



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: December 11, 2023

SUBJECT: Markville Secondary Plan Study Interim Report

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RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report and presentation dated December 11, 2023, entitled, “Markville Secondary Plan Study Interim Report” be received;
- 2) That the Markville Secondary Plan Study Interim Report and emerging concept be released for public consultation and input to support the preparation of the final study;
- 3) That staff be directed to host a Community Information Meeting in Q1 2024 to present the interim report and emerging concept; and
- 4) That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A new secondary plan for Markville is required by the Markham Official Plan 2014. The intent of the new secondary plan is to guide the development of a new community that integrates a mix of uses and amenities (e.g., housing, schools, community amenities, employment, shopping, recreation and parks) and to create a complete community.

The Markville Secondary Plan Study was initiated in 2022 to inform the preparation of a new secondary plan. The Study is being undertaken by an inter-disciplinary team of consultants including WSP, DTAH, Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, Parcel Economics, Urban Minds and Helene Iardas Consulting. The study is currently in Phase three of six. The study process to date has included two Community Information Meetings, a Visioning Workshop, two Youth engagement sessions, pop-up engagement over the summer and targeted stakeholder engagement. The interim report attached as Appendix ‘A’, presents the vision statement, guiding principles, preliminary policy guidance and emerging concept for the Markville Secondary Plan Area.

The vision and emerging concept for the Markville Secondary Plan Area supports a vibrant destination for culture and entertainment with a mix of uses and densities, as well as a network of open spaces and transportation connections to achieve the vision for a transit-oriented, connected and complete community.

Preliminary population and employment forecasts for the emerging concept anticipate a community of approximately 28,000 residents, 8,000 jobs and approximately 6 hectares of new parks within the proposed secondary plan area at build out. The preliminary forecasts will be tested through technical modeling and analysis to inform the appropriate amount of growth and determine what transportation and servicing infrastructure improvements would be needed to support future growth.

Analysis based on the preliminary forecasts by both the York Region District School Boards and York Catholic District School Board indicate a need for additional schools in the study area. Further analysis will be undertaken by the study team in consultation with both school boards to determine the appropriate location and built form for additional schools. Further, community infrastructure needs, including the need for expansion and/or reconfiguration of the existing Centennial Community Centre and the need for additional community facilities within or outside of the study area will be determined in phase 5 of the study through the completion of a community and service facilities strategy.

City staff recommend that Council direct staff to consult on the Markville Secondary Plan Study Interim Report and emerging concept to receive input to inform preparation of the final study.

PURPOSE:

This report provides an overview of the preliminary findings and policy guidance from the Markville Secondary Plan Study.

BACKGROUND:

A new secondary plan for Markville is required to guide the development of a complete community at transit supportive densities

The Markham 2014 Official Plan identifies the need for a new secondary plan for Markville. The intent of the new secondary plan is to guide the development of a new community that integrates a mix of uses and amenities (e.g., housing, schools, community amenities, employment, shopping, recreation and parks), and that will also serve as a focal point for surrounding neighbourhoods. The community will be developed at transit-supportive densities around the proposed McCowan BRT Station, and the Centennial GO Station.

The secondary plan area identified in the 2014 Official Plan is approximately 110 hectares (272 acres). It includes lands south of the Stouffville GO right-of-way (ROW), north of the Rouge River, east of Austin Drive Park and Bullock Drive and west of Laidlaw Boulevard.

Lands within the secondary plan area are identified as a Key Development Area (KDA) and an Intensification Area in the Official Plan 2014. KDAs are intensification areas along the Highway 7 Regional Corridors that are identified and planned as a priority for intensification. Intensification areas are prioritized for accommodating development at

higher densities. A portion of the lands are within the Bullock Drive Employment Area is designated in the City's 2014 Official Plan as Service Employment and an Employment Area in the York Region Official Plan 2022. Service Employment lands are planned and developed for service and retail uses together with light industrial and warehousing and small offices.

A portion of the secondary plan area lands, approximately 95 hectares, is within the McCowan Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) in the York Region Official Plan (YROP) 2022. MTSAs 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 include MTSAs with minimum density requirements assigned to them. The MTSA lands within the Secondary Plan area is required to achieve a minimum density of 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

The Markville Secondary Plan Study Interim Report has been Prepared by a Multi-Disciplinary Consultant Team that Documents Findings and Completes Phase 3 of the Study

The Markville Secondary Plan Study was initiated in 2022 as a first step to preparing the new secondary plan, and is being conducted by a multi-disciplinary consultant team including WSP, DTAH, Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, Parcel Economics, Urban Minds and Helene Iardas Consulting. The Study integrates land use and urban design, transportation, and municipal servicing to comprehensively plan for a transit-oriented and complete community, and is being carried out in six phases:

✓ **Phase 1** – Project Kick-Off

In Phase 1, City staff and consultants delivered a [kick-off presentation](#) at the May 30 2022 Development Services Committee meeting and presented the workplan.

✓ **Phase 2** – Background Review, Data Collection & Assessment

In Phase 2, a communications and engagement plan and existing conditions reports were drafted. The City's [Your Voice Markham](#) page was also launched as a platform to engage the public and as a repository for documents and studies related to Markville.

✓ **Phase 3** – Vision, Guiding Principles, Emerging concept and Interim Report [We Are Here]

The Study is at the end of Phase 3, which focused on the development of a vision, guiding principles, emerging concept and policy guidance. Phase 3 also included multiple opportunities for stakeholders and the public to learn about the Markville Secondary Plan Study, including the following:

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- Community Information Meetings (CIM), January 19, 2023 (virtual) and May 24, 2023 (hybrid) (155 participants) –
 - (CIM 1) - A virtual CIM was held in January 2023 to kick off the engagement phase of the project, and to provide background information to the public on the Secondary Plan Study.
 - (CIM 2) - A second CIM was held in May to kick off the project, and to provide additional opportunities for participation on draft development options.
 - Virtual Visioning Workshop, February 3, 2023 (90 participants) - a visioning workshop was held in February shortly following the first Community Information Meeting to engage the public on a draft vision and guiding principles that set the foundation for the development of draft development options.
 - Youth Engagement Sessions, November 17, 2022 and July 11, 2023 (73 participants) - two youth engagement sessions provided opportunities for youth in the Markville area to comment on what matters to them in Markville, and what their opinion is of the draft development options.
 - Other Engagement Opportunities/Activities –
 - Mobile Signs, Electronic Information Boards in various Community Centres and 407 ETR Billboards were used to market all Markville events
 - Targeted stakeholder engagement with businesses and public agencies for input
 - Pop-up engagement at the Markville Mall – City staff hosted a pop-up session in July to introduce the public to the Markville Secondary Plan Study, and to answer any questions they may have of the Study.
 - Flyer distribution to businesses in Markville Study Area – City staff distributed flyers in May to further market the Markville Secondary Plan Study and to reach out to businesses and tenants in the area.
 - Ongoing engagement through the Feedback form on the City of Markham’s Your Voice Markham page at www.markham.ca/markville
- Phase 4 – Draft Transportation and Municipal Services: Analysis and Recommendations

Following the completion of the interim report and emerging concept, detailed analysis will be undertaken in this phase to determine the feasibility of the development plan from a transportation and servicing perspective.

- Phase 5 – Final Development Concept and Reports

In Phase 5, City staff and consultants will present the final study report and development concept, along with urban design guidelines and policy recommendations to inform the development of the secondary plan. A Community Services and Facilities Strategy to determine the additional community infrastructure required to support growth will also be completed.

- Phase 6 – Secondary Plan

In Phase 6, City staff will bring forward draft secondary plan policies to amend the City of Markham's 2014 Official Plan for the Markville Secondary Plan area. Draft policies will be presented to Development Services Committee for authorization to proceed with statutory public consultation process.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Key findings from background reports and stakeholder engagement informed the Preparation of the Emerging Concept

Existing Conditions

The land use pattern and built form within the study area can be defined as autocentric with a block pattern comprised of a mix of large, medium and long angular parcels of land defined by public streets, natural heritage areas and the rail right-of-way. The study area includes Markham Centennial Park and Centennial Community Centre, and an array of industrial and auto service employment use lots within the Bullock Drive Employment Area on the east side of McCowan Road, and three high-rise apartment condominium buildings constructed in the early 1990s. The Rouge River Greenway borders the southern edge of the Study Area and is the City's largest, most prominent and environmentally significant spaces, connecting the Markville Secondary Plan Area to communities and ecosystems well beyond the Study Area. Cadillac Fairview's Markville Mall is the largest single ownership property in the study area. Cadillac Fairview has submitted an official plan amendment application seeking to re-develop the Markville Mall lands for mixed use residential development while preserving the mall site. The development application is being considered through a separate development review process.

Through community engagement and feedback, City staff and consultants heard that there is a desire for community infrastructure improvements such as schools, community centres and healthcare centres. Additionally, traffic congestion, lack of public transportation, and pedestrian and cyclist facilities are identified as lacking or deficient. There are also concerns about the protection of the environment and the need for more sustainable initiatives. The protection of employment and commercial lands in the area was also expressed.

Key Findings

The interim report assesses the existing conditions of the study area and identifies opportunities to create a complete community for Markville. These opportunities include redeveloping and intensifying the area by accommodating a mix and range of uses with transit-supportive densities that leverages multi-modal transportation options and higher order transit facilities. New growth within the area may require community facilities including new schools, parks, amenities, etc.

The Bullock Drive Employment Area has the potential to be intensified through the re-development of, or addition to, existing buildings and given the concentration of

automotive-related businesses and other service-type companies, there should be a focus on retaining the industrial uses in the area, and providing complementary uses in micro-manufacturing, technology and creative industries. Complementary uses can support the transition to employment uses and act as a buffer to sensitive residential uses.

There are also opportunities to address and enhance aspects of the built form, public realm, transportation network, and overall pedestrian experience for visitors and residents to the Study Area. This includes establishing connectivity with a comprehensive road network and providing active transportation and improvements in transit to support diverse travel patterns and reduce congestion.

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles Support a Transit-Oriented, Connected and Complete community for the Markville Secondary Plan Study Area

The following vision statement and guiding principles provide a framework to guide growth and development towards a transit-oriented, complete and connected community.

Vision Statement

Markville will be a vibrant destination for culture and entertainment in a connected community with a mix of uses and access to frequent transit and active transportation options. The area will offer important community amenities, public spaces, and preserve employment lands and economic landmarks that are an important part of the community while enhancing green spaces and ensuring sustainability.

Guiding Principles

- **A Complete Community** – provide a range of mixed-use housing appropriately integrated with employment land uses
- **An Attractive Community with Great Buildings and Spaces** – integrate Markville Mall through connectivity with mixed-use residential in key Secondary Plan locations
- **Active Transportation** – create pedestrian and cycling friendly streetscapes throughout the study area
- **Enhanced and Connected Green Space** – connect and enhance parks, green spaces and the public realm to existing parks and adjacent open spaces for future and current residents and visitors
- **A Connected Community** – ensure interconnected and permeable complete streets that accommodate active transportation
- **Leverage Transit** – leverage present and future higher order transit facilities and connections to them
- **Inclusive Community and Affordable Housing** – create fiscally viable development and affordable housing opportunities
- **Community Node** – support the establishment of Markville as a node and key development area in Markham and York Region

The emerging concept builds on the vision and guiding principles and was prepared with input from City departments, stakeholders (e.g., Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, York Region District School Board, landowners and/or their representatives) and the public.

The emerging concept identifies a mix and distribution of uses and densities, as well as the open space and transportation network, required to achieve the vision for a transit-oriented, connected and complete community that meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

The key elements of the emerging concept include the following:

1. Community Structure

The emerging concept builds on the existing network of streets and surrounding land uses to support the development of a healthy and complete community. The structural elements include an existing Residential Area with three high-rise apartment condominium buildings east of Austin Drive Park along Highway 7, Mixed Use Neighbourhood Areas that include a mix of residential and non-residential uses with opportunities for ground floor retail and other non-residential uses within mid-rise and high-rise building forms. A Parks and Open Space System incorporates parks of various sizes to support social and recreational uses and enhance pedestrian linkages, and a comprehensive transportation system that includes an interconnected road network to promote cycling and walking, and a transit network that supports transit-supportive development at three intensification nodes.

2. Built Form

The emerging concept proposes the tallest buildings be directed to three nodes within the Secondary Plan Study area that are located within the vicinity of planned and proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations at Highway 7 and Bullock Drive, Highway 7 and McCowan Road, and Bullock Drive and McCowan Road. At these nodes of intensification, high-rise buildings are proposed with heights of up to 40 storeys.

Outside of these nodes, the emerging concept proposes predominantly mid-rise built forms ranging in height from 5 to 8 storeys, with the exception of the existing high-rise buildings west of Bullock Drive, the low-rise buildings in the Employment Area with a maximum of up to 4 storeys, and the lands that are subject to Special Policy Area policies between Campbell Park and Highway 7 with a maximum of up to 3 storeys.

3. Land Use

The emerging concept proposes a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses surrounding the existing mall and along McCowan Road, Bullock Drive and Highway 7. Service employment uses continue to be proposed in the employment area east of McCowan Road with a focus on retaining automotive-related businesses in the area and complementary industries in micro-manufacturing, technology, and creative industries.

The Markville mall is proposed to maintain its focus as a destination with mixed use retail/commercial uses and is encouraged to intensify with retail/commercial uses including provision of office space.

The existing Centennial Community centre will also maintain its recreation and community use, with additional recreational facilities and amenities being assessed to accommodate the projected growth in this area.

4. Transportation Network

The emerging concept introduces a comprehensive road network of interconnected streets to create new links to open spaces and create short, walkable blocks. A complete street design approach is envisioned to be applied to both new streets and to retrofit existing streets to enhance pedestrian boulevards, separated cycling facilities, and public realm landscaping.

The emerging concept also envisions that in addition to the proposed McCowan Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) at Highway 7 and McCowan Road that is identified in the York Region Official Plan 2022, that there are three additional potential BRT stops at the intersections of Highway 7 and Bullock Drive, Bullock Drive and McCowan Road, and Highway 7 and Laidlaw Boulevard to increase transit service and encourage transit use to and from the Study Area.

5. Parks and Open Space

A total of approximately 6 hectares of new parks are proposed to complement the parkland already provided by the existing Centennial Park (at 4.72 hectares) within the Study Area. The emerging concept proposes small and medium-sized parks that range from 0.1 to 0.9 hectares to be dispersed throughout the Study Area to accommodate different functions and levels of activity. A total of six parks are proposed west of McCowan Road, with an additional seven parks on lands east of McCowan Road.

The emerging concept also proposes to add 4.7 hectares of land to the Greenway System comprised of natural heritage linkages that connect to the Region-wide trails network, and the Region's Greenlands System, namely the Rouge River and Raymerville Woodlot Park by adding 15 metre buffer around Campbell Park and broader improvements of a 30 metre buffer around Milne Creek. A portion of the Creek north of Highway-7 along Heritage Road and Laidlaw Boulevard is proposed to be restored through daylighting.

It is also envisioned that a potential pedestrian/cycle crossing be planned across the rail track and into Stargell Park that is north of the rail tracks outside of the Study Area.

6. Preliminary Forecasts

Preliminary forecasts based on the land uses and densities identified in emerging concept anticipate approximately 28,000 residents and 8,000 jobs within the secondary plan area at build out. The forecasts will be tested and refined through technical modeling and analysis to determine additional transportation and infrastructure capacity in Phase 4 of the study and ongoing consultation and engagements as a part of the study process.

7. Community Infrastructure

Analysis of additional community infrastructure needs, including the need for expansion and/or reconfiguration of the existing Centennial Community Centre, and the need for additional community facilities to serve the Study Area will be undertaken in phase 5 of

the study and reported on through the community and service facilities strategy. In addition, based on the population generated by the emerging concept, both the York Catholic District School Board and the York Region District School Board have advised that additional schools will be needed to support the projected growth. At this point, the potential location of school sites has not been finalized or indicated on the emerging concept. The potential school sites will be identified on the final concept in coordination with City staff and both the York Region and York Catholic District School Boards.

Healthcare capacity has also been identified as a concern in the community. While healthcare planning is a Provincial responsibility, City staff have reached out to provincial staff to obtain more information about the provision of healthcare facilities and will share the interim report and emerging concept for comment.

8. Transportation and Servicing Infrastructure

The feasibility of transportation and servicing infrastructure to accommodate growth will be undertaken in the next phase of the Study. City staff and the consultant team will investigate policy directions that support phasing growth with transit infrastructure delivery.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will engage the public and stakeholders on the interim report and the emerging concept including hosting a Community Information Meeting in Q1 2024. Further technical analysis will also be undertaken as a part of phase 4 and phase 5 of the study process.

Feedback received from the public and stakeholders and the recommendations from the technical analysis will inform the preparation of the final study and concept, to be presented to Development Services Committee in Q2 2024.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Markville Secondary Plan Study implements the City's 2014 Official Plan and supports Goal 3 – Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community in Building Markham's Future Together, 2020-2023.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Staff from Planning and Urban Design, Transportation, Library, Recreation Services and Development Engineering were consulted through the study process to date.

RECOMMENDED BY:

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Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A': Markville Secondary Plan Study Interim Report