

**SUBJECT:** Cornell Centre Secondary Plan – Status Update

**PREPARED BY:** Philip English  
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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1) That the report entitled "Cornell Centre Secondary Plan – Status Update" dated June 4, 2024, be received;
- 2) That Council endorse the proposed work plan to complete the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan; and
- 3) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

This report presents a status update on the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan and outlines a work plan to complete the project.

**BACKGROUND:**

Markham's Official Plan (OP) (2014) identifies Cornell Centre as one of the Secondary Plan Areas that requires the adoption of new or updated Secondary Plan policies. Cornell Centre was originally part of Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 168 – Secondary Plan for the Cornell Planning District (2008), however, with the exception of Cornell Centre, the Cornell Planning District is now part of the 2014 OP policy framework which directs that a new secondary plan be prepared for Cornell Centre.

In February 2015 staff presented a Draft Land Use Concept for Cornell Centre to DSC as an initial step in developing a Secondary Plan for Cornell Centre. The [staff report](#) outlined several matters that were to be addressed in the update of the Secondary Plan policies for Cornell Centre. Staff further refined the concept and associated land use policies based on internal and external input from the Cornell Advisory Group and from the public at an Open House held in April 2015. A [draft Official Plan Amendment](#) with updated Secondary Plan policies for Cornell Centre was presented to DSC in September 2015 but did not advance to completion for various reasons including resources and competing priorities.

Since that time, the 2015 Draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan policies have been used by Staff to inform the review of development applications. Approximately 6500 residential units and 3,800 square meters of commercial/non-residential uses have been approved and there are currently 9 applications under review that propose 7529 residential units and 46,466 square meters of commercial/non-residential uses (see Appendix 1 for map of Cornell Centre illustrating development activity).

The Cornell Centre Secondary Plan needs to be completed to inform and guide land use, needed community amenity space, and transportation and servicing infrastructure improvements to fulfill the vision for Cornell as a complete community.

### **OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

#### **Staff propose to update the draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan policies to account for the current planning context including Provincial and York Region policy direction**

Staff reviewed the previous technical and policy work undertaken on the 2015 draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan and determined that most of the content is still relevant. With some refinement, and further policy review and updates, the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan project can be completed by early 2025.

Staff have developed a work plan for completing the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan, including reviewing and updating policies in the draft 2015 secondary plan and consulting with stakeholders and the public.

The draft 2015 OPA containing the secondary plan policies was based on Markham's 1987 Official Plan and will need to be updated to reflect Markham's 2014 Official Plan. Staff are optimistic that recent secondary plan initiatives such as Markham Road Mount Joy and Milliken can be leveraged to accelerate and guide the policy update to the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan.

In addition to updating relevant policies contained in the 2015 Draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan, new policies will also be needed to bring the Secondary Plan into conformity with current Provincial direction including the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), and the 2022 York Region Official Plan (YROP).

#### **Update to focus on affordable housing, active transportation, public transit, confirming commercial and employment land uses, and infrastructure requirements**

Much of the work undertaken in 2015 to establish a policy framework for Cornell Centre is still relevant today. However, since that time there have been significant changes to provincial planning legislation, a new regional official plan, and development within Cornell Centre has rapidly progressed including several large-scale residential development applications in process. With the addition of the Cornell Viva Bus Terminal, a portion of Cornell Centre has been designated a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA), which calls for greater density targets for new developments to support higher order transit. With the approval and construction of the in-process development applications,

most residential areas of Cornell Centre will be built out. Secondary Plan policies concerning affordable housing, active transportation, public transit, should be strengthened, or added to reflect the current Planning policy context including conformity with the YROP, and Markham's 2014 OP.

In addition, a review of land use designations is needed to confirm their appropriateness in relation to current and proposed built forms and community needs. This also includes a review of school sites, parks and open space, the natural heritage system, and lands designated for residential, mixed use, commercial, and employment uses. The protection of employment lands, most of which are located along Reesor Road, will also be addressed.

When the initial policy work for the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan was undertaken in 2015, Staff had indicated that a Community Energy Plan (CEP) would be developed to align with the City-wide Municipal Energy Plan with the goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

To accelerate completion of the Secondary Plan, staff propose to leverage the recent CEP undertaken for Markham Centre along with related policies incorporated into the draft Markham Road Mount Joy and Milliken Secondary Plans. This will include adapting policies from these secondary plan programs to inform how future developments in Cornell Centre can meet a higher standard for energy efficiency and resiliency.

Finally, through the [Cornell Rouge National Urban Park Gateway Study](#), the Secondary Plan will incorporate the vision to create a highly articulated public realm that functions as a gateway from Cornell Centre into the Rouge National Urban Park along Hwy 7.

**Updated Natural Heritage, Transportation and Water and Stormwater analysis will inform Development of the Draft Secondary Plan**

To complete the Secondary Plan for Cornell Centre, scoped technical analysis and related policy updates will be required. This analysis and policy update work includes a scoped Transportation Assessment and a scoped Natural Heritage analysis which will be undertaken in the 2nd phase of the work plan. This work can be undertaken concurrently by the respective municipal department staff. A scoped natural heritage study will be prepared by staff and completed by end of Q3 2024 to describe existing natural heritage conditions and inform natural heritage policies.

Due to an increase in expected population for the area compared to 2015, some Water and Stormwater analysis work is needed to ensure there are no negative impacts to servicing infrastructure. The Cornell Centre landowner group has agreed to update the MESP water and wastewater models that will also identify any necessary infrastructure improvements with additional information from City flow monitoring starting in Q2 2024. Final reports are anticipated in Q3 2025. However, since the landowner's group has committed to the analysis and funding of any capital sanitary trunk upgrades, there is no requirement to await the final technical analysis before completion of the Secondary Plan.

**Work plan proposes Council adopted Secondary Plan by Early Q2 2025**

The work plan to complete the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan will consist of four (4) phases:

**Phase 1:** Review of 2015 draft policy framework and technical studies (completed)

**Phase 2:** Preparation of draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan for stakeholder and public consultation

- Present draft Secondary Plan to DSC (Q3 2024)

**Phase 3:** Public consultation and engagement

- Community Information Meeting (targeting Q4 2024)
- Statutory Public Meeting (targeting Q1 2025)

**Phase 4:** Approval of Cornell Centre Secondary Plan

- Present final Secondary Plan to Markham Council for adoption targeted for late Q1/early Q2 2025

**Next Steps**

Subject to Council direction, staff plan to advance this project to completion based on the proposed work plan.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This report has no financial implications.

**HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

N/A

**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:**

Staff from Planning and Urban Design, Sustainability & Asset Management, Legal, and Engineering were consulted in preparing this report. Operations and Environmental Services will be engaged throughout the development of the revised draft secondary plan.

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

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Darryl Lyons, MCIP, RPP  
Deputy Director, Planning & Urban Design

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Giulio Cescato, MCIP, RPP  
Director, Planning & Urban Design

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Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner, Development Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix 1 – Map of Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Study Area Showing Status of Development Blocks

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Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Study Area

