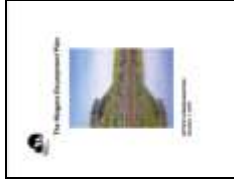




**BUILDING MARKHAM'S
FUTURE TOGETHER**
2015-2019 Strategic Plan



Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review

Comments on the

Proposed Amendments to the

Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine

Conservation Plan



Development Services Committee

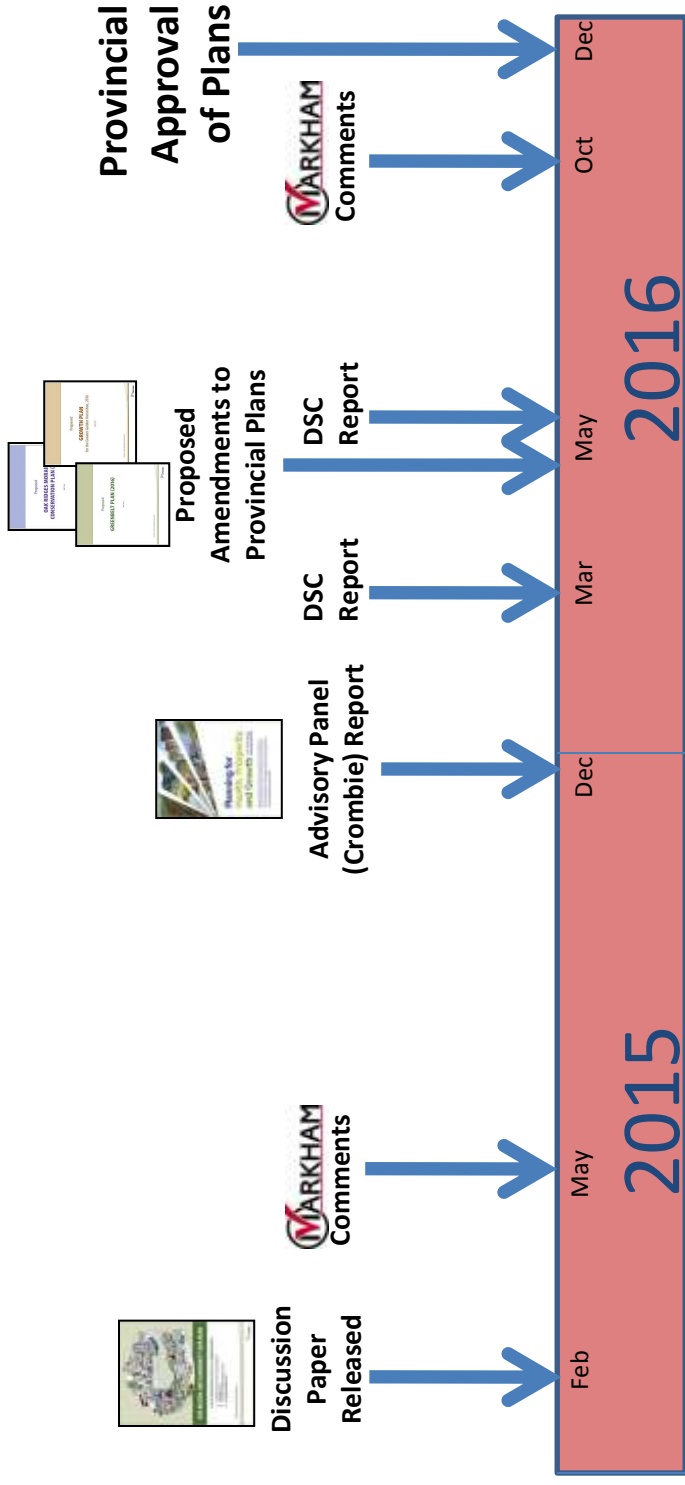
September 6, 2016

Order of Presentation

1. Overview of Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review
2. Summary - Areas of Support and Concern with Proposed Amendments
3. Policy Changes in Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
4. Next Steps



1. Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review



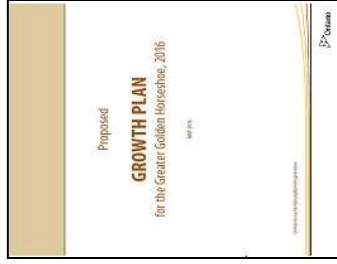
2. Summary – Areas of Support and Concern GROWTH PLAN

Areas of Support:

- Continue to strongly support the goals and principles of the Growth Plan to achieve compact, complete communities with a focus on intensification/ transit .
- Support the focus on targeted transit investment for intensification areas, stronger protection of ‘prime’ employment lands, and addition of policies related to natural heritage, community hubs and climate change.

Areas of Concern:

- Increased intensification target, and increased minimum density requirement for Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) are too high.
- If Province does proceed with increased DGA density targets, the new requirements should not apply retroactively to growth planned with current approved municipal Official Plans, but rather only come into effect upon the next municipal comprehensive review (2041 forecasts).
- The Province’s ‘built boundary’ mapping should be adjusted to reflect Markham’s urban boundary at the time of the 2006 Growth Plan (including all of OPA5).
- Clarification regarding density targets for Major Transit Station Areas and definition of Prime Employment Areas vs other Employment Areas.
- Absence of Yonge Subway extension, Highway 7 Rapid Transit Corridor, Major Mackenzie Drive Rapid Transit Corridor and the full extent of the Highway 407 Transitway from Priority Transit Corridor map. **4**



2. Summary – Areas of Support and Concern (cont'd)



GREENBELT PLAN

Areas of Support:

- Continue to support the goals and principles of the Greenbelt Plan to protect and enhance natural heritage and agricultural lands.
- Support the introduction of improved agricultural policies and better alignment with definitions and policies of the other Plans.



Areas of Concern:

- Original policy providing for municipal refinement of the boundary of the Natural Heritage System (NHS) remains unchanged, without guidance on how the refinements should be implemented.

2. Summary – Areas of Support and Concern (cont'd)



OAK RIDGES MORaine CONSERVATION PLAN

Areas of Support:

- Continue to support the goals and principles of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine feature.
- Staff support the introduction of improved agricultural policies and alignment of definitions and policies of the other Plans.



Areas of Concern:

- No major concerns with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, however, staff note that as a regulation, the approval process differs from that of the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan creating some administrative complexity.
- Decision on Council boundary adjustment request still pending.



3. Policy Changes in Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan

Building Complete Communities

Supporting Agriculture

Protecting Natural Heritage and Water

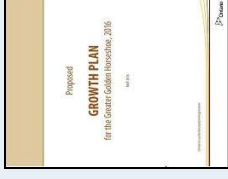
Growing the Greenbelt

Addressing Climate Change

Integrating Infrastructure

Improving Plan Implementation

Measuring Performance

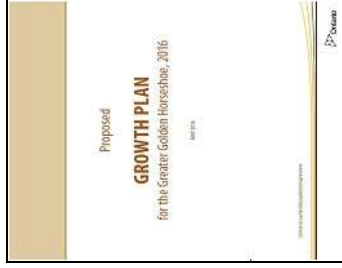


GROWTH PLAN - Policy Changes

- Intensification and Density Targets
- Priority Transit Corridors
- Strategic Growth Areas
- Community Hubs
- Employment
- Settlement Area Expansions
- Methodology for Land Needs
- Natural Heritage System
- Watershed Planning
- Green Infrastructure and LIDs
- Climate Change

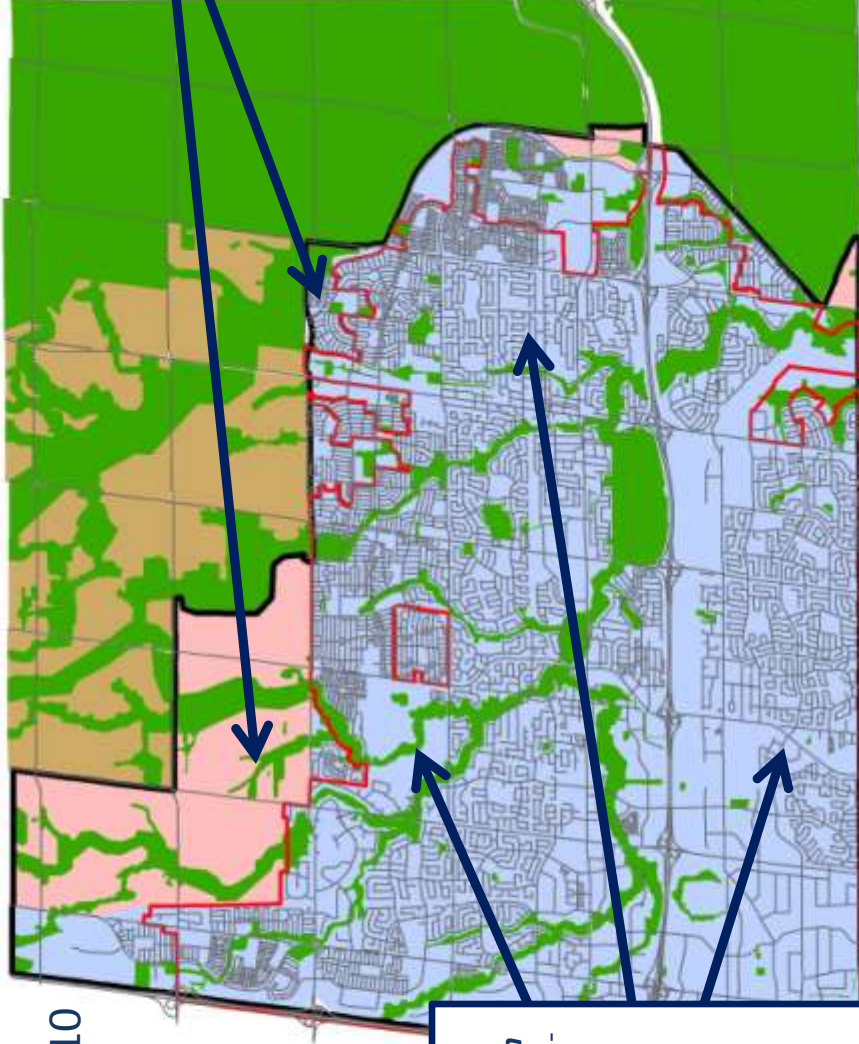


Proposed increases in Region-wide Residential Intensification Target and Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) minimum density



- The **residential intensification target** is proposed to increase from 40 percent to **60 percent** Region-wide; new target will not apply until the next municipal comprehensive review (2041 forecasts).
- The **Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) density target** is proposed to increase from 50 residents + jobs/hectare Region-wide to **80 residents + jobs/hectare**; and would come into effect immediately upon approval of the Growth Plan.
- 2031 forecasts in effect in the York Region OP continue to apply until the next municipal comprehensive review (2041 forecasts); the Schedule 3 population and employment forecasts for 2041 remain unchanged from Amendment 2 to the Growth Plan (2012).
- The **Built Boundary** would remain unchanged.

Growth Plan York Region OP, 2010



Designated Greenfield Areas:

Growth Plan 2006: min 50 residents + jobs per hectare
Region-wide for lands within the Urban Area Boundary (black line), but outside the Provincial Built Boundary (red line)

York Region OP:

Notwithstanding Growth Plan requirements, the minimum density in the Future Urban Area (pink area) is **70 residents + jobs/ha**, and minimum **20 units/ha**

Growth Plan 2016: min 80 residents + jobs /ha

Intensification:

Growth Plan 2006, York Region OP: min 40% of growth Region-wide to be within Provincial Built Boundary (red line); translates into approx **52%** for Markham; Markham chose a **60%** target

Growth Plan 2016: min 60% Region-wide intensification

Staff Response:

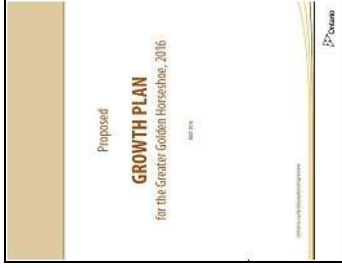


The proposed increases in the Region-wide residential intensification targets and Designated Greenfield Area minimum density, along with the transition policies are problematic:

1. The 'math' does not appear to work – it is not possible to achieve both the 60% intensification target Region-wide and the DGA 80 residents + jobs Region-wide (i.e., not enough people and jobs in the 2041 forecast for York Region to achieve both targets).
2. A Region-wide DGA minimum density of 80 residents + jobs/ha applied over areas already built out, results in much higher densities needing to be accommodated in the remaining unbuilt DGAs (e.g., possibly exceeding 150 residents + jobs/ha in Markham's Future Urban Area).
3. A multi-year, multi-discipline master planning process for the Future Urban Area is well advanced based on 70 residents + jobs/ha as required in the York Region OP; changes in minimum density requirements now would require work to be redone at additional expense, and delay getting the planned housing and employment lands on-stream.

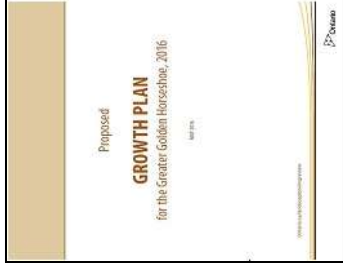
Staff Response (cont'd):

4. Intensification target and minimum densities proposed are too high:
 - Although Markham is capable of achieving 60% intensification (based on a 40% Region-wide target), a 60% target Region-wide would translate into a higher target for Markham (likely 70%+)
 - Higher intensification targets = more apartments; population forecasts assigned to Markham under a high intensification scenario would have to account for the ability of the market to build and absorb a much higher number of apartment buildings (i.e., forecasted growth may have to be lower to reflect slower market absorption).
 - The higher intensification target and minimum DGA densities assume higher order transit will be in place. Timelines for transit delivery in Markham lag behind timelines for growth, putting the City in a position of planning for transit-supportive development without the required transit.



Recommended Revisions:

1. Proposed intensification target and DGA minimum density are too high - should be modified to reflect the ability of Regional and local municipalities to deliver the new communities. (The Regional staff recommended 45% intensification target for 2041 and 70 residents + jobs per ha in expansion areas are more realistic.)
2. Markham's Built Boundary should be redefined - the DGA should coincide with the 'Future Urban Area' identified in Markham's Official Plan 2014 (largely north of Major Mackenzie Drive, with smaller areas in Cornell and southeast Markham).
3. Consistent transition policy should apply to new DGA minimum density and intensification target , i.e., both applied through next municipal comprehensive review (MCR); this would ensure consistency with the Growth Plan policy to continue to plan with the 2031 forecasts in effect until the next MCR, and ensures that planning well underway for the Future Urban Area (at 70 residents + jobs/ha) can continue without delay.

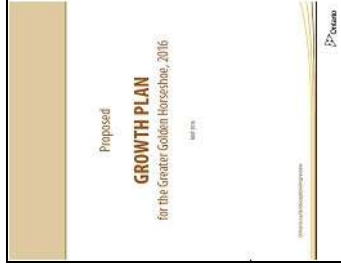


Intensification – Additional Policies

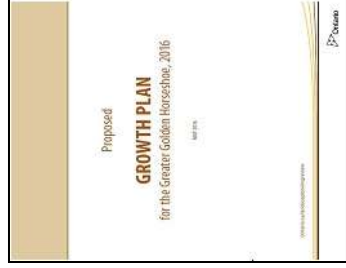
- New policy to prioritize planning and zoning for Priority Transit Corridors (higher order transit corridors) identified in Schedule 5.
- New density targets and policies for Major Transit Station Areas (within 500m radius of a transit station/stop on higher order transit corridor) as follows:
 - subway station areas = 200 residents + jobs/ha
 - light rail or bus rapid transit station areas = 160 residents + jobs/ha
 - Express rail GO Transit station areas = 150 residents + jobs/ha

Major Transit Station Areas to be delineated by municipalities and supported by updated zoning and prohibition of land uses/built form that would adversely affect achievement of minimum density targets.

- Lands within 'easy access' to frequent transit service to be identified as Strategic Growth Areas (intensification areas); minimum densities identified in upper-tier plans.



Staff Response:



- Principle of identifying and planning appropriate densities in Strategic Growth Areas and Major Transit Station Areas to reflect higher order transit is supported, but clarification is needed on how much discretion municipalities will have in identifying Major Transit Station Areas. Concern that existing land uses within a 500m radius may preclude achieving the targets at all stations/stops (e.g., Major Mackenzie Drive high order transit corridor).
- Yonge subway extension to Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway UGC, Highway 7 Rapid Transit Corridor, Major Mackenzie Drive Rapid Transit Corridor, and the full extent of the Highway 407 Transitway should be identified as Priority Transit Corridors on Schedule 5.
- Concern that language “easy access to frequent transit service” is too general and could be used to justify applications for intensification in stable areas throughout the City, rather than within identified Strategic Growth Areas/intensification areas - City may face same issue as with previous GP policy “to encourage intensification generally throughout the built up area”).

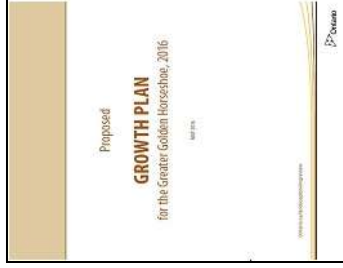
Employment Policies (Prime Employment Areas vs Employment Areas)

- Municipalities required to designate suitable lands near major goods movement facilities/corridors, including major highway interchanges, as Prime Employment Areas, to be protected long term for land extensive employment uses (e.g., manufacturing).
- Protection provided through OP policies prohibiting residential and other sensitive land uses, institutional uses, and retail, commercial and office uses; not eligible for conversion to non-employment uses (but eligible for conversion to Employment Area).
- Municipalities required to designate other Employment Areas where wider range of employment uses would be permitted if accessible by transit or active transportation; conversion could be considered through an MCR.
- Major Office now to be directed to Major Transit Station Areas and Strategic Growth Areas, and existing office parks to be planned to improve transit connectivity and appropriate mix of amenities, and intensification of employment uses.



Staff Response:

- The intent of the Prime Employment Area designation is supported, but concern with exclusion of office buildings as appropriate use in the designation; employment lands most suitable for Prime Employment Area in Markham also contain offices (e.g., Business Park Employment lands, particularly along Hwy 404 and Hwy 407).
- Confirmation requested that the related provision for upper-tier municipalities to identify other existing Employment Areas as Prime Employment Areas would allow for existing Business Park Employment lands to be identified as Prime Employment Area.
- Offices should continue to be permitted in Prime Employment Areas to allow for the employment lands within the Future Urban Area (last opportunity for new employment lands in the City) to be eligible for Prime Employment Area designation while permitting some office development.
- Concern that the new Employment Area policies are less restrictive re: commercial/retail uses and direct the integration of Employment Areas with non-employment areas; result may be non-employments uses becoming predominant use in Employment Areas.



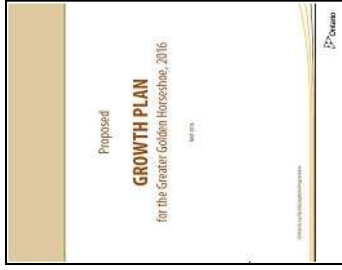
Infrastructure Planning

New Policies:

- Requirement that planning for infrastructure occur in an integrated manner, supported by master plans and asset management plans to ensure infrastructure is financially viable over its full life cycle.
- Provincial infrastructure (e.g., transit) investment will be used as an implementation tool to facilitate higher density development in Strategic Growth Areas; decisions on transit will be based on a number of criteria including prioritizing areas with existing or planned higher densities.
- Requirements for better integration of infrastructure planning in determining feasible urban boundary expansions, e.g., subwatershed studies, master transportation, water and wastewater plans and full life cycle financial viability of infrastructure and public service facilities.

Staff Response:

- Staff support use of transit investment as implementation tool and planning for infrastructure in an integrated manner.
- Yonge Subway extension, Highway 7 Rapid Transit Corridor, Major Mackenzie Drive Rapid Transit Corridor and the full extent of the Highway 407 Transitway must be added to Provincial Priority Transit Corridor Map (Schedule 5)
- Overall senior governments must do more to advance funding and implementation of Metrolinx's Big Move Regional Transportation Plan to support the Growth Plan



Watershed Planning/Natural Heritage System

New Policies:

- Municipalities required to identify and protect a Water Resource System (surface and ground water features and hydrologic functions) using watershed planning as basis.
- Watershed planning required to inform decisions on new or expanded infrastructure; and subwatershed studies are required before approval of urban expansion boundaries, and large scale development and secondary plans.
- Municipalities required to incorporate in official plans a natural heritage system (NHS) identified and mapped by the Province, with appropriate designations and policies.
- Greenbelt-level protections provided for key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features in natural heritage systems outside of settlement areas; NHS within the settlement area boundary (including FUA) is exempted.





Staff Response:

- Staff support the principle of water resource system/watershed planning, and the use of low impact development and green infrastructure (being undertaken in the FUA).
- The application of a consistent approach to natural heritage protection amongst the 3 Plans is supported. Markham's Official Plan 2014 natural heritage policies are generally consistent with those policies recommended by the Province.
- Staff agree with the approach of exempting previously urbanized lands from the new natural heritage system policies in the Growth Plan, but the policies should be applicable to the Future Urban Area.
- There is concern that a Provincial Natural Heritage System would be less robust than the system the City already has identified (e.g., if it only includes provincial scale features). More guidance should be included to ensure that municipal policies can be more restrictive.

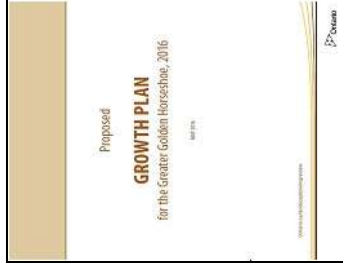
Agricultural System

New Policies:

- The Province will identify an agricultural system for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, consisting of Prime Agricultural Areas, Specialty Crop Areas and Rural Lands as well as an Agricultural Support Network.
- Municipalities will designate Prime Agricultural Areas in accordance with provincial mapping.
- Municipalities required to minimize impacts on agriculture at the interface with non-agricultural uses and ensure geographic continuity of the agricultural land base, and functional/economic connections to the Agricultural Support Network.

Staff Response:

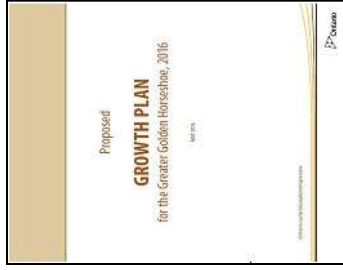
- The Province should consider the recent York Region LEAR process in identification of the agricultural system.
- Further guidance should be provided on how to address the interface of agricultural and non-agricultural uses.
- Further guidance should be provided on the identification of an Agricultural Support Network





Climate Change New Policies:

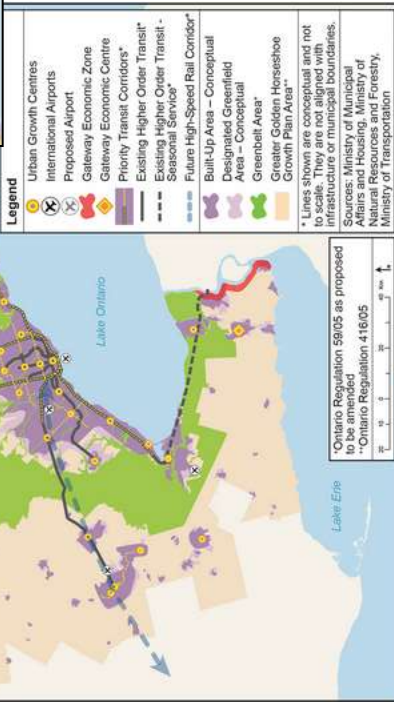
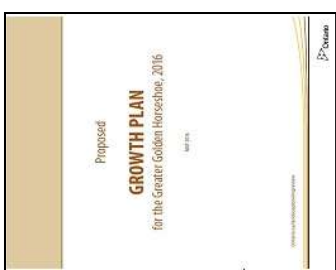
- Municipalities now required to develop OP policies to identify actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals aligned with Ontario Climate Change Strategy 2015 and Action Plan.
- Municipalities encouraged to establish greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that support provincial targets and consider the goal of Net-Zero Communities *(i.e. communities that meet their energy demand through low-carbon or carbon-free forms of energy and offset...any releases of greenhouse gas emissions that cannot be eliminated...)*
- Municipalities required to assess infrastructure vulnerability and identify priority actions to increase infrastructure resilience and adapt to climate change.
- New requirements for use of low impact development and green infrastructure in stormwater management.



Climate Change

Staff Response:

- More specific guidance would be helpful to clarify intent for climate change adaptation policies in general, particularly with respect to the definition of Net-Zero Communities and adaptation mitigation goals.
- Additional guidance is specifically requested regarding community energy planning.
- Staff support the use of low impact development and green infrastructure, and are currently undertaking a study of which types of LID facilities are appropriate for use in Markham.



Schedule 5 – Moving People-Transit (to be reviewed every 5 yrs)

- Schedule has been updated to reflect current provincial commitments to transit – new reference to Priority Transit Corridors
- 2006 Proposed High Order Transit line to Pickering Airport, and from Markham Centre to Scarborough Centre are no longer shown

Staff Response:

- Yonge Street Subway Extension to the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway UGC, Highway 7 Rapid Transit Corridor, Major Mackenzie Drive Rapid Transit Corridor and the full extent of the Highway 407 Transitway should be added as Priority Transit Corridors

GREENBELT PLAN - Policy Changes

- Agricultural System
- Prime Agricultural Areas Mapping
- Agricultural Viability
- Agricultural Assessments
- Settlement Areas
- Local Food, Urban and Near-Urban Agriculture
- Growing the Greenbelt
- Net-Zero or Low Carbon Communities
- Watershed Planning
- Rouge Urban National Park Management Plan
- Managing Excess Soil and Fill
- Urban River Valley Designation





Natural Heritage System New Policies:

- The Plan still provides for municipal refinement of the NHS boundary at the time of Official Plan conformity.
- The natural heritage protection standards remain unchanged and are supported.

Staff Response:

- In previous comments, the City requested that greater clarity be provided regarding Provincial NHS boundary adjustments either by ensuring that adjustment exercises be led by the Province, or by providing detailed criteria in the Plan to guide municipalities in recommending adjustments of Provincial NHS boundaries. These comments have not been addressed, and still apply.
- Staff support the natural heritage protection standards and support their application to the Growth Plan lands.



Growing the Greenbelt and Urban River Valley Areas

New Policies:

- The new Urban River Valley areas created in Amendment No. 1 to the 2005 Greenbelt Plan have been enhanced in the new Plan. The designation now applies to all 'public' lands identified in Provincial mapping.
- Growing the Greenbelt policies have been simplified to remove Regional approvals.

Staff Response:

- Clarity is required on how municipalities are required to implement the Urban River Valley areas as there is no direction to map these as part of the conformity exercise. The designation defers to the municipal Official Plan for policy protection.
- Staff support the flexibility provided in growing the Greenbelt through local municipal requests.



Parkland

New Policies:

- New policy recognizes that parks, open spaces and trails are important components of Complete Communities, which also help to address the causes and impacts of climate change.

Staff Response:

- Given the abundance of Greenbelt lands that will interface with the urban area, more guidance is required regarding the types of 'facilities' that would be permitted, what would be included in a 'system of publicly accessible parklands', or what is contemplated by 'a full range of publically accessible, built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands' to ensure a clear understanding of which recreational and parkland uses would be permitted in the Greenbelt.

OAK RIDGES MORaine CONSERVATION PLAN

– Policy Changes

- Net-Zero Communities
- Cultural Heritage Resources
- Alignment with PPS
- Agriculture-related Uses
- Sustainable Water Resources
- Watershed Planning
- Boundary Confirmed by 245 m Contour
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Green Infrastructure



OAK RIDGES MORaine CONSERVATION PLAN

New Policies:

- Agricultural policies updated to align with the Provincial Policy Statement 2014, i.e., more flexibility for farm structures to be located adjacent to natural features.
- Excess soil and fill policies encourage best practices.
- Southern boundary adjustment permitted to the confirmed 245 m asl contour. Lands outside of the 245 m asl contour are deemed part of the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt.

Staff Response:

- The alignment of the agricultural policies with the PPS/other Plans is supported.
- Use of best management practices to address soil and fill storage is supported, but clarification is requested.
- Staff are satisfied with the clarity provided with respect to the boundary adjustment (a boundary adjustment response as requested by Council is still pending).



4. Next Steps

- October 3, 2016 – DSC report on recommended comments
- October 18, 2016 – Markham Council approval of comments for submission to Province
- October 31, 2016 – Provincial deadline for comments
- December 2016 – Provincial target for approval of Plans
- 2017/2018 – Provincial guidance documents/mapping released

Discussion