



Report to: Development Services Committee

Date: May 31, 2011

SUBJECT:	Cornell Secondary Plan – Reesor Road Deferral Area No. 1
PREPARED BY:	Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator Environmental Planning & Rouge Park

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the staff report entitled ‘Cornell Secondary Plan – Reesor Road Deferral Area No. 1’, dated May 31, 2011, be received;
- 2) THAT the Region of York be requested to modify and approve the updated Cornell Secondary Plan – Official Plan Amendment No. 168 as outlined in this report, to remove the deferral on the lands east and west of Reesor Road north of Highway 407 and incorporate site specific policies;
- 3) THAT the Rouge Park, Toronto Conservation Authority and Ontario Realty Corporation be forwarded a copy of the staff report and Council resolution for information;
- 4) AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Cornell Secondary Plan (Official Plan Amendment No. 168) was modified and approved by the Region of York on September 15, 2008. This approval included the deferral of lands east and west of Reesor Road identified as Deferral Area No. 1, as they were not at the time of the approval of the Amendment part of the Region of York’s Urban Area (see Figure 1).

The new Region of York Official Plan was approved by the Province on September 7, 2010 and has subsequently been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Notwithstanding the appeals, the Region has confirmed that the Town could proceed with a request to the Region to remove the deferral, as none of the appeals were specific to the lands in question.

The lands comprising 8359 Reesor Road were designated as a Study Area in Section 6.1.1 (c) of Official Plan Amendment No. 168 to allow additional consideration of options regarding future use of the lands owned by the Province, including possible designation of these lands for business park employment, open space, Rouge Park and/or other appropriate uses. A jointly funded study was undertaken through the Rouge Park Alliance to identify a potential concept plan for the Reesor Road site and has been completed to the satisfaction of all parties.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of an “INDUSTRIAL– Business Park Area” designation of lands at 8359 Reesor Road and request the Region of York to remove the deferral for the “INDUSTRIAL - Business Park Area and OPEN SPACE” lands, identified as ‘Deferral Area No. 1’ in Official Plan Amendment No. 168 (Cornell Secondary Plan).

BACKGROUND:**Cornell Secondary Plan**

On January 22, 2008, Council adopted the updated Cornell Secondary Plan (Official Plan Amendment No. 168) and forwarded the amendment to the Region for approval. The approval included the deferral of lands east and west of Reesor Road identified as Deferral Area No. 1, as they were not at the time of the approval of the Amendment part of the Region of York’s Urban Area. Figure 1 identifies the lands subject to the deferral.

The lands comprising 8359 Reesor Road were designated by Council as a Study Area and policies were added to Section 6.1.1 (c) of Official Plan Amendment No. 168 to allow additional consideration of options regarding future use of the lands owned by the Province, including possible designation of these lands for business park employment, open space, Rouge Park and/or other appropriate uses. These lands are owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation. Council also directed that staff enter into further discussion with the Province (Ontario Realty Corporation), Region of York, Rouge Park Alliance and TRCA in regard to land use sustainability criteria and the interface relationship with the Rouge Park. A letter was submitted to the Town from the Ontario Realty Corporation in January 2008 in support of the deferral of the Reesor Road parcel.

The Cornell Secondary Plan (Official Plan Amendment No. 168) was modified and approved by the Region of York on September 15, 2008, incorporating the deferral.

Region of York Official Plan

On September 7, 2010 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the new York Region Official Plan. All of the Deferral Area No. 1 lands, including the parcel east of Reesor Road, are now part of the ‘Urban Area’ designation. With the approval of the lands as Urban Area in the Region’s Official Plan, the Region can now deal with the deferral in this regard. The lands are also identified as ‘Strategic Employment Lands’ in the approved Regional Official Plan.

Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road

In February 2008, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Region of York, Ontario Realty Corporation and Town of Markham agreed to jointly fund a Site Assessment of the property at 8359 Reesor Road and retained Envision Hough to undertake the study. The property is located on the east side of Reesor Road between Highway 7 and Highway 407, adjoining lands in the Rouge Park.

A Steering Committee, chaired by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and comprised of the study funders oversaw the study process. The goal of the site

assessment was to support the employment objectives for the property identified in the Cornell Secondary Plan while promoting leading edge, sustainable development that supports and benefits the Rouge Park.

The Site Assessment was completed in April 2010 and supports high end employment uses where designed in a sensitive manner respectful of the Rouge Park. The Site Assessment includes Design Guidelines which promote sustainable development within the context of addressing Rouge Park needs, including protection of existing natural and built heritage features and ecological linkages, integration with Rouge Park access through trails and supporting the planned trail network along Reesor Road. Specifically the guidelines promote:

- Prestigious business park uses as well as possible institutional uses in the existing heritage house;
- LEED standards for building and site design;
- A gateway feature to the Rouge Park combining public and private realm established east of the Reesor Road and Highway 7 intersection;
- A 10 metre landscaped boulevard along the east side of Reesor Road to accommodate a proposed multi-use trail and enhancement landscaping;
- Setbacks from the Rouge Park with planted buffers; and,
- Pedestrian linkages to connect Reesor Road to the Rouge Park.

Partner Response to Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road

The Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road was funded and steered by a collective group of senior staff representing the Rouge Park, Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), Town of Markham and Region of York. Markham staff met with all partners in late 2010 and early 2011 to request their confirmation of endorsement of the Site Assessment in order that the outstanding study area requirement for a portion of the Deferral Area No. 1 lands in the Cornell Secondary Plan could be dealt with.

Town staff met with representatives from ORC on November 10, 2010. The Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) has retained consultants to undertake an Optimal Use Study for certain ORC lands in Markham including 8359 Reesor Road. An Optimal Use Study identifies the highest and best use of lands. ORC also met with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Rouge Park staff. ORC have confirmed that they consider the optimal use for the lands to be employment uses, recommended in the updated Cornell Secondary Plan consistent with the INDUSTRIAL – Business Park Area designation.

The Region of York provided comments to the Rouge Park in February 2010 identifying the Region's priority for the lands for employment uses as demonstrated through the identification of the lands as "Strategic Employment Lands" in the approved Region of York Official Plan. The Region's expectation in the approval of the 'Business Park Area' designation and the removal of the deferral is that the Cornell Secondary Plan

would include appropriate policies to address site development and urban design principles which support the Site Assessment report for 8359 Reesor Road.

The Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Rouge Park participated in the Site Assessment Study process. The TRCA has not identified an issue with the land use designation, but have provided comments supporting the implementation of the key recommendations of the Site Assessment, including a request that the Town not advance the approval of the development of the lands until the Environmental Management Plan for the Cornell Secondary Plan has been updated. Staff are recommending incorporation of a policy into the Cornell Secondary Plan to address this matter.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Recommended Modifications to Cornell Secondary Plan (OPA No. 168)

The Cornell Secondary Plan, as approved, contains general and site specific policies which provide guidance on the future development of the lands at 8359 Reesor Road relative to its unique setting adjacent to the Rouge Park. Appendix 'A' provides a summary of the relevant existing policies in the approved Secondary Plan.

Notwithstanding these policies, the Site Assessment Report of 8359 Reesor Road suggests additional policy direction in regard to the development of the lands in a manner sensitive to the protection of the integrity of the Rouge Park. It would be appropriate to include additional policies in the Cornell Secondary Plan to clarify the provision for the development of the property, to ensure full consideration of the design and environmental objectives.

The Cornell Secondary Plan references the Urban Design and Infrastructure Guidelines contained in the Rouge North Management Plan (2001) for the development of the Reesor Road property. These are general guidelines pertaining to all lands which abut the Rouge Park. The Design Guidelines contained in the Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road provide a design framework for sustainable development with emphasis on minimizing ecological impact and enhanced architectural innovation. It would be appropriate to ensure these guidelines are considered in the development of the lands by referencing the Design Guidelines contained within the Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road.

There are specific design considerations identified in the Site Assessment for 8359 Reesor Road which are fundamental to the integration of potential development with the Rouge Park. It would be appropriate to add these specific design requirements into the Secondary Plan to ensure that they are achieved during the future development of the site.

An Environmental Management Study was prepared in support of the Cornell Secondary Plan. This study predated the consideration of the Reesor Road lands. In order to ensure that stormwater management considerations are considered in a comprehensive manner and in the context of the Rouge Park, and to address the matters identified by TRCA, Staff recommend a new policy be included in the Cornell Secondary Plan.

The following modifications to the Cornell Secondary Plan are proposed to finalize the deferral by the Region of York and to provide further policy direction with respect to the potential development of 8359 Reesor Road:

Recommended Modifications to Official Plan Amendment No. 168

The following recommendations are proposed:

1. That Schedule 'A' – LAND USE and Schedule 'D' – URBAN SERVICE AREA to OPA No. 168 be modified to replace the 'Study Area' designation at 8359 Reesor Road and with 'INDUSTRIAL'.
2. And that Schedule 'F', amending Schedule 'H' – COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES, Schedule 'AA'- DETAILED LAND USE, Schedule 'BB' – COMMUNITY STRUCTURE, Schedule 'CC' – DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS and Appendix '3'- DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS CORNELL CENTRE AND CORNELL NORTH CENTRE, be modified to replace the 'Study Area' designation at 8359 Reesor Road and with 'BUSINESS PARK AREA';
3. And that Schedule 'A' – LAND USE, Schedule 'D' – URBAN SERVICE AREA, And that Schedule 'F', amending Schedule 'H' – COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES, Schedule 'G' amending Schedule 'I' – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREAS, Schedule 'H', amending Appendix Map 1 – GREENWAY SYSTEM, Schedule 'AA'- DETAILED LAND USE, Schedule 'BB' – COMMUNITY STRUCTURE, Schedule 'CC' – DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS and Schedule 'DD' – TRANSPORTATION be modified to remove 'Deferral No. 1'.
4. And that policy 6.1.1c) be deleted in its entirety and the section renumbered accordingly.
5. And that Section 6.4.3.1 g) General Development and Design Policies be modified by adding the words in italics as follows:

“Development of the Business Park Area lands east of Reesor Road adjoining the Rouge Park North shall have regard for the Urban Interface and Infrastructure Guidelines contained in the Rouge North Management Plan (2001) *and the Design Guideline principles contained in the Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road (2010)*. Where applicable, these guidelines shall be addressed in the Master Servicing Study and Environmental Management Study and the Community Design Plan.”
6. And that Section 6.4.3.2 Site Specific Policies, be modified by adding a new section as follows:

“6.4.3.2 c) The property at 8359 Reesor Road shall be subject to the following additional design criteria:

- i) The heritage building shall be assessed for long-term protection and may be considered for adaptive re-use in accordance with the Business Park Area designation or uses related to the administration of the Rouge Park or re-located to other public lands within the Rouge Park;
 - ii) A trail head and pedestrian linkage between Reesor Road and the Rouge Park shall be provided for in the general location of the heritage house and existing natural heritage features, to provide access and integration into the Rouge Park;
 - iii) A 10 metre landscaped boulevard shall be protected along the east side of Reesor Road to accommodate an off road multi-use trail and enhancement landscape screening;
 - iv) Building and site design should reflect a LEED or equivalent sustainability standard; and,
 - v) Additional native species planting shall be provided along the Rouge Park interface. ”
7. And that Section 9.2.1 Stormwater Management, be modified by adding the following new section:

- “9.2.1 d) Prior to approval of development at 8359 Reesor Road, a comprehensive water management and ecological study shall be completed and integrated into the Cornell Master Environmental Servicing Plan. Given the site interface with the Rouge Park, stormwater facilities are required to be designed to enhance the environmental and ecological integrity of the Rouge Park and appropriate landscaping provided to buffer the Rouge Park.”

CONCLUSION:

The Site Assessment of 8359 Reesor Road was coordinated and funded in partnership by the Town of Markham, Region of York, Ontario Realty Corporation and Toronto Region Conservation Authority to address the outstanding study area requirement for a new business park designation with specific policies to guide sustainable development and environmental protection of the adjacent Rouge Park. The Site Assessment included site and building considerations to ensure that prestige employment uses on the site could be planned in a manner that supports and enhances the adjoining Rouge Park lands. The Region of York Official Plan identifies the lands which form part of Deferral Area No. 1 as Urban Area and Strategic Employment Lands. Staff recommend that the proposed modifications be endorsed and forwarded to the Region of approval, and resolution of the deferral.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The designation of the Reesor Road parcel for employment uses and inclusion of sustainability policies is consistent with the Town's strategic priorities for Growth Management and Sustainability.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

This report was prepared in consultation with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Rouge Park, Region of York and Ontario Realty Corporation.

RECOMMENDED BY:

T. J. Lambe, M.C.I.P, R.P.P.
Manager of Policy and Research

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure '1' Deferral No 1. Lands to the Cornell Secondary Plan
Appendix 'A' Policies in Cornell Secondary Plan (OPA NO. 168) pertaining directly to
 Reesor Road
Filepath: Q:\Development\Planning\MISC\MI 512 Cornell Secondary Plan
 Update\Lilli - Reesor Road Parcel\Report to DSC Reesor Road 2011.doc

APPENDIX ‘A’

Existing policies in Cornell Secondary Plan (OPA NO. 168) pertaining directly to Reesor Road

Policy 6.1.1 Schedules

- c) Lands east of Reesor Road between Avenue 7 and Highway 407 are identified as ‘Study Area’. The use of these lands for business park employment, open space, Rouge Park and/or other appropriate uses, and corresponding development criteria, will be determined by Council in consultation with the Province, the Region of York, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Policy 6.4.3.1 General Development and Design Policies

- g) The development of the Business Park Area lands east of Reesor Road adjoin the Rouge Park North shall have regard for the Urban Interface and Infrastructure Guidelines contained in the Rouge North Management Plan (2001). These guidelines shall be addressed in the Master Servicing Study and Environmental Management Study and the Community Design Plan.

Policy 8.2.5 Collector Roads

- d) Reesor Road provides the primary north south access through eastern Markham connecting the Oak Ridges Moraine, Federal Green Space lands, Rouge Park - Little Rouge Creek Corridor, Rouge Park - Bob Hunter Memorial Park and Provincial Greenbelt lands. The long-term intent for Reesor Road is to protect the function as a collector road, while protecting and upgrading the road design to enhance the country heritage and rural character of the agricultural and park setting in eastern Markham. Where road improvements are considered, consideration shall be given to enhanced landscape treatment, integrated on or off road bicycle lanes and parkway road design.

Policy 9.6.3 Lands Adjacent to the Rouge Park North

- a) The development of the Business Park Area lands adjacent to the Rouge Park North on Schedule ‘AA’ – Detailed Land Use, shall have regard for the Urban Interface and Infrastructure Guidelines contained within the Rouge North Management Plan (2001). These guidelines shall be addressed in the Master Servicing Study, the Environmental Management Study and the Community Design Plan.