

**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION REPORT  
City Initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Markham  
Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan

File No. PR 20 142832  
Wards 4, 5 and 6

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the Staff report dated April 23, 2024 entitled “RECOMMENDATION REPORT, City Initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan” be received;
- 2) That the Official Plan Amendment for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan, attached as Appendix “2”, be finalized and forwarded to Council for adoption, and subsequently forwarded to York Region for approval; and
- 3) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report recommends Council adoption of the City initiated Official Plan Amendment to incorporate the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan (“draft Secondary Plan”) into the City of Markham Official Plan, 2014. The preparation of the draft Secondary Plan was informed by the recommendations and policy directions from the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan Study (“Study”). The draft Secondary Plan introduces a comprehensive policy framework to guide growth and development in the Secondary Plan Area, including 10 public parks and two new public schools, to accommodate approximately 33,000 residents, 14,500 units, and 6,000 jobs at build out. The draft Secondary Plan was considered at a statutory public meeting on November 21, 2023 and revised, where appropriate, based on agency, stakeholder and public feedback. Staff are of the opinion that the draft Secondary Plan, attached as Appendix “2”, is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, and conforms to all applicable Provincial, Regional and Municipal plans.

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**PURPOSE:**

This report recommends adoption of the City initiated Official Plan Amendment to incorporate the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan into the City of Markham Official Plan, 2014.

**BACKGROUND:**

**The draft Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan was prepared based on the recommendations and policy directions of a multi-phased Secondary Plan Study and considered at a statutory public meeting in November 2023**

The City of Markham's Official Plan, 2014 ("Official Plan") provides direction to prepare a new secondary plan for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Local Corridor. The purpose 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 Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan Area ("Secondary Plan Area"), as shown in Figure 1, and to support the development of a complete community at transit supportive densities near Mount Joy GO Station.

The Secondary Plan Area includes the Local Corridor identified on Map 1 – Markham Structure in the 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 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 Official Plan and planned to accommodate development at higher densities.

A large portion of the lands within the Secondary Plan Area are also within the Mount Joy GO Station Protected Major Transit Station Area ("PMTSA") delineated in the York Region Official Plan, 2022 ("YROP"), as shown in Figure 2. Lands within the Mount Joy GO Station PMTSA are required to achieve a minimum density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare. The YROP also identifies a GO Rail Station subject to further study on the Stouffville GO Railway Corridor at Major Mackenzie Drive East adjacent to the Secondary Plan Area.

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. The multidisciplinary Study was undertaken in six phases and included extensive stakeholder and community engagement. Key milestones in the Study process included:

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- An introduction to the Study purpose, process, key considerations and objectives, and next steps that was received by the Development Services Committee (“DSC”) of Markham Council on [December 9, 2019](#).
  - A multi-day virtual design charrette and two virtual community information sessions held between [July and September 2020](#) to present and obtain input on the draft vision, guiding principles and emerging framework plans for the Secondary Plan Area.
  - An update on the results of the virtual engagement activities, ongoing technical work, and the emerging demonstration plan that was received by DSC on [December 15, 2020](#).
  - An Interim Report and a flythrough of the 3D model of the draft demonstration plan which were received by DSC on [April 21, 2021](#). The Interim Report documented the results of the technical work, and stakeholder and community engagement completed during the first three phases of the Study.
  - A virtual community information session on [June 3, 2021](#), followed by a virtual stakeholder session later the same month, to obtain input on the Interim Report and draft demonstration plan.
  - An update summarizing revisions to the draft demonstration plan based on feedback obtained through the third virtual community information session and virtual stakeholder workshop, as well as technical modelling and analysis undertaken since the Interim Report, that was received by DSC on [July 11, 2022](#).

The Study recommendations and policy directions informed the preparation of the draft City Initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan (“draft Secondary Plan”) that was received by DSC on [June 26, 2023](#).

The draft Secondary Plan 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 through intensification. A key component of the draft Secondary Plan is a refined Community Structure featuring an enhanced Greenway System; three Precinct Areas; Residential Neighbourhood Areas; Mixed Use Neighbourhood Areas (which includes the Mount Joy GO Station Mixed Use Node); Mixed Use – Employment Priority Lands; a Parks System with approximately 10 hectares of parkland; an Open Space System, and an improved and integrated Transportation System.

A statutory public meeting was held on [November 21, 2023](#) to consider the draft Secondary Plan. In addition to the deputations at the statutory public meeting, comments on the draft Secondary Plan have also been received through written correspondence from agencies, stakeholders and the public. The comments include recommended revisions to specific policies, concerns about the impacts of high density development on

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the transportation system and public realm, and requests to revise site specific land use permissions, among other things. Staff have completed their review of the feedback received to date and revised the draft Secondary Plan, where appropriate.

## **OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:**

### **November 21, 2023 Statutory Public Meeting Feedback**

#### **A range of general and site specific comments were raised by deputants at the November 21, 2023 statutory public meeting**

A total of eight (8) deputations were made at the statutory public meeting held on November 21, 2023 providing general and site specific comments on the draft Secondary Plan. The comments made by deputants included:

- a) Concerns about the impact of high density development on existing road capacity in surrounding communities and assumptions about planned transit service levels;
- b) Requests to remove maximum heights and densities in the draft Secondary Plan;
- c) Requests to revise site specific land use designations and/or maximum heights and densities;
- d) Requests to maintain the lands north of Castlemore Avenue as 'Mixed Use Neighbourhood Area';
- e) Concerns about the amount of high density development in the Secondary Plan Area and the impact on the public realm at grade;
- f) Concerns about the impact of the realignment of Mount Joy Creek on privately owned lands; and
- g) Requests to require the formation of a Developers' Group Agreement in the draft Secondary Plan.

Responses to the comments raised by deputants are provided in the comment response matrix in Appendix "1" which catalogues all the comments received on the draft Secondary Plan, and staff responses.

### **Staff Modifications to the Draft Secondary Plan**

**Feedback from prescribed bodies, stakeholders and members of the public informed revisions, where appropriate, to the draft Secondary Plan**

In addition to the comments provided by deputants at the statutory public meeting, thirty-four (34) written submissions from agencies, stakeholders and the public with comments on the draft Secondary Plan have been received. Staff have completed their review of the comments and revised the draft Secondary Plan, where appropriate. In addition, typographical edits as well as technical revisions to clarify the intent of various policies and maps were also made to the draft Secondary Plan. Changes to the overall draft Secondary Plan policy framework were however limited to:

- *Deleting Area and Site Specific Policy 9.1* – This area and site specific policy applied to the lands at 9900 Markham Road and provided for an increase to the maximum height identified on Map SP3B – Height (now Map SP3 – Height) subject to addressing specific criteria. The lands were also the subject of a combined official plan amendment (OPA) and zoning bylaw amendment (ZBLA) application. Markham Council adopted the OPA and approved the ZBLA with hold provisions on December 13, 2023. The draft Secondary Plan was therefore updated to remove the area and site specific policy and replace the maximum height on the portion of the lands designated ‘Residential High Rise’ from 15 storeys to 21 storeys, per the adopted OPA, on Map SP2 - Detailed Land Use.
- *Updating Area and Site Specific Policy 9.2 (now 9.1)* – This area and site specific policy applies to a portion of the lands at 9999 Markham Road, and also provides for additional maximum heights subject to addressing certain criteria. The area and site specific policy was updated to clarify the densities that would also be permitted if the listed criteria are addressed. In addition, the extent of the area and site specific policy previously included a portion of the lands fronting onto Anderson Avenue and was revised to apply only to the lands fronting Markham Road and Major Mackenzie Drive East. The lands within the area and site specific policy were also redesignated from 'Residential High Rise' to 'Mixed Use High Rise' and the maximum height was increased from 15 storeys to 21 storeys on Map SP2 – Detailed Land Use following a technical review by staff in response to stakeholder and public comments. There were no changes to the densities identified on Map SP3B – Density (now Appendix 2 – Density).
- *Moving Map SP3B - Density to the appendix as Appendix 2 - Density.* Map SP3B – Density identified the maximum densities on lands throughout the Secondary Plan Area based on the established community structure. Map SP3B – Density has been moved to the appendix, which is provided for information purposes, and renamed as Appendix 2 – Density. Together with the maximum heights identified on Map SP3 – Height, this approach emphasizes the built form of a proposed development by setting a limit on a building’s height with density as a guiding factor. The approach also provides flexibility to consider minor increases to the densities identified in Appendix 2 - Density without the need for an amendment subject to addressing the technical requirements detailed in the policy framework. Both height and density will continue to be reviewed through the development approval process to ensure proposed developments achieve the built form and public realm objectives, among other things, set out in the draft Secondary Plan.

- *Adding a new policy to encourage the development of affordable housing units* – A new policy to incentivize the provision of affordable housing units in mixed use and residential developments was added to Section 8.7 Height and Density. The policy exempts the provision of affordable housing units from the calculation of the maximum height as shown on Map SP3 – Height and maximum density as shown on Appendix 2 – Density.

It is noted that revisions were also made to increase the maximum heights on specific sites on Map SP3 – Height based on a technical review by staff in response to stakeholder comments. These revisions are documented in Appendix “1”.

It is also noted that lands within the Secondary Plan Area are under appeal, as documented in Appendix “1”, and will be subject to the Ontario Land Tribunal decision.

All the comments received on the draft Secondary Plan, and how they have been addressed, are detailed in Appendix “1”. A copy of the revised draft Secondary Plan is included as Appendix “2”.

### **Conformity with the Land Use Planning Policy Framework**

#### **The draft Secondary Plan is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020**

The draft Secondary Plan is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (“PPS”). It supports the efficient use of land, infrastructure and resources by accommodating growth through intensification and providing for a mix of residential, employment, institutional, parkland and other uses that optimize investments in transit infrastructure and services while promoting active transportation to meet the needs of individuals of all ages and abilities. The draft Secondary Plan also provides direction to confirm the realignment, and potentially daylight, a portion of Mount Joy Creek to remove the existing flood hazard within the Secondary Plan Area, enhance the natural heritage system, and protect public safety.

#### **The draft Secondary Plan conforms to the Growth Plan, 2019**

The draft Secondary Plan conforms to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (“Growth Plan”) as it accommodates growth through higher density development comprising a mix of residential and non-residential uses, services and community facilities in a Strategic Growth Area (“SGA”), specifically within and adjacent to a MTSA. The draft Secondary Plan also provides direction to align transit with growth and enhance opportunities for transit use and active transportation within a compact and complete community.

#### **The draft Secondary Plan conforms to the Greenbelt Plan, 2017**

Mount Joy Creek traverses the northern portion of the Secondary Plan Area and is identified as an urban river valley (“URV”) in the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 (“Greenbelt

Plan”). The Greenbelt Plan provides for the inclusion of publicly owned lands in URVs to integrate the Greenbelt into urban areas and recognizes URVs as important connections to the Great Lakes, among other things. The majority of the Mount Joy Creek lands within the URV designation are currently in private ownership. The draft Secondary Plan provides direction to undertake a comprehensive study to confirm the realignment, and potentially daylight, a portion of Mount Joy Creek. It is intended that the realigned creek will be conveyed into public ownership in support of the vision and goals of the Greenbelt Plan.

### **The draft Secondary Plan Conforms to the York Region Official Plan, 2022**

The draft Secondary Plan conforms to the York Region Official Plan, 2022 (“YROP”). It accommodates planned growth through intensification to meet the minimum density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare within the Mount Joy GO Station PMTSA. It also contributes to the development of a compact community with a mix of uses and densities supportive of transit use adjacent to the GO Station subject to further study at Major Mackenzie Drive East. The draft Secondary Plan also conforms to the YROP in terms of identifying existing and/or planned transportation, municipal servicing, and community amenities required to support growth in the Secondary Plan Area and meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities.

### **A new zoning by-law will be prepared to implement the adopted Secondary Plan**

Lands within the Secondary Plan Area are currently subject to the provisions of multiple zoning by-laws. In the future, a new zoning bylaw will be prepared following adoption of the Secondary Plan. In the interim, it is anticipated that landowners in the Secondary Plan Area will bring forward development applications to amend the in-effect zoning by-laws to conform to the Secondary Plan.

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

As discussed in the [June 26, 2023](#) report to DSC, there is approximately 1.24 hectares of existing and secured parkland in the Secondary Plan Area. The draft Secondary Plan designates eight new public parks that would add approximately 9.05 hectares to the parks system in the Secondary Plan Area. Due to the changes introduced by the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23), the total amount of parkland 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.

The draft Secondary Plan includes policies encouraging 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 smaller fragmented parks that would be of limited benefit to the community.

### **Implementation of the Secondary Plan will occur over the long-term and be coordinated with the delivery of infrastructure**

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 delivery of transportation and municipal servicing infrastructure in accordance with local and regional capital plans, and community facilities. It is noted that a limited amount of new development can proceed before upgrades to the existing municipal servicing infrastructure are needed. It is also noted that a portion of the lands north of Major Mackenzie Drive East are within the same sanitary catchment area as the Secondary Plan Area and therefore sanitary system upgrades should be evaluated holistically.

### **GO Station Subject to Further Study at Major Mackenzie Drive East**

The transportation component of the Study included a feasibility review to test the performance at a high level of the GO Rail Station subject to further study at Major Mackenzie Drive East on the Stouffville GO Railway Corridor. The feasibility review recommended continuing to protect for the additional station on the Stouffville GO Railway Corridor at Major Mackenzie Drive East, and engaging Metrolinx in further discussions to undertake ridership forecasting and ultimately an Initial Business Case (IBC) once the Secondary Plan is adopted by Council. Staff will reach out to Metrolinx regarding the necessary analysis for the GO Rail Station subject to further study at Major Mackenzie Drive East and the GO Rail Station subject to further study at Denison Street following the adoption of both the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan and the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan as it will be more efficient and cost effective to undertake the IBC processes for both stations concurrently. The draft Milliken Centre Secondary Plan will be brought to Council for adoption in Q2 2024.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The draft Secondary Plan has been revised based on agency, stakeholder and public feedback, where appropriate, as well as a technical review to clarify the intent of various policies and maps. Staff are satisfied that the draft Secondary Plan is consistent with the PPS, and conforms to the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, and YROP, fulfills the direction in the Official Plan and represents good planning. Staff therefore recommend that the City Initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan be adopted and forwarded to York Region for approval.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Funding to implement the policy direction in the Secondary Plan, specifically relating to City-initiated studies, infrastructure improvements, and related maintenance and operations will be raised through future budget processes for Council consideration.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:**

Not applicable.



**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

The Official Plan Amendment and draft Secondary Plan 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. The draft Secondary Plan also establishes a policy framework to manage and guide growth to meet the Housing Pledge approved by Markham Council in March 2023.

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Staff from Development Planning, Urban Design, Parks Planning, Natural Heritage, Zoning, Transportation, Engineering, Sustainability, System Engineering, Operations & Maintenance, Waste & Environmental Management, and Legal were consulted in the preparation of this report.

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

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**ATTACHMENTS:****Accompanying Figures**

Figure 1 – Location Map

Figure 2 – Mount Joy GO Station Protected Major Transit Station Area (excerpt from 2022 York Region Official Plan)

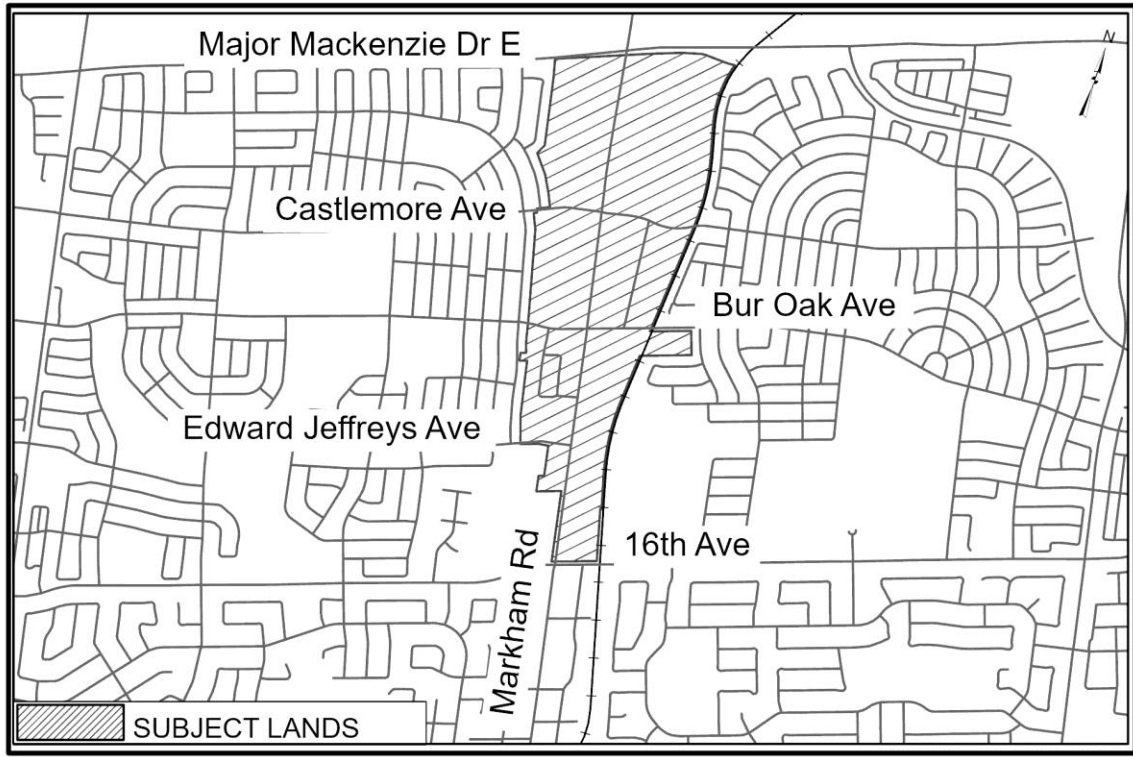
**Accompanying Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Comment Response Matrix of Feedback on the Draft Official Plan Amendment for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan

Appendix 2 – Draft Official Plan Amendment for the Markham Road – Mount Joy Secondary Plan



**Figure 1 – Location Map**



**Figure 2 – Mount Joy GO Station Protected Major Transit Station Area**

