

5

PROPOSED SIZE AND LOCATION OF URBAN GROWTH CENTRES IN THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE: TECHNICAL PAPER SPRING 2008

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated April 30, 2008, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this staff report to the local municipalities and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.
2. Regional staff, in consultation with the local municipalities, provide additional suggested revisions to the proposed Urban Growth Centres to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal as a follow-up to the pre-consultation conducted in 2007.
3. Regional staff report back to Council when the final Urban Growth Centres have been released and analyzed.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff report is to advise Council of the current status, size and location of the Urban Growth Centres based on the “*Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper Spring 2008*” released by Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) on April 2, 2008.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 THE PROVINCIAL GROWTH PLAN, “PLACES TO GROW”

The Provincial Growth Plan establishes a target of 200 people and jobs combined per gross hectare within each urban growth centre

In June 2006, the Province released the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006* which contained policies specific to the development of urban growth centres. They include:

- “The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, in consultation with municipalities that have urban growth centres, will determine the approximate size and location of

the urban growth centres.”

- “Municipalities will delineate the boundaries of urban growth centres in their official plans.”
- “Urban growth centres will be planned:
 - a) As focal areas for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.
 - b) To accommodate and support major transit infrastructure.
 - c) To serve as high density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses.
 - d) To accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth”.
- “Urban Growth Centres will be planned to achieve, by 2031 or earlier, a minimum gross density target of 200 residents and job combined per hectare”.

The Province’s *Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper Spring 2008* represents one of the next steps to assist in implementing the *Places to Grow* Plan.

In addition, the Province released the final revised built boundary for the Greater Golden Horseshoe concurrently with the proposed urban growth centres. A staff report on the final revised built boundary is a separate item on this Committee agenda.

3.2 REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Region has a number of initiatives to promote intensification and development in the Regional Centres

The Region has undertaken a number of initiatives to promote intensification in the Regional Centres and to enhance the planned urban structure. They include:

- *The Centres and Corridors Strategy*, 2004, 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 strengthens policies in the ROP regarding development in the Centres and Corridors.
- *The Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines*, adopted by Council in September 2006.
- *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 60)*, approved in February 2008, enables the Region to adopt Regional Community Improvement Plans and to participate in

local community improvement plans.

- In March 2008, Council adopted a plan to implement a policy to provide a 20-35% increase in servicing allocation for development proposals that meet LEED™ criteria in the Regional Centres and Corridors and Local Centres.
- In April 2008, Council endorsed the preliminary draft, *Enhancing York Region's Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Area Municipal Intensification Strategies* for review and comment by the local municipalities.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

On April 2, 2008, MPIR released the *Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper Spring 2008*. This paper represents another step in implementing the *Places to Grow* Plan. This section summarizes the key points of the technical paper and presents the proposed urban growth centres in Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

4.1 PROVINCIAL PRE-CONSULTATION, 2007

The Region and Area Municipalities worked together to submit proposed draft boundaries for the urban growth centres to Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR).

In mid-2007, MPIR commenced pre-consultation with the Region and the Area Municipalities to derive the general size and location of the urban growth centres in Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. As a result of this pre-consultation, the Region, along with the Area Municipalities, submitted to MPIR proposed draft boundaries. The MPIR proposed urban growth centres reflect the boundaries suggested by the Region and the Area Municipalities.

4.2 PROVINCIAL URBAN GROWTH CENTRE TECHNICAL PAPER: SPRING 2008

MPIR releases the proposed size and location of the urban growth centres for review and comment

The purpose of the technical paper is three-fold:

- To describe the importance of urban growth centres with the framework of the *Places to Grow* Plan.
- To summarize the *Places to Grow* Plan policies that support the establishment of urban growth centres.

- To outline the proposed size and location of each urban growth centre within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The key points contained in the Provincial technical paper include:

- *Attachment 1* contains the proposed size and location of the urban growth centres for Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
- The urban growth centre boundaries do not represent a new land-use designation and do not presuppose that any specific type of development will occur within that area.
- Once comments are received and reviewed, MPIR will finalize the approximate size and location of each urban growth centre in a subsequent document to be released at an unspecified time.
- The provincial urban growth centre boundaries are general in nature as municipalities will be responsible for delineating the precise boundaries in their official plans.

Table 1 lists the estimated size and existing density for each Regional Urban Growth Centre as described in the provincial technical paper. The density analysis is based on the 2001 Statistics Canada population and employment data. The provincial technical paper states that it is anticipated that 2006 Census employment and residential density figures will be released by Statistics Canada prior to the finalization of the urban growth centres size and location exercise.

Table 1
Approximate Size and Existing Density of the Proposed Urban Growth Centres
Based on Provincial Calculations

| Urban Growth Centre | Approximate Area (ha) | Approximate Existing 2001 Density (Jobs and People/ha) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Markham | 240 | 20 |
| Newmarket | 60 | 55 |
| Richmond Hill | 175 | 15 |
| Vaughan | 160 | 15 |

Source: Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Spring 2008.

As mentioned, the *Places to Grow Plan* states that urban growth centres will be planned to achieve by 2031 or earlier, a minimum gross density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare. The Markham Centre plan can be used as an illustration of the “look and feel” of this target density. It is anticipated that Markham Centre may likely exceed the 200 people and jobs/ha minimum density.

In addition, the calculated area of the MPIR proposed urban growth centres listed in Table 1 needs to be verified. For example, MPIR proposes 160 ha for the Vaughan Urban Growth Centre, however, it is suggested that this area may be less. Regional staff will verify this figure with staff at the City of Vaughan.

4.3 NEXT STEPS

The Region will consult with the affected Area Municipalities in reviewing the proposed size and location of the urban growth centres contained in the provincial technical paper. The Region will then submit comments to MPIR by the May 30, 2008 deadline in a consolidated format. Regional staff will report back to Council once comments have been finalized.

Once comments are reviewed, MPIR will finalize the approximate size and location of the urban growth centres in a subsequent document to be released at a later date. Regional staff will report back to Council once the final urban growth centres have been released and analyzed.

The Region continues the process of city-building with a focus on the Regional Centres and Corridors. This process includes working with the Area Municipalities to refine the preliminary draft *Enhancing York Region's Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Area Municipal Intensification Strategies*. Endorsed by Council in April 2008, this draft document refers specifically to provincial urban growth centres with respect to a methodology for measuring intensification, key attributes important to compact development and a monitoring system to track development.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The provincial *Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper Spring 2008* supports the Vision 2026 goal areas of "Managed and Balanced Growth". In addition, this paper also supports the "Healthy Communities" theme area of the *York Region Sustainability Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Region*.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The review and comment of the Province's urban growth centre technical paper, including area municipal consultation, is being conducted within the existing Planning and Development Services Department staff complement and within approved budget allocation.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The initial Urban Growth Centres were prepared in consultation with Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The Region will consult with the affected area municipalities in reviewing and commenting on the Provincial urban growth centre technical paper.

7. CONCLUSION

On April 2, 2008, the MPIR released the *Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper Spring 2008*. This paper represents another step towards implementing the Places to Grow Plan. The primary purpose of the technical paper is to propose the size and location of each urban growth centre within the Greater Golden Horseshoe as defined in the *Places to Grow Plan*. Concurrently, MPIR also released the final revised built boundary which is an item on this committee agenda.

The Province's proposed urban growth centres reflect the boundaries suggested by the Region and the Area Municipalities during the pre-consultation phase. The Region, in consultation with the affected area municipalities, will review the technical paper and the proposed size and location of the urban growth centres in Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The Region will then formally submit comments to MPIR in a consolidated format by the May 30, 2008 deadline.

The technical paper states that MPIR will review comments received on this technical paper and finalize the approximate size and location for each urban growth centre in a subsequent document at a later date. The technical paper clarifies that municipalities will then be responsible for delineating the precise boundaries of their respective urban growth centres in their official plans.

Regional staff will continue to consult with the area municipalities and MPIR, and will report back to Council when the final urban growth centres have been released and analyzed.

For more information on this report, please contact Dawn Seetaram, Planner at Ext. 1570, or John Waller, Director of Long Range and Strategic Planning at Ext. 1525.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is included with this report.)