



PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

Town of Newmarket

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October 3, 2016

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES/PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES REPORT 2016-41

TO: Council

SUBJECT: Coordinated Provincial Plans Review – Additional Growth Plan Density Comments
NP-16-41

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Development and Infrastructure Services/Planning & Building Services Report 2016-41 dated October 3, 2016 regarding the Coordinated Provincial Plans Review – Additional Growth Plan Density Comments be received and that the following recommendation(s) be adopted:

- 1. THAT Council direct staff to submit Report 2016-41 to York Region and the Province of Ontario as Town of Newmarket's additional comments on the draft version of the Provincial Growth Plan, released by the Province as part of the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review, in addition to those comments contained in Report 2016-28.**

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Staff Report 2016-28 was discussed at the September 26, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting. It was requested by Committee that staff report back on the proposed Growth Plan's general density targets in the Regional context, and density targets around Major Transit Station Areas.

It is being recommended that these comments be submitted to the Region and Province with those outlined previously in Report 2016-28.

COMMENTS

Proposed Growth Plan - General Density Targets

Like the existing Growth Plan, the proposed Growth Plan directs a significant portion of growth to "Built-up Areas" and "Strategic Growth Areas". The vast majority of the Town is designated "Built-up Areas", and "Strategic Growth Areas" are defined as those areas identified by a municipality or the Province as being appropriate to accommodate intensification, and includes Urban Growth Centres and areas located along higher order transit corridors (including bus rapid transit); as such, the entire Urban Centres Secondary Plan areas would meet the definition of a "Strategic Growth Area".

The minimum intensification target for Built-up Areas is 60%; increased from 40% in the existing Growth Plan. The minimum intensification target for “Strategic Growth Areas” in Newmarket is divided among various sub-categories: the Provincial Urban Growth Centre (200 people and jobs combined per hectare, which remains unchanged) and new density targets for Major Transit Station Areas (as discussed in “Proposed Growth Plan - Density Targets around Major Transit Station Areas” below).

The Town of Newmarket is in a unique situation where the vast majority of the municipality is located in the Built-up Area (all lands except for the Oak Ridges Moraine area and a portion of the northwest quadrant). Therefore, all new development that occurs in the Town (outside of these areas) helps achieve the 60% intensification target. In addition, the Urban Centres Secondary Plan was prepared to meet the 200 people and jobs combined per hectare target within the Provincial Urban Growth Centre, and similar density targets extend throughout the entire Plan area which will achieve approximately 33,000 residents and 32,000 jobs by build-out, over the 290 hectare Plan area. All new development that occurs within the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area will also help achieve the 60% intensification target, but also satisfy the intensification targets for “Strategic Growth Areas”.

The planning context described above is far different than that of other municipalities in the Growth Plan area. Other municipalities, including some within York Region, have large Designated Greenfield Areas (including whitebelt lands) which are subject to the proposed density target of 80 people and jobs combined per hectare. Although Newmarket does not have large Designated Greenfield Areas, we share the concerns of our municipal neighbours regarding the designated greenfield density target, and note that an unintended consequence of such a target may be the development of areas along suburban fringes that host more intensive density than their existing Built-up Areas and/or Strategic Growth Areas. Further, locating high densities such as 80 people and jobs combined per hectare along suburban fringes is counter to the Growth Plans stated objective of directing significant portions of forecasted growth to “Built-up Areas” and “Strategic Growth Areas”.

Given the above, it is requested that the Province re-examine the designated greenfield density target of 80 people and jobs combined per hectare in the context of the Plan’s other growth management policies and objectives.

Proposed Growth Plan - Density Targets around Major Transit Station Areas

Among other comments, The Town requested that the Growth Plan provide clarification on density targets in and around Major Transit Station Areas. The proposed Growth Plan defines Major Transit Station Areas as those areas generally within 500m of subway stations, bus rapid transit stations and GO Train Stations. Newmarket would be effected by the latter two, having both bus rapid transit stations and GO Train Stations (existing and planned). The minimum gross density for each bus rapid transit station area is 160 residents and jobs combined per hectare; and the minimum gross density for each GO Train Station is 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

Although the Town supports the concept of transit-oriented development, it is unknown if it is appropriate to target these exact densities within 500m of each of these station, given the context of each station area.

Given the above, it is requested that greater levels autonomy and flexibility be afforded to local municipalities in determining appropriate transit-oriented density targets and locations. In addition, it seems illogical that the minimum density target for bus rapid transit stations would exceed that of GO Train Stations, and therefore it is requested that this be re-considered.

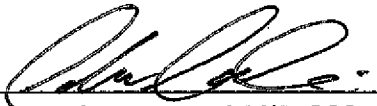
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CONTACT

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