



Buttonville Airport Lands Update

**Development Services Committee
September 29, 2020**



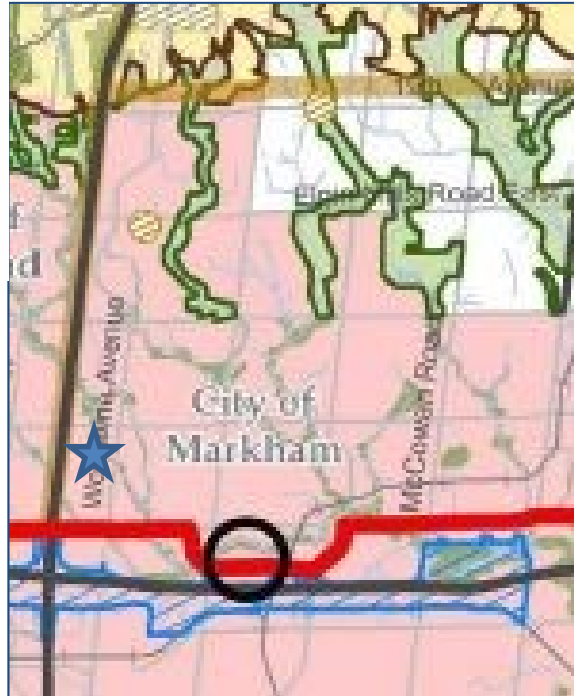
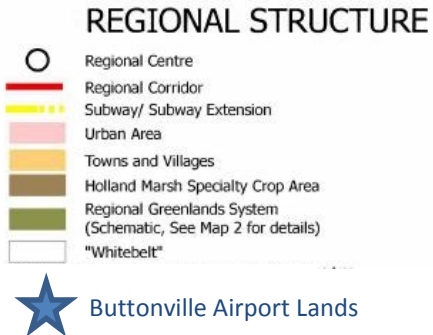
Background

September 15, 2020 Council Meeting:

- A motion was adopted seeking Council support for maintaining the intent of the current site specific policy in the Regional Official Plan (ROP) for the Buttonville Airport lands, which allows for a limited mix of urban uses on the employment lands.
- The motion arose from release of draft Regional Official Plan mapping which showed the Buttonville Airport lands designated as protected employment area under the Growth Plan.
- Council directed staff to report back to September 29, 2020 Development Services Committee meeting with an update on the Buttonville Airport designation issue.



Regional Official Plan 2010 (in effect)



Designation: Urban Area
Site Specific Policy 7.2.92

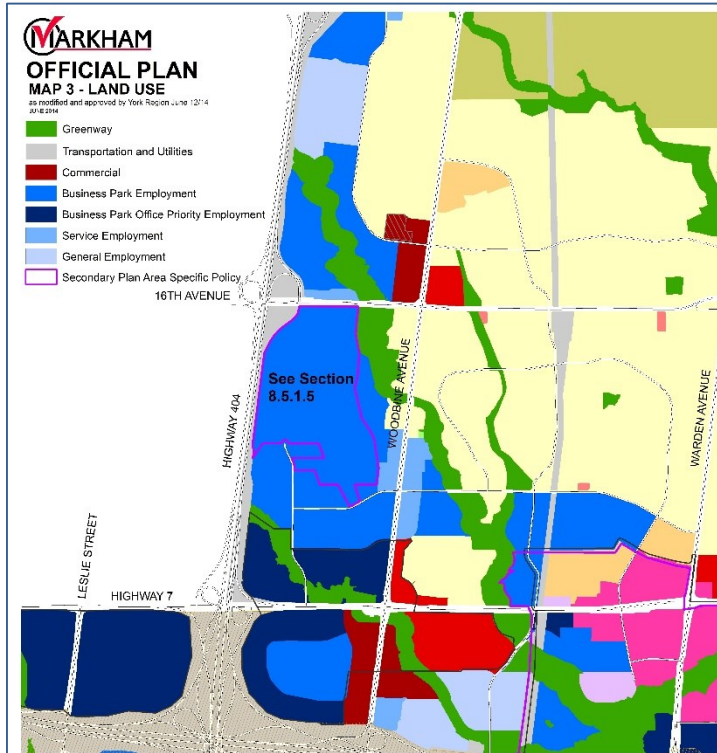
“That the Toronto Buttonville Municipal Airport Lands are designated for business park use, in the City of Markham Official Plan, including permission to operate an airport.

When airport operations at the Buttonville Airport cease, the significant majority of the subject lands shall be retained for business park use, and the balance for a mix of urban uses.

The City of Markham, in consultation with the Region, will determine the details of the future use of these lands through an implementing secondary plan process.”



Markham Official Plan 2014



7.1.8 Airports

7.1.8.2 To provide for the continued operation of the Toronto Buttonville Municipal Airport and to work with the Region and the landowners to determine the details of the future, long-term use of these lands through an implementing secondary plan process in accordance with Section 8.5.1.5.

Land Use Designation: Business Park Employment

8.5.1 Employment Lands - General Policies

8.5.1.5 That Markham will prepare a new secondary plan for the Buttonville West lands in the vicinity of the Toronto Buttonville Municipal Airport as shown on Appendix F – Secondary Plan Areas, and shown in outline with an asterisk on Map 3 – Land Use, that will incorporate policies for future land use in accordance with Section 7.2.92 of the Regional Official Plan.

Area and Site Specific Policies

9.4.5 Buttonville West Secondary Plan

A new secondary plan shall be approved for the 'Business Park Employment' lands in the vicinity of the Toronto Buttonville Municipal Airport or the Buttonville West area as shown on Appendix F – Secondary Plan Areas and in Figure 9.4.5, including lands within the Buttonville Airport Redevelopment Area (shown in outline with an asterisk on Map 3 – Land Use), that will incorporate policies for future land use in accordance with Section 7.2.92 of the Regional Official Plan.



Growth Plan 2019 Policy Change

New Employment Policy 2.2.5.6

Upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, will designate all *employment areas* in official plans and protect them for appropriate employment uses over the long-term.

For greater certainty, *employment area* designations may be incorporated into upper- and single-tier official plans by amendment at any time in advance of the municipal comprehensive review.

Definitions

Employment Area – Areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities, including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities. (PPS, 2020)



Implication of Growth Plan 2019 Policy 2.2.5.6

- The Growth Plan 2006 in effect at the time of approval of the ROP 2010 and the Markham OP 2014, did not require *employment areas* to be mapped. Although the Region was the approval authority for conversions, municipalities had discretion in how to protect *employment areas* in their official plans.
- The Growth Plan 2019 is more specific in that it now requires upper-tier municipalities to designate *employment areas* in their official plans.
- Applying both a specific *employment area* designation and a site specific policy that allows for non-employment area uses in the Regional Official Plan can be interpreted as not conforming with the Growth Plan 2019.



Status of Draft Secondary Plan

- An official plan amendment (secondary plan) application for the Buttonville Municipal Airport lands was submitted by the landowners in 2011 to identify specific land use designations for the lands. The application was subsequently appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).
- A settlement was reached between York Region, the City of Markham and the landowners resulting in a draft secondary plan being presented to the OMB for approval. The OMB approved the secondary plan subject to conditions in 2017, but the appeal was withdrawn by the landowners in 2020 prior to the conditions being satisfied and a final decision being issued. As a result, the secondary plan did not come into force.
- To date, no new development plans for the Buttonville Airport lands have been submitted.



Solutions Under Consideration

- Markham and Regional staff have been working with Provincial staff and the landowner to maintain the policy intent of ROP policy 7.2.92, while ensuring conformity with the Growth Plan 2019.
- The landowners' proposal to exclude the Buttonville Airport lands from employment area mapping while maintaining the site specific policy in the ROP may not be sufficient to ensure that the balance between employment and non-employment uses that was achieved through the secondary plan process is reflected in a future secondary plan. Markham staff are working with the Region to address this issue while ensuring appropriate policy protection in the Regional Official Plan.
- Until Markham Council takes a position on a new development concept or secondary plan for the Airport lands, staff consider it prudent to maintain appropriate Growth Plan conversion protection through the ROP mapping. Further discussions with the Province are required to arrive at a mutually acceptable policy solution.



Next Steps

- Markham staff will continue to work with Regional and Provincial staff and the landowner to arrive at a solution that maintains the intent of ROP 7.2.92 while conforming with the Growth Plan 2019.
- A Regional staff report seeking endorsement of employment area mapping and employment conversion recommendations is expected to be brought to Regional Committee of the Whole in early October.