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PLANNING COORDINATION FOR THE RICHMOND HILL CENTRE/LANGSTAFF GATEWAY REGIONAL CENTRE AND PROVINCIAL URBAN GROWTH CENTRE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated July 24, 2009, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Principles outlined in this report for the planning coordination of the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre and Provincial Urban Growth Centre be endorsed as part of the approach and process to continue to shape the implementation of the Centre.
2. Regional planning staff report back to Committee and Council in the Fall 2009 with an update of the planning coordination process, and an outline of the emerging policy and implementation directions for the Centre.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report, for information purposes, to the Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan, the Provincial Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Energy and Infrastructure, and the Office of the Provincial Development Facilitator.

2. PURPOSE

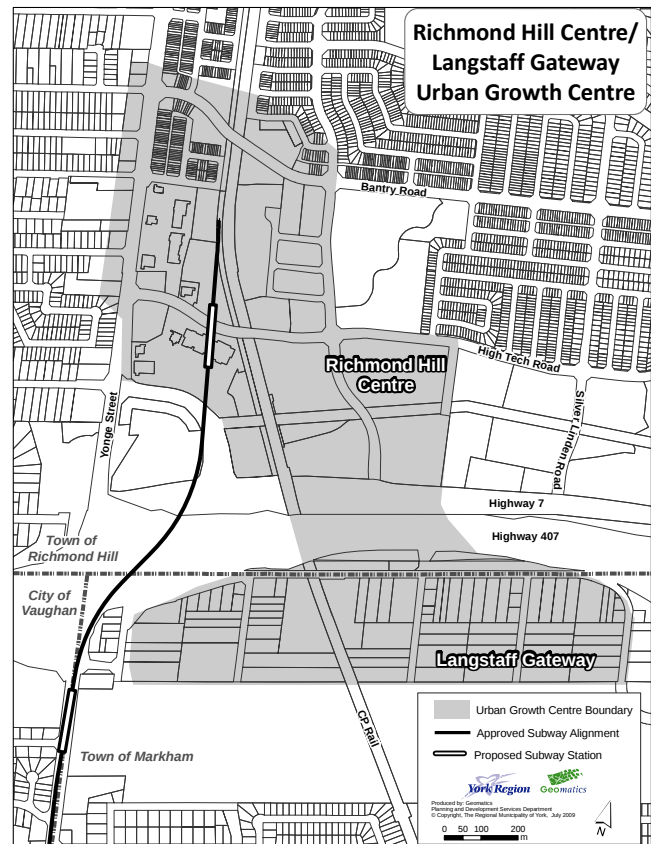
This report outlines the approach being undertaken by the Regional Planning and Development Services Department for developing a co-ordination framework for the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre and Provincial Urban Growth Centre (UGC). This work is being undertaken in collaboration with staff from the Towns of Richmond Hill and Markham, and neighbouring City of Vaughan. The Region, to support the implementation of the Regional Official Plan and as the approval authority for official plans, routinely works with local municipalities in the planning, review and approval of secondary plans and related issues for the Regional Centres and Regional Corridors.

3. BACKGROUND

Coordination for the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway is supporting the planned role and function of the Centre

The Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway is one of the most important new high-density and mixed-use development nodes emerging in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. It is strategically important as a Regional Centre and Provincial Urban Growth Centre; given its central location, potential for transit-oriented development, and unique characteristic as being the only Centre located within two local municipalities.

Acknowledging the importance, shared opportunities, and issues associated with the Centre, the Commissioners of Planning and Development from Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan and the Region have been working together to achieve a cohesive and integrated Centre. This process has involved staff participation in the on-going planning studies for the Centre and, recently, the establishment of shared Principles to help guide the development of complementary planning visions and associated implementation approaches. There is an important role within this process for Rapidco and York Region Transit, working with local, Provincial and Regional transportation staff, to assess and make recommendations related to traffic and transit capacity for the Centre.



The approach and process for the ongoing planning coordination is being instructed by, and is flowing from, the Principles established for the Centre. These will guide the development of planning policies and implementation approaches for shared issues. Staff are currently mobilized into sub-groups to make detailed recommendations on the common issues, based on the Principles. A more detailed summary of this process and approach, including the Principles and staff sub-group actions, are outlined in section 4 of this report.

The strategic location of the Centre, range of inter-related and complex issues, and number of municipal and agency jurisdictions involved, makes for a dynamic and issues-oriented exercise. The staff coordination initiated early on in the process, which is being supported by participation from the Province and related agencies including Metrolinx, Regional and local municipal departments, the York Region school boards and other municipal related agencies, will facilitate a shared vision and complementary approaches for the Centre. It is recognized that while each jurisdiction may have a range of interests, the achievement of a dense, mixed-use, well-designed Centre is a mutual objective, and that the completion of the Yonge Subway Extension is critical to its full achievement.

The four Regional Centres are the priority and strategic locations within York Region for intensification – the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway is a unique and excellent city-building opportunity

The four Regional Centres located in Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket are strategic and important locations for investments in rapid transit including subways, and are primary locations for the most intensive and greatest mix of development within the Region. The role and function of these areas are to serve as the foundations of the Region's urban structure and as key locations for intensification, retail, employment, institutional and cultural facilities, services and activities.

The primacy of the Regional Centres, and their critical role in urban structure, is being strengthened through enhancements proposed in the new Draft Regional Official Plan (ROP), which include minimum densities and a greater emphasis on mixed-use development. The Richmond Hill Centre portion of the Provincial Urban Growth Centre has been designated a Regional Centre in the ROP since 1994. It is conceptually shown on Map 5 of the existing ROP, and includes a portion of lands on the south side of Highway 407 within the Town of Markham. The 2006 Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) designated the four Regional Centres within York Region as Urban Growth Centres (UGC). The Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway is unique as a Regional Centre; located within two local municipalities.

Coordination throughout the ongoing planning studies is leading to shared, complementary policies and approaches for the Centre

Richmond Hill and Markham are each planning for the Centre through on-going studies that will lead to draft secondary plans for their respective parts of the Centre. Staff from each municipality, and from neighbouring Vaughan, and related agencies, are actively participating in the studies. The Region's participation is being led by the Planning and Development Services Department, with support and valuable input other Regional Departments including Transportation Services, Environmental Services, and Community and Health Services. York Region Transit and Rapidco are also key Regional participants in this process, to address the important issue of transit service improvements including the extension of the Yonge subway, to support the full implementation of the Centre.

The Richmond Hill Centre Design and Land Use Study was initiated by the Town in January 2009, and is being led by the firm of Urban Strategies Inc. of Toronto. A major focus of the Study is the Provincially-designated Mobility Hub, and encouraging supportive land uses and densities, with an emphasis on creating active and attractive public gathering places. The Study also aims to re-integrate Yonge Street into the Centre, through the promotion of a mid-rise, and pedestrian- and transit-oriented “main street.” The development concept emerging from the study is shown in *Figure 1*, and further information on the study can be found on the internet at www.richmondhill.ca.

Figure 1

Richmond Hill Centre Development Concept – Looking northwest across hydro corridor to Yonge Street, GO Transit rail corridor and James Langstaff Community Park



The Langstaff Gateway Land Use and Built Form Master Plan was initiated by Markham in May 2008, and is being led by the firm of Calthorpe Associates of Berkeley, California. A major focus of the Master Plan is maximizing the potential of the site as a transit- and non-auto oriented development. Through that exercise, the planning and design assumptions are rooted in the principle of integrating housing, employment and recreation activities to optimize access and connectivity across and within the site. The development concept emerging from the study is shown in *Figure 2*, and further information on the study can be found on the internet at www.markham.ca.

Figure 2
Langstaff Gateway Development Concept – Looking northeast across Holy Cross Cemetery to Highway 407 and Bayview Avenue



The concurrent land use studies will be completed this Fall, and will generate draft land use policies in the form of draft secondary plans.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The emerging planning visions are bold, transit-supportive and propose a Centre having a York Region- and GTA-wide reach and influence

The latest concepts for the Richmond Hill and Markham segments of the Regional Centre are working towards a vision for the Regional Centres as diverse, compact, vibrant, integrated and well-designed places that serve as focal points for housing, employment, cultural and community facilities, and transit connections. They propose compact development focused around transit, and incorporate innovative approaches for place-making, energy efficiency, and mobility. Included in those concepts is the proposed establishment of aggressive development densities, which will be dependant on the full-implementation of rapid transit including the proposed Yonge Subway extension and completion of the Viva Rapidways.

The Provincially-designated Mobility Hub and related transit connections is a critical, central feature of the Centre. Classified as an “Anchor Hub” in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, the Centre’s Mobility Hub is the highest-order transit terminal and transfer point, and is envisioned to function as a “Union Station” for York Region and the GTA. The role of Metrolinx in the coordination process is critical, since the Yonge

Subway Extension and details relating to the construction and operation of the Mobility Hub will greatly influence the planning for, and ultimate success of, the Centre.

In part from a request from the Town of Markham Council, the Province, through the Office of the Provincial Development Facilitator, is participating in the planning coordination process to provide input on matters of Provincial interest, including the Mobility Hub and broader infrastructure and funding strategies that may impact the Centre as a whole. Local and Regional staff welcome the Province's involvement in this regard, and appreciate the opportunity to engage in a dialogue on Provincial interests and related projects.

Shared Principles are being followed throughout the planning process to guide the creation of complete, cohesive and integrated Centre

Principles have been drafted and agreed upon by senior planning staff from Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, and the Region to guide the completion of the studies for the Centre, and to inform the policies of the draft secondary plans. These shared Principles are designed to provide a level of structure and consistency to the planning and implementation process, to optimize integration, compatibility and the creation of a cohesive Centre. The Principles were formed around the following six common and important issue areas or themes, requiring detailed and coordinated approaches:

- 1) Land Use and Urban Design
- 2) Building Complete Communities
- 3) Community Integration
- 4) Physical Infrastructure
- 5) Implementation of Community and Servicing Requirements
- 6) Financial Principles

A complete list of the Principles is attached to this report as *Attachment 1*.

Related to the Principles, planning policies (e.g. secondary plans) and implementation requirements (e.g. development approval triggers) for shared issues and interests will be determined. The Principles will also provide a framework for the general coordination and communication among municipal and agency staff in the overall planning for the Centre. This approach will help ensure transparency and consistency in the process by tracing emerging planning and implementation details back to "first Principles", as they emerge. Overall, it is recognized that, while the planning approaches and design vision for each segment of the Centre will be unique, the Principles will provide a basis for compatibility, and foster communication throughout the city-building process.

Details of planning policy, infrastructure requirements and implementation are being recommended through staff working group teams

Under the coordination of senior staff, teams of specialized staff members have been organized into four sub-groups to examine specific planning and implementation issues

in more detail. Working through the issues and related options, the staff teams will make short-, medium and long-term recommendations on the details of planning policies and related implementation approaches, consistent with the Principles that have been agreed to. The teams are organized to advance the shared Principles, around the following four focus areas:

- 1) Physical Infrastructure
- 2) Planning & Design
- 3) Community Facilities & Services
- 4) Financial Tools & Models

A chart outlining the structure of the four groups, and their role in the larger planning coordination process, is attached to this report as *Attachment 2*.

Each group is co-led by senior municipal staff, with membership from the municipalities and related agencies including the York Region School Boards, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and York Regional Police. The primary and immediate deliverables of each group will be specific recommendations (e.g. policies, financial tools, etc.) for issues within their scope. These recommendations will provide basic directions for the development of secondary plan policies and implementation approaches for the Centre, as determined by Richmond Hill and Markham. For example, one deliverable of the Physical Infrastructure sub-group will be to develop a framework to ensure adequate water and waste water servicing capacity for the Centre; working within the framework of the Region's approved Master Plans, and the servicing requirements emerging from the local planning and servicing studies. The work of the staff teams may continue after Regional approval of the secondary plans, to assist in the coordination of development phasing, approvals, and infrastructure delivery and financing.

Draft secondary plans for the Centre are expected by end of 2009, and will be reviewed and approved by the Region

Arising from the on-going and concurrent municipal studies for the Centre will be detailed land use policies in the form of secondary plans, which will benefit from the pre-screening and pre-testing of policies and approaches through the coordination process. This proactive and collaborative approach also increases the likelihood of the Secondary Plans being approved by the Region with few, if any, modifications – building more efficiency and certainty into the Regional approval process.

Planning coordination process will be useful to planning implementation after planning approvals in place, and could be applied to other projects

The coordination process and related shared Principles is an inclusive and collaborative process, bringing together the appropriate experts across a range of complex and interrelated issues. The approach for this exercise is now established for the Centre, and should continue to function to guide planning policy implementation throughout much of the development lifecycle. This approach and process could be also be applied to other

planning and implementation initiatives requiring a high-degree of coordination; which could enhance Centres and Corridors implementation, in partnership with the local municipalities, the Province and other agencies.

Next Steps

The staff teams in each of the four issue areas are in the process of determining short-, medium- and long-term recommendations for the planning and implementation of the Centre. The immediate and priority deliverables include policy recommendations to provide a basis for the draft secondary plans for the Centre, which are expected to be complete in draft form and circulated for comment in late 2009. The local municipalities will be reporting to their Councils on this process this Fall.

Relationship to Vision 2026

The planning and implementation of the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway, and the coordination being undertaken to achieve it, is an excellent example of good planning and inter-municipal and agency cooperation. The planning objectives and related process are highly consistent with and will serve to advance all eight goal areas of Vision 2026, and especially “Quality Communities for a Diverse Population”, “Managed and Balanced Growth”, “Infrastructure for a Growing Region” and “Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region”.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, although financial approaches are critical to the implementation of the Centre

The range and complexity of issues, the significant infrastructure requirements and the unique context of the Centre requires a new and customized financial approach, which will be the focus of the Financial Tools & Models sub-group staff team. A key part of this work will be a fiscal analysis for the Centre. New and innovative financial tools and models will be explored at the staff level, and integrated into the implementation approaches. An important, guiding financial principle is creating a level playing field across the Centre, and ensuring that development pays its way.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The planning coordination underway for the Regional Centre supports Richmond Hill and Markham in a manner that reflects local priorities and character, while achieving the broader Regional and Provincial planning objectives associated with the Centre. The City of Vaughan, which forms the western boundary of the Centre, will be impacted by the planning and implementation of the Centre, and has a shared interest in the

implementation of the Yonge Subway Extension and related facilities. Vaughan is an active participant in the planning process for the Centre and has staff representatives on the various technical advisory and coordination sub-group teams.

The coordination underway supports the unique approaches to the Centre by each municipality, while working towards integration and compatibility. In addition, there are important cross-jurisdictional infrastructure issues and requirements that are essential to the successful implementation of the Centre, including the funding and completion of the Yonge Subway Extension. The Region is well-positioned to assist the local municipalities in this regard, with the active participation of and input from the Province.

The local municipal Commissioners of Planning and Development have provided input into this report, and concur with report and its overall strategic direction and related process.

7. CONCLUSION

The Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway Centre is unique as a Regional and Provincial Urban Growth Centre, being located in two local municipalities. The planning and implementation coordination process being led by the Region recognizes the challenges and opportunities presented by the Centre, and is based on shared Principles to ensure a cohesive and integrated Centre. Important to this approach is that, while jurisdictions may have unique interests and visions for the Centre, it is a shared objective to create a dense, mixed-use, well-designed and transit-oriented community. The funding for and completion of the Yonge Subway Extension is critical to the full achievement of that vision.

This process is an effective way to move the Centre forward, through positive collaboration with the Towns of Richmond Hill and Markham, neighbouring City of Vaughan, the Province, related agencies and the Region. The approach, structure and experiences emerging from this process can be instructive and may be applied to other complex planning issues emerging within the Region.

For more information on this report, please contact Heather Konefat, Director of Community Planning, at (905) 830-4444, Ext. 1502, or Sean Hertel, Senior Planner, at Ext. 1556.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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

Richmond Hill/Langstaff Urban Growth Centre – Planning Coordination

Goal Statement:

To achieve a complete, diverse, compact, vibrant, integrated, sustainable and well-designed Centre, to serve as a focal point in the Region for housing, employment, cultural/community facilities, and transit connections.

Shared Principles:

1.0 Land Use and Urban Design

- 1.1 Planning will be comprehensive and achieve the implementation of a cohesive, **integrated and complete** community
- 1.2 The **initial phases of development** will include lands at and adjacent to the planned subway stations
- 1.3 Development densities will be concentrated at the planned **higher order transit facilities**, achieve a minimum of **3.5 Floor Space Index (FSI)**, and **decrease with distance** from the those facilities
- 1.4 A diverse mix of uses will be accommodated to create complete and active **precincts or neighbourhoods** within the Regional Centre, which will include the assignment of supportive resident-to-employee ratios
- 1.5 **Built form and design** will set a high standard, and contribute to a sense-of-place and **community identity** for each precinct or neighbourhood, and for the Regional Centre as a whole
- 1.6 Implementation tools, including the use of Section 37 of the Planning Act, will be incorporated into the respective secondary plans to achieve bona fide **community benefits**, which shall be described in the plans, that serve the residents and businesses of the Regional Centre

2.0 Building Complete Communities

- 2.1 Neighbourhoods or precincts will be **complete** and **self-sufficient** communities within an integrated Regional Centre, to the **extent possible** and recognizing **physical constraints**
- 2.2 Land uses will provide **live-work-shop-play** opportunities for all residents within the Regional Centre, taking into account a **wide range of income levels** and demographics
- 2.3 The Regional Centre will be a complete community with on-site community **facilities and essential services**, including emergency medical services (EMS), fire, police, schools, libraries, arenas, playgrounds and others

Building Complete Communities (cont.)

- 2.4 Community facilities including squares, parks, natural recreation areas, and pedestrian and cycling paths, will be **integrated** into the community and contribute to a **sense of place** for residents and employees within Centre
- 2.5 Facilities and services will **coincide with each phase** of development, and will be provided through the development approvals process, including the application of **Section 37 of the Planning Act**
- 2.6 **Access** to the facilities and services by area residents and employees will be convenient, safe, and available through a **short walk or cycling** trip
- 2.7 Amenity space, including parks and active recreation areas, will be **accessible to the public**, as opposed to being enclosed within privately owned buildings

3.0 Community Integration

- 3.1 **Connectivity** and **integration** across the Centre will be **optimized**, working to manage potential constraints posed by physical barriers and multi municipal jurisdictions
- 3.2 **Coordinate**, through agreements and related tools, the **operations** of and **funding** for community services (e.g. libraries, recreation programs, etc.) and infrastructure (e.g. street grid, sidewalks, etc.) across the Regional Centre
- 3.3 Ongoing **liaison** between among the Region, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan to **enhance community integration** and planning, leading up to and following the finalization and approvals of the secondary plans, and continue to the development approvals and implementation stages (e.g. formal **municipal working group** or **planning advisory group**)

4.0 Physical Infrastructure

- 4.1 The provincially-designated **Mobility Hub** is the central and most important destination, origin and transfer point for transit trips within the Centre, and has a **Region-wide significance**. Development will therefore serve to enhance access to and support the **efficient functioning** of this facility
- 4.2 Development and related phases will proceed on the basis of **transit-priority** and non-auto travel modes such as **walking** and **cycling**, and the demonstration of sufficient transportation capacity to, from and within the Regional Centre
- 4.3 A **transportation study/master plan** will include a comprehensive review of wide-area (e.g. including lands north to 16th Avenue) transportation facilities, and include current conditions, identify short, medium and long-term transportation improvements, related development thresholds, and triggers

Physical Infrastructure (cont.)

- 4.4 **Transportation capacity** will be assessed on the basis of **congestion management**
- 4.5 A comprehensive and integrated **mobility plan** and strategy – addressing all modes of transportation with an emphasis on **non-auto modes** – will be prepared by the applicants as a condition of development approvals, consistent with the findings of the wide-area transportation study/master plan
- 4.6 A **fine-grained street grid** network will be planned and implemented through the development approvals and phasing process, including the identification of additional road, pedestrian, cycling and transit linkages
- 4.7 **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)** measures, including ride-sharing programs for residents/employees and transit pass incentives, will be required by the municipalities as a condition of development approvals for each phase
- 4.8 **Parking supply and design** will reflect and support the transit-priority of the Regional Centre, and shall include parking management approaches that include the establishment of consistent and low maximum parking standards, and on-street parking in appropriate areas
- 4.9 Development **triggers** (e.g. opening of subway, TDM measures, etc.) for each phase of development will include **performance-based standards** that are tied to mode shares for transit and other non-auto modes
- 4.10 **Transportation capacity**, including transit mode shares and non-auto measures, will be monitored for and throughout each phase of development
- 4.11 **Traffic congestion will be managed** throughout the build-out of the Regional Centre in a manner that supports transit, walking and cycling as the primary travel modes, and that takes advantage of state-of-the-art technologies
- 4.12 The “**walk-to**” **catchment areas** for the transit stations will be not be uniform, and will be based on pedestrian and cycling connectivity and associated travel times, generally based on a maximum 15-20 minute walk for the majority of people

5.0 Implementation of Community and Servicing Requirements

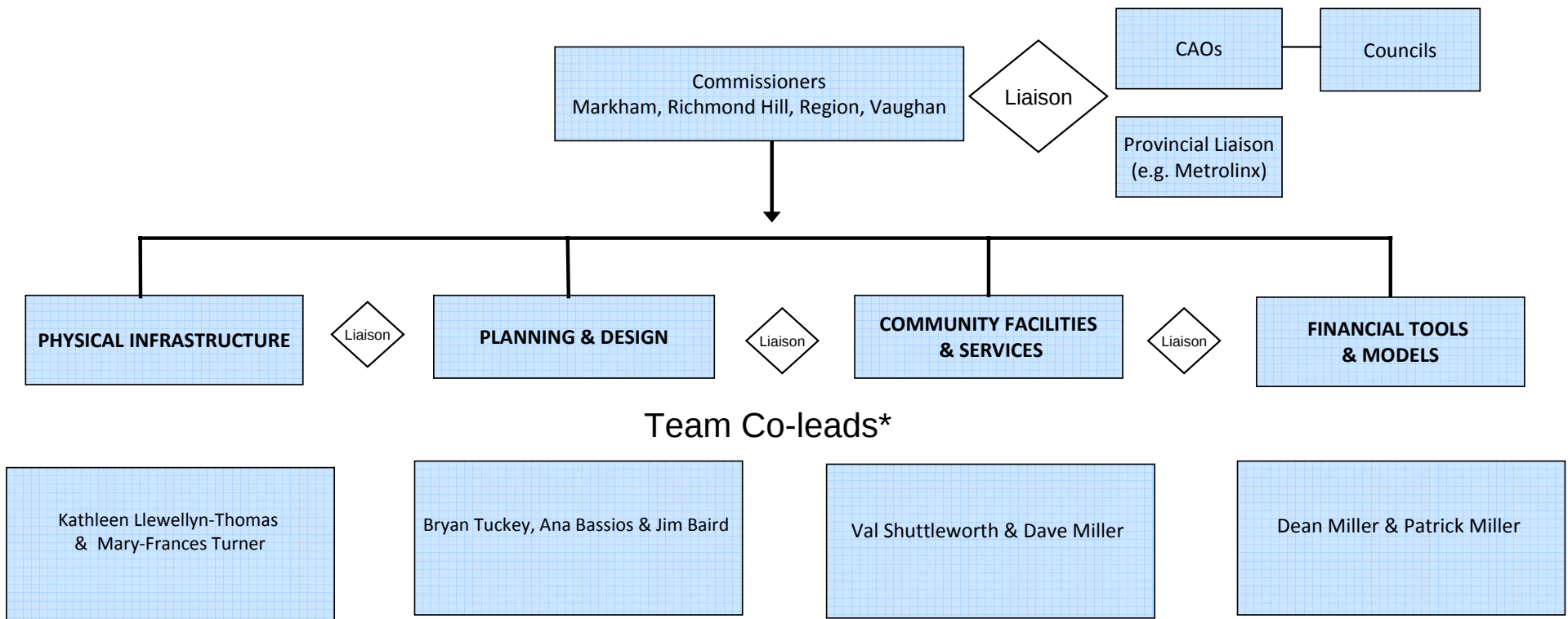
- 5.1 The Regional Centre will integrate complete and **self-sufficient** neighbourhoods or precincts, that have **on-site community facilities** and essential services, including emergency medical services (EMS), fire, police, schools, libraries, arenas, playgrounds and others
- 5.2 Facilities and services will **coincide with each phase** of development, and will be provided through the development approvals process, based on an inventory of community needs in the short, medium and long term.

Implementation of Community and Servicing Requirements (cont.)

- 5.3 **Phasing plans** will be developed, which will prescribe the phasing and staging at the **precinct or neighbourhood level**, to ensure the **orderly, sequential** and **integrated** implementation of secondary plans
- 5.4 **Community services and facilities** (e.g. EMS stations, libraries, etc.) will be **integrated** into development sites, projects and buildings within each phase of development. This includes the implementation of shared facilities and related programs among service providers (e.g. school boards) and through developer-municipal agreements
- 5.5 **Phasing and staging** of development within each precinct or neighbourhood will be **tied to triggers related to infrastructure capacity**, including community and social services and facilities, transportation, on-site energy generation (e.g. district energy), and water and waste water
- 5.6 **Equitable distribution** of, and financial contributions to, community facilities and services (e.g. parks, libraries etc.) across the Regional Centre
- 5.7 **Natural features** (e.g. streams, woodlots, etc.), related **linkages**, and **stormwater management** will be planned for and implemented in a comprehensive manner across the Regional Centre

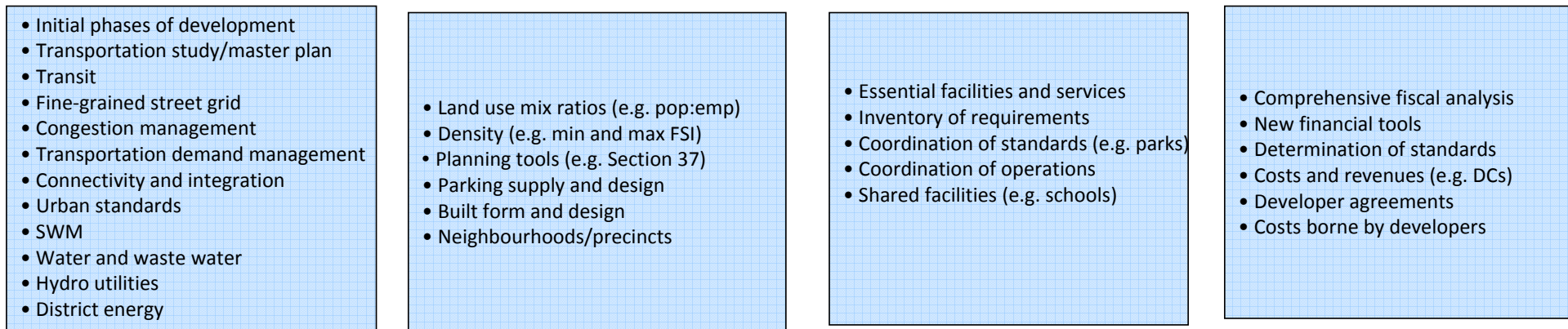
6.0 Financial Principles

- 6.1 A **comprehensive fiscal analysis**, funded by development, will be undertaken collaboratively by the municipalities as a condition of phase 1 development approvals, and subsequent phases, to determine the costs of common infrastructure required to service the Centre over the short, medium and long-term.
- 6.2 The **costs of required Infrastructure and services**, as determined by the municipalities to support each development phase, will be **borne by the developers**
- 6.3 Development **charges**, and other development and planning approval-related **fees**, will be **consistent across the Regional Centre** and will be based on the principle of **cost-recovery**
- 6.4 Park land dedication and parking **standards**, including cash in-lieu provisions, will be uniform across the Centre to ensure a **level playing** field in the development application and approvals process
- 6.5 The use of **Section 37** of the Planning Act will be applied only to achieve those bona fide community benefits which would not be required as a condition of development approvals



Team Co-leads*

Planning and implementation approaches to be determined



*Team Lead Roles and Responsibilities:

- Make detailed recommendations on planning and implementation approaches; to be integrated into secondary plans and related development approvals (e.g. subdivision, site plan, etc.)
- Take reports, as required, through the appropriate council/committee process to obtain necessary direction/authorization for recommendations
- Work towards a positive consensus on detailed elements
- Coordinate and liaise, as required, with other Teams (e.g. Co-leads) and Commissioners
- Schedule and host meetings as required, and record and distribute minutes and/or record of actions