



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: June 26, 2023

SUBJECT: Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan: Final Study and Draft Policy Framework

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RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report dated June 26, 2023 entitled “Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan: Final Study and Draft Policy Framework” be received;
- 2) That staff be authorized to schedule a statutory public meeting on the draft Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan policies, attached as Appendix ‘B’ to this staff report;
- 3) 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 findings of the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan Study, the draft Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan, and obtain authorization to hold a statutory public meeting to seek feedback on the draft Secondary Plan policies.

BACKGROUND:

The 2014 Official Plan provides direction to establish a new secondary plan for the Markham Road – Mount Joy local corridor to support the development of a complete community

The City of Markham’s 2014 Official Plan provides direction to prepare a new secondary plan for the Markham Road – Mount Joy (MRMJ) local corridor. The intent of the new secondary plan is to build on the policies of the Official Plan, providing detailed direction on the environment, land use, urban design, infrastructure, and community amenities to guide growth within the MRMJ Secondary Plan Area, and to support the development of a complete community at transit supportive densities adjacent to the Mount Joy GO Station.

The Markham Road - Mount Joy Secondary Plan Area is planned to accommodate growth through intensification at transit supportive densities

The Secondary Plan Area includes the Local Corridor identified on Map 1 – Markham Structure in the 2014 Official Plan. Local Corridors are intended to serve as main streets that provide a mix of uses and services to surrounding communities, as well as connections to higher order transit, and are part of the City’s strategy for accommodating forecasted population and employment growth to 2031. Lands within the MRMJ Secondary Plan Area centred around the Mount Joy GO Station are also delineated as an intensification area on Map 2 – Centres and Corridors and Transit Network in the 2014 Official Plan, and planned to accommodate development at higher densities.

A large portion of the lands within the MRMJ Secondary Plan Area are also within the Mount Joy GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) delineated in the 2022 York Region Official Plan (YROP). MTSA’s are generally defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk. Lands within the Mount Joy GO MTSA are required to achieve a minimum density of 200 people and jobs per hectare. The 2022 YROP also identifies a GO Rail Station subject to further study just north of the MRMJ Secondary Plan Area at Markham Road and Major Mackenzie Drive East.

The findings of a multi-phased and integrated Secondary Plan Study with stakeholder and public input informed the preparation of the draft secondary plan

The Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan Study (“the Study”) was initiated in late 2019 as a first step to preparing the new secondary plan, and was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of consultants in six phases.

A report documenting the work undertaken during the first three phases of the Study titled “[Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan Study: Interim Report](#)” and a fly-through of the 3D model of the demonstration plan was received by DSC on April 11, 2021. This was followed by a presentation with an “[Update and Revised Demonstration Plan](#)” that was received by DSC on July 11, 2022. The update provided an overview of the work completed since the Interim Report, and outlined next steps in the Study process which included finalizing the demonstration plan, undertaking additional technical modeling and analysis, and preparing a draft of the new Secondary Plan.

An executive summary of the Final Study Report, which includes the final demonstration plan and corresponding schedules is included as Appendix “A”. The technical analysis, results and recommendations prepared by the consultant team informed the preparation the draft MRMJ Secondary Plan. The consulting team is addressing staff and stakeholder comments in the final reports, which will be released later this summer, inclusive of the following reports:

- Final Study Report: The Final Study Report is being revised to address technical comments from City staff. The report documents the overall Study process, technical analysis, results and recommendations.

- **Transportation Study Report:** Technical modelling and analysis was undertaken as part of the Transportation Study to identify improvements to the existing transportation system required to support the development of the MRMJ Secondary Plan Area based on the demonstration plan. The Transportation Study Report is being finalized to address technical comments from staff, York Region and Metrolinx, and will be appended to the Final Study Report.
- **Municipal Servicing Study Report:** Technical modelling and analysis was undertaken to assess the need to upgrade existing water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and/or identify new servicing infrastructure to support the build out of the secondary plan area based on the demonstration plan. The technical modelling and analysis is being updated to reflect changes to the population and employment yields in the final demonstration plan and address comments from staff and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The draft Final Municipal Servicing Report will be appended to the Final Study Report.

The study directions and recommendations have informed the preparation of the draft secondary plan policy framework. Staff are now seeking feedback on the draft policy framework that will guide implementation of the vision for the secondary plan area.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

The Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan establishes a comprehensive framework to support the development of a vibrant mixed use, transit-oriented complete community

The draft MRMJ Secondary Plan builds on the Study recommendations and policy directions and introduces a comprehensive policy framework to achieve the vision of a mixed use, transit oriented, complete community that will accommodate a minimum of approximately 33,000 residents, 14,500 units, and 6,000 jobs at build out and a density of approximately 400 people and jobs per hectare across the Secondary Plan Area. The majority of jobs will be accommodated within the Mixed Use Neighbourhood Area and Mixed Use – Employment Priority area. The key components of the policy framework are detailed below. See Appendix “B” for the Draft Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan.

Community Structure

The draft Secondary Plan establishes a community structure for organizing and directing growth within the MRMJ Secondary Plan Area. The structural components include: a Greenway System; Precinct Areas, a Residential Neighbourhood Area; a Mixed Use Neighbourhood Area (which includes the Mixed Use Mid Rise – Retail Priority designation), Mixed Use – Employment Priority lands; the Mount Joy GO Station Mixed Use Node, a Parks System; an Open Space System; and a Transportation System. Each of the structural components are briefly described below:

Greenway System

The Greenway System is a key structural element of the Secondary Plan Area, and provides for the protection, restoration and enhancement of natural heritage features with some opportunities for passive recreational uses. The Greenway System comprises the natural heritage system associated with Mount Joy Creek and the Hamersley Woodlot. The alignment of Mount Joy Creek in the Secondary Plan Area was refined based on the results of the municipal servicing component of the Study to remove flood hazards from certain lands to enable opportunities for redevelopment, and daylight a portion of the creek, among other things. The alignment is subject to further refinements to be completed through a future comprehensive study, such as a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, in consultation with the City and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, until which time certain lands shall be protected from development.

Precinct Areas

The Secondary Plan Area is subdivided into the North, Central and South precinct areas, each with their unique context, land use, and built form considerations that also contribute to the shared identity of the community. Each precinct area incorporates a mix of land uses, new public parks, new streets as well as components of the new multi-use trail adjacent to the GO Rail corridor and elements of the Greenway System.

Residential Neighbourhood Areas

Residential Neighbourhood Areas within the Secondary Plan Area are situated within walking distance of community facilities and amenities such as public schools, places of worship and public parks, and close proximity to transit and services. These lands are intended to be developed with a range and mix of higher density ground oriented or apartment housing types to support the diverse needs of residents, and will also provide a transition in built form and density to adjacent communities.

Mixed Use Neighbourhood Areas

The Mixed Use Neighbourhood Area, which includes the Mount Joy GO Station Mixed Use Node overlay, is intended to provide for a mix of residential and non-residential uses that contribute to the development of a complete community at transit supportive densities. Primary height and density peaks in the Secondary Plan Area will be located within the Mount Joy GO Station Mixed Use Node. These will transition downward to secondary height and density peaks along the length of Markham Road, between Major Mackenzie Drive East and Edward Jeffreys Avenue, supporting the creation of a mixed use main street on Markham Road. The Mount Joy GO Station Mixed Use Node is intended to accommodate the greatest densities, building heights and mix of uses in the Secondary Plan Area, establishing a destination for residents and visitors to access neighbourhood and community uses and services.

Mixed Use – Employment Priority

Mixed Use– Employment Priority lands will provide opportunities for a range of light industrial and manufacturing uses while integrating street-related retail and service uses, as well as commercial, office and residential uses on upper-stories of vertically integrated mixed use buildings. The intent is to broaden the light industrial, warehousing,

small office and retail and service uses historically permitted on the lands while introducing compatible and complementary non-employment uses to promote transit supportive development adjacent to the Mount Joy GO Station. Residential uses will be discretionary in this area.

Parks System

The Parks System will incorporate a hierarchy of existing and new public parks offering a range of active and passive recreational uses and activities to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Public parks will be distributed throughout the Secondary Plan Area within reasonable walking distance of all residents, and provide views and connections to local destinations.

Open Space System

The Open Space System will complement the Parks System and Transportation System, and provide connections within the Secondary Plan Area as well as adjacent communities. The Open Space System features a north-south multi-use trail adjacent to the railway corridor from Major Mackenzie Drive East to 16th Avenue as well as two connections across the railway corridor.

Transportation System

An improved and integrated transportation system will support growth and redevelopment while offering a range of travel choices by: refining the existing hierarchy of arterial, collector and local roads in the road network; enhancing connections to existing and planned transit infrastructure and services; and, incorporating a convenient and continuous active transportation network. Markham Road, the central “spine” of the transportation system will also be transformed into a vibrant and animated mixed use main street.

New and existing community infrastructure and services will support growth in the Markham Road - Mount Joy Secondary Plan Area

In addition to the Public Parks System, the draft Secondary Plan builds on the existing community infrastructure to support growth and meet the needs of residents. Two elementary public schools are identified to support growth and will be encouraged to be developed within the podiums of mixed use buildings. Three existing places of worship are intended to be maintained, and will support Council’s place of worship site reservation policy. It is also noted that existing places of worship are located outside, but in close proximity to, the Secondary Plan Area to meet the needs of residents. Places of worship are also permitted in the residential and mixed use land use designations.

The draft Secondary Plan supports the potential for increased heights and densities in strategic areas to support the development of the GO Station Subject to further study at Major Mackenzie Drive East

Area and site specific policies for lands at 9900 Markham Road, and 9999 Markham Road provide flexibility with respect to additional heights. The policies also outline

criteria including required technical studies that would be addressed through the development review process.

Staff have also taken a flexible approach to density in the Secondary Plan Area. The draft Secondary Plan provides for floor space index (FSI) as a general policy direction, but additional density above the prescribed 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.

A Master Parkland Agreement is encouraged to achieve the Parks System identified in the Secondary Plan

There are currently two public parks in the Secondary Plan Area (i.e., Pottery Park and Robert Spindloe Park) and one public park secured through the development approval process with a combined area of approximately 1.24 hectares. The draft Secondary Plan proposes to designate eight new public parks varying in size from 0.2 to 2.9 hectares amounting to approximately 9.05 hectares.

Due to the changes introduced by the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23), the total parkland dedication that is anticipated to be secured is between 8.0 and 9.0 hectares. This results in a shortfall of less than one hectare of the parkland identified in the Secondary Plan Area. Policies in the draft Secondary Plan encourage the City and landowners to enter into a Master Parkland Agreement to secure and consolidate larger and more functional parks at the general locations identified in the Secondary Plan Area to avoid a situation where individual development provides smaller fragmented parcels that would be of limited benefit to the community.

Implementation of the Secondary Plan will occur over the long-term and in a phased manner

Full build out of the Secondary Plan Area will be achieved over the long-term. Development and redevelopment will be coordinated and phased with the provision of infrastructure and community facilities. In addition to the Master Parkland Agreement noted above, Developers' Group Agreements are also encouraged to ensure all property owners contribute equally to the provision of community amenities and infrastructure required to support growth.

NEXT STEPS

Next steps include releasing the final study reports, getting feedback on the draft Secondary Plan over the summer, and holding a statutory public meeting in the fall of 2023.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Study and draft Secondary Plan policy framework fulfill the requirements of the direction in the City's 2014 Official Plan and 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 report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

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Arvin Prasad, RPP, MCIP
Commissioner, Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix "A" – Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan: Final Study Executive Summary

Appendix "B" – Draft Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan