

9

YORK REGION 2031 INTENSIFICATION STRATEGY

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

1. **Adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated January 15, 2009, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services; and**
2. **Staff amend section 4.1 under the Regional Corridors heading, fourth bullet, by removing the words “downtown Richmond Hill” and replacing “Major Mackenzie Drive” with “Harding Avenue” in the second sentence, as follows:**

“These include, Yonge/16th-Carrville Avenue and Yonge Street, between Harding Avenue and Elgin Mills.”

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council adopt the *York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy* that meets the requirements of the Provincial *Growth Plan*, the *Provincial Policy Statement* and other provincial initiatives.
2. The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy be used as a basis to update the Regional Official Plan and that the following 9 elements evolve into Regional Official Plan Policy:
 - I. The York Region “Principles of Intensification” be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.
 - II. The Local Municipal Intensification Targets, as outlined in *Table 1* of the staff report and the attached strategy, 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*.
 - III. 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 hectare.

- IV. Each Local Municipality will complete and adopt a Local Intensification Strategy that will use the Regional Intensification Matrix as a basis to identify key strategic areas to best accommodate intensification. Local Municipalities are expected to address intensification in each of the Matrix's key strategic areas which include:
 - Regional Centres and Corridors
 - GO Stations
 - Local Centres and Corridors
 - Other Major Corridors
 - Local Infill
 - Secondary Suites
 - V. The Local Intensification Strategies will include targets for each locally-identified intensification area to meet the municipal intensification targets. Local municipalities will plan to meet and/or exceed these local area targets.
 - VI. The Local Intensification Strategies and subsequently the Local Official Plans include a map of the locally-identified intensification areas.
 - VII. The Local Intensification Strategies plan for employment within the built-up area and identify the intensification areas that will accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.
 - VIII. The York Region "Key Attributes of Intensification Areas" be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.
 - IX. The Region, in collaboration with the Local Municipalities, use various planning tools to implement intensification such as Sections 28 and 37 of the Planning Act.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Local Municipalities for information purposes.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an analysis of the Region's ability to achieve the *Growth Plan's* intensification target. This report is a key part of the Region's *Places to Grow* conformity exercise.

3. BACKGROUND

PROVINCIAL *GROWTH PLAN* “PLACES TO GROW”

The Province Requires a Regional Intensification Strategy as part of the “Places to Grow” Conformity Exercise

In 2006, the Ontario Government released a *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Places to Grow*. The *Growth Plan* guides decisions on issues related to transportation, infrastructure, planning and 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.

With respect to intensification, the *Growth Plan* stipulates that:

- By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40 percent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper- and single-tier municipality will be within the built-up area.
- A density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031 or earlier applies to urban growth centres, specifically in the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

The *Growth Plan* also 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 comprehensive review required for the Region’s *Official Plan* conformity exercise.

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.
- Identifies the appropriate type and scale of development and sets targets for employment and residential growth in intensification areas, urban growth centres, major transit station areas and intensification corridors.

YORK REGION POLICY CONTEXT

York Region Continues to Enhance the Planned Urban Structure.

The *Regional Official Plan (ROP)* outlines a regional structure that includes a system of centres and corridors that act as a focus for residential, office and commercial development. Further initiatives that the Region has undertaken to promote and measure intensification served by rapid transit include:

- The Region's *Centres and Corridors Strategy, 2004*, 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), 2005*, 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 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.
- 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 *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 in February 2008, enables the Region to adopt Regional Community Improvement Plans and to participate in local community improvement plans.
- In March 2008, Regional Council adopted a plan to implement a policy to provide a 20-40% increase in servicing allocation for development proposals that meet specific criteria that include, among others:
 - Minimum LEEDTM silver standard (Gold standard developments are eligible for a 40% increase in servicing allocation).
 - Location within a Regional Centre or Corridor, or Local Centre
 - Meet the Regional Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines.
- Council endorsed the preliminary draft release of "*Enhancing York Region's Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Local Municipal Intensification Strategies*" in

PEDC, Report No. 5, 2008. This Guide provides a high level framework to guide the completion of the Local Municipal Intensification Strategies.

The Region's 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*, but also outlines a long-term framework of creating a new generation of sustainable and quality compact communities focusing on the Centres and Corridors.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 THE REGION'S INTENSIFICATION FORECAST 2006-2031

The crux of the 2031 Intensification Strategy 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 York Region Principles of Intensification which were included in the draft Intensification Guide endorsed by Council in PEDC, Report No. 5, 2008. These principles are recommended for Council adoption for the ROP 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.***

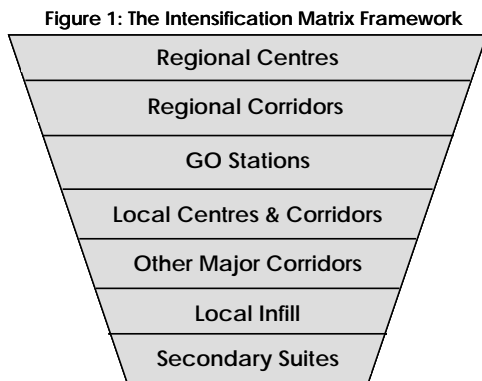
The *Growth Plan* minimum Target of 40% Intensification translates into 90,700 new residential units by 2031

An estimated 90,700 new units are required within the provincially-defined built boundary to achieve the *Growth Plan*'s 40% intensification target for residential development by 2031. It is expected that the Region will plan to meet and/or exceed the 40% target. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of this figure 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 Report, PEDC Report No. 8, 2008*.

An estimated 16,700 single detached and semi-detached units are being planned for within the built-up areas that are located across the Region in planned communities such as Cathedral and Box Grove in Markham, Newmarket Southeast in Newmarket, Kleinburg in Vaughan and within various secondary plans on the fringe of the built boundary. These units are primarily single- and semi-detached units and are not considered to be intensification and are not part of the 90,700 unit requirement.

Local Municipalities will Identify Intensification Areas using 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.

Regional Centres and Corridors relative to other key strategic areas.

Table 1

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

	Intensification Units (1)
Aurora	3,200
East Gwillimbury	1,000
Georgina	2,700
King	920
Markham	31,500
Newmarket	5,300
Richmond Hill	14,700
Vaughan	29,300
Whitchurch-Stouffville	2,100
York Region	90,700

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department,
1. Includes rows, mid- and high-rise units, duplexes and secondary suites.

*NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding.

The Intensification Matrix Framework, shown in Figure 1, identifies the 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 are expected to occur in the

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.

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, including Regional Centres and Corridors. For example, a total of 34,500 units are already planned for in the Regional Centres alone.

Regional Corridors

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/16th-Carrville 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 Local Municipalities are currently completing their local intensification strategies that will identify and map the areas that can best accommodate intensification and where it will not be permitted.

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.*

Total Regional Employment Intensification Anticipated to be 42% or 138,200 jobs by 2031

Table 2
Total Employment Intensification by Type (2006-31)

	Job Growth Potential	Built-up Area (%)
Employment Land Employment	44,700	26%
Major Office	53,500	89%
Population Related Employment	40,100	41%
Total Growth in Built-up Area	138,300	42%
Total Growth in Greenfield Areas	124,800	38%
Total Growth in Whitebelt Areas	67,400	20%

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

The Employment Forecast for 2031 is separated into three distinct types: Employment Land, Major Office and Population Related Employment. Table 2 demonstrates that 42% of the Region’s total employment growth will occur within the built-up area by 2031 which translates into approximately 138,000 potential 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.

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

Table 3 illustrates the Region’s capability to plan to meet and/or exceed the *Growth Plan* target of 200 people and jobs per hectare within the urban growth centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. These urban growth centre boundaries are a subset of the Regional Centre boundaries. The 2031 targets presented in Table 3 are preliminary pending the completion of the local municipal intensification strategies and various study updates. The Region and Local Municipalities recognize that the urban growth centres have capacity to accommodate intensification beyond the 2031 planning horizon of the *Growth Plan*.

Table 3
York Region Population and Employment Growth in the Urban Growth
Centres (2006-2031)

	Area (ha)	Total Population	Total 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 the Provincial Growth Plan target of 200 people and jobs per hectare.

2. Figures are subject to change pending the completion of local municipal updates.

*NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding

One of the primary goals of the intensification strategy is to emphasize mixed-use development and a strong live-work relationship in intensification areas. At a minimum, in the Regional Centres, the number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ the total labour force residing in that particular Centre.

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.

4.2 KEY ATTRIBUTES OF INTENSIFICATION AREAS

In creating complete communities, the Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas to create complete communities.

These attributes, which are recommended for Council adoption, focus on the following areas:

- Mixed-use Development
- Live-work Balance
- Active Lifestyles
- Built Form and Design
- Natural Heritage and Public Space
- Housing Options
- Human Services and Culture
- Transit Connections
- Traffic and Parking
- Energy Planning

These attributes will be used in implementing the regional and local intensification strategies to guide the creation of a new generation of sustainable and quality compact

development focused on the centres and corridors. The detailed description of the key attributes is contained in the attached Intensification Strategy.

4.3 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).” The Region is developing a monitoring system to track progress on intensification in collaboration with the Local Municipalities. The monitoring system will also contain a separate assessment for Regional Centres (i.e. Urban Growth Centres). Staff are considering the following sources of information:

- Building permits for new units within the built-up area on an annual basis.
- Development applications for potential units within the built-up areas on an annual basis.
- The Region’s Annual Survey of Employment.

4.4 REGIONAL OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE

A Section on Intensification will be included in the Update to the Regional Official Plan

A separate section on intensification will be prepared in the *Regional Official Plan* update that will conform to the Provincial Growth Plan and Regional Council policies and programs. This will include:

- Local Municipal Intensification Assignments, contained in *Table 1*, that distribute the Region’s target of 90,700 new units to meet a minimum region-wide target of 40% intensification by 2015 and each year thereafter.
- An update to *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 43)*, Centres and Corridors, to enhance the policies for the development of the Region’s system of centres and corridors within the urban envelope that provide a focus for intensification opportunities, mixed-use development and live-work opportunities.
- The updated employment forecast by employment land, major office and population-related employment within the built-up area.
- Planning for meeting and/or exceeding a target of 200 people and jobs per hectare in the Region’s four urban growth centres including the population and employment targets for 2031.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The Intensification Strategy supports the Vision 2026 goal areas of “Housing Choices for our Residents”, “Managed and Balanced Growth” and “Infrastructure for a Growing Region”. In addition, the Intensification Strategy also supports the “Healthy Communities” theme area of the *York Region Sustainability Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Region*.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The forecasted growth for the Region will require investment in transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure and human services. The Region is currently undertaking a detailed fiscal impact assessment and economic implications analysis for the population and employment forecast and land budget which includes the intensification forecast and requirements.

Given that there is a limited market for compact development within the Region, it is important to direct this form of development to key strategic areas serviced by the public and rapid transit network, and planned TTC subway extensions, to ensure financial efficiencies in infrastructure investments. By locating the highest densities in these areas, the market for transit ridership can be maximized and capital costs can be better recovered on a long-term basis.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

How intensification will occur is based on the Local Municipal Intensification Strategies

Each Local Municipality has a role to play in meeting the Regional target of 40% intensification. The nature of the 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, these local intensification strategies will involve:

- Demonstrating how the local municipal intensification assignment will be met in terms of unit potential, density and design.
- Identifying and mapping the locations and amount of intensification that will be planned for within the built-up area by 2031. Local Municipalities will plan to meet and/or exceed these amounts.
- Identifying the key attributes in creating high quality and sustainable compact communities.

The complete listing of intensification strategy objectives are contained in the attached Intensification Strategy.

Local municipal planning has already identified over 50,000 units including Regional Centres. Detailed planning work is underway to identify additional intensification areas and their potential based on the Regional matrix framework.

Local Municipal Collaboration is Key to Implementing Intensification Consistently Region-Wide

The Municipal Technical Advisory Committee was established to provide input into the Region's Growth Management program and continues to act as a conduit for completing all intensification work. The most recent meeting of this committee was held in December 2008.

The Region also held a local municipal working session in June 2008 where a number of issues were discussed associated with implementing intensification and completing the local intensification strategies.

7. CONCLUSION

The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy meets the requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement and other provincial initiatives. The Intensification Strategy will also be used as a basis for the Regional Official Plan update. This includes:

- The Region plans to meet and/or exceed the estimated 90,700 new units required within the provincially-defined built boundary to achieve the *Growth Plan's* 40% intensification target for residential development by 2031. The Local Municipal Assignments, as outlined in *Table 1*, will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan*.
- The Local Municipalities will complete and adopt a Local Intensification Strategy that will identify and map the areas best able to accommodate intensification and its amount, as well as where it will not be permitted. The distribution of the 90,700 units will include every key strategic area in the Intensification Matrix Framework to avoid unplanned and dispersed intensification.
- The Region plans to meet and/or exceed the *Growth Plan* target of 200 people and jobs per hectare in each of the provincially-defined urban growth centres in Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. It is expected that, at a minimum in the Regional Centres, the number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ the total labour force residing in that particular Centre.

- With respect to employment intensification, 42% of the Region's total employment growth will occur within the built-up area by 2031 which translates into approximately 138,000 potential new jobs. The employment forecast includes employment land, major office and population-related employment. Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify the intensification areas that will accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.
- In addition, the Region has developed "Principles of Intensification" and identified key attributes of intensification that will be used to implement intensification and the *Growth Plan's* concept of "complete communities". These will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.

The Region's 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*, but also outlines a long-term framework of creating a new generation of sustainable and quality compact communities focusing on the Centres and Corridors.

For more information on this report, please contact Paul Bottomley, Manager of Growth Management, Economy and Information Research at (905) 830-4444, Ext. 1530 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.)