


DRAFT
York Region Official Plan


September 16, 2009
Town of Markham
Public Information Session

Feedback



Feedback

- Of the 3-7 years supply of housing, a portion of this will include 40% intensification. In providing 3-7 year supply, must think about ground and high rise units in order to have balance.
- How does York Region determine how much employment land is needed and how much supply is useable?
 - York Region does a survey of vacant employment lands which includes land use categories and hectares of vacant employment land
 - Highways, green areas, existing uses non-developable are netted out of the vacant employment land supply.
 - Then is it compared against the Employment Forecast with respect to employment land, office and population-related type employment.



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Feedback

- York Region also does a survey businesses every year which includes employment count, sector type, export/import information, location and changing economic trends.
- Vacant Employment Land Supply Study is available on the Region's website.
- How will the 2.5 FSI (Floor Space Index) target in the Regional Centres and Corridors build out over time? How will parking fit into this target?
 - Higher density does not necessarily mean very high rise buildings. Paris, for example, has an approximate maximum building height of 6 storeys. These buildings cover entire block, likely at a 6.0 FSI.



Feedback

- Local Municipalities will define the development block on which the 2.5 FSI will apply. Parking will be factored into this target.
- Parking per unit could go down as transit service and ridership increases.
- How big is a development block?
 - Some local municipalities will define blocks larger or smaller and have varying non-developable areas. The challenge is to design attractive and interesting places with an emphasis on urban design and compatibility.
 - Urban expansion areas are the new development areas





Feedback

- 40% Intensification Region-wide is not enough. Some local municipalities have higher intensification targets. For example, Markham's intensification 2031 target is over 50%.
- When the unit forecasts for intensification and greenfield are put together, the result is a need for a modest amount of units in the white belt.
- Can we increase the intensification level and lower the required amount of land for development?
 - Housing supply should have variety and cater to the market. Not everyone wants to buy high rise condo.
 - However, if York Region is not successful in intensification, then we will run out of greenfield land.



Feedback

- White belt area that are identified for development is approximately 25-40% of total white belt area. However, the Region is still in discussion with the local municipalities
- How official is the Regional Official Plan (ROP)?
 - The ROP must conform to Provincial Plans and Laws.
 - Once ROP is approved, the local municipalities must conform to the ROP.
 - Local official plans and zoning by-laws must conform with ROP and Provincial plans and laws.





Feedback

- ❑ A lot of research has been put into Plan. However, some developers have changed the FSI on some applications, (doubled), how does this relate to the ROP?
 - ❑ Markham Centre Plan will have very specific policies on what is allowed in terms of FSI, which must be aligned with the ROP.
 - ❑ If municipalities reject a development proposal, it can be taken to OMB.
 - ❑ It is important to plan for where we want development to go – where are high rise, mid-rise etc... Otherwise, municipalities could be challenged at the OMB.
 - ❑ If residents don't like the change in FSI for an application, it is better to voice input right now.



Feedback

- ❑ There is an increase in intensification but supporting services are not in place. Comment?
 - ❑ Infrastructure Master Plan and human service plans have been integrated into ROP.
- ❑ Where can information on intensification in Cornell Centre be found?
 - ❑ Markham planning department will direct you.
- ❑ There is urban sprawl development on farmland, woodlots
- ❑ Intensification – York Region don't listen to community, Yonge and Steeles development is for 31 storeys
- ❑ Most stakeholders York Region consults with are developers
- ❑ Thornhill has flooding issues and intensification will worsen the situation





Feedback

- ❑ No stormwater management in place
- ❑ There is no transit in the white belt areas.
- ❑ Will Bayview be widened? There are issues with heritage so there should be no widening
- ❑ Flooding is massive throughout York Region
- ❑ Worried about white belt – fertile land, farmlands on Warden
- ❑ Intensification will reduce the amount of land required in white belt. In this way, the need for whitebelt lands will be reduced.
- ❑ The White belt has a lot of Class 1 agricultural lands.



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Slide 9



Feedback

- ❑ Will urban expansion boundaries be shown in ROP?
 - ❑ Markham and Vaughan are still undertaking work to refine urban expansion analysis.
 - ❑ East Gwillimbury has completed their analysis.
 - ❑ York Region hopes to show boundaries in November –lines will be precise to eliminate interpretation.
- ❑ York Region doesn't seem to have bike racks on buses.
Comment?
 - ❑ Funding is in place and the plan is to install bike racks next year.
 - ❑ 6-8 months ago, the pedestrian and bicycling master plan was completed.
 - ❑ Walking and cycling is important feature in York Region.



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Slide 10



Feedback

- If there is an exact Urban Expansion line, would Region and local municipalities consider ceding the balance of lands to the Greenbelt?
 - The Urban Expansion Area timeline is being negotiated with local municipalities, but the ROP timeline is to 2031.
 - In 2015, the Greenbelt will be reviewed. The Province will ask if there are any areas to include into Greenbelt.
 - Urban structure is defined – 69% of Region is either Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine. By 2031, York Region will still be growing, so we may need to consider additional additional employment and/or residential lands.
 - Must keep options open. But York Region will use the white belt lands sparingly.
 - Density targets in Whitebelt communities may be higher than in Cornell.



Feedback

- Reference to Slide 13 – Greenbelt review by 2015
 - Some municipalities are looking at employment land supply and there may be some situations where some parts of the Greenbelt are considered for employment land.
 - York Region must undertake more analysis of supply throughout the Region.
- York Region may want to speak about the greenway system which is beyond the Greenbelt.
 - The “fingers of green” in the white belt are Greenbelt. York Region must not only protect, but make them greener.





Feedback

- ❑ The ROP Climate change policies are weighted towards rainfall events, are other events addressed such as disease, warming etc?
 - ❑ York Region is looking at climate change strategies. We've seen more violent storm events and dangerous flooding.
 - ❑ There are other issues associated with climate change such as 1) emergency response 2) insect infestations 3) disease carrying insects (Lyme, West Nile)
- ❑ We are seeing animals migrating farther north and the cold is detrimental to their health.
 - ❑ York Region will look at these issues with the local municipalities to determine the appropriate response.

