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OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 34, TOWN OF AURORA

(Regional Council at its meeting on January 22, 2004, amended the foregoing Clause to include the following

Whereas on January 7, 2004, the Planning and Economic Development Committee considered a Planning and Development Services staff report on Official Plan Amendment No.34 and adopted the staff recommendation to approve the Amendment subject to two minor modifications;

And whereas on January 13, 2004, the Council of the Town of Aurora passed a motion to request that Regional Council modify OPA 34 to include a statement regarding the applicability of local Official Plan Amendment No. 48;

And whereas the statement would clarify the position of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, region and Town of Aurora that any new applications within the OPA 34 area shall conform to the requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan;

Now therefore be it resolved that, in addition to those modifications recommended by Planning and Economic Development Committee, the following statement be added to Section 1.1 (Introduction):

“It is noted that the lands subject to this Official Plan Amendment are also governed by Official Plan Amendment No. 48, regarding the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15 and 17 of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act.”

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The following communications be received:**
 - a) Brian MacEachern, dated January 6, 2004 and Evelina MacEachern, dated January 5, 2004, residents, Town of Aurora;**
 - b) Susan Walmer, Chairperson, Ratepayers of Aurora Yonge South, dated January 7, 2004;**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, December 10, 2003, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to approve Amendment No. 34 to the Official Plan of the Town of Aurora (*Attachment No. 1*), subject to the following modifications:
 - a) That all references to the Oak Ridges Moraine Area Implementation Guidelines be changed to The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan throughout Official Plan Amendment No. 34.
 - b) That “Ecological Buffers” be added as a new item “d)” of the General Environmental Policies of Section 6.1.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of the Town of Aurora’s Official Plan Amendment No. 34 (OPA 34), subject to modifications.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Location

The lands affected by OPA 34 are known as the Yonge Street South Urban Expansion Area (the Southwest Aurora lands) comprising approximately 600 ha (1,500 ac) in area. The lands form east and west blocks, on either side of Yonge Street, and are generally bounded by Bathurst Street and the Canadian National Railway on the west, Bayview Avenue on the east, Bloomington Road on the south and Vandorf Sideroad and Industrial Parkway South on the north.

3.2 Site Characteristics

The lands are characterised by rolling topography and largely developed with:

- estate homes on private services
- a gated golf course community
- the Beacon Hall Golf Course
- the Aurora Cemetery
- the Timberlane Tennis Club
- a number of institutional uses, including the offices of the Ontario Provincial Police, the York District Catholic School Board and the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources
- Cardinal Carter Secondary School
- the Blue Hills child centre
- the Willows nursing home.

The lands to the north and south are developed with existing low-density residential uses.

3.3 Description of OPA

OPA 34 comprises a mix of:

- approximately 563 existing and approved estate lot homes
- approximately 150 ha (371 ac) of lands designated for new development

- approximately 146 ha (360 ac) identified as environmental constraint areas, protected by appropriate designations within the plan.

The lands designated “Estate Residential”, “Private Open Space”, “Public Open Space”, “Major Institution”, “Minor Institution” and the lands designated “Cluster Residential” in the northeast portion of the planning area reflect existing or approved developments within the Southwest Aurora Lands. The background reports prepared in support of OPA 34 identify six potential development areas within the secondary plan involving a number of individual landowners. Development within those areas, including the design of servicing plans and the location of local roads, natural feature and environmental landform boundaries will proceed in accordance with the Block Plan (secondary plan) policies of OPA 34. The developable lands in those areas will comprise a mix of uses in accordance with the OPA’s land use Schedule “AA” (*Attachment 1*).

3.4 History

3.4.1 OPA 17

In 1995 the Town of Aurora undertook a growth management study to determine its growth needs and to identify future expansion areas. In 1996, the Town of Aurora adopted and the Regional Municipality of York approved Official Plan Amendment No. 17 (OPA 17), the implementing OPA of the Town’s Growth Management Study. The Study identified three (3) expansion areas, being areas 2B and 2C in northeast Aurora and the OPA 34 lands.

3.4.2 Ontario Municipal Board Appeals

The secondary plan process for the Southwest Aurora lands was completed in the Spring of 2000. On July 25, 2000, the Town adopted OPA 34. In October 2000 an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing was held pertaining to appeals relating to two properties located within the OPA 34 area, both having been submitted prior to the adoption of the OPA. These appeals were filed by James Elder (owner of approximately 8 hectares of land) and The South Aurora Land Owner’s Group (SALOG) (owners of approximately 57 hectares of land) respectively. The Region did not process the adopted OPA 34 at that time knowing that the OMB hearing was pending and modifications to the Amendment document could result.

The Region’s role at the Hearing was to work towards ensuring that the two individual proposals fit into the comprehensive framework envisioned by the Town’s and Region’s respective Official Plans. It was the Region’s position that the developments should respect the “environment first” philosophy of OPA 34 and reflect development that is consistent with the existing uses. It was recognised that Aurora’s growth would be directed off the Moraine to the northeast (to the 2B and 2C areas identified through OPA 17).

The OMB approved the applications and the Order reflected the Region’s position on the proposed developments. The OMB also ordered the following modifications to OPA 34 as a result of evidence brought forward at the Hearing:

- incorporating a larger school site and neighbourhood park
- eliminating the provision of driveways, parking areas and roads within the landscaped setback from Yonge Street
- lowering the intensity of development adjacent to the existing residential areas along Ridge Road West and Yonge Street
- including additional open space areas to visually and functionally separate cluster residential areas
- including provisions that a more natural means of stormwater management, other than traditional ponds, be explored.

OPA 34 was revised by the Town to reflect the OMB's Order. The final modified version of the OPA was received by the Region for consideration on October 2, 2003. OPA 34, in its entirety, is now being recommended for approval, subject to two minor modifications.

3.5 Official Plan Designation

The lands subject to OPA 34 are designated "Urban Area" by Map 5 of the Regional Official Plan. The "Urban Area" designation envisions the development of the OPA 34 lands as an urban expansion area on full municipal services while promoting development patterns and densities that are in keeping with the local municipality's goals. OPA 34 is consistent with the Regional Official Plan.

The lands in the easterly portion of the Southwest Aurora lands, abutting Bayview Avenue, are identified as a "Connecting Link" in the Regional Greenlands System on Map 4 of the Regional Official Plan. This portion of the site has been designated "Environmental Protection Area" through OPA 34, consistent with the Regional Official Plan.

3.6 Servicing

3.6.1 Water and Wastewater Servicing

The provision of water and wastewater servicing for the Southwest Aurora lands was considered in June 2003 when servicing improvement measures were undertaken. Servicing allocations will be dealt with by the Town on a site-specific basis at the draft plan of subdivision stage.

3.6.2 Transportation

The long-term transportation needs in the vicinity of the Southwest Aurora lands include the widening of Bloomington Road and the widening of Bayview Avenue. Greater detail pertaining to the planned road improvements are included in Attachment 2 to this report.

3.7 Summary of Circulated Responses

3.7.1 Infrastructure Planning Comments

Two sets of comments were received from Infrastructure Planning staff of the Region's Transportation and Works Department on November 12, 2003. The first set of comments

pertain to the projected fiscal impact of OPA 34 on the Region's Transportation Network and the second set of comments pertain to the implications of the approval of OPA 34 on the Region's Quick Start transit initiative. The full comments received from the Transportation and Works Department are included in Attachment 2 to this report.

3.7.2 Forestry Branch Comments

Comments on OPA 34 were received from Forestry staff on November 14, 2003. Those comments pertain to how OPA 34 addresses the requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. The full comments received from the Forestry Branch are included in Attachment 2 to this report.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Designating the Southwest Aurora Lands for Growth

The land use patterns and policies of OPA 34 have gone through extensive consultation, including the OMB, and represent good planning. Key aspects of the plan are:

- An environment-first approach to land use
- Infilling is encouraged where appropriate
- Key natural features are being protected
- Cluster development is permitted around the features
- It reinforces Aurora's Growth Management Plan to reflect existing development patterns in southwest Aurora and to encourage more intensive uses in northeast Aurora off the Oak Ridges Moraine.

4.2 Compliance with the Region's Official Plan

The community building policies in Section 5.2 of the Regional Official Plan set out criteria by which new developments will be evaluated. Policy 5.2(7) specifies that new development areas within the identified urban areas on Map 5, shall be subject to the preparation of comprehensive secondary plans. Policy 5.2(7) also requires that a number of criteria be considered during the preparation of a secondary plan, the relevant criteria of which include the following:

- A secondary plan shall be prepared for a large, contiguous block of land.
- The area is to encompass more than one community.
- The development is to provide a range of housing types.
- The development is to provide a mix of land uses.
- The development is to incorporate the Regional Greenlands system into the plan including proposed trails that provide pedestrian links that provide access to publicly owned green spaces and parks.
- An environmental analysis is to be completed in conjunction with and in support of the secondary plan.
- The development is to incorporate a road system linked with the regional road system.

These criteria were substantially addressed by the preparation of the Southwest Aurora lands' secondary plan. The means by which these items were met are described in the following paragraphs.

a) A secondary plan is to be prepared for large contiguous blocks of land

The Southwest Aurora lands comprise approximately 600 ha (1,500 ac) of land separated into east and west blocks by Yonge Street. While the lands have been separated into two separate blocks, this test has been met by providing the land use and policy framework for the development of this large area.

b) The area is to encompass more than one community

The layout of the secondary plan is limited by: the separation of the lands into east and west blocks by Yonge Street; a golf course in the middle of the eastern block; a Canadian National Railway rail line along the westerly limits of the western block; and, a number of existing institutional and residential land uses throughout. This test has been met given that the Southwest Aurora lands will comprise a number of self-contained developments, each having individual characteristics and access points from the regional road network.

c) The development is to provide a range of housing types

The intent of this test has been met as the secondary plan provides a mix of residential development types. The provision of a primarily low density residential form of development on the Southwest Aurora lands is based on a philosophy to protect the natural environment while providing development patterns compatible and consistent with the existing developed areas in the vicinity. As mentioned above, the primary growth areas, as identified by the Town's growth management study, are located outside of the OPA 34 and Oak Ridges Moraine area in areas 2B and 2C respectively.

d) The development is to provide a mix of land uses

The land uses planned through the OPA 34 secondary plan comprise both existing and proposed residential, institutional and private recreation uses thereby meeting the intent of this test. The "environment-first" approach adopted by the Town resulted in the identification of four categories of natural lands in OPA 34 that are to be preserved; the environmental policies of the OPA are consistent with the policies of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Furthermore, the proposed cluster-style and transitional residential types in the secondary plan are compatible with the existing uses in and in the areas adjacent to the Southwest Aurora lands.

e) The development is to incorporate the Regional Greenlands system

Schedule "DD" (Trails and Vistas) of OPA 34 incorporates the information shown on Map 4 of the Regional Official Plan (the Regional Greenlands System) into the Secondary Plan and therefore meets this test. Schedule "DD" shows lands designated "Environmental Protection Area" reflecting where Map 4 envisions a "Connecting Link" and includes proposed trails that provide links to existing and future publicly owned green spaces and parks.

f) An environmental analysis is to be prepared to support the secondary plan

An environmental analysis was undertaken as part of secondary plan study by North-South Environmental Inc. That report examined the natural functions of the area and

identified and categorised the features so that they can be properly incorporated into the OPA and therefore meets this test. Schedule “AA” of OPA 34 (Land Use Plan) designates lands within the secondary plan “Environmental Protection Area”, “Environmental Function Area”, “Environmental Restoration Area” and “Ecological Buffer”. These land use designations are being imposed through OPA 34 in accordance with the findings of the environmental analysis.

g) The development’s road system is to be linked with the regional road system
The proposed configuration of the land uses in the secondary plan takes advantage of the existing local and regional road network and therefore meets the intent of this test. The secondary plan area has the benefit of abutting the regional roads of Yonge and Bathurst Streets, Bayview Avenue and Bloomington Road. The location and design of specific access points to the respective roads will be determined to the satisfaction of Transportation and Works staff during the review of site specific subdivision applications.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A summary fiscal impact review of the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan area indicates that the proposed development within the plan will not adversely impact the Regional tax rate (tax levy).

Transit improvements included in the Region’s current long term capital program for the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan area and vicinity will require the local bus service to be extended along Vandorf Sideroad to Bayview Avenue. In addition, York Region Transit ultimately proposes an express bus service along Bayview Avenue from Newmarket to South York Region within their long term service strategy, estimated at a total cost of \$0.6 million. The proposed development should generate transit development charge revenues of approximately \$1.0 million.

Additional water supply to service the Town of Aurora buildout, including this secondary plan will be available upon completion of the Aurora/Newmarket water supply project scheduled for 2006 at an estimated cost of \$30 million. Water servicing capacity for the full buildout of the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan, is dependent on allocation of capacity from the Town of Aurora. The proposed development should generate water development charge revenues of approximately \$2.5 million.

Based on the YDSS Master Plan Update, additional capacity to service the development in Aurora, including this proposed development will be available upon completion of the Aurora Equalization Tank in 2007 at an estimated cost of \$7.2 million. The Town of Aurora is responsible for allocating servicing capacity to this development area. The proposed development should generate wastewater development charge revenues of approximately \$2.5 million.

The Regional Transportation and Works Department, Infrastructure Planning Division has identified several capital projects that are required in the vicinity of Yonge Street

South Secondary Plan area. These include construction of several road widenings in the area currently planned to start in 2007. It should be noted that traffic related to this proposed secondary plan area is not the sole contributor to the future need for these major transportation improvements estimated to cost \$33 million. There are no additional road improvements required to the year 2021 to service traffic demand in the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan and other areas of the Region. The development proposed within the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan area should generate road development charge revenues of approximately \$2.9 million.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Town of Aurora has adopted OPA 34 and the recommendations of this report are consistent with the Town's position.

7. CONCLUSION

The lands are designated "Urban Area" by the Regional Official Plan. OPA 34 is consistent with the intent of this designation.

The lands are designated "Settlement Area" by the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, which permits a range of residential and employment uses. OPA 34 is consistent with the intent of this designation.

Approval of Town of Aurora's OPA 34 will facilitate the approval of a residential subdivision with a park and provision for an elementary school within the identified urban area. Furthermore, OPA 34 advances the growth management approach of the Town to direct growth to the east, and preserves the natural environment and recharge areas through clustering and the infill of existing residential areas. It is therefore recommended that OPA 34 be approved.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing are included with this report and are also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)