.1 LCC Flood Risk Management - The site is in Flood Zone 3 and flood compensatory storage may be required for any loss of flood plain resulting from the extent of the proposed new office building. A Flood Risk Assessment would be required and this should include recommendations for the appropriate access level to the lower level car parking area based on flood levels for the area obtained from the EA's hydraulic modelling of the River Aire. Also suitable access/ egress arrangements should be considered for implementation when flood warning notification is given. In addition to any compensatory storage that may be required for the loss of the flood plain, appropriate attenuation storage would be required for the surface water drainage with discharges restricted to greenfield rates of runoff to the public surface water

sewer in the surrounding area.

5.2 Contaminated Land - The site and surrounding area has an extensive potentially contaminative history including a gas works. As such, a phase 1 desk study would be required in support of the application. Depending on the outcome of the phase 1, a phase 2 site investigation and remediation statement may also be required.

## **6.0 POLICY**

### **6.1 Development Plan**

6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of decision making, the Development Plan for Leeds currently comprises the following documents:

- The Leeds Core Strategy (Adopted November 2014)
- Saved UDP Policies (2006), included as Appendix 1 of the Core Strategy
- The Natural Resources & Waste Local Plan (NRWLP, Adopted January 2013) including revised policies Minerals 13 and 14 (Adopted September 2015).
- Any Neighbourhood Plan, once Adopted.

### **6.2 Core Strategy (CS)**

6.2.1 Relevant Core Strategy policies include:

#### Spatial and economic policies

6.2.2 Spatial 2 states that the Council supports a centres first approach directing office development to the City Centre and other designated centres.

6.2.3 Spatial Policy 3 seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the City Centre as an economic driver for the District and City Region, by comprehensively planning the redevelopment and re-use of vacant and under-used sites for mixed use development and areas of public space; enhancing streets and creating a network of open and green spaces to make the City Centre more attractive; and improving connections between the City Centre and adjoining neighbourhoods.

6.2.4 Spatial Policy 8 supports a competitive local economy including through the provision of a sufficient supply of buildings for B class uses; developing the City Centre for new retail, office and other main town centre uses; and by supporting training/skills and job creation initiatives via planning agreements.

6.2.5 Spatial Policy 9 seeks to provide a minimum of 706,250 sq.m. of office floorspace within the district.

6.2.6 Policy EC2 states that the City Centre will be the focus for most of the office development.

#### City Centre policies

6.2.7 Policy CC1 outlines the planned growth within the City Centre. All other town centre uses will be supported in the City Centre providing the use does not negatively impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses.

- 6.2.8 Policy CC3 states new development will need to provide and improve walking and cycling routes connecting the City Centre with adjoining neighbourhoods, and improve connections with the City Centre.

Design, conservation, transport and other policies

- 6.2.9 Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design and that development protects and enhance the district's historic assets in particular, historically and locally important buildings, skylines and views.
- 6.2.10 Policies T1 and T2 identify transport management and accessibility requirements to ensure new development is adequately served by highways and public transport, and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.
- 6.2.11 Policies EN1 and EN2 set targets for CO<sup>2</sup> reduction and sustainable design and construction, and at least 10% low or zero carbon energy production on-site.
- 6.2.12 Policy EN5 identifies requirements to manage flood risk.
- 6.2.13 Policy G5 requires larger commercial development sites of 0.5ha in area and above to provide a minimum of 20% of their site area as public open space.

6.3 **Saved Unitary Development Plan Review policies (UDPR)**

- 6.3.1 Relevant Saved Policies include:

GP5 - All relevant planning considerations to be resolved.

BD2 - New buildings should complement and enhance existing skylines, vistas and landmarks.

LD1 - Sets out criteria for landscape schemes.

6.4 **Natural Resources & Waste DPD 2013**

- 6.4.1 The plan sets out where land is needed to enable the City to manage resources, such as minerals, energy, waste and water over the next 15 years, and identifies specific actions which will help use natural resources in a more efficient way. Policies regarding drainage, air quality and land contamination are relevant to this proposal.
- 6.4.2 AIR1 states that all applications for major development will be required to incorporate low emission measures to ensure that the overall impact of proposals on air quality is mitigated.

WATER 4 and 6 - All developments are required to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site

- 6.5 Other material considerations

6.5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF identifies 12 core planning principles (para 17) which include that planning should:

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development
- Seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Planning should proactively support sustainable economic development and seek to secure high quality design. It encourages the effective use of land and the reuse of land that has previously been developed.

Section 7 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important that design is inclusive and of high quality. Key principles include:

- Establishing a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimising the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history;
- Reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments; and
- Development to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

#### **6.6 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance includes:**

SPD Parking

SPD Travel Plans

SPD Building for Tomorrow Today: Sustainable Design and Construction

#### **6.7 Emerging Site Allocations Plan (SAP)**

The SAP is at Publication Draft stage, having been through consultation from September to November 2015. Although it is not yet adopted, it is at a relatively advanced stage and can be afforded some weight in decision making. The site of the office building is not allocated for specific development but the draft SAP shows a dotted line running through the location of the proposed office building. This line shows the proposed alignment of the HS2 route.

### **7.0 KEY ISSUES**

Members are asked to comment on the proposals and to consider the following matters in particular:

#### **7.1 Principle of the Development**

- 7.1.1 The principle of the proposed office use and ancillary gym and coffee shop use is considered acceptable in this city centre location, in line with the Council's adopted policies.

- 7.1.2 As stated above the site is located on the proposed HS2 route. The route of HS2 is normally safeguarded in advance of any primary legislation coming into force for its provision through a series of safeguarding directions which place a statutory duty on Local Planning Authorities to consult with HS2 Ltd on pending planning applications which fall within an identified zone.
- 7.1.3 However at the present time these directions only extend as far as Crewe. At the time of writing the report Officers have contacted HS2 Ltd to seek an indication as to when this is likely to be extended and what their position is at the present time on pending planning proposals. Panel will be given a verbal update at the panel meeting on the response from HS2 Ltd.
- 7.1.4 The applicant's agent has made clear that if the route of HS2 is confirmed then the development proposal will not proceed.

**Do Members support the principle of the development?**

**7.2 Urban Design**

- 7.2.1 The immediate context of the building is the Leeds City Office Park, which is generally three storeys in height, arranged around a central landscaped space. The wider context ranges between single storey units, the two-three storeys of the rest of Leeds City Office Park, two storey pavilion offices at New Lane, and six-seven storey offices at City Walk. The nearby hotel on the opposite side of Meadow Lane is eleven storeys high. There is also the significant width of the highway infrastructure on Meadow Lane.
- 7.2.2 In this context, it is considered that a height of seven storeys above ground level with a parapet to screen rooftop plant would be appropriate to the mix of heights in the area, particularly when viewed along the main approach along Meadow Lane from the north.
- 7.2.3 The design of ground floor car parking will need careful consideration, and car parking should be well screened in all directions at ground floor level, preferably wrapped with an active use to the street frontage to Meadow Lane and any pedestrian routes. The proposed enhancement to a publically accessible route between Meadow Lane and Kidacre Street is welcomed in terms of improving pedestrian connectivity through the area and will need to be secured as publicly accessible land in the Section 106 agreement.

**Do Members consider the proposed scale of the development and emerging design proposals to be appropriate in this location?**

**7.3 Highways and transportation**

- 7.3.1 The existing car parking provision on the Leeds City Office Park is set out below:

<b>Leeds City Office Park Building No.</b>	<b>Floorspace (GEA)</b>	<b>Car Parking Provision</b>	<b>Car Parking Ratio to office floor area</b>
Building 1	6,225sqm	198	1:31sqm
Building 2	8,800sqm	254	1:35sqm
Building 3	7,100sqm	172	1:41sqm

- 7.3.2 It is clear that the current parking provision on site is considerably more generous than the Council's maximum parking guideline for office use in this area of 1 parking space per 175sqm of floorspace.
- 7.3.3 The proposal is for 162 spaces being provided for the existing Building 3 and the proposed Building 4. The combined floorspace of Buildings 3 & 4 would be 22,050 sqm (ie 7,100sqm + 14,950sqm) , which equates to a proposed parking ratio of 1:136sqm for the two buildings.
- 7.3.4 It is applicant's intention to prescribe 85 car parking spaces to the proposed Building 4 at a ratio of 1:175sqm (in line with the Council's adopted guidelines), leaving 77 spaces for Building 3 at a ratio of 1:92sqm (ie less than the current provision, but still in excess of the Council's maximum guideline).
- 7.3.5 Although the car parking for existing buildings 1, 2 and 3 would remain above the Council's maximum parking guidelines, this reflects the historic consented position for the Leeds City Office park and the proposals for building 4 would represent a reduction in overall commuter car parking ratios on site.
- 7.3.6 The reduction in existing car parking levels for building 3 is unlikely to result in further pressure for on-street car parking that will have an adverse impact on the highway network. The vicinity of the site has widespread on-street parking controls which would prevent obstructive car parking. Where there are gaps in control which could be used by the workers and visitors to the office park then officers would seek funding from the development to extend traffic regulation orders in these locations. In addition there is ready access to this city centre site by bus services, the city connect cycle network, the Park and Ride at Elland Road and from the train station as well. Officers have requested the applicant to progress and agree a travel plan for the whole of the Leeds City Office park in view of the fact that existing parking levels would be reduced.
- 7.3.7 For the above reasons the approach to car parking provision on site is considered appropriate.

**Do Members consider the proposed approach to highway and transportation is acceptable?**

#### **7.4 Landscape and open space provision**

- 7.4.1 With regard to the planning application site area, at present it measures approximately 0.6 hectares and therefore would trigger Core Strategy Policy G5's requirement for 20% of the site area to be provided as public open space.
- 7.4.2 It is noted that there are two areas of green space already on site which equate to 19% of the total site area of Leeds City Office Park. In addition the applicant is prepared to enhance the existing East-West pedestrian route through the site. It is considered that subject to provision of any necessary improvements to ensure the greenspace provides an attractive and useable outside amenity space and subject to securing public access rights to these existing spaces then the policy requirement will have been met.

**Do Members support the approach to public open space provision on site?**

## **7.5 Section 106 agreement**

A Section 106 agreement is likely to be required. This would include matters such as:

1. Provision of publicly accessible areas/routes on-site
2. Provision of site-specific Travel Plan measures
3. Travel Plan monitoring fee
4. Cooperation with local jobs and skills initiatives.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

Members are requested to consider the proposals for a 4<sup>th</sup> office building at Leeds City Office Park and comment on the following matters in particular:

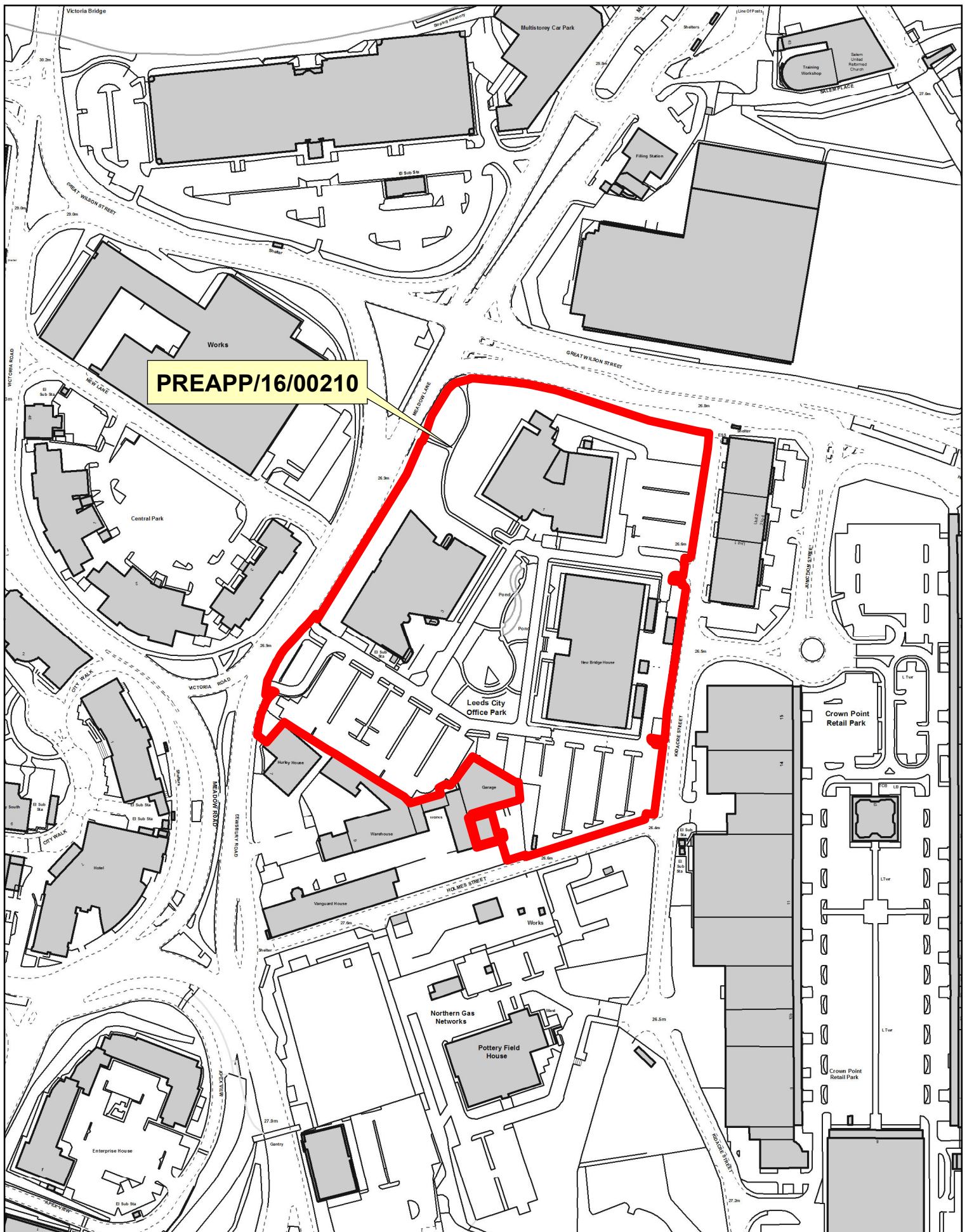
**8.1 Do Members support the principle of the development?**

**8.2 Do Members consider the proposed scale of the development and emerging design proposals to be appropriate in this location?**

**8.3 Do Members consider the proposed approach to highway and transportation is acceptable?**

**8.4 Do Members support the approach to public open space provision on site?**





# CITY PLANS PANEL

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