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REGIONAL ROAD 27 VALLEY CORRIDOR STUDY VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 610

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, October 18, 2004, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be authorized to give notice to approve Amendment No. 610 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan subject to modifications as set out in *Attachment 1*.
2. Valley Policy Area 1 be deferred, as requested by the applicant.
3. Staff continue to work with area municipal staff, TRCA staff and the owners of the land referred to as Valley Policy Area 1 in order to resolve outstanding issues regarding this site.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of the City of Vaughan's Official Plan Amendment No. 610 (OPA 610) which amends OPA 601 (the Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan). OPA 610 completes the Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan by providing detailed policies for the environmental area currently designated "Regional Road 27 Valley Corridor Study Area" between Rutherford Road and Nashville Road which makes up about 20% of the community plan area.

The main objectives of OPA 610 are to:

- Put in place the framework for the development of a natural trail system in the valley corridor.
- Enhance the policies for enhancement, restoration and acquisition of natural areas in the valley corridor.
- Define where limited development potential is appropriate.

3. BACKGROUND

The Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan OPA 601 came into effect on October 29, 2001 to provide direction and guidance for the development and redevelopment of land in the Kleinburg-Nashville area with policies pertaining to:

- community growth
- the natural environment
- residential, commercial and rural areas
- heritage conservation and urban design, transportation, sewer & water servicing
- phasing, monitoring, development review, and implementation.

As part of these policies, the lands located in the Humber River valley north of Rutherford Road and south of Nashville Road were identified as the “Regional Road 27 Valley Corridor Study Area”. The policies called for further study of these lands to determine if development in portions of this valley was appropriate and address issues regarding the environmental function of the area, integration of a trail system, transportation impacts, servicing options, and urban design.

The terms of reference for the Regional Road 27 Corridor study had the specific objectives of:

- a) Identifying lands not subject to environmental hazards and significant environmental features, where low intensity development may be appropriate.
- b) Establishing the community’s vision for the study area.
- c) Preparing a Corridor Management Plan.
- d) Establishing an Open Space Master Plan for the City owned lands at Regional Road 27 and Rutherford Road.

The study of the Regional Road 27 Corridor was completed at the beginning of the 2004. The City of Vaughan Council subsequently adopted OPA 610 on March 8, 2004 and approved the “Regional Road 27 Valley Corridor Management Plan”.

3.1 Content of Official Plan Amendment No. 610

Official Plan Amendment 610 was developed through a study process starting with the approval of the terms of reference on April 2, 2001. The study involved extensive consultation with the community and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The study and OPA 610 fulfill the requirements of the existing “Valley and Stream Corridor” policies in the Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan (OPA 601) which state:

“Further examination is needed to determine if development in portions of this valley corridor is appropriate, and if so, identify the appropriate, primarily low intensity land uses, which also address issues regarding: the environmental function of the area, including integration of a trail system, transportation impacts on the functioning of Regional Road 27, servicing options, urban design, etc.”

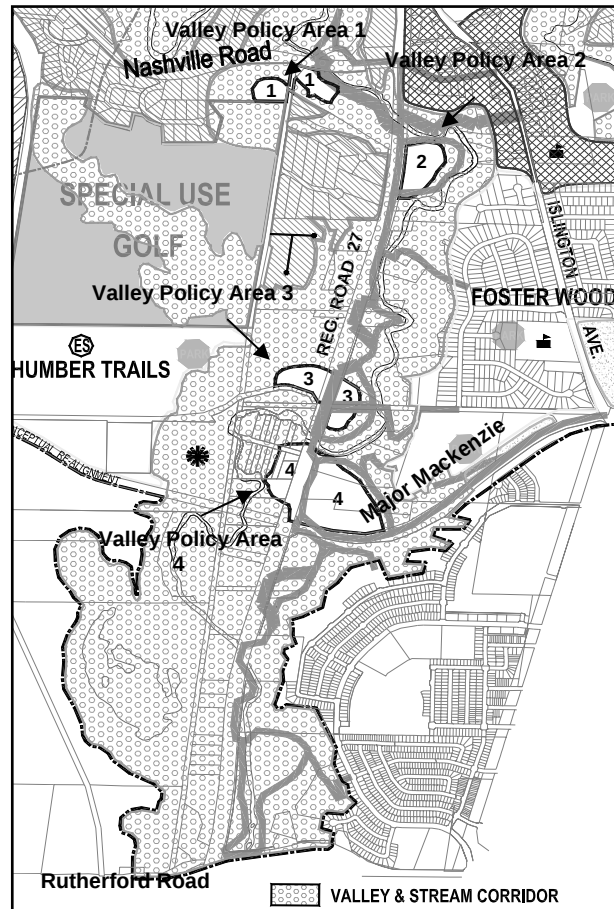
OPA 610 identifies four development sites in the study area to be designated “Valley Policy Area” with specific policies for each area. The remaining lands within the OPA 610 area are designated “Valley and Stream Corridor”.

3.1.1 Valley Policy Areas (Development Sites)

Four valley policy area development sites were chosen based on criteria developed in conjunction with the TRCA. The main thrust of the criteria was to identify areas that were privately held, not subject to flooding nor containing significant natural features, and appropriate for limited development. These lands are not designated as provincial Special Policy Areas since they are not within the flood plain.

The TRCA later added another criterion that the site had to front onto Regional Road 27 through a resolution approved by the TRCA Executive Committee on July 6, 2001.

Under the TRCA’s Valley and Stream Corridor Management Program, no new development is permitted within the valley corridors. However, in recognition of the unique aspects of the area with Regional Road 27 bisecting the valley for a considerable distance, the TRCA indicated that it would not object to some low scale and low intensity development on those parcels not subject to a hazard (flooding, slopes, erosion) and with frontage on Regional Road 27.



The four sites that meet the initial criteria are shown on the above diagram, however, site 1 does not have frontage on Regional Road 27 and therefore was not supported by the TRCA. The full OPA 610 schedule is attached as *Attachment 2*.

3.1.2 Valley and Stream Corridor

The areas designated “Valley and Stream Corridor” forms the bulk of the lands in the valley. These lands are intended to be preserved and maintained in their natural state. They also include a former aggregate pit at 6181 Major Mackenzie Drive, which is designated in OPA 601 as a “Waste Disposal Assessment Area”. The owners have expressed concern over OPA 610 Policy 4.10.10.1 (16), which states:

“The former aggregate extraction sites on the west side of Regional Road 27, north of Rutherford Road (Lot 17, Concession 8, and Lots 17 and 18, Concession 9 Wardlaw), and on the south side of Major Mackenzie Drive, west of Regional Road 27 (Lot 20, Concession 9, O’Connor), are encouraged to be rehabilitated to a naturalized state, in a manner which is appropriate for its valley location and surrounding land uses.”

The Official Plan policies cannot apply to prevent the current fill operation or prevent the continued issuance or renewal of the fill permits from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The TRCA’s Ontario Regulation 158 governs the filling of the lands. The intent of this OPA policy is to address the public issues and the Council direction to see the area rehabilitated upon completion of the fill operations, and as such, is appropriately included.

3.1.3 Trail Route

As noted above, the terms of reference for the Study included the consideration of recreational opportunities, including trails. The area surrounding the study area contains several local trails and important connections to the Inter Regional Trail (William Granger Greenway). The proposed trail is predominantly located on the east side of Regional Road 27, connecting the valley with the planned and existing trails in the area.

The proposed trail plan includes a preferred route and an alternate route. The preferred route maximizes the natural experience, while minimizing the potential ecological impacts of the trail. Where the preferred route crosses lands in private ownership, or there are significant natural constraints, an alternate routing is proposed which generally follows the Regional Road 27 right-of-way. The trail is proposed to be implemented in phases, through City funding in conjunction with development applications, where it crosses identified development sites.

Several portions of preferred and alternate trail routes may need to use the Regional Road right-of-way and therefore clarification on the Region’s role for those portions should be included in the plan. Some modifications are proposed in this regard.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Conformity with Regional Official Plan

The lands within the Regional Road 27 Valley Corridor form part of or are in proximity of the Regional Greenland system. The primary goal of the greenland policies is to identify, protect and restore the Regional Greenlands System composed of natural areas and connecting links as an essential structural component of the Region. Through the detailed study and adoption of the “Corridor Management Plan” based on the requirements of the TRCA’s Valley and Stream Corridor Management Program, a comprehensive report detailing the study process, land uses, existing natural features,

terrestrial and aquatic restoration recommendations, recommendations for recreational uses, and an acquisition process, for hazard lands (floodplain, steep slopes) have been put in place.

Approval of the Corridor Management Plan and OPA 610 furthers the goals of protection and restoration of the Regional Greenlands system and meets the requirement for area municipalities to develop policies which protect and complement the Greenlands System identified in the York Region Official Plan.

The limited development sites that are identified in OPA 610 are required to comply with all the environmental policies in the Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan which is in keeping with York Region Official Plan policy 2.6 that requires that development applications within or on lands in close proximity to the Greenlands System shall be accompanied by an environmental evaluation of the impact the development.

4.1.1 Valley Policy Area 1

This area is located west of Regional Road 27, abutting Nashville Road on either side of Stevenson Road. The portion of Valley Policy Area 1 on the west side of Stevenson Road is 1.145 ha in area and occupied by one large single detached dwelling. The portion of Valley Policy Area 1 on the east side of Stevenson Road has an area of 1.394 ha and is occupied by two single detached dwellings and a number of agricultural buildings. Area 1 is the one site that does not directly abut Highway 27 which raised the issue as to whether or not the Valley Policy Area 1 designation was appropriate.

While OPA 610 proposes that Valley Policy Area 1 include policies for residential development, OPA 610 also proposes that the “Suburban Residential” designation be applied to this site which provides for a maximum density of 2 units/ha and a minimum lot size of 0.4 ha. The impact of this density policy limits the development potential to a net increase of 1 to 2 units. The site would also be subject to the all the policy requirements of Section 4.3.2.1 of the Klein burg-Nashville plan that require a natural vegetative buffer area with a minimum width of 30 metres from watercourses and ponds or the limit of the valley and stream corridor whichever is greater. As the site is adjacent to both ponds and watercourses, the building envelope is fairly limited.

The proposed policy for this site is in keeping with the primary objective of preserving and enhancing the surrounding natural areas by limiting development potential.

The owner of the lands on the east side of Stevenson Road has indicated a desire to develop the lands at a much higher density than proposed in OPA 610 and to develop beyond the Valley Policy Area currently identified in OPA 610. It is therefore recommended that this “Valley Policy Area 1” designation be deferred to allow for further discussions between Region, Vaughan and TRCA staff and the owner. Once the site specific issues have been clearly identified by the parties, a further decision on the deferral could then be issued by the Region.

4.1.2 Valley Policy Area 2

This area is on the east side of Regional Road 27 south of Nashville Road and is approximately 2.9 ha in size. A higher density of 5 – 7.5 units/ha is proposed by OPA 610. The site has been used for a golf driving range, however, a site plan application is currently being reviewed (SP-V-051-02) for the site which would permit a 2 storey Villa Charities long term care facility with 160 beds under the existing Agricultural zoning. Institutional uses would continue to be permitted under OPA 610 for this site. The site plan review is nearing completion as outstanding site plan issues have been worked out. With the construction of this facility, further residential development on the site is unlikely.

This development represents a limited development that provides a needed institutional use in the form of a long term care facility while maintaining the surrounding natural environment.

4.1.3 Valley Policy Area 3

Area 3 is located on both sides of Regional Road 27 next to Old Major Mackenzie Drive. The parcels that make up area 3 are currently occupied by 2 houses on the northwest parcel, 1 house on the northeast parcel and 1 house on the southeast parcel. None of the existing houses have access on Highway 27, but rather directly access old Major Mackenzie Drive. The density proposed by OPA 610 is the same as that for area 1 at 2 units/ha. Given the site sizes, one additional house at most may be accommodated and could be situated such that access onto Regional Road 27 would not be necessary.

The limited development potential provided at this site maintains the primary goal of keeping the natural environment paramount in this area with clear limits on development.

4.1.4 Valley Policy Area 4

This is the largest of the four sites and is located at the intersection of Regional Road 27 and Major Mackenzie Drive. It is approximately 8.7 ha on the east side and 2.2 ha on the west side of Regional Road 27. The density proposed for residential uses in OPA 610 is 5 to 7.5 units/ha which could result in 51 to 78 units. There are plans for redevelopment at this time submitted to the City. Since this site would allow for more substantial development, the policies in OPA 610 call for a comprehensive development plan prior to any development of the site to be implemented as a tertiary plan through a further Official Plan Amendment. A number of policies are included to ensure the character of the valley is maintained including the requirement for enclave type development with a 30-50 m landscaped buffer next to the arterial roads to screen the development and maintain the sense of a natural valley. The comprehensive development plan that is required under OPA 610 is required to detail:

- lotting, form and structure of the proposed residential development
- functional servicing
- opportunities to maximize natural open space area
- integration of the Regional Road 27 Trail system
- protection of the natural features
- a comprehensive Urban Design Plan

- integration of a gateway feature.

As this development represents the most significant potential along Regional Road 27, it is also important that there is co-ordinated and consolidated access that minimizes the number of vehicle access point to the Regional Roads. This site also has the potential to be impacted by a future extension of Major Mackenzie Drive westward that eliminates the existing jog. Such a jog elimination is not scheduled in the 10 year capital plan, however, the widening of Major Mackenzie Drive east of the intersection is schedule for 2011 and the location of the jog elimination will be determined through the required Environmental Assessment for that project. The jog elimination is an identified project in the York Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP) by the year 2031. The TMP anticipates an eastbound volume exceeding capacity in this area by 2031 based on the existing road network. It is therefore critical that the future jog elimination not be precluded by any development in this area. A further requirement in OPA 610 would help clarify this.

The more detailed policy framework set out for the required comprehensive plan for this site continues to maintain the environmental features as key components of any development in this valley corridor area. The proposed policies for the limited developments site maintain the vision of the Klein burg-Nashville Community Plan to preserve the significant landscapes and natural features that give the Community its unique character within the Humber River Valley.

4.2 Servicing

The Kleinburg-Nashville – Water and Wastewater Project Environmental Assessment has recently been initiated by the Region to identify the preferred approaches for providing water supply and sewage servicing capacity for the community. It is expected that that EA will be completed by the summer of 2005. The community plan provides for an ultimate servicing for a population of 6800. The addition of the limited development areas does not require a change to this ultimate serviced population.

Site 2 will be fully serviced with water and sewers to services the long term care facility currently being reviewed through the site plan process and site 4 will ultimately require full services in order to develop the lands. Site 1 and 3 with their very limited development potential could be services with municipal or private sanitary and water. At the later stages of development (site plan/plan of subdivision), the Region will still need to confirm that adequate water and wastewater servicing is available and has been allocated by the City of Vaughan.

4.3 Modifications

Two modifications are proposed to provide clarification in terms of vehicle access onto Regional Road 27 from Valley Policy Area 4 and the use of the Regional Road 27 as part of the trail system.

4.3.1 Transportation – Valley Policy Area 4

Regional Road 27 is a regional arterial road which is used extensively for commuter traffic. Regional Transportation and Works staff has indicated that access to regional roads in this area is an issue. In this regard, further clarification would be beneficial regarding access to the Regional Roads for Valley Policy Area 4. The long term east-west connection using Major Mackenzie Drive also is required to be considered when assessing any development proposal for this area. Therefore, it is recommended that policy 4.10.10.1 (15), subsection 3.iv)b)(3) be modified by adding two additional criteria for the required comprehensive development plan that would be implemented through a further Official Plan Amendment. The criteria would read:

“co-ordinated and consolidated access that minimizes the number of vehicle access points to Regional Roads;
provisions for the accommodation of the future jog elimination at Major Mackenzie Drive and Regional Road 27.”

4.3.2 Regional Road 27 Trail

Several portions of preferred and alternate trail routes may need to use the Regional Road right-of-way and therefore clarification on the Region’s role for those portions should be included in the plan. It is suggested that the following policies be added to Section 4.11.2.4 (3) regarding the proposed trail to provide this clarification:

- The Trail siting and design within Regional Road 27 right-of-way shall be to the satisfaction of the Regional Municipality of York.
- Prior to the completion of any phase of trail construction within the Regional Road right of way, an agreement shall be entered into between the City and the Region for those portions of the trail within the Regional Road right of way, stipulating that all maintenance and management of the trail will be the responsibility of the City.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

The approval of OPA 610 provides the policy which is in keeping with the goal of “Securing a Green York Region through the promoting a permanent linked Greenland system.” OPA 610 provides for the long term protection and enhancement of the valley corridor through its various policies. The provision for the advancement of a natural trail system through the valley also helps achieve the goal of “Creating Vibrant Communities through encouraging the development of a range of activities, recreational opportunities and exciting community places.”

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The approval of OPA 610 supports Vaughan’s plans for implementing a trail system in this portion of the Humber Valley System, and Master Open Space Plan for the City-Owned valleyland at Rutherford Road and Regional Road 27 which includes woodland

restoration and trail connections. OPA 610 completes the policy review of the Kleinburg-Nashville Community which provides a vision for the growth and enhancement of the natural heritage of the area.

7. CONCLUSION

Through the Regional Road 27 Valley Corridor Study, four potential development sites have been identified and proposed to be redesignated as “Valley Policy Areas”, permitting various residential forms with specific policy requirements for each site. The deferral of site 1 until the issues can be further clarified at this time is recommended so that the balance of the OPA can be put in place.

The "Valley and Stream Corridor Policies" of OPA 601 and OPA 610, together with the Corridor Management Plan and the Valleyland Open Space Master Plan prepared for the City-owned lands at the northeast corner of Regional Road 27 and Rutherford Road provide a good policy basis and foundation for the preservation and restoration of this portion of the Humber Valley system and maintains the vision for the Klein burg-Nashville Community.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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