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DRAFT YORK REGION OFFICIAL PLAN – JUNE 2009

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the presentation by John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning;**
 - 2. Receipt of the deputation by Claudio Brutto, Brutto Consulting, on behalf of Bawden-Wood, owners of land in the Town of Richmond Hill and Addison Hall/Yorkwood/Emery, owners of land in the Town of Aurora;**
 - 3. Receipt of the following communications:**
 - (a) Patricia A. Foran, Aird & Berlis, June 17, 2009, on behalf of E. Manson Investments, owners of land in the Town of Richmond Hill;**
 - (b) Susan Rosenthal, Davies Howe Partners, June 17, 2009, on behalf of 775377 Ontario Limited (Belmont), Clearpoint Developments Ltd. and Upper City Corporation, owners of land in the Town of Richmond Hill;**
- and**
- 4. Adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated May 25, 2009, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1. The Draft York Region Official Plan appended to this report as *Attachment 1* be endorsed for circulation and public review.**
- 2. Council endorse the following key elements within the Regional Official Plan:**
 - The population and employment forecasts and local municipal distribution as contained in the attached Regional Official Plan**
 - The minimum 40% Intensification target and local municipal distribution as contained in the attached Regional Official Plan**
 - The minimum 200 people/jobs per hectare density target for the Region's four urban growth centres**

- The minimum 50 people/jobs per hectare density target for the Region's designated unbuilt urban areas and Towns and Villages
- 3. The Regional Clerk circulate copies of this report, the Draft York Region Official Plan and all attachments to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.
- 4. Staff undertake circulation of the draft document and public engagement and consultation as outlined in this report and report back to Committee and Council at the November 4, 2009, Planning and Economic Development Committee on the public input, comments received and any changes recommended to the Draft York Region Official Plan.

2. PURPOSE

This report:

1. Introduces the Draft York Region Official Plan and recommends endorsement of the Draft Official Plan for release and public review and comment
2. Brings the Official Plan into conformity with Places to Grow- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan through a comprehensive process
3. Outlines the upcoming Public Information Sessions and local municipal Council briefings to discuss the Draft Plan, and
4. Directs staff to give notice for Public Information Sessions, the Open Houses and Statutory meeting required by the *Planning Act*.

The release of this Draft document is one of the final steps in the Planning for Tomorrow growth management initiative commenced in 2005. Following adoption by Regional Council late in 2009 and approval of the document by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the York Region Official Plan will conform to Places to Grow – The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan and will integrate the approved Master Plan for Transportation and Transit and Water and Wastewater in the Official Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

Planning for Tomorrow has set the stage for the updated Regional Official Plan

Since 2005, under the Planning for Tomorrow initiative, Regional staff has brought forward a series of research reports and presentations on all aspects of growth management.

A full listing and the reports in PDF format are available on the Planning for Tomorrow portion of the Region's website. These documents form the background work and discussion papers to support an update to the Regional Official Plan to bring the Regional Official Plan into conformity with the Provincial Places to Grow and Greenbelt Plans.

Extensive consultation has taken place

Besides background research papers, the three phases of consultation with the public, municipal Councils, stakeholders and special interest groups undertaken in 2006, 2007 and 2008 have focussed on the issues requiring attention in an updated Plan. Since 2006 there have been over 80 meetings, including the town hall meetings with various stakeholder groups, municipal councils and technical committees in regard to Planning for Tomorrow or various aspects of the review.

Staff has consulted with local municipalities and the Province as part of the local municipal and Provincial technical advisory committee and refined policies as a result.

Provincial Plan conformity will be achieved with approval of the Draft York Official Plan

Municipalities throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe were required to bring their respective official plans into conformity with the *Growth Plan* by June 2009 by adoption of an Official Plan Amendment. Without an Official Plan Amendment, the Region has technically not met this conformity date. York Region Council has chosen to do a comprehensive, integrated, public focused approach which has led to the attached updated Regional Official Plan. Council's approach, process and timing is a valid response to a complex series of requirements. This approach has been based on the following:

1. Regional Council has previously endorsed the key tenets of the Growth Plan as contained in the Draft Official Plan, *Attachment 1* to this report and as contained in Recommendation 2 and *Attachment 2* to this report.
2. The Region supports and places value on ongoing, meaningful stakeholder consultation as a key tenet of the Region's work.
3. Development of an updated Regional Official Plan provides a comprehensive approach to inclusion of both Provincial and Regional initiatives in the Plan as opposed to a series of amendments.

In 2009, Council endorsed all Provincial Growth Plan conformity requirements through a series of reports. Approval of the Regional Official Plan is the final statutory step in the conformity process. As part of the Region's conformity work in 2009, Regional staff has brought forward the following:

- 2031 population and employment forecasts (January – endorsed by Council)
- 2031 land requirements (January - endorsed by Council)
- Regional Intensification Strategy (February – endorsed by Council)
- New criteria for building communities (March - endorsed by Council)
- Wellhead Protection Area Policies and Mapping (March - endorsed Council)
- Natural Heritage System – (April endorsed by Council)
- Centres and Corridors Policy Criteria - (April endorsed by Council)
- Infrastructure Master Plan Updates for transportation, water and wastewater (released at special meeting of Council, May)
- 25 year fiscal impact analysis (endorsed by special meeting of Council, May)

In February, 2009 Regional Council endorsed the work plan for the 2009 Regional Official Plan update. In the opinion of Regional staff, the many new Provincial planning initiatives (Greenbelt, Source Water Protection and Places to Grow, Metrolinx and Lake Simcoe Protection Plan) as well as changes in Regional initiatives had fundamentally changed the way planning occurs in the south-central Ontario and York Region.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Background reports prepared by Regional staff and endorsed by Planning and Committee and Council over the past 4 years have covered all aspects of growth management; including, population and employment allocation from the Growth Plan to local municipalities, land budget requirements, intensification requirements and criteria for new communities. Additional policy work has involved natural heritage planning and Greenlands updates and most recently review of agricultural and rural lands, through a Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) assessment.

The employment forecast has been modified to be consistent with the Growth Plan employment forecast of 780,000

The Region's 2031 employment forecast of approximately 799,000 jobs was used as the basis for determining land requirements for employment uses in the land budget report brought forward to Planning committee in January of 2009. This figure is approximately 20,000 jobs higher than the Growth Plan forecast. Regional staff have subsequently met with provincial staff to resolve this issue and to seek further clarification on the land budget methodology.

The employment forecast in the Draft York Official Plan (*Attachment 1*) is consistent with the 780,000 figure in Schedule 3 of the Provincial Growth Plan. Regional staff will be preparing a revised land budget report for the fall of 2009 to document and clarify the forecast and land budget revisions.

The Draft Official Plan contains a number of policies which:

- Protect strategic employment lands beyond the 2031 planning period (Policy 4.3.10)
- Prevent the conversion of employment lands to other uses within the horizon of this Plan (Policies 4.3.12-14)
- Monitor and review the availability of strategically located employment lands and determine whether there is a need to consider redesignation of Greenbelt lands for employment as part of the 2015 Greenbelt Plan review (Policy 8.4.5)

The Region has now met the requirements of the Municipal Comprehensive Review

The *Growth Plan* states that a settlement area boundary expansion may only occur as part of a municipal comprehensive review that is defined as “an official plan review, or an official plan amendment, initiated by a municipality which comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the *Growth Plan*”. The results of the municipal comprehensive review are to be implemented through the Regional Official Plan process.

Regional Staff have now satisfied the requirements of the municipal comprehensive review through the completion of the Regional Official Plan and the background reports listed above. *Attachment 2* details the conformity work the Region has undertaken and the relevant sections of the Growth Plan that the conformity work relates to.

Greenbelt Plan Conformity Requirements

Regional Council at its meeting of February 21, 2008 endorsed Clause 10 of Report 2 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee which outlined the process to bring the Regional Official Plan into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan.

As part of this review an Agricultural Rural area review has been completed and revised mapping included in the Draft Official Plan. Policies have similarly been modified to bring them in line with Greenbelt and Provincial Policy Statement requirements.

A report on the Agricultural/Rural Review will be prepared for the September meeting of Planning and Economic Development Committee, however the draft report on the Review from the Region’s consultants Planscape will be available in the near future for review as part of the draft Regional Plan background studies.

Other aspects of Greenbelt Conformity background work including the Natural Heritage System Review and Update and Wellhead Protection Area policies and mapping have been undertaken as part of the Regional Official Plan update and are included in the draft Regional Official Plan.

Key Elements of the Draft Official Plan Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the Region and the organization of the document.

The draft Official Plan is divided into three sections, as illustrated in *Figure 1*, with policies rooted in the values of sustainability contained in the York Region Sustainability Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Region.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide policies within the three pillars of sustainability: Sustainable Natural Environment, Healthy Communities and Economic Vitality

Key elements of Chapter 2 – Sustainable Natural Environment include:

- Updated Greenlands System to include ORMCP Core and Linkages, Greenbelt Natural Heritage System, a natural heritage system in new communities and identification of the Greenlands system through the existing urban areas of the Region.
- Policies in this chapter emphasize System enhancements
- Greenbelt Plan Conformity for natural heritage system and features in the Greenbelt
- Incorporates Region's Significant Woodlands Study (2005)
- Minimum Significant Woodlands size 4 ha south of Moraine, 10 ha north of ORMCP

Key elements of Chapter 3 – Healthy Communities include:

- Emphasis on quality of life, health, and well-being
- Improve human health by planning sustainable active communities
- Improve air quality and human health and addressing climate change
- Ensure provision of human services to meet residents and workers needs
- Conserve, and promote cultural heritage
- Promote the development of acceptable housing that meets the needs of all residents and workers

Key elements of Chapter 4 – Economic Vitality, include:

- Renewed emphasis on Sustainability
- Stronger employment lands protection

YORK REGION OFFICIAL PLAN SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK



Figure 1

- Support for Regional Centres and Corridors as the focus of economic activity and culture
- Create a mixed use transit supportive pedestrian environment
- Conversion of employment lands not permitted
- Identify and protect strategic employment lands beyond 2031
- Ensure that retail is well designed and integrated within the community
- Ensure that growth is fiscally responsible

Chapters 5, 6 and 7

Chapters 5, 6 and 7, within the Growth Management section of the Plan, establish new standards for community development, emphasizing city building and the integrated, coordinated infrastructure delivery and the protection of agricultural and rural lands

Key elements of Chapter 5- An Urbanizing Region: Building Cities and Complete Communities include:

- Updated forecasts for population & employment
- Places to Grow conformity
- 40% intensification within the built up area by 2015 and every year thereafter until 2031
- Require Local municipal intensification strategies
- Emphasis on city-building
- Criteria for building new communities (white belt)
- Updated Centres and Corridors policies
- Emphasis on sustainable communities and cities

Key elements of Chapter 6 - Our Agriculture and Rural Lands include:

- Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan policies
- Updated Agriculture and Rural Area map
- Agricultural and Specialty Crop Area policies meet Greenbelt Plan and PPS
- Rural Area policies consistent with Greenbelt Plan
- Mineral Aggregate Resource policies to meet PPS

Key elements of Chapter 7 – Servicing Our Population include:

- Reducing demand for services
 - Create a pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive active transportation system
 - Reduce automobile dependency
 - Water conservation policies
- Protecting corridors, future urban streets and rural roads
- Promoting a linked and efficient network for goods movement
- Supporting strong airport infrastructure in the GTAH
- Ensure adequate water resources and clean drinking water
- Provide safe and efficient wastewater services

- Achieve a sustainable and efficient waste management system
- Demonstrate leadership in energy conservation and innovation

Chapter 8 provides implementing policies for the Regional Official Plan

Key elements of Chapter 8 – Implementation, include:

- Emphasis on sustainability, resiliency, innovation and accountability
- Stronger coordination of growth and services
- Ensure planning is conducted in a transparent and timely manner
- Focus on partnerships and continuous improvement

***Planning Act* specifies procedures to obtain comments on the Draft Official Plan**

The *Planning Act* specifies the public notice and meeting requirements to be followed for a 5-year review and consideration of Draft Official Plans. These procedures must be followed in order for any Places to Grow or Greenbelt conformity amendments to the official plan to be legitimate.

In this case, at least one Public Open House must be held not less than seven days prior to the Statutory Public meeting. Advertisement for both the open house and the statutory meeting can be given together along with detailed information about the changes a minimum of 20 days in advance of the first meeting.

Given the many meetings held as part of the Planning for Tomorrow work, the process can be streamlined somewhat. It is recommended that the Open House be scheduled the evening of Tuesday September 29, 2009, from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Seminar Room at the Regional Administrative Building, with a presentation at 7:00 and question period following.

The Statutory Meeting prior to adoption of the Draft Official Plan will be scheduled for Wednesday October 7, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. as part of the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting. Appropriate notice will be given for this meeting as well as the Open House to meet the *Planning Act* requirements.

In each of the three phases previous phases of Planning for Tomorrow, public open houses and town hall meetings were held on average in five of the nine local municipalities within the Region. Since this is an update of the entire Regional Official Plan it is recommended that, in addition to the required Open House and Statutory meeting, that Regional staff hold 4 additional Public Information Sessions in early fall in the Towns of Markham, Richmond Hill, East Gwillimbury and the City of Vaughan. Scheduled dates for these sessions in early September will be advertised on the local newspapers, through the municipalities and on the Region's website in tandem with the statutory notice of the Open House and the Statutory Public Meeting.

Regional staff is also available to present the Draft Official Plan highlights and have discussions with each local municipal Council upon request. A number of local municipal Councils meet during the summer and Regional staff will offer presentations during this time. Letters with this offer have been sent to the Clerk of each local municipality. Regional staff will also work with local municipal planning staff over the summer and early part of September to respond to questions and ensure that formal municipal comments on the Draft York Official Plan are received by the Region before the end of September.

Special interest groups will also be contacted through the mailing list to determine their interest in Regional staff briefing and discussion on the draft document. These meetings will be conducted over the summer, and during early September.

The Draft Official Plan, appended as *Attachment 1* to this report will be printed following the Council endorsement on June 25, 2009 and this printed version will be given the large scale circulation identified above. In addition, Regional staff is currently preparing presentation materials, website updates and a brochure to assist in this public consultation phase.

The Draft Official Plan will be circulated to appropriate First Nations communities, Provincial Ministries, identified agencies, boards and commissions, local municipalities in York Region and abutting upper and lower tier municipalities. Given the recommended timing for adoption, Regional staff will request that formal comments on the Draft Official Plan be received by the Region not later than the end of September, 2009.

Following the Statutory Public meeting October 7, 2009, staff proposes that any comments received as a result of the statutory meeting be requested prior to October 14, 2009. This will permit consideration of the submissions in time for the Report back to Committee in early November.

A revised timeline for this Official Plan work is appended as *Attachment 3* to this report.

Summary of the Special Meeting of Council – April 8, 2009

Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, requires that at least every five years, Council revise the Official Plan. Before the revision, the *Planning Act* requires that consultation take place with the approval authority (in this case MMAH) and public bodies with respect to revisions that may be required. Subsection 26 (3)(b) of the *Planning Act* further requires that a special meeting of Council, open to the public, be held to hear submissions in regard to revisions that may be required.

Notice of the Special Meeting of Council was given in accordance with *Planning Act* requirements and the meeting held April 8, 2009.

Submissions at the meeting or in the days preceding and immediately following the meeting were received from the following persons or agents:

Solmar Developments (2 submissions)	Peter Eliopolous on behalf of Peter and Pauls Catering
David Faye & Associates on behalf of Ironrose Investments Inc.	Malone Givens Parsons on behalf of the North Markham Landowners Group
The Remington Group	Weston Consulting on behalf of the Church of the Pentecost
Brutto Consulting, representing Aurora Leslie Developments	Sciberras Consulting Inc on behalf of Smith Gardens
MMM Group on behalf of Signature Development	Ms. Susan Rosenthal, Davies Howe Partners on behalf of Clearpoint Developments, Upper City and 775377 Ontario Limited
Ms. Paula Tenuta, on behalf of BILD	Green Earth Village (East Gwillimbury)
Mr. Cam Milani, on behalf of Rizmi Holdings and Lucia Milani	The Domarr Foundation
Mr. Fraser Nelson. on behalf of Metrus Developments	The Chippewas of Rama First Nation
Ms Patricia A. Foran, Aird & Berlis LLP representing E Manson Investments	Ms Lucille King, Town of Aurora
Larkin & Associates representing Memorial Gardens	Mr. John La Chapelle, on behalf of Bell

Attachment 4 to this report contains the submissions and provides responses to the issues in a matrix form.

A number of other individuals and agencies attended the meeting but did not speak, preferring to receive additional information and notice of future meetings. Individual letters have been sent to these persons to inform them of today's meeting and the draft Official Plan

Relationship to Vision 2026

Vision 2026, York Region's strategic plan for the future, establishes the overall vision and direction for Regional Council. As well, Council has adopted the Sustainability Strategy and the Natural Heritage Directions Strategy. Further work is being undertaken on New Communities Criteria and Best Practices that will determine a new way of

proceeding with development. The preparation of an updated Regional Official Plan will permit the strengthening of these linkages in the Regional Official Plan document.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are significant costs in transportation and water and sewer infrastructure investment and human services investment associated with the amount of growth anticipated to occur in the Region over the next 25 years. The consulting firm, Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., has been retained to assess these costs.

The fiscal and economic analysis includes an evaluation of long range capital expenditures and revenues, operating costs, tax levy impacts, reserve fund and debt requirements.

Information from the fiscal impact study was presented to Council at the Special Council Meeting in May, 2009. A final detailed report will be presented to Committee and Council in the fall of 2009.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities have been consulted on an ongoing basis as part of the local municipal Technical Advisory Committee and policies have been refined in a number of instances in line with municipal suggestions. Regional staff has also briefed local municipal Councils directly over the last three years as part of the Planning for Tomorrow program.

Local municipalities will continue to be consulted as the Region proceeds with the review of the Draft Official Plan document and presentation made to local Councils on request. In order to meet the region's timelines for adoption of the draft official Plan, formal comments from each area municipality are requested prior to the end of September 2009.

7. CONCLUSION

Planning for Tomorrow, the Region's growth management initiative commenced in 2005. Since that time, background research papers, the three phases of consultation with municipal Councils, stakeholders and special interest groups undertaken in 2006, 2007 and 2008 have focussed on the issues requiring attention in an updated Plan. Since 2006, there have been over 80 meetings, with various stakeholder groups including the town hall meetings, municipal councils and technical committees in regard to Planning for Tomorrow and various aspects of the official plan review.

The release of the Draft York Region Official Plan document is one of the final steps in the Planning for Tomorrow growth management initiative commenced in 2005. The Draft Official Plan, appended as *Attachment 1* to this report will be printed following the Council endorsement on June 25, 2009 and this printed version will be given the large scale circulation identified in this report. In addition, Regional staff is currently preparing presentation materials, website updates and a brochure to assist in this public consultation phase.

Once approved, the York Region Official Plan will conform to Places to Grow – The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan and will integrate the approved Master Plan for Transportation and Transit and Water and Wastewater in the Official Plan.

This report also outlines dates for the upcoming Open House and the Statutory meeting required by the *Planning Act and plans for* public information sessions and local municipal council briefings that will occur over the summer and early fall to discuss the Draft Plan. Comments on the Draft Plan will be requested prior to the end of September.

It is recommended that the Draft York Region Official Plan be endorsed for circulation and public review that staff undertake circulation of the draft document and public engagement and consultation as outlined in this report. The Open House and Statutory Public Meeting required by the *Planning Act* will be scheduled for the September 29 and October 7, 2009 respectively. The Statutory meeting on October 7, 2009 will commence at 1:30 p.m. as part of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

Staff will report back to Committee and Council at the Planning and Economic Development Committee of November 4, 2009 on the public input, comments received and any changes recommended to the Draft York Region Official Plan. This timing would permit adoption of the Draft Official Plan by Council in November, 2009.

For more information on this report, please contact John B. Waller, Director of Long Range and Strategic Planning at (905) 830-4444 Ext. 1525.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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