

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

**REPORT NO. 1
OF THE REGIONAL
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 8, 2003**

**For Consideration by
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York
on January 23, 2003**

Chair: Regional Councillor F. Scarpitti

Members: Regional Councillor B. Hogg
Regional Councillor G. Rosati
Regional Councillor D. Wheeler
Mayor J. Young
Regional Chair B. Fisch, ex officio

Staff Present: L. Bigioni, S. Cartwright, N. Garbe, M. Garrett, K. Price, D. Sinclair, S. Taylor, B. Tuckey, J. Waller

The Planning and Economic Development Committee began its meeting at 1:08 p.m. on January 8, 2003.

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1

DEVELOPING CENTRES AND CORRIDORS IN YORK REGION

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by B. Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, D. Leeming, The Planning Partnership, and S. Chandler, Royal LePage Advisors, entitled "Making It Happen! The York Region Centres and Corridors Study", be received;**
- 2. The communication from J. Babcock, Commissioner of Planning and Development, Town of Richmond Hill, January 7, 2003, providing comments on the Regional Centres and Corridors study, be received; and**
- 3. The recommendations contained in the following report, December 20, 2002, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, Commissioner of Finance and the Commissioner of Community Services and Housing, be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council receive this report, Attachment 1 "Making It Happen – The York Region Centres and Corridors Study" and the presentation for information.
2. Staff proceed to prepare a centres and corridors strategy and implement the key action items listed below and additional action items that arise from other regional and local initiatives related to centres and corridors development:
 - Undertake a study to review a non-residential development charges rate structure which would encourage higher density development within centres and corridors, which is tied to land use density targets.
 - Undertake a study to review and examine the cost of capital service needs in higher density centres and corridors, as compared to greenfield development, and the most effective development charges rate structure.
 - Examine potential property tax options, which with enabling Provincial legislation could encourage compact development in centres and corridors.
 - Encourage the local municipalities and school boards to reduce area specific development charges in centres and corridors.
 - Petition the Federal and Provincial Governments to revise corporate and capital taxes to promote affordable housing.
 - Petition the Federal and Provincial Governments to allocate a portion of the GST, PST and Fuel taxes to municipalities.

3. Staff consult and co-ordinate with local municipal staff to develop common policy proposals for presentation to the Province including:
 - An evaluation of the Region's role in the creation of Community Improvement Plans under Section 28 of the Planning Act.
 - An investigation of policy enhancements to financial tools such as TIFS to promote compact development within the regional centres and corridors.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report to:

- Summarize the recommendations and conclusions of "The York Region Centres and Corridors Study".
- Inform Committee and Council of staff's recommendation to proceed with a number of the action items highlighted in the report.
- Present the framework for the preparation of a centres and corridors strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

The Regional Official Plan (ROP) outlines a regional structure that includes a system of regional centres and corridors that act as a focus for residential and commercial development. In addition to regional centres a series of urban centres are identified within local official plans. The ROP also establishes a target of 20% of the Region's forecast population increase to occur in existing built up areas and by redevelopment of underutilized areas and areas in transition. A fiscal impact study, completed for the ROP in 1994, was premised on the achievement of strong centres and corridors and the 20% intensification target.

In December 2001 Regional Council authorized staff to proceed with a review of growth in centres and corridors and intensification opportunities within York Region. The premise for the study was that although the Region and local municipalities have been successful in providing the policy and regulatory framework to encourage concentrated growth in centres and corridors, progress on the ground has been mixed.

Staff have identified four key action areas that are needed to encourage and promote higher density transit supportive growth in the Region's centres and corridors. These four action areas are policy, programs, financial tools and infrastructure investment. Staff from the Region and local municipalities have been working on a number of initiatives in these four action areas. The centres and corridors study is one component of the review of financial growth management initiatives.

The purpose of the study is to establish an economic and public interest business case for the establishment of a far reaching and comprehensive set of planning tools and financial incentives that will facilitate the achievement of the planned urban structure and help

direct higher density growth to the Region's centres and corridors. The study provides a multi-faceted analysis of land use policy, market realities, fiscal impact, transportation implications and case study reviews. The study forms part of the comprehensive review of the Development Charge (DC) By-law that is currently underway that is examining both development charge policy and rates.

This report provides a summary of the study's conclusions and recommendations and presents the framework for the preparation of a centres and corridors strategy.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The majority of politicians, planners and other interested stakeholders are in agreement that York Region is at a critical juncture in terms of managing growth, attracting business and maintaining the quality of life residents currently enjoy. Issues of deteriorating air quality, increased traffic congestion, increased travel to work time and environmental degradation are warning signs that the economic health of the Region is at risk. In order for the Region to continue to be economically successful in the long term and maintain and improve its quality of life, the urban structure of centres connected by transit corridors must be supported and achieved.

The Region and local municipalities have in many ways made significant progress in implementing the growth management vision in the Regional Official Plan, particularly in the development of more compact communities and in the delivery of a broader range and mix of housing types.

The Planning documents in York Region all promote the achievement of a new urban structure based on a system of centres and corridors and the local municipalities have prepared detailed secondary plans for the four regional centres. To date there has been limited progress in building the regional centres and substantial corridor development has yet to materialize.

Changes to the urban structure and attaining the type and intensity of built form and higher density residential and employment development requires a comprehensive package of policy, infrastructure investment, programs and financial tools to be put in place. A co-ordinated strategy is required if the Region is to realize its vision for centres and corridors.

4.1 York Region Successes

York Region can lay claim to a number of successes that will assist in the development of its centres and corridors. The study highlights these as follows:

- The completion and approval of regional centre secondary plans in Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
- The establishment of a clear vision for the Highway 7 corridor.

- The completion of the York Region Transportation Master Plan and the Housing Supply Strategy.
- The creation of York Region's Transit system.
- Initiation of the York Region Transit Plan Public-Private Partnership (PPP).
- A progressive financial growth management strategy.
- A reduction in non-residential development charges as an economic incentive to retract and retain new businesses.
- A reduced multi-residential tax rate to encourage more housing choice, diversity and affordability.

4.2 Benefits of a Centres and Corridors Urban Structure

The study presents a number of benefits that an urban structure of centres and corridors is expected to provide:

- Achieve vibrant, mixed use and higher density development.
- Strengthen the Region's economy and assessment base through the attraction of more businesses.
- Facilitate the implementation of the York Region Official Plan, Growth Management Strategy and Housing Supply Strategy.
- Promote development forms at densities that support the York Region Rapid Transit initiative.
- Reduce traffic congestion and promote a more balanced transportation network, including a greater reliance on transit.
- Provide greater housing diversity and more affordable housing thereby attracting a more diverse labour force.
- Provide an improved image and increased number of amenities and high quality urban design.
- Provide for a more efficient development pattern.
- Improve environmental sensitivity.
- Enhance economic competitiveness.

4.3 Making it Happen

As mentioned above, the implementation of an urban structure focussed on centres and corridors requires a complementary package of four key action areas that includes policy, programs, financial tools and infrastructure investment. The potential impact of these actions could enhance demand, reduce private market costs and reduce risk for the private sector.

It is important that the public sector takes the lead in promoting and encouraging change by creating and enhancing the reasons for businesses and residents to locate in a centre or corridor. A co-ordinated long-term commitment by the public sector will create a favourable investment climate for the private sector.

York Region is at a critical point in its evolution. The decisions made today can result in positive changes in public policy, establish the conditions for change, and facilitate the achievement of an urban structure focussed on centres and corridors. The study lists a number of important actions that the Region must consider in making the centres and corridors vision a reality:

- Establish the Vision.
- Establish the environment for change.
- Allow the private sector to respond to the market.
- Establish the array of approaches and tools that are required.
- Measure success incrementally.
- Understand success takes commitment, co-operation and time.

The study also recommends a number of specific priority actions be undertaken. These include the following:

- Provide higher order, public transit within the centres and corridors.
- Invest in infrastructure, including streetscaping and public buildings in centres and corridors.
- Create a clear high density, mixed use vision within the centres and corridors by providing strong planning guidance including density targets, urban design performance standards and careful development staging.
- Consider creating public parking authorities and development corporations.
- Pursue the Region's Housing Supply Strategy to promote a range and mix of higher density housing options in centres and corridors.
- Undertake a study to review the non-residential development charges rate structure to examine the impact of a standard per acre charge to encourage higher density development within centres and corridors, which is tied to land use density targets.
- Undertake a study to review the residential development charges rate structure to examine the real cost of capital service needs in higher density centres and corridors, as compared to greenfield development, which is tied to land use density targets.
- Endorse continuation of the non-residential development charges to attract and retain new businesses.
- Encourage local municipalities and school boards to reduce area specific development charges in centres and corridors.
- Examine property tax rates to determine if they reflect the real cost of providing services.
- Petition the Federal and Provincial Governments to revise corporate and capital taxes to promote affordable housing.
- Petition the Federal and Provincial Governments to allocate a portion of the GST, PST and Fuel taxes to municipalities.

4.4 Other Initiatives Underway

As part of the Region's on-going growth management efforts to promote development in centres and corridors a number of other important initiatives are underway, all of which are being worked on in a co-ordinated manner. These initiatives include:

- York Region Rapid Transit Plan (YRTP).
- Development Charge Bylaw Review.
- June 21 GTA Symposium – “Delivering the GTA Vision: Centres, Corridors and Transit”.
- October 4 GTA Financial Tools Symposium – “Vision to reality: Nodes and Corridors”.
- Highway 7 Vision work.
- Modifications to the R.O.P. to reflect the transit emphasis vision from the Transportation Master Plan.
- Proposal to the Province to incorporate an updated transit policy in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).
- Joint Tax Incentive Zone submission with the Town of Markham.
- Town of Newmarket Tax Incentive Zone submission.
- Markham Centre Plan Review
- Vaughan Highway 7 Land Use Study
- A number of other local municipal studies in Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket dealing with centre and/or corridor development.

4.5 Next Steps – Developing A Centres And Corridors Strategy

It is recommended that staff continue to co-ordinate all the initiatives mentioned in this report and proceed to prepare a detailed centres and corridors strategy. The strategy will prioritize and implement the key action items from the centres and corridors study and any additional action items arising from other regional and local initiatives relating to the achievement of the centres and corridors' vision. The strategy will be based on the four action areas of infrastructure investment, policy, financial tools, and programs. Preparation of the strategy will involve extensive consultation with the local municipalities and other interested stakeholders.

Staff from both the Region and local municipalities are now working on a number of initiatives in the four action areas. The strategy will expand upon these initiatives and continue to ensure that all related work programs continue to be co-ordinated in a comprehensive manner. The following summarizes existing and potential initiatives within the four action areas and comments on their potential impact in encouraging businesses and residents to locate in centres and corridors.

4.5.1 Infrastructure Initiatives

A commitment to the provision of major infrastructure including transit, streetscaping and the location of public buildings within centres and corridors will enhance demand attracting private sector investment. Higher density office and residential development tends to cluster adjacent to transit facilities, as rent and sales prices are higher closer to major public infrastructure making their development more attractive to the private sector. Public realm investment in major infrastructure sends a strong signal of government intent, thereby helping to reduce private sector risk.

York Region has made a significant commitment to investing in the implementation of a Region wide rapid transit system. The York Region Transportation Master Plan identified a total 30-year capital cost estimate between \$2.4 billion to \$4.1 billion to implement the transit system. York Region is prepared to fund one third of the net project costs (i.e. net of the private sector contribution). Provincial and Federal investment is required for the remaining two-thirds.

A \$150 million Quick Start Program that covers rapid transit elements in all four of the designated regional rapid transit corridors is currently being implemented. This program includes elements that can be implemented quickly and will provide visible, attractive rapid transit options to York region residents by the end of 2003 and early 2004.

The location of public buildings within centres and corridors is another example of public investment in infrastructure. York Region's two major administrative buildings are located in the regional centres of Newmarket and Richmond Hill. The Town of Markham's administrative office is strategically located within the Markham City Centre. The centres and corridors strategy will encourage both municipal and provincial buildings to locate within the Region's major centres and corridors.

Streetscaping initiatives are either in place or underway at the Region and local municipalities. Regional Council adopted a Regional Streetscape Policy on July 6, 2000. York Region staff, in partnership with area municipal staff, have been implementing streetscaping principles on urban Regional Road reconstruction projects since that time. Staff from Transportation and Works are currently considering enhancements to the Regional Streetscaping Policy to address non-capital projects. The centres and corridors strategy will continue to co-ordinate existing and future streetscaping and urban design initiatives at the regional and local level.

4.5.2 Policy

Certainty in the vision for centres and corridors and certainty in the approval process encourages private sector investment. A simplified planning policy outlining permitted densities, urban form, urban design guidelines and streetscaping principles can reduce non-market risk associated with development.

Enhancements to planning policy and the creation of the vision are well on the way. Other policy studies and implementation efforts will have to be done after the vision process is finalized. Work is currently underway on refining the land use, transportation and transit policies within the Regional Official Plan to reflect the Vision 2026 initiative, the planning policy recommendations from the Region's Transportation Master Plan, the York Region Rapid Transit initiative and the regional corridor vision and graphic image work that has been undertaken. To a large degree, the successful implementation of the Master Transportation Plan and York Region's rapid transit initiative depends upon the Region's ability to encourage transit supportive land use policies and related initiatives such as partnerships and programs with the local municipalities and other agencies.

Staff are also advocating that the Province update the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) to provide clear support for regional policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools to promote public transit and transit supportive development. A clearly defined Provincial interest through Provincial policy ensures consistency in Regional and local policy changes that are being contemplated. Clear, consistent policy at all levels of government is essential to lend support and clarity to the York Region transit and infrastructure initiatives and centres and corridors development.

4.5.3 Programs

Supportive program and partnership initiatives are critical in supporting and advancing the urban structure of centres and corridors. The establishment of local municipal parking authorities, development corporations and the implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation Management Association measures are examples of program actions that fall under this activity. Public education and marketing also falls within this action category. A comprehensive marketing and communication strategy could be developed that communicates the benefits of compact urban form and the attractiveness of living and working in centres and corridors to the general public.

4.5.4 Financial Tools

Decisions regarding the financing of urban services have a direct impact on urban growth. Municipal financial tools and tax policy can be used to encourage the private sector to build compact development within centres and corridors.

A detailed report was presented to Regional Council in September 2002 "Update on Fiscal Policy and Growth Management in York Region" that proposed staff continue to investigate potential new policy enhancements to municipal financial tools for the development of compact, healthy communities. The attached centres and corridors study follows through on that report's proposal and recommends a number of financial measures to facilitate the development of the Region's centres and corridors. These include a review of both the residential and non-residential development charges rate structures and an examination of property tax policy options.

A detailed review of the “DC” By-law is currently underway to reflect the updated growth and capital infrastructure requirements. A future review will examine alternative rate structures such as a non-residential charge per acre.

The centres and corridors study also recommends that York Region encourage local municipalities and school boards to reduce area specific development charges in centres and corridors, and to petition the Federal and Provincial Governments to revise corporate and capital taxes to promote affordable housing and to allocate a portion of the GST, PST and fuel taxes to municipalities.

Both the September 2002 “Update on Fiscal Policy and Growth Management in York Region” report and the centres and corridors study mention the potential use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) within the framework of a Community Improvement Plan. The Town of Markham is currently exploring how TIF financing can be used to promote development within the Markham Town Centre.

It is recommended that regional staff consult and co-ordinate with local municipal staff to develop common policy proposals for presentation to the Province. This would include an evaluation of the Region’s role in the creation of Community Improvement Plans under Section 28 of the Planning Act and an investigation of policy enhancements to financial tools such as TIFS to promote compact development within the regional centres and corridors.

The centres and corridors strategy will continue to examine potential new policy enhancements to municipal financial tools. It is critical to recognize that financial programs and incentives have a cost and a direct impact on the tax levy, user rates and DC rates. Any potential changes to financial tools will be accompanied with an extensive analysis on the impacts to all stakeholders.

4.6 Relationship to Vision 2026

The goals and objectives of Vision 2026 are intended to protect and enhance the quality of life the Region’s residents currently enjoy. The achievement of the planned urban structure of centres and corridors will facilitate the transformation of the Region from a suburban community to a more diverse, accessible and efficient urban-city region, while protecting the Region’s natural heritage and rural resources. In order for the Region to continue to be economically successful in the long term and maintain and improve its quality of life, the desired urban structure must be supported and achieved.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial policies for growth infrastructure and service provision are key tools in building sustainable communities. A compact, efficient urban structure is essential to the Region’s economic and financial vitality.

The attached study “Making It Happen!: The York Region Centres and Corridors Study” focuses on a number of financial measures to facilitate the development of the Region’s centres and corridors. The centres and corridors strategy will build upon the recommendations from this study and other regional and local initiatives.

Much of the proposed work dealing with financial policy is currently underway with the “DC” By-law review. It is critical to recognize that financial programs and incentives have a cost and a direct impact on the tax levy, user rates and DC rates. Any potential changes to financial tools will be accompanied with an extensive analysis on the impacts to all stakeholders.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Regional staff will continue to consult with staff from the local municipalities in the preparation of a centres and corridors strategy. Enhancing policy, creating or expanding supportive programs, investing in infrastructure and exploring financial growth management tools are more effective if these actions are mirrored, where possible, at the local municipal level.

Regional staff have had preliminary discussions with staff from the Town of Markham exploring strategies to facilitate development within the Markham Town Centre. Staff from the municipalities of Aurora, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan were consulted extensively as part of the centres and corridors study.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region is at a critical juncture in its transformation from a suburban community to more urban environment. To date there has been limited progress in building the regional centres and substantial corridor development has yet to materialize.

Changes to the urban structure and attaining the type and intensity of built form and higher density residential and employment development requires a comprehensive package of policy, infrastructure investment, programs and financial tools to be put in place. A co-ordinated strategy is required for the successful implementation of the York Region Transit system and if the Region is to realize its vision for centres and corridors.

It is recommended that staff proceed to prepare a centres and corridors strategy and implement a number of the recommended priority actions put forward in the centres and corridors study and additional action items that arise from other regional and local initiatives related to centres and corridors development:

It is recommended that staff co-ordinate with local municipal staff to develop common policy proposals for presentation to the Province. This would include an evaluation of the Region’s role in the creation of Community Improvement Plans under Section 28 of the

Planning Act and an investigation of policy enhancements to financial tools such as TIFS to promote compact development within the regional centres and corridors.

Staff will report back to committee with the detailed strategy early in the New Year.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk. A copy of the slide presentation is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)

2

NEW PROVINCIAL POLICY TO SUPPORT YORK REGION RAPID TRANSIT INITIATIVES

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, December 19, 2002, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. This Report be received.
2. The principles outlined in this report for new Provincial Policy regarding transit and transit-supportive land use planning be endorsed.
3. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing be requested to prepare new general Provincial Policy under *Section 3* of the *Planning Act* that articulates the Provincial interest in supporting transit-supportive land use planning and a site specific policy to support initiatives underway in York Region to leverage over \$4 billion in rapid transit investment, respectively.
4. Regional staff be directed to consult with stakeholders, including the local municipalities, on the principles and potential wording for new Provincial Policy.
5. Regional Staff prepare a further Report in early 2003 that outlines the feedback received from stakeholders and recommended wording for a new Provincial Policy Statement on transit and transit-supportive land use planning.
6. The Regional Clerk circulate this Report, and the report entitled “Developing Centres and Corridors in York Region” to the Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the nine area municipalities for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline the importance of and opportunities for issuing new Provincial Policy under *Section 3* of the *Planning Act* to articulate the Provincial interest in supporting transit and transit-supportive land use policies. New Provincial Policy is needed to provide clear support for Regional policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools to realize the Region's planned urban structure of nodes and corridors served by rapid transit

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Land use support for transit: Regional policy framework

Over the past year, a number of important initiatives have been commenced by the Region and area municipalities to implement the Region's planned urban structure of nodes and corridors served by rapid transit. These include:

- York Region Rapid Transit Plan (Public Private Partnership)
- A Vision for Highway 7
- Markham Centre Plan Review
- Fiscal Policy and Growth Management report
- Vaughan Highway 7 Land Use Study
- Transportation Master Plan
- York Region Centres and Corridors Study

Also under consideration by the Planning & Economic Development Committee on January 8, 2002 is the report entitled "Developing Centres and Corridors in York Region," which captures the timely and strategic role of these initiatives in changing the Region's urban structure. These initiatives have underscored the importance of having a "city building" approach to a policy framework from Provincial to local in scale that supports York Region policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools. The Region is currently preparing a policy framework to implement the Region's Transportation Master Plan for completion in the first quarter of 2003.

3.2 Provincial Policy Statement

The current PPS came into effect in May 1996 and applies to all planning decisions through *Section 3* of the *Planning Act* in the form of "shall have regard to" statements. The current PPS is divided into three distinct policy areas: 1) Efficient, Cost-effective Development and Land Use Patterns; 2) Resources; and, 3) Public Health and Safety.

A five-year statutory review of the PPS is currently underway to ensure that Provincial land use policies effectively protect Ontario's interests, and to determine if any changes need to be made to these policies. Regional planning staff in a report dated

October 3, 2001 explained the scope of this review and outlined changes that could be made to the PPS. Among these, staff recommended that the PPS should:

- Clearly define how “shall have regard to” statements should be interpreted.
- Assign more weight to human services and their role in sustaining a high quality of life for residents.
- Reference specific “Smart Growth” initiatives, including the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act.
- Include policy statements to support the development of public transit systems and encourage alternatives to automobile use.

3.2.1. Declaring a Provincial Interest

The *Planning Act* under *Section 2* describes what are matters of Provincial interest. These include:

- The adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems.
- The orderly development of safe and healthy communities.
- The protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities.
- The co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies.
- The appropriate location of growth and development.

The *Planning Act* under *Section 3* allows the Minister to issue policies that are in the Provincial interest. The PPS must provide clear policy direction to support the efforts already underway and planned by York Region and the local municipalities to advance public transit infrastructure and related planning tools. This will provide a broader context for York Region to provide a continuum of support for nodes and corridors from local initiatives (i.e. Highway 7 Vaughan, Markham Centre Review) to Regional initiatives (i.e. York Rapid Transit Plan and Transportation Master Plan).

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Changing the Region’s Urban Structure

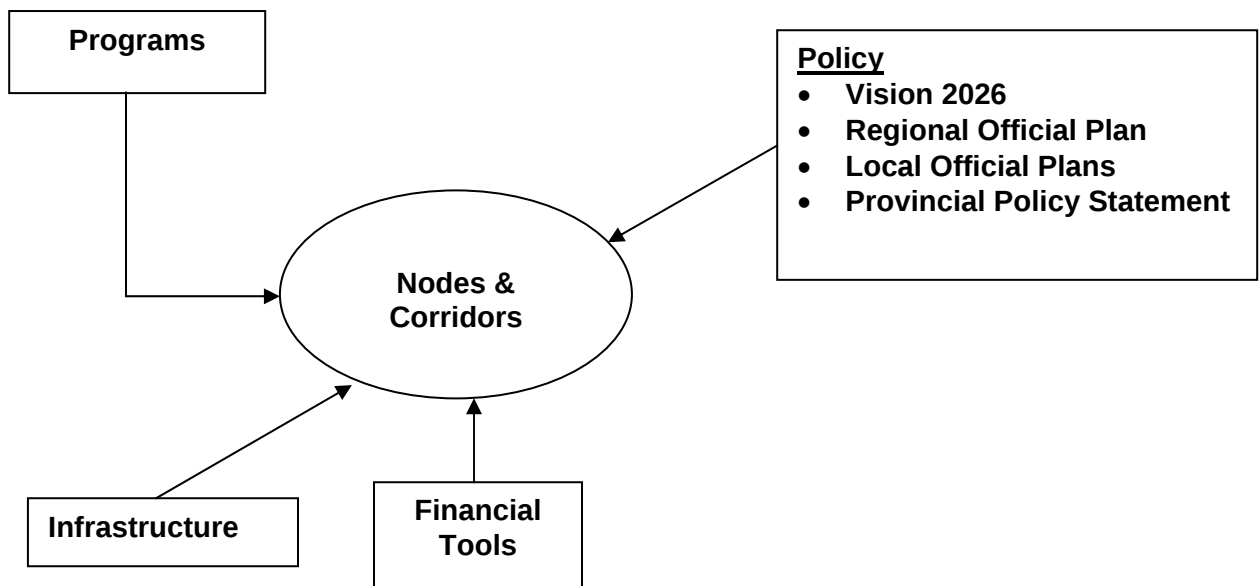
The majority of those involved in the planning of urban areas are in agreement that York Region is at a critical juncture in terms of managing growth, attracting business and maintaining the quality of life residents currently enjoy. Issues of deteriorating air quality, increased traffic congestion, increased travel to work time and environmental degradation are warning signs that the economic health of the Region is at risk. In order for the Region to continue to be economically successful in the long term and maintain and improve its quality of life, the urban structure of centres connected by transit corridors must be supported and achieved.

Part of the challenge is to ensure that policies managing growth and investment are in alignment across Provincial and local levels. This will lend more clarity and strength to

good planning policy, and allow for the needed transition of the historic community building framework to a smarter, more responsive city building framework.

4.2 Closing the Policy Gap

There is presently a wide gap between the PPS and York Region policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools to promote public transit and transit supportive development. At minimum the PPS must recognize and support the up to \$4.2 billion investment committed by the Region for rapid transit over the next 30 years. It is essential to have a consistent and direct policy link across all government levels in support of rapid transit and related initiatives. Creating such a link through language in the PPS is essential to complete the policy continuum from top-to-bottom as illustrated below.



Clearly defining the Provincial interest through Provincial policy ensures consistency in Regional and local policy changes that are being contemplated. Clear, consistent policy at all levels is essential to lend support and clarity to York Region transit and infrastructure efforts.

4.3 Matching Provincial and Regional policies

Changes to the PPS to better articulate the Provincial interest in transit and transit-supportive land use planning should be approached in both general and specific terms. First, a new section should be created to set out the general principles for transit-supportive development. Second, a site-specific policy is required that acknowledges the advanced maturity of the Region's policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools to implement an urban structure of nodes and corridors served by rapid transit. A site-specific policy would also serve to clearly articulate the Provincial interest in the Region's successful implementation of its desired city-based structure.

4.3.1 New General Policy: Making the transit- land use link

New general policies need to be included in the PPS to guide transit-supportive land use policies across Ontario—bridging the gap that exists in the PPS between transit infrastructure and land use planning, acknowledged in the Provincial principles for “Smart Growth.” These policy statements should take the form of basic principles to be incorporated into all land use decisions by municipalities where transit services exist or are planned, regardless of size and location. These will serve as general land use guidelines for transit Province-wide.

These policies could form a new *Section 1.3.2* in the PPS, supporting municipalities that:

- Ensure urban form is transit-supportive.
- Balance incentive and regulatory-based approaches for transit-supportive development.
- Invest in the long term financial health of their communities by using innovative financial tools to promote transit supportive development.
- Establish node and corridor policies in Official Plans, and require that these areas be serviced by public transit.

4.3.2 New site-specific policy: supporting York Region’s investment in transit and transit-supportive land use policies

While a general policy would assist most municipalities in Ontario, the maturity of York Region’s planning policy regime has progressed to a point beyond where a general policy would prove beneficial in support of its initiatives. The Region, together with the Provincial and Federal Governments will invest \$150 million in the short-term, and significantly more long-term, to bring rapid transit to York Region. Policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools are also well advanced to support this investment.

A specific Provincial Policy with clear and strong wording should be made to support York Region policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools to realize an urban structure based on nodes and corridors served by rapid transit. It must be clear that the successful implementation of York Region’s planned urban structure and over \$4 billion investment in rapid transit services is a Provincial interest and is a far-advanced part of the Ontario Smart Growth Initiative.

A new *Section 1.3.2.1* could be created in the PPS to acknowledge York Region’s urban structure plan and multi-billion dollar investment. This new section, building on the general guidelines of the new *Section 1.3.2*, needs to clearly state that it is a Provincial interest to support policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools in York Region that:

- Promote transit-supportive development through such tools as, but not limited to:
 - Minimum density targets
 - Urban design guidelines
 - Streetscaping requirements
- Promote a balance between incentive and regulatory approaches to encourage transit-supportive development.

- Provide for the long-term and sustainable investment in public transportation infrastructure through partnerships with all levels of government and the private sector.

In addition to these principles, the PPS under *Section 1.3.2.1* could also include a graphic or map showing the centre and corridor areas in York Region where policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools are being focused to leverage public and private investment in rapid transit.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

Investing in public transit infrastructure in lockstep with transit-supportive land use policies in York Region is consistent with Vision 2026. Making changes to the PPS to recognize and support these efforts will not only serve to improve public transit in York Region and the rest of the Province, but also advance the goals of Vision 2026. Specifically, the recommendations of this report contribute positively to “Quality Communities for a Diverse Population,” “Managed and Balanced Growth,” and “Infrastructure for a Growing Region.”

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Making changes to the PPS to support transit infrastructure and related land use planning policy will recognize and protect York Region’s significant investment in the York Region Rapid Transit Plan and York Region Transit. Strengthening planning policies at the Provincial and municipal government levels will maximize the efficiency of existing and planned transit infrastructure while minimizing the long-term costs to taxpayers.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

All upper and lower tier municipal planning decisions “shall have regard to” the PPS, as required under *Section 3* of the *Planning Act*. Aligning the PPS more closely with Regional and local programs and policies will establish a clear, consistent and strong policy framework for transit infrastructure and related land use planning. Local Official Plan policies relating to transit and transit-supportive land use planning will be further strengthened by changes to the PPS.

It is proposed that Regional and area municipal staff work co-operatively to develop the specific wording for Provincial policies.

7. CONCLUSION

Changes to the PPS to articulate the Provincial interest in providing transit under *Section 3* of the *Planning Act* will provide clear support for Regional policy, program, infrastructure and financial initiatives to realize the Region’s planned urban structure of nodes and corridors served by rapid transit. These changes will close the gap between transit and land use planning in the PPS to complete a clear, consistent and strong policy

framework for York Region initiatives. This will also provide a Province-wide context for York Region policies, programs, infrastructure and financial tools to promote public transit, and assist in the implementation of the Ontario Smart Growth initiative.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

3
AMENDMENT NO. 20
GROUP HOMES AND SPECIAL NEEDS FACILITIES
TOWN OF NEWMARKET
PLANNING REPORT 1516 OP

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, December 19, 2002, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to approve Amendment No. 20 to the Official Plan of the Town of Newmarket (OPA 20).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of Newmarket's Amendment No. 20. This Amendment builds on existing Official Plan policies permitting Group Homes in all residential designations and would establish development and location parameters for new Group Homes. OPA 20 also recognizes Special Needs Facilities as a new use and would create development and location parameters for new establishments in Newmarket.

3. BACKGROUND

The Town of Newmarket held a public meeting in April to present a proposed amendment to the Town's Official Plan and Zoning By-law that would essentially have the following effect:

- Define Group Homes to include special needs housing accommodating 3 to 8 persons and created a definition of Special Needs Facilities to include all halfway houses, and special needs housing accommodating more than 8 persons.
- Permit new group homes as-of-right in all residential zones, except where property is in a flood plain.
- Permit new special needs facilities in institutional and residential zones, except where property is in a floodplain.
- Establish minimum separation distances (300 metres between Group Homes; 400 metres between Special Needs).

- Establish other details, including parking standards, location of Special Needs on arterial/collector roads, and a Registration By-law.
- Existing facilities may continue to operate.

The proposed amendments received support from the community and group home agencies, with the exception of one special needs facility operator.

Mr. John Gaspar has submitted a letter of objection to the amendment. In Mr. Gaspar's opinion any separation distance is discriminatory but, as a compromise, noted that a 150 metre separation distance would be more reasonable. Mr. Gaspar also does not agree with the floodplain restriction.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requested notification of this amendment and provided comments, requesting a map showing the proposed radiuses from existing Group Homes and Special Needs Facilities (*see Attachment No. 1*). The Ministry also noted it has been their practice that facilities, such as the Special Needs Facilities, be permitted in any zone permitting residential uses.

On July 17, 2002, the Ministry appealed a decision made by York Region to approve OPA 58 for the Town of Markham. The Ministry has further requested that the Region defer its decision on this amendment until such time as Markham's amendment gets resolved.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

OPA 20 has undergone extensive public and operator consultation. The public operators alike are supportive of the Amendment. The structure of the Amendment is based on the common planning principle of equal distribution. The OPA improves existing group home policy by permitting the use as-of-right in residential zones subject to separation distance of 300 metres and floodplain restriction. The Zoning By-law currently permits group homes in residential zones only through a site-specific zoning amendment.

The proposed Amendment also establishes a definition for "Special Needs Facilities" for facilities with more than 8 persons. This definition was created to recognize uses of a more intensive nature and establish that these facilities may have additional considerations than what is typically thought of as a single residential unit (i.e. parking). OPA 20 requires that a Special Needs Facility proceed under a site specific zoning amendment.

Attachment No. 1 illustrates the availability of opportunities for locating Group Homes and Special Needs Facilities in the Town of Newmarket given the criteria established by OPA 20.

4.1 Vision 2026

One of the goals of Vision is that “In 2026, York Region residents will have access to a variety of housing options that are safe, affordable and responsive to their diverse and changing needs.”

To support this goal, York Region, with area municipalities and other partners, will continue to focus on providing an appropriate housing mix and supply, including housing people with special needs.

4.2 Regional Official Plan

Group homes are an essential component of supportive housing and residential policy alternatives, especially for people with special needs.

The Regional Official Plan recognizes the need to provide a wide variety of housing to meet the varying needs of the community. Pursuant to Policy 4.3.10, it is the policy of Council “to require area municipal official plans to provide a mix and range of different types, forms, sizes and tenures of housing within each community to meet housing needs as defined in the Regional housing needs study as updated from time to time”. Furthermore, Policy 4.3.16 supports “the equitable distribution of group homes and rooming, boarding and lodging houses to serve the needs of the community”.

From a land use perspective, the strategic interests of the municipality are being addressed through the inclusion of Group Home and Special Needs Facility policies within their Official Plan. Newmarket’s OPA 20 develops the principles of equal distribution of these housing types with details to be addressed in their zoning by-law.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from the approval of OPA 20.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The recommendation of this report is consistent with the Region’s recommendation to approve Markham’s OPA 58, Town-wide Group Home policies.

7. CONCLUSION

Amendment 20 develops an appropriate policy framework that is comparable to other municipal policies adopted throughout the Province with an aim to provide equitable distribution of this form of housing supply.

Attachment No. 1 illustrates that ample opportunity exists for future special needs housing within Newmarket, based on the criteria established by OPA 20.

As part of the background to OPA 20, a complete environmental scan was completed by the Town and public consultation has resulted in broad support from the community, with the exception of one group home operator that has appealed the implementing zoning by-law.

Staff conclude that this Amendment is based on sound planning principles and it is recommended that OPA 20 be approved.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is attached to this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)

4 UPDATE - COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Planning and Economic Development Committee advises Council of the following matters having been considered by the Planning and Economic Development Committee with the following action:

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

1. The Committee elected Regional Councillor Scarpitti as Chair and Mayor Young as Vice-Chair, for the year 2003.

PRESENTATIONS

2. J. Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning and L. Marsden, Planner, made a presentation regarding the 2002 York Region On-Line Business Directory. (A copy of the slide presentation is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.) **Received.**
3. B. Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, presented the 2003 Planning and Development Services Budget and Business Plans. (A copy of the slide presentation is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)

The Committee recommended that the presentation by B. Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, be received and that the 2003 Budget and Business Plans for Planning and Development Services be approved as submitted and referred to the February 6, 2003 Finance and Administrative Committee meeting for inclusion in the 2003 Consolidated Regional Budget.

The Planning and Economic Development Committee adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**January 8, 2003
Newmarket, Ontario**

**F. Scarpitti
Chair**