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GUIDELINES FOR NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN YORK REGION WORKPLAN AND CONSULTATION

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated February 9, 2011 from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The workplan and consultation program for the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* in Section 4 of this report be endorsed.
2. Planning Department staff circulate this report to all local municipalities, the development community, Regional partners and stakeholders.

2. PURPOSE

The *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* document will assist in the implementation of Sections 5.2 (Sustainable Buildings) and 5.6 (New Community Areas) of the recently approved Regional Official Plan which are included in *Attachment 1* to this report. The new communities in York Region are the new urban expansion areas in Markham, Vaughan and East Gwillimbury. This report outlines the purpose, contents, workplan, and consultation approach for the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region*.

3. BACKGROUND

The New Communities in York Region will be state-of-the-art

The new community areas in the whitebelt of Markham, Vaughan, and East Gwillimbury will be state-of-the-art communities. The development of sustainable new communities is essential to achieve a complete community in which to live, work, and play. The location, composition, density, and design of new development projects can have a significant cumulative impact on a community's ability to sustain a healthy economy; to provide effective and accessible public services; to secure adequate choice and opportunity for present and future generations of residents; to protect our environment; and, to ensure we all continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

The new communities of York Region will be state-of-the-art and planned as vibrant, walkable, energy efficient, inclusive, diverse and green. These compact and complete communities will be designed with a priority on people and liveability, offering a variety of housing and transportation choices by providing opportunities for walkability and transit. They will be mixed use, live-work communities with high quality, attractive urban design.

Regional Staff consulted on the criteria for developing new communities in York Region, and the final criteria were included in the Regional Official Plan in Section 5.6 New Community Areas. Those policies related to Sustainable Buildings are contained in section 5.2 of the Regional Official Plan. The *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region*, which are referenced in policy 5.2.19 of the Regional Official Plan, will assist in the implementation of these policies. The development of the guidelines assists within the important phase of implementation of the Regional Official Plan.

The policies in the Regional Official Plan, 2010 have established a new generation of community design for York Region. Key to the implementation of these new state-of-the-art communities, is an innovative and collaborative secondary plan process led by the local municipalities. The secondary plans would be developed by a multidisciplinary team including the landowners, the conservation authority, the Region, human service providers, ecologists, engineers, architects, etc., in order to ensure an integrated and sustainable approach to the planning, design, and approval of the secondary plans.

The New Communities of York Region have been designated through boundary expansions in Regional Official Plan Amendments 1, 2, and 3, and are within the City of Vaughan, the Town of Markham, and the Town of East Gwillimbury. The *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* will provide guidance on the implementation of the Regional Official Plan for development within these communities. The guidelines, where appropriate, will also provide guidance to development within the employment areas throughout the Region, and other lands within the designated greenfield areas.

At its meeting of March 26, 2009, in clause 2 of Report 3 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, Regional Council endorsed the draft criteria for building new communities in York Region for discussion and inclusion in the Regional Official Plan update.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The New Communities Guidelines will assist in implementing the Regional Official Plan

Policy 5.2.19 states:

That the policies of this Plan are supported by the Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region. New development shall meet all the required items, and be encouraged to achieve all optional items.

The *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* will assist in implementing Sections 5.2 (Sustainable Buildings) and 5.6 (New Community Areas) of the Regional Official Plan. The Guidelines will provide clarity on how to implement the policies and provide examples. The intent is that the document supports the policies of the Plan, and be helpful for the local municipalities and the development community in implementing the policies of the Regional Official Plan.

The New Communities Guidelines will be a user friendly document

The New Community Guidelines will contain 2 sections; the first being a checklist of the applicable policies, and the second being the explanatory text, and guidelines. Both sections of the document will be organized by the following categories;

- Complete Community Design
- Sustainable Transportation
- Open Space and Natural Heritage
- Sustainable Buildings
- Energy Conservation and Renewable Technologies
- Water Management and Conservation
- Waste and Resource Management
- Education

It is anticipated that the explanatory text and guidelines in Section 2 will be updated as new information becomes available, including new information on technology changes, and any affected regulatory changes (i.e., Building Code, etc.). Section 1 will only be updated if policy changes within the Regional Official Plan.

Numerous other jurisdictions have prepared similar documents including the City of Toronto's Green Development Standard, the City of Pickering's Sustainable Development Guidelines, and the Town of Oakville's Sustainable Development Checklist and User Guide.

Planning Staff will consult with other Regional Departments, the local municipalities, and the development community on the Guidelines

In the development of the guidelines, Regional Staff will be consulting with the local municipalities and the development community. This consultation will be critical to ensure that the Regional guidelines are implementable, with a co-ordinated approach across the Region. In particular, Regional Staff will be working closely with the City of Vaughan, Town of Markham, and the Town of East Gwillimbury.

A workshop will be held in Fall 2011 to provide a forum for discussion on the draft guidelines prior to Regional Council consideration of the final guidelines.

Workplan

The development of the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* will occur throughout 2011. Key steps in the workplan include:

- Initial report to Planning and Economic Development Committee March 2011
- Update Report to Planning and Economic Development Committee June 2011
- Draft Guidelines to Planning and Economic Development Committee in Fall 2011
- Workshop with local municipalities, stakeholders, and implementation partners in Fall 2011
- Final Guidelines to Planning and Economic Development Committee in Winter 2011/2012

Relationship to Vision 2026

This staff report addresses several goal areas in Vision 2026, including “Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture”, “Responding to the Needs of Our Residents”, “Managed and Balanced Growth”, “Infrastructure for a Growing Region” and “Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region”.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* will be undertaken within the existing staff complement and budget allocation for the Planning and Development Services Department.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities have been an integral component of the Region’s Growth Management program and will be the key partners in the implementation of new communities. The local municipalities will be circulated the draft of the New Community Guidelines for review and

comments, and their comments will be incorporated into the final document to ensure that the guidelines are helpful and are implementable.

Many of the local municipalities have, or are in the process of, producing similar guideline documents. It is intended that the guidelines prepared by the Region be a base-line and that the Local Municipal guideline documents build on the Regional guidelines and will be more detailed and specific than the Regional guidelines. Regional Staff are ensuring that these processes are co-ordinated to ensure consistency.

7. CONCLUSION

The new communities in York Region in the whitebelt areas of Markham, Vaughan, and East Gwillimbury will be state-of-the-art, and planned as vibrant, walkable, energy efficient, inclusive, diverse and green. These compact and complete communities will be designed with priority on people and liveability, offering a variety of housing and transportation choices by providing opportunities for walkability and transit. They will be mixed use, live-work communities with high quality, attractive urban design. These communities will be more compact than traditional neighbourhoods in York Region.

The *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* will assist in the implementation of Sections 5.2 (Sustainable Buildings) and 5.6 (New Community Areas) of the Regional Official Plan, 2010. The guidelines are intended to be and be helpful for the local municipalities and the development community in implementing the policies of the Regional Official Plan.

The *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region* are proposed to be submitted in draft to Regional Council for endorsement and wide circulation and consultation in Fall 2011, a workshop held in Fall 2011, and presented to Regional Council for disposition in Winter 2011/2012.

For more information on this report, please contact Karen Antonio-Hadcock, Senior Planner at 905 830-4444, Ext. 1532 or John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning at Ext. 1525.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

Sample of Policies Included in the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region*

The following are a sampling of policies that will be included in the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region*. These policies will be further explained to assist in their implementation. In addition to these policies, there are a number of policies throughout the Regional Official Plan which are intended to be implemented at the Secondary Plan level in the New Community Areas. These policies will also be included within the *Guidelines for New Community Development in York Region*.

Excerpt from Section 5.2 of the Regional Official Plan:

20. To work with local municipalities and the development community to achieve the following energy efficiency and conservation standards for all new buildings:
 - a. Grade-related (3 storeys or less) residential buildings achieve a minimum performance level that is equal to an ENERGY STAR® standard.
 - b. Mid- and high-rise (4 storeys and greater) residential and nonresidential buildings, with the exception of industrial buildings, shall be designed to achieve 25% greater energy efficiency than the Model National Energy Code for Buildings.
21. To work with local municipalities and the development community to achieve 10% greater water conservation than the Ontario Building Code for all new buildings.
22. To encourage the following energy efficiency and conservation standards for new buildings:
 - a. Grade-related (3 storeys or less) residential buildings achieve performance level that is equal to a rating of 83 or more when evaluated in accordance with Natural Resources Canada's EnerGuide for New Houses: Administrative and Technical Procedures.
 - b. Mid- and high-rise residential (4 storeys and greater) and nonresidential buildings be designed to achieve 40% greater efficiency than the Model National Energy Code for Buildings.
 - c. Industrial buildings be designed to achieve 25% greater energy efficiency than the Model National Energy Code for Buildings.
23. To encourage that all new buildings achieve 20% greater water conservation than the Ontario Building Code.
24. To encourage that new buildings be designed and certified to LEED® Silver, Gold or Platinum standards, and to provide complementary incentive programs to achieve the successful implementation of LEED® buildings across York Region.
25. To regularly review and update sustainable building incentive programs within York Region together with local municipalities. These programs may include water and wastewater servicing allocation credits, density bonusing, expedited processing of development approvals or the use of local municipal community improvement plans and associated financial tools.
26. That *development* shall be designed to maximize solar gains and be constructed in a manner that facilitates future solar installations (i.e. solar ready).

27. To encourage retrofitting of existing buildings within the Urban Area and within Towns and Villages to the standards in 5.2.22 and 5.2.23 of this Plan.
28. To encourage all new buildings to include on-site *renewable or alternative energy systems* which produce 25% of building energy use. Where on-site *renewable or alternative energy systems* are not feasible, consideration of purchasing grid-source renewable energy is encouraged.
29. To encourage enhanced indoor air quality in buildings, including the use of low or no volatile organic compound products; minimizing the leakage of combustion gases; reducing exposure to indoor pollutants by ventilating with outdoor air; and indoor moisture controls.
30. To encourage the use of environmentally preferable materials including low volatile organic compound products, adhesives and finishes, highrenewable and recycled content products and certified sustainably harvested lumber in all new development.
31. To restrict the use of potable water for outdoor watering.
32. To require the installation of rainwater harvesting and re-circulation/reuse systems on all new residential buildings for outdoor irrigation and outdoor water use.
33. To encourage the use of water conserving, drought resistant landscaping by:
- providing a minimum of 6 inches of topsoil;
 - installing drought resistant sod;
 - providing landscape features that minimize the demand for water and synthetic chemicals by utilizing native and drought resistant species; and,
 - installing permeable driveway surfaces.
34. To encourage all *development* to incorporate green roofs into building design.
35. To encourage local heat island effects mitigation in all *development* including:
- green and/or white roofs;
 - locating trees or other plantings to provide shading for at least 50% of sidewalks, patios, and driveways within 15 m of the home; and,
 - installing light-coloured paving materials including white concrete, grey concrete, open pavers and any material with a solar reflectance index of at least 29.
36. To encourage the use of building materials sourced within York Region, and to support the building and land development industry on the availability of local building materials.
37. To ensure that all new development reduces construction waste and diverts construction waste from landfill consistent with policy 7.4.14 of this Plan.
38. To ensure that facilities necessary for three-stream waste separation and collection are provided consistent with policy 7.4.9 of this Plan.
39. To work with local municipalities and the building and land development industry to develop resident, building owner and operator educational materials and training on sustainable buildings.
40. To work with local municipalities and the building and land development industry to provide each resident, worker, and employer with information on the sustainability features of their

communities including water and energy conservation, transit information, ride share, car share, and carpooling options.

41. To support local municipalities and the building and land development industry with information, resources, and training to implement the sustainable building policies of this Plan.

42. To require local municipalities to develop programs to ensure the successful implementation of the sustainable building policies of this Plan.

43. To support local municipal initiatives in sustainable community planning and sustainable building policy and implementation to achieve building standards greater than the policies of this Plan and the Ontario Building Code.

44. To consider the creation of an awards program to showcase sustainable buildings and communities in York Region.

Excerpt from Section 5.6 of the Regional Official Plan:

1. That local municipalities, in consultation with York Region, prepare comprehensive secondary plans for *new community areas* that meet or exceed the policies of this section of this Plan. The secondary plan preparation should include an innovative approach that involves a multidisciplinary team assembled by the local municipality in order to ensure an integrated and sustainable approach to the planning, design and approval of the secondary plan.

2. That each *new community area* shall be planned in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner.

3. That *new community areas* shall be designed to meet or exceed a minimum density of 20 residential units per hectare and a minimum density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare in the *developable area*.

4. That *new community areas* shall contain a wide range and mix of housing types, sizes and affordability.

5. That *new community areas* shall be designed to contain community core areas, which will be the focus of local retail, personal services, human services, community services and provide connections to rapid transit. The community cores shall be within a reasonable walking distance from the majority of the population.

6. That within *new community areas*, live-work opportunities be provided through a combination of flexible zoning permissions and accommodations for combined residential and business or personal services, office uses, and home occupations.

7. That *new community areas* shall be designed to have high-quality urban design, attractive buildings, landscaping and public streetscapes, consistent with policy 5.2.8 of this Plan.

8. That *new community areas* shall be planned to consider human services needs, including educational, social, health, arts, culture, and recreational facilities.

9. To design communities to maximize passive solar gains, and to ensure that all buildings are constructed in a manner that facilitates future solar installations.

10. That the local municipality shall develop a Community Energy Plan for each *new community area* to reduce community energy demands, optimize passive solar gains through design, and make use of renewable, on-site generation and district energy options including but not limited to solar, wind, water, biomass, and geothermal energy.

11. That comprehensive master environmental servicing plans shall be prepared and implemented. These plans will examine all water systems in a comprehensive and integrated manner to:

- a. understand the integration of all water systems to increase efficiencies;
- b. maximize water conservation in buildings and municipal infrastructure, including water-efficient landscaping and rainwater collection for reuse; and,
- c. minimize stormwater volume and contaminant loads, and maximize infiltration through an integrated treatment approach, which may include techniques such as rainwater harvesting, runoff reduction of solids and materials at source, phosphorus reduction, constructed wetlands, bioretention swales, green roofs, permeable surfaces, clean water collection systems, and the preservation and enhancement of native vegetation cover.

12. That mobility plans shall be completed to ensure that:

- a. communities are designed to have interconnected and accessible mobility systems, with a priority on pedestrian movement, and on transit use and access;
- b. communities are designed to include a system of pedestrian and bicycle paths linking the community internally and externally to other areas, and providing access to the transit system;
- c. a transit plan is completed in consultation with York Region Transit, which identifies transit routes and corridors, co-ordinates transit with land use patterns and ensures the early integration of transit into the community;
- d. the distance to a transit stop in the Urban Area is within 500 metres of 90% of residents, and within 200 metres of 50% of residents;
- e. all schools and community centres shall be integrated into the community mobility system and provide the ability to walk, cycle, transit and carpool to these locations;
- f. the street network includes continuous collector streets that run both north-south and east-west and/or a grid system of streets linked to the Regional Street network;
- g. *new community areas* are designed to meet the York Region Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines;
- h. a rapid transit corridor and/or transit terminal that connects to a rapid transit corridor is included in the community;
- i. parking standards, consistent with policy 5.2.10, encourage and support transit use and include reduced minimum and maximum parking standards; and,
- j. trip-reduction strategies consistent with the policies of Section 7.1 are promoted.

13. That *new community areas* shall be designed to implement the York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.

14. That a Greenlands System Plan shall be prepared that:

- a. evaluates the potential impact of *development* and ensures the protection, enhancement, and securement of all *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* of the System;
- b. identifies strategic areas for enhancement and restoration to maximize the quality of the entire System;

- c. identifies how infrastructure projects within the System, including permitted stream crossings for streets, water and wastewater systems, contribute to an overall ecological gain by increasing natural cover, enhancing ecological function,
- d. providing recreational access or contributing to off-site enhancements;
- e. identifies securement opportunities and management requirements;
- f. includes a trail system, which is integrated into the mobility systems of the community;
- g. examines the feasibility of providing local community gardening plots where appropriate, outside of the lands dedicated for parkland; and,
- h. identifies hazard lands and hazardous sites, incorporates them into the Greenlands System, directs *development* away from these areas and includes an appropriate buffer or access allowance.

15. That *new community areas* be designed to include an integrated open space network that includes both active recreational facilities and meeting places, urban squares, parks, outdoor seating and informal gathering spaces generally within 500 metres of all residents.

16. That *new community areas* be designed to reduce urban heat island effects and consider integrating green and white roofs, greening to provide shade, and light-coloured surface materials consistent with policy 5.2.35 of this Plan.