



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: June 18, 2013

SUBJECT: Draft Official Plan 2012 – Update on Timeline for Adoption

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

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the report and staff presentation entitled “Draft Official Plan 2012 – Update on Timeline for Adoption” dated June 18, 2013, be received;
- 2) 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 the timeline for adoption of the new Official Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Since the release of the Draft Official Plan in September 2012, staff have been engaging with the public, the development industry, individual property owners and other interested groups to obtain their input/comments on the new Plan, with a view to Council adoption of the Official Plan before the 2013 summer recess.

Draft area and site specific policies were released in February, and separate reports have been brought forward requesting Council direction on specific matters to be addressed in the new Official Plan, including parkland dedication policies and land use direction for the Thornhill Revitalization Area. In March, 2013, staff provided a report summarizing comments received, for Council’s information prior to the April, 2013 Statutory Public Meeting.

The comments summarized in the March 19, 2013 report included a number of requests for the conversion/redesignation of employment lands to non-employment uses. In May, 2013 staff provided a detailed report regarding the implications of 12 applications for the conversion/redesignation of approximately 120-150 hectares of employment lands. The report recommended denial of the applications on the basis that approval would not only have a substantial negative impact on Markham’s employment land supply and the City’s ability to achieve the employment targets set out in the Regional Official Plan, but also on achieving Markham’s community planning and economic development objectives. The report sought Committee direction on whether the changes in land use designations being proposed in the applications should be reflected in the final Official Plan. At the May DSC meeting, all but one of the applications were referred to a Subcommittee of Development Services Committee for further consideration. Staff were directed to report back on the Subcommittee recommendations in the Fall.

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

Staff are proposing that the Official Plan not be brought forward for Council adoption until Council has provided direction on the employment conversion/redesignation applications. Staff’s position is that it is critical that Council’s decision for each application be made within the context of the cumulative impact of these applications on the City’s land budget (employment and

residential) underlying the land use designations in the Draft Official Plan. When submitting the new Official Plan to the Region for approval, Markham must demonstrate that sufficient land has been designated to accommodate the employment forecasts. The employment designations in the Draft Official Plan provide the minimum amount of employment lands required to meet the 2031 employment projections. As such, it would be premature to ask Council to adopt the Official Plan without Council and staff understanding the impact of decisions on the employment conversion/redesignation applications on the City's ability to achieve the employment forecasts, and on the residential land budget. The City Solicitor and Regional planning staff support this approach.

The May 21, 2013 staff report identified the potential implications the decisions regarding the employment conversion/redesignation applications could have for the OMB Hearing currently underway for the Regional Official Plan (ROP) and ROPA 3 (the amendment related to Markham's urban expansion lands). The implications include significant potential changes in the supply of residential and employment lands within the existing urban area, and on land requirements by land use designation in the Future Urban Area. Phase 1 of the ROP/ROPA 3 Hearing, which will determine the total area of required urban expansion lands in Markham to accommodate population and employment projections to 2031, has recently concluded. The next phase of the Hearing, which will confirm the boundaries of the urban expansion area, will be scheduled once the Phase 1 decision has been issued. The timing of the Phase 1 Board decision is not known, but is expected to be issued by the Fall.

Proposed Timeline for Adoption of Official Plan Adoption

Based on the above, staff propose the following steps over the next few months leading to adoption of the new Official Plan:

June-July, 2013

- Finalize revisions to text and mapping (with the exception of employment conversion impacts which will not be determined until after the recommendations of the Subcommittee are considered by Council)
- Hold Subcommittee meetings for employment conversion/redesignation applications

August, 2013

- Continue to hold Subcommittee meetings for employment conversion/redesignation applications, as required
- Staff discussions with Regional staff regarding the impact of the recommendations on the employment and residential land budget and urban boundary, and status of Phase 1 OMB Decision

September-October, 2013

- September 10, 2013 DSC (timing dependent on conclusion of Subcommittee meetings) - staff report on Subcommittee recommendations, identifying impact of the recommendations on land use designations, policies, land budget and urban boundary; the report will also provide a further update regarding the timing of the adoption of the Official Plan, considering the implications referred to above and the status of the OMB Phase 1 decision. The City Solicitor may also provide Council with an update at this time on the status of the Regional Official Plan OMB appeal process, and any specific implications relative to the timing on the Markham Official Plan.

Staff will use the opportunity in the summer months to discuss proposed revisions to the Draft Official Plan with individual property owners, groups who have provided comments, as well as individual members of Council, if requested, which should help to focus discussion when the revised Official Plan is brought forward for adoption.

Future Urban Area planning work will not be delayed by Fall OP adoption

In addition to finalizing the Official Plan, staff have also initiated the work program required to bring the Future Urban Area lands on-stream for development. The revised timelines for adoption of the Official Plan are not anticipated to delay this work. Staff are initiating subwatershed studies and assembling staff and consulting teams to undertake the planning and engineering studies required to advance development, to the extent possible, based on the Future Urban Area boundary endorsed by Council. Staff will be reporting on terms of reference and consultant selection for the subwatershed studies, and a detailed work program/timeline for the master planning of the Future Urban Area in the Fall.

In conclusion, staff propose to provide further direction regarding the timeline for adoption of the Official Plan when reporting back to Council on the recommendations of the Subcommittee in September, taking into account the implications of the Subcommittee recommendations and the status of the OMB decision on Phase 1 of the ROP/ROPA appeals.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.


ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

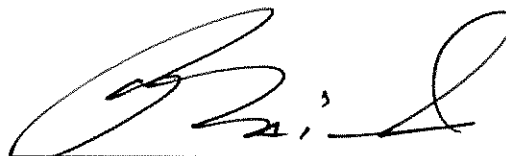
The Draft Official Plan relates to all strategic priorities of Building Markham's Future Together, and specifically addresses the Growth Management priority.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Business units across Markham have been consulted on the policies of the new Official Plan. Staff will continue to work with various representatives from different departments in finalizing the new Official Plan.

RECOMMENDED BY:


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Director of Planning and Urban Design


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