



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: October 3, 2016

SUBJECT: Conceptual Master Plan for the Future Urban Area – Interim Report and Preliminary Community Structure Plan

PREPARED BY: Marg Wouters, MCIP, RPP Ext. 2909
Senior Manager, Policy and Research

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report dated October 3, 2016 entitled “Conceptual Master Plan for the Future Urban Area – Interim Report and Preliminary Community Structure Plan” be received;
- 2) That the report entitled “Conceptual Master Plan for the Future Urban Area – Interim Report and Preliminary Community Structure Plan” dated October 3, 2016 be released for comment, and that a Public Open House be held in Fall 2016 to gain public input;
- 3) That the report “Conceptual Master Plan for the Future Urban Area - Interim Report and Preliminary Community Structure Plan” dated October 3, 2016 be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and York Region in support of Council’s request to the Province to continue to plan for the Future Urban Area in accordance with the York Region Official Plan 2010 in effect (i.e., at a minimum 70 residents and jobs per developable hectare), notwithstanding proposed amendments to the Provincial Growth Plan which may result in higher minimum density requirements;
- 4) And that staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Not applicable.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on work completed to date on the Future Urban Area Conceptual Master Plan, and to seek direction to hold a Public Open House to obtain public input on the Preliminary Community Structure Plan.

BACKGROUND:**The Conceptual Master Plan is the first step in detailed planning for the north Markham Future Urban Area**

In late 2013 and early 2014 Council initiated the Conceptual Master Plan (CMP) process by authorizing a number of supporting studies required to inform the detailed planning for the north Markham Future Urban Area (FUA). The FUA is identified in Markham's Official Plan 2014 (partially approved in October 2015 and May 2016), as one component of Markham's strategy to accommodate forecast growth to 2031. The majority of growth in Markham to 2031 is being accommodated through intensification of the existing urban area, with the Future Urban Area accommodating approximately 20 percent of residential growth.

The FUA consists of approximately 975 developable hectares bounded by Major Mackenzie Drive to the south, the Hydro Corridor and Woodbine Avenue to the west, the northerly City limits and Elgin Mills Road to the north and Robinson Creek to the east (Figure 1). Approximately 675 hectares of developable lands within the FUA are designated 'Future Neighbourhood Area'. These lands, located primarily between Major Mackenzie Drive and Elgin Mills Road, are anticipated to accommodate approximately 40,000 residents in 12,000-13,000 dwelling units. Approximately 300 hectares located north of Elgin Mills Road are designated as 'Future Employment Area'. The entire north Markham FUA will support approximately 16,000-19,000 jobs, most of which will be accommodated in 'Future Employment Area' lands. The remainder of the lands in the FUA are comprised of a natural heritage system designated 'Greenway' for protection.

The first stage of detailed planning for the FUA is taking place in the form of the Conceptual Master Plan, which is intended to provide a high level Community Structure Plan across the FUA lands, as the basis for more detailed statutory secondary plans for each of the four concession blocks. An accompanying policy document (Key Directions) will provide specific policy direction for the secondary plans and subsequent development applications.

In addition to planning and urban design, the background studies underway include a subwatershed study, transportation study, and water and wastewater studies. These integrated studies, when completed, will satisfy the Master Plans component of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**Goal is to develop healthy and resilient new communities**

The new communities in the north Markham FUA are being planned in accordance with the vision of sustainable growth outlined in Markham's Official Plan 2014. This vision is based on four key themes: protection of the natural environment, building compact and complete communities, increasing travel options, and maintaining a vibrant and competitive economy. Consistent with the Official Plan and emerging Provincial policy, the overarching goals are to ensure the development of healthy and resilient complete communities, as described more fully in the Interim Report attached as Appendix 'A'.

Phase 1 work completed; Phase 2 work is well-advanced

The component studies of the CMP are being undertaken in a coordinated, integrated manner, each following a similar three-phase process, consisting generally of background and development of options, impact assessment of the options, and development of an implementation strategy for the preferred option.

Phase 1 has now been substantially completed and Phase 2 work is underway. Work to date is documented in the Interim Report including the development of a draft Preliminary Community Structure Plan (Figure 2).

The draft Preliminary Community Structure Plan provides an overall planning framework for the new communities and employment lands in the Future Urban Area

The draft Preliminary Community Structure Plan identifies a high level community structure across all of the FUA lands. The Plan includes a protected Greenway System, a transportation network, an open space network, and broad land use categories which together deliver the structural elements of the new communities and employment area to be developed in the Future Urban Area, consistent with Markham and York Region Official Plan requirements. The broad land use categories (Residential Neighbourhood Area, Mixed Use Neighbourhood Corridor, and Mixed Use Regional Corridor) provide for a range of housing (from ground oriented units to apartments) and employment uses, and supporting commercial cores, at transit-supportive densities. The Employment Area is identified to accommodate primarily general employment uses, with opportunities for business park uses and ancillary retail and service at appropriate locations. The lands outside the Employment Area are being planned to support an overall density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare and 20 units per hectare.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The component studies of the CMP are being undertaken in close consultation with York Region planning and transportation staff, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), and participating landowners.

Each of the study phases anticipates the opportunity for Council and public input through reports to Development Services Committee and Public Open Houses. Consultation has been taking place with non-governmental organizations, adjacent municipalities, other agencies such as school boards and utilities, non-participating landowners, and First Nations and Métis communities.

The first Public Open House was held in January 2015 to introduce the Conceptual Master Plan work and its study components to the public and to obtain initial input for consideration in developing land use concepts. Based on the work completed in Phase 1 and Phase 2 to date, a second Public Open House is now being planned for Fall 2016 to introduce a draft Preliminary Community Structure Plan and associated policies for the FUA, which will be finalized in the third and final phases of the studies.

Staff recommend this report be forwarded to the Province and York Region in support of planning for a minimum density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare within the Future Urban Area, notwithstanding proposed amendments to minimum density requirements in the Provincial Growth Plan

The Province is currently undertaking a review of four Provincial Plans, including the Growth Plan, and has released proposed amendments to the Plans. In a separate report to Committee dated October 3, 2016 recommending Council's response to the proposed amendments, staff have outlined concerns with the proposed increases to the minimum density requirements for Designated Greenfield Areas in the Growth Plan (from 50 to 80 residents and jobs per hectare). Analysis by Regional staff indicates that the proposed Growth Plan minimum density of 80 residents and jobs per hectare for Designated Greenfield Areas Region-wide (including the FUA) would require the FUA lands to be developed at a density that could exceed 150 residents and jobs per hectare.

Given the extent of the work completed and the resources invested in the Conceptual Master Plan exercise (i.e., multi-year, multi-million dollar studies plus dedicated staff resources), one of the recommendations in the report outlining Council's response to the Province on the proposed Plan amendments, is that Council request that the Province acknowledge this work and continue to allow for planning of the FUA at 70 residents and jobs per hectare. In support of that recommendation, staff further recommend that this report, including the attached Interim Report and Preliminary Community Structure Plan, be forwarded to the Province as evidence of Markham Council's ongoing commitment to developing compact, complete, transit-supportive communities in the Designated Greenfield Area, at densities exceeding the current Growth Plan density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare.

Next Steps

Public input received at the Public Open House will be considered in the remaining phases (remainder of Phase 2 impact assessment, and Phase 3 implementation recommendations) of the Conceptual Master Plan exercise. Once finalized, the Conceptual Master Plan will be presented to Council for endorsement as the basis for the preparation of statutory secondary plans.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Conceptual Master Plan work is being undertaken by a team of City staff and consultants funded through approved capital budget projects and a Funding Agreement with participating landowners in the north Markham Future Urban Area.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

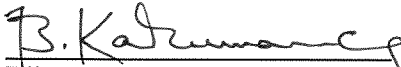
ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

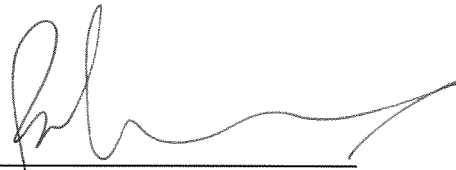
The Future Urban Area is identified to accommodate a portion of Markham's growth to 2031 in the Markham Official Plan 2014 and the Region's Official Plan 2010.


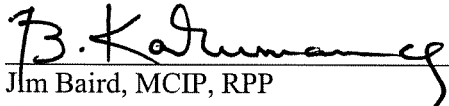
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

All relevant City departments are being consulted on an ongoing basis as part of the Conceptual Master Plan process.

RECOMMENDED BY:


Biju Karumanchery, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning & Urban Design


Brian Lee, P. Eng
Director, Engineering

 
Jim Baird, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1: Future Urban Area

Figure 2: Preliminary Community Structure Plan

Appendix 'A': Conceptual Master Plan for the Future Urban Area – Interim Report

Q:/development/planning/MISC/MI551 FUA/DSC Oct 2016/DSC Report3oct16.doc