

# **York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy**

York Region Planning and Development Services

**February 2009**

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## Executive Summary

The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy Report demonstrates the Region's ability to achieve the Provincial *Growth Plan's* intensification targets and requirements. This report is also a component of the comprehensive review required for the *Regional Official Plan* conformity exercise. The report includes the following highlights:

- The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy meets the requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement and other provincial initiatives.
- The York Region Principles of Intensification will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. They provide a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors served by rapid-transit.
- The Local Municipal Intensification Targets, as outlined in Table 1, will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The Region plans to meet and/or exceed the estimated 90,700 new units required to achieve the 40% intensification target in the Provincial *Growth Plan*.
- The provincially-defined urban growth centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan are planned to meet and/or exceed the *Growth Plan* target of 200 people and jobs per gross hectare. The number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ, at a minimum, the total labour force residing in each Centre.
- Local municipalities are currently completing their intensification strategies that will identify and map key strategic areas where intensification can be best accommodated with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. Local municipalities are expected to address intensification in all key strategic areas of the Region's Intensification Matrix Framework that include: Regional Centres and Corridors, GO Stations, Local Centres and Corridors, Other Major Corridors, Local Infill and Secondary Suites.
- As part of the local intensification strategies, local municipalities will include targets for each identified intensification area to meet their municipal intensification target based on the 40% target region-wide. Local Municipalities will plan to meet and/or exceed these local area targets.
- The Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas that will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The attributes focus on such areas as: transit-supportive and mixed-use development, housing options, built form and design, transit connections, natural heritage and public space, traffic and parking, energy planning and active lifestyles.
- The *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report, January 2009*, indicates that approximately 42% of the Region's total employment growth will occur within the built-up area by 2031, translating into an anticipated 138,000 new jobs.

- Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify intensification areas that can accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.
- A number of local municipalities, such as Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, are currently identifying key areas along the regional rapid transit corridors of Highway 7 and Yonge Street in which to focus mixed-use and transit-supportive development.
- Of the 90,700 required units, over 50,000 already have some level of approval within the built-up area. For example, a total of 34,500 units are already planned for in the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
- As specified in the *Growth Plan*, the Region is developing a monitoring system to track progress on intensification in collaboration with the local municipalities. Sources of information that are being considered for the system include: building permits, development applications and the Region's annual employment survey.

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## 1.0 Purpose of the York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy

In 2006, The Province of Ontario released a *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Places to Grow*. The *Growth Plan* guides decisions on issues relating to transportation, infrastructure, planning, land-use planning, urban form, housing, natural heritage and resource protection with the intent to help secure the future prosperity of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

The *Growth Plan* states that all municipalities will develop and implement, through their official plans and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve intensification and the intensification target. The *York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy* represents a component of the larger municipal comprehensive review required for the *Regional Official Plan Review*. In accordance with provincial requirements, the objectives of the Regional Intensification Strategy are to:

- Use the Region's Growth Forecasts for population and employment
- Quantify and accommodate a significant portion of both future employment and residential development through intensification throughout the built-up area in accordance with the policies in 2.2.3 of the *Growth Plan*
- Identify a minimum intensification target for residential development that maximizes and ensures the implementation of the intensification strategy.
- Identify the appropriate type and scale of development and set targets for employment and residential growth in intensification areas, urban growth centres, major transit station areas and intensification corridors.

In addition to provincial regulation, intensifying the Region's built-up area will result in a number of environmental, economic and community benefits:

- Communities can be designed so that cost-effective and efficient transit, infrastructure and human services systems can be operated and easily accessed. Well-designed streets and building locations give people the choice of walking and bicycling as opposed to reliance on automobiles.
- Higher density, mixed-use and transit-supportive development reduces greenhouse gas emissions and increases long-term resiliency to the impacts of climate change by utilizing land and infrastructure resources efficiently and reducing automobile dependency.
- Higher densities result in a greater proportion of row and apartment style housing. These types of housing structures provide a broader range of housing choices and affordability.

The Regional Intensification Strategy, accompanied by the Local Municipal Intensification Strategies, will reinforce the linkage between high density, mixed-use development and centres and corridors served by rapid transit. These strategies,

therefore, will further enhance the planned urban structure and advance the Region's "city-building" initiative.

## 2.0 Background and Context

### 2.1 Provincial Policy Context

#### The Provincial Policy Statement

Intensification is supported and encouraged in Section 1.0 of the Provincial Policy Statement, "Building Strong Communities". Specifically, Section 1.1.2 states that *"sufficient land shall be made available through intensification and redevelopment and, if necessary, designated growth areas, to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of employment opportunities, housing and other land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 20 years"*.

#### Definition of Intensification

The Provincial *Growth Plan* defines intensification as the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- Infill development; or,
- The expansion or conversion of buildings.

#### Provincial Policy on Intensification



With respect to Intensification policy, the Provincial *Growth Plan* stipulates that:

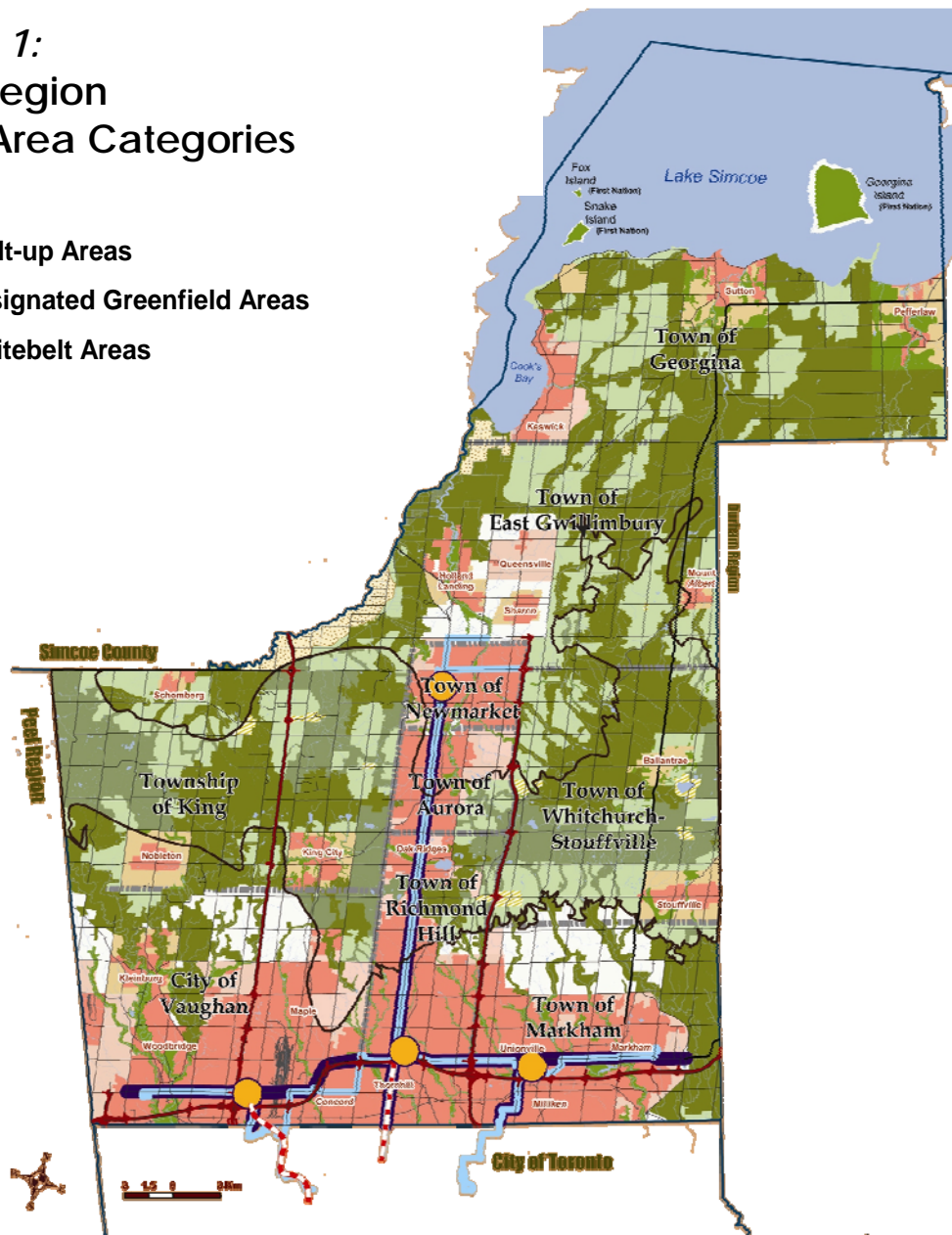
- By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum 40 per cent of all residential development occurring annual within each upper- and single-tier municipality will be within the built-up area.
- If at the time this Plan comes into effect, an upper- or single-tier municipality is achieving a percentage higher than the minimum intensification target identified in policy 2.2.3.1., this higher percentage will be considered the minimum intensification target for that municipality.
- All municipalities will develop and implement through their official plans and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve intensification and the intensification target.

- All intensification areas will be planned and designed to:
  - Cumulatively attract a significant portion of population and employment growth
  - Provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhood
  - Provide high quality public open spaces with site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places
  - Support transit, walking and cycling for everyday activities
  - Generally achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas
  - Achieve an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas.

The provincially-delineated built boundary is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:**  
**York Region**  
**Land Area Categories**

-  Built-up Areas
-  Designated Greenfield Areas
-  Whitebelt Areas



## Provincial Policy on Urban Growth Centres

With respect to urban growth centre policy, the Provincial *Growth Plan* stipulates that:

- The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal (now Energy and Infrastructure), in consultation with municipalities that have urban growth centres, will determine the approximate size and location of urban growth centres.
- Municipalities will delineate the boundaries of urban growth centres in their official plans.
- Urban Growth Centres will be planned:
  - As focal areas for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses
  - To accommodate and support major transit infrastructure
  - To serve as high density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses
  - To accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth.
- Urban Growth Centres will be planned to achieved, by 2031 or earlier, a minimum gross density-target of:
  - 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare for each of Markham Centre, Newmarket Centre, Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway and Vaughan Corporate Centre.

In November 2008, the Province released the final size and location of the Urban Growth Centres within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

## 2.2 Regional Context

The existing *Regional Official Plan (ROP)* outlines a regional structure that includes a system of regional centres and corridors that act as a focus for residential, office and commercial development. The Region has a number of initiatives that promote intensification, as well as, a series of preliminary measures of progress. These include:

- In June 2004, Council adopted the Region's *Centres and Corridors Strategy* that aims to strengthen the relationship between a compact urban structure in the centres and corridors and transportation and transit.
- *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 43)*, July 2005, that increases the plan's intensification target from 20% to 30% in existing built-up areas, and towns and villages and strengthens policies in the ROP regarding development in the Centres and Corridors.
- In 2006, Regional Council adopted the *Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines* that emphasize the need for an urban form that supports transit-users and the transit service itself along the Regional network of centres and corridors. The guidelines can help assess how well a policy or project incorporates some of

the essential TOD elements such as: pedestrians, built form, parking, land-use and connections.

- Between January 2001 and December 2005, the Region achieved a rate of 18.4% intensification compared to a 16.7% rate between 1990 and 2003. Both analyses used the estimated 1990 built boundary.
- In April 2007, a preliminary analysis indicated that approximately 85,000 new units would be required to achieve the 40% intensification target specified in the Provincial *Growth Plan* presented in the *Planning for Tomorrow – York Region Residential Intensification Strategy, Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) Report No. 4, 2007*.
- *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 60)*, approved February 2008, enables the Region to adopt Regional Community Improvement Plans and to participate in local community improvement plans as part of the Provincial Bill 51 amendment to the Planning Act. These plans can be applied to regional infrastructure, affordable housing, and planned transit corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development and redevelopment.

## Enhancing York Region’s Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Local Municipal Intensification Strategies

In April 2008, the Region released *Enhancing York Region’s Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Local Municipal Intensification Strategies (“Intensification Guide”)*. The preliminary draft was endorsed by Regional Council in the *Planning and Economic Development Committee, Report No. 5, 2008*. The Intensification Guide provides a high level framework for collaboration with Local Municipalities to guide the completion of their local intensification strategies. In this way, the Region and the Local Municipalities can approach long-term intensification within the planned urban structure in a consistent manner and meet the Provincial *Growth Plan* targets.

The crux of the intensification strategies is not only to demonstrate conformity with the *Growth Plan*, but also to construct a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors. This framework is based on the following Regional principles of intensification that will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.

### *York Region Principles of Intensification*

1. *Connect the Regional Centres and Regional Corridors with rapid transit systems to stimulate compact and efficient growth.*
2. *Connect transit, land-uses and pedestrians by following the Region’s Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines.*
3. *Ensure that buildings and streets are well-proportioned to one another to ensure walkability and efficient investment in infrastructure and land.*
4. *Provide access to the community through open space, trails, parks and other public spaces that are carefully placed, inter-connected and proportioned.*
5. *Improve the live/work relationship through a mix of intensified land uses.*
6. *Ensure a range of housing options and affordability.*
7. *Create a sense of place through cultural amenities, and architectural and design standards.*

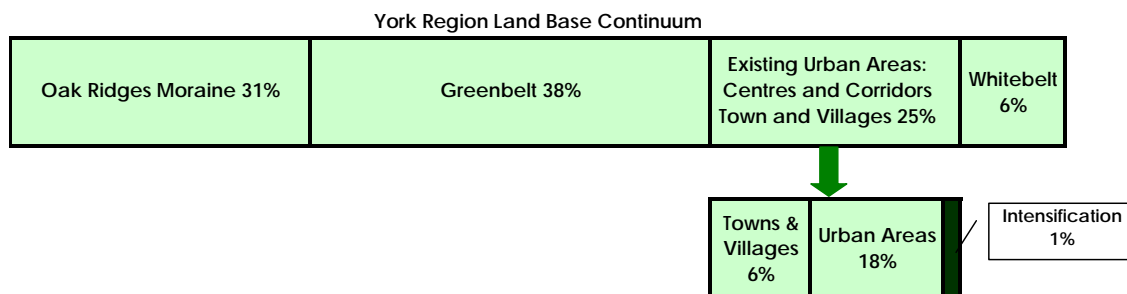
8. *Connect quality and accessible human services to rapid transit and alternative modes of transportation.*
9. *Protect and restore natural heritage and trails within the built-up area.*
10. *Integrate sustainable design and construction of buildings such as community energy systems and sustainable waste management.*

### 3.0 York Region Intensification Forecast (2006-31)

The York Region Intensification Forecast is divided into three analyses for residential, employment and the provincially defined urban growth centres. The Intensification Forecast is based on the *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report* that was presented to Regional Council in January 2009.

#### Intensification Expected to occur on One Percent of Region’s Land Base

Considering the proportion of lands designated as Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and the existing urban areas, approximately 7% of the Region’s land base remains for future intensification and ‘whitebelt’ development. Of this remaining 7%, only an estimated 1% will likely be available for both residential and employment intensification. It is this proportion of the Region’s land base that provides the opportunity to showcase high quality, sustainable and transit-supportive intensification in key strategic areas within the planned urban structure.



### 3.1 Residential Intensification

#### 40% Intensification by 2031 requires 90,700 new units

Out of the total 234,100 new units forecasted region-wide, approximately 90,700 of these new units must locate within the provincially-defined built boundary to meet the 40% intensification target for all new residential development as specified in the *Growth Plan*. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of the 40% target by local municipality.

The 90,700 figure is an update to the preliminary intensification target of 87,400 previously presented in the *Planning for Tomorrow – Refined York Region 2031 Forecast and Land Budget, Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) Report, Report No. 8, 2008*. The revised intensification target of approximately 90,700 units was derived based

on detailed spatial analysis by regional staff using the final built boundary as defined by the Province.

The final built boundary released by the Province included areas of low-density greenfield development in the vicinity of major transportation corridors and along the edges or fringe areas of the built boundary line. These greenfield areas translate into an estimated 16,700 single- and semi-detached planned units in such communities as Cathedral and Box Grove in Markham, Newmarket Southeast in Newmarket, Kleinburg in Vaughan and various secondary plans on the fringe of the built boundary. From a technical perspective, these greenfield areas are within the built-up area, but have not been included as part of the intensification target analysis since large-scale low density greenfield development does not meet the intent of intensification policies in the *Growth Plan*.

**Table 1: Required Intensification Units (2006-31) to meet 40% Residential Intensification**

	Intensification Units (1)
Aurora	3,100
East Gwillimbury	1,030
Georgina	2,690
King	920
Markham	31,590
Newmarket	5,250
Richmond Hill	14,700
Vaughan	29,300
Whitchurch-Stouffville	2,100
<b>York Region</b>	<b>90,700</b>

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

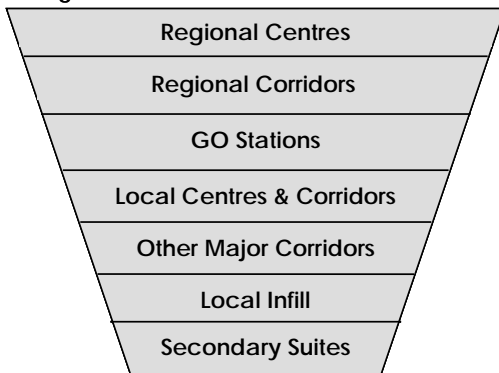
1. Includes rows, mid- and high-rise units, duplexes and secondary suites.

\*NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding.

The Local Municipalities, in completing their intensification strategies, will be reviewing their assignments to identify the appropriate level and location of intensification, as well as where it will not be permitted. Further detail on the role of local municipalities in meeting regional intensification targets is described in Section 6.0.

## Intensification Matrix Framework Assists in Identifying Intensification Areas

**Figure 2: The Intensification Matrix Framework**



NOTE: Local infill includes severances, expansions or conversions of buildings, vacant or derelict land previously developed, parking lots and/or redevelopment of a portion of a land parcel.

The Regional Intensification Matrix Framework has been formulated to help identify potential intensification areas as shown in Figure 2. The Matrix Framework identifies key strategic areas where intensification can be best accommodated with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. In this way, the Region can avoid unplanned and dispersed intensification by organizing the estimated 90,700 required new intensification units into the matrix levels.

The triangular shape of the Matrix Framework signifies that densities and built form types will vary. For example, higher densities and building heights will occur in the Regional Centres and Corridors relative to the other key strategic areas.

The existing *Regional Official Plan* specifies the following long-term density targets for the Regional Centres and Corridors:

- 2.5 Floor Space Index (FSI) in each of the Regional Centres
- An average 2.5 FSI of all Key Development Areas along the Regional Corridors. The intensification areas identified in Regional and Local Intensification Strategies that fall along the Regional Corridors are considered equivalent to Key Development Areas in which the 2.5 FSI target would apply.

The update to the *Regional Official Plan* will include an enhancement to the existing Regional Centres and Corridors policies given the *Growth Plan* requirements, planned TTC subway extensions into York Region and the advancement of the Region's city-building initiative.

## **Local Municipalities to Identify Intensification Areas to Accommodate 40% Intensification**

Of the required 90,700 units, over 50,000 already have some level of approval. These applications are for communities within the built-up area. Local Municipalities are currently completing their local intensification strategies that will identify the areas that can best accommodate intensification and where it will not be permitted.

### ***Regional Centres***

The objective of the Regional Centres, as outlined in the existing *Regional Official Plan*, is to be the focus for residential, institutional and business activities, served by our rapid transit system, Viva. As well, Richmond Hill Centre and Vaughan Corporate Centre are the termini for the two planned TTC subways extensions into York Region.

Approximately 34,500 units, or 38% of the required new intensification units, are planned for within the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan which also include the provincially-defined urban growth centres. The local municipalities are currently updating their respective Centre Studies recognizing the capacity to accommodate intensification beyond the 2031 planning horizon of the *Growth Plan*.

### ***Regional Corridors***

The Regional Corridors, as outlined in the existing *Regional Official Plan*, form the key connections between Regional Centres and are considered the main arteries of the Regional urban structure. Major road and public transit networks also intersect along these corridors to create opportunities for "sub-centres" or "inter-modal nodes" between the local and regional centres. The *Regional Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines* also reinforce the corridor element of intensification by focusing on the connection between pedestrians, built-form, land-use, transit and parking.

A number of local municipalities have commenced detailed planning to identify intensification areas along the Regional Corridors of Avenue 7 (Highway 7) and Yonge Street. These include:

- The Town of Markham's *Avenue Seven Corridor Study* identifies potential key development areas for intensification such as Langstaff, Commerce Valley, Woodbine/404, Markham Centre, Markville and Cornell.

- The Town of Markham has commenced the *Yonge and Steeles Corridor Study* that will introduce new policies to encourage vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian and transit-oriented development in this area.
- The City of Vaughan's *Avenue Seven Land Use Futures Study* and subsequent Highway 7 Official Plan Amendments outline a planned urban structure based on a hierarchy of centres for higher density development served by higher order transit. The hierarchy of centres consists of a number of Transit Stop Centres, GO Transit Centres, the 7/427 Centre, along with the Vaughan Corporate Centre.
- The Town of Richmond Hill, through their Official Plan work, have identified strategic areas along Yonge Street that are best suited to accommodate intensification. These include, Yonge/16<sup>th</sup>-Carville Avenue, and downtown Richmond Hill (Yonge Street between Major Mackenzie Drive and Elgin Mills). The Town is also commencing an update study of the Richmond Hill Centre.

The Region is embarking on a process to further enhance planning for the Centres and Corridors with respect to updating ROPA 43 policy. This framework was presented to Council in *Taking York Region Centres and Corridors Planning to the Next Level of Innovation and Implementation – A Framework, PEDC Report No. 11, 2008*.

## **3.2 Employment Intensification**

### **Employment Forecast Separated by Type**

The Employment Forecast is divided into three distinct types: Employment Land, Major Office and Population Related Employment.

*Employment Land Employment:* Located on Employment Lands (industrial or business parks) and typically required large areas of vacant Designated Greenfield land, preferably in strategic locations along major transportation routes (i.e. 400 series highways) and near existing markets.

*Major Office Employment:* Occurs in office buildings of 1,860 square metres (20,000 sqft) or larger. Policies in the *Growth Plan* attempt to direct the location of Major Office within the Built-up Areas along transit routes and in centres and corridors. Major Office employment does not typically require large vacant lands for development and can locate on both employment lands and within a community.

*Population-Related Employment:* Located within communities and includes services that serve the local population such as retail services, educational services, municipal government services, social, community and health services, and local office uses. Major Retail, which is also classified as population-related employment, is calculated separately and requires significant land in addition to land requirements for a typical new community.

Details of the methodology used to calculate potential employment intensification is contained in the *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report, January 2009*.

### Employment Lands within the Built-Up Area Anticipates 44,700 jobs.

The *Vacant Employment Land Inventory 2006*, presented in *PEDC Report No. 10, 2007*, was updated and used as the basis for determining the current supply of vacant designated lands available in the built-up area for employment land employment. The job potential from this inventory is derived by applying modified densities to the available supply taken from the *York Region Employment Land Areas Analysis, PEDC Report No. 5, 2008*. Further information on the Employment Land Employment methodology is included in the *York Region Land Budget Report, January 2009*.

**Table 3: York Region Employment Land Potential in the Built-Up Area by Area Municipality**

	Job Potential
Aurora	1,400
East Gwillimbury	500
Georgina	40
King	60
Markham	12,610
Newmarket	2,980
Richmond Hill	12,010
Vaughan	14,800
Whitchurch-Stouffville	320
<b>York Region</b>	<b>44,720</b>

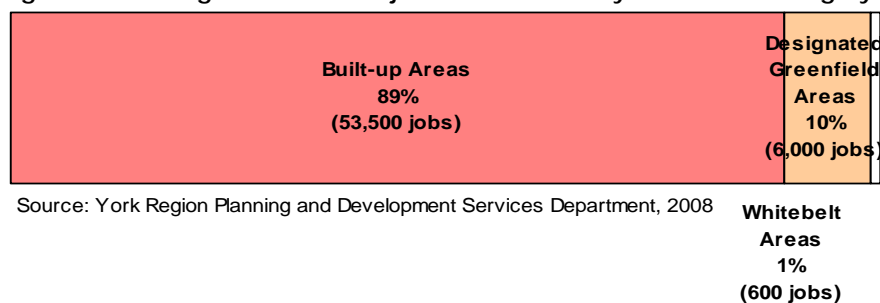
SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

As Table 3 illustrates, an analysis of employment land employment growth potential in the built-up areas indicates that over 44,700 jobs can be counted as intensification. This number of jobs is expected to occupy approximately 26% of the employment land potential within the Region.

### Major Office Employment within the Built-up Area Anticipates 53,500 jobs.

The *York Region Land Budget Report, January 2009*, assumes that a portion of major office growth will expand upon existing major office locations on employment lands and also assumes a significant increase in major office employment along the Regional Centres and Corridors. It is anticipated that large numbers of major office employment will locate within the Region's four urban growth centres over the next 25 year period of the forecast.

**Figure 3: York Region 2006-31 Major Office Growth by Land Area Category**



Source: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008

Figure 3 illustrates that approximately 89% or 53,500 jobs of the Region's growth of major office employment is within the built-up area. According to the *York Region Land Budget Report, January 2009*, the Region is forecasted to add an additional 60,080 major office jobs within 1,514,000 square metres of total major office space by 2031.

The land budget exercises assumes that approximately 57% or 192 net hectares of land required for forecasted major office growth will locate predominately in regional centres and corridors between 2006 and 2031. In addition:

- The majority of major office growth is anticipated to locate in the Town of Markham, the Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Vaughan. A large proportion of the major office growth will be directed to the Regional Centres of each of these municipalities.
- 80% of Markham major office growth on employment lands is assumed to locate in the built-up areas.
- 100% of Vaughan major office growth on employment lands is assumed to locate in the built-up areas.
- The Town of Newmarket's major office growth will be focused in the Regional Centres and the area surrounding the Southlake Regional Health Centre.
- The Town of East Gwillimbury detailed official plan review identifies the area adjacent to the existing GO Train Stations as a potential location for major office.

### Population Related Employment within the Built-up Area Anticipates 40,000 jobs

According to the *York Region Land Budget Report, February 2009*, Population Related Employment occurs in step with the population growth in communities. Table 4 indicates that approximately 40,050 population-related employment will occur within the Region's built-up area by 2031.

**Table 4: Population Related Employment Growth within the Built-up Area by Area Municipality (2006-31)**

	Job Potential
Aurora	1,870
East Gwillimbury	290
Georgina	1,090
King	280
Markham	11,180
Newmarket	2,770
Richmond Hill	9,940
Vaughan	11,220
Whitchurch-Stouffville	1,410
<b>York Region</b>	<b>40,050</b>

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

The population related employment forecasted for the built-up areas is based on the portion of residential growth anticipated to occur in the built-up area.

## Total Employment Intensification Anticipated to be 42%

Table 6 summarizes total employment within the regional built-up area.

**Table 5: Total Employment Intensification by Type (2006-31)**

	Job Potential	Built-up Area (%)
Employment Land Employment	44,710	26%
Major Office	53,500	89%
Population Related Employment	40,050	41%
<b>Total Jobs in Built-up Area</b>	<b>138,260</b>	<b>42%</b>
Total Jobs in Greenfield Areas	124,800	38%
Total Jobs in Whitebelt Areas	67,360	20%

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify intensification areas that can accommodate employment in keeping with the Region’s Employment Forecast.

### 3.3 Urban Growth Centres

#### The Region’s Urban Growth Centres Planned for more than 200 people and jobs per hectare

The Provincial *Growth Plan* stipulates a target of 200 people and jobs per hectare applies to the provincially-defined urban growth centres of Newmarket, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. This target applies to the entire gross area of the urban growth centres which includes all developable and non-developable lands. In November 2008, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure released the final size and location of the urban growth centres. This document states that the precise boundaries of the urban growth centres will be delineated in Regional and Local Official Plans. The document also states that these boundary adjustments should be minor and necessary in nature to the size and location of the provincially-defined size and location. The Region, in collaboration with the Local Municipalities, is clarifying the scope of these adjustments with the Province.

Table 6 illustrates preliminary population and employment growth needed to achieve 200 people and jobs per gross hectare by 2031 in each of the Regional urban growth centres. The local municipalities will refine these estimates in their respective intensification strategies and official plan updates. It should be noted that the urban growth centre boundaries are a subset of the Regional Centre boundaries.

One of the primary goals of these intensification strategies is to emphasize mixed-use development and a strong live-work relationship in intensification areas. At a minimum,

the number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ the total labour force residing in that particular Regional Centre.

**Table 6: York Region Population and Employment Growth in the Urban Growth Centres (2006-2031)**

	Area (ha)	Population	Employment	Density (people & jobs/ha)
Markham	235	30,930	20,940	221
Newmarket	45	4,500	4,530	201
Richmond Hill	117	12,630	11,700	208
Vaughan	60	6,240	6,270	209

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, February 2009.

1. Population and employment figures represent growth required to meet Provincial Growth Plan target of 200 people and jobs per hectare

2. These figures are subject to change pending the completion of Local Municipal updates.

\*NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding

Given that the urban growth centres are contained within the boundaries of the Regional Centres, appropriate density targets will be established in lands adjacent to the Urban Growth Centres.

## 4.0 Key Attributes of Intensification Areas

Meeting the intensification and density targets specified in the Provincial *Growth Plan* and Regional policy are only one component in developing the built-up area and specific intensification areas. In creating complete communities, the Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas:

**York Region Key Attributes of Intensification Areas**

Attribute	Description
Mixed Use Development	Support a broad array of land uses including employment, shopping, entertainment, arts and culture, parks, schools and other community services.
Live/Work Balance	Support close live-work opportunities through the arrangement of land uses and accessibility to transit and transportation.
Physical Activity	Promote an active lifestyle with connected pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, parklands and a well-designed street network.
Built Form	Buildings and streets that are well-proportioned to one another. Established urban design and architectural standards to foster a sense of place that would appeal to existing and prospective residents.
Natural Heritage/Open Space	Protected natural heritage features. Public spaces that are varied, interconnected and accessible to all neighbourhoods. Public spaces that are interesting, carefully spaced and proportioned.
Housing Options	Broad mix and range of unit sizes, housing forms, types and tenure that satisfy the needs of the Region's residents and workers.
Human Services	People of all ages, background and capabilities meet their needs throughout various stages in their lives including opportunities for employment, learning, inclusivity, culture, recreation and spiritual, emotional physical and social well-being.
Culture	The Region's cultural heritage resources and values are recognized, conserved and promoted as a benefit to the community.

<b>Transit and Connections</b>	Provisions for efficient and effective higher order transit. Buildings and spaces in between transit stations are connected by sidewalks and other walkways.
<b>Traffic/Parking</b>	Innovation in parking provisions such as structured and underground parking, and municipal lots to maintain a pedestrian-friendly area.
<b>Energy Planning</b>	Accommodate any land requirements for community energy systems, alternative energy and energy efficient technologies.

Source: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008

These key attributes will be used in the implementation of the intensification strategies, as the Region and Local Municipalities continue to construct a long-term framework for a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors. These attributes will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.

## 5.0 Monitoring Progress

Section 5.4.3.3 of the *Growth Plan* states that “Municipalities will monitor and report on the implementation of this (Growth) Plan, in accordance with the guidelines developed by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal (now Energy and Infrastructure).” A regional intensification monitoring system will evaluate whether the key attributes and targets are being attained in a consistent fashion across all Local municipalities. Working with the Local Municipalities, the Region will develop a system to track progress on intensification using the local municipal strategies and the Regional intensification guide and strategy as a basis. The monitoring system will also contain a separate assessment for Regional Centres (i.e. Provincial Urban Growth Centres).

The regional monitoring system will track progress towards the local municipal assignments in terms of:

- Building permits for new units within the built boundary on an annual basis
- Development applications for potential units within the built boundary on an annual basis
- The Region’s Annual Survey of Employers

The Region will consult further with the Local Municipalities in developing the monitoring system. Once completed, the monitoring system will be incorporated into each of the local municipal intensification strategies.

## 6.0 Role of the Local Municipalities

**Each Local municipality in the Region has a role to play in meeting the Regional target of 40% intensification.**

The nature of this role will be captured in each of the local intensification strategies which the Local municipalities are in the process of completing. Using the Intensification Guide and in collaboration with the Region, the objectives of the local intensification strategies involve five objectives:

- Demonstrate how the Region's local municipal intensification assignment will be met in term of unit potential, density and design. Identify and map the locations and amount of intensification that will be planned for within the local municipality's built boundary by 2031.
- Identify the Key Attributes in creating high quality, sustainable compact communities.
- Promote communication to engage and raise awareness of intensification among stakeholders and the public.
- Identify the next steps to implement local municipal intensification strategies including reviewing current regional and municipal policy and conducting further detailed analysis on the identified intensification areas.
- Develop a monitoring system that tracks progress towards the intensification vision, key attributes and unit, population and employment targets.

The specific components of the local intensification strategy are contained in the Intensification Guide Report. The crux of the intensification strategies is not only to demonstrate conformity with the *Places to Grow Plan*, but also to construct a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors.

## 7.0 Conclusions and Observations

The *York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy Report* provides an analysis to achieve the Provincial *Growth Plan's* intensification target and requirements. This report represents a component of the comprehensive review required for the *Regional Official Plan* conformity exercise.

The following conclusions made from this analysis will be used as a basis for the Regional Official Plan policy:

- The *York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy* meets the requirements of the *Provincial Growth Plan*, the *Provincial Policy Statement* and other provincial initiatives.
- The York Region Principles of Intensification will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review. They provide a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres

and corridors. These principles speak to such themes as strengthening land-use, transit and pedestrian connections, integrating sustainable design and construction, providing public spaces and ensuring that buildings and streets are well-proportioned to each other.

- The Local Municipal Intensification Targets, as outlined in Table 1 will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The Region will plan to meet and/or exceed the estimated 90,700 new units required to achieve the 40% intensification target in the Provincial *Growth Plan*.
- The provincially-defined urban growth centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan are planned to meet and/or exceed the *Growth Plan* target of 200 people and jobs per gross hectare. To emphasize a strong live-work relationship, the number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ, at a minimum, the total labour force residing in the particular Regional Centre.
- Each Local Municipality will complete and adopt an intensification strategy. These strategies will use the Regional Intensification Matrix as a basis to identify key strategic areas where intensification can be best accommodated with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. It is expected that local municipalities will address intensification in every key strategic area of the Matrix Framework that includes:
  - Regional Centres and Corridors
  - GO Stations
  - Local Centres and Corridors
  - Other Major Corridors
  - Local Infill
  - Secondary Suites
- The Local Intensification Strategies will include targets for each locally-identified intensification area to meet their municipal intensification target based on the 90,700 unit target region-wide. It is expected that local municipalities will plan to meet and/or exceed these targets.
- To achieve the *Growth Plan's* concept of "complete communities" the Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas that will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review. The attributes focus on such areas as: transit-supportive and mixed-use development, housing options, live-work balance, built form and design, transit connections, natural heritage and public space, traffic and parking, energy planning and active lifestyles.
- Local municipalities, such as Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, are currently identifying key areas along Highway 7 and Yonge Street in which to focus mixed-use and transit-supportive development.
- Of the 90,700 required units, over 50,000 already have some level of approval. These applications are for communities within the built-up area, including the Regional Centres and Corridors. For example, a total of 34,500 units are already planned for in the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

- The *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report* indicates that approximately, 42% of the Region's total employment growth will occur within the built-up area by 2031, translating into an anticipated 138,000 potential new jobs.
- The 138,000 potential new jobs forecasted for the built-up area consist of an estimated:
  - 44,700 employment land employment
  - 53,500 major office employment
  - 40,050 population-related employment
- Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify intensification areas to accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.
- As specified in the *Growth Plan*, the Region is developing a monitoring system to track progress on intensification in collaboration with the Local Municipalities. Sources of information that are being considered for the system include: building permits, development applications and the Region's annual employment survey.

The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy represents another component in enhancing the planned urban structure and advancing the Region's "city-building" initiative. The purpose of the intensification strategy extends beyond demonstrating conformity with the *Growth Plan* to outlining a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact communities focusing on a system of Centres and Corridors.