



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: June 25, 2024

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**SUBJECT:** RECOMMENDATION REPORT  
City Initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Milliken  
Centre Secondary Plan

File No. PR 23 127618  
Ward 8

**PREPARED BY:** Duran Wedderburn, R.P.P., M.C.I.P., Manager, Policy (x.  
2109)

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the staff report dated June 25, 2024 entitled, “RECOMMENDATION REPORT, City Initiated Amendment for the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan” be received;
- 2) That the Official Plan Amendment for the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan, attached as Appendix 2, be finalized and forwarded to Council for adoption, and subsequently forwarded to the planning approval authority for approval;
- 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 recommend adoption of the City Initiated Official Plan Amendment to incorporate the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan into the City of Markham Official Plan, 2014.

**BACKGROUND:**

The 2014 Official Plan identifies the need for an update to the Main Street Milliken Secondary Plan (OPA #144) in the 1987 Official Plan and establishes an expanded secondary plan boundary to ensure future development in the area is planned in a comprehensive manner. Due to the expanded boundary, the secondary plan's name was changed to Milliken Centre.

The intent of the secondary plan update is to guide development in the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan area and to provide detailed direction on land use, infrastructure, transportation, community services and environment beyond the general policies provided for in the 2014 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.

**Process to Date**

- 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 status updates to the Milliken Subcommittee in November [2020](#) and [2021](#) on ongoing studies and development 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 the secondary plan to move forward without delay, support comprehensive and integrated planning of land use, transportation and municipal infrastructure, and to advance the vision of a walkable, transit supportive community.
- On September 12, 2022, Markham Council endorsed a [staff presentation](#) that outlined next steps to finalize the development concept, technical studies and bring forward a draft secondary plan.
- On May 31, 2023, Markham Council received the draft Milliken Centre secondary plan and [authorized](#) staff to schedule this statutory public meeting to receive input on the draft Milliken Centre Secondary Plan policies.
- In July 2023, City staff circulated the draft Secondary Plan and associated planning studies to prescribed public bodies for comment. City staff also [launched a Your Voice Markham page](#) for Milliken, to provide information on the Secondary Plan including the draft official plan amendment for comment, technical studies in support of the Secondary Plan, minutes from past meetings and to provide opportunity to receive input on the draft Secondary Plan.
- On November 21, 2023 a statutory public meeting was held 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.

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

The Milliken Centre Secondary Plan is planned for at least 17,000 people, 8,000 units and 4,800 jobs in the area, resulting in a minimum planned density of 300 residents and jobs per hectare for the Secondary Plan Area. The policy framework allows for the consideration of additional densities and height in the secondary plan and through area and site-specific policies subject to criteria based on capacity and urban design considerations. Staff expect more density in certain areas, such as the Pacific Mall, lands west of the rail track to facilitate a pedestrian crossing to the Pacific Mall, and the potential Denison Go station that will result in increases to the planned population and employment.

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 is 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) first 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 SP4 – 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. Improvements to the transportation system are linked to growth throughout the policies in the secondary plan and through Area and Site-Specific policies. As development is proposed, consideration will be given to the existing capacity and the timing of improvements.

#### 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.

### **DISCUSSION:**

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

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 received include recommended revisions to specific policies, concerns, requests to revise site specific land use permissions.

The comments made by deputants and provided through correspondence included:

- a) requests to remove maximum heights and densities in the draft Secondary Plan;
- b) requests to revise site specific land use designations and/or maximum heights and densities;
- c) request for additional uses to be contemplated in the Mixed-Use High-Rise land use designation;

- d) requests to increase the minimum units planned for the secondary plan area;
- e) request to make the Urban Design policies less prescriptive;
- f) request for Stratified Parks and Roads and Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Open Spaces to be considered in the secondary plan to provide flexibility to support the delivery of a complete community; and
- g) concerns about the location of the proposed public school and land use compatibility with adjacent uses.

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

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

Staff have completed their review of the feedback received to date and revised the draft secondary plan, where appropriate

- Permissive approach to densities

Map SP4 – Densities has been moved to an Appendix in the draft secondary plan to provide a more permissive policy framework that will allow for the consideration of increases in densities without the need for an official plan amendment, subject to performance criteria.

- Incentivizing Affordable Housing

A new policy is introduced that will incentivize affordable housing by excluding affordable housing units from the calculation of height and density in the draft secondary plan.

- Updated Phasing Policies

Phasing policies have been updated to better reflect the transportation assessment undertaken as a part of the Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) and the recommended infrastructure updates required to support planned growth in the secondary plan.

- Updated permissions (35-51 Old Kennedy Road).

In March 2024, Council adopted an Official Plan Amendment to OPA #144 (Main Street Milliken) and a Zoning By-law Amendment for 35-51 Old Kennedy Road. The maximum height of 30 storeys approved for the subject lands in the OPA is reflected in the draft secondary plan.

- Minimum parkland requirement to the area and site-specific policies for southwest quadrant.

A requirement to provide a neighbourhood park has been added to the Area and Site-Specific Policies (9.1) for the lands in the southwest quadrant of the secondary plan.

- Urban Design Policies

The Urban Design policies in Section 6.1 of the secondary plan have been updated to remove references to specific numbers as it relates to site design and built form. The updated policies will provide for a more permissive approach and allow flexibility with design considerations.

- Uses in the Mixed-Use High-Rise Land Use Designation

Staff have expanded the list of permitted uses in the Mixed-Use High-Rise land use designation to include ‘Hotels’ and ‘Commercial Parking Garage, as an interim use’ to support the range and mix of uses that are available to support the secondary plan as a destination and as it transitions to a transit supportive community.

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

The following section provides an overview of how the draft secondary plan conforms and is consistent with provincial, regional, and local policies.

#### **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.

**Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 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 the Milliken GO Major Transit Station Area. 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.

**York Region Official Plan, 2022**

The draft Secondary Plan conforms to the York Region Official Plan, 2022 (“YROP”). It accommodates planned growth through intensification. 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.

A 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 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.

As of July 1, 2024, the City will be responsible for the administration of the 2022 York Region Official Plan where it applies to the City of Markham.

**City of Markham Official Plan, 2014**

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. 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 draft secondary plan proposes the development of a mix use transit supportive community that will serve future residents and the broader main street Milliken community.

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

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 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, transit, 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 includes the Pacific Mall Lands, Kennedy Commons and the former Market Village, all of which are in 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 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. These factors will be considered through the development application review process.

### **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 what the quantity of parkland 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 encourages the City and landowners to 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. Staff are working with the Developers' Group(s) in the secondary plan area on principles that will guide the development of a Master Parkland Agreement.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

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 Markham Official Plan and represents good planning.

Staff recommend that the City Initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan be adopted and forwarded to the planning approval authority for approval.

**HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:**

Not applicable.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Funding to implement 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.

**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 and support the implementation of the City's Affordable and Rental Housing Strategy.

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Staff from Development Planning, Urban Design, Parks Planning, Natural Heritage, Transportation, Engineering, Environmental Services, Operations, and Legal were consulted in the preparation of this report.

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

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**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Comment/Response Matrix of Feedback on the Draft OPA for the Milliken Centre Secondary Plan

Appendix 2 - Draft Official Plan Amendment Milliken Centre Secondary Plan