

Markham Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2021, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Electronic Meeting

**Sub-Committee
Members**

Regional Councillor Jack Heath

Councillor Karen Rea

Councillor Andrew Keyes

Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton (Ex-Officio)

Regional Councillor Jim Jones (Ex-Officio)

Councillor Keith Irish (Ex-Officio)

Regrets

Councillor Amanda Collucci

Mayor Frank Scarpitti (Ex-Officio)

Council Members

Regional Councillor Joe Li

Councillor Alan Ho

Staff

Andy Taylor, CAO
 Claudia Storto, City Solicitor
 Jacqueline Chan, Assistant City Solicitor
 Bryan Frois, Chief of Staff
 Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services
 Biju Karumanchery, Director, Planning & Urban Design
 Brian Lee, Director, Engineering
 Marg Wouters, Senior Manager, Policy & Research
 Ron Blake, Senior Development Manager,
 Stacia Muradali, Acting Manager, Development, East District
 Lilli Duoba, Manager, Natural Heritage
 Regan Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage
 Kevin Ross, Manager, Development Finance & Payroll
 Mark Visser, Senior Manager Strategy Innovation & Investments
 Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services
 Graham Seaman, Director, Sustainability & Asset Management
 Grace Lombardi, Acting Election & Committee Coordinator
 Alida Tari, Manager, Access & Privacy
 Laura Gold, Council & Committee Coordinator
 Amanda Samara, Administrative Assistant Building Standards
 Department
 Billy Tung, KLM Planning
 Julianna Boldt, Humboldt Properties
 Latif Fazel, Liberty
 Michael Uster, Liberty
 Christian Lamanna, Cornell Rouge
 Robert Singer

1. CALL TO ORDER

In consideration of the ongoing public health orders, this meeting was conducted electronically to maintain physical distancing of participants. With the recent passage of Bill 197 COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, municipal Council Members are now permitted to meet remotely and count towards quorum.

The Markham Sub-Committee meeting convened at the hour of 9:06 AM with Regional Councillor Heath presiding as Chair.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None disclosed.

3. HUMBOLD GREENSBOROUGH VALLEY HOLDINGS LIMITED PRESENTATION

Biju Karumanchery, Director, Planning & Urban Design, addressed the subcommittee and provided brief opening remarks relative to the Humbold Greensborough Valley Holdings Limited application.

Stacia Muradali, Acting Manager, Development, East District, delivered a presentation providing an update with respects to the Humbold Greensborough Valley Holdings Limited applications for official plan, and zoning by-law amendment, draft plan of subdivision and site plan approval. The presentation included background information, area context, and the proposed development. It was noted that the site plan application was referred to the Markham subcommittee by Development Services Committee to consider enhancement to the fencing along the storm water management pond.

Billy Tung, KLM Planning, on behalf of Humbold Greensborough Valley Holdings Limited, delivered a presentation and provided a high level overview on the background information, context map, context of the greater Rouge National Urban Park, proposed site plan, proposed private parkette design, proposed landscape plan, and proposed decorative fencing. It was noted that an existing chain link fence around the storm water management pond was installed by Humbold Greensborough Valley Holdings Limited and that the proposed enhancement fencing will be maintained by the future condominium corporation. Mr. Tung noted that the applicant is requesting compensation to assist with the request to install the enhanced fencing.

Members of the Markham Sub-Committee discussed the following with respect to the staff and applicant presentations:

- Potentially upgrading the chain link fence to wrought iron or like fencing to increase the interface between the proposed application and the potential Rouge National Urban Park expansion;
- Maintenance responsibilities of the decorative fencing surrounding the stormwater management pond;
- Fencing height;
- Retain the current chain link fence and consider installing cedar hedges along the chain link fencing as a substitute for enhancing the fence; and,
- Potential funding source for the requested compensation to assist with the installation of an enhanced fencing.

Staff noted that the funding source for the compensation would be tax dollars as the enhancement of the fence does not meet the requirements to use Development Charge (DC) funding. Staff also noted that a “parks fund” for these type of uses does not exist.

It was requested that staff report back to a future Development Services Committee meeting with a memo and include the minutes of today’s meeting. It was suggested that staff outline: the cost of cedar hedges and provide other alternatives for the area around stormwater management pond.

Moved By Regional Councillor Jim Jones

Seconded By Councillor Andrew Keyes

1. That the presentations by staff, Billy Tung, KLM Planning, and Julianna Boldt, Humboldt Properties, titled "Humboldt Greensborough Valley Holdings Limited" be received.
2. **That staff be directed to report back to a future Development Services Committee meeting with a memo and include the minutes of today’s meeting and outline the cost of cedar hedges and provide other alternatives for the fencing, if any, along the stormwater management pond.**

Carried

4. CHAIR HEATH TO SPEAK ON PROPOSED GATEWAY

Regional Councillor Jack Heath, delivered a presentation and provided his vision on creating a successful gateway of the Rouge National Urban Park within the City of Markham which included the components that make up the central node.

The subcommittee expressed their support for Regional Councillor Jack Heath’s vision of the gateway. There was discussion with respect to potentially considering incorporation of a convention centre, automated waste management system, sports fields, and golf courses near the gateway.

Moved By Councillor Andrew Keyes

Seconded By Regional Councillor Jim Jones

1. That the presentation titled "Rouge National Urban Park in the City of Markham" be received.

Carried

5. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By Councillor Andrew Keyes

Seconded By Regional Councillor Jim Jones

That the Markham Sub-Committee meeting adjourn at 11:02 AM.

Carried



ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK IN THE CITY OF MARKHAM

Presented to Markham Subcommittee
(with minor revisions after meeting)

Monday, January 11, 2021

Regional Councillor Jack Heath



Lake Louise in the winter.

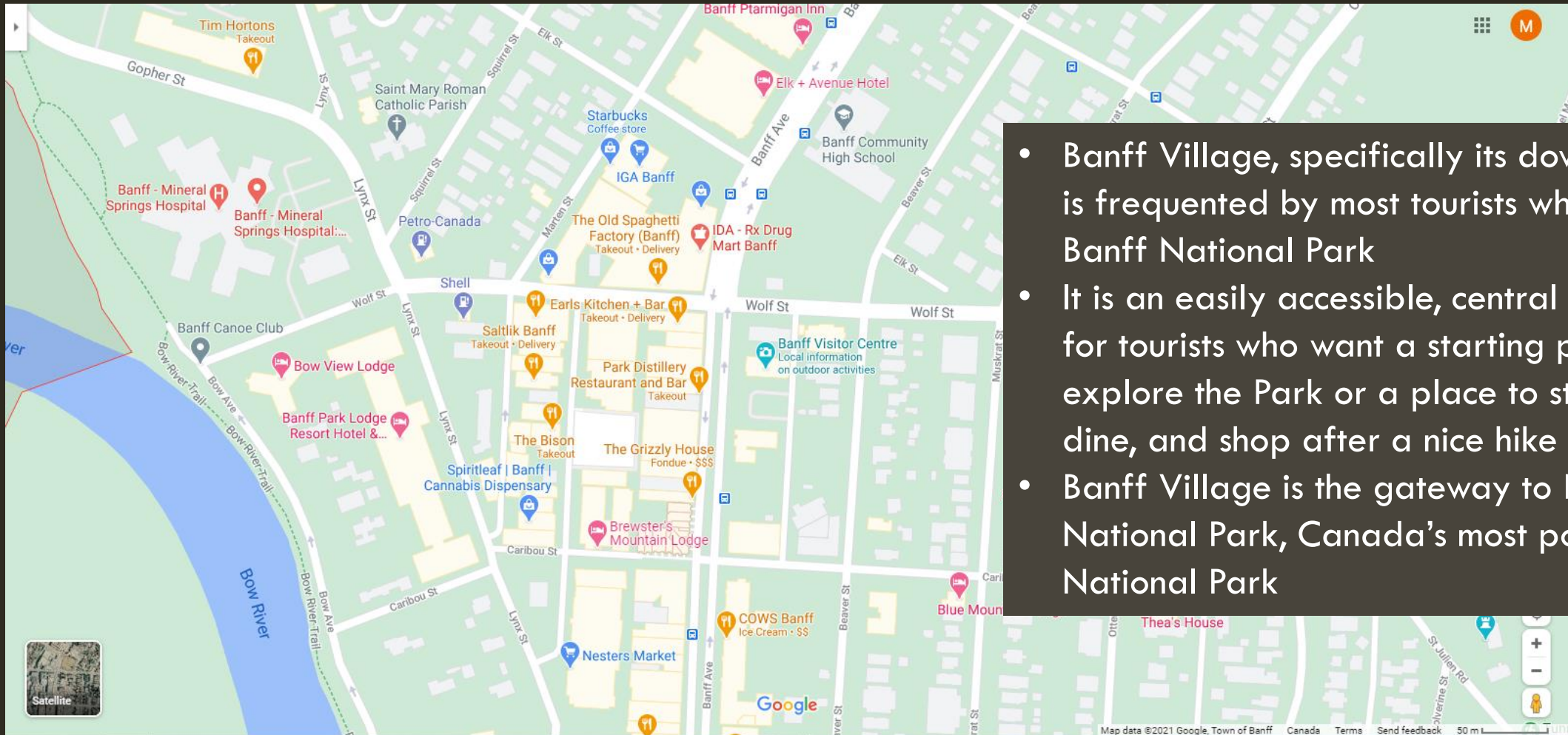
**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO
BANFF NATIONAL PARK?**



Downtown Banff Village looking towards Mount Rundle.

**THEN YOU MUST HAVE VISITED
BANFF VILLAGE!**

DOWNTOWN OF BANFF VILLAGE



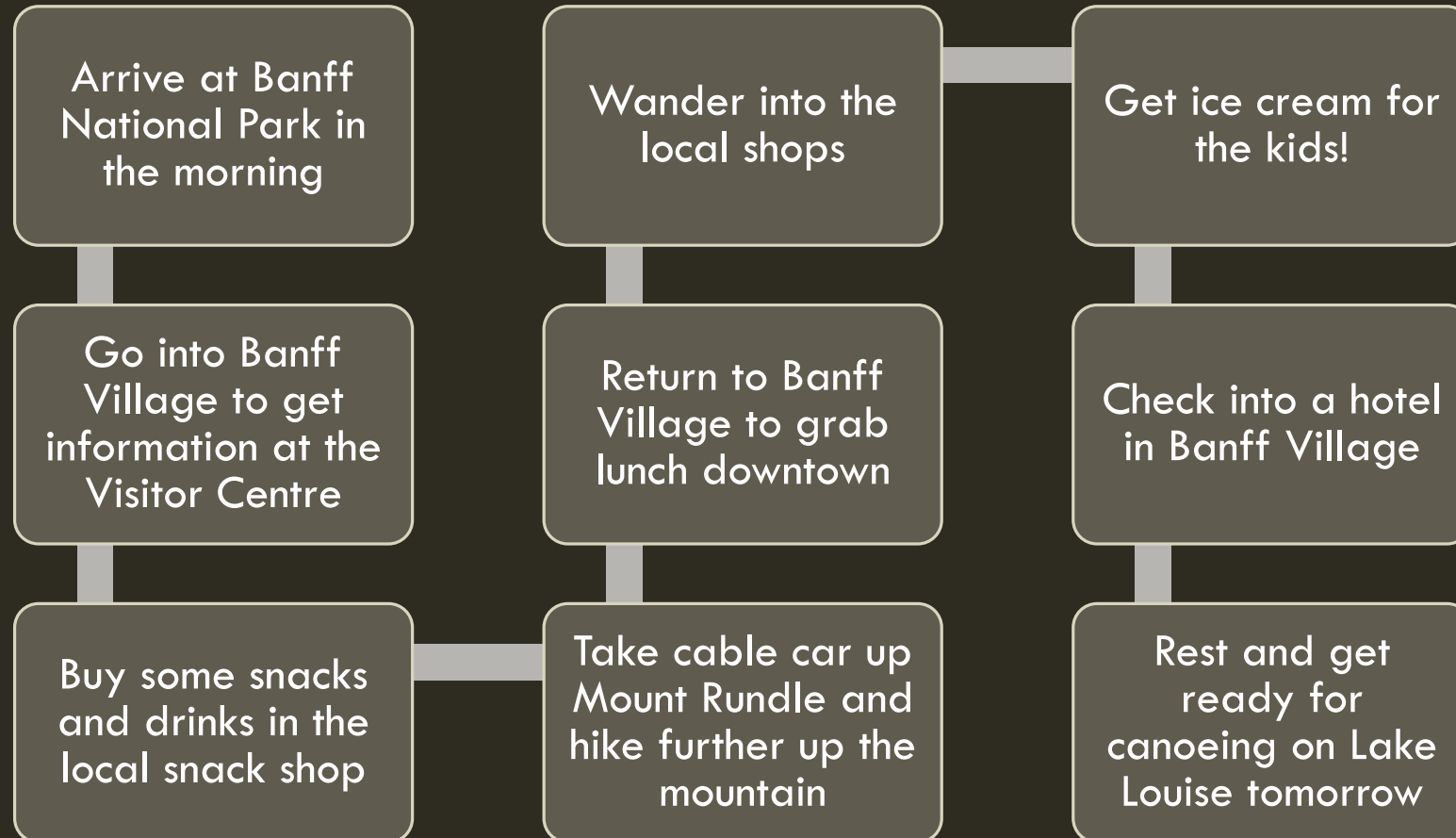
- Banff Village, specifically its downtown, is frequented by most tourists who visit Banff National Park
- It is an easily accessible, central area for tourists who want a starting point to explore the Park or a place to stay, dine, and shop after a nice hike
- Banff Village is the gateway to Banff National Park, Canada's most popular National Park

- Ice cream
- Shopping
- Lodging



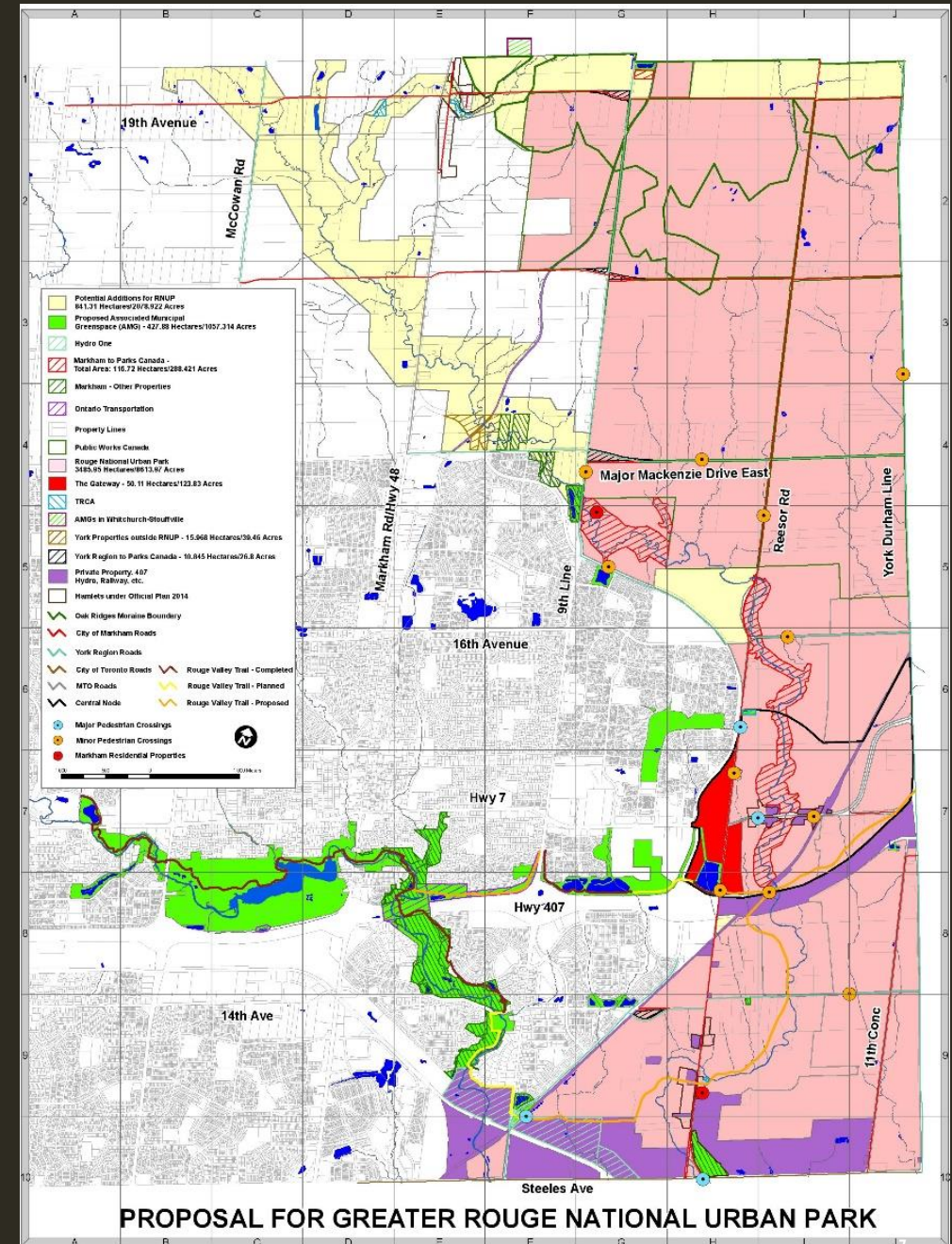
- Dining
- Sightseeing
- Tourist information

A DAY IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK

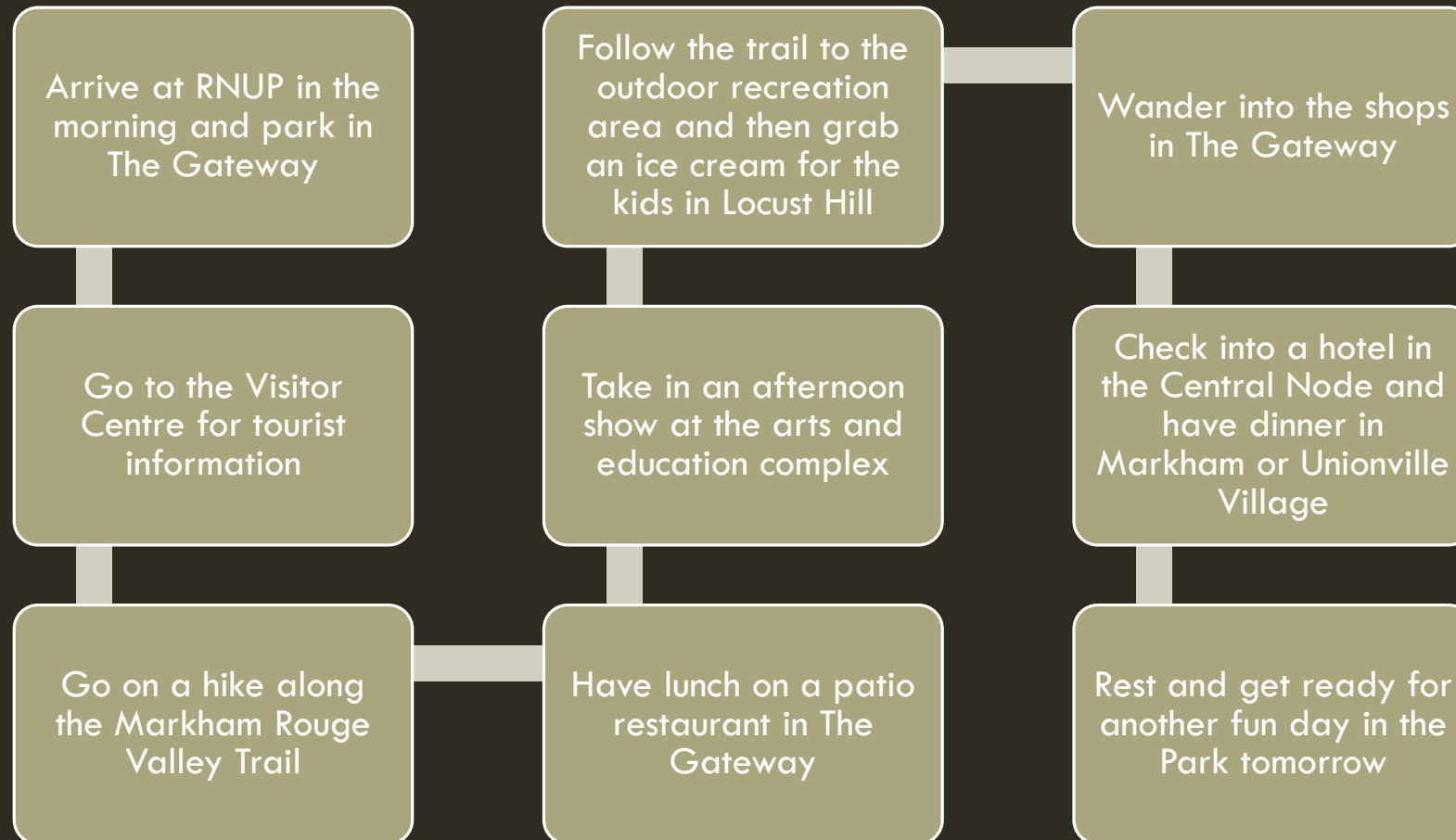


ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK IN MARKHAM

- Rouge National Urban Park could eventually encompass 1/5th of Markham
- It is expected that, at its maturity, Rouge National Urban Park could draw a million visitors annually
- Our presentation today is all about the visitor experience
- The time is now for the City of Markham, together with Parks Canada, the landowners, and the local community to create a successful gateway in the City of Markham



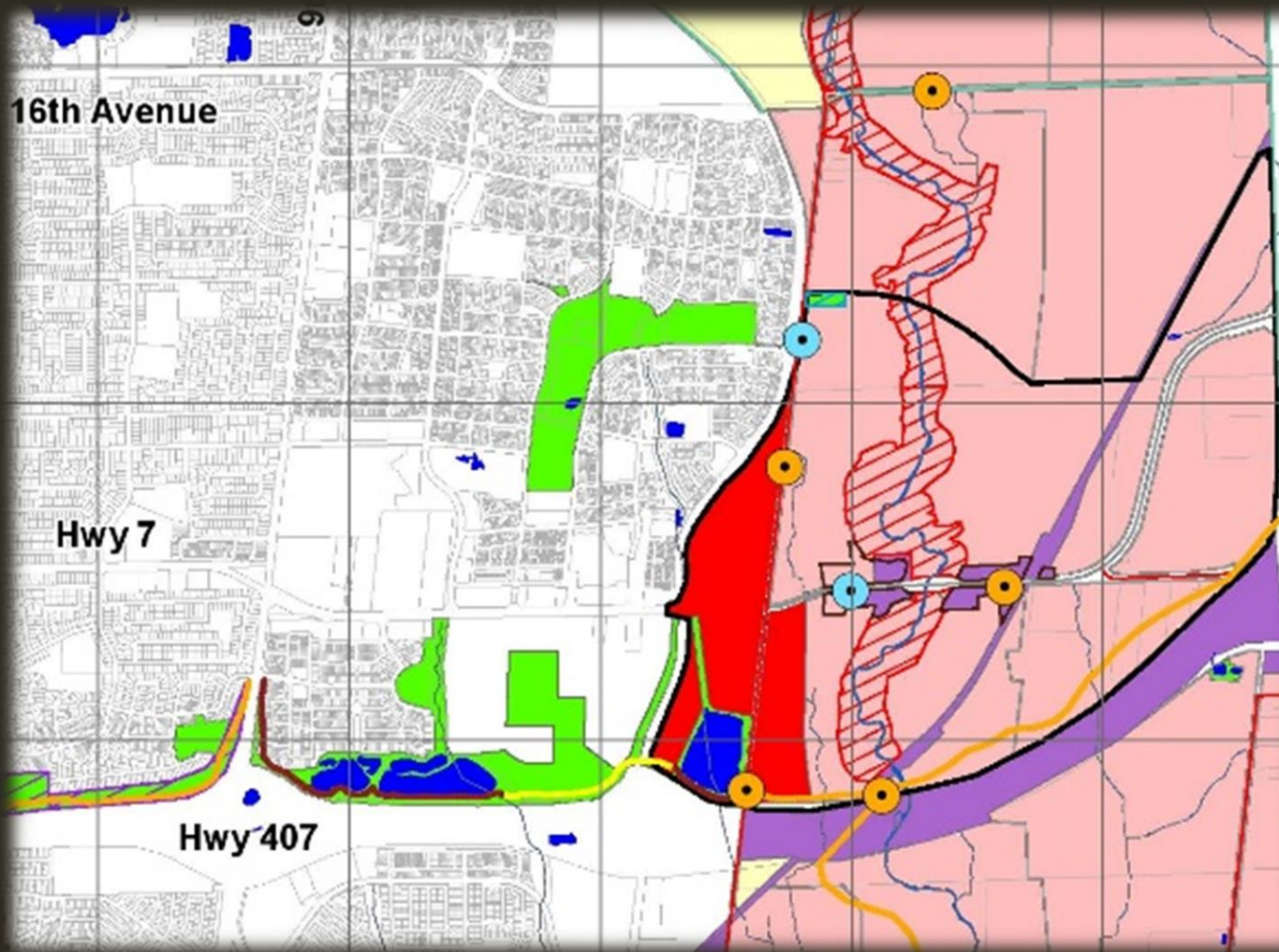
IMAGINE A DAY IN ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK IN MARKHAM



IS THIS A VISION WORTH STRIVING FOR?

Let's see what is needed to
make it happen!

THE CENTRAL NODE AND RNUP



Key Legend:

- **PINK** = Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP)
- **BLACK LINE** = The Central Node
- **RED** = The Gateway

The Central Node is the location that provides visitors, with a limited amount of time, all they need for an enjoyable experience at the Park.

COMPONENTS THAT MAKE UP THE CENTRAL NODE

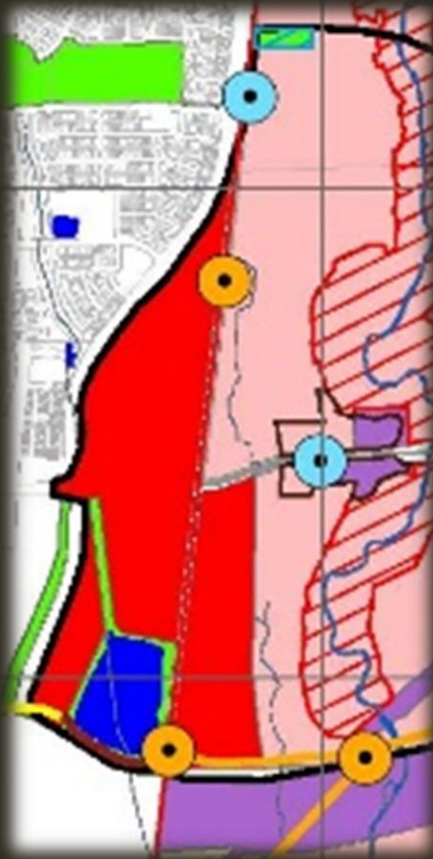
THE GATEWAY

Location:

- In RED, just to the west of RNUP
- North of the 407, east and west of Reesor Rd
- The entire Gateway is located **OUTSIDE** of RNUP

Ownership:

- Landowners
- City of Markham
- Province of Ontario



Opportunities to be Realized:

- Can help bring the word “Urban” to life - in and around RNUP
- Significant economic development for Markham and York Region
- Should be a special area distinct from the rest of Cornell, with a different architecture and feel
- Ought to be designed to face into the Park and the Visitor Centre
- Needs adequate parking for visitors to the Park, the arts and education complex, stores, restaurants, patios, and recreation. Structured? An integrated parking system with the Park?
- Will bring significant employment
- Should include two major intersections (Donald Cousens and Hwy 7, & Reesor Road and Hwy 7)
- Requires significant residential to make it viable all year round. How much?
- Would have retail, restaurants, patios, hotels, local shops, and Park services
- Needs nearby recreation areas (e.g. trails, canoeing, bird-watching, picnics, camping, etc.), and numerous connections to the rest of the Park

Rebranding is Needed:

- For tourism and economic development marketing, a name change is recommended: “The Markham Gateway”

Question:

- How much conversion from employment to mixed-use is needed to realize the opportunities?

THE REESOR ROAD EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Location:

- East of Reesor Rd, South of Highway 7 down to the 407 (see oval on map)

Current situation:

- Owned by the Province of Ontario
- Part of York's and Markham's employment land inventory

Opportunities:

- Employment (office locations)
- Residential
- Retail, restaurants, patios, hotels facing into the Park; RREL shares a larger boundary with RNUP than other parts of The Gateway
- Plan as an integral part of The Gateway, not separate
- Recreation
 - Connectivity via trails and pathways going east to join RNUP trails and west to join Markham's Rouge Valley Trail
 - Could host a mini sports field or two

Question:

- How much conversion from employment to mixed-use is needed to realize the opportunities?



THE VISITOR CENTRE

Location:

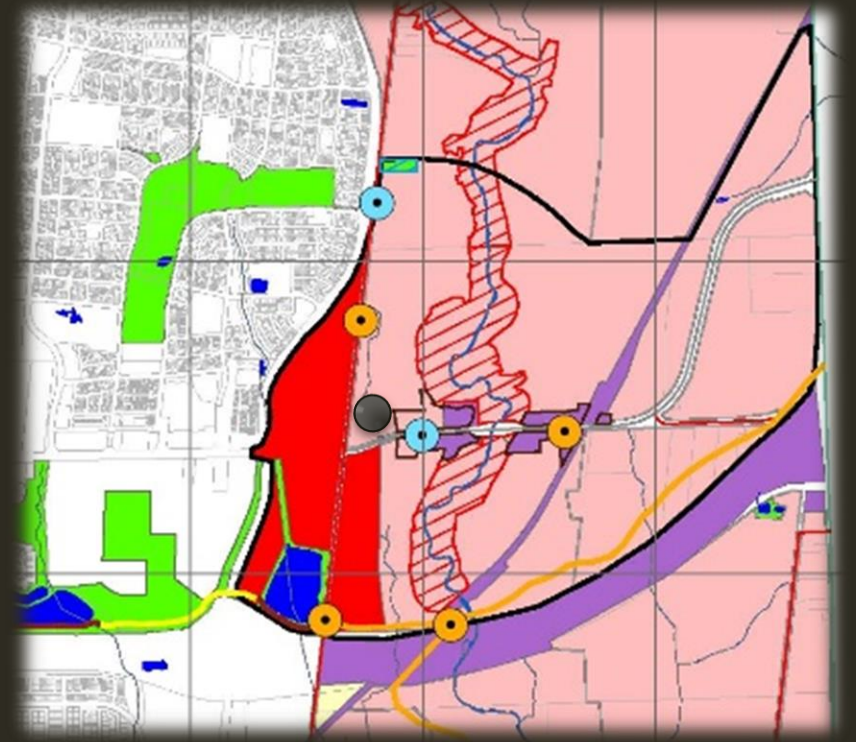
- Northeast corner of Reesor Road and Highway 7 (see black dot on map)

Purpose:

- Inform and educate visitors about the geographical history of the area, and the Indigenous peoples and settlers of this land over the years
- Provide visitors information on where to go, things to do, and other recommendations for their visit to RNUP and Markham

Integral:

- The Visitor Centre will be essential for The Gateway and the Central Node. It will be the hub of The Gateway – convenient and accessible.
- We propose to link it with the Markham Museum



RECREATION: TRAILS

Proposal:

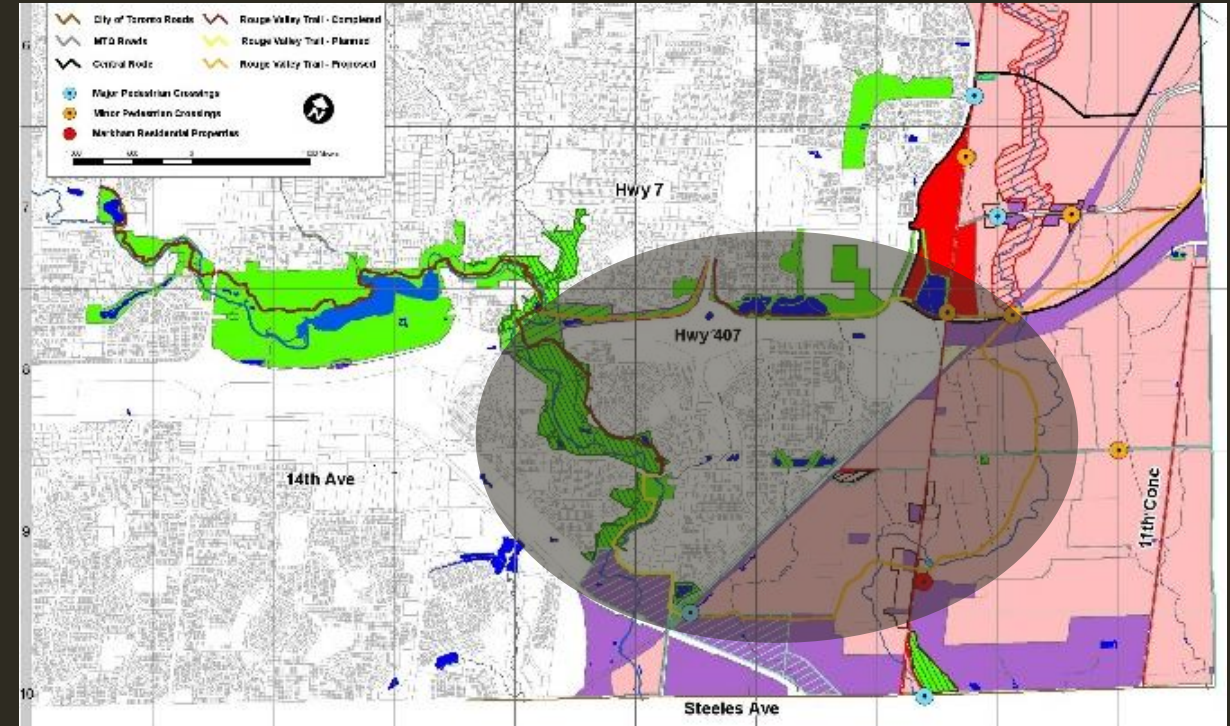
- That the existing Markham Rouge Valley Trail connect to RNUP trails near Steeles and Reesor
- That a branch of the Markham Rouge Valley Trail be constructed just north of the 407 from the Rouge River east to The Gateway and RNUP

This Means:

- In conjunction with RNUP's main north-south trail, there would be a loop opportunity. Extremely popular!
- It would be a major attraction for The Gateway. These trails would be on its southern edge where the stormwater management ponds and all the birds are located!
- It would be multi-use. One day, it might be a route for cycling and cross country races!
- Residents in The Gateway would value these trails highly
- Markham will likely have the best trail network in the GTA

Rebranding is Needed:

- For tourism and economic development marketing, a name change is recommended: "Markham Rouge Valley Trail"



RECREATION: MILNE #2

Background:

- Milne Park has been a tremendous success in Markham
- With the City's growth, a second location is needed for community events, recreational activities and picnics, and trails for people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy

Proposal:

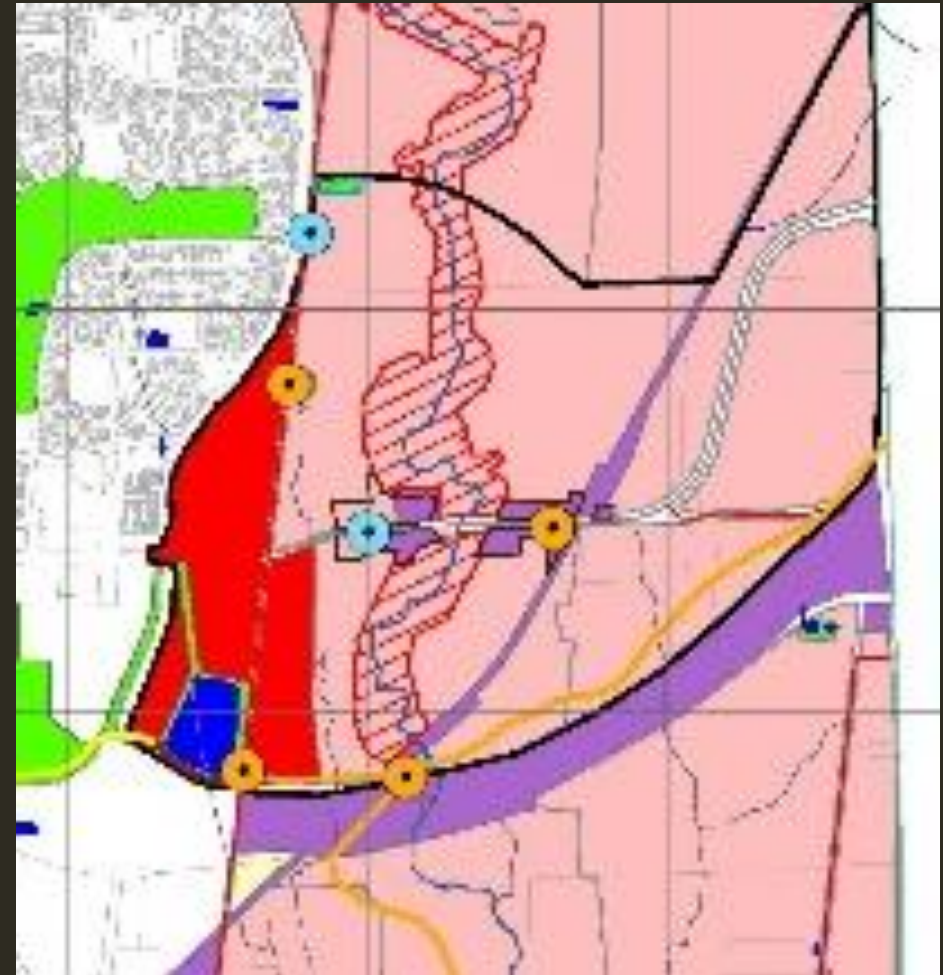
- Milne #2 (name TBD) would serve this purpose

Location:

- TBD
- Proximity to The Gateway is important

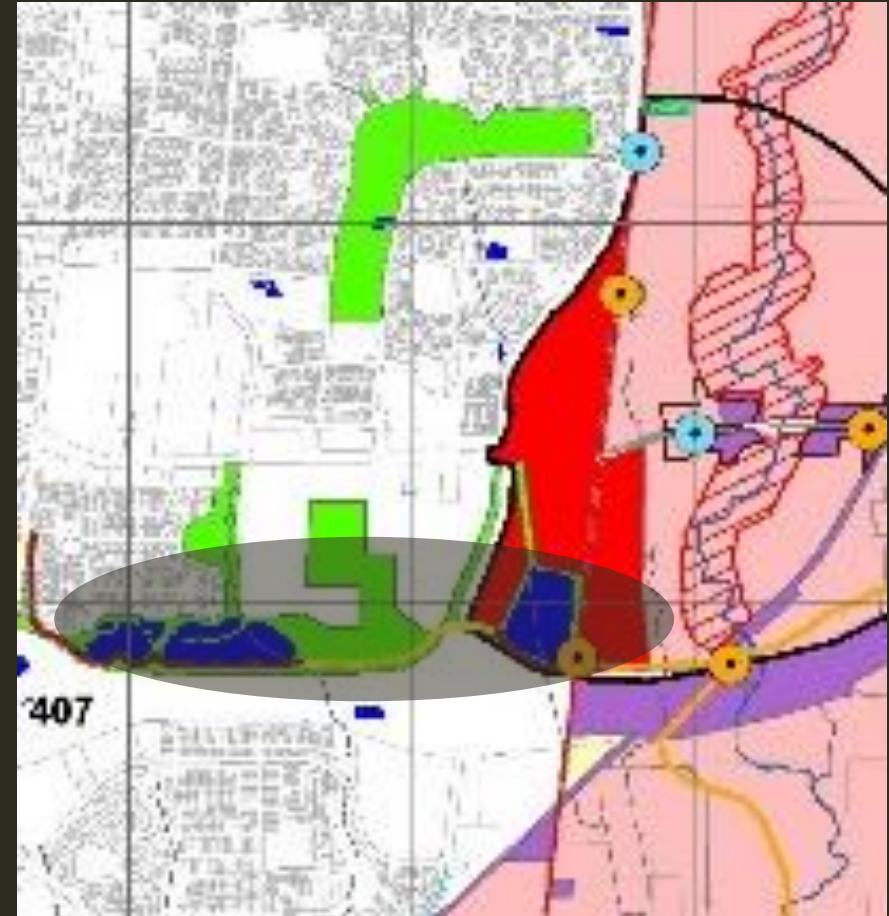
Types of Recreation:

- Trail connections, picnic areas, outdoor stage, education and learning, environmental enhancement opportunities, farmers' market, skating on natural ice in the winter, non-organized sports, dog off-leash park, etc.



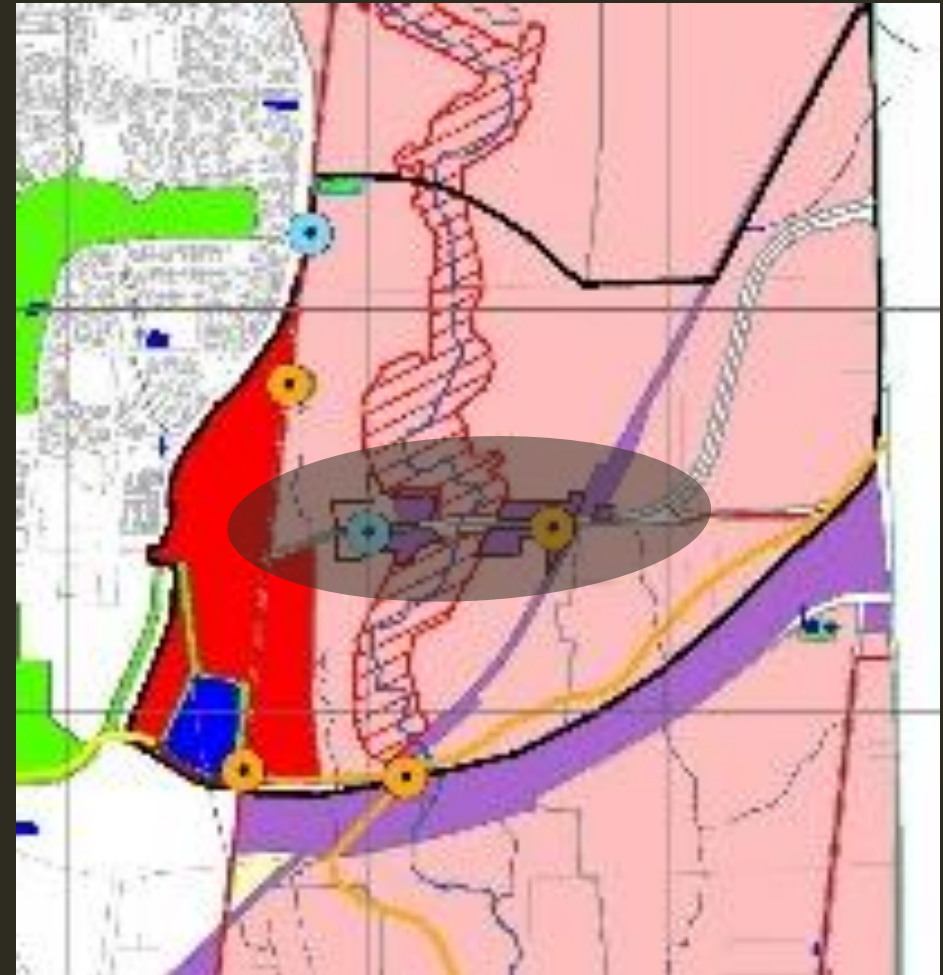
RECREATION: CYCLING, CAMPING, BIRDWATCHING, ETC.

- The possibilities are endless for activities in and near The Central Node
- Birdwatching is already something that people do by the large storm water management ponds in or near the Gateway (see dark oval highlight on map)
- Camping is also a potential. There's a possibility for families to grab their camping gear in The Gateway and enjoy RNUP overnight.
- Cycling opportunities in and around the Park will be plentiful. Visitors can rent a bike for 3-hours at a bike-rental store in The Gateway, and explore RNUP.
- Winter skating at Cedarena - Reesor Rd south of 14th which potentially could have artificial ice
- Heritage exploration. RNUP and its vicinity have the greatest number of heritage assets in Markham and the Park
- Arts and education opportunities are being explored



A HIGHWAY 7 BYPASS OF LOCUST HILL

- Highway 7 runs through the heart of The Central Node. Two lanes at present.
- With coming development of Seaton in Durham, there will eventually be a need to widen Highway 7 into a 4-lane road
- From a tourism perspective, the widening would have detrimental effects. Families visiting the Park would not feel safe and comfortable walking beside or crossing a fast-moving, busy 4-lane road in the Locust Hill area.
- The best way to solve this problem is with a bypass for Highway 7 so traffic can go around Locust Hill and recreation areas



QUESTIONS ON THE HORIZON

1. There are lots designated for heritage homes in Locust Hill in the Markham Official Plan. How will this work?

2. Will GO train service return to the Havelock Line? Will there be a station in Locust Hill?

3. Will the Locust Hill Train Station return to the hamlet? Located where?

4. Will RNUP have its own transit system?

5. Where will hotels be located?

6. Will the new mixed-use Gateway need parking systems immediately?

7. Can the Nighswander Hotel be restored? It was located in the east end of Locust Hill on the south side of Hwy 7.

8. Where will tour buses park?

9. The “iconic bridge” at Reesor and Hwy 7 - does this mean that the main trail going east is on the south side of Hwy 7?

10. Will there be another iconic bridge at the Locust Hill School House crossing over Donald Cousens Parkway?

11. Could The Gateway host a convention centre?

A SUCCESSFUL CENTRAL NODE WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS. IT WILL:

- ✓ Be viable year-round,
- ✓ Be the go-to location for Park visitors,
- ✓ Be family friendly,
- ✓ Have a variety of uses,
- ✓ Have significant residential component,
- ✓ Be a thriving hospitality site,
- ✓ Contribute to economic development,
- ✓ Start construction and essentially complete in a reasonable timeframe,
- ✓ Understand that a Highway 7 bypass of Locust Hill will eventually be needed,

- ✓ Include:
 - The Gateway in its entirety,
 - The RNUP Visitor Centre,
 - And, have access to a variety of recreation (trails, cycling, camping, Milne #2, Heritage Estates, arts and education complex, etc.)

The involvement of The Gateway landowners in all aspects of the Central Node is crucial.

Moving around in the Central Node should be a seamless experience for all visitors to enjoy.

THANK YOU!

Questions?