



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Heritage Markham Committee

**FROM:** Regan Hutcheson, Manager-Heritage Planning

**DATE:** February 12, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Strategy to Address Cultural Heritage Resources in the North District Employment Lands

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**Project:** Consultant Study - Development of a Strategy to Address Cultural Heritage Resources in the North District Employment Lands

**Background:**

- As part of the City's Future Urban Area work in northern Markham, a specific component of the North Planning District has been designated for employment uses.
- Currently this area is rural in nature comprised primarily of farm properties, a number of which possess buildings of cultural heritage value or interest.
- The City has recently announced this area as part of the Markham Innovation Exchange or the MiX. This would be a distinctive innovation district utilizing one of the largest undeveloped opportunities for greenfield employment lands in the Greater Toronto Area. A campus-style environment is envisioned where entrepreneurs, innovators and start-ups can collaborate and grow their business.
- The issue of how to address properties of cultural heritage value or interest on the North District Employment Lands was first raised during recent capital budget discussions regarding potential maintenance expenditures for a City owned property. Members of the Budget Committee indicated at the time that a strategy for the cultural heritage resources within the Employment Lands should be explored.
- Also, during recent discussions concerning the acquisition of a property in this area by the City, Council directed staff to consider the issue of heritage buildings situated on employment lands as part of an independent third party study to be undertaken and to report back to Council with further recommendations. It was felt that when considering how best to handle a cultural heritage resource, corporate wide objectives should be considered in addition to heritage conservation objectives.

- Although there are policies in the Markham Official Plan indicating that it is the policy of Council that significant cultural heritage resources should be incorporated into new development either in their original use or an adaptive re-use, some have questioned the feasibility of this when dealing with employment lands.

#### Scope and Purpose of Study

- The study will consider how best to address the existing properties of cultural heritage value or interest which are located within a defined area of future employment lands. The purpose of the study is to provide the City of Markham with options regarding the existing cultural heritage resources and a recommended strategy.
- Originally there were 9 properties of cultural heritage value or interest that were within the study area boundaries. Six of the properties are in private ownership, two are owned by the City of Markham and one is owned by the Region of York. The Region of York property has been addressed and has been removed from the Study. Two additional properties have been added (see below)

#### Study Area Boundaries

- The study area for this project are the lands designated Employment Area in the North District Planning District generally bounded by Woodbine Avenue, Elgin Mills Road, Warden Avenue and the Markham/Whitchurch-Stouffville municipal boundary to the north. See attached map for the original study area.
- During the start up meeting, the consultants were also asked to consider two additional City-owned properties: 2780 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Alfred Read House) and 11091 Warden Avenue (former Elson Miles Farmhouse)

#### Consultants Retained

- MHBC Consultants have been retained and have started the assignment. Sub-consultants include: George Robb Architects - Peter Stewart (Architecture) and urbanMetrics - Peter Thoma (Economics).

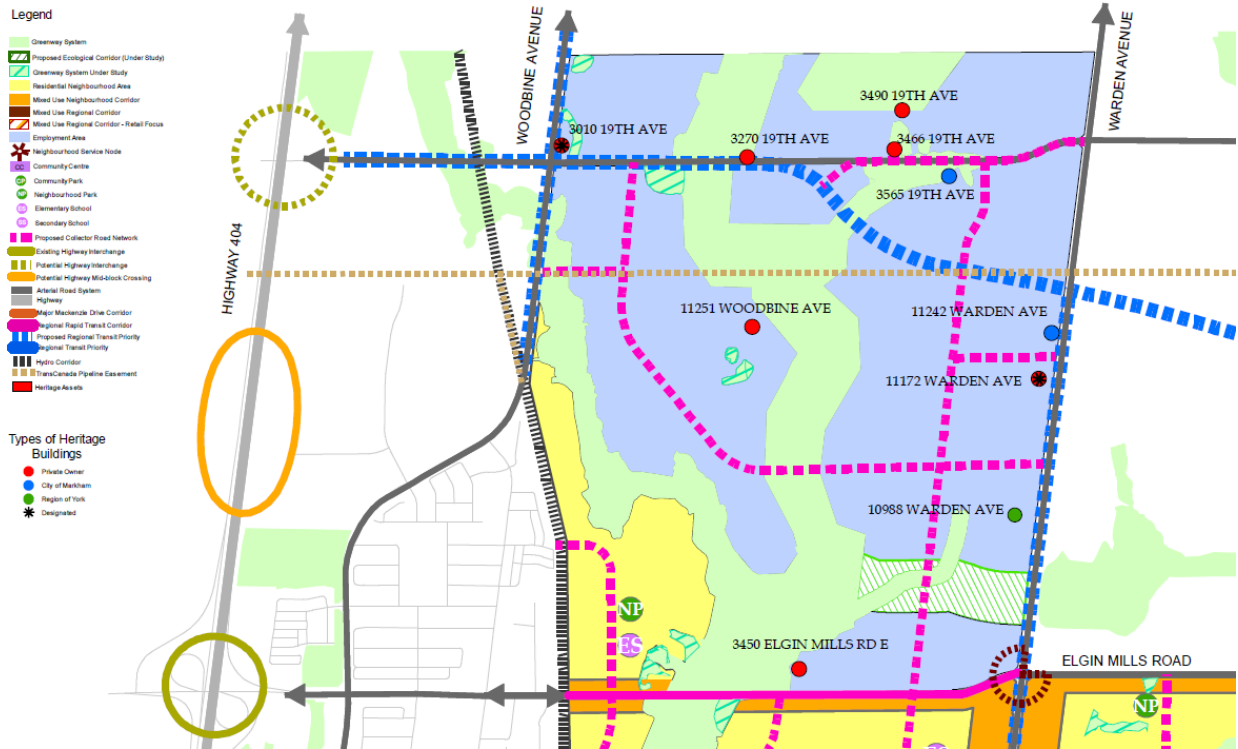
#### Status/ Staff Comment

- The study is currently underway.
- The work will take approximately 4 months (February to May). The general work program is attached.
- Heritage Markham Committee will be consulted on the options under consideration prior to the final strategy development.

### **Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham**

That Heritage Markham Committee receive the update on the consultant study entitled 'Strategy to Address Cultural Heritage Resources in the North District Employment Lands', as information.

# Heritage Buildings in Employment Area North Markham Planning District



## Types of Heritage Buildings

- Private Owner
- City of Markham
- Region of York
- Designated

## Legend

- Greenway System
- Proposed Ecological Corridor (Under Study)
- Greenway System Under Study
- Residential Neighbourhood Area
- Mixed Use Neighbourhood Corridor
- Mixed Use Regional Corridor
- Mixed Use Regional Corridor - Retail Focus
- Employment Area

## Work Program

The following summarizes anticipated tasks:

**A. Study Organization Meeting**

- meet with Study Working Committee
- review goals and objectives of the study
- review issues and constraints related to the project
- confirm study methodology
- provision of background information and materials

**B. Review of Background Materials/ Consultation**

- examination of policies and plans, including the Markham Official Plan, Conceptual Master Plan for the FUA, provincial policies (PPS) and legislation (Planning Act and the Ontario Heritage Act).
- review information on the Markham Innovation Exchange (MiX) concept for the employment lands.
- consultation with impacted land owners

**C. Existing Policy Framework**

- provide an overview/ summary of the applicable policy and planning framework as it relates to future planning of the area, economic development, natural heritage constraints, and cultural heritage resources.
- consider the municipal, provincial and national policies and standards related to cultural heritage resources.
- consider timing of future development on these lands

**D. Summary of Cultural Heritage Resources**

- provide a brief overview of the existing cultural heritage resources (based on existing information to be provided to the consultant)
  - ownership (public, private)
  - heritage status (designated, listed, easement agreement)
  - historical and architectural information
  - existing condition
  - evaluation score (from Council's Heritage Resources Evaluation System)

**E. Real Property and Financial Implications**

- impact of a cultural heritage resources on land value in this area (i.e. loss of land value as a result of having to retain and maintain heritage resources in – situ versus other options).
- financial implications on property owner for having to maintain heritage resources on site and/or convert the resource for employment uses/related functions versus relocation for residential uses.
- impact on development potential:

- including potential uses of cultural heritage resources within employment area scenarios); and,
  - relative to loss of value on surrounding lands within the property as a result of having to retain the cultural heritage resource in-situ
- impact on function and design of the property versus other options if heritage resources are left in-situ.

**F. Development of Potential Options for Cultural Heritage Resources**

- consultant to prepare options for consideration
- option(s) should consider examples from other areas where heritage buildings have been integrated into employment lands
- each option should include its pros and cons, financial implications and policy implications
- options to be considered should include:
  - a. Retention of Resources in-situ (stabilize only for future use – if vacant, enforce the minimum requirements of the Keep Markham Beautiful By-law and Property Standards By-law)
  - b. Retention of Resources in-situ (Owner restores and tenants- likely adaptive re-use)
  - c. Retention of Resources in-situ (sever property and sell heritage component with heritage protection mechanisms)
  - d. Relocation of Resources (to a selected site in the Employment Lands – grouping of resources)
  - e. Relocation of Resources (Markham Heritage Estates or elsewhere in the municipality)
  - f. Demolition of Resources (low value resources or all)
  - g. Demolition of only Outbuilding/Barns
  - h. Other
- Review the existing criteria associated with “threat of loss” as approved by Council for use when considering buildings for Markham Heritage Estates/or other relocation opportunities. Consider additional flexibility for the City when certain criteria are met.

**G. Review Options**

- review options with Study Work Committee (and select other staff)
- review options with Heritage Markham Committee for its feedback

**H. Recommended Strategy**

- prepare a recommended strategy for Council consideration
- the strategy is to include:
  - Recommendations on the applicability of the strategy for other employment areas such as potential best practices.
  - Guidance for Official Plan Heritage Policy modification or interpretation related to relocation of a heritage resource (the policy: “where it has

been demonstrated that retention in its original locations is neither appropriate or viable” How to determine what is “appropriate or viable”.

- Recommendations regarding best practices for on-going maintenance of heritage assets where development of the land is not anticipated for several years.

- review strategy with City staff

I. **Finalize Study**

- complete any final revisions to study document

J. **Presentation to Development Services Committee**