

Summary Notes of Urban Development Institute (York Region Chapter) comments made at the Growth Management Information Session - May 24, 2006

Attachment 1
Council Attachment

Feedback

- The Provincial population forecasts for York Region are higher than the forecasts in the Regional Official Plan but may be low if immigration continues to rise.
- Perhaps we (the Development Industry) should be producing more affordable housing and rental housing.
- Affordability is driven by land supply issue – the supply of land is a major factor.
- We are concerned that the land supply may be constrained in the GTA, particularly in York
 - If there is insufficient land supply for residential and employment land then growth would be forced to locate further north i.e. in Simcoe County or beyond.
 - There is concern about the ramifications of the public sentiment that growth should go elsewhere, not here.

Feedback

- The Region should take on a leadership role to communicate the growth management issues and appropriate policy responses to support intensification because municipalities aren't doing it
- We see intensification as market driven.
- The Province doesn't seem to understand the implementation issues and challenges associated with intensification.
- Where does the retail land supply fit in to the discussion of available land supply – Perhaps there should be a calculation of necessary land for retail purposes and determination of where it should be located.
- Have we increased our employment land requirements?
- What is the potential for intensification of big box or other employment areas.
- Densities in Greenfield development should be higher than in existing residential developments.

Feedback

- There are few people in our business areas after work. It was suggested that more office/residential mix should be encouraged in order to share utilities, transit and infrastructure including parking.
- Would like to see methods to make an office/residential mix happen successfully? In Markham, for example, landscaping in business parks is extensive and isolates employment locations.
- Transit is the key to accommodating forecasted growth and is becoming increasingly critical across the whole GTA Region.
- Suggestion - how about getting VIVA onto the 404 to connect with the subway terminus.
- There is interest in how intensification is being calculated.
- Good design, higher quality construction and higher unit costs are more acceptable to the public.

Feedback

- Intensification often has higher unit costs.
- In York Region the condo market is generally directed at higher quality units and markets.
- Residential market has changed - Needs to be a hierarchy of intensification, a strategy for municipalities focussing on:
 - Centres
 - Regional corridors
 - Other corridors
 - Local centres and corridors
 - Transit stations
 - GO stations
 - 2nd suites

Feedback

- This Growth Management work/Places to Grow seems to have backed off on specifying mix.
- If 40% of growth is intensification within the built boundary and 60% intensification in greenfields, does this mean that the 60% can or will be single family?
- High rises in old Stouffville and Markham were built in a different place and time.
- Problem now for developers is how to get intensification approved in some municipalities. i.e. The only way to get an 8 storey building in some municipalities is through an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.
- OMB has become a necessary step in the process.
- Need the Region to take a strong leadership role in provision of direction for growth management and intensification.
- Useful to have a survey of who is buying and moving into these intensification projects.

Feedback

- Suggest that all municipalities need to take a share of the forecasted growth - and who do municipalities want to make the decisions – and this is what they can look like.
- Discussion about the new Transportation Master Plan focussed on the need to:
 - Support 404, 427, 400 and the new Bradford bypass
 - Get in front of or ahead of current development projects
 - Recognize that congestion affects employment and housing – moving people and goods.
- It is important that Growth Management work be tied into the Transportation Master Plan process – transit, intensification and affordable housing and mixed housing are all related issues.
- Financial planning needs to be incorporated into the process as well.



Planning for Tomorrow

York Region Growth Management

Towards A Sustainable Region

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Feedback

- Where does Region go from here?
- Is this GM work consistent with Provincial Plan?
- Will staff report back on Places to Grow?