

Report to: Development Services Committee

Date: November 17 2009

SUBJECT: Preferred Markham Growth Alternative to 2031
PREPARED BY: Planning and Urban Design Department

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Report entitled Preferred Markham Growth Alternative to 2031 dated November 17, 2009 be received;

1) And that the preferred growth alternative outlined in the report incorporating:

- a 2031 population of 423,500 and employment of 240,800, as provided for in the draft Regional Official Plan,
- the proposed Town greenway system, addressed in a report dated June 16, 2009,
- development of vacant lands within the current settlement area, consistent with land use designations and in support of the preferred growth alternative,
- a Town intensification strategy, as addressed in a report dated April 7 2009, and based on:
 - an hierarchy of preferred intensification locations, served by higher order transit, as identified in the Town's intensification strategy,
 - the exclusion of significant intensification from stable, low density residential areas,
 - intensification of designated employment lands, in accordance with current policies, or policies intended to preserve lands for employment, consistent with accommodating forecast employment growth;
- a residential intensification target of 60% within the built boundary, based on reports dated April 7 2009 and June 23, 2009,
- an employment intensification target of 67% within the built boundary, based on a report dated June 16, 2009,
- an extension to the current settlement area to accommodate approximately 12,800 units and 14,000 jobs, and having a gross land area of approximately 900 hectares,
- a strategy for supporting continued agricultural activity on farmlands, as addressed in a report dated November 3, 2009, and,
- the phased development of land within intensification areas, and in an extension of the current settlement area, reflecting requirements to be identified for transportation, servicing and community infrastructure,

be endorsed, as input to ongoing studies and as the basis for the completion of a draft Growth Management Strategy document, to be submitted to Committee and endorsed for further public consultation in the Winter/early Spring, 2010;

2) And that Staff report back following further public consultation, providing a final recommended Growth Management Strategy, refined in response to public comment and input from other applicable Town studies, for approval by Council as input to the Region of York Official Plan and preparation of a new Town Official Plan, commencing in the 2010;

- 3) And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

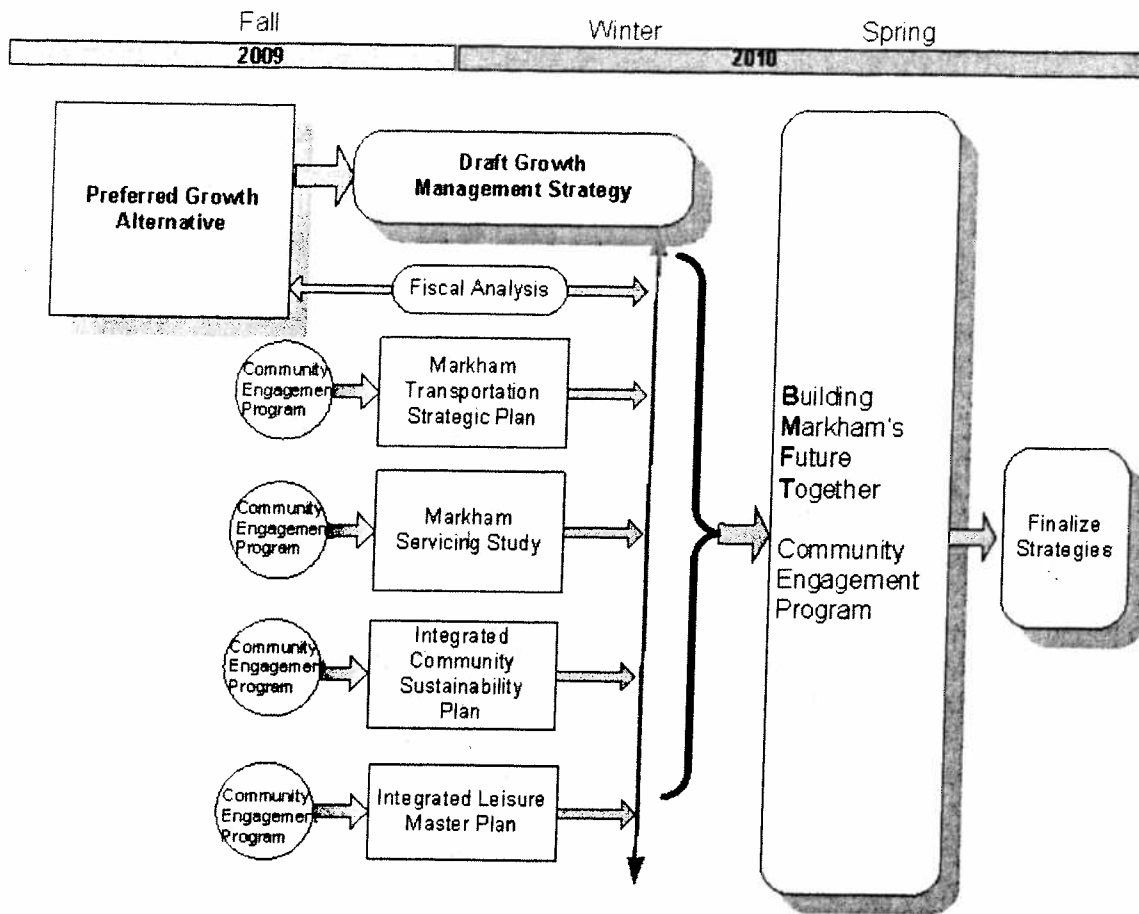
Markham has long been recognized as an innovative leader in planning, growth management and new urbanist community design. Early in this term of Council, the Town began a renewed look at growth management in the Town by first soliciting resident views through the "Click with Markham" campaign. Coming out of that exercise, growth management was identified as a key strategic priority for the Council term. Work on the Growth Management Strategy began in November of 2007.

Four options for growth were considered and reviewed. Several key planning initiatives were also undertaken, the results contributing to development of the preferred growth alternative. Consistent with the "Environment First" approach to the GMS exercise the Environmental Policy Review was completed to establish the Town's new Greenway System. The Housing Stock Analysis, Framework for Intensification, Employment Lands Strategy and Agricultural Assessment have also been completed or sufficiently advanced to determine the preferred growth alternative

The preferred alternative to accommodate growth to 2031 not only represents a balanced approach to managing growth; it continues to "push the envelope" with a bold intensification target of 60% (for new residential growth within the built boundary). We are not aware of another municipality with "white belt" lands that is targeting 60% intensification. Other highlights of the preferred alternative include:

- provision of a Town Greenway System and a strategy to support the continued use of farmlands for long term agriculture,
- a mix of and variety of new housing choices and a range of jobs, supportive of improved live/work opportunities,
- new sustainable communities that promote active living, at densities exceeding Growth Plan targets. These communities will lead the GTA in water and energy management, wellness, accessibility, biodiversity, equity and choice, and,
- employment and intensification at appropriate locations to support transit, and development of mixed use and walkable new development.

Endorsing a preferred growth alternative facilitates the preparation of a draft Growth Management Strategy for public review, and integration with other BMFT areas of focus, including the Green Print, Markham Transportation Strategic Plan update and the Integrated Leisure Master Plan. Based on this work, the preferred alternative will be refined for inclusion in the final Growth Management Strategy to be prepared for Council approval in the Spring of 2010 (see below and Appendix 'F', attached).



Once completed and approved by Council, the Growth Management Strategy will be used to advise the Province regarding Markham's intentions relating to growth and as input to the preparation of a new Town Official Plan. A proposal for next steps is provided at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

This report summarizes key components of the work toward identifying a preferred growth alternative for the Town to 2031, and describes and recommends to the Committee, a preferred growth alternative, accommodating forecast increases in population and employment to 2031. It is recommended that this work form the basis for a draft Growth Management Strategy document, to be brought back to the Committee early in 2010 to be endorsed as the basis for further public consultation.

BACKGROUND:

Provincial Legislation for Managing Growth

The Development Services Committee has received a number of reports and presentations (see list in Appendix 'A') describing the authority of Provincial legislation in regard to future growth, and the requirement for the Town to meet its obligations to conform to this legislation. Principal among the documents defining the Town's obligations are:

- the Planning Act,
- the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005,
- the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006, under the Places to Grow Act, 2005,
- the Greenbelt Plan, 2005, under the Greenbelt Act, 2005,
- the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2005 under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2005, and,
- the Regional Transportation Plan, 2008, ("The Big Move") under the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act, 2006.

The Town is required to ensure conformity of Markham's Official Plan with the Region of York Official Plan, which must also conform to the legislation identified above. A summary of requirements relating to Provincial legislation is provided in the October 1, 2007 report from the Town Solicitor to the Committee.

Region of York Official Plan

Under Provincial legislation, the Region of York has the authority to direct land use planning through its Official Plan (ROP) and to require local municipalities to conform to the ROP. A new draft ROP was released in June 2009, revised to meet the Provincial conformity requirements established for the Region. Through the Town's representatives on Regional Council, and at the Staff level, the Region has worked with the Town through its Planning for Tomorrow process, leading to the draft ROP, and in regard to the Region's Sustainability Plan and updates of the Regional Transportation Master Plan, and the Water and Wastewater Master Plan.

A primary requirement of the Region's planning process is to refine growth forecasts established in the Growth Plan, and to assign population and employment growth to 2031 to each area municipality. The Region also assigns requirements for residential intensification, and establishes minimum development densities consistent with the Growth Plan. To implement the assigned growth, the Region has established an intensification hierarchy, and targets to assist local municipalities in determining how much, and where, municipal intensification should occur, and estimates of land to accommodate new growth outside the current settlement area. The results of this work are reflected in the new draft ROP, scheduled for approval by the end of 2009.

The growth forecasts for Markham, and related matters, have been the subject of reports and presentations to the Committee by both Region and Town Staff, and have been communicated to the public through the Region and Town consultation programs throughout the past two years.

Detailed Town comments regarding the draft Regional Official Plan were dealt with by Council on October 27 2009 and forwarded to the Region. These included a request that policies and mapping related to new communities and any urban expansion proposed within the Town be deferred, until the Town has endorsed a Growth Management Strategy. Any further Town comments on the draft ROP, arising from Council's decision regarding the Town's Growth Management Strategy, will be forwarded to the Region.

Building Markham's Future Together (BMFT)

Following an extensive public consultation process identified as "Click with Markham" and an update of the bi-annual community survey, Council confirmed six strategic areas of focus comprising a strategy identified as "Building Markham's Future Together" in March 2008. The BMFT strategic areas of focus include:

- Growth Management,
- Transportation/Transit,
- Environment,
- Municipal Services,
- Diversity,
- Parks, Recreation, Culture & Library Master Plan/Public Safety.

Council has directed Staff to pursue a number of initiatives addressing the areas of focus confirmed in BMFT, including growth management. The Growth Management Strategy, incorporating the preferred growth alternative, addresses the first strategic area of focus, Growth Management, and relates to several other focus areas, including transportation/transit and environment. Council direction on the draft GMS, and in particular the planned distribution and built form of forecast growth, will also provide key strategic input and direction to other related BMFT initiatives.

Markham Growth Management Strategy

In November 2007, following passage of the Places to Grow Act and approval of the Provincial Growth Plan, Council directed Staff to prepare a Town growth management strategy, to be endorsed by Council in support of preparing a new Official Plan. Some of the main components of work undertaken during the past two years have been:

- Council endorsement of a Town-wide Greenway System strategy incorporating a Natural Heritage Network and Greenbelt Agriculture lands,
- final approval of OPA No. 140, for the Rouge North Management Area,
- completion of the Small Streams Study,
- completion of the Employment Lands Strategy Study (Phase 1),
- completion of the Housing Stock Analysis, identifying preferences for a future housing mix and requirements to manage housing growth,
- completion of the Agricultural Assessment Study recommending policies and requirements to enhance long term use and sustainability of agricultural lands,
- completion of a framework for an Intensification Strategy, identifying preferred locations and requirements to direct residential and employment intensification,
- completion of a Public Engagement Program regarding requirements and alternatives for growth and the need for a growth management strategy, and,
- completion of a draft OPA refining current policies to govern compensation for Section 37 height and density bonuses, consistent with good planning.

In addition, the Town completed a new Economic Development Strategy in 2008, and has completed, or is engaged in, a number of area studies addressing growth policy (eg.

Cornell Centre, Yonge-Steeles Corridor, Langstaff UGC, Markham Road Corridor). Studies addressing Built Form Guidelines for Intensification, Sustainable Development Guidelines, and Employment Area Intensification are also underway.

Work and findings for each component identified above, have been communicated to the Committee and the public and have contributed to our understanding of the possibilities, challenges and influences on future growth in Markham. These components have contributed to the refinement of “possibility”, into “preference”, for a Town of Markham growth alternative, in the context established by the Provincial Growth Plan and Regional Official Plan, within which Council’s decisions on growth must also be made.

Through Council’s direction on Building Markham’s Future Together, work is proceeding on:

- an update of the Markham Strategic Transportation Plan,
- a Master Servicing Study,
- a Financial Analysis, intended to examine financial implications and develop a financial strategy to implement the preferred growth alternative,
- an Integrated Leisure Master Plan, and,
- an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (Green Print).

These initiatives will inform refinement and implementation of the preferred growth alternative through the preparation of the draft GMS, ultimately a new Official Plan, and the development of parallel implementation strategies.

Public Consultation through Region’s “Planning for Tomorrow” Initiative

Since 2005, under the Planning for Tomorrow initiative, the Region has brought forward a series of reports and presentations on all aspects of growth management in support of an update to the Regional Official Plan. This has included three phases of consultation, involving over 80 meetings with the public, including meetings in Markham, municipal Councils, stakeholders and special interest groups. The resulting new draft Regional Official Plan was released in June 2009 for public review and comment. A list of all Region and Town public engagement opportunities is included in Appendix ‘B’.

Public Engagement on Markham Growth Related Studies

Public engagement has been undertaken as part of the studies noted above, supporting the overall growth management strategy, in addition to an extensive consultation program for the strategy as a whole. Separate engagement events were completed for the Environmental Policy Review and Consolidation (Town Greenway System), the Agricultural Analysis and the Employment Lands Strategy (Phase 1) as well as each of the local area/secondary plan studies. The public consultation on GMS component initiatives, and consultation relating to local area studies, has all been framed within the context of the overall management of growth.

Public Engagement Program for the Markham Growth Management Strategy

In February 2009, the Town initiated a public engagement program associated with the development of the Growth Management Strategy (GMS). This program included:

- a launch event (February 2009),
- five community meetings (March/April 2009),
- five meetings with individual stakeholders (i.e. Markham Youth Task Force, Markham Centre Advisory Committee, etc.), and,
- online consultation.

The engagement program combined both the GMS and Transportation/Transit initiatives of Building Markham's Future Together. The launch event and community meetings included discussion of growth forecasts and alternatives, as well as transportation issues, including work toward updating the Strategic Transportation Plan. Underlying the discussion of growth alternatives were explanations of:

- the significance of an "Environment First" approach to good planning
- variations in intensification and the future housing stock represented in several alternatives for growth,
- supportive relationships between land use and transportation,
- alternatives in planning for employment, in terms of ensuring a strong Town economy and in support of essential live-work arrangements,
- the potential implications of extending, or not, the current settlement area, and,
- the importance of phasing growth in regard to infrastructure and community services.

The consultation program clearly explained the growth alternatives considered for Markham and identified the relative strengths and shortcomings of each. The public was advised that the information gained through consultation would inform Council in selecting the preferred growth alternative to be incorporated into a draft Town Growth Management Strategy, to be the subject of future public review. The individual engagement programs for each study and the overall program for the GMS were all well received by the many participants.

Results from Public Engagement – What was Heard

The results of the public engagement activities of the Region and Town are posted on the respective websites. The report from the Town's engagement program consultants DPRA, for the growth management strategy and transportation/transit, including individual community meeting commentary, were provided in a report to the Committee in May 2009 and posted on the Town website for public review. The summary of opinion from the engagement program, prepared by DPRA, is provided in Appendix 'C'. The full report on public engagement is available on the Town website.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**Growth Forecasts**

Figure 1.1, shows the 2006 and forecast 2031 population and employment for Markham, incorporated into the draft Regional Official Plan. The forecasts include an increase of

151,000 residents and 96,000 jobs over the 25 years between 2006 and 2031. Markham's population at mid-year 2009 was estimated to be approximately 303,000, suggesting a remaining population increase of about 120,000 to 2031.

The recent forecast population increase (151,000 for the 2006 to 2031 period) in the draft Regional Official Plan adds a fairly modest 34,000 more residents to Markham, compared to the growth anticipated during the same period reflecting the forecast of the current Regional Official Plan (see Figure 1.2). Markham's population and employment growth represents 26% and 30%, respectively, of the total forecast growth in the Region to 2031, however Markham's share of the total residents and jobs in the Region in 2006, remains almost constant in 2031.

	Population	Employment
2006	272,500	144,800
Additional 2006 to 2031	151,000	96,000
2031	423,500	240,800

**Figure 1.1 Growth Forecast for Markham
Included in Draft Regional Official Plan**

	Population Forecast Based on Current Regional Official Plan	Proposed Forecast Based on Provincial Growth Plan	Difference Between Proposed and Current ROP Forecasts
2006	253,000	272,500	+19,500
2031	370,000*	423,500	+53,500
Increase 2006 -2031	117,000	151,000	+34,000

* 2031 estimate extrapolated from 2026 forecast of 348,000

Figure 1.2 Current & Proposed Region of York Population Forecasts for Markham

These Regional forecasts also underlie more detailed growth data, including the requirement for residential intensification, the forecast breakdown of employment by type, proposals relating to housing mix and the land required to accommodate growth, prepared by the Region.

Goals for a Community Sustainability Plan

Concurrent with development of the Growth Management Strategy, work on the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, Markham's "Green Print", is underway. The Growth Management Strategy integrates with that effort by helping to define and reflect common goals, indicators, and targets. The twelve draft Green Print goals, presented at a Council workshop in October, 2009 include:

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1. **Social Equity:** A Markham where all people can thrive,
 2. **Identity & Culture:** A unique sense of place that is vibrant and diverse,
 3. **Individual Health:** A community that facilitates wellness,
 4. **Shelter:** A community that offers housing choice for all residents,
 5. **Food Security:** Safe accessible & healthy food for all,
 6. **Access & Mobility:** A connected community that offers choice for all,
 7. **Education and Skills:** A high performing, empowered community,
 8. **Economic Vibrancy:** A local, resilient economy oriented to current & future opportunities,
 9. **Energy & Climate:** A carbon neutral community that is responsible and resilient,
 10. **Ecosystem Integrity:** A community that protects biodiversity and preserves habitat,
 11. **Resource Efficiency:** A community that aims for responsible and fair consumption, waste generation, and waste removal, and
 12. **Water Efficiency:** Reducing consumption and minimizing waste.

The draft goals were developed using the results of the various BMFT public engagement sessions, the GMS and Transportation/Transit public engagement program, Staff engagements, and other outreach efforts with senior Staff and Council. The programs to be developed for implementing the Green Print goals will be integrated into the framework for growth provided through the Growth Management Strategy and may be appropriately reflected in new Official Plan policies. They will assist in refining, enhancing and strengthening the preferred growth alternative and are expected to be incorporated into design principles and new development standards for new development and redesign/retrofitting of existing development. The Integrated Community Sustainability Plan will also provide targets and indicators to measure goal achievement.

The Town has already made progress in reducing present and future GHG emissions through transportation and land use intensification policies and their implementation (notably Markham Centre, which is now well underway in its development). Intensification areas are premised on increased transit use. This is complemented with a Cycling, Pathways and Trails Master Plan and ongoing Transportation Demand Management initiatives.

Staff has spoken to the consultants preparing the Green Print about greenhouse gas emissions modeling for the preferred growth alternative in comparison to other options. This work will be undertaken shortly and will model emissions over time. Recommendations will be made with respect to optimizing land use and urban form in relation to the growth scenario, with a view to reducing anticipated emissions, and identifying mitigating measures.

Planning Initiatives in Support of Growth Management

The Town has undertaken a number of planning initiatives addressing key components of the Growth Management Strategy. Each of these is summarized below, and together they have supported the development of the preferred growth alternative.

Town Greenway System: Environmental Policy Review and Consolidation

On June 23, 2009, Council endorsed in principle the recommendations of the Environmental Policy Review and Consolidation Study, as the basis and framework for finalizing the proposed Greenway System and policy directions to be included in the Town's Growth Management Strategy and new Official Plan. The Greenway System comprises approximately 35% of the Town land area, encompassing waterways, woodlands and wetlands (not including municipal parks), and supports a linked and connected system of natural heritage and hydrological features and the lands needed to support the function of these features. (see Figure 2, attached).

The proposed Greenway System is addressed by three policy management areas:

- Natural Heritage Network lands include natural heritage and hydrological features and their buffers and policy areas established by senior governments,
- Natural Heritage Network Enhancement lands include lands that currently do not contain natural heritage or hydrological features, but which have been identified as providing further support to the Greenway System to address the Town's biodiversity and linkage objectives in key node and linkage areas, and,
- Greenbelt Agriculture lands in the Greenbelt Plan area are those to be protected for long term agriculture.

The Greenway System implements the requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement, Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan and is consistent with Town policies for the Oak Ridges Moraine, already in place, and supports the Town's 'Environment First' approach to land use planning. The proposed Greenway System incorporates lands to be protected for natural heritage and agriculture and that will not be available for future urbanization.

Growing the Greenbelt

The Province has outlined a detailed process to assist municipalities with the review of a potential request for a Greenbelt expansion. The Town will be embarking on the preparation of a new Official Plan once the Growth Management Strategy is approved by Council; Official Plan review is recommended by the Province as the process through which expansion of the Greenbelt should be addressed. As requested by the Development Services Committee on November 3, 2009, a memorandum addressing matters relating to the Provincial initiative identified as Growing the Greenbelt will be included on the Committee agenda for November 17, 2009.

Small Streams Study

In 2007 the Town endorsed the Small Streams Study which sought to identify, evaluate and make recommendations regarding the protection of small drainage features or headwater streams. Small streams are intermittent drainage features which play an important role in any watershed and in our natural heritage system. Over time, these features support many ecosystem functions and play an important role in the ecology of the watershed. As a result of adoption of the recommendations of the study these features will be evaluated and protected through future development approval processes.

Environmental Priorities

In regard to Markham's **environmental priorities**, the preferred growth alternative incorporates a Town Greenway System that will:

- define, for protection, a system of linked natural heritage and hydrological features and associated lands to support their functions, and Greenbelt agriculture lands in eastern Markham,
 - by definition, establish limits, and priorities for protection, relative to the use of lands within the System,
 - integrate with features and systems identified by the Province, the Region and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority,
 - conform with and implement Provincial and Regional Plans, and,
 - provide the basis for identifying improvements and enhancements to features and functions within the System.
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Managing Future Housing Stock to Accommodate Forecast Population

The Region's forecasts for Markham propose the addition of 62,000 dwelling units to the housing stock between 2006 and 2031. Town forecasts, which incorporate additional intensification and a more varied housing mix, propose to add over 72,000 new units (see Figure 3). Both proposals employ the same person per unit assumptions and in both, the resulting 2031 housing stock accommodates the same forecast 2031 population of 423,500.

Managing achievable change in the Town's housing stock is central to accommodating future growth in Markham. The appropriate housing stock is required to address the needs of the Town's growing and evolving population. New housing is also a contributor to a strong live-work relationship, a vibrant economy, transit-oriented design and a determinant of conformity with senior government growth policy. A key factor in addressing the structure of the housing stock is the Growth Plan requirement to provide at least 40% of new housing through intensification within the built boundary. The Region has established a Town target of 52% (52% of all new units added to 2031 are to be within the built boundary), whereas Council has expressed a preference for greater intensification. Comparative estimates of additional housing mixes for the 2006 to 2031 period, associated with a range of residential intensification alternatives, are identified in Appendix 'D'.

In 2008, the Town retained Hemson Consulting Ltd. to prepare a housing stock analysis evaluating residential intensification options and housing stock alternatives within the framework of Provincial and Regional policy and Markham's residential market (residents and builders) and to assist in identifying a preferred growth alternative. A Staff report on the findings and recommendations of the housing stock analysis was provided to the Committee in June 2009.

The analysis concluded that Markham is well-positioned to accommodate more intensive forms of housing. However, recognizing Markham's continuing, strong market

orientation to family households, the consultant advised that intensification beyond a 52% target will present challenges on both the demand and supply side of the housing stock, for which there are potential fiscal and service delivery impacts. The analysis also concluded that an increased proportion of medium density, ground-related housing forms would address the needs of families, while further diversifying the housing stock. To accommodate sufficient new ground-related units to 2031, the analysis concluded that additional residential land should be designated outside the current settlement area.

Staff Recommends a 60% Intensification Target

Staff has reviewed the consultant's findings and has taken account of Council's preferred direction to accommodate more residential intensification. As a result, Staff is recommending that the Town's growth alternative should incorporate a 60% residential intensification target and a residential land expansion of approximately 600 ha outside of the current settlement area. The 600 ha will need to incorporate land for housing, plus essential associated uses such as parks, schools, roads etc. in addition to local retail and service uses, incorporated into mixed used development.

This recommendation represents a balanced approach to managing residential growth, accommodates more than 80% of the Town's increase in dwelling units to 2031 within the current settlement area, provides for a housing mix that realistically addresses the market needs of Markham's residents, and meets Provincial and Regional growth objectives.

Achieving a 60% intensification target depends on "moving" the Town's housing market from past preferences for ground-related housing towards increased numbers of medium and high density units. For example, the share of apartments in the total housing stock must increase from 11% in 2006, to a projected share of 32% in 2031 at the end of the forecast period (see Figure 3). As a result, apartments will represent 54% of the housing stock added between 2006 and 2031. Concurrently, medium density ground-related units, exemplified by semi detached and townhouse forms, will be a significant contributor to the additional stock increasing in number by almost 70% over this same period.

Having regard for the significant shifts that will need to occur with respect to how and where Markham households will choose to live, Staff is recommending that market performance and housing preferences be carefully monitored over time to permit the Town to evaluate, and adjust as needed, the planning policy context, the target for residential intensification, and the phasing of land development for new housing.

	DWELLING TYPE				
	Single	Semi	Townhouse	Apartment	Total
2006 Housing Stock	56%	15%	18%	11%	100%
	45,500	12,200	14,000	9,100	80,800
Additional Housing 2006 to 2031	21%	6%	19%	54%	100%
	15,000	4,300	13,800	39,200	72,300
2031 Housing Stock	39%	11%	18%	32%	100%
	60,500	16,500	27,800	48,300	153,100

Figure 3 Housing Stock by Unit Type for Preferred Growth Alternative
(Housing Stock shares by unit type and estimated units)

Housing Stock

In regard to Markham's **future housing stock**, the preferred growth alternative will:

- continue to accommodate family households,
- accommodate an increasing number of non-family households,
- become more diverse by including larger numbers of medium and high density dwelling types,
- conform to, and implement, Provincial and Regional Plans,
- contribute to meeting residential intensification objectives,
- contribute to an improved live-work relationship, and,
- require regular monitoring of market performance, and if needed, adjustment to the housing supply.

Managing Employment Growth

Markham already enjoys a significant employment presence contributing to a strong local economy. Markham is forecast to add 96,000 jobs over the period from 2006 to 2031 increasing the Town's employment to 240,000, and surpassing the Region's planning target of 1 job for every 2 residents. The largest component of the forecast employment growth is the major office category (39%). Overall, the estimated shares of employment by type vary little between 2006 and 2031 (Figure 4).

Markham's commitment to employment has been established over many years, and is reflected in the active promotion of the Town in support of economic development. In 2008, the Town approved a new Economic Development Strategy, "Markham 2020".

A new policy context for 'employment lands' has also been created by revisions to the Provincial Policy Statement, followed by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and completed by the revised Ontario Planning Act.

Employment Type	Total 2006	Additional Employment 2006 to 2031	Total 2031
Major Office	33%	39%	35%
	47,400	37,400	84,800
Employment Land	34%	34%	34%
	50,000	32,800	82,800
Population Serving	33%	27%	31%
	47,600	25,600	73,200
Total Employment	100%	100%	100%
	145,000	95,800	240,800

Figure 4 Forecast Employment Growth 2006 to 2031 by Employment Type
(share of employment by type and estimated jobs)

This policy framework mandates municipalities to provide and protect sufficient land to accommodate competitive opportunities for employment growth, while promoting intensification and mixed-use development, all within the context of sustainable, complete communities and long term economic prosperity. Municipal planning decisions and Official Plans must be in conformity with the new policy direction of these documents

In 2008, the Town commissioned an Employment Lands Strategy (ELS) (Phase 1) study to offer guidance on decisions regarding:

- land requirements to achieve employment forecasts to 2031,
- updating the Official Plan policy framework for employment lands, and
- a preferred growth alternative to form part of the Growth Management Strategy.

“Markham 2020”, the Town’s Economic Development Strategy identifies 4 key employment sectors for the Town to pursue. The accommodation needs for these sectors is taken into account in the ELS (Phase 1). The ELS (Phase 1) adheres to the Region’s 2031 employment forecast for Markham of 240,000 employees.

A stakeholder workshop for the ELS (Phase 1) was held in November 2008 and the initial findings and directions of the study work were incorporated into the public engagement program for the growth management strategy undertaken in the Spring of 2009.

A Staff report with recommendations arising from the ELS Phase 1 was submitted to the Committee on June 16, 2009. Key recommendations and directions for the preferred growth alternative based on the ELS Phase 1 include:

- retaining all designated employment lands within the current settlement area for employment use, and protecting these lands from conversion to other uses including retail, service, institutional and residential uses,

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- continuing to intensify existing employment areas, focusing on the Town's Regional Centres, Key Development Areas and business parks (see discussion of Markham's Intensification Strategy, below),
 - planning for higher employment densities than required by Provincial policy,
 - adding two new strategic employment areas (see Figure 9 attached) totaling +/-300 ha*, outside the current settlement area to locate approximately 15% of the forecast additional employment growth over the 25 years between 2006 and 2031:
 - lands east of Reesor Road, north of Highway 407, previously identified for employment through the Eastern Markham Strategic Review, 2003, and the review/update of the Cornell Secondary Plan in 2008, and,
 - lands north of Major Mackenzie Drive, east of the developing business park adjoining Highway 404, previously identified in the Employment Lands Strategy Study, 2000; lands in these areas will accommodate a range of industrial uses, supporting/associated retail and service uses, and smaller scale office uses, complementing the development of lands within the current settlement area,
 - encouraging major office employment to occur primarily within Regional Centres and in Key Development Areas served by rapid transit; this will help to focus the development of prestige, light industrial uses, on the remaining designated lands in established and developing business parks,
 - promoting the incorporation of new retail/commercial at grade in mixed-use developments, particularly in the high order transit corridors and Regional Centres,
 - requiring retail development outside the current settlement area to take place only within a mixed-use context as part of new, healthy and sustainable communities, and,
 - protecting designated commercial lands to serve retail requirements to 2031.

*The additional +/-300 ha land area noted above is less than recommended through the ELS (Phase 1) because it does not incorporate an additional recommended land contingency. The exclusion of the contingency is based in part, on the assumption that Markham is committed to no further conversion of designated employment lands within the current settlement area. This assumption will require ongoing monitoring, and possible adjustment of the land supply.

Employment

In regard to Markham's **future employment**, the preferred growth alternative will:

- locate 2031 employment opportunities predominantly within the current settlement area (90%+) with the balance located strategically with access to 400 series Highways and the arterial road system,
 - focus employment, within the current settlement area, on Regional Centres, Key Development Areas and business parks at locations served by higher order transit,
 - depend on the protection of all designated employment lands from conversion to other uses,
 - not incorporate a separate land budget for major retail development,
 - encourage retail/service employment to be incorporated in mixed-use development,
 - help to improve the live-work relationship and support the Town's economic development objectives, and
 - conform to, and implement, Provincial and Regional Plans.
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Markham's Intensification Strategy

Under the Provincial Growth Plan, municipalities must prepare and implement through their official plans and supporting development controls, policies to accommodate and phase-in intensification. A detailed Staff report outlining work on a residential and employment intensification strategy and presenting a recommended set of Intensification Principles and Intensification Hierarchy was provided to the Committee in April 2009. The report included a copy of the York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy, proposing intensification targets for Markham of 31,590 units, and approximately 65,000 jobs, over the period from 2006 to 2031.

In April 2009, the Committee endorsed working principles and a hierarchy of intensification locations as the basis for finalizing a Markham Intensification Strategy. The Town's intensification principles (see Appendix 'E'), reflecting input from Councillor and community meetings, emphasize sustainable development in transit nodes and corridors, appropriate to overall Town development requirements and the area context in which the intensification occurs. Existing residential areas and designated employment areas are to be protected from residential intensification, with the exception of compatible approved minor infill and second suites, where permitted in residential areas. Natural and heritage features within intensification areas will be preserved.

Figure 5 (attached), depicts the overall context for residential and employment intensification opportunities with the Town's current settlement area. Figure 6, shows the potential distribution of units in the four principal groups of intensification areas, based on achieving a residential intensification target of 60% within the 2031 forecast period. These unit estimates are subject to the preparation of implementing area plans, and to future economic circumstances, market preferences and development phasing reflecting service and infrastructure delivery.

Residential Intensification

Current estimates suggest that approximately 37,000 additional units can be distributed across the four groups of intensification areas (see Figure 6) in the period to 2031. These units account for about 88% the overall total of 43,200 additional units that contribute to the 60% intensification target (see Figure 7) to 2031. The difference between the estimates is accounted for by units located outside the identified intensification areas, within the built boundary. Some of the intensification areas are anticipated to have additional potential that will continue to be delivered beyond 2031.

The largest proportion of additional intensification units to 2031 (51%) can be achieved in the two Regional Centres of Markham Centre and the Langstaff Gateway. These Urban Growth Centres are planned for the highest concentration and greatest mix of uses in the Region, a range of housing and employment opportunities and to be a focus for strategic investment in transit.

About 22% of the additional intensification units to 2031 can be accommodated in the Key Development Areas along the Avenue Seven and Yonge Street Regional Transit Corridors. Taken together, the Regional Centres and Corridors could accommodate as much as 73% of the identified intensification potential with the balance occurring in Major Corridors (14%) and Local Centres and Corridors (13%).

Intensification Category and Intensification Areas	Combined Additional Forecast Units 2006-2031	Share of Combined Additional Units 2006-2031
Regional Centres <i>Markham Centre & Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway</i>	up to 18,800 units	51%
Key Development Areas <i>Cornell Centre, Yonge-Steeles Corridor, Markville, Commerce Valley/Galleria, Avenue 7 Corridor/Woodbine, Yonge Corridor North</i>	up to 8,350 units	22%
Major Corridors <i>Markham Road Corridor-Armadale, Markham Road Corridor - Mount Joy, Steeles Ave East Corridor, Avenue 7 Corridor - Village Parkway, Kennedy Corridor-South Unionville</i>	up to 5,250 units	14%
Local Centres/Local Corridors <i>Milliken Centre, Fairtree East/Parkview Centre, Cathedraltown Centre, Kennedy Road Corridor North, Thornhill Centre, Cornell North Centre</i>	up to 4,750 units	13%
Total Additional Units in Intensification Areas	up to 37,150 units	100%

Figure 6 Estimated Additional Dwelling Units in Intensification Areas 2006 to 2031

The distribution of intensification units reflected in Figure 6 provides housing opportunities at a number of locations throughout the Town in proximity to planned transit services. The variety of locations contributes to the development of a range of community enclaves, incorporating other services and community facilities appropriate in a residential context.

Employment Intensification

The Growth Plan emphasizes the importance of increased employment densities in centres and corridors where concentrations of employment will integrate with higher order transit service and with appropriate mixing of uses. In Markham, this emphasis relates to the Regional Centres and to Key Development Areas on the Regional Transit Corridors. Within the context of employment areas, such as business parks, a minimum employment density (already met in Markham) is specified. However, intensification is only one of several objectives relating to employment, and is a lesser priority compared with the preservation of a competitive supply of land, able to accommodate an appropriate mix of employment supportive of a diversified economic base.

Based on work relating to the Employment Lands Strategy (Phase1) and Markham's Intensification Strategy, employment intensification will be achieved by:

- exceeding required Provincial employment densities, together with protecting lands already exceeding these densities, thereby securing more intense employment,
- accommodating all new major office and most population-serving employment within the current settlement area, much to be located in the identified intensification areas (Figure 7) served by rapid transit,
- incorporating employment into new mixed-use development,
- identifying opportunities to economically accommodate additional employment growth in established and well-located business parks, and,
- developing parking strategies to support intensification over time by freeing up land as transit ridership increases.

It is estimated that Markham has the potential to achieve employment intensification equivalent to 67%, within the built boundary to 2031, with 85% of all additional jobs being located within the current settlement area (see Figure 7). Beyond this intensification potential, Council has directed that an Employment Area Intensification Study determine if additional Employment Land Employment jobs could reliably be forecast to be delivered through intensification, within the current settlement area, before 2031. This study will inform the final Growth Management Strategy.

Intensification Within the Context of Good Urban Design and Infrastructure Delivery

To be successful and meet community expectations, increases in building height and density must be paired with good urban design. Accommodating new, more intense development will require transitions in scale and form that are sensitive to existing residential neighbourhoods. Most of the Town's existing residential areas have been established at a ground-related scale, and residents want reassurance that new development directed to adjacent intensification areas will be appropriate in scale and

context. Recognizing the importance of good urban design for new intensification areas, Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co. Architects were retained in 2008 to complete a Built Form, Massing and Height Study.

The study has focused on how policies relating to transition and urban design can be introduced through Town secondary plans, or more local studies, to ensure that new development adjacent to existing neighbourhoods respects their character and scale. The study identifies best practices or guidelines to be employed in creating walkable, connected and transit-supportive development, while addressing key principles related to public realm, streets and blocks, building location and form, and heritage.

Specific development controls, appropriate for each intensification area, cannot practically be incorporated into the Intensification Strategy, which is intended to provide overall direction at the Town level. Such detail will be subsequently developed on an area specific basis, as has been done in the case of Cornell Centre, the Yonge-Steeles Corridor and the Avenue 7 precinct in Markham Centre. Guidelines and standards specific to each intensification area, will be prepared in the context of more focussed secondary plan or local area studies, prior to the approval of new development.

Development in intensification areas must be supported by sufficient public infrastructure meeting the needs of existing and new residents and employees. As part of the detailed study to refine the potential within an intensification area, a determination of the key actions relating to infrastructure investment and delivery will also be made, in order to link infrastructure delivery and phasing of development.

Intensification

In regard to **intensification**, the preferred growth alternative incorporates a Town intensification strategy that will:

- direct residential and employment intensification to appropriate locations within the current settlement area, most served by higher order transit,
 - exceed the residential intensification requirement and meet the employment intensification target for Markham established by the Region,
 - contribute to approximately 80% of the forecast residential and employment growth to 2031 being located within the current settlement area,
 - contribute to 60% of new housing and approximately two-thirds of new jobs added before 2031 being located within the built boundary,
 - provide a range of locations for intensification consistent with the centres and corridors policies of the draft Regional Official Plan,
 - support productive diversification of the Town housing stock and employment, supporting increased opportunities for an improved live-work relationship in Markham, and,
 - conform with the intensification provisions established in Provincial and Regional Plans.
-

Agricultural Assessment Study

The Town of Markham Agricultural Assessment Study was undertaken to assess the feasibility of a long-term agricultural presence in Markham and developing a multi-faceted strategy to address the requirements in the Greenbelt Plan, Provincial Growth Plan and Provincial Policy Statement with respect to agricultural lands. The Agricultural Assessment Study concludes that Markham can retain a viable and sustainable agricultural presence, while pursuing a balanced approach to meeting Provincial Growth Plan requirements. The unique circumstance of the high proportion of tenanted lands owned by senior governments and non-farm businesses in Markham makes the future of the agriculture on these lands dependent on increased attention to landowner/tenant arrangements that might be more supportive of agriculture.

The recommendations of the Agricultural Assessment Study are intended to support and enhance both the short-term and long-term function of lands designated for agricultural use, recognizing the significant influence of landowners in how the lands may be used. The Agricultural Assessment Study identifies a possible strategy for the Town which includes updating and introducing new policies in the Official Plan to address the protection of agricultural lands in the Greenbelt, and on non-Greenbelt lands until such time as they may be approved for urban use consistent the preferred growth alternative.

In discussions with staff at the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs it is clear that there are many Provincial incentives and programs which have been created to support agriculture, and that some of these programs would most certainly apply to the local farming practices in Markham. It would be very helpful for the Town to hear first hand from the Ministry how these programs could be applied, particularly as the Town moves forward with the Community Sustainability Plan and other agricultural initiatives. A recommendation in this regard is included in the memorandum requested by the Committee on November 3, 2009, to be on the Committee agenda on November 17, 2009.

Lands outside Markham's current settlement area comprise +/-9,700 ha of which 90ha relate to existing hamlets and +/-900 ha are recommended for a settlement area extension to 2031. The balance, +/-8,700 ha, would remain available for agricultural use, within and outside the Greenway System. 8,700 ha represents 90% of the land outside the current settlement area and 41% of the total Town land area. Further detail regarding lands available for agriculture is included in the memorandum requested by the Committee on November 3, 2009, to be on the Committee agenda on November 17, 2009.

The Agricultural Assessment Study also identifies a number of agricultural policies and programs which are consistent with the goals of the Town's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and are directed for further consideration to the Town's Sustainability Plan process, as well as possible financial incentives requiring further review by the Town's Finance Department and other levels of government.

Rural lands in Markham are of course, one part of a much larger pattern of agri-business and food production in the Region, GTA and Province. The recommendations of the

Agricultural Assessment Study provide the opportunity for the Town to address food production by encouraging a more sustainable program for agriculture. For example, agriculture principles are being prepared for the Rouge Park to encourage agricultural best practices, agricultural innovation and to encourage conversion from cash crops to food products over time. The policies and programs being recommended are able to support initiatives by landowners and farmers to increase local food production as markets evolve. Markham has also assisted in establishing farmers' markets helping to focus consumer attention on local food. The Committee received a report on final study recommendations on November 3, 2009.

Agriculture

In regard to **agriculture in Markham**, the preferred growth alternative will:

- ensure that lands not needed for growth or environmental protection remain available for long term agricultural use
 - mesh with agricultural support initiatives, including recognition and support for traditional, innovative and urban types of agricultural activity in the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan,
 - accommodate phasing-in of lands currently in agricultural use, identified to accept new growth, so that agriculture can continue until the lands are needed for growth, and,
 - accommodate new community design, providing opportunities for community gardens and small-scale urban agriculture.
-

Four Alternatives for Accommodating Growth

As directed by the Committee, four alternatives to accommodate residential and employment growth have been examined. These include:

- an alternative providing for 40% residential intensification within the built boundary;
- an alternative providing for 55%, subsequently increased to 60%, residential intensification within the built boundary; the 55% alternative was a variant of a 52% alternative proposed by the Region of York, incorporating a different housing mix,
- an alternative providing for no extension of the current settlement area to accommodate either new residential or employment growth.

The 40%, 55%, and 60% residential intensification alternatives, also incorporated employment intensification and extensions of the current settlement area, to accommodate some of the proposed residential and employment growth, consistent with recommendations from the Housing Stock Analysis and the Employment Lands Strategy (Phase 1).

It should be noted that the 40% alternative was examined for comparison purposes only, as this alternative is not consistent with the minimum requirement for residential intensification (+/-52%) established by the Region for Markham. Consequently, Staff recommended that this alternative not be considered further.

As directed, the growth alternative based on no extension of the current settlement area, has also been examined. This alternative is not consistent with recommendations of the Housing Stock Analysis and the Employment Lands Strategy (Phase 1), and is inconsistent with the policy context provided by the Growth Plan and the draft Regional Official Plan. The alternative presents several concerns, including:

- not providing for a balanced diversification of the housing stock, responsive to the accommodation needs of the forecast population,
- relying on an even more extensive shift in the housing market to high density dwelling types than recommended as part of the preferred 60 % intensification strategy, and to an extent that cannot reasonably be expected to be implemented by the building industry or supported by residents within the planning timeframe to 2031,
- not accommodating a balanced diversity of employment,
- relying on significant shift in the market for employment accommodation to the extent of potentially displacing some business types through uncompetitive accommodation costs,
- not supporting the Town's Economic Development Strategy by restricting the supply and choice of land and buildings to accommodate employment growth and reducing the Town's future competitive advantage, and,

Staff is therefore recommending to the Committee that the Town preferred growth alternative should be based on 60% residential intensification, and a limited extension of the current settlement area to accommodate additional housing and employment growth to 2031.

Markham's New Communities

The outward extension of Markham's current settlement area will be guided by phasing, including appropriate triggers and thresholds over time to 2031. Lands brought into the urban area will be developed in future based on emerging best practices and triple bottom line objectives (integrating environmental, social and cultural, and economic strategies of the Town). Policies in the new Official Plan for any outward expansion will have to be developed to ensure the Town's objectives are achieved.

Markham's future new communities will be even more compact and pedestrian friendly than the Town's current leading edge OPA 5 communities. The new communities will be efficient and inclusive to respond to local and global challenges and opportunities. Built form and sustainability guidelines currently being advanced, and the Community Sustainability Plan, will ensure higher standards of community planning, green infrastructure, green buildings and sustainable development practices.

New communities will have sufficient densities (exceeding the Provincial minimum of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare) and a diverse mix of uses within proximity of transit to reduce the reliance upon single occupancy vehicles in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote live – work opportunities. Compact communities will

contribute to efficient use of infrastructure, as well as creating vibrant, walkable places where people feel comfortable and remain healthy.

Based on coordination across all Town Departments and public agencies, Markham's new community form will harness the power of natural processes to support our infrastructure and maintain our biodiversity. Based on emerging Green Print plan objectives and performance measures, new communities will be oriented to capture the energy of the sun, both actively and passively, or be solar ready to take advantage of future technologies. They will use water more efficiently as we meet the demands of a growing population and respond to our changing climate and more intense storms.

The density and form of new communities will be transit supportive, and also support schools, places of worship, recreational and cultural facilities, and employment and retail opportunities. This will allow people that live within new communities to spend less time travelling and more time engaged in the community. New communities will include a variety of land uses and gathering spaces that are flexible enough to meet the needs of people of various ages, abilities, and desires.

Each of the studies and program initiatives underway across Council's BMFT priority areas will contribute to defining how our objectives for new communities will be realized.



Preferred Growth Alternative

Current Staff estimates of dwelling units, population and employment for the preferred growth alternative are summarized in Figure 7.

Dwelling Unit Estimates	No. of Dwelling Units	Share of Additional Units	Share of 2031 Units
Town Total Units 2006	80,800	-	53%
Within Current Settlement Area	59,400	82%	39%
- Within Built Boundary	43,200	60%	28%
- Outside Built Boundary	16,200	22%	11%
Within Extension of Settlement Area	12,800	18%	8%
Additional Units (2006 to 2031)	72,200	100%	47%
Town Total Units 2031	153,000	-	100%
Population Estimates	Population	Share of Additional Population	Share of 2031 Population
Town Total Population 2006	264,300	-	62%
Within Current Settlement Area	121,000	76%	29%
- Within Built Boundary	86,400	54%	21%
- Outside Built Boundary	34,600	22%	8%
Within Extension of Settlement Area	38,200	24%	9%
Additional Population (2006 to 2031)	159,200	100%	38%
Town Total Population 2031	423,500	-	100%
Employment Estimates	Employees	Share of Additional Employees	Share of 2031 Employees
Town Total Employment 2006	144,800	-	60%
Within Current Settlement Area	81,800	85%	34%
- Within Built Boundary	64,400	67%	27%
- Outside Built Boundary	17,400	18%	7%
Within Extension of Settlement Area	14,000	15%	6%
Additional Employment, 2006 to 2031	95,800	100%	40%
Town Total Employment 2031	240,600	-	100%

**Figure 7 Preferred Markham Growth Alternative -
Dwelling Unit, Population and Employment Estimates**

The Preferred Growth Alternative outlined in this report:

- accommodates the forecast growth for Markham to 2031, while conforming to the growth policy framework established in the Provincial Growth Plan and draft ROP,
 - provides for a mix of additional housing to 2031, consistent with exceeding minimum intensification requirements, while further diversifying the Town housing stock to serve the growing and changing population,
 - provides for employment intensification at appropriate locations and supporting transit, as well as increasing the supply of land for employment to competitively accommodate employment growth,
 - provides for a housing mix and a range of jobs supportive of improved live-work opportunities within the Town,
 - provides a Town Greenway System, of more than 7,400 ha integrated with lands for growth and agriculture
 - provides an enhanced operating context for agriculture in Markham, supporting the use of +/- 8,700 ha as farmlands,
 - as provided for in senior government policy, incorporates an extension to the current settlement area (Figure 8) of approximately 900 ha in area to be phased over the forecast period to 2031; the extension has been kept to a minimum by accommodating about 80% of the forecast residential and employment growth within the current settlement area,
 - provides the opportunity to accommodate more than 600,000 residents and jobs, over 90% of the 2031 combined total, within the current settlement area,
 - offers support and opportunity for the further application of sustainable community design, transit investment, infrastructure improvement, a diversity of housing and employment opportunities, and continued investment in Markham, contributing to a vibrant and resilient economy,
 - aligns with the transportation/ transit initiatives proposed by Metrolinx and the Region,
 - will include new, sustainable communities, leading the GTA in water and energy management, wellness, accessibility, biodiversity, equity, and choice,
 - provides the essential information regarding growth to complete implementing initiatives related to transportation, community and serving infrastructure, finance and the goals established for the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan,
 - provides the basis for infrastructure and financial analysis to refine and address matters such as infrastructure improvements, costs, financing demands and abilities and to relate these to development phasing, and,
 - provides the basis to proceed with completion of a Town Growth Management Strategy, and preparation of a new Town Official Plan.
-

Official Plan Conformity

The requirements of Provincial legislation obligate the Town to bring its Official Plan into conformity with Provincial Acts and Plans, and the Region of York Official Plan. Policy revision and the introduction of new policies to ensure conformity with senior government policy will be needed to bring Markham's Official Plan into conformity.

The Town must bring its Official Plan into conformity with the Growth Plan by June 2009. Although an extension of up to one year to meet this requirement was requested by

Council in February, 2009, no response from the Province has been received. As a practical matter, the Town must concurrently bring its Official Plan into conformity with the new Regional Official Plan, scheduled for adoption before year end. In lieu of meeting the June 2009 Official Plan conformity requirement, Staff has recommended that Council endorse a Growth Management Strategy, to demonstrate how the Town intends to conform, and to then guide the preparation of a new Official Plan. In this way the Town demonstrates its commitment to addressing senior government growth policies as an interim step toward achieving full conformity.

The Planning Act requires municipalities, to revise their official plans at least every 5 years. Notwithstanding a partial review in 1987, and many individual policy updates by amendment, the Official Plan format and some policies are now 30 years old. Given the age of some policies, and the potential for significant amendment to achieve conformity with the provincial and regional policy regimes, Staff recommended in November 2007, that a new Town Official Plan should be prepared, building on the preferred growth alternative incorporated into a Growth Management Strategy.

In addition to the mandated requirement to bring the Town Official Plan into conformity with Provincial and Regional Plans, once this requirement is addressed, the Town is mandated to also amend all zoning by-laws, to ensure that they conform with the official plan, within three years of the Plan's approval.

The process for addressing the requirements of the Planning Act and other Provincial Plans for review/revision of the Official Plan and ultimately Town zoning, is anticipated be the subject of a future report in 2010.

Further Public Consultation on Preferred Growth Alternative

The next opportunity to further engage the public regarding the preferred growth alternative will come with Council endorsement of the draft Town Growth Management Strategy document. Staff across the Town have been engaged in preparing the draft which could be submitted to Committee early in 2010 and proceed to public discussion by Winter/early Spring 2010.

As recommended, the draft Growth Management Strategy document will place the preferred growth alternative in context relative to the strategic focus of BMFT as a whole, and to objectives for Markham's future in which the community will also be interested. The GMS engagement will be integrated with the Markham Strategic Transportation Plan and will be linked with consultation on the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. It may also be possible and preferable to integrate consultation regarding a number of BMFT initiatives into a single community engagement program targeted for the Spring of 2010, as shown in Appendix 'F'. Such an approach will be valuable for the community in understanding the relationships among the related initiatives.

Following completion of the next round of public engagement and Council approval of the final Town Growth Management Strategy, staff will bring forward a report to initiate

the preparation of a new Official Plan. This exercise will also involve a significant public engagement program, which, subject to Strategy approval, could be initiated before Summer, 2010, and continue forward into 2011.

Next Steps

November 2009	→	Council endorsement of Preferred Growth Alternative
January 2010	→	Council receives DRAFT GMS document
Winter/Early Spring 2010	→	Public Consultation on Draft GMS document
Spring 2010	→	Council receives FINAL GMS (revised in response to public consultation) and endorses a basis for new Official Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)

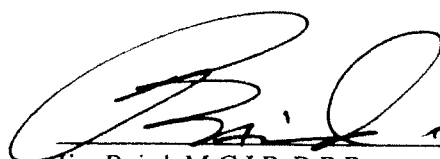
There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Finance Department Staff and the Town's consultant, C.N. Watson, are undertaking a Financial Analysis to examine financial implications and to develop a financial strategy to implement the preferred growth alternative.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The preferred growth alternative for Markham to 2031, outlined in this report, delivers the basis for completion of a growth management strategy in accordance with the first strategic area of focus, Growth Management, identified in BMFT. It also contributes to the completion of other initiatives identified in BMFT that are dependent on Council confirming a Town growth alternative.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Business Units across the Town have been consulted on the preparation of the various growth alternatives. The Directors Forum has regularly received status updates and provided input on the work toward a Growth Management Strategy.

RECOMMENDED BY:

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



Valerie Shuttleworth, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning & Urban Design

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 2. Proposed Town Greenway System

Figure 5. Potential Intensification Areas and Rapid Transit Improvements

Figure 8. Preferred Growth Alternative to 2031

Appendix 'A' Reports and Presentations to Development Services Committee re Growth Management

Appendix 'B' Public Engagement re Growth Management: Region of York and Town of Markham

Appendix 'C' Markham Public Engagement Summary

Appendix 'D' Comparative Estimates for Residential Intensification Alternatives and Housing Mix

Appendix 'E' Markham's Intensification Principles





Appendix 'F' Proposal for Integrated BMFT Community Engagement Program

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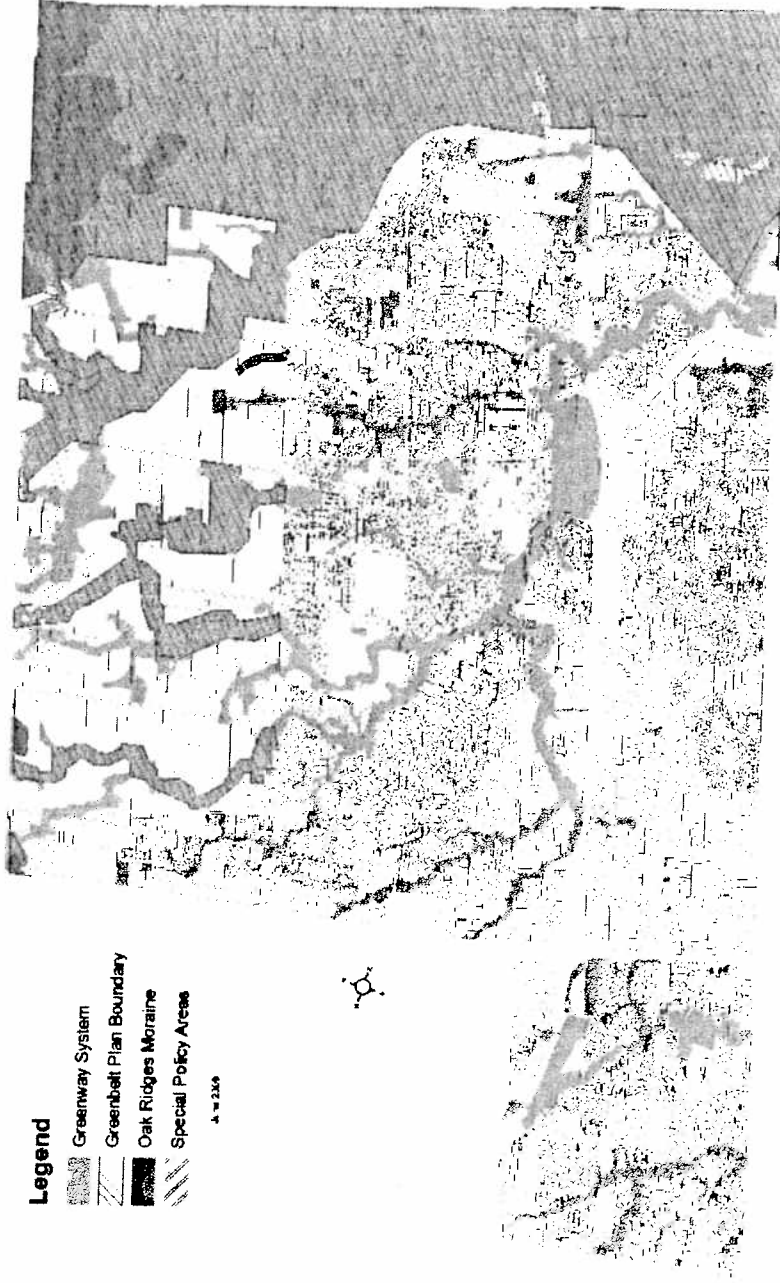
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PROPOSED GREENWAY SYSTEM

Legend

-  Greenway System
-  Greenbelt Plan Boundary
-  Oak Ridges Moraine
-  Special Policy Areas

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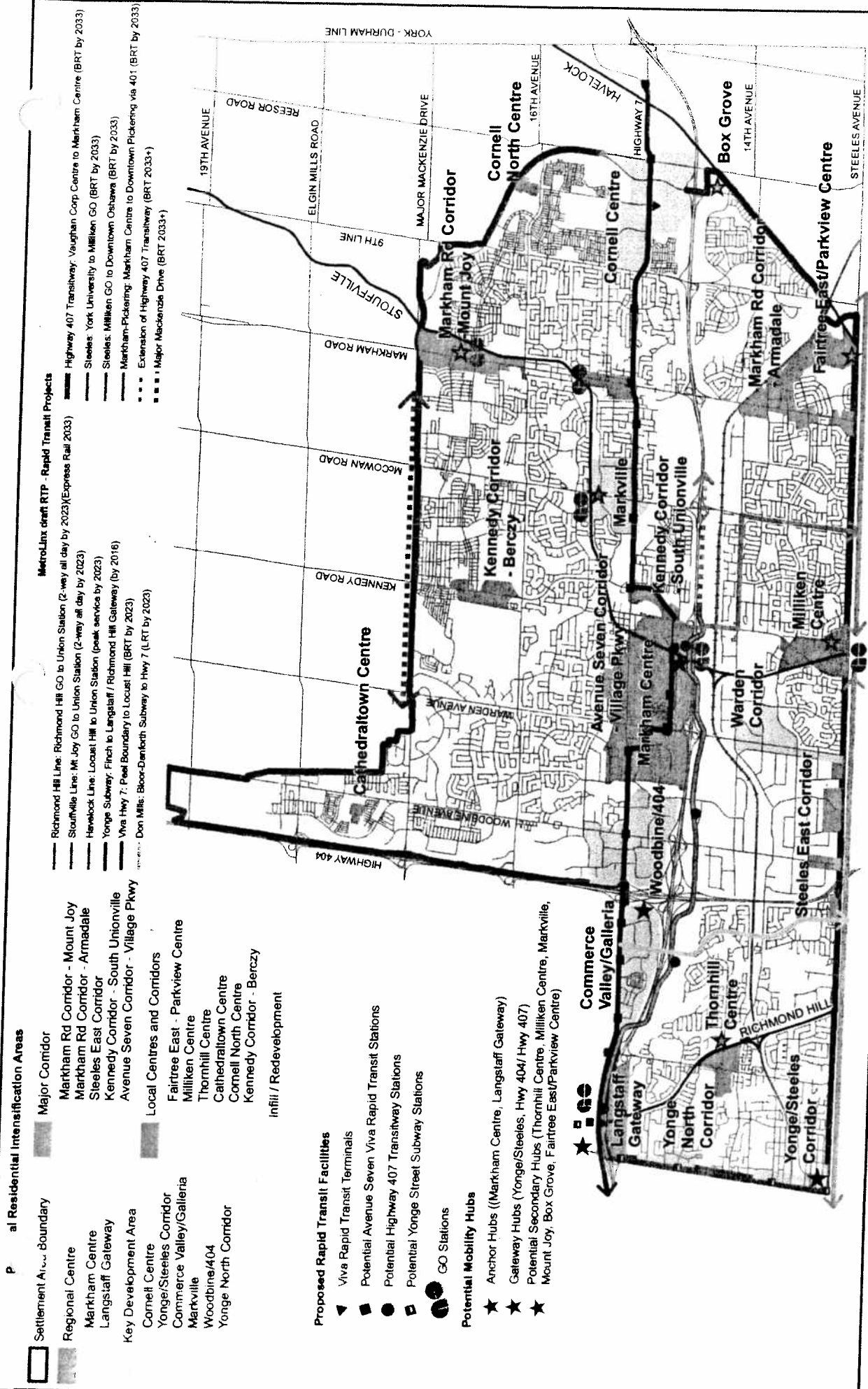


Proposed Town Greenway System



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

FIGURE No.2



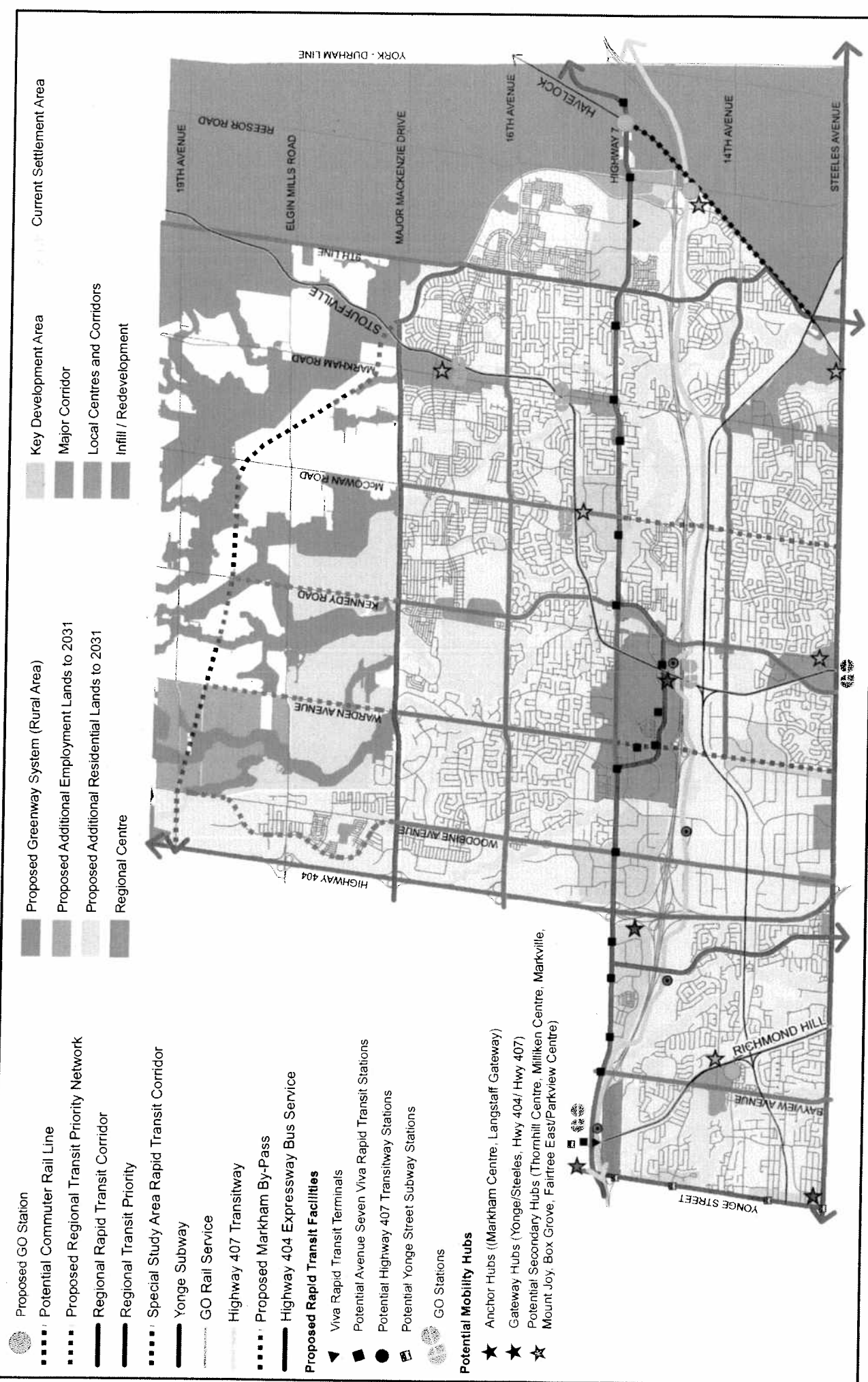
Potential Intensification Areas and Rapid Transit Improvements



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION



FIGURE NO. 5



Preferred Growth Alternative to 2031



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

FIGURE NO. 8

Reports & Presentations to Development Services Committee re: Growth Management (2006 to 2009)

DATE	TITLE	Pres'n (P) Report (R)
2006		
Jan	Comments on the Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, November 2005	R
Sept	Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe	P
Nov	Density and Intensification Targets in the Growth Plan for the GGH	R
2007		
Jan	Directed Growth Strategy and New Official Plan	P
Mar	Regional Planning Trends and Issues (informal late pm presentation)	P (Region)
Apr	Defining the "Built Boundary" within Markham's Settlement Area	P *
Apr	Region of York Report titled "Provincial Infrastructure Required to Implement the "Places to Grow" Plan in York Region"	correspondence
May	Places to Grow Summit - Preliminary Program May 17, 2007	P
May	Region of York Preliminary Growth Forecasts for the Town of Markham	P
Jun	Planning for Tomorrow: York Region Growth Management	P (Region)
Jun	Employment Lands Strategy	P
Jun	Avenue Seven Corridor Study: Phase 1 Background & Analysis	P
Jun	Work Program and Terms of Reference for Markham Transportation Master Plan	R, P
Sep	Request by Heritage Markham to comment on Planning for Tomorrow	R
Sep	Intensification/Density Study: Height and Density Options	P
Oct	The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe	P (Ministry)
Nov	Directed Growth Strategy and Official Plan Review - Legislative Requirements	R
Nov	Proposed Work Program for the Directed Growth Strategy	R
Jan	Growth Management Strategy - Naming and Reporting to Council	R
2008		
Feb	Comments on Proposed Final Built Boundary for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe	R
Feb	Markham Transportation Strategic Plan - Consultant Selection	R
Mar	Town of Markham Growth Management Strategy	P
Apr	Growth Management Strategy Update	P
Apr	Intensification Analysis: Method and Examples	P
June	Agricultural Assessment Stakeholders Meeting/	P
June	Environmental Policy Review & Consolidation Study - Public Information Meeting	P
Sept	Growth Management Strategy - Opportunities to Accommodate Growth	P
Sept	Growth Management Strategy - Public Engagement Program	P (DPRA)
Nov.	Employment - Presentation	P

Nov	Growth Management Strategy Update	P
Oct.	Agricultural Assessment Preliminary Findings	P
Oct.	Phase 1 – Markham's Agricultural Assessment Study	R
Oct.	Agriculture – Public Open House	P
Dec.	Environmental Policy Review & Consolidation Study – Public Information Meeting	P
2009		
Feb.	Toward a Growth Management Strategy: Opportunities to Accommodate Growth	R, P
Feb.	Master Servicing Plan for Growth Management Strategy – Consultant Selection	R
Feb.	Growth Management Strategy: Overview and Approach to Financial Analysis & Fiscal Planning	P
Feb.	BMFT Launch Event for Growth/Transportation (4 presentation)	P
Mar. /Apr	Growth Management Strategy, Markham Transportation Strategic Plan, Master Servicing Study – Community Meeting Presentation Milliken Community Meeting Thornhill Community Meeting Markham Community Meeting Unionville Community Meeting Armandale Community Meeting	P
Mar.	Employment Land Strategy (Phase 1)	P
Mar.	Outlining an Intensification Strategy	P
April	Outlining an Intensification Strategy	R
May	Growth Management Strategy Update –/Results of Public Engagement	P
May	Housing Stock Analysis	P
May	Phase 2 Options Report – Markham's Agricultural Assessment Study	R
May	Section 37 Official Plan Policies & Guidelines	
May	Employment Land Strategy (Phase 1)	R
May	Built Form Massing & Height Study	P
June	Section 37 – Outlining Plan Policies & Guidelines	R
June	Employment Land Strategy (Phase 1)	R
June	Agriculture – Public Open House	P
June	Growth Management Strategy – Update Status of Draft	R,P
June	Environmental Policy Review & Consolidation – Final Report	R
June	Housing Stock Analysis	R
Sept.	Presentation – Draft Regional Official Plan	P (Region)
Sept.	GMS - Workshop	P
Sept.	Employment – Revised Terms of Reference	R

Public Engagement (Region of York & Town of Markham)

MARKHAM	
Environmental Policy Review Public Information Meeting	June, 2007
Agriculture – Stakeholder Meeting	June 16, 2008
Meeting with individual Councillors	May 21 – July 4, 2008
Agriculture – Phase 1 Public Information Meeting	Oct. 29, 2008
Employment – Stakeholder Meeting	Nov. 12, 2008
Environmental Policy Review Public Information Meeting	Dec. 9, 2008
EPR – Full day focus group meetings with stakeholders	Dec. 2008
Agriculture – Farmers Focus Group	Jan. 27, 2009
Public Launch: Growth Management Strategy/Transportation Strategic Plan	Feb. 9, 2009
Milliken Community Meeting	Mar. 11, 2009
Thornhill Community Meeting	Mar. 12, 2009
Markham Community Meeting	Mar. 25, 2009
Unionville Community Meeting	April 2, 2009
Armandale Community Meeting	April 20, 2009
Developers Round Table	March 11, 2009
Mayor's Youth Task Force	March 24, 2009
Markham Centre Advisory Group	March 26, 2009
Cornell Advisory Group	April 6, 2009
Milliken Main Street Advisory Group	April 16, 2009
Environmental Policy Review Public Information Meeting	April, 2009
EPR – Technical Advisory /Agency/Province Meetings	20 Meetings
EPR – Full day focus group meetings with stakeholders	April, 2009
Agriculture – Phase 2 Public Information Meeting	June 22, 2009
YORK REGION - Planning For Tomorrow	
Symposium	March 3, 2006
Public Info. Session	March 23, 2006
High School Students	April 11, 2006
Open House	May 3, 2007
Environmental Interest Groups	May 24, 2006
Urban Development Institute	May 25, 2006
Town Meeting	Sept. 17, 2008
Public Info. Session	Sept. 16, 2009

Open House	Sept. 29, 2009
Public Meeting	Oct. 7, 2009
YORK REGION - Transportation Master Plan Update	
Symposium #1	June 28, 2006
Newsletter (1)	Fall 2006
Technical Advisory Committee	Oct. 2, 2006
Public Info Session	Nov. 2006
Technical Advisory Committee	May 31, 2007
Newsletter (2)	Fall 2007
Technical Advisory Committee	Nov. 2, 2007
Public Info Session/ Water & Wastewater	Nov. 15, 2007
Technical Advisory Committee	June 26, 2008
Symposium #2	Nov. 20, 2008 (Live Audio Broadcast)
Technical Advisory Committee	Sept. 15, 2008
Newsletter (3)	Fall 2008
Public Opinion Survey (EKOS Research Associates)	Fall 2008
Technical Advisory Committee	May 7, 2009
YORK REGION - Water & Wastewater Master Plan	
Public Info Session	Nov. 21, 2006
Newsletter (1)	Nov. 2006
Newsletter (2)	Nov. 2007
Newsletter (3)	Nov. 2009

Markham's Public Engagement Summary

What We Heard

Detailed results from the public launch, community meetings, workbooks and comment forms are captured in Section 4.0 (What We Heard) and Appendices C, and E through L.

Results from the engagement program were summarized primarily based on the results of questions asked at the Community Meetings and in the workbooks. Comments from the question and answer periods at the meetings along with written comments have helped to provide anecdotal comments. What we heard has been summarized under four major categories:

- Guiding Principles for Growth Management
- Accommodating Growth in Markham
- Residential Intensification
- Employment Growth

Guiding Principles for Growth Management

Generally, participants were supportive of the Town's growth management work, the environment first approach to planning and the guiding principles. A common sentiment was that once changed, there is no "going back" with Markham's environmental lands.

Respondents were supportive of the guiding principles; overall, the three most important guiding principles for workbook respondents and community meeting attendees were:

- Preserve established neighbourhoods and employment areas
- Identify phasing and funding requirements to deliver the infrastructure required to support growth
- Direct intensification to locations served by rapid transit

Additional guiding principles that were suggested included:

- Preserving, creating and continuing to integrate recreational services into the GMS
- Maintaining community/social infrastructure (i.e. schools, religious institutions, etc.)
- Identifying and working against world-class benchmarks for all of the identified principles
- Monitoring traffic (since it is an important issue for residents)
- Interactions between various cultural groups and impact on their daily life with the growth and changes in the town

Accommodating Growth in Markham

There was a division of interest from participants with respect to expanding into the Whitebelt to accommodate residential and employment growth. Almost two-thirds of the participants (workbook respondents and community meeting attendees) agreed with accommodating the majority of new residential growth within the current urban area. Anecdotal responses on this topic were mixed, with some favouring 100% accommodation within the current urban areas and others suggesting a lower percentage so that Markham can continue to offer single family homes to those that prefer them. Some respondents were concerned about the potential for intensification to change the character of existing neighbourhoods.

With respect to accommodating growth, almost three-quarters of respondents agreed that the Town should balance residential intensification with the development of additional lower density housing to ensure a diverse housing mix. Many respondents commented on the need for Markham to provide a mix of housing types and to consider affordability.

Respondents were fairly evenly split on the question: "Do you agree with expanding the Town's urban area into the Whitebelt to accommodate lower density residential growth?" Just under half of the respondents agreed with this question.

Residential Intensification

Participants in the public engagement program were supportive of the Town's proposed approach to distribute residential intensification to key locations with proposed rapid transit services. The general sense was that making transit a viable option will allow residents to get out of their cars, thus reducing pollution and congestion.

Residents supported most of the intensification areas but felt strongly about ensuring adequate infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the future residents. A small percentage of participants were concerned with some of the areas identified as intensification areas, due to congestion that already existed or concern for heritage of the area.

Participants were not supportive of high-rise buildings (more than 20 storeys) throughout Markham, but did feel that a combination of mixed height buildings (between 3 and 20 storeys) could accommodate future residential growth.

Employment Growth

In addition to building form and intensification, participants were asked a series of questions about employment growth in Markham. A large number of the participants (almost 90%) agreed with reserving land to accommodate employment growth over the long-term. Respondents noted that it would be important for new employment areas to be accessible by transit.

The general sentiment was that jobs could also be added within the current urban area through intensification in existing business parks and the appropriate mixing of

employment in new residential development (i.e. ground floor retail in apartment buildings). Reasons for supporting ground floor commercial uses included: convenience, accessibility, keeping jobs within the local economy and the fact that the buildings are already in existence (nothing new to build). Those not in favour cited issues such as safety, noise and the need to separate residential areas from commercial lands.

Anecdotally, participants were in favour of the ability to work near or at home, thus reducing commuting time and increasing family or recreation time.

Overall, participants felt that the growth in Markham should to be planned in a way that protects the environment, culture and heritage of the Town. Viable and safe transit options and ensuring adequate infrastructure emerged as concerns for residents. Participants would like to see communities built that optimize live, work and play environments, while allowing for residential, employment and recreational opportunities within walking distance.

APPENDIX D
(NOV 17/09)

Comparative Estimates for Residential Intensification Alternatives and Housing Mix

Comparative Estimates for Residential Intensification Alternatives and Housing Mix				
Estimates Relate to Total Units Added to Town, 2006 to 2031 in each alternative	40% Province	52% Region	60% Town Staff	100% No Settlement Area Extension
Proportion of Additional Units within Current Settlement Area	65%	80%	82%	100%
Proportion of Additional Ground Related Units*	67%	54%	46%	27%
Proportion of Additional Apartment Units	33%	46%	54%	73%
No. of Additional Apartment Buildings	+/- 100	+/- 140	+/- 200	+/- 300

* single detached, semi-detached and townhouse units

Markham's Intensification Principles

1. Refine the Town's urban structure to manage growth and intensification within the current settlement area without significantly impacting the Town's existing structure of residential neighbourhoods, heritage districts and business parks, while limiting the extension of urban land uses outside the Current Settlement Area.
 2. Intensify and improve the mix of development and direct it to designated centres and corridors, which are well served and connected by rapid transit, to create mixed use, pedestrian friendly, livable communities that are transit supportive.
 3. Focus intensification in areas that have a reduced impact on Town infrastructure, or which justify investment in new and sustainable infrastructure.
 4. Retain employment uses and employment districts serving Town residents and businesses, and create new job opportunities through intensification of employment districts and mixed use development in transit nodes and corridors.
 5. Intensification areas and sites are to be prioritized, phased and linked to service and infrastructure delivery.
 6. Improve connectivity by providing a street network/public realm that is more conducive to transit, cycling and pedestrian use, and implement travel demand management and parking strategies to reduce reliance on the automobile as a preferred mode of transportation.
 7. Intensification needs to be appropriate to the area context in which it occurs. The built form of development, its height and density, the appropriate mix of uses involved, and the relationship to the surrounding community form and function will be subject to area studies.
 8. Infill and redevelopment in Heritage Conservation Districts will only be considered in accordance with existing Official Plan policies and Heritage District Conservation Plans.
 9. Incorporate sustainable development practices, and promote innovative solutions and pilot projects in such areas as green energy, green buildings and green infrastructure technologies and practices.
 10. Respect the quality of life of Markham residents, and address public input and participation in municipal land use policy and development approvals.
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Proposal for Integrated BMFT Community Engagement Program Appendix F

