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PLANNING FOR TOMORROW
PART 3
YORK REGION RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION STRATEGY

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Paul Bottomley, Manager, Growth Management, Economy and Information Research, Long Range and Strategic Planning, relating to Clauses 6 to 10 in this Committee Report be received;**
- 2. A Regional or Local Councillor from each local municipality be requested to “champion” the *Planning for Tomorrow* series to raise awareness in their communities; and**
- 3. The following recommendations contained in the report dated April 4, 2007, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services be adopted:**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council adopt the Intensification Matrix for consultation with the area municipalities (*Council Attachment 4*).
2. Regional Council direct staff to work with the area municipalities to prepare their individual implementation strategies in order to meet their intensification assignment as described in the Matrix.
3. The Regional Clerk distribute this staff report to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), and the area municipalities for information purposes.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this staff report is to provide an intensification strategy for consultation and refinement. The Strategy’s main objective is three-fold:

- To forecast the amount and location of residential intensification from 2006 to 2031 in the Region.
- To demonstrate what the Provincial *Places to Grow* target of 40% intensification means to the Region in terms of absolute numbers and urban design.
- To provide a framework for the Regional and Area Municipal Intensification Strategies using the Intensification Matrix.

This report is Part 3 in the series of the Planning for Tomorrow reports being brought forward for information and discussion in the spring of 2007. The reports in the series are:

1. York Region Population and Employment Forecasts
2. 2031 York Region Land Requirements
3. York Region Residential Intensification Strategy
4. York Region Residential Area Analysis – Preliminary Report
5. Phase 2 – Public Engagement and Consultation.

All five reports are to be considered at the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting of April 4, 2007 and should be read in the order in which they are listed above.

3. OVERVIEW

The key findings on intensification are as follows:

- A preliminary analysis indicates that the 40% intensification target specified in the Provincial *Places to Grow Plan* requires the Region to accommodate over 85,000 new units within the built boundary by 2031.
- The southern three municipalities of Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan are expected to absorb approximately 84% or 71,500 of the total new intensification units.
- Each area municipality has a role to play in achieving 40% intensification Region-wide. As a result, each area municipality has an intensification target and will be asked to prepare an individual implementation strategy. This approach ensures that intensification units locate in the appropriate areas.
- From January 2006 to January 2007, the Region has received 22 applications for medium- and high-density development which translates into 16,922 potential new units.
- Quality urban design, appropriate scale, compatibility and consistency with the with the Region's *Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines* are keys to successful implementation.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Concept of Intensification

According to the *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)* and the Provincial *Places to Grow Plan*, intensification is defined as : “the development of property, site or areas at a higher density than currently exists through:

- redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites.

- the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas.
- infill development.

A detailed explanation of these four forms of intensification are contained in this staff report as *Attachment 1*.

4.1.1 Benefits of Intensification

The benefits of further intensifying the Region's urban areas and creating compact communities are outlined below. These benefits are based on Section 5.2 of the *Regional Official Plan (ROP)*.

- Communities can be designed so that cost-effective and efficient transit, infrastructure and human services systems can be operated and easily accessed. Well-designed streets and building locations give people the choice of walking and bicycling as opposed to complete reliance on automobiles.
- Higher densities result in a greater proportion of row and apartment style housing. These types of housing structures and their affordability provide opportunities for a broad range of age and income groups, and family and non-family structures.
- More land is available for other community functions such as employment, shopping, entertainment, arts and culture, recreation, education, places of worship and community services. All of these functions can be easily accessible by transit, walking or bicycling.
- A sense of place and vibrancy takes shape in the community as street activity increases, people have more personal contact with each other, and social cohesion is strengthened.

4.2 Provincial Growth Plan – “Places to Grow”

The *Places to Grow Plan* specifies the following intensification approach:

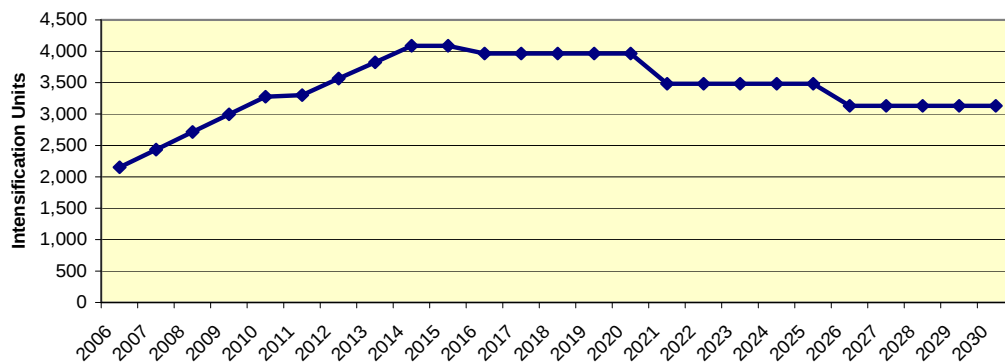
- A phased increase in residential intensification so that by 2015, a minimum of 40% of all residential development occurring annually within each upper and single-tier municipality will be in the defined built-up areas.
- A density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031 or earlier applies to urban growth centres, specifically the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
- The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, in consultation with the affected municipalities, will verify and delineate the *built boundary*.

4.3 Regional Context

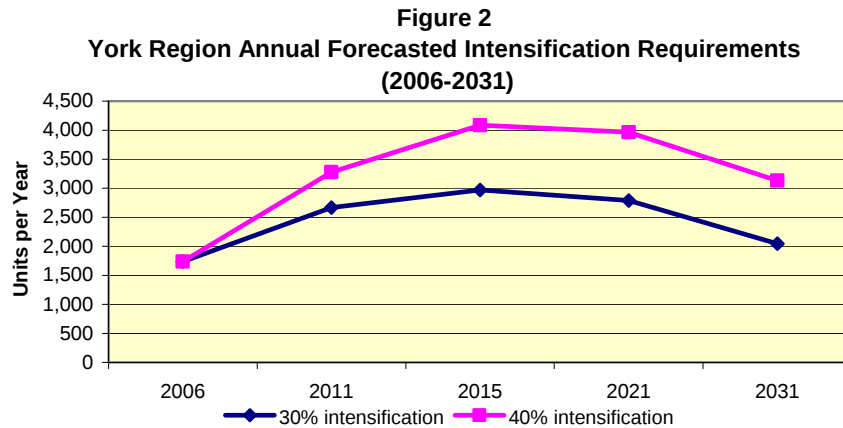
The October 2006 staff report on intensification, along with an earlier staff report received by Regional Council in November 2005, highlighted a number of findings and on-going initiatives that track and promote intensification within the Region. These include:

- *The Regional Centres and Corridors Strategy*, June 2004, aims to strengthen the relationship between a compact urban structure in the centers and corridors and, transportation and transit.
- *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 43)*, July 2005, increases the plan's intensification target from 20% to 30% in existing built-up areas, and towns and villages.
- In September 2006, Regional Council adopted the *Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines* that focuses on urban design to respond to the needs of transit users and the transit service itself.
- Between January 2001 and December 2005, the Region achieved a rate of 18.4% intensification compared to a 16.7% rate between 1990 and 2003. Both analyses used the 1990 built boundary.
- A preliminary analysis indicates that the 40% intensification target requires the Region to accommodate over 85,000 new units within the built boundary by 2031. Figure 1 illustrates the forecasted annual demand to achieve this target. Figure 2 illustrates the difference in forecasted intensification demand between the 30% ROP and the 40% *Places to Grow Plan* target.

Figure 1
York Region Forecasted Annual Intensification Demand (2006-2031)
40% Scenario



SOURCE: York Region Planning Department, 2007.



SOURCE: York Region Planning Department, 2007.

- The residual 60% of residential development of approximately 140,000 units will be accommodated in existing approved greenfield areas, as well as lands yet to be designated outside the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*.

4.4 Current Residential Development Trends

The October 2006 staff report described current trends in residential development throughout the Region with respect to household growth, housing mix and density. The main conclusion from this trends analysis revealed that the Region is gradually increasing its residential density and diversifying its housing mix. It is expected that new developments under application will be at higher densities with a greater proportion of row and apartment style housing. The Region's primary task is to foster and strengthen this trend and ensure that compact development is directed to the appropriate areas such as Regional and Local Centres and Corridors.

4.5 Intensification Successes

The 2006 staff report also included a "Made in York" Intensification Photographic Essay that contained a preliminary compilation of site-specific examples of compact development within the Region's urban area. This preliminary inventory illustrated that the Region has already established a trend for compact development that integrates compact built form with urban design principles.

Examples demonstrated that densities higher than 2.0 Floor Space Index (FSI) have been achieved throughout the Region. The ROP specifies a FSI of 2.5 for its four Regional Centres. FSI is defined as the gross floor area of a building divided by the total site area. Other characteristics include:

- The number of units per development ranged from 68 units in a 4-storey building to 370 units in an 11-storey building.
- The majority of compact development has strategically located along regional and local corridors within access to transit and linkages to rapid transit.

- Parking in these developments are a combination of at-grade and underground parking resulting in standards in excess of 1.0 spaces per resident.
- Building heights are generally less than 18 storeys. The average height was 8 storeys for all developments examined.

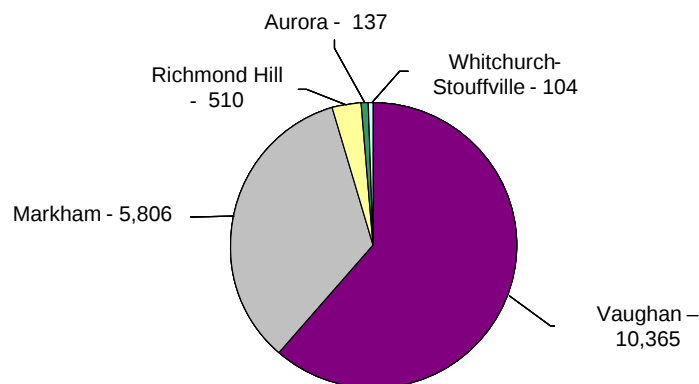
The complete preliminary photographic essay is included in the staff report as *Attachment 2*. Regional staff will continue to expand and refine this photographic essay through the coming months.

Between January 2006 and January 2007, the Region received a total of 22 applications classified as medium- and high-density development. These applications represent a potential 16,922 medium- and high-density new residential units. Examples of these applications are as follows:

- Concord Floral located at Highway 7 and the CN Rail:
 - Fourteen apartment buildings ranging from 8 to 20 storeys
 - Nine blocks of townhouses
 - Total unit potential is 2,500 units
- Liberty Developments Thornhill located at Yonge Street and Doncaster Avenue:
 - Two 32-storey and two 36-storey apartment buildings with potential for 1,380 units
 - One 10-storey and one 3-storey office building
 - 120,000 square foot retail plaza.

Figure 3 illustrates the unit breakdown of these 22 applications by area municipality.

Figure 3: Total High and Medium Density Residential Units from Applications Received (January 2006 to January 2007)



SOURCE: York Region Planning Department, 2007

Attachment 3 of this staff report lists these medium and high-density development applications. The analysis reveals that although the Region is building more multi-unit dwellings and increasing its densities, some of these developments need to be strategically located in appropriate areas along the Regional Centres and Corridors serviced by rapid and public transit. The objective of the intensification strategy is to direct future intensification to these key development areas in order to avoid dispersed ad hoc intensification.

In addition, approximately 3,600 new condominium units are actively being marketed in Aurora, Markham, Maple, Newmarket, Woodbridge and Stouffville. This figure is based on information from *The Toronto Star*, January 27, 2007.

5. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

5.1 The Provincial Built Boundary

In December 2006, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) provided Regional staff with a preliminary draft Provincial built boundary. This built boundary accompanied the *Technical Paper on a Proposed Methodology for Developing a Built Boundary for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Built Boundary Technical Paper)* released by the Ministry on November 27, 2006.

The *Places to Grow Plan* defines the built boundary as the “limits of the developed urban areas” as defined by MPIR. According to the Plan, 40% of the Region’s development should locate within this boundary by 2015 and every year thereafter to 2031. Based on a preliminary analysis of the built boundary, staff are currently investigating the following areas as they relate to MPIR’s delineation of the built boundary and the Region’s capacity to achieve 40% intensification:

- Parkway Belt West Lands
- Cornell Centre
- Edges of the built boundary
- Donut Holes or pockets of unbuilt grid-cells surrounded by built-up areas found throughout the Region.
- Some unbuilt areas that may have been erroneously captured due to their rural character.

The Provincial Built Boundary is not yet finalized. Regional staff are examining the Built Boundary in collaboration with area municipal staff. Regional staff will also continue to consult with the Province on the methodology and delineation of the built boundary, as well as the specified issue areas.

5.2 Preliminary Municipal Intensification Calculation

Table 1 lists the required intensification target for each municipality to attain a Region-wide intensification rate of 40%. The intensification calculations are expressed in units by structure type. The distribution of these units was calculated based on the Regional 40% Forecast Scenario and is being discussed and refined with area municipal staff.

Table 1

Required Intensification by Local Municipality to Reach 40% Intensification
Region-Wide (2006-2031)

	Singles	Semis	Rows	Apt	Total
Aurora	90	0	590	2,120	2,800
East Gwillimbury	0	0	210	820	1,030
Georgina	270	10	530	1,890	2,690
King	100	0	170	660	920
Markham	1,050	400	4,080	24,260	29,790
Newmarket	370	250	500	3,240	4,360
Richmond Hill	1,700	530	2,270	7,030	11,530
Vaughan	470	170	3,830	25,740	30,210
Whitchurch-Stouffville	660	0	310	1,040	2,010
YORK REGION	4,710	1,370	12,470	66,800	85,340

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services, 2007

Note: Total may not add due to rounding.

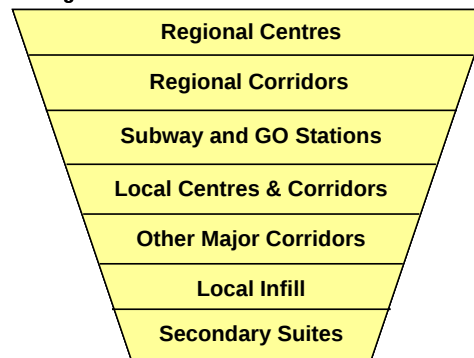
Approximately 18,420 of these units are currently under application and are estimated to fall within the preliminary Provincial Built Boundary.

5.3 The Intensification Matrix

In order to achieve the *Places to Grow* target and the municipal assignments, a wide variety of intensification types will be reviewed. The Intensification Matrix has been formulated to help identify potential intensification areas as illustrated in Figure 4.

The Matrix identifies strategic key development areas where intensification can be best accommodated in Region's built-up area with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. In this way, the Region can avoid unplanned and dispersed intensification throughout the Region.

Figure 4: The Intensification Matrix Framework



The Matrix will be used to organize the estimated 85,000 required new intensification units outlined in section 5.2 into the appropriate level based on scale of development and character. Table 2 Intensification Matrix describes how the 85,000 new intensification units will be distributed throughout the Region by matrix level.

Table 2
York Region Intensification Matrix (2006-2031)

	Units (1)	% of Intensification
Regional Centres	25,640	30%
Regional Corridors	14,490	17%
Subway and GO Stations (6)	2,490	3%
Local Centres	25,890	30%
Other Major Corridors	5,900	7%
Local Infill	10,930	13%
TOTAL	85,340	

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services, 2007

Note: Total may not add due to rounding.

1. Total Intensification Unit Growth projected from 2006 to 2031.

2. Secondary Suites are not included pending further analysis.

3. Other Major Corridors include selected areas along Steeles Ave, Dufferin St, Bayview Ave and Major Mackenzie Dr.

4. Local Centres includes locally defined centres (i.e. Woodbridge, Unionville, Thornhill) and Towns, Villages and Hamlets.

5. Regional Centres figure does not include built units as of July 1, 2006.

6. Located outside other matrix areas listed.

Every area municipality has a role to play in achieving the Regional target rate of 40% intensification. Municipal Implementation Strategies will highlight the differences in these roles. Regional staff have conducted a preliminary consultation with the area municipalities on the Intensification Matrix. Municipal staff are currently reviewing the Matrix and their individual assignments. Regional staff will work together with the area municipalities to further breakdown and complete the Matrix. This collaborative work includes:

- Developing a common set of criteria to organize key development areas into the Matrix levels.
- Identifying specific key development areas under each Matrix level and their estimated unit yield. For example, the Matrix will list all the local centres in the Region designated for intensification and their estimated unit potential by 2031.
- Identifying the policy changes needed to provide intensification in the right places.

5.3.1 Municipal Intensification Implementation Strategy

Area municipalities will be asked to complete a Municipal Intensification Implementation Strategy. This action plan will outline how each area municipality will achieve their individual preliminary intensification assignment using the Intensification Matrix framework. As part of the implementation strategy, each area municipality should complete their own version of the Intensification Matrix. A copy of a blank Matrix is included in this staff report as *Attachment 4*.

Each Municipal Intensification Implementation Strategy will examine potential key development areas in their respective municipality related to:

- Prime areas for intensification
- Appropriate scale of development
- Mix of land uses
- Housing mix
- The Region's *Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines*

The Region in collaboration with the area municipalities will develop a common set of criteria to be included in each implementation strategy. The criteria will act as a type of "checklist" and will speak to the following elements:

- key principles
- compatibility and fit with the surrounding areas
- housing options
- transportation and transit options
- policy or other obstacles to achieving targets
- future policy direction and tools necessary to meet the intensification forecast
- the role of secondary suites.

Consistency across municipalities is key in ensuring that the Region attains 40% intensification in terms of methodology, infrastructure and human services assessments, among other factors.

The Intensification Matrix and the local implementation strategies will inform the intensification policies in the ROP and subsequently, the Local Official Plans.

5.4 Next Steps

The next major steps involve consultation with the area municipalities to review and refine the intensification forecasts. Municipal input will also clarify the Region's capacity to accommodate 40% intensification. Next steps include:

- Work with the area municipalities on their preliminary assignments and Intensification Matrix to better suit their circumstances.
- Test the estimated unit yields in the Matrix and forecasts against local findings contained in the municipal implementation strategy.
- Conduct further assessments on the Intensification Matrix which include:
 - An infrastructure assessment with respect to transportation, transit, water and sewer capabilities.

- An analysis on green space, parking requirements and human services provisions.
- Identify the necessary financial and planning tools to implement intensification in the identified key development areas.
- Explore the relationship between compact development and energy efficient technology as a means of delivering efficient and cost-effective infrastructure such as water use.
- In consultation with the area municipalities, develop a technique for annual monitoring of intensification both municipal- and Region-wide.
- Review the *Regional Centres and Corridors Strategy* for additional policy actions to encourage more intensification as required in the *Places to Grow Plan*.
- Integrate the findings from the intensification strategy into the Growth Management Update and the ROP review to further encourage and support intensification and the Provincial target of 40%. This information will also assist in understanding how the Region can potentially increase its rate of intensification beyond 40% in the long-term.

5.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Residential Intensification Strategy supports the Vision 2026 goal areas of “Housing Choices for Our Residents”, “Managed and Balanced Growth” and “Infrastructure for a Growing Region”.

In addition, the Residential Intensification Strategy also supports the “Healthy Communities” action area of the York Region Preliminary Draft Sustainability Strategy.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The residential intensification work is being conducted within the existing Planning and Development Services Department staff complement and within approved budget allocations.

Staff have been investigating the role and impact of fiscal policy and financial tools in influencing the urban structure of York Region. Achieving the Centres and Corridors vision and the 40% intensification target will require creative and innovative funding tools to be put in place and a significant investment in supporting infrastructure.

The Region recently completed a study of financial options to foster intensification in the Centres and Corridors with respect to development charges. Findings indicate that there

are potential cost savings in transportation capital costs in the Centres and Corridors which could potentially justify restructuring the Region's uniform development charges methodology.

A 25 year fiscal impact analysis will be completed to further assess the fiscal challenges associated with growth options. In this way, the Region can devise a decision-making model that gives equal consideration to land-use and infrastructure planning, human services and fiscal impacts.

7. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Area municipal consultation and coordination are integral components of the Region's intensification work. The Municipal Technical Advisory Committee will provide opportunity for additional local input on intensification. As mentioned throughout this staff report, the Region will work with the Area Municipalities on the following:

- Preliminary intensification assignments based on the 40% intensification scenario as per the *Places to Grow Plan*.
- The Intensification Matrix in terms of identifying key development areas and estimating unit yields
- Municipal Intensification Implementation Strategies that include the "checklist" of principles and criteria.

8. CONCLUSION

The Residential Intensification Strategy forecasts the amount and location of residential intensification from 2006 to 2031 using an Intensification Matrix. In this way, the Region can demonstrate what the Provincial *Places to Grow* target of 40% intensification means in terms of absolute numbers and urban design.

From January 2006 to January 2007, the Region has received 22 applications for medium- and high-density development which translates into 16,922 potential new units. The strategy will direct future intensification to strategic areas that are best able to accommodate this scale of development. Key development areas, such as the Regional Centres and Corridors, will be assessed in terms of cost effective and efficient provision of infrastructure, human services and transit.

The Intensification Matrix demonstrates that all area municipalities have a role to play in achieving a Region-wide rate of 40% intensification by 2015 and each year thereafter to 2031. A preliminary analysis indicates that the 40% intensification target specified in the Provincial *Places to Grow Plan* requires the Region to accommodate over 85,000 new units within the built boundary by 2031. Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan are

expected to absorb approximately 84% of this growth. Area municipalities will be asked to complete a Municipal Intensification Implementation Strategy that outlines how their assigned local intensification target can be met. Quality urban design, appropriate scale, compatibility and consistency with the Region's *Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines* are keys to successful implementation.

Next steps include refining the intensification strategy with the Area Municipalities. Further assessments regarding infrastructure, green space, parking requirements and human services provisions will also be conducted. In addition, existing policies will be reviewed to identify further tools and actions necessary to implement intensification and meet the Provincial 40% target. Findings from the intensification strategy will be incorporated into the Growth Management Strategy Update and ROP review. These will also inform any amendments to the Local Official Plans.

For further information regarding this staff report, please contact Paul Bottomley, Manager of Growth Management, Economy and Information Research at 905-830-4444 ext. 1530 or paul.bottomley@york.ca.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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