



**BUILDING A GREATER GTA**  
Building Industry and Land  
Development Association

April 1, 2013

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Senior Projects Coordinator, Zoning and Special Projects  
Planning and Urban Design Department  
City of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, ON  
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Dear Mr. Villella,

**RE: *BILD Comments for the City of Markham's Review of Parkland Dedication By-Law, Policies and Practices***

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The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) is in receipt of the City of Markham's report on the *Review of Parkland Dedication By-Law, Policies and Practices, dated January 22, 2013* (the "Report") and on behalf of our members we submit the following comments for your review and consideration.

BILD would like to take this opportunity to thank city staff for meeting with BILD representatives on March 8<sup>th</sup> to review the proposed by-law and associated policies. We appreciate the ability to have early and open dialogue, which is essential to the success of all policy reviews.

We appreciate that the Report acknowledges many of the industry's concerns, including the concern that the *Planning Act* standard acts as a disincentive to higher density development projects because the standard was created with low density housing in mind. Throughout the stakeholder consultation process, our primary concern remained the parkland requirement calculation for high density residential projects. As a response to this concern the Report recommended a graduated scale model whereby high density projects would receive an overall reduction in the parkland requirement depending on their density measured by floor space index ("FSI").

We support the proposed mechanism of a graduated scale model ("the Model") to encourage high density residential development projects. BILD believes this is a very progressive step.

BILD has been advised by its active City of Markham landowners that the two upper-tier thresholds (as seen in the proposed Model) are a rare building form in Markham and that typically high density development occurs within the 2.5 and 5.0 FSI category. Therefore, the Model attributes the highest grade of incentive to a high density development form that is rarely built or proposed to be built. As such, BILD believes that the Model could be strengthened to be more reflective of the current market conditions. Our recommendations on the Model follow immediately below.

1. As an alternative, we believe that the percentage of reduction in the parkland dedication requirement should be described in a weighted average to depict the overall savings of a high density development

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project. We believe that only depicting the percentages of reduction (75%, 50%, and 25%) for the given component of the building is misleading to the reader.

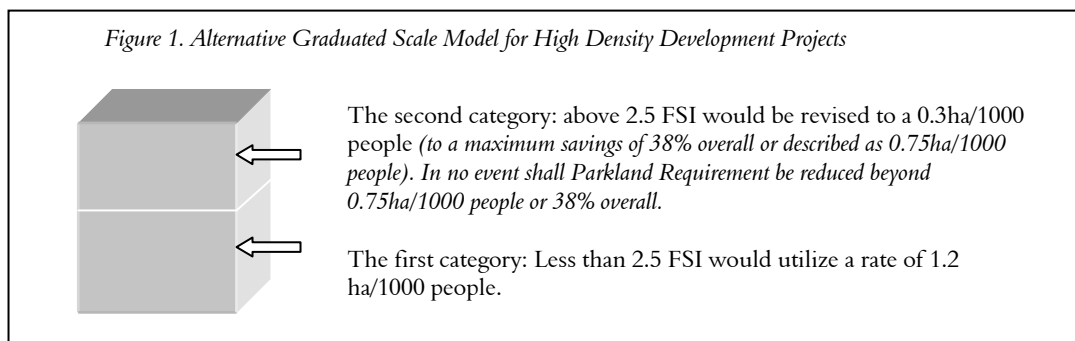
2. The Model provides for definitions of FSI, Gross Floor Area, and Gross Land Area that stray from industry standards. Specifically, the definition of Gross Floor Area should be broadened to all areas in the building envelope including commercial areas (for mixed use buildings) where appropriate. In addition, the Gross Land Area must also only consider the site plan or lot that the building(s) are situated on. Any adjoining parkland or other green lands that are available to the general public should be excluded. We would encourage the City to consider the definitions of these three terms as they are found in the Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca>).
3. When presenting the Model, the City consultant provided by way of example, a high rise development that would benefit from the Model's graduated reduction in parkland requirements. The example assumed a site plan density of 10.0 FSI which then resulted in an overall parkland requirement of 0.75 hectares/1000 population or a reduction of 38%.

BILD believes that while the result is an appropriate reduction for high density projects, the underlying assumption of 10.0 FSI is not representative of built form densities in Markham. To date no completed project in Markham has achieved a density approaching 10.0 FSI and the top tier of FSI values are between 3.5 – 5.0 FSI. This is due to height restrictions resulting from traffic and transportation issues, and broader planning constraints which are unlikely to change in the near future. Under the existing Model, a typical 4.0 FSI high rise development would only reduce the parkland requirement by 9%.

As an alternative, we believe the Model should be adjusted to provide the same 38% reduction or 0.75 hectares/1000 population rate for more typical high density development in Markham (5.0 FSI). With this reduction achieved for 5.0 FSI buildings, no further reduction would be necessary beyond 38% or 0.75 hectares/1000 population for buildings denser than 5.0 FSI and a floor could be incorporated into the Model.

In order to achieve this, the Model would provide two (rather than four) categories:

- (i) Less than 2.5 FSI, 1.2 hectares/1000 population, and
- (ii) Greater than 2.5 FSI, 0.3 hectares/1000 population, provided that in no event shall the overall parkland requirement for the project be reduced beyond 0.75 hectares/1000 population overall. (See below: *Figure 1. Alternative Graduated Scale Model for High Density Development Projects*) and *Figure 2. Application of City Proposed Model and Alternative Model to Markham Projects*).



*Figure 2. Application of City Proposed Model and Alternative Model to Markham Projects*

<i>Project FSI</i>	<i>City Model – Parkland Requirement (Reduction %)</i>	<i>Alternative Model – Parkland Requirement (Reduction %)</i>
3.5★	1.11 ha/1000 ppl (7%)	0.94 ha/1000 ppl (21%)
4.0★	1.09 ha/1000 ppl (9%)	0.86 ha/1000 ppl (28%)
4.5★	1.07 ha/1000 ppl (11%)	0.80 ha/1000 ppl (33%)
5.0★	1.05 ha/1000 ppl (13%)	0.75 ha/1000 ppl (38%) [Floor]
6.0	0.98 ha/1000 ppl (19%)	
9.0	0.8 ha/1000 ppl (33%)	
10.0	0.75 ha/1000 ppl (38%)	
11.0	0.71 ha/1000 ppl (41%)	

*\*Project FSI typically approved by the City for Markham High Density Developments*

This alternative model is more consistent with the land use designations and anticipated development forms identified in the new Markham Official Plan and better address BILD's concerns with current Parkland Policy. Acknowledging that the provincial Growth Plan and the City's Official Plan seeks to intensify land uses, especially within centres and corridors, it would prove more beneficial to the City and its applicants to promote high density development using the suggested alternative to the Model.

BILD also believes that 'strata parks' are another mechanism to modernize planning policies in an effort to obtain parkland. This mechanism creates efficiencies and promotes flexibility in land-use designs. We support this mechanism and encourage the City to utilize it.

The Report lists the types of land acceptable and not acceptable for parkland conveyance. In this list, buffers are not acceptable for parkland conveyance. However, we understand that previously buffers were acceptable in Markham Centre, and therefore we would encourage you to reconsider buffers as an acceptable parkland conveyance across the City.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and we would be pleased to speak with you at your earliest convenience. Please feel free to contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Danielle Chin, RPP MCIP  
Senior Planner, Policy & Government Relations

Cc: Paula Tenuta, Vice President, Policy & Government Relations, BILD  
Michael Pozzebon, BILD York Chapter Chair  
BILD York Chapter Members