

5

YORK REGION RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE

(Regional Council at its meeting of October 19, 2006, amended the following clause as follows:

by adding the words “and consultation” to the end of recommendation 2, so that it now reads as follows:

- 2. This report be forwarded to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) and the Local Municipalities for their information and consultation.)**

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, September 22, 2006, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse this staff report as a basis for local municipal consultation to determine Regional capacity to accommodate the Provincial Growth Plan target of 40% intensification.
2. This report be forwarded to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) and the Local Municipalities for their information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Council with an update on the Region's Residential Intensification Opportunities Study as follows:

- The level of residential intensification currently occurring in the Region.
- An overview of the York Region Intensification Strategy in regards to measuring intensification, local municipal consultation, marketing, monitoring and reporting.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Provincial Growth Plan, *Places to Grow*

On June 16, 2006, the Province released the Final Growth Plan “Places to Grow” for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. A full analysis of the Growth Plan is an additional item on this Committee agenda. *Attachment 1* contains the key components of the Growth Plan relating to the Region's residential intensification work which includes:

- 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.

3.2 Regional Context

The Region has a number of on-going initiatives that promote intensification within the Region. In June 2004, Council approved the *Regional Centres and Corridors Strategy* which includes four action areas: policy, financial policy and tools, supportive programs and infrastructure investment. The purpose of this strategy is to strengthen the relationship between a compact urban structure of centres and corridors, transportation and transit.

An example of an action item under the policy category is the Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 43 – Regional Centres and Corridors approved on July 7, 2005. This amendment increases the Plan's intensification target from 20% to 30% in existing built-up areas, and towns and villages.

In November 2005, Council received a staff report on the Residential Intensification Opportunities Study. The study looked at regional implications of the Province's forecasts that anticipate a total of 1.5 million people, 780,000 jobs and 500,000 households in the Region by 2031 with a 40% residential intensification rate. Preliminary findings indicate that 40% intensification requires the Region to accommodate approximately 81,000 new units within the existing built boundary.

The residual 60% of residential development, approximately 150,000 units, will be accommodated in existing approved greenfield development areas, as well as lands yet to be designated in areas outside the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Areas.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Provincial Built Boundary Update

Regional staff has been in contact with their counterparts at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal on an on-going basis. At the date of writing of this report however, there is no firm date identified for release of the Built-boundary from the Province. Once released however, Regional and area municipal staff will proceed to review, and confirm or request modifications to the boundary as required.

4.2 Regional Residential Intensification Update

Table 1 illustrates that between January 2001 and year end 2005, the Region achieved a rate of 18.4% intensification, compared to a 16.7% rate between 1990 and 2003 as shown in Table 1. The analysis used the 1990 built boundary as a basis.

Table 1
Residential Intensification in York Region (2001-2005)

	New Dwelling Units within 1990 Built Boundary (2001- 2005)	Total New Dwelling Units in the Region (2001- 2005)	% Intensification (1990-2003)**	% Intensification (2001-2005)*
Aurora	352	2,406	9.7%	14.6%
Markham	3,872	17,931	16.2%	21.6%
Newmarket	372	3,456	17.9%	10.8%
Richmond Hill	2,833	11,556	21.8%	24.5%
Vaughan	2,546	14,941	14.5%	17.0%
York Region Total	9,975	50,290	16.7%	18.4%

* Based on building permits for new dwelling units, 2001-2005

** Based on CMHC housing completions (1990-2003) .

Other residential development related trends in the Region are included in this report as Attachment 2.

4.3 York Region Intensification Strategy

The York Region Intensification Strategy focuses on an overall plan to describe, promote and track residential intensification within the Region's existing built boundary. The strategy is outlined below:

4.3.1 Residential Intensification Forecast

The residential intensification forecast will determine municipal distribution of the Provincial 40% target which requires the Province, in consultation with the Region, to define the built boundary. A local intensification target will then be assigned to each municipality using population and household forecasts and the built boundary which includes a forecast of housing requirements by structure type.

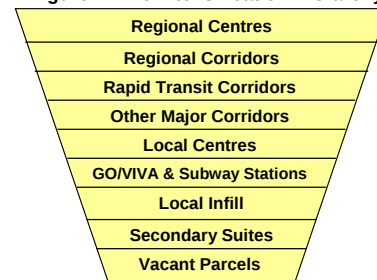
4.3.2 Proposed Municipal Strategy to Achieve 40% Intensification Region-Wide

This component involves determining the Region's potential to accommodate the 40% target as assigned in the intensification forecast. The Region will work with each area municipality to complete an intensification strategy to outline the location and the nature of intensification that will take place in order to meet targets. Each municipal intensification strategy will need to incorporate the following components to ensure consistency across the Region in meeting the Provincial 40% intensification target:

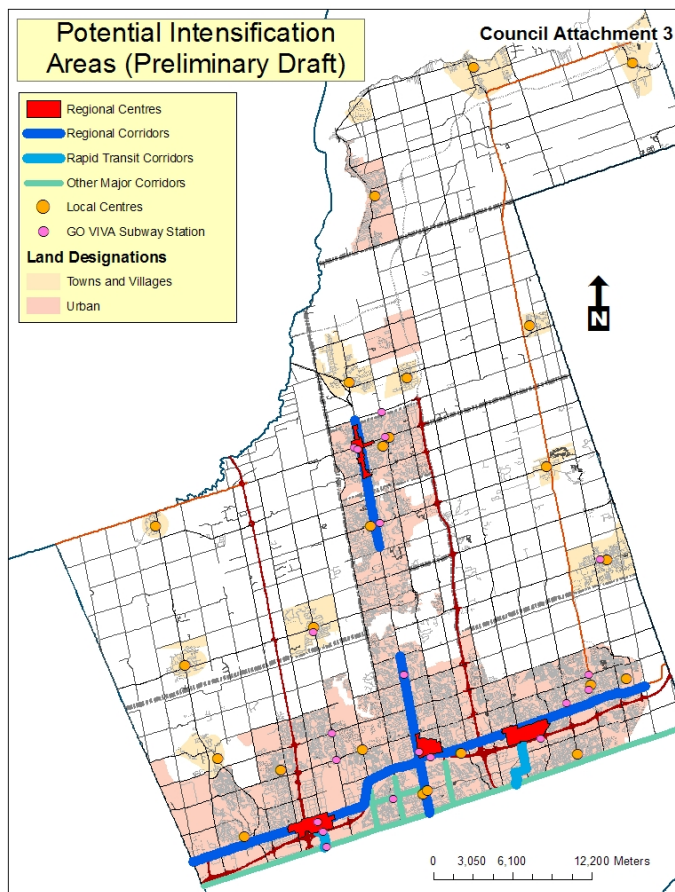
- As specified in ROPA 43, the Region in consultation with the area municipalities will identify and map Key Development Areas (KDAs) that could accommodate intensification.

- Area municipalities will identify the appropriate scale and character of each KDA which will then be organized into an “intensification hierarchy” as shown in *Figure 1*. The organization of the KDAs into the hierarchy will be based on a common set of criteria in a type of “checklist” or “screen” format that will speak to the following elements:
 - Carry-capacity and expected scale of development
 - Compatibility and fit with the surrounding areas
 - Long-Term Planning Vision
 - Housing Options
 - Transportation and Transit Options
 - Legislative, policy and other obstacles to implementation and proposed solutions.

Figure 1: The Intensification Hierarchy



4.3.2.1 Preliminary Framework for the Municipal Intensification Strategy



Regional staff are currently defining a preliminary draft framework for the municipal intensification strategy with respect to the amount and location of intensification that the Region can accommodate within the built-up area.

Attachment 3/ Figure 2 illustrates where intensification can occur across the Region.

A preliminary assessment of the Region’s capacity to accommodate the Provincial Growth Plan target of 40% residential intensification was conducted with respect to the intensification hierarchy as shown in *Table 2*.

The final revision and description of the hierarchy will be completed pending

consultation with the area municipalities beginning in the Fall of 2006.

Report No. 8 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee
Regional Council Meeting of October 19, 2006

Draft: Table 2		
<u>Intensification Hierarchy and Potential Intensification Areas</u>		
Residential Intensification Hierarchy (1)	Potential Key Development Areas (2)	Potential Proportion of Total Regional Intensification (3)
Regional Centres		30%-40%
	Markham Centre Newmarket Centre Richmond Hill Centre Vaughan Corporate Centre	
Regional Corridors		20%-30%
	Yonge Street Highway 7	
Rapid Transit Corridors		5%
	Jane Street Warden Avenue Centre Street	
Other Major Corridors		10%
	Steeles Avenue Bayview Avenue (Steeles to Hwy 7) Bathurst Street (Steeles to Hwy 7) Dufferin Street (Steeles to Hwy 7) Centre Street (Yonge to Hwy 7)	
Local Centres (2)		15%-20%
Urban Area	Carville District Centre Woodbridge Vellore Village Miliken Thornhill Centre Aurora - Yonge & Wellington Newmarket Historic Centre Newmarket Regional Health Centre Markham Village Leitchcroft Cornell	
Towns and Villages	King City Holland Landing Mount Albert Keswick Kleinburg Nobleton Stouffville Schomberg Sutton Pefferlaw Sharon Ballantrae/ Musselman	
GO/VIVA and Subway Stations		5%-10%
GO/VIVA Stations	Langstaff Rutherford Newmarket Unionville Centennial Markham King City East Gwillimbury Mount Joy Stouffville Maple - Major Mackenzie Aurora Bernard Richmond Hill Promenade	
Subway Stations	Steeles Avenue Station Highway 407 Station Vaughan Corporate Centre	
Local Infill		2%-4%
	Dispersed throughout Regional Built Area	
Secondary Suites (4)		1%-2%
	Dispersed throughout Regional Built Area	
Vacant Parcels		1%
	Dispersed throughout Regional Built Area	
TOTAL		100%
<i>SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services, July 2006.</i> <i>The Region requires a minimum of 81,000 new units in the built area to meet the Provincial Growth Plan Target of 1)Description of the intensification hierarchy to be finalized pending consultation with area municipalities.</i> <i>2) Potential KDAs are identified based on their placement in the hierarchy which can result in more than one KDA in</i> <i>3) Percentage of total intensification in each hierarchy level is based on Provincial Growth Plan targets, a</i> <i>4) The second self-contained residential unit in a detached house, semi-detached house and rowhouse with its own private kitchen, bathroom and entrance/exit.</i>		

Analysis to date indicates that an estimated 19,100 new units (24%) of the 81,000 new units can be accommodated in the Regional Centres of Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill. Newmarket Centre's potential will be determined pending completion of the Town's Official Plan review. However, the overall capacity of the Regional Centres requires further review given the Growth Plan target of 200 people and jobs per hectare.

A re-evaluation of regional and municipal policies regarding intensification will be required in order to meet the Provincial Growth Plan target of 40% intensification. Such policies would include those related to secondary suites, GO/VIVA and subway stations, and local infill areas. Area municipalities are currently investigating opportunities for residential intensification which will also inform the Region's work (*Attachment 4*).

4.3.3 Area Municipal Consultation

A Municipal Technical Advisory Committee has been established to support the Region's Growth Management Public Information and Engagement Program. This group of municipal representatives meet regularly to discuss growth issues affecting the Region, such as population, household and employment forecasts, and land budgeting. This committee will also provide comments on the Growth Plan's Built-Boundary and feedback on Regional capacity to accommodate the Province's 40% intensification target.

4.3.4 Intensification Monitoring, Reporting and Marketing

The Region will formulate a comprehensive monitoring and reporting system to track the amount, location and type of residential intensification occurring in the Region. A marketing strategy will also be developed in order to address public reaction to the "look" and "feel" of residential intensification by emphasizing the importance of urban design principles. The Province is also scheduled to monitor residential intensification as it pertains to the Growth Plan targets.

4.4 Intensification Monitoring and Marketing Underway

Staff is currently monitoring intensification using different techniques as follows:

- Monitoring annual residential intensification rates using building permits for new dwelling units, as shown in *Table 1*.
- Tracking the amount and location of new compact development in the Regional built area that are currently advertised in real estate listings and other related publications (*Attachment 5*). Preliminary draft findings indicate:
 - Approximately 14,104 new compact dwelling units are currently approved and/or under construction, of which approximately 54% of compact units are located within the Regional Centres, Corridors and Rapid Transit Corridors.
 - Between January 2004 and September 2005, approximately 6,456 new compact dwelling units were either under construction or completed, of which an estimated

42% were located within the Regional Centres, Corridors and Rapid Transit Corridors.

- Working on a preliminary monitoring model for tracking the evolution of the Regional Centres in terms of:
 - Mix of land uses, housing options and urban design
 - Population and employment density and live-work relationships
 - Modal split and transit order levels
 - Human services and affordability and
 - Amount and type of employment and businesses.

The Region is also compiling a draft photographic essay of “Made in York” examples of intensification as part of the marketing strategy (*Attachment 6*).

4.5 Monitoring Density in Designated Greenfield Areas of the Region

Staff are currently analyzing the density of the Region’s designated Greenfield Areas to determine compliance with the Growth Plan’s minimum density target that is not less than 50 residents and jobs per hectare combined.

4.6 Challenges to Achieving More Intensified Development

The Region recognizes the difficulty in achieving 40% intensification by 2031 in a sustainable, coordinated and collaborative approach. The Region requires significant investment in physical infrastructure in transportation, transit, water and wastewater to support 40% intensification in the built area. In September 2004 and April 2005, Council approved a number of recommendations to the Province to this effect including:

- The Province commit to long term infrastructure plans and funding for Provincial highways, local and rapid transit funding, cross boundary and boundary road funding, GO Transit and natural heritage implementation funding.
- The Province adopt an urban-focused policy approach within all ministries and prioritize investments in infrastructure, government institutions, facilities and services in the urban centres with emphasis on Centres and Key Development Areas.

In order to continue respecting and protecting the Region’s linked natural heritage system, the ROP review and Infrastructure Master Plan Updates and subsequent implementation will be undertaken in a coordinated approach.

The target of 40% intensification represents an additional 81,000 households and an equivalent resident population of approximately 162,000 who will require adequate and equal access to human services such as police, EMS and fire services, immigrant settlement services, education and health care. The Region recommends that the Province commit to long-term funding for hospitals and other human services funding, and the

Provincial and Federal government to provide stable, long-term and sufficient funding for affordable housing in both the private and public sectors.

4.7 Relationship to Vision 2026

Residential intensification advances the Vision 2026 goal areas of “Managed and Balanced Growth”, “Quality Communities for a Diverse Population” and “Infrastructure for a Growing Region”.

5. 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 has 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. 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.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Municipal consultation and coordination are integral components of the Region’s intensification work. The Municipal Technical Advisory Committee will provide an opportunity for additional local input on intensification, population and employment forecasts, and land budgeting.

7. CONCLUSION

Although the Region has made key advances, many challenges lie ahead in meeting the targets of the Growth Plan in a sustainable, coordinated and collaborative approach. The target of 40% residential intensification by 2015 translates into 81,000 new units. Preliminary analysis suggests that the Region’s rate of intensification has increased to 18.4% (2001 and 2005) from 16.7 % (1990 and 2003).

The next steps in the Residential Intensification Opportunities Study includes Provincial Built-Boundary consultations, municipal distribution of 40% intensification and

accommodation potential, municipal consultation, a marketing strategy and an annual intensification monitoring model.

Increasing residential intensification depends largely on the political will, commitment and partnership from all levels of government to provide the necessary funding, and policy and financial tools to realize the 40% target by 2031. This political aspect is a key factor in developing compact and complete communities from an economic, environmental and social perspective as enshrined in Provincial and Regional policy.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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