
SUBJECT: City of Markham Comments on York Region's Draft MTSA's for Inclusion in the Regional Official Plan

PREPARED BY: Policy & Research Group

REVIEWED BY: Darryl Lyons, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Policy, Policy & Research (x. 2459)
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RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report entitled "City of Markham Comments on York Region's Draft MTSA's for Inclusion in the Regional Official Plan" dated June 22, 2020 be received;
- 2) That Council support the comments and recommendations regarding the draft major transit stations areas (MTSA's), provided in Appendix 'B' and Appendix 'C' to this report;
- 3) That Council request York Region to bring forward a Regional Official Plan Amendment to implement MTSA's and include inclusionary zoning policies in advance of completion of the Municipal Comprehensive Review and adoption of a new Regional Official Plan to enable local municipalities to require the provision of affordable housing in MTSA's as soon as possible;
- 4) That the report entitled "City of Markham Comments on York Region's Draft MTSA's for Inclusion in the Regional Official Plan" dated June 22, 2020, be forwarded to York Region as Markham Council's input on the Region's draft MTSA's;
- 5) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to provide comments on the draft Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA's) that have been identified by York Region for inclusion in the Regional Official Plan (ROP). Provincial policy directs the Region and Markham to manage growth through transit supportive development. In particular, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (Growth Plan, 2019), seeks to align transit with growth by directing development to strategic growth areas (SGAs) identified to accommodate intensification and a higher density of mixed uses, such as MTSA's.

Markham's approach to planning for intensification is reflected in the Official Plan, 2014 and is based on the Region's urban structure of centres and corridors. This approach directs the highest levels of intensification to the City's Regional Centres, Regional

Corridors/Key Development Areas (KDAs), and Local Centres and Corridors, as shown on Map 2 – Centres and Corridors and Transit Network in Appendix ‘A’. The two Regional Centres – Markham Centre and Langstaff Gateway – are anticipated to accommodate the largest share of intensification, followed by KDAs along the Yonge Street and Highway 7 Rapid Transit Corridors, and Local Centres and Corridors along the Stouffville GO line.

York Region, in consultation with its local municipal partners, is required by the Growth Plan, 2019 to include the boundaries and minimum density targets for MTSAs located on priority transit corridors in the ROP. The densities are expected to be achieved incrementally over the long-term, up to 2041 and beyond.

A MTSA is generally defined as the area surrounding a transit station, within a 500-800 metre radius or 10-minute walk. The minimum density targets for MTSAs in the Growth Plan are:

- 200 residents and jobs per hectare for subway stations,
- 160 residents and jobs per hectare for BRT/LRT stations; and
- 150 residents and jobs per hectare for GO rail stations.

Upper-tier municipalities may also identify and delineate additional MTSAs beyond the priority transit corridors identified in the Growth Plan, 2019. The minimum density targets for these additional MTSAs can be set by the upper-tier municipality and are not subject to the Growth Plan, 2019 minimum density targets.

On March 12, 2020 Regional Council endorsed 72 MTSAs for inclusion in the ROP, 24 of which are located in Markham. Of the 24 MTSAs, sixteen (16) are required to be delineated as they are on identified priority transit corridors. In Markham, the priority transit corridors include the section of the Hwy 7 BRT corridor between Yonge Street and Markham Centre (13 MTSAs), and the Stouffville GO Line between Milliken Station and Unionville Station (3 MTSAs). The eight (8) proposed additional MTSAs include four (4) located on non-priority portions of these transit routes, as well as four (4) along the proposed Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE).

The Region has proposed minimum density targets for the MTSAs in Markham that meet and, in most cases, exceed the minimum density targets of the Growth Plan, 2019 as shown in Appendix ‘B’. The draft delineations for each MTSA are provided in Appendix ‘C’.

Staff are generally in agreement with the Region’s draft MTSA delineations and minimum density targets but recommend certain revisions to reflect local conditions and site specific concerns. Recommended revisions to minimum density targets are identified in Appendix ‘B’ and summarized below. Regional staff are generally in concurrence with the proposed revisions.

- a) Yonge North Subway Extension – Minimum density targets for Clark and Royal Orchard MTSAs should be consistent – both at 250 residents + jobs per hectare, rather than 200.

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- b) Employment MTSA along Highway 7 BRT – Staff recommend slightly lower targets (ranging from 160 to 250 jobs/hectare) to better reflect existing conditions and provide more flexibility in accommodating new employment development in these areas, while still meeting or exceeding the Growth Plan, 2019 minimum density for BRT MTSA.
 - c) Markham Centre MTSA – Staff recommend applying a more generalized target of 300 residents + jobs/hectare, with slightly lower targets for the Town Centre Blvd and Enterprise MTSA (200 to 250), until the Secondary Plan is further advanced and the potential for higher densities can be verified. All of these proposed targets are still well above the Growth Plan, 2019 minimum density of 160 residents + jobs/hectare for BRT MTSA.
 - d) 14th Avenue and Milliken Centre MTSA – Regional staff have indicated that the proposed 14th Avenue MTSA will be removed as Metrolinx is no longer planning for a station at that location. Markham staff are continuing to pursue a new station at Denison Street at the northern limit of the Milliken Centre secondary plan area, and may provide a delineation and density target for this station at a later date.

Markham staff are supportive of the identified additional MTSA located on the non-priority portions of transit routes, as listed below, to ensure transit-supportive development as well as the application of inclusionary zoning for affordable housing:

- Steeles, Clark, Royal Orchard and Langstaff MTSA along the YNSE;
- Langstaff GO MTSA on the Richmond Hill GO line;
- McCowan and Cornell MTSA on the Highway 7 BRT; and
- Mount Joy MTSA on the Stouffville GO line.

While opportunities for additional MTSA on all of the future rapid transit corridors shown on Map 2 – Centres and Corridors Transit Network in the Official Plan were considered, including future Major Mackenzie Drive, Steeles Avenue, and Leslie Street rapid transit routes, staff recommend limiting additional MTSA at this time to those areas where there is anticipated funding for transit, or where there is already development interest. Further to this, Markham staff recommend extending the northern boundary of the Post MTSA in Markham Centre to include the lands fronting Highway 7, as shown in Appendix 'C', to maximize the application of inclusionary zoning. Likewise, until a decision is made by the Region on an additional MTSA at Denison Street, the delineation of the Milliken MTSA should be extended as far northward as reasonable within an 800 metre radius to capture additional opportunities for inclusionary zoning.

To allow local municipalities to begin applying inclusionary zoning as quickly as possible, it is also recommended that the Region bring forward a separate Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) in advance of the completion of the MCR and new ROP.

PURPOSE:

This report provides comments on the draft MTSA that have been identified by York Region for inclusion in the ROP.

BACKGROUND:

York Region is preparing a new ROP and undertaking a municipal comprehensive review (MCR) as part of its conformity exercise to the Growth Plan, 2019. The new ROP is also required to reflect the policy direction of other provincial policies and plans, including the Provincial Policy Statement 2020, Greenbelt Plan 2017 and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan 2017.

A key component of the Region's MCR work program is the preparation of an intensification strategy, which will include:

- An intensification framework based on a hierarchy of centres and corridors;
- Intensification targets Region-wide and for each local municipality to 2041;
- MTSA delineations and minimum density targets;
- Any additional strategic growth area (intensification area) delineations and minimum density targets;
- An implementation strategy for local municipalities with recommended tools for implementation; and
- Policy direction to update the ROP.

The "Planning for Intensification Background Report", which was considered by Regional Council on April 11, 2019, contained a summary of the background analysis completed to inform the preparation of the intensification strategy. The report also introduced draft components of the intensification strategy, which included an updated intensification matrix, and MTSA delineations and density targets, as the basis for consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders. Markham staff provided initial comments on the draft MTSA in a report to Development Services Committee (DSC) on April 29, 2019 and was directed to consult with the public and stakeholders in June 2019 to inform formal comments to the Region.

Regional staff provided an update on the draft MTSA to Regional Council on March 11, 2020, seeking confirmation of the number of MTSA to be identified in the ROP. Regional Council endorsed 72 staff recommended draft MTSA for inclusion in the ROP and directed Regional staff to identify certain additional MTSA in Richmond Hill and Vaughan, while continuing consultation to inform refinements to the draft MTSA delineations and density targets. The final MTSA are expected to be reported to Regional Council in Q3 2020.

This report provides an overview of the Region's draft intensification strategy with a focus on Markham staff comments on the draft MTSA delineations and density targets. To provide context, the report begins with a review of the current Provincial and Regional policy framework that directs planning for intensification, as well as an overview of the Region's and Markham's intensification strategy to 2031.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**1. Provincial plans and policies direct municipalities to manage growth through transit supportive development****1.1. Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Growth Plan, 2019**

A key principle of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS, 2020) is to promote development that uses land, resources and public investment in infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently and cost-effectively to accommodate growth. Accordingly, PPS, 2020 policies provide direction for planning for intensification, while promoting the integration of land use and transportation planning to manage growth and achieve transit-supportive development, among other things.

Building on the PPS, 2020, the Growth Plan, 2019 promotes the development of complete communities that are compact, transit-supportive, and make efficient use of investments in infrastructure and public service facilities. The Growth Plan, 2019 also seeks to align transit with growth by directing development to SGAs identified to accommodate intensification and a higher density of mixed uses, such as urban growth centres and MTSAs.

More specifically, the Growth Plan, 2019 provides direction for planning for intensification through policies that require municipalities to: manage population and employment growth based on forecasts to 2041; realize minimum intensification targets for residential development; identify intensification areas (SGAs) as the focus for accommodating growth, and specifically identify, delineate and set density targets for MTSAs. The Growth Plan, 2019 requirements for MTSAs are outlined in more detail below.

A more detailed overview of the applicable provincial policies is available in the Region's April 2019 "[Planning for Intensification Background Report](#)".

1.2. Current Regional Official Plan 2010 and Markham Official Plan 2014 are based on directing growth to regional centres and corridors served by higher order transit

The current ROP provides policy direction at the Regional level to achieve the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 intensification target of 40% by 2031 and to coordinate growth with transit planning. In particular, Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 direct intensification to strategic areas within the Region to leverage existing and planned infrastructure, services and transit. These strategic areas are based on a centres and corridor urban structure that directs the highest levels of intensification to Regional Centres and Corridors, GO stations, and local centres and corridors.

A graphic representation of the intensification strategy is provided in Figure 1. The highest levels of intensification will be accommodated in the intensification areas identified at the top of the matrix and generally decline towards the bottom of the matrix. The matrix has been updated to include MTSAs, which fall within the centres and corridor components of the matrix.



Figure 1 - York Region's Updated Intensification Matrix

The focus of intensification in centres and corridors served by higher order transit in Markham is reflected in Map 2 – Centres and Corridors and Transit Network in the Official Plan 2014, as shown in Appendix ‘A’. These intensification areas are identified as Regional Centres, Regional Corridors/Key Development Areas (KDAs), and Local Centres and Corridors. The two Regional Centres – Markham Centre and Langstaff Gateway – are anticipated to accommodate the largest share of intensification, followed by KDAs along the Yonge Street and Highway 7 Rapid Transit Corridors, and Local Centres and Corridors. Markham staff support the principle of continuing to focus growth in centres and corridors served by higher order transit, particularly within MTSAs, as reflected in the updated matrix.

As part of the 2041 MCR, the Region is required to distribute population growth to 2041 to achieve the new Growth Plan, 2019 minimum intensification target of 50% region-wide. This work is being done through the land needs assessment currently underway. The distribution of population growth to local municipalities will be based on capacity of the centres and corridors (including MTSAs) and other components of the intensification matrix to accommodate growth in each local municipality. Intensification targets to 2041 for each local municipality will also be determined through this exercise.

Markham staff will report back to Council when the Region releases updated population and employment forecasts and intensification targets in early 2021.

2. Comments on York Region's draft MTSAs

The Growth Plan, 2019 requires upper-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, to define the boundaries and assign density targets for MTSAs located on the priority transit corridors identified in Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan, 2019 in their

official plans. An MTSA is generally defined as the area surrounding a higher order transit station within a 500-800 metre radius, representing about a 10-minute walk.

The minimum densities specified in the Growth Plan, 2019 for required MTSA's are:

- 200 residents and jobs per hectare for subway stations,
- 160 residents and jobs per hectare for BRT/LRT stations; and
- 150 residents and jobs per hectare for GO rail stations.

These targets do not need to be met by the 2041 planning horizon, rather they represent densities at full build-out which may extend beyond 2041.

Upper-tier municipalities may also identify and delineate additional MTSA's beyond the priority transit corridors identified in the Growth Plan, 2019. The minimum density targets for these additional MTSA's can be set by the upper-tier municipality and are not subject to the Growth Plan, 2019 minimum density targets.

2.1 Twenty-four MTSA's identified in Markham

The Region's April 2019 "Planning for Intensification Background Report" identified seventy (70) draft MTSA's for inclusion in the ROP. Twenty-three (23) of the draft MTSA's were located in Markham. York Region subsequently identified two additional draft MTSA's in June 2019, one being the proposed Royal Orchard subway station, bringing the City's total to twenty-four (24). A map showing the draft MTSA's identified in Markham is provided in Figure 2.

Of the 24 MTSA's, sixteen (16) are required to be delineated as they are on identified priority transit corridors. In Markham, the priority transit corridors include the section of the Hwy 7 BRT corridor between Yonge Street and Markham Centre (13 MTSA's), and the Stouffville GO Line between Milliken Station and Unionville Station (3 MTSA's). The eight (8) proposed additional MTSA's include four (4) located on non-priority portions of these transit routes, as well as four (4) along the proposed YNSE.

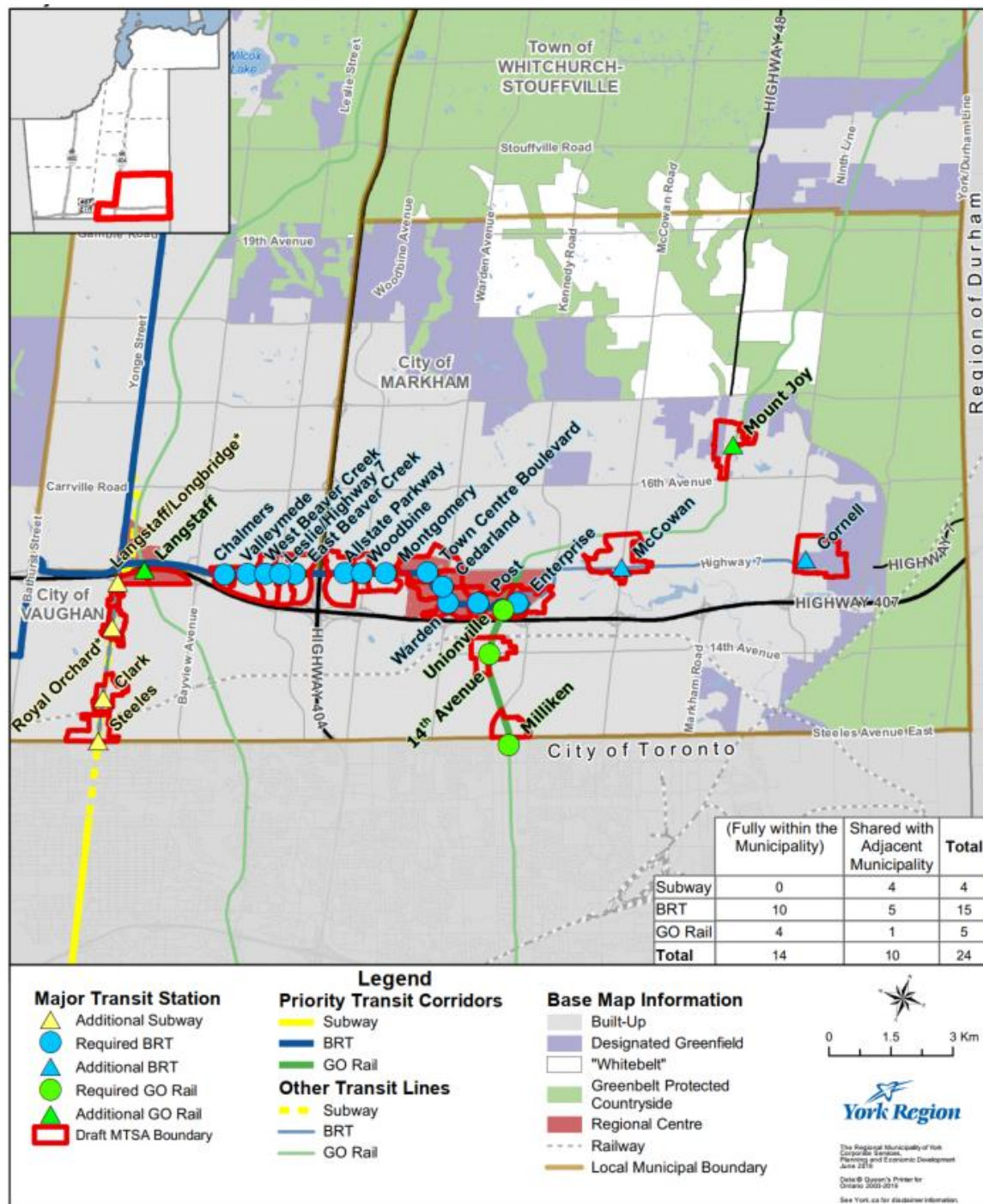


Figure 2 – Draft Major Transit Station Areas Identified in Markham

Ten (10) of the draft MTSA's are shared with municipalities adjacent to Markham, including Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Toronto. Where MTSA's are shared between municipalities, the Region has identified separate minimum density targets for each local municipality. The local municipalities will be responsible for independently planning to achieve the density target within their portion of the MTSA. York Region and the City of Toronto will also independently delineate and set minimum density targets for their portion of shared MTSA's (e.g., Milliken GO MTSA).

The Region has proposed minimum density targets for the MTSA's in Markham that meet and in most cases exceed the minimum density targets of the Growth Plan, 2019, as shown in Appendix 'B'. Local municipalities will be responsible for directing intensification and allocating density within each MTSA to achieve the minimum density targets. It is expected that full build-out will occur after 2041 and that the densities will be achieved incrementally over the long-term.

In accordance with the Planning Act, the Region plans to identify both the required and additional MTSA's in the new ROP as protected MTSA's, which are similar to MTSA's under the Growth Plan, 2019, in order to protect associated official plan policies and zoning from appeals. Once approved in the ROP, the MTSA's will be reflected in the Markham Official Plan and zoning.

2.2 York Region developed a consistent approach to delineate MTSA's across the Region

York Region's draft delineations and minimum density targets for each of the MTSA's identified in Figure 2, are provided in Appendix 'C'. The draft MTSA's were developed in consultation with the local municipalities, based on a consistent methodology developed to identify MTSA's across the Region.

Markham staff provided comments during the development of the methodology and worked with the Region to identify preliminary boundaries and density targets for the required and additional MTSA's across the City.

2.3 Community and stakeholder consultations were undertaken by staff to inform formal comments on the draft MTSA's to the Region

In April 2019, Council authorized staff to proceed with a community information meeting to obtain stakeholder and public input on the draft MTSA's released by the Region. The community information meeting took place in June 2019 and was facilitated by both City of Markham and York Region staff. Markham staff also presented the draft MTSA's to development industry representatives at a separate meeting.

Feedback received at the community information meeting ranged from general questions about the roles and responsibilities for land use planning at the Regional and local levels of government to questions about specific MTSA stations. Meeting participants were generally receptive of the draft MTSA's and emphasized the need to continue investing in transit infrastructure and services in Markham.

Written submissions received after these consultation events conveyed comments from landowners with properties in or near the following MTSA's:

- Royal Orchard Subway Station – Comments expressed support for the identification of Royal Orchard Subway Station as an MTSA and area of intensification.
- Unionville GO Station/Enterprise BRT Station – Comments suggested extending the boundary of the Unionville GO Station MTSA east to include two properties immediately adjacent to the station area but currently captured within the

Enterprise BRT MTSA delineation, and to increase the minimum density targets for the properties given that they are served by two MTSA.

- Mount Joy GO Station – Comments suggested extending the northern boundary of the Mount Joy GO Station MTSA from 500 to 800 metres to include a portion or all the lands immediately south of Major Mackenzie Drive within the delineation.

2.4 Staff are generally in agreement with the Region's draft MTSA delineations and minimum density targets but recommend certain revisions to reflect local conditions and site specific concerns

Markham staff are generally satisfied with York Region's approach to delineate the majority of the MTSA's located in Markham. The draft MTSA's are, with one exception, located within the City's Regional Centres, Regional Corridors/KDAs and local centres and corridors and are for the most part consistent with the boundaries for these areas. As noted earlier, these areas are intended to accommodate the majority of future residential and employment growth through intensification.

It should be noted that the draft delineations shown in the Region's April 2019 report reflected the definition of MTSA's in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (500 metre radius of a station) rather than the 500-800 metre radius now identified in the Growth Plan, 2019. The application of an 800 metre radius is expected to affect the delineation of only one or two MTSA's as discussed further below.

It should also be noted that the Region's methodology differs from the work undertaken by Markham to inform Metrolinx's YNSE station analysis as reported to DSC on May 25, 2020. The Regional MTSA delineations were based primarily on lands with existing or potential for high density development whereas the YNSE station analysis was based on a broader commutershed approach.

Recommended revisions to minimum density targets are identified in Appendix 'B', and summarized below. Regional staff is in concurrence with the proposed revisions.

- a) Yonge North Subway Extension – Staff recommend that minimum density targets for Clark and Royal Orchard MTSA's should be consistent – both at 250 residents + jobs per hectare, rather than 200.
- b) Employment MTSA's along Highway 7 BRT – Staff recommend slightly lower targets (ranging from 160 to 250 jobs/hectare) to better reflect existing conditions and provide more flexibility in accommodating new employment development in these areas, while still meeting or exceeding the Growth Plan, 2019 minimum density for BRT MTSA's.
- c) Markham Centre MTSA's – Staff recommend applying a more generalized target of 300 residents + jobs/hectare, with slightly lower targets for the Town Centre Blvd and Enterprise MTSA's (200 and 250), until the Secondary Plan is further advanced and the potential for higher densities can be verified. All of these proposed targets

are still well above the Growth Plan, 2019 minimum density of 160 residents + jobs/hectare for BRT MTSAs.

- d) 14th Avenue and Milliken Centre MTSAs – Regional staff have indicated that the proposed 14th Avenue MTSA will be removed as Metrolinx is no longer planning for a station at that location. Markham staff are continuing to pursue a new station at Denison Street at the northern limit of the Milliken Centre secondary plan area, and may provide a delineation and density target for this station at a later date.

Further comments may be reported by City staff at a later date regarding the draft delineations and proposed densities for MTSAs in Markham Centre, Milliken Centre, Cornell and Markham Road – Mount Joy as secondary planning processes currently underway in these areas continue to advance.

2.5 Staff are supportive of the proposed eight (8) additional MTSAs (located outside of priority transit corridors) to ensure transit-supportive development as well as the application of inclusionary zoning for affordable housing

Markham staff are supportive of the identified additional MTSAs located on the non-priority portions of transit routes as follows:

- Steeles, Clark, Royal Orchard and Langstaff MTSAs along the YNSE;
- Langstaff GO MTSA on the Richmond Hill GO line;
- McCowan and Cornell MTSAs on the Highway 7 BRT; and
- Mount Joy MTSA on the Stouffville GO line.

While opportunities for additional MTSAs on all of the future rapid transit corridors shown on Map 2 – Centres and Corridors Transit Network in the Official Plan were considered, including future Major Mackenzie Drive, Steeles Avenue, and Leslie Street rapid transit routes, staff recommend limiting additional MTSAs at this time to those areas where there is anticipated funding for transit, or where there is already development interest.

The Growth Plan, 2019 allows for additional MTSAs to be identified in the ROP outside of a Regional MCR to coincide with investments in transportation infrastructure or increases in the anticipated level of intensification for specific transit corridors. Any additional MTSAs over and above those listed which may be identified through secondary plan or other studies could continue to be put forward following completion of the Regional MCR. These may include recommendations for additional MTSAs to reflect an additional GO Station near Major Mackenzie Drive East and Markham Road, currently being assessed through the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan Study process, or the additional station being pursued at Denison Street in Milliken Centre.

Inclusionary zoning for affordable housing applicable only to MTSAs

With respect to the relationship between MTSAs and inclusionary zoning for affordable housing, changes to the Planning Act in 2019 now limit the application of inclusionary zoning to lands within protected MTSAs. In order to maximize the application of inclusionary zoning in Markham, staff recommend extending the northern boundary of

the Post MTSA in Markham Centre to include the lands fronting Highway 7, as shown in Appendix 'C'. Likewise, the delineation of the Milliken MTSA should be extended as far northward as reasonable within an 800 metre radius to capture additional opportunities for inclusionary zoning. For the remainder of the MTSA's, the current proposed boundaries already capture the majority of lands with potential for high density residential development.

To allow local municipalities to begin applying inclusionary zoning as quickly as possible, it is recommended that the Region bring forward a separate Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) in advance of the completion of the MCR and new ROP.

Recommendations and Next Steps

It is recommended that this report be forwarded to York Region as City of Markham comments on the Region's draft MTSA's.

In addition, it is recommended that the Region consider a standalone Regional Official Plan Amendment to implement MTSA's and inclusionary zoning in advance of completion of the MCR and adoption of the new ROP, to enable municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning as soon as possible.

Staff will continue to report to Committee as required, when other consultation documents pertaining to the MCR are released by the Region.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This report supports Goal 3 – Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community of Building Markham's Future Together, 2020-2023.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Planning and Urban Design Department was consulted regarding the recommendations of this report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Arvin Prasad, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A': Map 2 – Centres and Corridors and Transit Network

Appendix 'B': Draft MTSA Boundary Delineations/Density Targets and Recommended
Revisions

Appendix 'C': Draft MTSAs in Markham