



Building Markham's Future Together
Journey to **Excellence**

Markham Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Development Services Committee

9 September 2014

Ronji Borooah

FRAIC, OAA, MCIP, RPP

City Architect

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Outline

1. Purpose & Objective
2. Design Review Panel Role
3. Scope & Operation
4. Markham's Design Review Panel
5. Pilot Areas & Projects
6. Panel Composition
7. Consultation with Development Industry Stakeholders
8. Recommendations

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

A Design Review Panel Can Improve Design in the City

- A Design Review Panel is an independent body of experienced design professionals, reporting to the Director of Planning & Urban Design and Commissioner of Development Services in an advisory role.
- The Panel provides advice to City Staff on design matters regarding complex development applications.
- The Panel performs its functions through Design Review meetings where they review, comment and make recommendations on the design of projects.
- The Panel helps to raise the quality of design in new developments, for better buildings and public realm.

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Role of the Design Review Panel

- The Panel is an informal body and does not have any statutory decision making powers.
- The role of the Panel is to provide advice to City Staff through design review meetings.
- City Staff incorporate Panel comments and advice into their reports to Development Services Committee for their deliberation.
- The Panel's activities do not replace any part of the current approval process, nor the roles of Staff or other stakeholders.
- Council (DSC) has the ultimate authority and the control of the development and Site Plan Approval process.

Design Review Panel Scope and Operations

- City Staff will continue to deal with Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning issues as per current practice, while the Panel will focus on urban design and architecture and, in particular, Site Plan Approval related matters.
- City Staff will review major development applications and prepare design comments and questions for the Panel to consider in their review of applications.
- The applicant's design professionals will be invited to present their design concepts to the Panel, and engage in professional dialogue and critique.
- The Panel's advice often provides added support to Staff recommendations in their reports to Council, and are referenced by City Staff in their reports.
- The Panel will function within the existing planning approval framework in Markham.
- The Panel will recognize its supporting role within the existing framework.

A Design Review Panel Pilot Project Should be Established in Markham

- Design Review Panels have been established successfully in several Ontario municipalities, including:
 - ☐ Hamilton
 - ☐ London
 - ☐ Mississauga
 - ☐ Ottawa
 - ☐ Toronto
 - ☐ Vaughan
- A Design Review Panel Pilot Project is recommended in Markham, to commence under the new term of Council (2015).
- The Pilot Project should run for a 2 year period.
- The Panel will help in achieving design excellence on new projects.

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Pilot Areas and Projects for Design Review

- Areas for design review would include major, complex applications within the intensification areas identified in the Official Plan.
 - ☐ Regional Centres and Corridors;
 - ☐ Key Development Areas;
 - ☐ Local Centres and Corridors.
- Projects for design review include applications for:
 - ☐ Design concepts and submissions in support of applications for Official Plan Amendments and Rezoning;
 - ☐ Site Plan Approvals.



Building Markham's Future Together
Journey to Excellence

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Design Review Panel Composition

- Markham should start with at least 7 members for the Pilot Project.
- Panel Members should be experienced design professionals from the fields of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Planning and Engineering.
- Panel members will serve for a 2 year term.
- A Chair and Vice Chair will be chosen from the Panel membership to conduct Panel Meetings.
- A City Staff Member will be assigned on a part-time basis to assist with organizing the Panel meetings, setting agendas, scheduling presentations & material from applicants for Panel review, coordinating attendance of applicants and their design consultants, and preparing minutes. **8**

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Pilot Project will be Monitored

- Monitoring of Pilot Project by City Staff.
- Collecting feedback from applicants, Staff, and Panel Members.
- Interim Status Report to Council at end of Year 1.
- Final Report to Council at end of Year 2.

Update

Consultation with Development Industry Stakeholders

- Several stakeholders were consulted during Summer 2014 regarding the proposed Pilot Project.
- Stakeholders included developers and consultants with experience in Design Review Panels in other municipalities.
- These stakeholders are generally involved in high density, high rise developments in Markham.
- In summary, stakeholders had positive comments about the role of Design Review Panels in improving the design quality of projects.
- Stakeholder comments include:
 - ☐ Panel members must have experience in the dynamics of the development industry;
 - ☐ Restrict the scope of the Design Review Panel to design matters, not planning matters;
 - ☐ Meet with Design Review Panel as early in design process as possible, ie. at concept stage;
 - ☐ Ensure the Panel schedule is synchronized with application processing schedule, ie. no delays.



Building Markham's Future Together
Journey to Excellence

Markham's Design Review Panel Pilot Project

Update

Recommendations

- That the presentation and report of the Markham Design Review Panel Pilot Project be received.
- That Council approve the establishment of a Markham Design Review Panel Pilot Project for 2 years starting in 2015.
- And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.



Building Markham's Future Together
Journey to Excellence

