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Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan Request for Public Meeting Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2019-92

Department(s): Planning & Building Services

Author(s): Meghan White

Meeting Date: October 15, 2019

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan Request for Public Meeting dated October 15, 2019 be received; and,
2. That the Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan be referred to a Public Meeting; and,
3. That following the public meeting, comments from the public, Committee, and those received through agency and departmental circulation of the application, be addressed by staff in a comprehensive report to the Committee of the Whole; and,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to refer the draft Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan to a public meeting.

Background

The Mulock GO Station was announced by the province in June, 2017. Council subsequently committed to implementing a transit supportive planning regime around the station. The Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan will fulfill this commitment as it will, among other objectives, determine the highest and best long-term land uses and

densities around the station. The Secondary Plan will facilitate transit-oriented design, including land uses, densities and a future road network to facilitate this vision.

As Council will recall, on November 30, 2018, Metrolinx released a report outlining an alternative approach to be pursued to deliver new stations. This new approach was then considered and approved at the Metrolinx Board meeting on December 6, 2018. This new approach relies on the concept of transit-oriented development (TOD) to fund each station. Each station's development would be completed in partnership with third-parties (e.g., adjacent property owners, developers) in exchange for certain development rights around, and/or over, each station. This approach relies heavily on market demand.

The new approach does not change the Town's intentions for proceeding with the Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan; in fact, because the Metrolinx Board has now approved a market-driven approach, it only places greater importance on having the TOD framework in place in order to better promote the area.

The project is progressing well and schedule to conclude in Q1 2020 (see Attachment 1 – Project Schedule).

Discussion

The Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan has advanced enough to warrant a public meeting as it complies with and conforms to the relevant provincial and regional plans as discussed below.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2014

The 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS. The PPS contains policies that emphasize a land-use pattern, density, and mix of uses that are supportive of transit and active transportation. It also contains policies that speak to the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure capacity.

The Mulock GO Station Secondary Plan envisions a new community which is centred on the Mulock GO Station area. Land uses are to be accommodated within a dense, mixed use format, in a transit supportive manner as to optimize transportation investment into the GO Station. Refinements to the floodplain and erosion hazard limits associated with the East Holland River tributary valleylands are envisioned to take place on a site-specific basis as development applications are advanced, in order to ensure that development and new land uses are provided sufficiently away from hazardous lands. This will ensure that no intensification takes place within areas that are subject to a natural hazard, in line with PPS policies regarding Natural Hazards.

The Mulock GO Station Secondary Plan is consistent with the policies of the PPS with respect to meeting set intensification targets. The Study Area envisions a minimum

density of 150 residents and jobs per hectare, and a maximum of 200 residents and jobs per hectare, which is in line with the Region of York's intensification hierarchy. Approximately 7,500 residents and 4,000 jobs are envisioned within the Study Area by 2041, with a targeted full build-out of approximately 10,200 residents and 5,300 jobs. These densities are consistent with the PPS's direction regarding intensification, as the minimum provincial density targets are planned to be met, as well as those of the Region of York.

From a design perspective, the PPS directives for built form require the establishment of appropriate development standards. The Secondary Plan envisions the introduction of the highest densities within the core of the Station Area, and provides for appropriate setbacks, stepbacks, separation distances, and transitional height provisions to ensure that a denser, taller built form is appropriately buffered from existing low-density uses that surround the Secondary Plan area. As such, the PPS policies with respect to well-designed built form are implemented through the Secondary Plan.

The PPS encourages the use of active transportation and transit in order to connect residential, employment, and institutional uses. The Secondary Plan envisions an enhanced active transportation network throughout the new community areas, and capitalizes on local transit improvements through the development of the Mulock GO station itself. As such, these improvements will facilitate a reduction in vehicular trips as residents will be within walking distance to a transit hub, meeting the intent of the PPS in this regard.

The intent of the PPS is upheld with respect to the optimization of planned hard and soft infrastructure improvements, as the development of the new mixed-use community will take place simultaneously with improvements to stormwater management and servicing infrastructure, as well as the improvements to local community services such as public transportation. As such, the proposed Secondary Plan demonstrates consistency with the directives of the PPS 2014.

Draft Provincial Policy Statement, 2019

It is noted that as of July 22, 2019, a draft update to the PPS has been released by the Province. Based on the draft update, the same general policies as noted above apply. However, it is noted that an additional relevant draft PPS policy has been proposed with respect to the protection and enhancement of employment lands. The Secondary Planning process has identified lands within the study area which are required to be subject to a future employment land conversion. The Draft PPS 2019 directs that an assessment of employment lands be undertaken to ensure that this designation is appropriate to the planned function of the employment area (1.3.2.2). An employment lands conversion request has been submitted to the Region as part of the current Municipal Comprehensive Review which will be considered in accordance with the applicable policies and population/employment forecasts of the Region.

With respect to the relevant changes, as noted above, the Secondary Plan remains consistent with the provisions of the PPS, as draft provisions require employment lands

to be protected and enhanced. In order to introduce residential uses into the station area, an employment lands conversion is required and has been submitted to the Region. However, the intent of the Secondary Plan is to facilitate an appropriate mix of residential as well as employment uses in order to provide for a complete community within the Station Area. The introduction of residential land uses into the station area is envisioned to be undertaken in a complementary way to the proposed employment uses, in order to maintain the function of the existing employment lands and meet employment intensification targets.

The planned targeted build-out of the Secondary Plan area envisions the introduction of 10,200 residents and approximately 5,300 jobs. Based on a market analysis completed by N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited in November 2018, the Study Area currently supports an estimated 1,200 to 2,800 jobs. As such, at build-out, the land use distribution within the Secondary Plan area will strengthen the employment numbers within the area by a minimum of 2,500 additional jobs.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) sets out the Province of Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities by managing growth within the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region. In setting out a vision to manage growth, the Growth Plan emphasizes the accommodation of significant amounts of new growth through the intensification of lands within already built-up areas. The Growth Plan identifies a number of Strategic Growth Areas towards which intensification is to be directed, including Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). These MTSAs are a significant focus of the Plan in terms of their ability to accommodate growth within the built-up areas of municipalities. Being a station for higher-order transit located within a settlement area, the Mulock GO Station area, will meet the Growth Plan's definition of a MTSA.

The land uses envisioned through the Secondary Plan respond to the policies of the Growth Plan, as added residential and expanded employment permissions are proposed in a mixed use format with a compact built form.

As the Mulock GO Station Area is within the built boundary, the intent of the Growth Plan is maintained with respect to intensification being targeted towards areas that have already been built up. The minimum density target for MTSAs associated with GO rail stations is 150 people and jobs combined per hectare, which will be accommodated within the Secondary Plan area. A maximum of 200 residents and jobs per hectare is provided within the Secondary Plan document, so as to not detract from the intent of the neighbouring Newmarket Urban Centres Secondary Plan, which provides for a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

The Growth Plan directs that MTSAs be identified through municipal official plans. Through the advancement of the Secondary Plan, and once the Mulock GO Station has been constructed, the Secondary Plan area will meet the definition of an MTSA. The

Secondary Plan contains policies that encourage Transit Oriented Development in order to realize the build-out of the Secondary Plan while enabling the construction of the Station in a third party partnership arrangement. As such, the Secondary Plan meets the direction of the Growth Plan.

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP) provides for a comprehensive plan to protect and restore the ecological health of Lake Simcoe and its watershed. The LSPP addresses long term environmental issues in Lake Simcoe and its watershed.

The LSPP contains policies pertaining to development within Settlement Areas, with respect to the impacts on natural features and habitats. Development within the Lake Simcoe watershed will seek to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts associated with the quality and quantity of urban run-off into receiving streams, lakes and wetlands.

The proposed Secondary Plan conforms to the LSPP by further protecting the Natural Heritage Areas within the Secondary Plan area.

York Region Official Plan

The York Region Official Plan (2010) describes how York Region plans to accommodate future growth and redevelopment facilitating a minimum of 40 percent residential intensification (5.3.1) within the built-up area while enhancing mobility systems using a “people and transit first approach” (1.2.7) to connect land use and transportation planning.

The Secondary Plan meets the objectives of the York Regional Official Plan (ROP) as it provides for intensification on lands that are on, and adjacent, to a future GO Transit train station. The Secondary Plan provides for land uses that are complementary to the future transit improvements in the area, in order to ensure that a transit-supportive residential and employment density is provided to ensure the longevity of the planned transit improvements.

The Secondary Plan area will connect to the surrounding community through an enhanced road network and provide for additional trip-generating uses. This will in turn enhance the surrounding area, and provide for a focal point for the local community. Mulock Drive is envisioned to function as a corridor which will facilitate new medium density development with an attractive public realm and streetscaping treatments. Mulock Drive will provide a connection to the nearby Newmarket Urban Centres Secondary Plan area to the west, which will fulfill the intent of the York ROP with respect to the improvement of connectivity within the surrounding community.

The York ROP’s policies are met with respect to the delineation and protection of the Regional Greenlands System. The Secondary Plan concept and policies show that Natural Heritage Features will be identified, protected and enhanced in partnership with the LSRCA, which is consistent with the ROP’s policies with respect to the Regional

Greenland System. With respect to cultural heritage, draft policies have been incorporated into the Secondary Plan policy text regarding the conservation of cultural heritage resources, and as such the intent of the ROP has been met in this respect.

The preservation and expansion of employment uses is a significant component of the Secondary Plan, especially due to the existing context of the area as an industrial/commercial area. According to the market analysis completed by N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited, under existing conditions the Secondary Plan area supports an estimated 1,200 to 2,800 jobs. At the planned targeted buildout, approximately 5,300 jobs will be facilitated within the Secondary Plan area, providing for a significant increase in jobs. These additional jobs will be facilitated primarily within four land use designations; three of them being mixed-use commercial-residential, and one being an Office land use designation. Subject to the results of the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review, these land uses, along with new low-rise residential uses, will be arranged within the Secondary Plan area in a manner that appropriately transitions to the existing stable residential land uses surrounding the Secondary Plan area. Furthermore, the Secondary Plan recognizes that there are currently potential noise and other nuisance concerns that could arise as residential and/or sensitive non-residential uses are introduced within the Mulock GO Station Area, originating from existing industrial and commercial operations. The Secondary Plan contains policies that require mitigation strategies for noise and nuisance concerns, on a site-by-site basis, through the submission of development applications. While the Secondary Plan will encourage the gradual replacement of these uses in order to fulfill its intensification objectives, policies have been incorporated to recognize the continued function of existing uses. This will ensure that impacts between existing businesses and new residential and/or sensitive non-residential uses are minimized as the Mulock GO Station Area transitions over time.

Town Official Plan

The Town of Newmarket Official Plan (2006) manages and directs physical change within the Town of Newmarket to increase quality of life. Redevelopment, infill, and intensification are a key focus of the Official Plan's growth management strategy. The Official Plan is structured around seven core goals (1.3), two of which are directly related to the purpose of this study. The first of these two goals, Encourage Growth in Support of a Sustainable Community (1.3.3), encourages the development of complete communities that provide the opportunity to live and work. The second of these two goals, Develop Sustainable Transportation Improvements (1.3.4), calls for land use changes around potential station areas in order to provide the necessary support to make transit systems viable.

The Secondary Plan Area is currently designated for Commercial and Business park uses, as well as Parks and Open Space uses. The Commercial Land Use designation provides for a broad range of commercial and retail units outside Urban Centres. Additionally, two designations of General and Mixed Employment are established under

the Business Park Land Use designation. The Parks and Open Space land use designation applies to the majority of the East Holland River valleylands and lands associated with the floodplain, as well as the established open spaces of the Natural Heritage System. The Secondary Plan envisions intensification in a predominantly mixed-use approach, which will take place in a gradual manner over the build-out period. The mixed-use approach will introduce intensive residential and commercial redevelopment to the Secondary Plan Area, which will support the objective of achieving transit-supportive densities. The intent of the Official Plan to maintain the area as an employment-focused centre is upheld through the Secondary Plan, given the significant increase in employment opportunities that is envisioned, relative to existing conditions.

The Town's OP contains policies regarding Urban Design principles and standards. The Secondary Plan contains policies with respect to Urban Design that are aligned with those of the OP. Namely, the Secondary Plan endeavours to ensure a compact, high-quality, attractive, accessible built environment in a transit-oriented fashion. The OP directs that the majority of new development will be located in areas that are well-served by Transit, and provide for pedestrian conveniences and an improved public realm. The OP recognizes that with the advancement of higher order transit in Newmarket, urban design policies will be transit supportive and aim to facilitate high quality pedestrian and transit user environments. The Secondary Plan is aligned with these directives through the provision of policies that describe built form and development standards that are transit-oriented and provide for improved connectivity throughout the Secondary Plan area.

The Town's OP policies with respect to Cultural and Natural Heritage resources will be incorporated into the Secondary Plan policies and schedules, specifically through the inclusion of wording that recognizes the natural heritage features associated with the Bailey Ecological Park, Wesley Brooks Conservation Area, and the East Holland River valleylands as a whole. The OP requires that cultural and natural heritage features be identified, protected and enhanced through the submission of site-specific studies as part of development applications. As such, the Secondary Plan responds to this policy requirement, and is consistent with the OP.

Conclusion

The Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan is now substantially advanced enough to warrants it's referral to a Statutory Public Meeting.

After the Statutory Public Meeting, staff will report back to Council on the outcomes of the consultation and with recommendations on how to proceed.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

The Mulock Station Area Secondary Plan contributes to Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities by ensuring vibrancy on Yonge, Davis and Mulock through policies which support enhanced access to diverse housing, office and retail options on Mulock Drive.

Consultation

Staff have engaged the public and various agencies twice through the Secondary Plan process to date and incorporated the comments received into the draft policies.

It is staff's intention that a third, non-statutory public engagement session will be held early in 2020. This third consultation session will re-engage affected landowners, and the general public, around key issues of the Plan including the proposed transition policies.

A detailed accounting of the comments received and how they were considered and/or addressed will form part of the report following the Public Meeting.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

Should the application be referred to a public meeting, there will be the typical costs associated with providing notice and holding the public meeting.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Project Schedule

Approval

Adrian Cammaert, MCIP RPP, CNU-A, Acting Manager of Planning Services

Jason Unger, MCIP RPP, Acting Director Planning and Building Services

Peter Noehammer, P. Eng, Commissioner Development & Infrastructure Services

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