



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: June 17, 2014

SUBJECT: Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Review

PREPARED BY: Alan Filipuzzi, Manager, Intensification & Secondary Plans, Policy and Research (x. 2459)

REVIEWED BY: Marg Wouters M.C.I.P., R.P.P., Senior Manager, Policy and Research (x. 2909)

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report entitled "Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Review" dated June 17, 2014 be received; and
- 2) 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:

- outline the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan review process and schedule; and
- identify issues and requirements to be addressed through the secondary plan review process.

BACKGROUND:

The Markham Official Plan (December 2013) identifies Cornell Centre as one of the Secondary Plan Areas for which new or updated secondary plans are to be adopted, and provides direction for the preparation of secondary plans.

The vision and direction for Cornell Centre is set out in the 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan (OPA No. 168). In 2011, a Precinct Plan was initiated for Cornell Centre to provide more detailed planning and urban design direction. Some of the new direction identified in the draft Precinct Plan requires changes to the Secondary Plan policy. In addition, staff have been working with various landowners regarding applications or development concepts that are substantially different from the vision for Cornell Centre outlined in the 2008 Secondary Plan and the draft Precinct Plan. Many of these issues are interconnected and need to be resolved in the context of a comprehensive secondary plan review. The proposed Secondary Plan review process, including issues and requirements to be addressed, are outlined in this report.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Official Plan direction for preparation of secondary plans

The 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan applies to the entire Cornell community. Much of the Cornell community outside of Cornell Centre has been built out or approved. Consistent with the direction of the new Official Plan with respect to secondary plans focusing on areas that have substantial development or redevelopment potential, the updated secondary

plan will pertain only to Cornell Centre. The limits of the proposed new Cornell Centre Secondary Plan area are outlined in Figure 1.

The remainder of the Cornell community outside Cornell Centre will be governed by the policies in Part I of the new Official Plan. Policies from the Cornell Secondary Plan that are still required for the remaining undeveloped parcels, outside of the Cornell Centre boundary, have been included as area and site specific policies in Chapter 9 of the Official Plan. It should be noted that until an updated Secondary Plan is approved by the Region, the policies relating to Cornell Centre in the 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan will remain in effect.

Cornell Centre is identified as a key development area (KDA)

Cornell Centre is identified as a key development area in the Official Plan, and forms an important part of the intensification strategy in the Plan. Key development areas are areas along rapid transit corridors that are identified and planned as a priority for intensification. They are intended to have well designed, compact, mixed use pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive built form, and are expected to achieve an overall long term density of a minimum 2.5 floor space index.

Official Plan requirements for new secondary plans

The Official Plan requires new secondary plans to include innovative and comprehensive approaches to address the following matters:

- protection of the Greenway System,
- achievement of minimum density targets, where applicable
- provision for a range of housing types and sizes and a range of affordability,
- provision for employment lands, and for a range and mix of retail and service uses,
- provision for community infrastructure and services, including a community infrastructure plan,
- protection of cultural heritage resources,
- urban design and sustainable development practices including guidance on: a streets and blocks plan, streetscape, built form, height and massing, and sustainable community design and development practices including community energy planning,
- provision for a sustainable transportation system, including transit and road network, transportation demand management and active transportation,
- the recommendations of master environmental servicing plans,
- guidance on the development of precinct plans or comprehensive block plans, and
- phasing of development.

Some of these requirements have already been addressed in the 2008 Secondary Plan, and will require only an update.

Vision for Cornell Centre to be confirmed

Cornell Centre is envisioned in the 2008 Secondary Plan to be a mixed-use district functioning as a regional sub-centre serving not only the Cornell community but also east Markham. As a centre within a regional rapid transit corridor, it is intended to be a focal

point for community, institutional, recreational and retail activities, providing for a mix of uses at transit-supportive densities. It is also planned to function as a regional employment node, building on the health care campus and capitalizing on access to major road and planned rapid transit infrastructure.

Various landowners have expressed concern that some of the Cornell Centre policies are too restrictive and are hindering development of the Centre. Approvals have been granted for various development proposals (e.g., the Lindvest mixed-use block south of Highway 7/east of Bur Oak Avenue and stacked townhouse block east of 9th Line, and the Springhill Macwood apartment site plan and draft plan of subdivision on the north side of Hwy 7/west of Cornell Centre Boulevard). However at this time, only one development, the Lindvest stacked townhouse block, is moving forward. Among the landowner requested changes are consideration of ground-oriented residential building types in Cornell Centre, the redesignation of a substantial amount of the employment lands, permission for single use rather than mixed use commercial development, and a request for commercial uses outside the identified commercial areas.

Some landowners, primarily in the north-east quadrant of Cornell Centre, have requested the introduction of a townhouse built form within the Residential Neighbourhood – Cornell Centre designation. This designation was intended to accommodate mid-rise residential development, acting as a transition between the lower density residential neighbourhoods outside Cornell Centre and the higher intensity development along Highway 7. The current 4 storey minimum requirement and the exclusion of a townhouse built form in this designation was intended to ensure transit-supportive densities and a more intense form of development within Cornell Centre.

In addition, three official plan amendment applications (Lindvest, Flato and Cornell Rouge) have been received to redesignate a substantial amount of employment lands in the eastern portion of Cornell Centre to ground-oriented residential and mixed use.

The draft Precinct Plan also put forward a refined street and block pattern and an alternative built form model with proposed massing and building heights that are different from the current Secondary Plan requirements.

The appropriateness of the proposed land uses and their impact on the vision for Cornell Centre as a transit-supportive live/work community, as well as the alternative massing and height regime proposed in the draft Precinct Plan, needs to be examined comprehensively.

Location of VIVA Regional Transit Terminal to be confirmed

The proposed VIVA regional transit terminal within Cornell Centre will provide a transfer facility for VIVA, local YRT buses, GO Transit, and other inter-regional transit providers. The 2008 Cornell Secondary Plan identified the location of the regional transit terminal south of Highway 7 at the western edge of the employment area. More recently, VIVA has been exploring locations north of Highway 7 in close proximity to the Markham Stouffville Hospital. Any location of the transit terminal near the hospital would require

the review of impact on the adjacent land use designations, which may in turn affect the community and commercial structure of the Centre.

Commercial Structure to be confirmed

Cornell Centre is intended to function as a focal point for community, institutional, recreational and retail activities. A variety of community supportive retail activities are concentrated into a mixed-use retail area at the heart of the Centre adjacent to Highway 7. As well, grade-related retail provides continuity and support to the mixed-use area at key locations along the Highway 7 and Bur Oak Avenue frontages. An intensive mixed-use 'main street' character is mandated for Bur Oak Avenue from Highway 7 to Church Street.

The draft Precinct Plan confirmed the intersection of Highway 7 and Bur Oak Avenue as the main focal point for Cornell Centre and recommends a concentrated "Commercial Core" encompassing the commercial area south of Highway 7 and extending northward along the Bur Oak 'main street' corridor.

There has been landowner interest in developing commercial uses north of Highway 7 closer to 9th Line rather than along Bur Oak Avenue. A commercial market study has been submitted by the landowners group in support of this alternative commercial concept. In addition, the market study questions the mixed use built form required for retail development in Cornell Centre and the landowners are requesting that a more traditional form of commercial development be permitted.

Staff is reviewing the study recommendations and assessing the implications on Secondary Plan policies. The ultimate location of the VIVA transit terminal will also be taken into account as part of the review.

Technical Analyses to be updated

Depending on the changes in population and employment from a revised land use schedule resulting from this review, a number of technical analyses or studies may be required to determine what, if any, impact the proposed level of development in Cornell Centre will have on:

- transportation infrastructure;
- water, waste water and storm water infrastructure (MESP update);
- the parks and open space system; and
- community facilities and services, such as schools, community centres, library facilities, fire and emergency services

In addition, a community energy plan will be prepared for Cornell Centre. A city-wide community energy plan, currently being developed by the Sustainability Office, will provide a framework for the Cornell Centre energy plan.

Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Review Process and Schedule

Staff will continue to work with the landowners and stakeholders to review and refine various concepts throughout the summer, and report back to Committee in the fall with proposed options for an updated land use schedule and policies for inclusion in the

Secondary Plan update. The proposed options would be presented to the Cornell Advisory Group and to the general public through an open house. Following the fall consultation, a Draft Secondary Plan would be prepared for consideration at a statutory public meeting.

Staff have been actively working with the landowners on the issues outlined above. Although it is preferable that decisions on individual development applications await approval of the updated Secondary Plan, it is contemplated that some applications could be considered in advance of the Secondary Plan approval, where they are consistent with the direction of the updated Cornell Centre Secondary Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Funding for any required planning-related studies is available through the 2014 Capital Budget.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

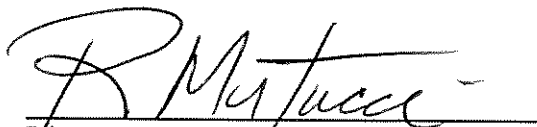
Not Applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Cornell Centre Secondary Plan Review relates to all strategic priorities of Building Markham's Future Together, and specifically addresses the Growth Management priority.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

During the review process for the Cornell Centre Secondary Plan, it is anticipated that most business units will be consulted particularly the Engineering, Community Services, Finance and Legal Departments.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Rino Mostacci M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning and Urban Design



Jim Baird M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

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ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1: Limits of Cornell Centre Secondary Plan



CORNELL CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN



FILE No: MI559(AF)

----- CORNELL CENTRE LIMITS

DATE: 05/23/14



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

Drawn By: DD

Checked By:

FIGURE No. 1