



May 30, 2008

Mr. Brad Graham
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ontario Growth Secretariat
Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal
777 Bay St., 4th Floor, Suite 425
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Mr. Graham:

Re: York Region Comments on the “*Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper, Spring 2008*”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Province’s “*Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper, Spring 2008*”, released on April 2, 2008. This letter contains consolidated comments on the technical paper from the Region and its affected area municipalities: Town of Markham, Town of Newmarket, Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Vaughan.

Overall, the proposed size and location of the urban growth centres reflect discussions with staff from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal during the pre-consultation stage in 2007. The following outlines questions and comments specific to each Area Municipality.

Town of Markham

The technical paper’s proposed general urban growth centre boundaries for Markham reflect the discussions held with MPIR staff and the Region during the pre-consultation stage. At its meeting of May 13, 2008, Markham Council directed staff to comment to York Region and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal in regard to the following matters:

1. Markham Council expressed the concern that the proposed boundary does not include any of the lands comprising the portion of the Markham Centre Planning District, east of the CNR Line to Kennedy Road. These lands are located around the existing GO station which has also been identified as a Major Transit Interchange/Potential Gateway Hub and potential Anchor Hub in the Metrolinx work. Recognizing that a function of Urban Growth Centres, and Regional Centres identified in the Regional Official Plan, is to

accommodate and support major transit infrastructure and investment, Markham Council feels that some lands around the station/hub should be incorporated into the proposed UGC boundary. Appendix 1 shows the additional lands proposed to be added to the Markham Centre UGC.

2. Markham Council takes the position that the portrayal of the UGC as a tone, rather than as an outline boundary, incorporates lands within the Rouge River Valley which are not intended by the Growth Plan, for development. Council would prefer that the valley lands not be portrayed as part of the UGC in this manner.
3. Markham Council seeks confirmation from the Region and the Ministry that the determination of the Markham Centre UGC Boundary by the MPIR will not preclude any future commitment of infrastructure funding, or the ability to take advantage of other financial policy or senior government investment initiatives, that could support development in other parts of Markham Centre, not located within the UGC boundary as defined by the MPIR.

The Markham Council resolution on this subject is also contained in Appendix 1.

Town of Newmarket

The general size of the Newmarket Urban Growth Centre proposed in the Provincial technical paper is estimated at 60 hectares. The Region and Town suggest that this UGC area be adjusted as attached in Appendix 3a, which includes removing part of the lands north of Davis Drive. This area would, in turn, reduce the Newmarket UGC from 60 hectares to 45 hectares which was the Region and the Town's proposed UGC boundary submitted to MPIR during the pre-consultation phase.

The Town of Newmarket notes that a larger urban growth centre area would make it more difficult to achieve this target across the urban centre and may have the cascade effect of permitting a population that is beyond the Town's population target of 98,000 persons. The Town notes that the Region modified the Newmarket Official Plan to include a place-holder policy that can amend this population number.

The Town of Newmarket also notes that the Provincial technical paper indicates various green spaces surrounding the urban growth centre that are not consistent with the Town's 2006 Official Plan. The Province should verify the green spaces by cross-referencing the appropriate land uses in Schedule A – Land Use Plan to the Town of Newmarket's 2006 Official Plan which is contained in Appendix 3b.

Town of Richmond Hill

Detailed discussions between staff of the Town of Richmond Hill and York Region have resulted in a slightly revised boundary that incorporates the west side of Yonge Street and moves the northern boundary to just north of Bantry Avenue. These revisions reflect the planning of a

significant inter-modal gateway, as well as the recently proposed extension of the Yonge subway to the Richmond Hill Centre. The revised boundary is attached as Appendix 4.

York Region and Richmond Hill are concerned about the Hwy. 7 and 407 corridor and the hydroelectric transmission corridor lands that run through the Richmond Hill/Langstaff UGC. As you know, this Corridor is approximately 500 metres wide representing an extensive area of land that is sterilized from future development. In this respect, achieving the density target in this UGC will be onerous given the technical calculation of 200 people and jobs per gross hectare. Richmond Hill Staff would prefer that corridor lands, which cannot develop, not be included (or be credited) as part of the gross land area calculation to meet the Province's required 200 people/jobs per hectare density target.

City of Vaughan

The general size and location of the technical paper's proposed size and location of the urban growth centre reflect discussions held with Ministry, Regional and Municipal staff during pre-consultation. Additional comments include:

- The estimated area indicated for the Vaughan Urban Growth Centre (160 ha.) is well in excess of its actual area. The urban growth centre coincides with the Vaughan Corporate Centre Node, as defined by Vaughan OPA 500. Both Regional and Municipal staff calculate the approximate area of the current Node to be 60 ha. The Node is the area intended to be intensively developed in recognition of its close proximity to the planned subway station on Highway 7, and higher order transit service planned along Highway 7. The balance of the Vaughan Corporate Centre, known as the 'District' surrounding the Node in OPA 500, will be less intensively developed.
- With regard to the open space shown on page 61 of the technical paper in the vicinity of the northeast quadrant of Highway 400 and Highway 7. Open Space is identified in the Legend as including public and private parks, cemeteries, golf courses and utility corridors. The open space shown seems to be based on outdated information. This area was once home to a driving range and a nine hole golf course for many years. Although part of this area remains zoned for open space, the golf course/range use ceased its operation in the mid to late 90's. The lands are currently vacant and are designated "Corporate Centre District" by the Corporate Centre Secondary Plan - OPA 500. Therefore, the open space shown at this location should be deleted.

The City of Vaughan plans to carry out an update study of the Corporate Centre that includes assessing whether the size of the Node/UGC should be enlarged beyond the planned Ring Road. The area within the Node/UGC was originally defined so as not to be too large (e.g. not as large as Scarborough Town Centre, or Mississauga City Centre) in order to ensure a concentration of development in close proximity to planned transit services.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Province's "*Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Technical Paper, Spring 2008*". I would also like to take the opportunity to commend Ministry staff for their thoroughness and professionalism during this consultation process. We would be pleased to further discuss the comments contained in this letter with you. Please feel to contact myself or John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning at 905-830-4444 extension 1525.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Bryan Tuckey MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Planning and Development Services

BT/ds

Attachment: Appendix 1: Markham Proposed UGC Addition and Council Resolution
 Appendix 2: York Region Receipt of Markham Council Resolution
 Appendix 3a: York Region Proposed Newmarket UGC, Pre-Consultation
 Appendix 3b: Schedule A – Land Use Plan, Town of Newmarket Official Plan
 Appendix 4: Richmond Hill/Langstaff Urban Growth Centre - Revised

Copy to: John Waller, Director of Long Range and Strategic Planning, York Region
 Jim Baird, Commissioner of Planning Services, Town of Markham
 Susan Plamondon, Commissioner of Planning, Town of Newmarket
 Ana Bassios, Commissioner of Planning, Town of Richmond Hill
 John Zipay, Commissioner of Planning, City of Vaughan