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PROPOSED FINAL BUILT BOUNDARY FOR THE GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE, 2006: FALL 2007 TECHNICAL PAPER

(Mayor Black declared a pecuniary interest in this report in that a client of her law firm may have an interest in the matter. Mayor Black did not participate in the consideration, discussion or vote on this matter.)

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated November 28, 2007, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to local municipal planning heads, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
2. Staff, in consultation with local municipal staff, be directed to provide the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal suggested revisions to the proposed final built boundary.
3. Staff report back to Committee when the final built boundary has been released and analyzed.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the current status and delineation of the built boundary based on the *Proposed Final Built Boundary for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006: Fall 2007 Technical Paper* and updated mapping released by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (PIR) on November 20, 2007.

The method used to create the built boundary as outlined in this updated technical paper is considered to be final. However, limited revisions to the boundary will be permitted within the parameters of the methodology.

3. BACKGROUND

On January 16, 2006, PIR released the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan includes policies which support the development of more compact, vibrant, transit-supportive communities.

One of the key policies of the Growth Plan is that “by the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper- and single-tier municipality will be within the *built-up area*.”

The *built-up area* is defined as “all land within the built boundary”.

On November 27, 2006 PIR released the *Technical Paper on a Proposed Methodology for Developing a Built Boundary for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* which included preliminary mapping of the built-up area. Comments on the methodology were due to PIR by January 19, 2007 and comments on the preliminary mapping were due Spring 2007.

On January 10, 2007 staff presented a staff report to Committee identifying six key issues with the proposed methodology:

1. All Regional Centres should be included in the built-up area
2. All Parkway Belt West Lands should be included in the built-up area
3. Cornell Centre should be included in the built-up area
4. Edges of the boundary that are uneven or jagged should be largely contiguous and delineated by a clear boundary aligned with recognizable features.
5. Donut Holes, or pockets of unbuilt areas surrounded by built-up areas, should be included in the built-up area.
6. Unbuilt areas that have been erroneously identified as built-up should be removed from the built-up area.

Committee recommended that staff consult with local municipal staff prior to the Regional Chair submitting comments to PIR.

Local municipal staff were consulted and comments were forwarded to PIR on January 19, 2007. In addition to regional comments, comments from the municipalities of East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Markham, Newmarket and Vaughan were included in the package.

In January 2007 regional staff received a GIS preliminary draft of the built boundary. All local municipalities were also contacted by PIR and had the opportunity to obtain this digital data. PIR requested that regional staff coordinate comments amongst all municipalities.

From February to May 2007 regional staff met with staff from each of the nine local municipalities to co-ordinate the suggested revisions to the boundary. The suggested consolidated revisions were then forwarded to PIR for their consideration.

In July 2007 Planning Commissioner Tuckey sent a letter to PIR Assistant Deputy Minister Brad Graham providing additional rationale for the inclusion of Cornell Centre in the built-up area (*Attachment 1*).

In November 2007 PIR ADM Brad Graham wrote to Commissioner Tuckey advising that the lands within Cornell Centre do not meet the criteria for inclusion within the built boundary as they were not built as of June 2006 (*Attachment 2*).

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The updated built boundary methodology and mapping addresses many of the issues identified in the January 2007 staff report. Comments in this report are based on the small scale map provided with the print version of the methodology (*Attachment 3*). A more detailed analysis, based on the digital mapping (*Attachment 4*) will be conducted in consultation with local municipal staff.

4.1 Regional Centres

The preliminary draft of the Built Boundary did not include Markham Centre. All Regional Centres are now included in the built-up area.

4.2 Parkway Belt West Lands

The preliminary draft Built Boundary did not include many of the lands within the Parkway Belt West. The updated boundary includes the vast majority of the lands, with the exception of the unbuilt areas to the extreme east and west of the Region.

4.3 Cornell Centre

Regional staff and Town of Markham staff strongly support the inclusion of Cornell Centre in the built-up area. As outlined in Attachment 1, the inclusion of Cornell Centre is a key component of the Region's planned urban structure and it should be included in the built-up area based on local municipal, regional and provincial policy initiatives.

The updated boundary includes some small portions of the Centre; however, the majority of it has not been identified as built-up. This oversight by PIR is counterintuitive to the Region's and Town's efforts to build a compact, vibrant, transit-supportive community. As such, it is staffs intention to include Cornell Centre in all intensification calculations despite the fact that it is not included in the Provincial built-up area.

4.4 Edges

In general, there has been a smoothing of the edges of the boundary in the updated mapping. However, there continues to be some uneven and jagged edges in high growth areas.

The updated methodology specifies that “structures that had a foundation prior to June 16, 2006 are generally considered built”. At the time of our initial analysis we were under the impression the structure must have roof to be considered built. This updated, more lenient requirement may allow for some minor smoothing of the edges of the boundary.

The updated methodology also provides that when PIR was unable to obtain information on the precise location of built structures within a registered plan that the entire plan is included if it was estimated by the municipality that the majority of the plan (> 50%) was built prior to June 16, 2006. Likewise, if it is estimated that if less than fifty per cent of the plan was built prior to June 16, 2006 the plan would be excluded. This rule does not automatically apply in York Region because we have more detailed information on the precise location of built structures. Nonetheless, it may be of value to request the application of this rule in order to facilitate the smoothing of edges and to simplify monitoring in the long-term.

4.5 Unbuilt Holes in the Built-up Area

The updated methodology has increased the size of groups of unbuilt parcels that are completely surrounded on all sides by built parcels that can be included in the built-up area from 6.25 ha to 37.5 ha. This more permissive approach has resulted in many of the donut holes throughout the region being considered built-up.

4.6 Unbuilt Areas

All areas that were identified as unbuilt have been removed from the built-up area.

The updated methodology also provides that smaller, unserviced or partially serviced settlement areas which have limited capacity to accommodate significant future growth are represented by a dot because a line will not be required for monitoring purposes. It is notable that Pepperlaw is represented by a line despite the local municipal request for its removal. Staff will draw the Province's attention to this technical error.

4.7 Next Steps

PIR has indicated that minor revisions to proposed built boundary, within the parameters of the methodology, will be considered.

Regional staff will conduct a detailed review of the digital version of the boundary and analyze the differences between the updated boundary and the suggested revisions forwarded to PIR in consultation with local municipal staff. Also, the updated boundary will be reviewed against the updated methodology for consistency. Comments generated through this evaluation will be consolidated and forwarded PIR for their consideration.

4.8 Relationship to Vision 2026

The final built boundary will have direct impacts on the form, structure and density of new residential development in the long term. The impact on new development will in turn speak to many of the Vision 2026 goal areas, including Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture; Responding to the Needs of our Residents; Housing Choice for our Residents; Managed and Balanced Growth; and Infrastructure for a Growing Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the built boundary methodology and mapping proposed by PIR. Financial implications associated with growth management and intensification will be reported on at a later date.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Defining the built boundary is one component of the Region's comprehensive growth management exercise that also includes developing revised local municipal forecasts, a land budget exercise, an intensification strategy, updates to the Region's infrastructure master plans and a fiscal impact analysis. Regional staff have consulted extensively with local municipal staff throughout this process.

Intensification units will account for 40% of all growth units at the Regional scale from 2015 on. The final delineation of the built boundary will determine the total built-up area for each local municipality. This information will be used as input in the assignment of local municipal intensification targets. Regional staff will work closely with local municipal staff in the refinement of the built up areas.

7. CONCLUSION

The Province has finalized the methodology for determining the built boundary. Overall the built boundary methodology outlined by PIR is sound. The methodology allows for a consistent evaluation of the built-up areas across the GGH.

The Province has addressed many of the consolidated suggested revisions forwarded to them by regional staff and have incorporated them into the built boundary.

The method used to create the updated built boundary as outlined in this technical paper is considered to be final. However, limited further revisions to the boundary will be permitted within the parameters of the methodology.

The most significant requested revision that PIR did not incorporate into the boundary was the request for the inclusion of Cornell Centre. It is the Region's contention that this decision is counterintuitive and does not support the Town's, Region's and Province's vision for compact, vibrant, transit-supportive communities. As such, it is the Region's intention to include Cornell Centre in all intensification calculations despite the fact that it is not included in the Provincial built-up area.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with staff of each local municipality and will forward further suggested revisions to the built boundary to the Province for their consideration. A second round of local municipal consultations will be initiated in winter 2008.

For more information on this report, please contact John Waller, Director Long Range and Strategic Planning at 905-830-4444 ext. 1525 or john.waller@york.ca.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The four attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)