



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: May 30, 2023

SUBJECT: Milliken Centre Secondary Plan - Draft Policy Framework

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RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report entitled, “Milliken Centre Secondary Plan - Draft Policy Framework” dated May 30, 2023, be received;
- 2) That staff be authorized to schedule a statutory public meeting on the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan Draft Policies, attached as Appendix ‘A’ to this staff report;
- 3) And further, that staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Secondary Plan policy framework for Milliken Centre and request authorization from Council to hold a statutory public meeting to receive input on the draft Official Plan Amendment for the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The 1987 Official Plan includes the Main Street Milliken Secondary Plan through Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 144.

The 2014 Official Plan identifies the need for an update to the Main Street Milliken Secondary Plan and establishes an expanded secondary plan boundary to ensure future development for the area is planned in a comprehensive manner. As a result of the expanded boundary, the name of the secondary plan was changed to Milliken Centre.

The intent of the secondary plan update is to guide development in the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan study area and to provide detailed direction on land use, infrastructure, transportation, community services and environment beyond the general policies provided for in the Official Plan. Until a new secondary plan is approved for Milliken Centre, the provisions of the 1987 Official Plan and OPA 144 continue to apply to these lands.

On November 7, 2017, Markham Council [passed a resolution](#) to release the draft development concept for public comment as input towards the preparation of the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan. Since the release of the draft development concept, City staff held a Community Information Meeting in 2017, and completed several studies including the Natural Heritage and Hydrologic Study in 2016, the Heritage Building Evaluations in 2018,

the Retail and Office Background Report in 2018, and the Denison GO Feasibility Study in 2022.

City staff provided a status update to the Milliken Subcommittee in November [2020](#) and [2021](#) to advise the Subcommittee members of status of the Secondary Plan. In [January 2022](#), City staff recommended an approach that included area and site specific policies for the southwest and northwest quadrants to enable decision on the entire secondary plan without delay, support comprehensive and integrated planning, especially in sequencing and provision of transportation and municipal infrastructure, and to continue to achieve the vision of walkable, transit supportive community.

On September 12, 2022, City staff provided an updated [presentation](#) titled “Milliken Centre Secondary Plan Update” to Development Services Committee. Subsequently Council endorsed the staff presentation that outlined next steps to finalize the development concept, technical studies and bring forward a draft secondary plan.

DISCUSSION:

Updated planning context for the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan Area

Milliken Centre is identified as a Local Centre in the 2014 Official Plan. Local Centres are served by local transit offering connections to higher-order transit, and contain GO stations. Local Centres are intended to serve as important neighbourhood focal points and provide for intensification in the form of a range and mix of housing, shopping, employment and recreation opportunities, as well as personal and human services, with appropriate forms and scale that complement the surrounding community. The Milliken Centre Secondary Plan is planned for a population of 17,000-19,000 people, a minimum of 8,000 units and 4,800 jobs in the area which results in over 300 residents and jobs per hectare for the Secondary Plan Area.

A portion of the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan area is within the Milliken GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) boundary as identified in the 2022 York Region Official Plan (YROP). MTSA's are generally defined as the area within an approximately 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing a 10-minute walk. The 2022 YROP establishes a growth hierarchy within Strategic Growth Areas that includes MTSA's with minimum density requirements assigned to them. The portion of the MTSA within the Secondary Plan area is required to achieve a minimum density of 250 residents and jobs per hectare. The YROP also identifies Denison GO as a GO rail station that is subject to further study. The draft Secondary Plan supports transit supportive redevelopment opportunities within the Milliken GO MTSA, and additional intensification should the potential GO station at Denison be realized.

The Community Structure for Milliken Centre Supports the Development of a Healthy and Complete Community

The community structure for Milliken Centre builds upon the existing network of streets,

surrounding land uses and rail corridor. The structural elements of the Milliken Centre community include Residential Neighbourhood Areas, Mixed Use Neighbourhood Areas, a Public Parks and Open Space System, A Greenway System with a Wetland Feature as an Overlay, Community Infrastructure and Service Facilities and a comprehensive Transportation System. A summary of each are noted below:

Residential Neighbourhood Area

Residential blocks are generally located around the central school and neighbourhood park campus and offer housing options that allow for a diverse mix of household sizes, lifestyles, and incomes. Residential blocks provide for a concentration of compact housing forms within walking distance to transit, retail and community facilities and may include townhouses, mid- rise buildings and high- rise buildings.

Mixed Use Neighbourhood Area

Lands within the Mixed Use Neighbourhood Area are intended to provide for an appropriate mix of residential and non-residential uses and are generally located in proximity to the Milliken GO Station at Steeles Avenue East and north of Kennedy Road and Old Kennedy Road. Mixed use blocks provide the opportunity for ground floor retail and other non- residential uses within mid- rise and high- rise building forms.

Public Parks and Open Space System

A well-defined parks and open space system will incorporate a hierarchy of public parks to support social and recreational uses and enhance pedestrian linkages.

Protected Greenway System and Wetland Feature as an Overlay

The Secondary Plan includes two existing natural heritage features (woodland and wetland) which were originally identified in the 2016 Milliken Centre Natural Heritage Hydrologic Study. The existing woodland feature north of the GO Rail corridor is proposed to be protected in the Greenway System and integrated into the overall community design. The existing wetland feature south of the GO Rail corridor will require further technical study to finalize its ultimate status, including confirmation of the delineation of the feature. Staff recognize that there are challenges to protecting this feature over the long term, the draft policy framework for the Secondary Plan provide for the option to remove and compensate for the wetland feature identified as an overlay in Map SP3 – Public Parks, Open Space and Natural Heritage Features.

Community Infrastructure and Service Facilities

An elementary school campus is planned central to the community south of Gorvette Road and west of Old Kennedy Road. There are also existing Places of Worship, one within the Secondary Plan north of Sunrise Drive and East of Old Kennedy Road, and two outside of the Secondary Plan area immediately abutting the west and north of the Secondary Plan area.

Transportation System

A road network, transit and active transportation system consisting of arterial, collector

and local roads, will accommodate the majority of pedestrian, cycling, vehicular and transit service traffic within the community as well as serve as links to the neighbouring areas reducing the number of car trips and traffic congestion, lower emission and create healthier communities. A series of pedestrian connections are also identified as opportunities to enhance connectivity throughout the secondary plan.

Landmark Gateways

Three landmark gateways are identified in Milliken Centre including at the corner of Kennedy Road and Steeles Avenue; at the corner of Kennedy Road and Denison Street; and at the corner of Old Kennedy Road and Steeles Avenue to serve as focal points of Milliken, enhances a sense of place and to offer a gateway entry point into the community.

A flexible policy framework supports comprehensive block planning at strategic transit supportive locations and considerations for increased heights and densities

The policy framework in the draft Secondary Plan recognizes that proposed heights and densities for transit supportive areas such as the GO Rail Station Subject to Further Study at Denison Street and the southwest quadrant that includes the Pacific Malls lands have the potential for a mix of uses and higher transit supportive densities. The draft Secondary Plan includes Area and Site Specific Policies (ASSP) that permit the consideration of increased heights and densities in strategic areas through comprehensive block planning where matters such as infrastructure capacity, the road and active transportation network, location of parks, built form and massing, and provisions for affordable and purpose built rental housing can be addressed.

Southwest Quadrant (Pacific Malls Lands)

The southwest quadrant that includes the Pacific Mall Lands, Kennedy Commons and the former Market Village, is within the Milliken GO Major Transit Station Area. The policy framework recognizes the potential for additional heights and densities beyond what is being proposed. The ASSP requires the completion of a comprehensive block plan that must demonstrate the appropriateness of development, including adequate transportation and servicing infrastructure to support development, pedestrian friendly streetscapes, gateway feature at Steeles and Kennedy and the provision of appropriate park space. Through the comprehensive block plan exercise, increased heights and densities may be considered without an amendment to the Secondary Plan, subject to conditions.

Northwest Quadrant (Denison Go)

The northwest quadrant is the location of the GO Rail Station Subject to Further Study at Denison Street. The ASSP in this area would allow the consideration of additional heights and densities without an amendment to the Plan provided a GO station is identified and approved by Metrolinx through a business case and a comprehensive block plan is undertaken addressing how the appropriate provisions for increased density will be addressed (i.e. infrastructure, parks, community facilities).

Further flexibility related to heights and densities in the draft Secondary Plan is provided by taking a permissive approach to Floor Space Index (FSI). The draft Secondary Plan provides for FSI as a general policy direction, but additional density above the prescribe FSIs may be considered without an official plan amendment. This policy recognizes that there are many factors that shape the intensity of a site including parking, lot configuration, building footprint, and park space but good built form and massing can still be achieved if supported by sound planning and urban design principles.

City staff have been working with the landowner's consultants and stakeholders including those that attended the September 12, 2022 to review the general direction of the draft policy framework.

Revitalize and Improve the Main Street Streetscape along Old Kennedy Road

The draft policy framework for Milliken Centre also includes urban design policies that would revitalize and create improved streetscapes specifically for Old Kennedy Road, in response to the number of listed and designated heritage properties fronting this strip and leading into the gateway landmark at Old Kennedy Road and Steeles Avenue East. These elements include placing buildings close to the edge of the right-of-way and enhancing the pedestrian realm through adoption of extended landscape boulevards, canopy street trees, widened sidewalks, etc.

Designating Public Parks and Master Parkland Agreement

The Milliken Secondary Plan area currently has one park at 0.08 hectares. The draft policy framework proposes to designate three new public parks that adds up to a total of 4.6 hectares to provide a variety of active and passive recreational uses to meet the diverse needs of residents and visitors. This includes the following:

- A neighbourhood park, with a minimum size of 2.8 hectares, located centrally and adjacent to a school site
- Two parkettes, with a minimum size of 1 hectare and 0.75 hectares located north of Kennedy Road and east of Old Kennedy Road, respectively; and
- Additional opportunities for parks to be explored in future development of the southwest quadrant of the Secondary Plan.

As result of the passage of Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, the total parkland that can be required under section 51 of the *Planning Act* is between 4-5 hectares. The 4.6 hectares of new parkland proposed within the Secondary Plan area aligns closely with the quantity of parkland that could be achieved through individual development applications. The size and location of public parks in this Secondary Plan also ensures the total parkland area is consolidated into larger and more functional park blocks. Further, additional opportunities for parkland dedication will be accommodated in the southwest quadrant (pacific mall lands). The amount and location of park space will be determined through the comprehensive block plan exercise.

The draft policy framework also proposes that the City and the landowners enter into a Master Parkland Agreement to identify the minimum amount and general location of parks as shown in the Secondary Plan and outline mechanisms to support the acquisition of parkland.

Technical Studies Have Informed the Draft Policy Framework and are being prepared to be released

Several technical studies have been completed or are approaching completion that informed the draft policy framework, including the Natural Heritage and Hydrologic Study in 2016, the Cultural Heritage Building Evaluations in 2018, the Retail and Office Background Report also in 2018, and the Denison GO Feasibility Study in 2022. The following studies are being finalized and their findings have informed the draft policy framework:

- The Transportation Assessment assessed the transportation needs associated with the full build-out of the lands within the secondary plan area and informed the planning of the transportation network. Staff have reviewed and circulated the draft Transportation Assessment to external agencies. Minor comments from York Region and the City of Toronto are being addressed by the consultant to finalize the report.
- The purpose of the Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) is to identify infrastructure needs related to water, wastewater, stormwater and transportation to support Milliken Centre Secondary Plan. The MESP also assesses the natural environment and the Greenway System to identify, protect and enhance the Greenway System. Staff have reviewed and circulated a draft MESP to external stakeholders. The draft MESP is being revised to address City comments. Further, the draft MESP identified issues with capacity constraints in the downstream sanitary trunk sewer located outside of the Milliken Secondary Plan area. The City is undertaking additional sanitary modelling to determine the necessary upgrades to the downstream system to provide sanitary service for the Secondary Plan. The draft policy framework requires the landowners' group to enter into an agreement to ensure equitable distribution of the cost for sanitary upgrades.

Overall, City staff are satisfied that final edits to the technical studies are minor in nature and will not alter the policy direction in the draft Secondary Plan. City staff will continue to work with the landowners' consultants to revise and finalize the outstanding technical studies for release.

NEXT STEPS:

City staff recommend that Council authorize that a public statutory meeting be held to receive input on the draft Official Plan Amendment for Milliken Centre. Staff will engage with stakeholders on the draft policy framework over the summer and host a statutory public meeting in the Fall of 2023.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The recommendations in this report support Goal 3 – Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community in Building Markham’s Future Together, 2020-2023.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The applicable departments have been consulted in the development of this staff report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

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Appendices

Appendix ‘A’: Milliken Centre Secondary Plan Draft Policies