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OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 597 – THE ISLINGTON AVENUE CORRIDOR SECONDARY PLAN CITY OF VAUGHAN

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, March 7, 2006, 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, in part, Amendment No. 597 to the Official Plan of the City of Vaughan and defer section 2.7 which deals with Special Policy Areas.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend partial approval of the City of Vaughan's Official Plan Amendment No. 597 (OPA 597). The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Natural Resources are the approval authority for Special Policy Areas (SPA) and as such, Section 2.7 of OPA 597 is being deferred so the Ministries can make a decision when all applicable studies have been completed.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Description of the Application

The City of Vaughan embarked on reviewing the development options for the Islington Avenue corridor, between Langstaff Road and Woodbridge Avenue, in response to a number of development applications seeking amendments to the Woodbridge Secondary Plan. The Islington Avenue Land Use Study commenced in February 2002.

Consultation involved the creation of a Stakeholder Consulting Group. The Group consisted of representatives from: property owners directly in the study area, ratepayer groups bordering on Islington Avenue, the umbrella ratepayers association for the City of Vaughan, landowners with development applications in the study area, the Region of York and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The study was completed in September 2002 with a final report recommending a preferred land use plan. This preferred land use plan and the policy recommendations contained in the final report became the basis of the Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan. (See Land Use Schedule shown on *Attachment #1*.)

The City of Vaughan adopted the Secondary Plan, OPA No. 597, on June 23, 2003. The Region received the request for approval of OPA 597 on July 3, 2003. Comments received from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), dated August 19, 2003, advised that they were generally in support of the proposed secondary plan; however, TRCA cautioned that since the City proposed to increase the densities in the Special Policy Areas (SPAs), the Province, namely the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the Minister of Natural Resources (MNR), have the approval authority over these SPAs. SPA's are areas where urban development has historically developed within floodplains and the continued viability of these areas depend on a reasoned application of the Provincial standards for floodplain management.

Written comments from the MMAH and MNR were received on September 24, 2004. Efforts for a joint meeting between the Province, TRCA, the City and the Region culminated in a meeting that took place in mid-November 2005. At this meeting, the Province advised that the section dealing with SPA's should be removed from the amendment and brought back to the Province for approval, through the Region, once all the necessary studies were completed. The City of Vaughan's position was to leave the section in but defer its decision while approving the balance of the secondary plan.

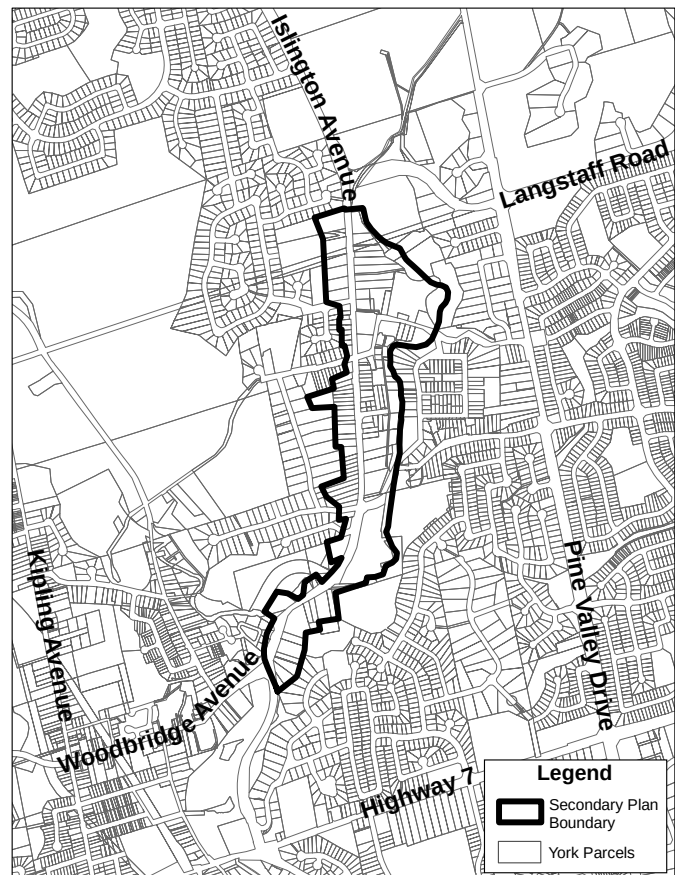
3.2 Location

The Secondary Plan area is centred on the historic settlement of Pine Grove and comprises approximately 38 hectares of land fronting onto Islington Avenue, as well as some properties that have access onto Islington Avenue. This area is generally between Langstaff Road to the north and Woodbridge Avenue to the south.

3.3 The Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan

The guiding principles of the Secondary Plan include:

- Maintain and enhance the built form, character and scale within the corridor, being a mix of institutional, commercial, industrial, open space and, predominately, single detached residential uses.



- Recognize urban design implications associated with both the wide and narrow segments of the planned reconstruction of Islington Avenue, and the existing natural features and built character of the corridor.
- Respect existing land uses, most particularly the Humber River Valley, Hayhoe Mills, and adjacent communities.
- Ensure that transportation improvements to support any proposed intensification of residential development be in place prior to the approval of development applications.
- Ensure that any intensification in the residential fabric of the area can be supported by the existing or planned community services.

The adopted Secondary Plan includes intensification to medium density residential and high density residential. The Medium Density designation permits block, stacked or street townhouses and garden-court or low-rise apartments to a maximum Floor Space Index (FSI) of 0.5 and to a maximum height of 3.5 storeys. The High Density designation permits stacked townhouses or apartment units to a maximum FSI of 1.0 and to a maximum height of 5 storeys.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan embodies good planning principles by encouraging redevelopment and intensification to proceed while being guided by a set of design guidelines respectful of the existing scale and character of the secondary plan area.

The Secondary Plan proposes to increase residential densities within the existing Special Policy Areas (SPA). Since the Province continues to be the approval authority over SPA's, the Region can approve the majority of the secondary plan and defer decision on Section 2.7 – Special Policy Areas to the Province.

The Province has advised that, in order to gain approval of proposed changes to SPA's, municipalities should update their SPA policies in a comprehensive manner. This includes updating the SPA boundaries with TRCA's newest floodline modeling exercise as well as conducting updated technical engineering studies that details such matters as flood frequency, depth of flooding and velocity of flows, upstream and down stream effects, proposed flood proofing measures, etc.

4.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The approvals process of the City of Vaughan's Official Plan Amendment No. 597 commenced prior to March 1, 2005, the effective date of the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS); therefore, the old 1996 PPS, as amended February 1, 1997, applies. The approval of OPA 597 shall have regard for the policies contained in the 1996 PPS.

The 1996 PPS encourages the development of strong communities. This is achieved by:

- directing growth to the urban areas (1.1.1.a)

- avoiding development or land use patterns which may cause environmental or public health and safety concerns (1.1.1.f)
- efficient use of land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities (1.1.2.b.1)
- supporting the use of public transit (1.1.2.b.3)
- development standards which are cost effective and which will minimize land consumption and reduce servicing costs (1.1.2.d)
- providing opportunities for redevelopment, intensification and revitalization in areas that have sufficient existing or planned infrastructure (1.1.2.e).

The Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan complies with the policies and intent of the Provincial Policy Statement by: encouraging residential intensification that is sympathetic to the existing character and scale of the immediate neighbourhood; is within the urban area with sufficient existing planned infrastructure; supports public transit, and encourages development that is cost effective.

The Province advises that they are the approval authority of Special Policy Areas (SPA). This authority is specified in the definitions section of the PPS.

4.2 York Region Official Plan

The secondary plan policies are consistent with the policies of the Regional Official Plan. Islington Avenue is identified as a Local Corridor. The Regional Plan requires secondary plans to contain policies which indicate the function of Local Corridors while considering the historical function and provide land use policies along the Local Corridors. The Secondary Plan achieves this by encouraging residential intensification at densities that are sympathetic to the historic character and predominately low density character of the area. The Secondary Plan also contains urban design guidelines that encourage developments that will compliment the existing built form. The Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan is consistent with the policies and intent of the Regional Official Plan.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

Regional approval of the Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan will advance the goals of Vision 2026, in particular, “A Vibrant Economy”, “Housing Choices for Our Residents”, and “Managed and Balanced Growth”. The amendment provides for low, medium and high density housing and job opportunities within the proposed employment areas.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report or in the approval of the secondary plan.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Islington Avenue Corridor Study resulted in a secondary plan that seeks to revitalize and strengthen this Local Corridor. The Regional approval of this secondary plan, in part, will enable the City to implement a community plan that represents good planning. The recommendation of this report is supportive of the City of Vaughan's position.

7. CONCLUSION

The City of Vaughan embarked on reviewing the development options for the Islington Avenue corridor, between Langstaff Road and Woodbridge Avenue, in response to a number of development applications seeking amendments to the Woodbridge Secondary Plan. The Islington Avenue Land Use Study involved the participation of a large Stakeholder Consulting Group. The study culminated with a preferred land use plan and associated policies and design guidelines developed to form the Islington Avenue Corridor Secondary Plan.

The main goal of the Secondary Plan is to direct residential intensification to appropriate locations and to define the appropriate densities and design guidelines that are sympathetic to the existing character of the neighbourhood. The policies of the Secondary Plan are consistent with the 1996 Provincial Policy Statement, the Regional Official Plan and represents good planning.

Some of the proposed intensification areas are located in Special Policy Areas (SPA). SPA's are the responsibility of the Province and development, including Official Plan amendments, within these SPA's require Provincial approval. The recommendation of this report is to approve the Secondary Plan, in part, and defer the approval of section 2.7, of the Secondary Plan, which deals with SPA's.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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