

SUBJECT: City Comments on Provincial Bridge Station Transit Oriented Community Proposal (Ward 1)

PREPARED BY: Marty Rokos, MCIP, RPP, ext. 2980, Senior Planner

REVIEWED BY: Stephen Lue, MCIP, RPP, ext. 2520, Acting Senior Development Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report titled “City Comments on Provincial Bridge Station Transit Oriented Community Proposal, (Ward 1)” be received;
2. That the City does not support the Bridge Station Transit Oriented Community (TOC) proposal as currently proposed;
3. That the City request the Province to revise the Bridge Station TOC Proposal to address the matters outlined in this staff report and in particular the following:
 - a. Align the Bridge Station TOC Proposal with the vision of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan to create a complete and sustainable community;
 - b. Comprehensively plan for the entire Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area;
 - c. Correct the imbalance of land uses by achieving a jobs to residents ratio of closer to 1:2 as outlined in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan;
 - d. Provide a minimum of 6 hectares of parkland and confirm that Bridge Park is financially and technically feasible;
 - e. Provide a minimum of one library at 2,415 m² and one community centre at 4,273 m² to serve the community;
 - f. Confirm the appropriate amount of space required for schools with the York Region District School Board, York Region Catholic School Board, Conseil scolaire Viamonde, and Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir;
 - g. Engage with the City to meet the 35% target for affordable housing as established in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan;
 - h. Revise the Transportation Plan to comprehensively plan for the entire Richmond Hill Centre/ Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre and account for the change in the subway location, significant increase in travel demand from the population increase and reduced opportunity for local travel due to the low ratio of non-residential uses proposed;
 - i. Provide a detailed Phasing Plan for the City’s review that appropriately aligns development with the delivery of subway, transportation, infrastructure and civic uses (such as schools, parks and community amenities);
 - j. Provide information on how automated vacuum waste system (AVAC) and District Energy can be accommodated;
4. That the City request the Province to provide details regarding the financial framework for the Bridge Station TOC proposal;

5. That the City request the Province to consult with appropriate external agencies, including but not limited to: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Canadian National Railway, and 407 ETR;
6. That the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing be requested to consult with the City of Markham should a Minister's Zoning Order be considered for the Bridge Station TOC lands;
7. That Council direct staff to continue working with the Province and Region to align the vision of the Bridge Station TOC with the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan through *Planning Act* implementation tools (e.g. plan of subdivision, site plan) and other mechanisms, including potential agreements with participating parties;
8. That the City Clerk provide a copy of this resolution and report to the Ministries of Infrastructure, Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Transportation; and Infrastructure Ontario, as well as York Region and the City of Richmond Hill; and
9. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends that the City not support the Bridge Station Transit Oriented Community as currently proposed. Areas of concern include the following:

- The Bridge Station TOC would result in much higher densities than envisioned in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan;
- The Bridge Station TOC has not been planned comprehensively;
- A comprehensive transportation analysis and plan are required;
- The Bridge Station TOC would be a primarily residential community with inadequate non-residential uses;
- The provision of parkland is insufficient and further justification is required to cover Pomona Mills Creek. In addition, the acceptance of the Bridge park by CN and its technical feasibility remain to be confirmed;
- The proponent has not adequately planned for civic uses;
- Revisions are needed with regard to tower placement, development blocks, grading, and shadow impacts;
- No commitment has been made to affordable housing;
- Phasing, staging, and financial plans are required;
- Additional sanitary servicing and capacity allocation details are required; and
- Information is needed on how automated vacuum waste system (AVAC) and District Energy can be accommodated.

The growth proposed by the TOC proposal is well beyond the vision of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan and will impact the planning and delivery of infrastructure, parks and community services. The Province has identified a mandate to attain certainty for the zoning of the TOC proposal by March 2022. This may result in a future Minister's Zoning Order.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview, comments, and recommendation on the Provincial Bridge Station Transit Oriented Community (TOC) proposal by Infrastructure Ontario (IO) on the westerly portion of the Langstaff community extensively planned by the City and the subject of a Council approved secondary plan.

BACKGROUND:

Process to Date

The current plans and reports for the Bridge Station TOC were made public at a virtual public open house held on December 14, 2021. On December 15, 2021, IO uploaded drawings and reports to their public engagement website. The documents made available include:

- A Planning Rationale Report dated December 2021
- Architectural Drawings and Renderings
- Shadow Study
- Landscape Concepts dated November 29, 2021
- Master Functional Servicing & Stormwater Management Report updated December 2021
- Transportation Study dated December 10, 2021

In addition, a Pedestrian Level Wind Study dated January 7, 2022 was uploaded after the above documents.

Staff provided a description of and summary of preliminary concerns about the Bridge Station TOC to DSC on December 14, 2021 and provided additional updates to the DSC on December 21, 2021 and January 18, 2022. On January 13, 2022, York Region Council considered a report entitled “Yonge North Subway Extension - Transit Oriented Communities Proposals - Markham and Richmond Hill”.

Provincial Transit Oriented Communities Program

The TOC program is intended to facilitate the development of transit oriented communities around transit stations along the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) and other priority rapid transit lines in the Greater Toronto Area. To implement the TOC program, IO is partnering with developers to build high density housing and employment within walking distance of new transit stations, which will fund the construction cost of subway projects. The following TOCs have been announced along the YNSE in York Region:

- Bridge (Markham)
- High Tech (Richmond Hill)

In addition, the following TOCs have been announced along the Ontario Line in Toronto:

- Corktown
- East Harbour

- Exhibition
- King-Bathurst
- Queen-Spadina

Future Transit Oriented Communities

The Minister of Infrastructure has indicated in a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of York Region dated January 12, 2022 (see Appendix “A”) that an additional subway station will conditionally be constructed at Royal Orchard Boulevard as part of the YNSE project. The original version of the Metrolinx Initial Business Case that was released in March 2021 did not propose construction of a station at Royal Orchard.

According to the letter, the Province will not seek additional funding from the Region, instead raising the required funds through the development of a TOC. As stated in the letter:

“the Province will secure Transit Oriented Community (TOC) proceeds to offset the incremental costs incurred...To ensure the realization of this opportunity, the Province would seek formal development planning-related assurances from the Region and impacted lower tier municipalities.”

The Province will also seek funding from the federal government. Further discussion is needed with the Province to understand the implications of this letter relative to the development of a complete community in the Bridge Station TOC area.

No TOCs have been announced at the planned Clark and Steeles stations, but staff anticipate that TOCs may be developed at these locations in the future.

Proposed Development

The subject lands are a total of 25.4 hectares (62.8 acres) in area. This is approximately 54% of the total land area of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan, which has an area of 47 ha (116 ac) (see Figure 5). The Secondary Plan area is bounded by Holy Cross Cemetery to the south, Yonge Street to the west, Highway 407 to the north, and Bayview Avenue to the east. There is a 3.12 ha (7.71 acre) environmentally significant woodlot known as the Langstaff Woodlot on the east side of the community near Bayview Avenue. The Pomona Mills Creek valleyland bisects the west side of the community. The central area of the community is bisected by a north-south CN Rail line used for freight and commuter/passenger service.

IO has partnered with Condor Properties Ltd., which owns most of the subject lands. A total gross floor area (GFA) of 1,888,357 m² is proposed. Within this GFA, IO proposes a “lower bound” and an “upper bound” of residential and office space as illustrated in Table 1. The lower bound refers to the development option with fewer jobs and more residents, while the upper bound refers to the opposite.

Staff are of the opinion that IO’s stated people per unit (PPU) of 1.74 is significantly lower than normal planning averages used by the industry and that the PPU of 2.13 as established by OPA 183 is more accurate. Tables 1 and 2 include the population figures derived from

both PPU figures, which illustrates the resulting wide variance in population and density. See also the Options/Discussion section.

Table 1: Proposed Bridge Station TOC Development Summary

	Lower bound (fewer jobs)	Upper bound (more jobs)
Site area	25.4 ha (62.8 acres)	
Total GFA	1,886,357 m ² (20,305,578 ft ²)	
Residential GFA	1,568,953 m ² (16,888,070 ft ²)	1,508,252 m ² (16,234,690 ft ²)
Dwelling units	20,490	19,715
Office GFA	145,701 m ² (1,568,313 ft ²)	205,000 m ² (2,206,602 ft ²)
Retail GFA	17,350 m ² (186,754 ft ²)	
Civic use GFA	17,522 m ² (188,605 ft ²)	
Population*	35,653 (1.74 PPU)* 43,644 (2.13 PPU)	34,301 (1.74 PPU)* 41,993 (2.13 PPU)
Jobs	9,405	12,322
People & jobs per ha*	1,774 (1.74 PPU)* 2,089 (2.13 PPU)	1,836 (1.74 PPU)* 2,138 (2.13 PPU)
Parkland including strata parkland and parkland within CN and TTC lands	5.04 ha (12.45 acres)	
Open Space	1.47 ha (3.62 acres)	
Tower heights	15-80 storeys 84-263 m (274-863 ft)	

*Staff disagree with the stated PPU figure of 1.74. Staff are of the opinion that the PPU figure of 2.13 used by OPA 183 and Regional policy is more accurate.

The subway line and CN rail line are proposed to be covered by a park identified in the plans as Bridge Park. The tallest towers are planned at this central location, with 80 storeys and a height of 263 m (863 ft). The heights of buildings are planned to be gradually reduced to the west (see Figures 7 and 8). Two 15 and 17 storey office buildings are proposed on North Boulevard next to Bridge Station, one of which is identified as the potential location of a fire station. A 6 storey office building is proposed at the corner of South Boulevard and Yonge Street at the west edge of the community. The rest of the proposed office space is located in the podiums of residential buildings. Additional office development shown on North Boulevard between Bridge Station and Cedar Avenue are not part of this proposal. Pomona Mills Creek Park has been replaced by Romeo Park, which includes land covering Pomona Mills Creek (See Figure 6).

The Planning Rationale report describes the retail and civic space on the lower levels of buildings throughout the TOC as being developed in the future as residential and employment densities grow. An elementary school is proposed in Block W08 and a future community centre and library with a GFA of approximately 3,000 m² are proposed in Block W-06. On both blocks the civic uses are proposed to be incorporated into the podiums of

mixed use buildings. The development statistics and how the TOC proposal compares to the existing secondary plan are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Next Steps

IO is the proponent of the Bridge Station TOC, involving an expedited review and approval. The process does not adhere to the typical or traditional development application review and approval norms. Furthermore, IO is seeking zoning certainty to establish approved heights and densities by March 2022. Given the extremely short timeframe and the concerns raised to date, staff anticipate that the Province may use alternative approval tools available to it, potentially including a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO). A TOC development approved through a MZO is not appealable to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Should the Bridge Station TOC proceed similarly to previous MZOs established by the Province, staff anticipate that future development applications will be filed, including Draft Plan of Subdivision and Site Plan approvals to facilitate the continued development of the community and to secure for municipal rights-of-way, infrastructure and conditions of approval. Staff anticipate several meetings with the Province, York Region, local municipalities and other stakeholders regarding potential agreements and implementation mechanisms. This report includes a recommendation that Council direct staff to continue working with the Province and Region to align the vision of the Bridge Station TOC with the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan through *Planning Act* implementation tools (e.g. plan of subdivision, site plan) and other mechanisms, including potential agreements with participating parties.

Table 2: Comparison between Bridge TOC and corresponding portion of the Langstaff Gateway Master Plan and OPA 183

	Proposed Bridge TOC	Existing OPA 183
Site Area	25.4 ha	
Residential units	19,715-20,490	10,450
Population*	34,301-35,653 (1.74 PPU)* 41,993-43,644 (2.13 PPU)	22,259 (2.13 PPU)
Retail GFA	17,350 m ²	21,068-35,055 m ²
Jobs	9,405-12,322	10,615-19,181
People & jobs per ha*	1,774-1,836 (1.74 PPU)* 2,089-2,138 (2.13 PPU)	1,294-1,631 (2.13 PPU)
Minimum jobs to residents ratio*	Approx. 1:3.5 (1.74 PPU)* Approx. 1:4 (2.13 PPU)	Approx. 1:1-1:2 (2.13 PPU)

*Staff disagree with the stated PPU figure of 1.74. Staff are of the opinion that the PPU figure of 2.13 used by OPA 183 and Regional policy is more accurate.

The current policies of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan provide for the development of approximately 4,550 residential units within the rest of Langstaff. Including the Bridge Station TOC and the rest of Langstaff, the total buildout would be approximately 25,040 residential units and 53,335 residents (at 2.13 PPU).

Existing Development Applications Within the TOC Land Area

Draft plan of subdivision and zoning by-law amendment applications at 5-25 Langstaff Road East to facilitate 50 and 45 storey towers with 1,090 residential units and 1,624 m² (17,481 ft²) of non-residential space were approved on February 11, 2020 (Condor Properties Ltd., file ZA/SU 18 162178). An Official Plan Amendment application to allow a portion of Pomona Mills Creek to be covered with land to be used as open space is currently under review (10 Ruggles Avenue Development Inc., file PLAN 20 132805).

Provincial and Regional Policy Framework

The Province released the “Places to Grow - Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe” in 2006. The current version, called “A Place to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe” (the “Growth Plan”), is dated August 2020. The Growth Plan provides a framework to direct anticipated growth and implement the Province’s vision for building stronger, prosperous and complete communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region. Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway is one of the two Urban Growth Centres identified in the City of Markham (along with Markham Centre) to accommodate the greatest levels of intensification based on a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare by 2031.

The Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre was established as a Regional Centre in the 2010 Region of York Official Plan.

Langstaff Gateway Land Use and Built Form Master Plan

On December 14, 2009, Markham Council endorsed the Langstaff Gateway Land Use and Built Form Master Plan (the “Master Plan”). The Master Plan includes the vision and principles for the development of the area, and laid out the road pattern, transportation system, building locations, density, land uses, and parks and open space system (see Figure 4). This led to the development of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan (OPA 183).

Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan (OPA 183)

Council adopted OPA 183 on June 8, 2010. The subject lands are designated “Residential – Mixed Use”, “Residential”, “Office”, “Parks & Open Space”, and “Environmental Protection Area – Valleylands” in OPA 183 (see Figure 5).

OPA 183 details the urban structure, design, land use, and development frameworks established in the Langstaff Gateway Land Use and Built Form Master Plan. It establishes policies and related requirements for the logical and successful implementation of the Langstaff Gateway, providing for an ultimate population of 32,000 (15,000 units) and approximately 15,000 jobs. This Gateway is intended to be a complete, pedestrian and transit oriented community having a full range of uses and served by the proposed YNSE, GO Transit, future 407 Transitway, Viva Rapid Transit and York Region Transit. OPA 183 achieves densities supportive of the YNSE.

Development of the Langstaff Gateway community is divided into three phases by OPA 183. The first phase is to include up to 5,000 residential units and at least 21,600 m² of retail and service floor space, 6,100 m² of civic uses, 33,600 m² of office space, and 4.83 hectares of parks and open space. In addition, the Yonge North Subway Extension must be complete and open before Phase 2 begins.

The “Residential” designation provides for townhouses, apartments, and other multiple dwelling forms. Civic uses such as schools, libraries, and places of worship may also be permitted. The “Residential – Mixed Use” designation provides for apartments and other multiple dwelling forms above the ground floor and civic uses, retail, personal service, office, and other non-residential uses on the ground floor.

The “Office” designation is intended to accommodate high density office development and provides for uses such as offices, institutional uses, medical offices and clinics, commercial schools, financial institutions, and ancillary uses.

The “Parks and Open Space” designation forms a linear park corridor that forms the “spine” of the Langstaff community. The “Environmental Protection Area – Valleylands” designation applies to the Pomona Mills Creek valley, which is to remain in a natural state. As noted in the Background section, an Official Plan amendment application has been submitted to cover a portion of the creek with land to be used as open space.

Official Plan 2014

The subject lands are designated “Residential High Rise”, “Mixed Use High Rise”, “Mixed Use Office Priority”, “Business Park Office Priority Employment”, “Transportation and Utilities”, and “Greenway” in the 2014 Official Plan (as partially approved on November 24, 2017 and further updated on April 9, 2018).

The Official Plan states that the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan (OPA 183) shall be revised to conform to the designations and policies of the 2014 Official Plan, and that major changes in land use are not contemplated. Until a revised secondary plan is approved, the provisions of the 1987 Official Plan and OPA 183 shall apply to the subject lands.

Draft Plan of Subdivision

One or more draft plans of subdivision will be required to create the development blocks, park blocks, open space blocks, and streets.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Staff are of the opinion that the Bridge Station TOC represents a significant departure from the vision of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan (OPA 183) and will not lead to the development of a complete community. It is inconsistent with the vision of OPA 183 with respect to density, mix of uses, parkland, built form, street and block layout, phasing, and public services. The following subsections summarize the comments that staff have identified after reviewing the materials from IO obtained on December 15, 2022.

The Bridge Station TOC would result in higher densities than envisioned in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan

The Bridge Station TOC is proposed to be the most densely developed TOC currently being developed by Infrastructure Ontario in the Greater Toronto Area as measured by the combined net FSI of the development blocks. The Bridge Station TOC has a net FSI of

15.3. By comparison, the equivalent FSI is 13.5 at the High Tech TOC, 13.1 at East Harbour, and 10.9 at King-Bathurst.

The proponent has not adequately demonstrated that the significantly higher density can be accommodated without additional infrastructure or services to support it. This significant increase in density over the current Secondary Plan may put upward pressure on the density of development proposals in the rest of Langstaff and in other Major Transit Station Areas in Markham. As noted in the Background section, a future TOC is being planned at Royal Orchard and staff anticipate that other TOCs may be developed at other locations in the future.

The Bridge Station TOC has not been planned comprehensively

The Bridge Station TOC consists of approximately 54% of the lands within the Langstaff Gateway. Impacts on the rest of the community have not been considered with respect to several areas, including but not limited to schools, emergency services, servicing, civic uses, parkland, and transportation. Shortfalls in these areas in the Bridge Station TOC will require the accommodation of these uses within the rest of the secondary plan. To determine how the subject proposal affects the planning of the rest of the community, comprehensive planning needs to occur for the entire Langstaff Gateway and Richmond Hill Centre.

The current plans were made available to the City on December 15, 2021. This has left staff with a very limited timeframe to review a proposal of this magnitude. As such, staff have not had the opportunity to do a thorough and complete evaluation of the submission. Staff have not been able to discuss the plans and supporting technical reports with several agencies and IO did not circulate the plans to several agencies, including the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), school boards, CN, 407 ETR, and utilities. The comments contained in this report are as complete and comprehensive as possible given these constraints.

Engineering drawings are required

Full engineering drawings are required, including but not limited to storm and sanitary design sheets, storm and sanitary drainage plans, streetlighting, cross sections, etc.

A comprehensive transportation analysis and plan are required

The increased density triggers the need for a comprehensive transportation analysis for the entire Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Urban Growth Centre. This level of density will have significant impact on the movement of people and goods potentially leading to significant traffic congestion and a greater reliance on active transportation and transit. Therefore, walking and cycling must be prioritized as the predominant modes of travel within Langstaff.

The proposed TOC transportation plan is similar to the plan developed for the Condor Phase 1A development proposal under the original Langstaff Secondary Plan. As a result, the TOC transportation plan does not adequately address the change in the subway station location, significant increase in travel demand from the population increase and reduced opportunity for local travel due to the low ratio of non-residential uses proposed in the

TOC. The TOC transportation plan is out of date and not appropriate for review for the current TOC proposal.

Road access to Langstaff will be from three locations: at Yonge Street and Langstaff Road, Bayview Avenue and Langstaff Road, and Cedar Avenue from High Tech Road. With the population and mix of uses proposed in the TOC and the limited road access into Langstaff, traffic congestion and delays at critical intersections are expected to be significant. As a result of the TOC plan, vehicle queuing and delay are expected to be problematic at the Yonge Street/Langstaff Road and Bayview Ave/Langstaff Road intersections. Intersection operations are not fully analyzed yet as the transportation analysis submitted did not account for the full population estimate for the TOC proposal.

The following design, construction timing, and responsibility for critical transportation infrastructure including the following have not been fully identified:

- Langstaff Road grade-separation and integration with the Bridge subway station;
- South Boulevard collector road crossing of the subway-CN corridor;
- Enhanced active transportation connection to Richmond Hill Centre;
- Cedar Avenue extension;
- Boundary road intersection improvements.

The design configuration, phasing and responsibility for these critical infrastructures in relation to the construction of the Yonge North Subway Extension need to be defined. In addition, a detailed implementation plan for parking and TDM is also required to support the interim phases of development prior to the build-out of Langstaff.

Additional detailed staff comments were provided earlier to the Province which have yet to be addressed.

The Bridge Station TOC would be a primarily residential community with inadequate non-residential uses

The Bridge Station TOC proposal increases the residential population substantially without a corresponding increase in the number of jobs or services. The proposed population number uses 1.74 people per unit (PPU), which is significantly lower than the PPU of 2.13 that is used by OPA 183. The lower PPU results in an underestimation of the population of the community. Using 2.13 PPU, the population would be up to approximately 43,644. In addition, no information is provided on unit breakdown by number of bedrooms.

The jobs to residents ratio has dropped from approximately 1:2 in OPA 183 to approximately 1:4 in the Bridge Station TOC (based on 2.13 PPU), resulting in an imbalance of residential to non-residential uses. This will result in the area being an origin point for trips rather than a destination and does not support the principle of complete communities. This imbalance will likely produce additional automobile trips, with an increase in residents leaving the area to access employment, retail and civic uses. It is critical that these lands develop as a complete community where residents can meet their daily needs without leaving Langstaff, including sufficient opportunities for employment,

recreation and shopping. The TOC will not achieve a complete community at the population and employment levels proposed.

The provision of parkland is insufficient; further justification to cover Pomona Mills Creek and confirmation of the feasibility of Bridge park are required

Of the proposed 5.04 ha of parkland, only 1.94 ha is considered unencumbered parkland. The proposed Bridge Park (2.6 ha) is largely on top of the CN and TTC corridors at the core of the Bridge Station TOC. No information has been provided on CN support of the plan, park ownership, maintenance, programming constraints, legal agreements, grading, and whether the park will be appropriate to meet the community's needs.

The proposed Romeo Park (1.91 ha) is partially located above Pomona Mills Creek which would result in the removal of the watercourse and riparian vegetation. This is similar to the proposed enclosure of the creek as proposed in the site specific Official Plan Amendment application submitted by 10 Ruggles Avenue Development Inc. (see the Background section of this report). In the review of that application, City and TRCA staff requested information regarding downstream compensation, the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, minimize and/or mitigate ecological impacts), the significance of natural features in the valleyland, and demonstration of net gain to the greenway system. These comments have not been resolved.

The amount of Parkland proposed within the portion of the Langstaff Gateway Master Plan within the Bridge Station TOC boundary is 3.03 ha (7.4 ac) with approximately 36% being encumbered. The amount of parkland proposed in the Bridge Station TOC is 5.04 hectares, with approximately 62% being encumbered (i.e., parkland is over the CN rail corridor, Pomona Creek, or underground parking). The percentage of encumbered parkland could exceed 62% as the proposal identified stormwater management (SWM) tanks under Romeo Park. Parks encumbered by a covered waterway, SWM tanks, or underground parking may limit the programming of the park space and increase operating costs. This issue is compounded by the fact that the population has almost doubled from 22,249 to 43,644 (an increase of 96%) while proposed parkland has only increased by 66%.

There are concerns and uncertainties on the feasibility of the rail deck park (Bridge Park), which is planned to be 2.6 ha (6.4 ac) in area and constructed in the final phase of development. IO has not provided any information on their negotiations with CN. If Bridge Park is not constructed, it will reduce the amount of parkland proposed in the TOC by more than 50%. From a proportional population to parkland comparison, the Bridge Station TOC proposal should be providing at least 6 ha of parkland.

Furthermore, based on the approved Interim Parkland Cash-In-Lieu (CIL) Strategy, Parkland dedication for all medium and high density residential apartments will be calculated at a rate of 1.0 hectares per 500 units. City Staff anticipate Parkland deficiencies will be compensated in the form of CIL payment to the City.

Additionally, Urban Design staff have requested numerous studies including a pedestrian level wind impact study and a more detailed sun and shadow study as per the City's terms of reference to better understand the impact of proposed towers on the public realm and

proposed parks. The sun and shadow study does not have sufficient detail on the impact of shadowing on proposed parks as it only provides analysis for every other hour of the day. Additionally, no changes have been made to tower height and tower placement to mitigate the impacts of shadows on parks.

A Pedestrian Level Wind Study was submitted in January 2022. The wind study identified a number of concerns including wind channelling and downwind effect from proposed towers located adjacent to Bridge Park and Cedar Park. The proposed tower locations have adverse impact on proposed parks with wind speeds of up to 20 kilometres per hour, limiting users from basic activities such as sitting, standing, or even strolling in the park. The study provided a number of mitigation measures to reduce grade-level winds channelling and downwind effect by implementing vertical canopies, additional tree planting, and most importantly, providing greater tower setbacks along parks.

However, the revised plan did not demonstrate the implementation of any of the above mitigation measures. The implementation of these mitigation measures is vital in ensuring pedestrian comfort at a streetscape level and functioning park spaces. Additionally, the study did not mention the impact of the proposed tower height on proposed parks. Downwind effect exacerbates as buildings go higher, creating faster wind speed, and colder micro-climates when downwind from the towers reaches street level. Furthermore, the study failed to mention wind impact on sidewalks and proposed parks during winter months, which is important considering Bridge Park would be an important access route to the subway station for the residents and workers in the adjacent developments.

The proponent has not adequately planned for civic uses

A Community Services and Facilities Implementation Strategy, Master Emergency Services Plan, and Community Energy Plan are required. While IO has indicated the general locations of a school, library, community centre, and fire station, minimal details have been provided on these facilities and it has not been demonstrated that they are enough to meet the needs of the community.

The Bridge TOC is proposed to accommodate a future community centre and library in Block W-06 with a combined GFA of approximately 3,000 m² (32,292 ft²). Community Services staff have indicated that one 2,432 m² (26,186 ft²) library and one 4,273 m² (46,048 ft²) community centre (6,705 m² (72,234 ft²) combined) will be required. This community facility size is intended for the Bridge Station TOC lands only. It is worth noting that a higher volume of community space will be required when the anticipated population of Langstaff East is included and that the aforementioned community service space falls short when viewing the Langstaff community in a holistic manner. In addition, the proposed TOC does not contain any outdoor sports fields as contemplated in the Integrated Leisure Master Plan.

IO has indicated that they have contacted the appropriate school boards through the Ministry of Education. However, no details of this communication have been submitted and the submission contains no information regarding the demand for schools or the size of the proposed school site.

Revisions are needed with regard to tower placement, development blocks, and grading

Grading throughout Bridge Station TOC from Yonge Street to Cedar Avenue should have consideration for the viability of grade-related retail along sloping frontages, pedestrian access to the station building, and for usability and accessibility of parks and open space. An overall grading plan and a ground floor plan identifying the location of retail uses is required. At the same time, the Transit Green, Transit Lane, and surrounding street and block layout between Yonge Street and proposed Creek Street West needs to be reconsidered as a subway station and bus terminal are no longer proposed at this location.

The tallest towers should be located at the north end of the community close to Bridge Station and step down towards Holy Cross Cemetery. Tower placement must consider wind impacts on the streetscape level and shadowing on parks. Additionally, development blocks should be designed for increased pedestrian permeability and access to Bridge Park. Barrier free access to Bridge Park should be ensured. A wind impact assessment, more detailed shadow study, 3D massing model, and Urban Design Brief are required.

No commitment has been made to affordable housing

The Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan requires applicants to submit an Affordable Housing Implementation Strategy to provide details of the implementation mechanisms necessary to contribute to the Regional affordable housing target of 35% of new housing units in Regional Centres. While the Planning Rationale Report explores options for increasing housing affordability, no commitment has been made to the provision of affordable housing. In addition, IO has not indicated how many units would be purpose built rental, condominium, or other tenure types.

In the approved draft plan of subdivision for Condor Phase 1A at 25 Langstaff Road, Condor previously committed to meeting the Regional 35% affordability target in OPA 183 plus approximately 30 additional affordable units.

Phasing and financial plans are required

The proposal has no specific milestones for the development of office, retail, or civic uses or infrastructure. By contrast, OPA 183 contains specific milestones that need to be satisfied for each phase of development, including limits on development that may occur before the subway extension is open to the public. In addition, OPA 183 phasing policies limit residential development in each phase until minimum amounts of office and retail space, civic uses, parks and open space, transit infrastructure, and street construction are complete. Detailed phasing milestones are important to ensure that the appropriate mix of land uses is developed in co-ordination with the infrastructure required to support the population.

Staff have unanswered questions regarding ownership and maintenance of parks, cash in lieu of parkland, responsibility for the construction of overpasses, arrangements for emergency services being incorporated into private development sites, etc. The City requires clarity that it maintains the right to collect development charges as normally associated with development.

Additional information and details relating to the phasing of infrastructure is required to better understand when and how the different infrastructure needed to support the TOC will be constructed and delivered, and whether efficiencies, including cost savings, can be found by constructing certain infrastructure as part of the YNSE.

Additional sanitary servicing and capacity allocation details are required

Up to 20,490 units are proposed for the Bridge Station Master Plan TOC, which translates to an approximate equivalent population of 43,644 persons (at 2.13 PPU). Additional details need to be submitted by the Province to better understand the phasing of the 20,490 units and how they can be serviced with the existing Pomona Mills Creek trunk sanitary sewer and the new trunk sewer proposed to be constructed by the Region along Highway 7 without constraining development potential of other properties that would be serviced by this sanitary sewer system.

In addition, further discussions with the Region and the Province on sanitary capacity allocation are required to determine how sanitary capacity allocation can be assigned to this TOC without impacting growth elsewhere in the City.

Information is needed on how automated vacuum waste system (AVAC) and District Energy can be accommodated

OPA 183 states that district heating and cooling shall serve all development within the Langstaff Gateway. It also requires Green Development Standards to be developed, which would consider an automated waste collection system. Staff have been in ongoing discussions with Markham District Energy about a district heating and cooling system to ensure that the system can be implemented with the Condor Phase 1A development. The IO plans and reports do not contain any information on district heating and cooling or automated waste collection.

CONCLUSION:

Staff support the principles of transit oriented communities. The existing Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan provides for an intensely developed, transit supportive, complete community that supports the subway investment. The proposed Bridge Station TOC represents a significant departure from the vision of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan. Based on the supporting plans and reports submitted to date and without the opportunity to comprehensively discuss the plans and reports with the Province/applicant and required agencies, Staff cannot reach the conclusion that the proposal would constitute a complete community. There remain significant concerns that have not been addressed and required information that has not been submitted. Staff do not support the Bridge Station TOC as currently proposed.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposed development is to be evaluated in the context of growth management, environmental, and strategic priorities of Council.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The proposal has been circulated to various City departments and is currently under review. Infrastructure Ontario has also circulated the plans to York Region. Infrastructure Ontario has indicated that it has consulted with the TRCA and school boards.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Biju Karumanchery, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director, Planning and Urban Design

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1 – Location Map
Figure 2 – Area Context/Zoning
Figure 3 – Aerial Photo
Figure 4 – 2014 Official Plan Land Use
Figure 5 – Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan Land Use
Figure 6 – Bridge Station Master Plan
Figure 7 – 3D Perspective From South
Figure 8 – 3D Perspective From North
Figure 9 – OPA 183 Schedule 'II' - Development Phasing and Precinct Plan

APPENDICES:

Appendix "A" - Letter from Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure