

SUBJECT: Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Update – Draft Policy Framework

PREPARED BY: Philip English
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) That the report entitled "Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Update – Draft Policy Framework" dated November 12, 2024, be received;
- 2) That the Draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan be released for public consultation;
- 3) That Staff be authorized to schedule a statutory public meeting on the draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan, attached as Appendix ‘A’ to this staff report; and further,
- 4) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report presents the draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan and provides an update on the status of the project.

BACKGROUND:

Markham's Official Plan (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.

Staff presented a [workplan to Council](#) in June 2024 outlining the work required to update the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan based on previous work undertaken in 2015. Since the last report to Council, Staff have completed phases 1 and 2 of the work plan which includes updated mapping, scoped technical analysis, and the preparation of the draft secondary plan.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan has been prepared

Since the last DSC update report in June of 2024, Staff have been working on a new updated draft secondary plan for Cornell Centre. This new Cornell Centre Secondary Plan (see Appendix 'A') has been drafted and was circulated to the internal project team for review and input.

The new draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan updates and incorporates the original draft policy framework from previous work undertaken in 2015 with the current secondary plan template which is common to recently completed secondary plans such as the Markham Road Mount Joy and Milliken Centre Secondary Plans that have been adopted by Council in the past year.

Cornell Centre Community Structure

The structure of the Cornell Centre community is established in the draft Secondary Plan and builds upon the existing Greenway System, mix of land uses, public parks system, open space system, and transportation system, including the Cornell Regional Transit Terminal. The Secondary Plan Area is comprised of three distinct precincts that serve as supporting structural elements of the community. Those three distinct precincts are: Residential Neighbourhoods, Commercial Core, and Employment nodes.

Revisions to land use designations, road and transportation network, and parks, natural heritage and open space in new Secondary Plan

The policy framework developed in 2015 for Cornell Centre had detailed land use designations in three distinct categories: Residential, Mixed Use, and Employment.

While these three categories have been maintained in the update, they have been streamlined, with some mixed-use designations consolidated or eliminated.

The Employment designation has also been consolidated into one designation, Business Park Employment. This review of land use designations was informed by development application activity within the study area which has progressed over the past several years, as well as the current Planning context, and the Planning policy framework at the provincial and municipal levels.

Additionally, the road and transportation network within the study area has been revised to reflect approved block plans of subdivision. This was primarily a mapping exercise, however, policies concerning active transportation as well as public transit have been strengthened to reflect the current Planning context and policy framework. A pedestrian mews has been planned that will provide a mid-block pedestrian connection from Bur Oak Dr. to the Cornell Bus Terminal through multiple development blocks.

Mapping has been updated

A comprehensive mapping review and update has been completed for the Secondary Plan study area. The new updated maps listed below can be found in Appendix 'A' to this report. The updated mapping uses the same template as recently approved Markham Secondary Plans. While the study area boundary has remained the same since the work undertaken in 2015, the road network has evolved and is now nearly complete with new streets as part of approved Plans of Subdivision. Changes to land use designations,

additional park sites, revised heights, as well as newly identified natural heritage features have also been mapped.

Maps included in the updated Cornell Centre Secondary Plan:

- SP 1 - Detailed Land Use
- SP 2 - Community Structure
- SP 3 - Development Blocks
- SP 4 - Height
- SP 5 - Street Network
- SP 6 - Transit and Active Transportation
- SP 7 - Greenway System

Heights and Densities

Building heights have been revised to reflect approved and in process development applications, while respecting the original intent to provide a transition from higher density areas to lower density areas of the Cornell community. The tallest buildings are planned for development blocks with frontage on Highway 7 and in close proximity to the Cornell BRT Station.

Rouge National Park Gateway

Through the [Cornell Rouge National Urban Park Gateway Study](#), the draft Secondary Plan incorporates 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.

The Cornell Rouge National Urban Park Gateway Study area is located on the eastern edge of the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan area along a portion of Highway 7 and adjacent lands. It is identified on map SP1 – Detailed Land Use.

Transportation, Water and Stormwater Analysis

The Cornell Centre Secondary Plan project team is on track to complete updates to Transportation, Water and Stormwater components of the plan by Q1 2025.

The Street Network for the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan is based upon recommendations from technical work originally initiated as part of this secondary plan process in 2015 as well as technical assessment completed as part of approved development applications. The Active Transportation Network is also developed concurrently with the overall road network through workshops with multidisciplinary involvement.

In light of recent updates to the population and employment projections (as reflected in recent approved developments), updates to transportation plans by the Province and York Region, and the Province's legislative changes in relation to development, an updated transportation assessment is being undertaken within the context of these recent changes to confirm if the previous findings and recommendations need to be refined or strengthened in the Secondary Plan policies. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by Q1 2025.

The Cornell Centre Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) report in support of the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan was originally submitted to the City in September 2017. The MESP examines the existing conditions of the study area's water mains, sanitary sewers, and stormwater infrastructure and determined the extent of municipal servicing improvements and mitigation measures required to accommodate future contemplated growth. The intent of the MESP was to set a general framework to guide future development and provide recommendations to support growth.

Since that time, there has been an increase in the projected population for the study area and as such further analysis work needs to be undertaken to evaluate impacts on the servicing infrastructure. The Cornell Centre Landowners Group have agreed to update the MESP water and wastewater models that will identify any necessary infrastructure improvements with additional information forthcoming from the City's flow monitoring program which began in Q2 2024. Terms of Reference have been conveyed to the lead consultant to ensure needs and study outputs are understood. Final report completion is targeted for Q3 2025. However, since the Cornell Centre Landowners Group has committed to the analysis and funding of any capital sanitary sewer upgrades, there is no requirement to await the final technical analysis before completion of the Secondary Plan.

Updated Natural Heritage Study

The draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan protects a network of natural heritage features in the Greenway System. A natural heritage report (see Appendix 'B') has been prepared by staff which provides an assessment of potential natural heritage features and recommendations to guide the preparation of Secondary Plan policies. The draft Secondary Plan protects all of the existing 'Environmental Protection Area' lands in the 2015 draft Secondary Plan policy framework and includes several new potential natural heritage features based on natural heritage criteria in the 2014 Official Plan. As development applications come forward, it is anticipated that Environmental Impact Studies will confirm the ultimate management of these new natural features.

Phase 3 of study to begin Q4 2024

With the completion of the new draft secondary plan, the project will move into Phase 3 – Public consultation and engagement. At the outset of Phase 3, a Your Voice Markham (YVM) webpage will be launched to provide the public and stakeholders with project materials, updates, and key dates and as a tool to gather feedback. Links to the new draft secondary plan document and mapping will also be available on the YVM page.

Work plan is on track for a Council adopted Secondary Plan by Early Q3 2025

The work plan to complete the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan consists of four (4) phases with Phase 1 and 2 having now been completed:

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 (completed)

- Complete draft Secondary Plan (early Q4 2024)

Phase 3: Public consultation and engagement

- Community Information Meeting (targeting Q1 2025)
- Statutory Public Meeting (targeting late Q1/early Q2 2025)

Phase 4: Approval of Cornell Centre Secondary Plan

- Present final Secondary Plan to Markham Council for adoption targeted for early Q3 2025

Next Steps

Subject to Council direction, staff plan to move forward with Phase 3 of the study and host a Community Information Meeting in early Q1 2025, and Statutory Public Meeting in late Q1 or early Q2 of 2025 and advance this project to completion based on the Council endorsed 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:

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

Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix ‘A’ - Draft Cornell Centre Secondary Plan

Appendix ‘B’ - Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Natural Heritage Review