



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: October 22, 2013

SUBJECT: Recommendations from Development Services Subcommittee on Applications for Conversion or Redesignation of Employment Lands

PREPARED BY: Marg Wouters, Senior Manager, Policy and Research (x. 2909)

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report entitled "Recommendations from Development Services Subcommittee on Applications for Conversion or Redesignation of Employment Lands" dated October 22, 2013, be received;
- 2) That staff incorporate the direction to be received from Development Services Committee regarding the 11 employment conversion/redesignation applications, into the new Official Plan to be brought forward in November for adoption;
- 3) 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 bring forward the recommendations of the Development Services Subcommittee regarding 11 Official Plan Amendment applications for the conversion or redesignation of employment lands. Direction from Development Services Committee regarding these applications is required to finalize the new Official Plan.

BACKGROUND:

On May 21, 2013 Development Services Committee considered a staff report recommending denial of 11 Official Plan Amendment applications for the conversion or redesignation of employment lands to non-employment uses (see Appendix 'A'). The report sought Committee direction on the applications for the purpose of finalizing land use designations in the new Official Plan. As outlined in the May 21, 2013 report, the new Official Plan must provide sufficient employment lands to achieve Markham's employment forecasts (as set out in the policies of the Regional Official Plan) to 2031. In addition, provincial policy restricts consideration of employment land conversion requests to the time of a municipal comprehensive review (Official Plan Review), and provides six tests related to impact on the supply of employment land, which must be addressed in consideration of employment land conversion requests, as outlined in Appendix 'A'.

Staff's position is that all of the lands identified with an employment designation in the Draft Official Plan (both within the existing urban area and in the urban expansion area) are required to meet not only the employment forecasts to 2031, but also the economic development and community planning objectives of the new Official Plan. Staff's recommendation for denial of the applications is based on analysis of each application against the six tests for employment conversion outlined in the Growth Plan.

Conversion/redesignation applications in Markham are being dealt with in a two-phase approach. The first phase is a decision by DSC on whether the conversion/redesignation of employment lands requested in each application should be considered and the employment designation deferred in the new Official Plan. If DSC direction on any of the applications is that conversion or redesignation can be considered, the lands would be deferred and the OPA application would then proceed to the second phase of the process, that is, continuation through the regular OPA application review process, including public consultation and identification of conditions of any approval.

DSC referred the May 21, 2013 staff report recommendations to a Subcommittee for further consideration and a report and recommendation back to Development Services Committee in the fall of 2013. In June 2013, staff recommended to Council that, because of the potential implications of the applications on the new Official Plan, the new OP not be brought forward for adoption until Council direction had been received on the applications.

The Subcommittee held seven meetings between July and October 17, 2013. At the meetings, both staff and the applicants presented their positions on the applications. The minutes of Subcommittee meetings will be provided as a separate agenda item at the October 22, 2013 DSC meeting. The recommendations of the Subcommittee are provided below.

Direction is required from Development Services Committee regarding the Subcommittee recommendations in order for staff to incorporate such direction into the final draft of the new Official Plan. The OP will be brought back to DSC in early November with the intent that the Plan be presented to Council for adoption in late November/early December 2013.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Subcommittee Recommendations:

The Subcommittee's recommendations, as documented in the minutes of the Subcommittee meetings of July 9th, July 16th, July 23rd, July 30th, September 24th, October 1st and October 17th are as follows:

a) Linvest Properties (Cornell Ltd) OP-12132870

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by Lindvest Properties (Cornell) Ltd. (OP 12-132870) and that the employment land designation be deferred in the new Official Plan; and

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to increase the number of Major Office Employment (MOE) jobs.

b) Neamsby Investments Inc. OP 13-108448

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by Neamsby Investments Inc. (OP 13-108448), and that the employment land designation be deferred in the new Official Plan.

c) Times Group OP 13-131100

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by Times Group (OP 13-131100), and that the employment land designation be deferred in the new Official Plan; and

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to provide a joint community facility; and

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to increase the number of jobs along Highway 7 by 10%.

d) Box Grove Hill Developments OP 13-108173

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by Box Grove Hill Developments (OP 13-108173), and that the employment land designation for Site B be deferred in the new Official Plan; and

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to increase employment numbers on Sites A and B; and

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to provide affordable or seniors housing within Site B.

e) Cathedral Town Ltd. OP 13-114066

That the applicant's presentation regarding Cathedral Town Ltd. (OP 13-114066) be received.

f) Jolis Investments (Ontario) Ltd OP 13-114950

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by Jolis Investments (Ontario) Ltd (OP 13-114950), and that the employment land designation be deferred in the new Official Plan.

g) Wemat One Ltd OP 13-113480

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by Wemat One Ltd (OP 13-113480) for commercial uses; and,

That the residential use designation not be granted at this time.

h) Holborn Properties (OP 13-116651)

That the presentations for the application for employment land redesignation by Holborn Properties (OP 13-116651) and the proposals by Markham Woodmills (Smart Centres) and Tucciarone be received.

i) King Square Ltd (OP 10-116596)

That staff be directed to continue to process the employment land conversion application by King Square Ltd (OP 10-116596) and that the employment land designation be deferred in the new Official Plan; and,

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to increase the number of jobs by 200.

j) Romandale Farms Ltd. OP 13-114027

That the employment land redesignation application by Romandale Farms Ltd. (OP 13-114027) be referred to the Future Urban Area secondary plan process.

k) Catholic Cemeteries OP 13-116842

That consideration of the employment land redesignation application by Catholic Cemeteries (OP 13-116842) be referred to a future Development Services Committee meeting; and,

That staff be directed to work with the applicant to try to find a solution to the Catholic Cemeteries' requirements.

l) Flato Developments Inc. (letter dated September 24, 2013)

That the employment land redesignation proposal by Flato Developments Inc. be received.

The Development Services Subcommittee also recommends that, for the employment conversion applications identified for continued review Development Services Committee and Council consider the following criteria in reviewing the applications and include the criteria in any special deferral policy applicable to the said sites in the new Official Plan:

- compatibility with adjacent land uses;
- increase in number of future jobs to be provided on site, or at a minimum, no net reduction in jobs;
- proximity to transit;
- provision of lands for a VIVA terminal;
- achieving better public amenities; and,
- where the location is appropriate, designate a site for an affordable or seniors housing project.

Proposed Depiction of Subject Lands in new Official Plan

For those applications which DSC supports for further consideration of conversion or redesignation, the application would continue through the regular application review process, including submission of technical studies, a Public Meeting and a Council decision to determine approval or denial of the application, and if approved, the site-specific land use designations, land use policies and conditions/requirements for development.

Staff propose that for an application DSC recommends for further consideration, the subject lands continue to be shown with the employment designation indicated on Map 3-Land Use in the Draft Official Plan 2012, but with a 'deferral' symbol and site-specific policy indicating that the lands may be considered for a designation or use other than employment, subject to a Markham Council decision on the application. Council's decisions at the end of the Official Plan Amendment application approval process regarding land use and any related conditions, would be incorporated into the new Official Plan through modification or amendment.

Revisions to May 21, 2013 Staff Report

Staff note the following revisions to the May 21, 2013 staff report attached as Appendix 'A' as follows:

- Page 2, paragraph 4 - the number of net hectares of vacant employment land designated to accommodate the employment forecasts to 2031 should be 675 (consistent with Table 5), rather than 750.
- In Table 2, the Population Related Jobs should be 34,700 and the Total Employment Jobs should be 202,500 (consistent with Table 3). As a result, Population Related jobs as a percentage of total employment should be 21%, and Major Office jobs as a percentage of total employment should be 18%.

These revisions correct inconsistencies in the report only and do not alter the findings or recommendations of the report.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:


The Draft Official Plan relates to all strategic priorities of Building Markham's Future Together, and specifically addresses the Growth Management priority.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

The Legal Department has been consulted regarding the recommendations of this report.

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A' May 21, 2013 Staff Report entitled "Draft Official Plan 2012 – Employment Conversion and Redesignation Applications"

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